

Sex is the Warmest Color:
Intimate Relations of Power and Truth in England and Thailand

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Abstract

Substitutive sexuality....the infinite cannot be made into matter, but it is possible to create an illusion of the infinite: the image...and skin, a mass of scars, a skeleton's robe...but they certainly are truth.

– *Andrei Tarkovsky, 'The Sacrifice'*

This honors thesis outlines the importance of sexuality and its connotations in the political as well as social sphere of society. The purpose of this work is to illustrate the underlining reasoning within people and states using a sexual discourse. By applying Michel Foucault's theory of sexuality and relations of power, a description of a society's system solely based on sexual activity and identity is constructed, and argued to be woven into each individual by culture, specifically religion. An attempt to present culture as an explanation for a state's behavior is depicted, by looking at how religious ideology of a society influences immigration policy, and furthermore, voluntary sex work and either the sexual openness or censorship in two states, England and Thailand. To collect significant data, literary research was applied to the area of public opinion, in which amount of sex bars, sexuality in magazines, and women's rights groups' involvement were measured in both regions since the new millennium. Results signify the importance of culture, specifically religion, in forming a subject's perception about sex within one's-self and the sexual expectations of society. Conclusions reveal the importance of culture seen in state's behavior through the prescribed sexual norms, ideals, and values given to each individual at birth, and emphasize that the religious sexuality of a society is the conduit of truth for political and social power relations and state activity.

Table of Contents

<u>Suitcase Full of Sparks</u>	
Preface.....	5
<u>Crooked Muse</u>	
Methodology & Theory	
<i>Puzzle, Hypotheses, Causal Arrow</i>	6
<u>All Shades of Blue</u>	11
<i>A Sexual Background</i>	
Fascination Street	
<i>Foucault’s Constructive Theory</i>	12
The Color of Pomegranates	
<i>Sex: Norms, Ideals, Values</i>	13
Myxomatosis	
<i>The Biology and Economics Handshake</i>	16
Life in a Glasshouse	
<i>Voluntary vs. Involuntary Sex Work</i>	20
<u>How to Disappear Completely</u>	22
<i>Immigration Policy and Voluntary Sex Work</i>	
Morning Mr. Magpie	23
Good Evening Mrs. Magpie.....	35
<u>Bullet with Butterfly Wings</u>	42
<i>Culture, Immigration Policy, and Voluntary Sex Work</i>	
Being Beige.....	43
Buddha’s Melancholia.....	47
<u>The Great Gig in the Sky</u>	55
<i>Data – England and Thailand</i>	
England	
Comfortably Numb.....	56
Welcome to the Machine.....	60
Psycho Killer, Qu’est-ce que c’est?.....	66
Thailand	
Karma Police.....	70
Every Other Freckle.....	73
Swans and the Swimming.....	78
<u>Melatonin</u>	83
<i>Conclusion, Theory Constructs</i>	
Bloodflood and Fitzpleasure.....	84
<u>Bibliography</u>	85

“Sex is full of lies. The body tries to tell the truth. But, it’s usually too battered with rules to be heard, and bound with pretenses so it can hardly move. We cripple ourselves with lies.”

Jim Morrison

Suitcase Full of Sparks

Preface

Imagine a pair of shoes. Small, plastic ones, with a red heart glued on top and with a sole that has nearly fallen apart. Next to the shoes, picture a bottle of huffing glue and a pin with a

number on it. Juxtaposed to these items is a wooden bed frame, bleached and used. The inalterable links behind these items are ugly, heinous, broken; yet, these items and their meaning was what compelled me to write this thesis.

iEmpathize, a non-profit organization working to abolish modern day slavery, or sexual human trafficking, was the portal for my journey of exploring sexuality, its beauty and darkness, in each society. Factors that drive the sexual industry, how sexual normality in this kind of industry is formulated, and how sexual identity is so different in countries like England and Thailand, started to fascinate me. I wanted to understand why culture and sex are constructed differently in each region of the world, and why it is normal for family members to sell their daughters and wives to the sex trade in certain parts of the globe. Working directly with severely sexually abused girls allowed me to question the psychology of sexual activity – why does the simple, biological act of sex exert so much power over an individual? Questioning the link between intimacy and relationships of power, a decision to explore this intricate puzzle was made, comparing two strikingly different parts of the world in which sexuality appeared to be extremely different. By exploring our most intimate sphere of biology, a desire to understand how sex surfaced on the social and political areas of society emerged, with a want to analyze how sex is the most truthful aspect of ourselves and of our perceptions.

Crooked Muse

Methodology – Puzzle, Hypotheses, Causal Arrow

There is a global political economy of sex, which links under-development, poverty, and unemployment into transnational flows and a global division of labor, which are gendered.

“Intimate economies of sex and service are increasingly internationalized – globalization has restructured women’s lives and gender relations across state boundaries, as surely as it has reconstituted interstate relations and international political economy”¹. In Southeast Asia, specifically in Thailand, sex tourism and sex work is open, at its peak, and steadily reaching a zenith that allows the economy of the state to depend on the sex industry for income and growing wealth. In Western Europe, England for example, the sex industry is more concealed and undercover, with sex tourism and sex work being on the low scale of popularity in the country – as opposed to Thailand, England is censored sexually. Why is this voluntary profession not available in England? Why is Thailand so sexually open and England is not?

This thesis provides two hypotheses, each tying into each other to answer this interesting question about human sexuality. The first hypothesis argues that the immigration policy of a state influences its level of voluntary sex work and its sexual perception. Yet, it is also argued that there must be something affecting immigration policy in order for it to taint the voluntary sex trade. Therefore, the second hypothesis states that cultural norms, ideals, and values, specifically that of religious ideology, impact the status of immigration policy as well as voluntary sex work and the sexual atmosphere of a society. Through culture and religion, sexual identity and sexual societal expectations are formed, and become normalized, idealized, and practiced. Sexuality, thus, becomes the vessel of society’s truth as well as a form of power and knowledge given to individuals, and surfaces itself on the political and social branch of a country.

The framework of this argument rests on two influential figures: Emile Durkheim, a sociologist, and Michel Foucault, a philosopher. Though the research done for this thesis is mostly constructed on Foucault’s theory, Durkheim’s idea of culture affecting state behavior is

¹ Youngs, Gillian. Kofman, Eleonore. *“Globalization: Theory and Practice Second Edition”*. Continuum, March 20, 2003.

crucial. In Durkheim's theoretical principal, he states that "...the cultural norms and values of the dominant members of society are embedded in the social practices and institutions of society...Durkheim points out that a normative culture is comparable to a collective conscience and is part of the apparatus of social control. Group conscience interacts with individual volition"². In other words, Durkheim references to the relationship between culture and ideology as an enzyme affecting state behavior, formulating the politics and social behaviors of a country. In Durkheim's interpretation, institutions govern and control the individual, dictating to the subject certain types of knowledge in order to accumulate a set of norms, values, and ideals expected for each region. Durkheim's words, "...every large system is itself a new entity, with its own specific reality and its own specific characteristics"³, mean that each region is specific to its own cultural constructs behaviorally. In this case, England and Thailand would be the two countries assigned each a specific cultural antibiotic. These institutions, one example being schools of religious thought, exert power onto the individual – by looking at how religious schools of thought impact a state's behavior, a type of relationship of power is outlined, painting a picture of how faith and politics shake hands. Foucault's theory of sexual relations of power details this idea, but through a sexual lens. In Foucault's argument, the question of the creation of the subject and how the individual was constituted through sexuality is posed. It is based on the fact that people's identities are becoming increasingly tied to their sexuality and that they are constantly subjected to society's culture created from institutions, which form sexual perception. Because sex is so closely tied to power and knowledge, Foucault also argues in his work that sex is truth – sexual identity and the act of sex itself unearths the truth within a society's structure,

² Hedges, Larry V. Schneider, Barbara. *The Social Organization of Schooling*. Russell Sage Foundation, May 26th, 2005, pg. 130.

³ Eckstein, Arthur M. *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*. University of California Press, Feb. 13th, 2007, pg. 187.

and allows the raw form of societal perspective to emerge. This ‘truth’ can be seen in each cultural sphere, both political and biological.

The thesis rests on these two theoretical frameworks, relating to the thought that culture is the rational glue for state activity seen through sexuality. In the first section, the outlining of the basic concepts of sex, its bond within economics, politics, and immigration, its context within culture, and the fine line between voluntary versus un-voluntary sex work will be elaborated on. This section serves as a basic, conceptual piece about sexuality and background to my argument. Later in the thesis, an examination of the new millennium’s immigration requirements in each country for prospective migrants coming into both Thailand and England will be shown, and I attempt to decipher what requirements each country holds for receiving a visa and or citizenship. Work and long-stay visas for incoming migrants will specifically be looked at, with an argument that immigration policies for these particular types of visas depend on the type of profession each migrant possesses. These two requirements directly reflect the ratio of voluntary sex work –there is a strong correlation between immigration policies dealing with long stay and work visas instilled in the new millennium and amount of voluntary sex work practiced as a result. For England, obtaining a visa is a tricky process; as opposed to opening its doors for regular immigration, Britain welcomes skilled immigrants from Eastern Europe, India, and Asia, as well as other parts of the EU to reduce labor shortages in IT and health care⁴ (Meyers, 2004:77). Meyers (2004) in his literature research, states the “Barbara Roche, the Home Office minister responsible for immigration, urged more flexibility in British immigration policy. Roche said that ‘Britain is in competition for the brightest and best talents – the entrepreneurs, the scientists, the high-technology specialists who make the global economy tick’”⁵ (Meyers,

⁴ Meyers, Eytan. *International Immigration Policy: A Theoretical and Comparative Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan , April 3rd, 2004, pg. 77.

⁵ *Ibid.*

2004:77). In Thailand, immigration policies are fairly open and poorly controlled, due to the skyrocketing sex industry. As the Thai economy has developed, there are fewer Thai women to traffic and employ, and the traffickers in response can command more money for the services of Thai women in international markets⁶ (Shelley, 2000).

Anglo-Catholicism and Buddhism will be discussed further in the thesis, and are argued to be the biggest cultural factors under which society's values and perspectives are constructed, especially in ideas about sex, sexuality, and personal identity. They also tie into the political sphere, one branch being immigration policy. John Humphrey Noyes, a speaker and pastor, preaches about the Western perspective of marriage and sex, an archaic view still followed by many religious Christians and Catholics today. He states, "...The discrepancy between the marriage system and nature is one of the principle sources of the sexual tensions and disorders of men and women...The restoration of true relations between the sexes is a matter second only in importance to the reconciliation of man to God"⁷. On the other hand, rather than preaching a desire restricted only to attain God's love through abstinence until marriage, Buddhist teachings preach: "All desire is essentially empty in the Buddhist sense...The desire for sex is a very basic human condition...as Zen practitioners, we need to learn to live in a world in which pornography is open and available...The openness of sexuality these days is a sign that we're finally ready to face up to the whole of what life is"⁸.

These two different cultural religious views on sexuality impact society greatly, which in turn influences each country's political and social atmosphere. Through researching this specific corner of culture through sex and sensuality, an insight into why immigration policies are so

⁶ Shelley. (2000). *Human Trafficking*. London, Cambridge University Press.

⁷ Foster, Lawrence. *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community*. University of Illinois Press, 1981, pg. 3.

⁸ Warner, Brad. *Sex, Sin, and Zen: Buddhist Exploration of Sex from Celibacy to Polyamory and Everything in Between*. New World Library, Oct. 12th, 2010, pgs. 83-84.

different in each state may become understood, thus allowing us to see why voluntary sex work is abundant in one place of the world, and not in the other.

All Shades of Blue
A Sexual Background

Fascination Street
Foucault's Constructive Theory

“We demand that sex speak the truth... and we demand that it tells us our truth, or rather, the deeply buried truth about ourselves which we think we possess in our immediate consciousness.”
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*

Michel Foucault once mentioned, “Sex has always been the focal point where, besides the future of our species, our ‘truth’ as human subjects is tied up”⁹. *The History of Sexuality*, one of Foucault’s greatest works, mainly discusses society’s history and the concept of biopower, the politics over life, which governs capability. Sexuality is seen as a conduit of truth, one of the

⁹ Bennett, Andrew. Royle, Nicholas. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. Routledge, July 10th, 2014, pg. 221.

main biological human functions that mirror the veracity of a society in this particular work of Foucault's. Foucault's framework thus explains a country's, in this case, England's and Thailand's, social and political constructs of immigration policy and either the rise or stagnation of voluntary sex work through cultural practices of religious ideology. This underlies sexual acts and sexual subjectivity in each state and showcases the premier perception of sexuality and power in gender identity through religious social constructs. Intimacy presents relations of power and institutions of knowledge, such as religion, which exert power. According to Foucault, this enables for a political and social truth of each society to ultimately be seen – this is the architecture for this thesis. Sex is more than just a physical act – it is a raw form of power and truth illustrated in the political and social behavior of a region and its peoples.

Sexual identity may be open, it may be closed, and it may be either pleasurable or sinful. Sexuality is constructed based on culture, which teaches, directs, advises, and instructs. Religion is the most influential formulation of power through knowledge, subjecting every individual to have forms of thoughts, morals, feelings, and ethics. As Foucault describes, power structures are created and inalterable intimate links between human beings are made, showcasing the taught structures of sex and its' connotations in every society. Intimacy is a power that manifests itself through the constructed ideology of sexuality we are given.

The Color of Pomegranates
Sex: Norms, Ideals, and Values

“And he could not tell why the struggle was worthwhile, why he had determined to use the utmost himself and his heritage from the personalities he had passed... He stretched out his arms to the crystalline, radiant sky. “I know myself,” he cried, “But that is all... They slipped into an intimacy from which they could never recover.”

- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*

Sex and intimacy are behaviors that involve choreography of endocrine functions,

muscles, and stages of physical change¹⁰. Despite this physiological component, the act of sex cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it occurs”¹¹. In comparing England and Thailand, it is clear to see that these subtopics of sexual understandings vary significantly due to the vast historical and contemporary cultural differences customary to each state – England’s sex culture is full of censorship, yet Thailand’s is open based on each country’s researched ethnography. As stated in Anne Bolin’s and Patricia Whelehan’s (1999) *Perspectives on Human Sexuality*,

...we shall define sex as those behaviors, sentiments, emotions, and perceptions related to and resulting in sexual arousal as defined by the society or culture in which it occurs. We qualified our definition by referring to cultural definitions of sexual behaviors, since these differ a great deal among ethnic groups and among different cultures¹².

One subtopic of this sexual culture, norms, significantly differs based on each region of study. Cultural norms represent “the influence of the social environment”¹³ of a society, or the normality of a spectrum of behaviors amongst a particular ethnic circle. The social environment, which influences the cultural norms of a region in this thesis, represents the social economic aspects of immigration policy of each state during the new millennium. From gathered research, it is clear that Thailand and England each view sexual culture very differently, particularly that of these two factors. By contrasting this economic aspect in each area, the influence on the contemporary sexual culture of norms of voluntary sex work can begin to be understood.

The second subtopic of culture, values, is “...a more individualized concept; sexuality is used here to refer to the ways in which individuals structure their sexual and gender performances, and the partners toward whom they direct their behavior and emotional

¹⁰ Bolin, Anne. Whelehan, Patricia. *Perspectives on Human Sexuality*. SUNY Press, 1999, pg. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Zabin, Larue Schwab. Hayward, Sarah C. *Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Childbearing*. SAGE, 1993, pg. 39.

attachments”¹⁴. A cultural value of sexuality within a group or region is furthermore based on the human environment: a person’s beliefs, religion, and moral ethics with which he is prescribed at birth. As Theerasak Thanasankit (2003) states in his work *E-commerce and Cultural Values* (2003), “Culture is a man-made part of the human environment...A widely used definition of cultural value is derived from Hofstede’s book (1991), in which cultural value is likened to mental programs, or ‘software of the mind’, using the analogy of computer programming”¹⁵. In this case, the ‘man-made’ part of the environment researched will be the human institution of immigration policy, a branch of an economic system established by human thought.

The subtopic of ideals within the sexual cultural sphere plays an important role in how contemporary sexual ideals of voluntary sex work in both Thailand and England are presented. Marriane Thesander (1997) suggests a culture ideal that is created in every society, socially constructed by the public sphere of the culture in which one is raised, just as Durkheim and Foucault argue. “The artificial body can be made the object of symbolic significance; the shape of the body has necessarily to be changed before it can be given a new value. Each culture transfers a difference significance to the molded and remodeled body...Like everything else, the body is subject to social control and is given status by being transformed into a cultural ideal”¹⁶.

The specific cultural aspect of values, particularly the institution of religious ideology, plays the biggest role in forming knowledge of sexual intimacy and identity, affecting immigration policy perspectives, which directly correlate to voluntary sex work and sexual perspectives in Thailand and England. Religion is presented to us by society innately, a cultural aspect that we inherently grow up with and adapt at an early age. “Culture and religion influence each other at various levels. Religion shapes a culture’s system of beliefs and practices, which is

¹⁴ Ember, Carol R. Ember, Melvin. *Men and Women in the World’s Cultures Topics and Cultures A-K volume 1; Cultures L-Z/* Springer Science and Business Media, 200, pg. 3.

¹⁵ Thanasankit, Theerasak. *E-commerce and Cultural Values*. Idea Group Inc, 2003, pg. 307.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pg. 11.

why when individuals or communities convert to another religion, their ways of thought and life undergo important changes....Christ might be divine, but Christianity is a cultural phenomenon”¹⁷. This is a social construct that is of crucial importance when understanding a specific culture, especially when looking at sexuality. The West’s perspective of sexuality is based on mainly Christian and Anglo-Catholic beliefs, all which are important in forming England’s opinion of sex, prudery, and vulgarity. In Thailand, Theravada Buddhism forms the sense of sexual openness, a teaching much different than that of a salvation to God.

Myxomatosis
The Biology and Economics Handshake

“We were searching for ourselves in each other.”
- Sergei Parajanov

Though we tend to associate economic policies, laws, and institutional frameworks on a level differentiated from human feeling and morality, economics is a human institution bred from innate basic and culturally constructed human wants and needs. “...economics, which grew out of the study of moral philosophy, tries to address much broader issues that are central concerns of society...economics is a study of mankind in the ordinary business of life”¹⁸. One business of life, which presents itself even in archaic societies such as Pompeii in 79 A.D., the capital of sexual destination for ancient Romans and Europeans during this time period, is sex. The sexual industry is perhaps one of the oldest forms of economics - through the basic need of human sexual activity, certain economic aspects play a key role in guiding the proliferation or discreteness of

¹⁷ Parekh, Bhikhu C. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. Harvard University Press, 2002, pg. 147.

¹⁸ M.C., Appleby, J.A., Mench, I.A.S. Olsson, B.O. Hughes. *Animal Welfare, 2nd Edition*. CABI Publications, pg. 280.

sexuality in a particular society, region, and state.

There is sexual economic theory in academia, which proposes, “men’s and women’s sexual thoughts, feelings, preferences, and behavior follow fundamental economic principles”¹⁹. This theory argues that women possess a precious resource that men seek and wish to attain; in other words, this theory is an “idea that each person in a dyad gives up something that he or she holds to get something of greater benefit in return...According to sexual economics theory, men give women resources so that women will allow sex to take place”²⁰. This trade has taken place amongst many olden and contemporary cultures, which suggests that female sexuality is of greater value when looking at the sexual industry from a historic perspective, such as the case of Pompeii in 79 A.D. Pompeii housed the greatest number of brothels in all of Italy, praising women’s sexuality and pleasures, particularly that of the sexual pleasure of virgins. Unlike the Roman capital, Pompeii’s sexual promiscuity was completely open, allowing for the city to be known for its sexual pleasure and brothel houses. Thus, sexual culture in the city was erotic – promiscuity was supported. In Pompeii, voluntary sex work was abundant, and just like in Thailand, was a specialized area for a qualified work force, women. This allowed for an influx of poor migrant workers to come to Pompeii in search for employment. An example like this can shed light on how economics plays as a key ingredient in shaping the culture of a city’s sexual atmosphere. This trait is based on economic influence of certain policies, such as immigration, which correlates to voluntary sex work, a lucrative profession in Thailand.

Bangkok, Thailand, houses the most amount of tourists and places for sexual entertainment in the world. Commercial sex is largely an urban phenomenon due to population size and density factors, Bangkok being the capital of this trade in Southeast Asia. The

¹⁹ Baumeister, Roy F. D. Vohs, Kathleen. *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology*. SAGE Publications, Aug. 29th, 2007, pg. 863.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

importance of the topic is also partially a function of future world demographics as represented by Asian cities. Migration to the cities for work is part of the Thai fabric and also a common condition in sex work. This international labor migration accounts for many factors tied into the international political economy, such as foreign currency and domestic labor policies in the recipient country. In many respects, Truong's (1990) *Sex, Money, and Morality*, is still one of the most far-reaching examinations of the international sex industry. Dr. Thanh-Dam Truong, an associate professor at the International Institute of Social Studies at the Erasmus University at Rotterdam, draws connections between the sex industry in Thailand and the international political economy of labor, local commodization of sexual services, and the needs of a global travel industry. Women providing sexual services in Thailand are part of an international division of labor producing wealth for international businesses, states agents, and states. The emergence of tourism and sex related entertainment is an articulation of a series of unequal social relations including relations between capital and labor, male and female, and production and reproduction. "The combination of shared vested interests led firms to incorporate diverse sexual services into a highly organized production process with diverse points of distribution on an international level"²¹.

As opposed to Thailand, England's sex industry is almost non-existent. Due to England's tight immigration policy, which was instilled in the new millennium, only a high input of intellectual capital is imported in the country for the country's invested resources in medical, financial, and technological skillsets. Therefore, England's export-oriented sector becomes one of intellectual capital. For this reason, England's sexual industry is almost virtually blank when compared to that of Thailand. Thailand, in contrast to England, has become to be known as a place "free from sexual repression and bodily hang ups....it is used as a stick to beat

²¹ Clift, Stephen. Carter, Simon. *Tourism and Sex: Culture, Commerce, and Coercion*. Pinter Publications, 2000, pg. 189.

contemporary moral conservatism”²². The sex industry in England is hidden, and going to a brothel in London, for instance, is considered a sexual taboo for most young men – open sexual practice is looked down upon. In a social survey about sexual openness amongst young people in contemporary England, Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher (2010) asked sexual questions to subjects that test their comfort level about the topic of sex. “We did not primarily find oral history interviewees willing to discuss their private lives because their own attitudes to sex had changed and become less private, but because strong feelings on the differences between contemporary society and the lives they had lived induced them to talk”²³.

Voluntary sex work can thus be a marker reflecting the influenced cultural atmosphere created by economic institutions of immigration policy. The question about the fascination with exoticism and the ‘other’ also surfaces itself through immigration policy tactics, questioning why so many tourists choose to travel to Thailand for sexual freedom and not England. Sex work is “...often defined as a form of prostitution that is closely linked and dependent upon the patronage of tourist within a country...sex work today includes both real and virtual exchanges of sexual services for monetary reward”²⁴. Voluntary prostitution becomes dependent upon the influx of tourism, creating an economic factor of foreign capital flowing into the country exporting sex; a cultural foundation based upon the changing view of sexual openness due to economic prospects. “...sex workers are just as influenced by the changes occurring in the culture of consumption as sex tourists, and although economic need is usually the primary reason for supplying these services, fantasies about the Other also play an important role”²⁵. Sex is vital

²² Blanshard, Alastair J. L. *Sex: Vice and Love from Antiquity to Modernity*. John Wiley and Sons, Jan. 29th, 2010, pg. 4.

²³ Szreter, Simon. Fisher, Kate. *Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England 1918-1963*. Cambridge University Press, Oct. 14, 2010, pg. 14.

²⁴ Gottdiener, Mark. *New Forms of Consumption: Consumers, Culture, and Commodification*. Rowman and Littlefield, Jan. 1st, 2000, pg. 230.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pg. 238.

it is to economics and serves as a basic human need, one that is inevitable. It is based upon cultural context, and cultural context is influenced by economics, a human institution itself. We are all animals with behavioral impulses.

Life in a Glasshouse
Voluntary vs. Involuntary Sex Work

Well, Grace she's gone, she's a half-written poem - she went out for cigarettes and never came home. Well, I just came to talk, Saint Valentine. I never pictured you living here with the rats and the vines. You're all fucked up, Saint Valentine. Now I circle the bars on the promenade, while the girls in the glass, they're just throwing me shade. And I'm saving my coins up for Jangling Jane, she's out plucking strings in the pouring rain.
- Gregory Alan Isakov, *Saint Valentine*

In the New York Times, a stripper was asked why she strips. Her reply was, “The reason why we’re strippers, is invariably more boring, more grounded in non-existential needs like money – and pragmatic concerns, like money”²⁶. For this reason of easy finance, sex work has been deemed by some academics as ‘the oldest profession’, dating back to primitive societies and the Egyptian pyramids. “Prostitution is well documented in antiquity and is alleged to have financed the production of some of Egypt’s pyramids. The stratification of prostitution in Ancient Greece is widely reported”²⁷. Yet, sexual acts are performed either voluntary or involuntary, either willingly or forced. This presents a major discourse in the realms of what sex slavery as opposed to voluntary sex work is composed of. Of course, voluntary sex workers may not always be *that* voluntary – a drug addiction, a need to feed a family or one’s self, or the

²⁶ Fowler, Ruth. *Girl, Undressed: On Stripping in New York City*. The New York Times, 2005.

²⁷ Ditmore, Melissa Hope. *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work, Volume 1*. Greenwood Publishing Group, Jan. 1st, 2006, pg. xxvi.

simple reasoning for ‘easy money’ all apply in the case of sex work. This thesis will take all of this reasoning for voluntary sex work into consideration, but will still separate voluntary versus involuntary sexual acts that provide a monetary currency. The main difference between the two terms will be resting on the fact that voluntary sex workers keep their money while sex trafficked victims do not get to keep their earnings from clients, creating a fundamental distinction. An expansion on the economic and immigrant backdrop from which this culture of sex work arises will also be argued.

Woody Allen, in the film *Deconstructing Harry* (1997), states, “Every hooker I ever speak to tells me that it beats the hell out of waitressing”²⁸. Voluntary sex work is a choice, though sometimes made out of need. There, as with any type of profession, are good sides and bad sides to sex work. Some women enter the sex trade not out of necessity, but out of reason, and immigrate to a bigger market of the sexual profession to get employed voluntarily. This is something very important to understand when creating a discrepancy between prostitutes and victims of human trafficking. Voluntary sex work allows the worker to keep money earned. As Emma Goldman has stated, “To the moralist, prostitution does not consist so much in the fact that the woman sells her body, rather that she sells it out of wedlock”²⁹. In Bangkok, many sex workers are voluntarily working in the trade, out of choice, or out of necessity. “In Thailand...It is legal for persons to work in entertainment establishments as providers of special services, which, according to industry sources, is a cover for offering sexual services”³⁰. The marker for distinguishing sex work is, therefore, based on finances that trafficked victims would otherwise not be able to keep, and is consistent of women who join the sex trade as voluntary workers seeking employment and financial stability for several personal reasons. Because the majority of

²⁸ Allen, Woody. 1997.

²⁹ Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 3rd Rev. Ed., Ch. 8. 1917.

³⁰ Universal Law Publishing Collective. *Legislating an Epidemic: HIV/AIDS in India*. 2003, pg. 117.

voluntary sex workers who immigrate have to register into the government's records, this difference between involuntary and voluntary sex workers may show the correlation that immigration policy in each country has on work visas. This fact may allow statistics of types of immigrants coming into both Thailand and England to show the proliferation or lack of voluntary sex work as a profession in each country.

How to Disappear Completely
Immigration Policy and Voluntary Sex Work

Morning Mr. Magpie
England

“His talent was as natural as the pattern that was made on the dust on a butterfly’s wings. At one time he understood it no more than the butterfly did and he did not know when it was brushed or marred.”

- Ernest Hemingway

Britain’s immigration policy tactics of granting long-stay visas to only certain, high skilled workers coming into the UK was not something that British officials decided to enact into economic policy one day while sipping on Earl Grey. The historic influence of why these restrictions on immigration policies in England progressed to such draconian mandates plays a key role in shaping the contemporary British immigration mentality that mirrors the new millennium’s voluntary sex work in the state. Events and social ideas of a multi-racial Britain, which led to accounts of racism, the concept of female ‘purity’, and gender stratification, all influenced contemporary sexual cultures and voluntary sex work in the United Kingdom, as well as fit into the theoretical constructs of Foucault’s sexual principals of power and truthfulness seen through sexual identity expectations.

In the UK economic report of the year 2007, written by Britain’s House of Lords in the Select Committee on Economic Affairs, it is stated that:

In our view, the primary economic consideration of UK immigration policy must be to benefit the resident population in the UK, although we recognize that there are important practical constraints on the capacity of the UK to control immigration: EU membership, human rights considerations, and illegal immigration...The Government should have an

explicit and reasoned indicative target range for net immigration, and adjust its immigration policies in line with that broad objective³¹.

Behind this question of migration law lies many traits in understanding why immigration policy in Britain is the way it is today, and how that impacts voluntary sex work. Racism is one trait of deciphering modern British immigration patterns, and one factor of English history that is crucial to understanding the UK's closed sexual culture. 'Multi-Racial' Britain, a term that was coined after the decolonization of Britain's subject countries, sprouted from the following social and political history:

One of the more apparent after-effects of the empire was the immigration into Britain of so many of its ex-subjects during and after decolonization: a few white settlers fleeing from what they saw as a horrendous future, and many thousands (132,000 between 1955-1957) of non-whites...By 2001, the number of Asian-origin Britons had risen to 2.3million...their cultural impact was enormous...a multi-racial Britain was one of the main results of empire, but one for which the empire, despite all its high multi-racial pretensions, had very poorly prepared her people³².

Multi-racial diversity is rooted back in England during the country's imperial period, when the state was composed of African slaves and the Asian black seamen who lived in multi-racial dockland communities – because London was an imperialistic superpower during the 15th-17th centuries, the metropolitan center was host to countless visitors and residents from it³³. The process of 'othering' non-white residents in Britain then started occurring – former slaves and workers during the height of Britain's imperialism began to be associated with 'lower' statuses; though free, Brits still conceived these people as being the other, not British, and of not belonging to the state. This mentality of 'othering' non-white British citizens commenced further after World War II, with Commonwealth Migration in Britain. Right after the war, Britain had a

³¹ House of Lords – Select Committee on Economic Affairs. *The Economic Impact of Immigration: 1st Report of Session 2007-2008*. The Stationary Office, April 1st, 2008, pg. 55.

³² Porter, Bernanrd. *The Lion's Share: A History of British Imperialism 1850-2-11*. Routledge Press, June 11th, 2014, pg. 287.

³³ Spencer, Ian R.G. *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain*. Routledge Press, Nov. 1st, 2002, pg. 6.

non-white population of about 30,000 people – at the end of the century, the region had over 3 million non-white residents, many of whose roots extended from Africa, the Pacific Rim, the Caribbean, and the Indian Subcontinent – with France and Germany, Britain now has among one of the largest ethnic populations in Europe, and shares the largest ethnic-minority citizenry³⁴.

Further negative racial attitude acquired with Commonwealth Immigration when Winston Churchill told the Jamaican Governor, Sir Hugh Foot, that Britain “would have a magpie society: that would never do”³⁵. After the Second World War, marginalization of ethnic minorities started to rise in the country when a murder investigation of Stephen Lawrence, a black Londoner, took place. This murder ensued debates about the role of Islam and rise of the religion’s fundamentalism in British politics, bilingual education, separate denominational schools, and the discourse of positive ethnic minority targets in hiring³⁶. “All political parties have had to acknowledge the needs of ethnic minorities, even if they would prefer to ignore them...The extent and rapidity of the UK’s transformation from a largely homogeneous society into a multicultural society is remarkable, unprecedented, and complete...few people would have predicted or wanted a multicultural Britain...post-war Commonwealth migration to Britain has been almost entirely unwanted”³⁷. Because of uprising race riots on the streets of London, such as the Notting Hill incident in which many Indian families living in the outskirts of London were beaten to death by white youths on ‘nigger hunts’³⁸. This was the most recent significant racial discrimination which was displayed in public, and in the years of 1958-1960, a divisive argument in the British parliament was carried in favor of immigration control, which demonstrated a lengthy argument that was waged between the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Labor over

³⁴ Hansen, Randall. *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*. Oxford University Press, June 1st, 2000, pgs. 30-30; 80-100

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

the legitimacy and the necessity of migration controls³⁹ – this debate mirrors the immigration policies instilled in the UK today, nearly 55 years later. “An immediate consequence to the incident (Notting Hill) was the transformation of migration from a regional into a national issue...the time had come to reconsider the tenability of Britain’s open borders. The fact that the attacks were executed largely by white men, (and a few women), against blacks and Indians led commentators to suggest that a threshold of tolerance had been reached and that the British public would not accept a larger immigrant presence”⁴⁰. This incident influenced the rigorous immigration policies that were set up in Britain in 1962, and attracted hostility, both on purely racial grounds and on the fear that new migrants would be a source of cheap labor, undercutting white, British workers’ wages⁴¹. Immigration legislation in Britain has thus been “underpinned, explicitly or implicitly, by deeply racist ideas in which ‘immigrants’ are constructed as a problematic threat”⁴², a threat that is rooted in history.

In the early 20th century, a new context emerged to further impose strict rules and regulations on immigration, which shrugged away the politically incorrect racist notions and negative attitudes of Brits from immigrants coming into the state and monitored the exotic ‘other’ from metamorphosing into a progressive, British cosmopolitan. “Controlling immigration was seen as ‘necessary to improve race relations. The fewer the blacks, the easier their integration. No blacks, no problem: it was all a matter of numbers’”⁴³. Britain started regulating its color minority by extending the question on country of birth to each immigrant’s parents,

³⁹ Hansen, Randall. *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*. Oxford University Press, June 1st, 2000, pgs. 30-30; 80-100

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Burns, William E. *Brief History: Brief History of Great Britain*. Infobase Publishing, January 1st, 2009, pgs. 224-225.

⁴² Dwyer, Peter. Shaw, Sandra. *An Introduction to Social Policy*. SAGE, March 15th, 2013, pg. 44.

⁴³ Finney, Nissa. Simpson, Ludi. *‘Sleepwalking to Segregation’?: Challenging Myths about Race and Migration*. Policy Press, 2009, pgs. 25-26.

following a firm rejection of a question on race by the government Chief Statistician – Britain’s aim was “a demographic profile of the minority population but political debate about the statistics continued to focus on whether the immigration population had been exaggerated or undercounted. These debates informed the politics of immigration today”⁴⁴. This Immigration Act of 1971 stipulated those seeking family reunification “would not have access to public funds until the applicants were granted residence status”⁴⁵. The restrictions continued – in 1981, Margaret Thatcher restricted immigration to those with British parents or parents settled in Britain through her British Nationality Act – that is, British citizens not born in Britain with no familial link to the state could not settle in it⁴⁶. By the mid-1980s, pre-entry visa controls for working and long stay visas were also established and imposed on countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Ghana, and Nigeria, which might explain the lack of sex workers in Britain⁴⁷. Thus, one can say that racist constructions and racism have been and remain an aspect of contemporary UK immigration policy⁴⁸. “...Retgression is most visible in the area of immigration in Britain. Despite having a population ‘stemming from multiple roots and complex patterns of inward, outward and return migration through processes of conquest, colonization and decolonization’, the state and the general public continue to act hostile to those deemed to be ‘foreigners’”⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Dobrowolsky, Alexandra. Tastsoglou, Evangelia. *Women, Migration, and Citizenship: Making Local, National, and Transnational Connections*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., February 28th, 2013, pgs. 162-169.

⁴⁶ Dobrowolsky, Alexandra. Tastsoglou, Evangelia. *Women, Migration, and Citizenship: Making Local, National, and Transnational Connections*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., February 28th, 2013, pgs. 162-169.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Dwyer, Peter. Shaw, Sandra. *An Introduction to Social Policy*. SAGE, March 15th, 2013, pg. 44.

⁴⁹ Dobrowolsky, Alexandra. Tastsoglou, Evangelia. *Women, Migration, and Citizenship: Making Local, National, and Transnational Connections*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., February 28th, 2013, pgs. 162-169.

Yet, these negative racial attitudes were governed by sexual preferences, particularly those on grounds of purity and sexual morality based on Christian ethics. The British standard of female 'purity' impacted immigration policy in a way that has prevented voluntary sex work and an open sexual atmosphere.

The clean souls and bodies prized by social purity were not only symbolically but literally white...Sexual morality was an important component of what was known as 'character', in turn an important part of the project of building a nation that was moral as well as prosperous...White people were seen as having more character, as a group, than Native people or people of color; and among whites, people of British descent were regarded as having the most character. Character was both presupposed by and acquired through activities such as clearing prairies and building transcontinental railways; but it was also centrally related to the ability to control one's sexual needs and wants⁵⁰.

This conservative preference by the English government for sexually pure females migrating into the UK may have something to do with why many English tourists fly to Bangkok to escape sexual purity standards, and to spend time in a place thriving in sexual freedom which is governed by weak immigration policy. Immigration policies in Britain seem to stem from partly the 'puritan' ethic of race and gender in a process of 'nation building', where multiple class formation was always gendered and racially specific – Saxon whiteness becomes worthy of femininity and racial minorities when conducting a critical analysis⁵¹. Puritanism played on untrustworthiness of race as well as sexuality. Censorship became crucial, and books as well as magazines that had the accidental intention of sexual appeal were banned. "The thirty years of British Mandate up to the 1948 establishment of the State enhanced its spread, especially with the introduction of the British Obscenity Laws, passed in the mid-1950s in Britain"⁵². Because of the widespread puritanistic mentality Britain possessed, immigration was granted to only highly skilled, properly documented, sexually pure, and childless

⁵⁰ Valverde, Mariana. *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. University of Toronto Press, 2008, pgs. 105-113.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Bastin, Georges L. Bandia, Paul F. *Charting the Future of Translation History*. University of Ottawa Press, 2006, pg. 182.

immigrants, in order to keep England clean cut, white, and economically ahead. This ideological mindset elaborated on relations of power through sexuality, and constructed subjectivity to form certain societal norms, values, and ideals that stem social and political constructs of the state and people, as described by Michel Foucault. This affected racism, gender stratification, as well as power, and allowed Britain progress in the building of a nation state that would make it the most dominant player in the field. During times of early immigration in the 18th century into Britain, a nation was solely based off of the premise of sexual morality and character. This kind of nation was based off of the character of its people, a character of virginity, ethical principles, and, most importantly, purity – not only racial, but sexual⁵³. As a church pastor once elaborated in a speech in a Britain, Britain can be “...proud of the growth of natural resources, of its place in the Empire...but it must not forget that the source of national wealth and power lies in the character of its people”⁵⁴. In Britain it was, and still is considered a sin in the Catholic and Christian religions to lose control of sexual desire. The predominance of the Anglo-Catholic religion in England is intertwined by moral and personal culture given to each individual throughout life. It was regarded that people of Catholic and Christian religions, primarily the Anglo-Saxon race, were “much more capable of controlling their instincts than other races...the English are farther from a state of nature than any other modern people. They are, more than any other people, a product of civilization and discipline...In England, rule has to a great degree substituted itself from nature”⁵⁵.

This assumption based on religious outlook and belief established a regulation and ‘control of instinct’ that was “crucial for gender formation, for class order, and for racial and

⁵³ Valverde, Mariana. *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. University of Toronto Press, 2008, pgs. 105-113.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

ethnic organization. If blacks and East Indians were undesirable immigrants, it was not because they had no capital and no schooling, but rather because they were ‘savages’, that is, people who could not control their sexual desires and were thus unlikely to lead orderly and civilized lives, saving for rainy days and postponing gratification”⁵⁶. Immigrants of a non-Western country choosing to come to England are rarely granted a green card, for the pre-supposed moral and sexual overtones created by religious ideals based in Anglo-Catholic beliefs rooted deep in British history. For example, ‘the lure of the Chinaman’ was a case in which the British morality division accused Chinese immigrants to cause the increase of “...immorality among young girls...there is too much liberty to roam the streets, and the consequent results therefrom. The lure of the Chinaman is also developing among this class of girls, to their utter demoralization in many instances”⁵⁷. This sexual purity and ethical morality of the body became politicized into immigration policy as a crucial necessity when immigrating – not only was sexual purity and wholesome morality encompassed in a person’s intimate sexual setting, but it was intricately linked to broader political landscapes of racism and cultural ideals, all built on essentialism created by social constructs and ideology which the English population was subject to. Immigration became nationalistic – no inferior race or stained sexual ‘savage’ would be allowed into England, constricting Britain’s immigrant influx. This ‘pure’ outlook in Britain based on religious value and morality impacted a sector of immigration policy, but furthermore influenced the profession of voluntary sex tourism as well as, based on puritan principles.

Women who desired to migrate to Britain from India, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, were thus not only subjected to racial and puritanical sexual standards England set, but were also required a special visa if their fiancée was of British nationality. “The British authorities deemed the Indian subcontinent migrant woman to be ‘downtrodden, housebound,

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

and emotionally and materially dependent on her husband', and someone who would not enter the workforce or qualify for public assistance"⁵⁸. This view of female migrants of non-European descent, specifically Southeast Asian women, of being meek, tradition-bound, and submissive, enabled the attempts of the British government to prevent arranged marriages through immigration control, and also led to the use of virginity testing when selecting the few immigrants who would receive a British visa⁵⁹. The legitimacy of the marriage had to be confirmed by the British government only at the border. This meticulousness of documents and specificity of a confirmation at the physical, British border itself exemplifies the basis of traditional societal and medical stereotypes of sexual and moral expectations held by British society about foreign, subcontinent fiancées. "These women were seen by the (British) immigration authorities as bodies to be 'consumed' by other men, for sex, marriage, and domestic duties."⁶⁰ The FCO special advisor of British security and immigration control stated:

If immigration or entry certificate officers suspect that a girl claiming to be an unmarried dependent is in fact married, or if a woman arriving at London Airport and claiming to be a fiancée of a man resident here is in fact a wife seeking to join her husband and avoid the 'queue' for an entry certificate, they have on occasion sought a medical view on whether or not the woman concerned had borne children, it being a reasonable assumption that an unmarried woman in the sub continent would be a virgin⁶¹.

The desire of British authorities was to establish a secure, wealthy, and 'racially superior' nation state to create a powerful country; sexual and ethnic 'purity' began to mean ultimate power and superiority. After mandates were established based on these puritan markers, sexual identity started to present England's immigration rationale, its truth. "The virginity testing represented a rational, not accidental, 'choice' made by the state in seeking to achieve its socio economic goals,

⁵⁸ Smith, Evan. Marmo, Marinella. *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination*. Palgrave Macmillan, July 30th, 2014, pgs. 87-92.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

while applying its ‘whiteness’ policy”⁶². If a woman refused to undergo ‘virginity testing’, an invasive procedure checking the sexual activity of a woman to see if she is a virgin or not, she would be rejected a visa to Britain immediately, for she would be uncooperative with British authorities and not allowing her body to ‘speak the truth’ about her purity. It was paramount that British males chose ‘pure’ wives, wives that would not stain the racial superiority of white Britain. This test deemed ethnic minorities of Britain as lower peoples, and signaled to the female immigrant “what her purpose was once she was fortunate enough to be allowed into the country...The test was a rite of passage to assert power over the female migrant body, to signify her position in the hierarchical order”⁶³. The opportunity of working as a voluntary sex worker in the UK therefore became extremely difficult. This bio-political space, a space of power over life by means of a social and political sphere, addresses the colonial attitudes still present in the post-colonial British system.

Along with the fusion of Catholicism and Christianity, sexual purity and further racist and gendered ideologies formed in the UK through an essentialism toxic to contemporary British immigration policy. This marks one of the reasons why immigration is so tightly controlled at England’s borders. Lust for power “created a regime that normalized the gross violation of human rights to assert the stratification of society based on colonialist-racist attitudes...the practical realities of the colonial project meant that these bodies often traversed the liminal boundaries that they usually inhabited”⁶⁴. Ann Stoler, an anthropologist, once wrote about sexual dominance and power in one of her works, stating that:

The cultivation of the European bourgeois self in the colonies, that ‘body to be cared for, protected, cultivated, and preserved from the many dangers and contacts...’ required other bodies that would perform those nurturing services, provide the leisure for such

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³ Smith, Evan. Marmo, Marinella. *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination*. Palgrave Macmillan, July 30th, 2014, pgs. 87-92.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

self-absorbed administering and self-bolstering acts. It was a gendered body and a dependent one, on an intimate set of exploitative sexual and service relations between European men and native women...shaped by the sexual politics of class and race. Those native women...threatened that 'differential value' of adult and children's bourgeois bodies that they were to protect and affirm⁶⁵.

A particular view of seeing the potential migrant as the 'other' as untrustworthy was created - unless migrants were solely there on contract or helping the UK achieve a higher human capital to advance its technology and economic wealth, getting a residence permit was, and is even now, nearly impossible. A British immigrant official, in a survey taken in 1976, noted that, "Bengalis, though friendly and likable, are probably the most prone to invention and fabrication"⁶⁶. Immigration policy in Britain today is injected with a complicated network of assumptions where sex, gender, and race are intricately tied – sexuality becomes a battleground for competing understandings and codes of what makes up proper behavior, according to the European, Western world⁶⁷. "...sexuality is constructed and reconstructed through a complex series of interlocking practices, all of which involve relations of power – and of challenges to that power....the state (Britain), can organize the terrain of sexual struggle through its patterns of legal regulation, its political interventions, and social policies"⁶⁸. The meaning of sexuality becomes socially constructed and subjected to individuals of a state, who in turn, assume cultural ideals about sexuality, the other, and races as being inferior –voluntary sex work, though it may bring economic benefit in some cases such as Thailand, is not a profession that entails puritan and clean cut methods Britain seeks for its reputation.

Power is represented through sexuality in this case, as a relationship of dominance. It can be said that class status has become an important factor in sexual fantasy, as seen in virginity testing of non-European, exotic women⁶⁹. An economic policy, such as Britain's immigration

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷Weeks, Jeffrey. *Making Sexual History*. John Wiley and Sons, May 28th, 2013.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

policy, is inevitably stained by class-constrained assumptions: “Eurocentric concepts of correct sexual behavior have helped to shape centuries of response to the non-European world. So in the evolutionary model of sexuality dominant until the early twentieth century, the black person was classes as lower down the evolutionary scale, close to nature than the European”⁷⁰. Created by cultural institutions, religious knowledge of expected racial and sexual ideals, norms, and values were given to subjects living in England, which ultimately showed themselves in government policies of immigration law. Power through sexual perspective gained way in British society, much like Foucault describes in his theory of intimacy and its link within the powerful sphere of politics and individual thought, which influences personal as well as state behavior. If one is ‘fortunate’ enough to be European, one has a lucky hand at the poker table in the broader political and economic landscape of society - immigration into Britain would be an easy task.

Good Evening Mrs. Magpie
Thailand

“We don't understand that life is heaven, for we have only to understand that and it will at once be fulfilled in all its beauty, we shall embrace each other and weep. The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible.”

- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

Immigration into Thailand has more or less always been an issue that does not pose much restriction on incoming migrants, creating a Thailand that houses a mix of ethnicities. Legal migration into Thailand started as early the 17th century, when Chinese, Mong, Vietnamese, and

⁶⁹ Phillips, Kim M. Reay, Barry, Senior Lecturer. *Sexualities in History: A Reader*. Routledge Pres, October 18th, 2013, pg. 35-36.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

Burmese immigrants came to Bangkok for various reasons⁷¹, mostly due to political conflict or war in the migrants' home countries. The biggest amount of migrants coming into Thailand have been refugees seeking asylum in the country – by the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of both legal, and illegal immigrants were living and working in Thailand⁷². Due to the 'Rest and Relaxation' treaty made by the United States during the Vietnam War for American soldiers, the growth of the sex industry in Bangkok exploded, as it was conveniently the neighboring country of Vietnam during the war. This brought an appeal for Thai women from all over the country to join the sex trade in hopes of better profit earnings for themselves as well as their families. Yet, due to the open immigration Thailand had instilled, and still possesses for refugees and people seeking political asylum, in Thailand today, most women immigrating into the state are of Burmese, Indian, Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese ethnicity, and these women are the ones who fuel the sexual economy and culture of the country. "...Thailand has become the place of arrival for many economic immigrants from Burma (about 330,000, many of which are women...), from India and Bangladesh (about 100,000), from China (about 100,000...), and about 20,000 from Cambodia and Laos"⁷³. Immigration doors became open first due to the influx of refugees, the rage of the Vietnam War, the World Bank 'entertainment' initiative, economic politicization of Thailand by the Western world, and the growing tourism industry, which boomed right after the late 1970s.

Within a globalized capitalist economy, survival of a small 'artisan' and 'interstitial' economy can find great difficulties and occupy limited niches of the market. Today, prostitution tends to be a capitalist business like any another, made up of a group of directors and wage earners....Because these are the conditions which allow it to obtain

⁷¹ UN-HABITAT. *International Migrants and the City: Bangkok Berlin, Dakar, Karachi, Johannesburg, Naples, Sao Paulo, Tijuana, Vancouver, Vladivostok*. 2005, pgs. 18-19.

⁷² Brown, Michael Edward. Gaguly, Sumit. *Government Policies and Ethnic Relations in Asia and the Pacific*. MIT Press, 1997, pgs. 226-227.

⁷³ Edwards, Baldwin Martin. Arango, Joaquin. *Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe*. Psychology Press, 1999, pgs. 240-242.

that which every self-respecting industry seeks: profit. And...this capitalist enterprise is expanding thanks to the conditions offered by globalization⁷⁴.

Refugees fleeing to Thailand sought comfort in Thailand's political asylum and work opportunities, two pull factors that have made the country one of the highest states for density of immigration after the 17th century. Burmese citizens have been fleeing to Bangkok due to Burma's fascist regime, and Cambodian people immigrating to the past Siam Kingdom due to work opportunity, mainly sex work. Women and girls get informed about sex work when visited by Thai nationals, who advocate to them about the chance to pay off family debt and the ability to gain good monetary prospects. "Thailand has been receiving many refugees from neighboring Myanmar...the refugees are also often used as scapegoat for the social problems in Thailand such as drug use and prostitution"⁷⁵. Because more workers are needed in order to ensure the stability of this sexual economic sector for the wealth of the nation, immigration policy in the Thai state is very loose, without the instilment of harsh immigration policies that would thwart the possibility of potential laborers.

The gendering of economic development that sustains patriarchal power over women is evident in the escalation of prostitution ...In medium development countries, such as Thailand, massively deployed prostitution sustains the economic marginalization of women from the industrializing labor force – the function it continues to serve in the labor force of developed countries. Thailand...has a rapidly industrializing economy that shows signs of stabilizing prostitution as a patriarchal economic sector for women. In recent years, women are immigrating from the least developed countries – China, Vietnam, Laos, and Burma – to the sex markets in Thailand⁷⁶.

The rapid growth of refugees and immigrants from neighboring Thai countries has simultaneously allowed for the expediting of drug trafficking, smuggling, conflict between ethnicities, and black market products to be fueled into Thailand through the states borders,

⁷⁴ Edwards, Baldwin Martin. Arango, Joaquin. *Immigrants and the Informal Economy in Southern Europe*. Psychology Press, 1999, pgs. 240-242.

⁷⁵ Riley, Thomas James. *Refugees in Developing Countries: A Growing Problem*. ProQuest, 2008, pg. 46.

⁷⁶ Barry, Kathleen. *The Prostitution of Sexuality*. NYU Press, June 1st, 1996, pg. 186.

creating a booming entertainment industry filled with drugs and sex; a virtual sexual and narcotic freedom. Thailand is seen as a progressive, second world country, filled with exoticism and wealth – yet, this money is funded by the narco-trade, and the architecture is a narco-sex-architecture, sponsored by the entertainment industry of sexual promiscuity. “In a broad epidemiological study of population movement in the Thai border areas, Beyrer (1998) makes the connection between civil war, conflict, and the flood of refugees, smugglers, traders, and other cross border personnel...Cross border traffic and the trade in heroin, methamphetamine and other black market products from Myanmar means that boom towns are created where intravenous drug use and prostitution become common (Porter, 1994, 1997)”⁷⁷. Those who do voluntary sell their bodies for a career eventually bear the unbearable by injecting or smoking illegal drugs, usually those trafficked by refugees coming into Thailand. Drugs such as methamphetamine and heroin are trafficked into the Thai state near the border, and with Thailand’s expeditiously growing immigrant population, more and more illegal narcotics get trafficked into the country. Drugs become readily available for working prostitutes, and provide escape; sex for money, money for drugs. “Many sex workers see prostitution as a means to escape poverty...In the same way, Thai drug addicts, many of them prostitutes, make up a significant portion of users in the narcotics trade”⁷⁸. A narcotic and social power over life is established, forming a relationship of power that is anything but independent.

The Vietnam War was one of the main key events that procured the sex culture in Thailand, especially the sex work. After American G.I.’s were prompted to go to Thailand for ‘Rest and Relaxation’ from their service in Vietnam, due to Thailand’s and the U.S.’s alliance, prostitution raged, proliferating tremendously. G.I. men paid well for sexual services, and word

⁷⁷ Bennett, Linda Rae. Manderson, Lenore. *Violence Against Women in Asian Societies: Gender Inequality and Technologies of Violence*. Routledge Press, Sep.. 13, 2013, pg. 81.

⁷⁸ Kislenko, Arne. *Culture and Customs of Thailand*. Greenwood Publishing Group, Jan. 1st, 2004, pg. 161.

spread that there was work in Thailand. “Police estimated 400,000 prostitutes in Thailand in 1974. They had been procured primarily for the U.S. military on leave for R & R during the Vietnam War”⁷⁹. After this spread of tongue, women from rural Thai regions traveled to Bangkok to make money for themselves and for their families, hoping for new, stable monetary foundations. After the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam in 1972, prostitution remained a profession where women became pawns for more sinister and profitable areas⁸⁰. An evolution of sexual services took place, where instead of just a brothel and a hotel, a department was opened in which expensive prostitution was created. A prostitudinal social hierarchy was established, where high-scaled call girls would not only provide sex for clients, but spend time with them, administering a companionship to the client, and providing female exoticism and attention – in other words, acting as a type of ‘geisha’. “...Inside the entrance is a large department store display window. The walls are draped in red velvet. The glare of 30 spotlights shows off the merchandise; nearly 200 girls, all pretty and painted and wearing bright colored dresses and platform shoes. They sit on tiers of benches, looking like an all girl choir. I asked if any of them spoke English. A few were pointed out”⁸¹. This progression in sexual services was created by an indirect social colonialism, physically carried out by American G.I’s; the most intimate sphere, the sexual sphere, was dominated by this infiltration of the war, creating a powerful relationship between sex and colonialism. Now, Thailand is swimming in a power constructed by American interests, carried out in sexual acts. “Cynthia Enloe pointed out that ‘by 1986 Thailand earned more foreign currency from tourism than from any other economic activity including its traditional export leader, rice’”⁸². By the Vietnam War, sex was industrialized and commodified,

⁷⁹ Barry, Kathleen. *The Prostitution of Sexuality*. NYU Press, June 1st, 1996, pg. 142-144.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Barry, Kathleen. *The Prostitution of Sexuality*. NYU Press, June 1st, 1996, pg. 142-144.

transitioning from a physical act to a currency.

In 1998, the World Bank gave a \$300 million U.S. loan to Thailand to invest in SIP, a social investment project. This loan was mainly directed by the World Bank for Thailand in order to invest in the country's entertainment sector, the sector that was the main economic machine for the state. This would enable Thailand's social and economic policies to help development, in other words, raise the GDP, the gross domestic product, of the state. This loan was said to:

...tackle the problems of unemployment, loss of income and the higher cost of social services arising from the economic meltdown and the crippling structural adjustment program (SAP) prescribed by the IMF. A major set of government programs under SIP were directly related to tourism development, including beautification projects, the installation of bi-lingual signs and the construction of toilets for tourists in rural areas. According to the SIP mission report, these tourism projects to be coordinated by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) would promote 'new approaches and procedures, for example', incorporating more local community participation⁸³.

These social projects were all expanding on Thailand's growing tourism industry, the industry holding Thailand's wealth. The economic politicization of Thailand by the Western world came with this SIP initiative as well, due to the fact that the increase of tourism started to boom right after the evolution of the prostitution industry. Several investments by both the World Bank and IMF created an oversupply of entertainment centers in sought after tourist spots, leaving behind built resorts, hotels, and strip malls⁸⁴. Thailand rests on the premise of selling sex, and bringing in tourism by expanding the entertainment sector industry resulted in an even greater profit margin when foreign currency was buying sexual services from a Thai brothel. Wealth thus circulates in Thailand sexually, an economy driven by fast, easy cash, and a black market. This loan given to Thailand was strictly provided to the country based on the West's interests, interests in human resources and a desire for exoticism. An economic coup was

⁸³ Equitable Tourism Options (EQUATIONS). *Making a Difference: Dossier on Community Engagement on Nature Based Tourism in India*. EQUATIONS Press, pg. 94.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

instilled, dictating how Thailand was supposed to spend its money. This relationship of power subjugates and constricts Thailand's development by means of foreign direct investment, a reliance of foreign currency coming into the state.

As many analysts have pointed out, sex tourism has been an important element in Thai tourism. ...After the Vietnam War ended in 1975, the entertainment business of international tourist instead of American soldiers was promoted by the Thai government in order to gain foreign currency and also to meet the needs of the jobless sex workers...Thailand's international tourism has a proportion of male tourists that are much larger than that of females...the male proportion is over 70%⁸⁵.

Masked in the words, 'Thailand's economic boom', is, in fact, a GDP growing from tourists, most of them men visiting Thailand for sexual pleasure. Because of this foreign direct investment brought in by tourists, immigration policy in Thailand is very open to migrants seeking employment in the state, especially immigrants willing to work voluntarily in the sex trade. Immigration fuels the sex work in the country on a cultural and economic basis. Thailand is a country bathed in sex – as opposed to England, where prudery is paramount, the former Siamese Kingdom adopted a culture open to sexual norms, ideas, and values from indirect colonial and economic politicization factors that painted sex in the form of power through intimacy.

⁸⁵ Hitchcock, Michael. King, Victor T. *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions*. NIAS Press, 2009, pg. 198.

Bullet with Butterfly Wings
Culture, Immigration Policy, and Voluntary Sex Work

Being Beige
England

“He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars.”

- Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

The religious institution of Anglo-Catholicism in Britain serves as an institutional framework governing knowledge of cultural ideals, values, and norms of Brits, specifically influencing their sexual identity and intimate closure. These cultural aspects are seen in events of English imperialism, the role of the Industrial Revolution and its impact on gender and sexual stereotypes, and the domestic English circle. These events may provide an understanding as to why sexuality is so censored in Britain, why immigration policy is strict, and why voluntary sex work is rare.

If one were to wander the streets of London today, a brothel or sex shop would be difficult to find. As opposed to Thailand, Britain favors Catholic churches, Big Ben, museums, and expensive stores. This architecture can be dated back to England’s imperialistic regime, a time when England was deemed an economic and political superpower of the world. Sexual dominance throughout English power and colonial times invoked imperialism in the most intricate of spheres – the household. When British troops took over and colonized a state, one of

the tactics they used to enable ultimate domination was sex with native women in the home. This not only reflects 'superiority' from the English perspective, but also allows the world to see the colonized people as the 'other', a different ethnic and racial group inherently 'lower' than Westerners. The cultural ideal of the 'other' allowed the colonized peoples to become the objects with which colonizers exerted their sexual pleasures. The act of sex in Western Christian and Catholic religion without matrimony is dirty, a sin; because natives were considered the 'other', lesser individual, this 'dirty' act was carried out by British soldiers and colonizers on the colonized people, specifically women. This sexual tactic was not only problematic in the long run culturally, but also hinders the sexual identity of both the colonized and the colonizers. As Ann Stoler (2002) has argued,

Sexual discipline and moral superiority were as central to maintaining empire as colonial bureaucracies. In the process of 'making empire respectable', colonial officials substantiated their legitimacy to rule by phasing out interracial unions, frowning upon miscegenation and treating hybridity as a weakness in the creation of an imperial nation...these colony-based disciplinary regimes circulated back to the metro pole and provided the kind of impetus toward generating discourses of the body and sexuality in post-Enlightenment Europe that Michel Foucault has famously described in *The History of Sexuality*⁸⁶.

Sexual acts exhibited a relationship of power in this sense, seen through cases of British colonizers and concubines. British colonial strategies had rooted themselves into the most intimate of settings that ultimately surfaced on cultural, gender, racial, domestic, and political intersections of knowledge in imperialized regions, specifically Southeast Asia. The physical act of intercourse became an arsenal.

The church in Britain also played a substantial role in forming the sexual perspective and openness about sensuality in modern day England. Because of widespread Christian faith, predominantly in the 15th-19th centuries, sex became a physical act of sin and shame, only to be

⁸⁶ Ghosh, Durba. *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of an Empire*. Cambridge University Press, Nov. 2nd, 2006, pg. 25-26.

done in the domestic sphere of marital relations. This example of Christian teaching is seen in the act of virginity testing for female migrants coming to the UK with British fiancés – if they were not ‘pure’ or uncooperative, they immediately were sent back to their homeland; the British mentality of pure sexuality until marriage is thus still seen as an important factor on the political branch of England. This interpretation of the simple act originated with St. Augustine, a Christian theologian and philosopher, who made a distinction with sex and pleasure during the clash of the Christian and pagan traditions. “...in his (Augustine’s) dire vision sexual desire became man’s ageless adversary, bending him from the undivided act of loving and praising God of which the human soul was capable. The body, in this reading, had to be disciplined...Even the act of married intercourse brought back the pang of sin: it was a sad reminder in Augustine’s teaching – since orgasm spelt lost control – of the fall. Theology and medial lore had on this point fallen apart”⁸⁷. To fall to temptation and desire meant to be doomed for hell, to show weakness. Sexuality became an act made only for reproductive purposes, not for pleasure. “Love is good and associated with God, while sexual desire is evil and associate with the Devil. The two can never meet. Thus, to Augustine and most other church fathers, there was no such thing as sexual love. The implication is that if a person is sexually attracted to another individual, he can only have evil intentions, he can not be motivated to do good or to act out of love”⁸⁸. This Christian teaching also occupied the domestic circle, and was taught in schools, in families, and in social spheres as closed, as taboo, and as uncomfortable. To be ‘pure’ was to not engage in sexual acts until marriage, when God seals the bond and laws of approval. To be ‘sinful’ was to have sex without marriage or for pleasure. Men giving into their sexual appetites did so with

⁸⁷ Fletcher, Anthony. *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800*. Yale University Press, Jan. 1st, 1995, pgs. 52-53.

⁸⁸ Cook, Roland C. *Sex Sin, and Science: What Evolution Says about Religion and Desire*. Dog Ear Publishing, 2009, pg. 314.

prostitutes, women who were not ‘pure’, who gave sex with no matrimonial pact. This intrinsically created sex as an act only exercised behind closed doors and enabled England to mirror Anglo-Catholic moralities in immigration policy – only female individuals seeking ‘pure’ jobs imbedded in the technological or medical sector and who passed the virginity testing were granted long stay and work visas.

The Industrial Revolution marked a radically sharp shift in England’s economic and gendered arena – there evolved a separation between home and workplace, a shift in social perception of womanhood and femininity, and reformulation of the ‘breadwinner’ concept. “...The industrial revolution is usually considered as altogether distinctive: the sexual desires of the body and the economic desires of men and women as consumers in the marketplace”⁸⁹. Womanhood and femininity were seen as more open, more sensual. Yet, the domestic ideal for women was still enforced, creating the ‘housewife’ every male came home to. In addition to working in textile factories, women were expected to manage the household, essentially playing two separate roles: independent and the ‘breadwinner’ outside the home, and the ‘housewife’ or ‘pure’ domestic partner, as elaborated in Anglo-Catholic teachings. “Notions such as the male breadwinner and the family wage became instruments of power in the nineteenth century in England...they remained important ideological tools, and they were sustained and endorsed by the growing strength of the domestic ideal for women. Put simply, this belief situated women in the private sphere of the home, dependent on men who went out into the public sphere of work...working women emerged as a ‘problem’ and a threat”⁹⁰. Males still dominated the public sphere even though women became workers in society. The ‘threat’ of emerging female workers enabled the perception of disintegrating the male image of the ‘head of the household’, the

⁸⁹ Stanton, Domna C. *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*. University of Michigan Press, 1992, pg. 187.

⁹⁰ Verdon, Nicola. *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth-Century England: Gender, Work, and Wages*. Boydell Press, 2002, pg. 15.

breadwinner who feeds the family – this portrayed a very much patriarchal view exercised through the Bible’s teachings. Thus, working women were perceived as women of ‘lower’ status, unable to have a husband who can provide for them. Because a working woman was more independent, this socially suggested that she was more sexually open as well. A ‘pure’ woman, on the other hand, was provided for by her husband, and developed a luxury of being a stay at home wife, dependent on her husband for money and resources. She was domestic, sexually closed for society yet sensually open only for her marital spouse. She was, by Christian standards, on the road to purity and God’s embrace, guaranteeing an entrance into heaven’s doors. Society indirectly reinforced patriarchal power by stratifying employed women as vulgar and stay at home women as purer, placing closure of sexuality on a higher tier of the sensual hierarchical ladder. This idolization for the pure woman indebted to God influenced the strict restrictions of voluntary sex workers seeking employment in the UK – if women of this stature were allowed to immigrate to Britain, the country would lose its morality.

Cultural constructs of religious institutions in the United Kingdom, specifically Anglo-Catholic views, serve as the most powerful form of cultural knowledge, sparking British society to form a sexually puritan state. This religious formation of identity is seen through Britain’s invisible sexual industry, a vessel of veracity as suggested by Foucault. By closing off its immigration doors to voluntary sex workers based on social knowledge of foreign sexual uncleanness, suggested religious constructs and teachings are seen through the politicized sector of Britain’s migration laws.

Buddha’s Melancholia
Thailand

“Sometimes she did not know what she feared, what she desired: whether she feared or desired what had been or what would be, and precisely what she desired, she did not know. Rummaging in our souls, we often dig up something that ought to have lain there unnoticed.”
- Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*

Unlike Britain, Thailand has engaged in the openness of sexual culture prior to its loose immigration policies instilled in the new millennium. This sensual attitude rests on social and cultural constructs, which were created from Theravada Buddhism, and are seen in events of war, colonialism, location, and slavery. These social and religious factors influenced the Siam territory to gain an attitude of openness towards sexuality and prostitution, making it the secretive, and then completely open, norm in the country. Through these factors, a picture can be painted to explain why contemporary immigration policy is so open, why voluntary sex tourism in the state is at its peak, and why Bangkok is the sexual zenith in the globe.

Theravada Buddhism, an archaic religious practice, originated in India and spread throughout Southeast Asia. After Siddhartha Gautama, the man who founded the practice of Buddhism, died, the religion split into sectors, the two most prominent being Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism was adopted by Southeast Asia, primarily Thailand, as it was more appealing to the people to practice the original teachings of the Buddha, or ‘the teachings of the elders’⁹¹. This particular practice stressed Buddhism as “a way of life, not a Salvationist creed. Theravada was important with strict adherence to personal behavior and the quest for understanding as a means of release from the wheel of life”⁹². This wheel of life becomes a key ingredient in understanding why sexual promiscuity is so permitted and open in Thailand – karma is paramount to sexual activity in the Theravada Buddhist religion. Gautama Buddha accepted, and even welcomed, prostitutes as disciples, and because the religion has no explicit sexual code, Buddhist countries have been tolerant towards prostitution⁹³. “Buddhist legends tell of prostitutes whose enlightened compassion shamed monks and other high status

⁹¹ Duiker, William J. Spievogel, Jackson J. *World History, Volume 1*. Cengage Learning, December 26th, 2008, pg. 249.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³ Ditime, Melissa Hope. *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work, Volume 2*. Greenwood Publishing Group, Jan. 1st, 2006.

men....Thailand...has hosted prostitution at least since the 1400s and is today home to one of the world's largest prostitution industries"⁹⁴.

The most important factor Theravada Buddhism plays in the historic regulation of prostitution and voluntary sex immigration in the past, and today, is the belief of karma held in Buddhist practice. There was, and still is, a widespread opinion about prostitution in Thailand as being an act of kindness, of aid – engaging in prostitution is seen as purely helping others, which can be a source of karmic merit⁹⁵. The will to help family, in addition to repaying a debt given to each child at birth that he or she needs to pay back, provides a rationality in engaging with prostitution – "...the belief that one gains merit through gratitude to one's parents, indeed motivates many prostitutes. Some Thai Buddhist monks recommend that the negative karma resulting from prostitution be atoned for through offerings and gifts to Buddhist temples"⁹⁶. Thus, the Thai Buddhist hierarchy remains silent⁹⁷ on the discourse of prostitution in Thailand, creating an openness of sexual culture in the state. There is also much literature that states how Theravada Buddhism has played a role, both in modern and ancient times of the former Siamese Kingdom, which examines theories such as Goughlin (1950) and Phongpaichit's (1982) argument that "...prostitution in Thailand is part of the country's history and tradition and that brothels have existed for centuries"⁹⁸, as well as Truong's (1990) argument that "the growth in prostitution in Thailand was promoted to help economic exchange"⁹⁹, thus influencing the openness of the immigration sector for sex employment benefiting the economy of the state. Other academics, such as Kirsch (1975) and Khin Thitsa (1980), have also stated, "Buddhism attaches a low value

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Bauer, Thomas G. McKercher, Bob. *Sex and Tourism: Journeys of Romance, Love, and Lust*. Routledge Press, 2003, pgs. 172-173.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁹⁸*Ibid.*

⁹⁹*Ibid.*

to the female body and the female spirit, therefore the degrading of women has been sufficient for them to enter prostitution...Indeed, the traditional emphasis on polygamy in Buddhist society encourages the widespread practice of prostitution in modern Thailand”¹⁰⁰. Buddhist literature reflects the fact that women are spiritually inferior and socially subordinate to men, and they are also seen as sexual temptresses¹⁰¹. The religion of Theravada Buddhism sees women as “attached and becoming”¹⁰², closer to the natural world of order. Buddhism “deems women suitable for merchant activities in addition to their lives as mothers, daughters, and wives”¹⁰³ – sex, a merchant activity, is one of these professions not frowned upon by the Theravada Buddhist way of life.

Another factor that contributes to why sex is so open in Thailand, why it is welcomed as a form of employment, and why immigration policies are not strict about voluntary sex work as a descriptive job for a working visa, would be the aftermath of war and colonialism. Women in Southeast Asia, particularly of Thai origin, were “forced to serve as comfort women for the Japanese military...the sex industry in Thailand was further expanded by the presence of the United States armed forces during the Indochinese War. During that period, the governments of the United States and Thailand signed a treaty which allowed American soldiers stationed in Vietnam to visit Thailand on ‘rest and recreation leave’”¹⁰⁴. This signed treaty, for the pleasure of American soldiers, is a factor that proliferated prostitution in Thailand and created the sex trade to become open, tolerated, and visible. Thus, the sexual culture of Thailand grew, as many more voluntary women and girls traveled to Thailand to join the trade, due to karma merit and familial,

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Barger, Runchana P. Suksod. *Religious Influences in Thai Female Education (1889-1931)*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, June 26th, 2014, pgs. 31-32.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Obokata, Tom. *Trafficking of Human Beings from a Human Rights’ Perspective: Towards a More holistic Approach*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2006, pgs. 41-44.

spiritual debt. During this time, after the establishment of the ‘relaxation’ treaty made for American soldiers, economic colonialism of Thailand began to happen, and on a sexual scale, not a market derived one. “Economic development in Thailand was closely linked to the selling of sexual services...sex was an important commodity that was traded in an attempt to achieve economic growth”¹⁰⁵. Thailand was the only Southeast Asian country not colonized by an outside government, but not directly: indirect colonialism took place after the adoption of Western teachings by the Siam monarchy in the early 17th century. This indirect colonialism grew later on in the years as an indirect force of economic militarization and politicization, when the World Bank encouraged Southeast Asia to develop a policy to “maximize profits by capitalizing on accommodation and ‘entertainment’ facilities, which had been put in place to serve US military personnel on ‘Rest and Recreation’”¹⁰⁶ in 1970. Thailand was then prompted to “arrange for the bank’s experts to produce a study of Thailand’s post-war tourism prospects”¹⁰⁷. Thus, many Thai women and girls were encouraged to voluntarily join the sex trade due to the increasing existence of brothels needed to “meet the assumed ‘physical necessities’ of the troops”¹⁰⁸, and the increasing sex openness growing in Thailand from the expediting economic colonialism posed by the Western World on Thailand. Though indirect, this colonialism funded a machine of sex in Bangkok, as well as fueled a sexual eroticism and comfort in the state, allowing for loose migration laws and a sky-high voluntary sex industry.

The location of Thailand is very important in explaining why sexual services are predominant in this part of Southeast Asia. Due to the country’s rich resources, convenient military base location, and connections with the rest of the continent, this Asian Tiger was a

¹⁰⁵ Mason, Peter. *Tourism Impacts, Planning and Management*. Routledge Press, May 4th, 2010, pgs. 66-67.

¹⁰⁶ Cole, Stroma. Morgan, Nigel. *Tourism and Inequality: Problems and Prospects*. CABI, 2010, pgs. 49-50.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

stellar candidate for foreign intervention. The exploitation of Thailand's rich rural resources were taken on by the United States as well as Thai elites and foreign elites, and Thailand's location became a factor of convenience for outside countries and governments. Thai culture was stained by economic colonialism and politicization of the state, due to its perfect locational setting amongst resources, connections, and ocean zones. "The continuing salience of the Vietnam-era sex trade in contemporary advocates' explanations of trafficking reflects how the bodies of Thai women prostituted to foreign men still bear significant cultural and political meaning, and can therefore be strategically securitized – both as referent objects of security in need of protection and as threats to social order and national identity in need of rehabilitation"¹⁰⁹. This convenience of land prompted foreign intervention and indirect colonialism, raising the sex trade in Thailand by means of human migration and voluntary sex work, and therefore impacting the sexual openness and suggestive attitudes about sex in the country. The convenience of location allowed for neighboring migrants to come to Thailand in search for sex work, due to an expanding entertainment center fueled by the World's Bank's vision. Migration did not just occur from the rural sector of Thailand to the urban city of Bangkok amongst local, Siam women looking for sex work – Chinese, Singaporean, and poor Japanese women migrated into Thailand to look for sex work for a way to gain income. From this high influx of migration, "...expanding Siamese clientele for prostitution also began developing from around the early 1900s in the wake of major reforms to the administration of the country that saw the creation of a 'modern' style salaried bureaucracy. Growing male demand and increasing monetization of the economy, together with various sociocultural factors...helped create the conditions under which prostitution was to flourish in Bangkok to an unprecedented extent"¹¹⁰. Thus, the Siamese state

¹⁰⁹ Tripp, Aili Mari. Ferree, Marx Myra. Ewig, Christina. *Gender, Violence, and Human Security: Critical Feminist Perspectives*. NYU Press, Nov. 15th, 2013, pgs. 87-88.

began to grow into a sex state. Voluntary women migrating to Thailand were in search for work, work that would pay off debt, both spiritual and material, and induce karma.

With the abolition of slavery in 1905 by King Rama V, slaves joined the growing sex industry for way of work and income, and there became a record of an increase of the numbers of brothels in many parts of the Thai country¹¹¹. From this fact, voluntary sex workers tripled in number, allowing Bangkok to reach a peak of sex marketing. Because of the proliferation of the sex market, slaves were only given the option of working as housekeepers or in factories, for a low wage, or voluntarily working as a sex worker for a substantial amount of income. Naturally, ex-slaves in the Thai state made the latter choice, which expanded Thailand's sexual market. By subjecting and exposing the most intimate sphere of the human body for a market price, sex became a source of power and a form of power over life as understood by Foucault. Thailand is drowning with karmic justifications when selling bodies for sexual entertainment.

The Great Gig in the Sky
Data, New Millenium: England and Thailand

¹¹⁰ Barne, Scot. *Woman, Man, Bangkok: Love, Sex, and Popular Culture in Thailand*. Rowman and Littlefield, January 1st, 2002, pg. 6.

¹¹¹ Lim, Lin Lean. *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*. International Labor Organization, 1998, pg. 131.

England

Comfortably Numb *Amount of Sex Bars*

Upon looking at either the proliferation or closure of sex bars in London, one will discover that the amount of sex bars are rare – most of the sexual bars in London have turned

into upscale department stores or dance clubs since the new millennium. After researching two specific locations in the heart of London's entertainment district, Soho, and Pall Mall, an increase of luxury and conservatism was detected, signifying the decrease of open sex bars and voluntary sex work in the UK.

“Soho gives you the best and the worst of London: the porn joints that proliferated from the mid-1960s onwards still have a strong presence, but nowadays the area boasts a lively fruit and vegetable market, and a nightlife that has attracted writers and ravers of every sexual persuasion to the place since the eighteenth century”¹¹². The Soho area in the heart of London's streets is an old district dedicated to nightlife, restaurants, shopping, and a colorful culture of immigrants. Before the new millennium, Soho was a district known mostly for a “...centre of high-society nightlife, epitomized by Viennese prima donna Theresa Cornelys' wild masquerades....By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the party was over, the rich moved west to Mayfair , and Soho began its inexorable descent into poverty and overcrowding”¹¹³. Soho, after the eighteenth century, became the main spot for immigrants leading up to the beginning of the twentieth century, filled with “...Greeks, Ishmaelites, cats, Italians, tomatoes, restaurants, organs, coloured stuffs, queer names, people looking out of upper windows”¹¹⁴. As time went on, this colorful neighborhood dazzled with folk and jazz clubs, punk-rock venues, and more recently this millennium, private drinking clubs secluded for the elites, eliminating any signs of sex bars or readily available sexual entertainment in the area. In 2002, Soho finished its transformation into an upscale, trendy shopping and music center, flourishing in “...diverse slices of London featuring businessmen, clubbers, drunks, theatregoers, fashion victims, market-stallholders, and politicians”¹¹⁵. Through the metamorphosis from an

¹¹² *The Rough Guide to London*. Rough Guides, 2003, pgs. 113-114.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

impoverished, immigrant dumping ground into a bohemian, elite and hipster scene, the amount of sex bars in the heart of London diminished significantly. One reasoning why this district changed itself into a known upscale center from an immigrant neighborhood was because of the tight immigration policies instilled in the 2000s – as the influx of immigrants decreased due to strict policies on work and long-stay visas, so did the amount of voluntary sex workers. Soho was regenerated from an unorthodox and slightly raffish air into an area bursting with trendy cafes and bars born out of the neighborhood’s rich immigration history before the new millennium¹¹⁶. Once immigration began to subside to England and policies for migrants became more enforced, the idea of the “church in a pub” was brought to Soho, spreading the word of “house churches”¹¹⁷. One reason why theatre became so popular in the area was due to English priests “...encouraging, and then hosting, productions of such notable playwrights as Christopher Fry”¹¹⁸ to promote the holy space and idea for purity and salvation into a sinful place like Soho.

Gentlemen’s clubs in England have archaic notary, such as those on Pall Mall and in the area of Heathrow. Unlike Thai sex bars, English clubs like these never offer the opportunity to debase women¹¹⁹; elite gentlemen’s clubs are one of the only places where one will find an upscale female entertainer for the night, only for a very expensive price and only by means of a financial or familial connection. Pall Mall, home to a dignified street named after a game of croquet, *palle-maille*, was designed in the seventeenth century by London’s elite for exclusive gentlemen’s clubs, providing a “...refuge from womenfolk”¹²⁰. Before the new millennium, the

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Tickle, Phyllis. *Emergence Christianity: What it is, Where it is going, and Why it Matters*. Baker Books, September 1st, 2012.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Jeffreys, Sheila. *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade*. Routledge Pres, Nov. 19th, 2008, pg. 105.

¹²⁰ Leapman, Michael. *London*. Penguin, January 11th, 2011, pg. 92.

area was known for a place to ‘run from your wife’, a place where men can relax with the company of young female escorts solely there for company, never for explicit sexual entertainment. Once teeming with gentlemen’s clubs, this district is now home to “...a textbook of the most fashionable architects of the era...the clubs’ stately interiors are well preserved but only members and their guests are admitted”¹²¹. The decrease of these gentlemen’s clubs signifies the growing sexual censorship of the British, mirroring Christian thought, seen also in immigration policy justifications with labor. One reason why these vigorous clubs became static after migrants arrived in the country was because officials for the Pall Mall budget believed that “The causes of this depression are numerous, but the chief causes undoubtedly are excessive immigration from all parts of the world and Chinese labour”¹²².

A decrease in Pall Mall’s activity has taken place due to a decrease in voluntary sex workers and high-end female entertainers, hardly showing any signs of sexual entertainment or gentlemen’s clubs. Because Pall Mall has always been a street designed by elites, dukes, and male monarchy, a strong presence of Anglo-Catholicism has played a role in the area. In the English domestic circle, men were expected to shine with Christ’s teachings, leading his wife, children, and servants in a pure way. By escaping to a gentlemen’s club, if one was of wealthy background, men were provided a way of escape, where one would not have the pressure of carrying Christian weight and purity on one’s shoulders, a weight that was an important one for salvation. An English saying about the effective use of gentlemen’s clubs was, “Where others so often fail – in the family – there he shone...men keep all feelings of depression, and those dark hours of wrestling with doubt, disappointment and anxiety...within the sanctuary of his own heart, unveiled to one on earth, and to his Father in Heaven”¹²³. In essence, there was a

¹²¹ Leapman, Michael. *London*. Penguin, January 11th, 2011, pg. 92.

¹²² *The Pall Mall Budget: Being a Weekly Collection of Articles Printed in the Pall Mall Gazette from Day to Day, with a Summary of News, Volume 34*. 1886, pg. 13.

complication for men about their expected domestic role; maybe this was why men felt that they could fully relax in only a male atmosphere in gentlemen's clubs, where they were "...allowed to sit slumped in large arm chairs, with no women to complicate their fragile self-presentations"¹²⁴. Reforms of sexual purity from religious ideology allowed for draconian immigration policies that restricted many voluntary sex workers from coming into the state. This religious ideal limited female entertainers and ultimately allowed for the Pall Mall area to become a ghost of bourgeoisie entertainment.

Welcome to the Machine *Sexuality in Magazines*

The sexuality of Brits can be seen in the three most popular English magazines such as "BAZAAR", "Marie Claire", and "Vogue", read by the majority of the female demographic in the UK¹²⁵. These magazines mirror the increasing sexual closure of the female body in England, advertising feminine power, relationship advice, and conservative fashion styles. White, wealthy celebrity figures and skinny models are pictured on each cover, channeling the perfect female image to British public – pure, conservative, well dressed, and trendy. Because modern sexuality is "...policed by laws which regulate and oversee sexual desires, actions, and identities"¹²⁶, this socially constructed ideal of a 'pure' Englishwoman governs the ways in which British citizens perceive sexual identity, and plays a key ingredient in explaining why voluntary sex work is so lacking in the country. Social constructs, such as the religious ideologies of Anglo-Catholicism,

¹²³ Walton, Susan. *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., April 28th, 2013, pgs. 101-102.

¹²⁴ Walton, Susan. *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., April 28th, 2013, pgs. 101-102.

¹²⁵ Groneman, Carol. *Nymphomania: A History*. W.W. Norton and Company, 2001, pgs. 153-154.

¹²⁶ Watney, Simon. *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media*. A&C Black, January 1st, 1997, pg. 56.

echo in Britain's magazine articles, and may explain why the decrease in the sexuality of British magazines reflect immigration policy, and therefore, voluntary sex work, in England.

In the new millennium, Britain released a law that stated the ages of sexual consent; for heterosexual consent, the age is now sixteen, for homosexual, eighteen¹²⁷. This law was printed in magazines such as "BAZAAR" and "Vogue", allowing for a conservative trend to become popular amongst young female readers. This enticed many women to become independent, more feministic – sexual openness and the practice of sex decreased, with a lower rate of marriages¹²⁸. In the early 2000s, it was estimated that only 21% of British households consisted of married couples and children¹²⁹. "BAZAAR", a popular English magazine, focused and argued for a "...broadening of the meaning of the term 'political' to include a general interest in everyday life, especially the female-associated spheres of domesticity and consumerism...the personal is political"¹³⁰. This allowed women to perceive themselves as feminists, as strong, progressive women not needing a husband to succeed in life. This feminine image developed a stable place in English society, specifically when it came to the discourse of sex, an issue presented to readers in every printed copy. BAZAAR magazine advertised sex as a pure, precious commodity men seek – the more stable the relationship, the better the physical act of sex and the stronger the emotional attachment. One of the main things the magazine wanted to portray to women was the fact that, "...even in the age of sexual liberation, some of the old values still held. Sex surveys provided the evidence. BAZAAR's survey of 100,000 married women – a number unprecedented in sex research – delivered the 'good news about sex'. The survey concluded that most of the respondent 'liked their husbands, their marriages, and their sex lives'"¹³¹. The article

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Rosen, Andrew. *The Transformation of British Life 1950-2000: A social History*. Manchester University Press, 2003, pg. 53.

¹³⁰ Conboy, Martin. Steel, John. *The Routledge Companion to British Media History*. Routledge, Spe. 15th, 2014, pg. 128.

in the magazine followed up with the quote, “women need loving, caring and more romanticized relationships, not sexual intercourse within five minutes”¹³². The magazine preached self-respect by sexual purity to women, socially constructing the idea that more powerful women are the women who do not sleep around. According to BAZAAR magazine, women who changed partners frequently were those who had no self-respect, and were those who were left with no power internally. The magazine left readers with a double standard on the discourse of sexuality, advising women to have flings yet to never give one’s self entirely to the ‘no-strings’ attached individual physically. Recently in one of the magazine’s covers, a survey was conducted to statistically report the amount of virgins in college campuses throughout England – the report stated that in recent years, about 43% of college females were virgins, and this number was rising¹³³. “Extending these findings to other college campuses, BAZAAR attributed the changes to a fear of venereal diseases, to a more conservative political climate on the campuses, and to an upsurge in affiliation with Christian religions that advocated no sex before marriage”¹³⁴. The magazine also coyly condemned one night stands, forcing women to walk on a tight rope and hold their sexuality hostage.

“Marie Claire”, one of the most popular English magazines in the Western hemisphere, especially in the fashion capital of London, has a long reputation and tradition as being one of the world’s most feminist-oriented popular women’s publications that attends to transnational issues¹³⁵. In a recent issue of “Marie Claire”, an article about sexual liberation was written by Olivia Liang, entitled “The Sex that Changed my life: What it’s like after a three year Hiatus”¹³⁶.

¹³¹ Groneman, Carol. *Nymphomania: A History*. W.W. Norton and Company, 2001, pgs. 153-154.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Murphy, Michael. Ribarsky, Elizabeth. *Activities for Teaching Gender and Sexuality in the University classroom*. RSL Education, April 26th, 2013, pg. 241.

In the article, Olivia describes a situation where a woman experiences a one-night stand with a man she fell in love with the next morning, after many one-night stands that were purely sexual and not emotional. She goes on to state in the article that this one-night stand made her think about sexual intercourse in a different light – she describes herself as being ‘frozen’ with one-night stands, and revitalized with this particular sexual experience, an experience that was emotional and not purely physical. She instructs the readers that sex is meant to be an emotional act, an act done in a stable relationship – this makes the act meaningful, fulfilling; this way, more power of intimacy and joy is given to the woman, satisfying her sexually, morally, and emotionally. “All that time I never met anyone, though sometimes I longed for a savior to sweep in and rescue me from the hard work of having to recover trust...Then he came along...We circled each other for months...and then, a little later, he touched me the first time...a thaw worth waiting for, even if it took a thousand days”¹³⁷. This article socially constructed the female reader to believe that sexual intimacy is better, and is meaningful, if one waits to give their sexuality away to another person. Stemming from the roots of Christianity, this piece in “Marie Claire’s” magazine echoes the cries of abstinence until holy matrimony or love – being pure is still considered being powerful, better, moral, and intimate in the twenty-first century England. Thus, this magazine incorporates with it the acceptance of some liberal and feminist principles of criticism of prejudice and misogyny as well as the encouragement to stand up for sexual rights¹³⁸ and the wait for ‘the first time’. As Par Carmen writes in her book, *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, “Sexuality, as the textual analysis will demonstrate, is

¹³⁶ Liang, Olivia. *The Sex that Changed my Life: What it’s like after a Three-Year Hiatus*. Marie Claire Magazine, Jan. 15th 2000.

¹³⁷ Liang, Olivia. *The Sex that Changed my Life: What it’s like after a Three-Year Hiatus*. Marie Claire Magazine, Jan. 15th 2000.

¹³⁸ Coulthard-Caldas Rosa, Carmen. Coulthard, Malcolm. *Texts and Practices Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. Routledge, April 15th, 2013, pgs. 254-256

constructed both by Christian discourse of distaste and fear which makes sex dangerous and punishable, and by progressive discourses which construct sex as autonomous from other forms of relationship such as love and friendship... There is an insistence that women's primary duty and orientation is to men"¹³⁹. The meaning of sex, based on this example of one of "Marie Claire's" articles, sheds light onto why women in England are so shy with their openness of sexuality and why voluntary sex work is non-existent – it has been taught and taught again and again in one of the world's most famous magazines that love comes first, then comes marriage, and only then comes the wedding night and honeymoon. This 'love' is thus made only when a woman is strong, independent, and financially stable.

"Vogue", one of the most prestigious magazines in the world, has one office stationed in London, where the contents of the fashionista magazine are based on sexual paradoxes with the main purpose of entertainment as well as sexual propaganda. It is a mega-commercial vehicle for the social constructs of female identity, and Ballaster (1991), states in his research that "...the magazine is at the same time a medium for the sale of commodities to an identifiable market group, women, and itself a commodity, a product soled in the capitalist market place for profit. It is also a text, a set of images and representations which construct an imaginary world and an imaginary reader"¹⁴⁰. Sexuality and femininity are defined through consumerism¹⁴¹ in Vogue, showing readers what's 'hot' this season and what was last year's style, and "sex becomes one of the most attractive products to be sold"¹⁴². In "Vogue", sex is a commodity itself, shown through trendy clothes of the season. More conservative styles in clothes seem to be reaching a peak, suggesting that there is a "...sense of power through knowledge and a sense of modernity (the

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Coulthard-Caldas Rosa, Carmen. Coulthard, Malcolm. *Texts and Practices Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. Routledge, April 15th, 2013, pgs. 254-256

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

modern liberated women should not only ‘know’ about sex and sexual techniques, but also should be able to perform...it also involves being in accordance with prescribed social rules and behavior, generally of a traditional and patriarchal kind: the sexually attractive woman is the beautiful one who, to please men, is persuaded to by the products being advertise in the magazine”¹⁴³. Women, through purchasing this magazine, are drowning themselves in expected societal constructs presented to them by modern puritan ethics. The female, through her choice of conservative clothes presented in Vogue, suggests to the male that she is a woman of ‘high end’ modernity, only willing to perform learnt trendy sexual tactics when a stable relationship blossoms. For example, Vogue’s January 2000 issue published a runway fashion article featuring that year’s trendy styles, entitled “Something left for the Imagination”. On the list were pictures of skinny white models, covered in oversized faux leather jackets, high heeled boots, floppy hats, and black leather pants. This modern look suggests to Vogue readers that sexuality is seen not through the act itself, but through looks, fashion, social interaction, and wealth. A high-end Vogue woman would not ‘sleep around’ for sexual liberation – she would wait for Mr. Right.

Sexuality through magazines such as these represent Britain’s close minded view on sexual identity – though England is a progressive, developed country, the shadows of Anglo-Catholic virtues of purity, abstinence, waiting, and social circles of morality through sexual acts exist very much so in the UK’s atmosphere, especially in female circles. “...the implicit agenda is based on prioritizing of only certain forms of heterosexual relationship as the determining force in human relations, and traditional sexual role models. Femininity is a goal to be worked for. Women are designed as objects of male desire...Relationships are women’s responsibility and part of their work”¹⁴⁴. England’s magazine are showing a more socially and fashionably conservative style when it comes to sexual intercourse and sexual openness. These magazines

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

make it easier to understand why there is a lack of voluntary sex work, due to the rise of conservatism through mass media, in the state, and why Britain's immigration borders desire human capital and haute couture, creating more conservative styles of teaching and fashion statements.

Psycho Killer. Qu'est-ce-que c'est?
Women's Rights Groups' Involvement

Women's rights groups' involvement in England are some of the most progressive in the developed world. In the UK, these groups mostly focus on abolishing women's rights to choose to work in the sex industry. Feminist groups such as *The London feminist Network* and *The New Women's Network* argue against voluntary sex work, and focus on self-empowerment, human rights, and societal power through sexual ideas. The fundamental ground for women's rights involvement rests on Christian morals, and argues for female respect and salvation. These involved groups can explain why the censorship on voluntary sex work and sexuality is growing in the UK, why this 'progressive' feminine stance influences immigration policy. They can also represent the sexual puritan standards raised for English women to become less sexual beings, mimicking the teachings of Christian morals of the conservative purity myth prescribed to British society.

The first strong feminist wave occurred in England during the 1960s, when a stance to 'rescue fallen women' started to overlap with the protection of women's rights¹⁴⁵. Radical feminist activists who are against sex work and sex workers themselves present an argument dealing with masculinity and gender identity, looking at social constructs in society, which deal with the conception of power and inferiority.

For polemicists like Kathleen Barry (1979, 1995) prostitution is a product of male sexual violence and an inherent assault on the dignity of women, and has taken a particularly

¹⁴⁵ Weeks, Jeffrey. *The Languages of sexuality*. Routledge Press, April 29th, 2011, pg. 139.

vicious form through the international sex trade... The main targets of this sort of critique are male power structures and the ready acceptance of male violence, but there is also a strong message for women involved in the sex trade. Women, Barry argues, have no inherent right to prostitute themselves nor can they give meaningful consent to the violation of their own rights. For this reason radical feminists are usually vehemently opposed to self-organized groups of sex workers and their supporters campaigning for their sexual rights¹⁴⁶.

England's grassroots group, *The London Feminist Network*, campaigns against patriarchy in all its' forms, specifically combatting the idea of women being treated as sex objects in society¹⁴⁷. Testimonials of women who were previously employed as lap dancers are quoted on the site, stating how blessed they were to be saved from this terrible industry where one is treated like a piece of meat with no dignity. The website itself sponsors the tagline, of "Do you need help? Reach out and talk - We help the fallen angels"¹⁴⁸. The site features censorship practices for women working as strippers or go-go dancers, which is as degrading as being a sex worker in this organization's eyes. The involvement of this particular organization working for women's rights is very much seen on London's streets: each week, pickets and protests against porn cinemas, regular feminars (seminars on feminism), a series of conferences, and a night march against sex work is taken place in the heart of the city, making this organization grow from 100-2,000 members¹⁴⁹. This organization has successfully censored sexuality in the state, decreasing the amount of voluntary sex work and sexual entertainment by petitioning, marching, and protesting vigorously against sex workers and prostitution. *London's New Women's Network*, a women's rights' group organization advocating against prostitution, voluntary sex work, and sexual promiscuity, takes the same stance on sex work and sex workers. This organization has also blossomed, recruiting more than 200 members during the course of two years¹⁵⁰. The

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ <http://londonfeministnetwork.org.uk/>, The London Feminist Network.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.newwomens.net/who-we-are-and-what-we-stand-for/>, The New Women's Network.

specifics of this non-profit circle around female empowerment, becoming a better female figure, and creating, understanding, and protecting power and authority through sexual acts dealing with violence, discrimination, and the like¹⁵¹. The strictly female organization takes the stance of the paternalist/protectionist view, arguing against prostitution and voluntary sex work. "...we argue that, since the sex trade is based on male dominance and the commodification of women, prostitution is inherently exploitative and any consent by women is irrelevant to its condemnation...If prostitution were such a regarding job and the product of free choice, why, it is asked, is it most often the women with the fewest meaningful or desirable choices who are most often the ones doing it?"¹⁵².

Both UK organizations stem their foundations from faith based perspectives; the only way to save a 'fallen angel' is to convert her back from sinful acts, such as voluntarily participating in the sex trade. Christian teachings are used to 'save' these women, reimbursing each woman's status of a pure female living in society, empowered with a good, stable, prestigious job, not allowing herself to fall to objectification by working as a lap dancer or voluntary sex worker. By being financially stable, pure, and abstinent with sexuality, a woman becomes a progressive feminist, empowered with potency and power of the modern age – she becomes a woman fighting the patriarchal power of male dominance in society. Progressivism turns into conservatism, and sexual censorship becomes one's own feminine power. This echoes the puritan sexual laws of immigration policies for England's long stay and work visas, especially when a female fiancée that is not British applies for a long stay visa or if a work visa is applied for that does not fit into the high tech or medical industry. The result from these groups is a decrease in voluntary sex work and a stricter immigration policy – England's

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Elliott, Jessica. *The Role of Consent in Human Trafficking*. Routledge Press, Oct. 24th, 2014, pg. 109.

immigration branch did not pass the law on legitimizing sex work as a form of labor; government officials in England side with this patriarchal/protectionist of sex work, stating that, "...there are anxieties about community safety and exploitation joining more long-standing concerns about morality and decency....we need to prioritize the promotion of community safety and the elimination of street sex work as a form of commercial exploitation in its key objectives".¹⁵³

These Anglo-Catholic teachings from the Bible show Christ's love and the shame of sex work in mixed messages sent to English society, separating stances on sexual power, purity, and morality while simultaneously influencing immigration policy by sexual puritan standards and decreasing the amount of voluntary sex work. One main message attends to the roots of Christianity, defining what it is to be a pure and powerful woman - personal power is expressed through sexual pureness, a conduit of truth.

¹⁵³ Phoenix, Joanna. *Regulating Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Policy Reform and the UK*. Policy Press, 2009, pg. 30.

Thailand

Karma Police *Amount of Sex Bars*

When one arrives in Bangkok, it is impossible not to avoid sex bars scattered all over the city. Neon lights, brothels, strip clubs, flashing strobe lamps, and sex shops surround the tourist in the artilleries of the red light district. Bangkok, is a sexual paradise and market.

The sex trade in Thailand originated in the colonial period, but began to take its modern form with the influx of U.S. GI's coming to Thailand for "R&R" from the Vietnam War. The number of women working as prostitutes grew from approximately 20,000 to 170,000 during the 1960s. The commercial sex industry in Thailand has continued to thrive. When the World Bank advised the Thai government in 1980 to develop its tourism industry, the government took advantage of the existing infrastructure of brothels, bars, massage parlors, and other sex establishments to entice foreign 'tourists', many of whom come to Thailand for the sex industry alone¹⁵⁴.

Evidence gathered from three major websites for Thai destinations for sex with numerous, never ending lists of sex bars and strip clubs in Bangkok may lead to understanding the influence of karma and Theravada Buddhism for the justification of sex work as a career for many women, as well as a comprehension of why immigration policy in the country is so open. This data of sex bars and their expansion in Thailand may also present how culture and immigration policy directly influence the amount of voluntary sex work in the Thai state.

"Living Thai", a website dedicated to provide the ultimate guide to Thailand's night life,

¹⁵⁴ Ferguson, Kathy E. Mironesco, Monique. *Gender and Globalization in Asia and the Pacific: Method, Practice, Theory*. University of Hawaii Press, 2008, pg. 251.

generates information not only about sex bars and clubs around the area, but also hotels, resources to learn Thai, a selection of available Thai girls working at bars, and even tips on dating a Thai sex worker online before the travel to Bangkok. A page entitled ‘Best places for sex in Thailand’ is featured, exposing lists and lists of places available for sex. It also describes different sexual experiences with various kinds of prostitutes, allowing the consumer to pick his type of sex worker based on preference. The list of bars for sex is divided up into different regions of Thailand; Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket, and Chiang Mai. The website states, “Bangkok has the most sex going on in Thailand, it’s also home to the best gentlemen’s clubs in all of Thailand and the best soapy massage parlors as well...This is probably because of the huge number of beer bars and go go bars located along the 4km stretch of beach which are also lined with many Thai Hookers and Prostitutes”¹⁵⁵. Statistically, there are more sex bars in Bangkok than there are temples, mosques, shrines, or churches – in Bangkok, there are 508 sex bars, 449 Temples, 178 Mosques, 116 Shrines, and just 62 Churches¹⁵⁶. Another website called “Phuket – Naughty Nightlife”, is a tourist’s guide to sexual bars all over the second biggest sex district in Thailand besides Bangkok, Phuket. One specific district described in the guide is called Bangala Road, a strip dedicated to sex bars that have grown in number. “Bangala Road in Patong is the heart of the tourist sex industry in Phuket. This is where you will find the great mass of beer bars and go-gos...These complexes are full of small beer bars and there are literally hundreds of girls ready to entertain customers”¹⁵⁷.

“Sex Holiday Asia” is a virtual guide for people interested in visiting Thailand for purely sexual reasons. This website not only includes popular sex bars, but also lists prices of sexual

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.livingthai.org/mongers-nightlife-guide-to-chiang-mai-thailand.html>, Living Thai, Copyright 2000.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.knowphuket.com/naughtynightlife.htm>, Phuket, Naughty Nightlife.

intercourse, girls, and accommodation. Girls with pinned numbers are displayed on the website's page, allowing the customer to pick and choose which prostitute he prefers based on serial code. The website's advertisement states, "Go outside, smile at a girl, make small talk, and take it from there. It may come to nothing or it may end up in nights with the best sex you ever had... The heart of the action is centered around Bangla Road, Patong. This is where you need to be... it's right by the beach, there's a ridiculous amount of women and the night life is insane. Lady drinks are about 90-140 baht(3-4\$). Short time are about 500 to 1,500-baht(17-50\$) and the price rise 1000 to 3000-baht(34-100\$) for all night"¹⁵⁸. All in all, the consumer is fully equipped with knowledge when arriving in Bangkok – sex guide in hand. In contrast to that of England, sex is incredibly easy to find in Thailand, even if one presses a search key from thousands of miles away. Because Thailand's economy now solely rests on the sex and entertainment industry, women are a necessity to fuel the economy of the state, and a major asset to Thailand's wealth – sex is money, money is the circulation of power.

Buddhism empowers voluntary sex workers and justifies their sexual actions as respectful and loyal to family members. "Muecke (1992) argues that...commercial sex has flourished partly because it enables women to fulfill the traditional cultural functions of daughters. Because daughters engaged in commercial sex are able to send remittances home and to engage in merit-making activities above the level the family could otherwise afford, sex work, in her view, serves to conserve both the family and local rural Buddhism as institutions"¹⁵⁹. Because women in Theravada Buddhism are also considered of low status and closer to nature, sex work is duly permitted in the Buddhist religion, for it allows to woman to redeem herself with merit making by sexual services, services grounded to nature. "While the Buddha allowed women to enter the

¹⁵⁸ <http://sexholidayasia.com/destination/thailand-guide/phuket-sex-guide/>, Sex Holiday Asia.

¹⁵⁹ Steinfatt, Thomas M. *Working at the Bar: Sex Work and Health Communication in Thailand*. Greenwood Publishing Group, Jan 1st. 2002, pg. 88.

Sangha, this right was withdrawn in the reinterpretations of later centuries. The female body is a source of sexual desire and childbirth, both of which are inherently attached to the natural world... Women must redeem themselves in this life through merit making”¹⁶⁰. With a constantly growing entertainment industry, Thailand’s need for both voluntary sex workers and tourists enabled the state to open its immigration doors, instilling relaxed policies for migrants coming into the country. Voluntary sex work in bars becomes the norm to the government and to Thai people due to the Buddhist beliefs of women’s juxtaposition to nature and low status in spiritual life. Thailand is “...up-scaling, expanding services, clientele and markets and using business forms similar to mainstream businesses, including corporate forms and diversification, as they try to integrate into the tourist economy...it is no longer useful to posit the sex industries as an ‘other’ to late capitalist industry in Thailand”¹⁶¹. The religious and social construct of Buddhism becomes reflected in the sexual industry in Thailand, presenting sexuality as a form of spiritual potency for female sex workers – gaining merit for karma is power, carried out by sexual acts.

Every Other Freckle
Sexuality in Magazines

Incredibly popular Thai magazines such as “FHM Thailand”, “MAXIM Thailand”, and “Zoo Daily Thailand” hold a very interesting spot in Thai society, influencing and socially constructing the way in which sexuality and women are perceived in the country. Women engaging in voluntary sex work read these magazines daily, learning about sexual trends to perform to clients. Not only do these magazines reflect the status of women in Buddhist practice, but market Thai women in a way which attracts foreign tourists, developing an image of Thai feminine exoticism in the West. The magazines also advertise Thai girls as sexual fantasies and

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Sanders, Teela. O’Neil, Maggie. Pitcher, Jane. *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy, and Politics*. SAGE Publications, Sep. 15th, 2009, pg. 151.

men as masculine gods, and advise Thai women themselves of their expected role in society, pushing them towards sexuality, promiscuity, and sexual independence. These magazines may provide a literal understanding of why Buddhism permits the perception of females as sexual objects in Thailand, as well as explain why immigration policies are so loose and voluntary sex work is at its peak.

“FHM Thailand” magazine has been incredibly successful. “...after their first launch in Singapore in 1997, they rolled six Asian editions and most recently launched it in China. Totally, FHM has been licensed in Australia, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Indonesia”¹⁶². When one opens the first few pages, one sees a banana, a woman in lingerie, and a section entitled “How to Please your Man”¹⁶³. The magazine’s table of contents consists of articles solely focused on sexual intercourse, what ‘he’ likes, and a picture calendar of “Girls of the Month”¹⁶⁴. Female readers of this magazine succumb to social molding of the idea of sexuality and vulgarity as a form of power in Thailand – by providing and engaging in the physical act of sex, “FHM Thailand” suggests to the female reader that more power will be gained, making the woman more desirable, independent, and sexual, all qualities men pursue. A section of “An experienced woman is Hot!”¹⁶⁵ in the magazine also constructs the reader to believe that more physical intercourse leads to more knowledge and sexual experience, allowing for the gain of more potency with men and more personal independence. This sexual knowledge allows the woman to be desirable, making her more sought after in Thai society. An idealized, sexually active Thai woman is portrayed in “FHM Thailand”, an imaginary ideal that many Thai women try to amount to. Power is brought to the woman through sexual vulgarity in the Thai sphere, unlike that of power through sexual conservatism in England. This influences a will to

¹⁶² Indonesian Association of Advertising Agencies. *Indonesia Media Guide.*, 2005, pg. 79.

¹⁶³ <http://www.fhm.in.th/>, FHM Thailand.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

join the sex industry for a Thai woman, allowing her to experiment and gain knowledge through her sexuality. Yet, the magazine brings with it the notion of the inferiority of Thai women as well as their sexual openness and reception: "...women continue to be portrayed in submissive positions to men, in unnatural poses, as sexual objects, with body parts in isolation, with sexually connotative facial expressions, and as the subject of violent imagery"¹⁶⁶. Throughout the whole magazine of FHM, not one girl is fully dressed, all of them making a suggestive sexual expressions. Thus, this magazine enforces the ideology of Thai women as being submissive, vulgar, sexual, and inferior to the foreigner, creating an incentive for the tourist to visit Thailand for an easy sexual fantasy where the female counterpart is compliant, docile, and extremely sexual. Most tourists visiting Thailand are male, searching for the sexual fantasy they have seen in magazines like FHM. Unlike the Western magazines of "Marie Claire" or "BAZAAR", females in Thailand are taught that visible and tangible sexuality and intercourse emits power and independence.

"MAXIM Thailand" is one of the most well known magazines in Southeast Asia. "...MAXIM boasted a 2.5 million circulation rate...MAXIM remains one of the top 50 best selling magazines in the world"¹⁶⁷. The magazine is also one of the most sexually provocative magazines, projecting an image of sexual provocation of Thai women to South Asian and Western society. The magazine's issues feature headlines of "Who will be the Sexiest Spy Girl?", "Miss Maxim Sexitainment", "The Sexy Girls of 2000"¹⁶⁸. The magazine depicts girls either naked or in lingerie next to rich Western men. One particular segment of the magazine article in September 2001 illustrates a man with underwear and a girl with lingerie lying vulgarly

¹⁶⁶ Worell, Judith. *Encyclopedia of Women and Gender: Sex Similarities and Differences and the Impact of Society on Gender, Volume 1*. Elsevier, 2001, pg. 704.

¹⁶⁷ Kosut, Mary. *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media*. SAGE, May 18th, 2012, pg. 226.

¹⁶⁸ <http://maxim.in.th/>, MAXIM Thailand.

on the bed, smiling seductively. Beneath the picture is the quote, “That Power!”¹⁶⁹, suggesting both the sexual power of the woman and the superiority of the man, emulating his masculinity. The sexual tense in the photograph praises a woman who is sexually open, making her powerful with seduction, and applauds a man showing off his masculinity by having many sexual partners and no emotional ties. The “Mother Jones” magazine described this sexual power by “...choosing sex in all its complexity to ‘affirm’ women’s potential for autonomy and power. In “MAXIM Thailand”, the editor’s willingness to include several articles on sexual power, lust, and fantasy, lies the magazine’s greatest strength”¹⁷⁰. The magazine not only applies power to women who are sexually open, but creates the ideal of masculinity by emphasizing the power of men’s genitalia. One picture in the “MAXIM Thailand” issue showed a man pointing down to his private area and smiling while being surrounded by naked Thai women, suggesting that men have more power due to biology and therefore are more superior – men, according to the magazine, have the power to initiate sex. For readers flipping through these pages, an inferiority seems to be placed on Thai women due to their portrayal as sex objects for men. Yet, the magazine sends mixed messages - the ability to be the woman men choose shows a strong power for women, power that is desired amongst female Thai readers of “MAXIM Thailand”. The growth of this sexual suggestion of power from the masculine and feminine perspective has grown immensely, especially in the Western world. “There is a growing market among Western males for pornography featuring exotic foreign females, most of them Thai”¹⁷¹. By seeing the exaggerated masculinity and sexual openness of women in Thailand, foreign male readers skimming through the magazine develop a want to visit Thailand, due to its sexual paradise and open female sexuality, socially constructed by the magazine itself. Thai women who read this

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Mother Jones Magazine, Jan. 1984, pg. 58.

¹⁷¹ Kimmel, Michael S. Hearn, Jeff. Connell, Robert W. *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. SAGE Publications, July 20th, 2004, pg. 342.

magazine are taught the importance of sexual openness to promote desirability and thus feminine power, and indirectly feel the need to become more sexually open. Because Buddhism also encourages sexual appeal and identity and stratifies women as of lower status due to their closer relations to nature, this social construct gets normalized by means of religious acceptance of sexual openness as well as male superiority, amplifying the normality of sexual vulgarity and sex work in Thailand.

The Thai magazine “Zoo Weekly” is perhaps the most sexually explicit, popular magazines in the country. There is a promotion of the association of females as sex objects, inferior to men, happy to perform sexual acts. For female readers, the purpose is to fuel the link between sexuality, promiscuity, and power, the power to make men sexually praise and desire a female. The magazine targets specifically foreign males, with the publishing of the magazine in several languages, the predominant one being English. Thai women are portrayed in “Zoo Weekly” as entertainment for men, serving them solely on sexual grounds. The association of fantasy and dream come into play, constructing the ideal, exotic women all men desire. The exploitative photographs in “Zoo Weekly” have grown with Thailand’s sex industry, hoping to specifically target tourists willing to come to Thailand to carry out their sexual fantasies with the perfect, submissive Thai girl. “Erotic magazines, such as Zoo Weekly...are available in street markets, newsstands, and video stores...a theme designed to excite is the extreme objectification of women as sex objects for sale. Sex workers are numbered for customer’s selection, and their nakedness enhances their anonymity”¹⁷². Female readers who engage in voluntary sex work look through the “Zoo Weekly” magazine to gain knowledge about the expectations from Thai women in sexual services, which are socially constructed by the magazine’s editors.

¹⁷² Francoeur, Robert T. Noonan, Raymond J. *The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality*. A& C Black, 2004, pg. 1047.

Because sex work is the most sought after labor sector for female workers in search of employment, an expected knowledge about sexual services needs to be known, due to the competitive rates of voluntary sex work in Bangkok – if one is mediocre in sexual knowledge, one will make okay money; if one is well versed sexually, one will make good money. This leaves women with a power of sexual knowledge and independence, serving male clients to the best of their sexual ability for gain of potency. Because Buddhism justifies sexual relations as a way of receiving karmic merit, it does not shame women in sex work, but instead encourages them to engage in the industry. Intimacy is thus power in Buddhism, in this case, expressed through prostitution and sexual photographs in magazines such as “FHM”, “MAXIM”, and “Zoo Weekly”.

Swans and the Swimming
Women’s Rights Groups’ Involvement

When attempting to research an active women’s rights group in Thailand, only references to UNICEF, UNESCO, or the UN come up. “UNICEF (2001) reports that as many as a million women...are subject to sexual exploitation in developing countries, especially Southeast Asia. In Thailand alone, monetary transfers from urban female sex workers are estimated to remit nearly \$300 million each year to the countryside”¹⁷³. Though certain grassroots organizations in Thailand have attempted to create an outreach for women’s rights, only certain groups have made an impact and name in the non-profit sector of the country, such as the group Empower. Instead of local Thai women’s organizations, Western NGOs and governmental sectors are involved in either legalizing prostitution as a form of labor or abolishing the act whatsoever in Thailand. The reasoning behind this lack of Thai women’s rights groups’ involvement rests on the booming sex industry, open immigration policy, voluntary sex work, and principals of

¹⁷³ Coston, Charisse Tia Marie. *Victimizing Vulnerable Groups: Images of Uniquely High-Risk Crime Targets*. Greenwood Publishing Group, Jan 1st. 2004, pg. 201.

Theravada Buddhism. These background factors might explain why the absence of Thai women's rights groups' involvement in either legalizing or abolishing voluntary sex work exists in the region.

Thailand's best-known, local women's rights' group organization is called Empower, a feminist group lobbying for the legalization of sex and sex worker's rights in Thailand that rose in 2000¹⁷⁴. This organization desires to grant basic labor rights to every voluntary sex worker working as a prostitute in Thailand, allowing her the same governmental benefits as any other working Thai citizen. The main goal of Empower is to "...end the inequality between men and women and ultimately abolish it...provide immediate aid to prostitutes, end forced prostitution, and spread education of the public on the issue"¹⁷⁵. Since sex work is so popular and needed in Thailand, women voluntarily join the sex industry in interest of gaining finances, and sometimes in need of desperation, all in order to pay back the indebtedness of karmic merit when they are born. The organization, though not popular in Thailand, grants women the chance to recognize their form of labor as legitimate, allowing them to gain power as independent, working female gaining financial stability, spiritually and morally. The only focal discourse about voluntary sex work, according to the one active local women's rights' groups in Thailand, Empower, is about recognizing sex work as a traditional form of labor, making the career legitimate for the government and the state. Because the Empower NGO has such little experience in lobbying, implementing, and humanitarian practices, no real, governmental action is taking place to recognize sex work as a legitimate form of labor in the Thai state, and the involvement of the organization has gone down. "The inexperience of this organization and its' lack of contact with the community of female sex workers are detrimental to female migrants. For example, the

¹⁷⁴ Parent, Colette. Bruckert, Chris. Corriveau, Patrice. Mensah, Maria Nengeh. Toupin, Louise. *Sex Work: Rethinking the Job, Respecting the Workers*. UBC Press, Sep. 18th, 2013, pg. 127.

¹⁷⁵ Turshen, Meredith. Holcomb, Briavel. *Women's Lives and Public Policy: The International Experience*. Greenwood Publishing Group, Jan. 1st, 1993, pg. 141.

organization is unable...to differentiate between trafficked women and migrant women or to determine categories of different needs for women...The conflation of women's needs...is so common that women are frequently treated as if they were children"¹⁷⁶. From local lobbying for sex worker's rights and attempts to legalize the sex industry in ordinance with labor laws, Empower's activity has worked with legal openness of Thailand's sexuality, due to the increasing sexual market.

Organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and the United Nations all advise and suggest the need for the decline of sexual activity and the sex industry in Thailand, deeming prostitution an 'inhuman, indecent form of work'¹⁷⁷, and have raised in activity against sexual labor. "A UNESCO report on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (1995) uses the terms trafficking, prostitution and sexual exploitation interchangeably and refers to them as sordid, dangerous, and inhuman...The UNESCO document also makes a reactionary, unsupported and culturally vague demand for 'strengthening the family nucleus and respect for moral values', as a solution to the 'problem'"¹⁷⁸. Clinging on to the rising rate of HIV/AIDS evident in the Thai border, UNICEF, on the grounds of the AIDS epidemic, claims that sex work is an unethical practice, dealing directly with violence, crime rates, and disease¹⁷⁹. "...UNICEF reports a very high maternal mortality and HIC infection rate, concentrated in the east and the south, along the Thai border"¹⁸⁰. The United Nations coyly berates the sex industry in Thailand looking specifically at the phenomenon of sexual human trafficking, not at the women voluntarily entering the sex trade

¹⁷⁶ Parent, Colette. Bruckert, Chris. Corriveau, Patrice. Mensah, Maria Nengeh. Toupin, Louise. *Sex Work: Rethinking the Job, Respecting the Workers*. UBC Press, Sep. 18th, 2013, pg. 127.

¹⁷⁷ Lewis, Reina. Mills, Sara. *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Routledge, 2003, pg. 416.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Great Britain: Parliament: House of Commons: International Development Committee. *DFID assistance to Burmese internally displaced people and Refugees on the Thai-Burma border: Tenth report of Session 2006-07, Vol. 2: Oral and written evidence*. The Stationary Office, July 25th, 2007, pg. 146.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

for financial and religious reasons. In the UN's ASEAN branch, sex work is a stagnation to the country's modernity. This Western outlook on the indifference between sex trafficking versus voluntary sex work as a form of backwardness creates an image of Thailand as a land of lower status, filled with women sexually open due to lack of modernity and civilized, first world power developed in the West. An association with sexual liberation and openness as being a characteristic of a developing nation progresses, amplifying the lack of order and conservatism in Thailand seen by the Western perspective.

Buddhism explains the lack of involvement of women's rights' groups in Thailand, and their relevant inexperience and attempted lobbying and activism in the region. Empower, the local women's rights' group in Bangkok, centrals around the ideals of Buddhist faith, amplifying the pros of legalizing sexual openness and voluntary sex work. "...transnational women's movements have been vital in Thai women activists' formulation of questions of gender inequalities and women's rights...an importance of the transnational Buddhist women's movement in the Thai campaigns to establish a Buddhist female monks; order – a *bhikkhuni* order"¹⁸¹. The women's rights group Empower is an intimate drive for power shown through the physical act of attempting to legalize voluntary sex work. This want to legalize prostitution in Thailand has pushed more women to join the sex trade, justified by the tolerant feelings of karmic debt in the Buddhist religion. A want to legitimize sex work has become one of the main reasons for why immigration doors are flooded in Bangkok with willing sex work employees.

¹⁸¹ Roces, Mina. Edwards, Louise. *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminism and Transnational Activism*. Routledge, June 19th, 2010, Chapter 7.

Melatonin
Conclusion & Theory Constructs

Bloodflood and Fitzpleasure
Conclusion and Theory Constructs

“The world is, of course, nothing but our conception of it... These people have learned not from books, but in the fields, in the wood, on the river bank. Their teachers have been the birds themselves, when they sang to them, the sun when it left a glow of crimson behind it at setting, the very trees, and wild herbs.”

- Anton Chekhov

There is a beauty and ugliness to sex, seen and interpreted differently by every culture and religious institution. England and Thailand's cases are prime examples of individual and state activity impacted by religious ideologies, seen through the sexual openness or censorship of a state by measuring immigration policy and levels of voluntary sex work. Sexuality underlines

the political and social characteristics and behavior of a country, governed by the construction of religion through culture. Michel Foucault's particular interest in sex as a vessel of truth for a society mirrors this statement, signifying that personal intimacy surfaces itself in political and social boundaries, in examples of power, knowledge of religion, and faith.

The discourse on sexuality rests on the fact that sex is constructed through knowledge, and those specific teachings allow individuals to acquire perceptions about sex which grants power sexually. Thus, relationships of power through sex and sexual identity are established, highlighting the raw intentions, politics, and social relations of a state, which are invisible otherwise. Sex is thus controlled – control is power through constructive religious and cultural ideals. Sexual self conservatism is power in England, and sexual promiscuity is power in Thailand. Cultural institutions control both sexual perspectives, and sex becomes power. We have to talk about sex; it is repressed liberation and our truth in ourselves. Sex is supposed to be liberating, free. Yet, it is locked in cultural institutions of knowledge, preventing us from not placing specific connotations and understanding to sex itself. As Foucault states,

Truth does not belong to the order of power, but shares an original affinity with this supposed freedom of sexual liberation; power is everywhere, not that it engulfs everything, but that it comes from everywhere. Nature, keeping only useless secrets, is placing within reach and in sight of human beings things it was necessary for them to know¹⁸².

In closure, the idea and implication that sex isn't just sex is presented in this thesis - there are complex religious, cultural, and mental connotations to the biological act, which are seen inevitably in political and social relations and state behavior. The act of sexual intimacy is the most powerful aid in understanding religious, political, and social aspects of a region and peoples. Sex is a conduit of truth, and is formed invisibly through religion. To understand

¹⁸² Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, April 18th, 2012.

ourselves is to understand our intimacy and sensuality. Sex unearths each society's secrets. We are our biological selves, painted in crimson skies.

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