Threat or Opportunity?
Sexuality, Gender and the Ebb and

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Les auteures emploient une analyse historique des données médiatiques pour faire la lumière sur la trajectoire du discours ambiant sur le trafic des femmes et situer les débats actuels sur l'émigration et les droits des femmes dans un contexte social, économique et historique. Elles examinent l'émergence du trafic comme une préoccupation sociale depuis la montée en flèche de l'émigration et la panique provoquée par le sensationalisme des médias. En outre, elles critiquent l'argument de la victimisation pour mobiliser les troupes et légitimer une réponse des institutions. Les auteures évaluent les nouveaux discours sur le trafic alors que les conditions géo-politiques ont mis un frein à l'immigration et que les frontières entre les pays ont été consolidées.

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Levels of public concern in the U.S. over trafficking in women and children have peaked twice in the last century: between 1907 and 1913 during the controversy over "white slavery" and again in the 1990s with the rising concern over global sex trafficking. It is not surprising that trafficking—a phenomenon so closely linked to notions of movement and mobility—would emerge as a major social issue during these two periods. The first and last decades of the twentieth century both witnessed seismic demographic shifts. Nearly 1,000,000 people immigrated to the U.S. per year between 1905 and 1914. After World War I immigration declined sharply, partly due to restrictive new citizenship laws. The U.S. would not see similar levels of immigration until 1989, the inaugural year of an eleven-year wave of heightened migration (Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services). The two periods under scrutiny share additional features in common: facilitated by the introduction of new technologies—railroad and new communications technologies respectively—capital expanded during both periods, seeking out inexpensive labour and new markets for its products and services. Not surprisingly, informal and illicit markets flourished as well, including the gun, drug, and sex trades.

Increased migration led to domestic anxieties over immigration during both periods. Early twentieth-century reform movements were largely a middle-class response to the dramatic expansion of the U.S. urban population. Many of the new immigrants arriving on U.S. shores hailed from eastern and southern Europe and were largely Catholic, Jewish, and atheist, precipitating a wave of xenophobia among the slightly-more-rooted Protestant populations. Likewise, the collapse of communism in Eastern-bloc countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s intensified the movement of people on a global scale. This global shift coupled with increased migration to the U.S. from the south resulted in a resurgence of anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. and abroad. In the early 1990s, such legislation as California's Proposition 187 drew much support from voters who believed crime and economic recession were causally linked to immigration. From the U.S. vantage-point, the post-cold war global order was experienced as both a possibility and a threat. Along with the domestic euphoria over the so-called triumph of democracy and the free market came fears about "invisible" threats linked to a newfound global -mobility: the specters of immigration, new infectious diseases, terrorism, and sex trafficking. Such "traveling threats" loomed large in the 1990s.

In this paper, we argue that while increased traffic in women is a potential outgrowth of urbanization and globalization, it also functions as a potent metaphor for the profound anxieties provoked by radical social upheaval related to flows of people. We seek to account for 1) trafficking's emergence as an object of social concern during periods of increased migration; 2) the phenomenon's connection to moral panics and the commercial mass media; 3) how the historical deployment of a victimization framework has mobilized groups and legitimated institutional responses; and 4) trafficking's potential demise in public discourse when the geo-political conditions facilitating immigration break down and national boundaries are fortified.

Throughout, we take the stand that the current anti-trafficking discourses carry problematic historical baggage with them. First, such anti-trafficking rhetoric makes a priori assumptions about women's victimization. Nineteenth-century western conceits about women's purity and innate sexual innocence have been transposed onto

Flow of Trafficking as Discourse

non-western women in the current context. When translated into official policy, this woman-as-victim motif can result in punitive state legislation passed off in the guise of protecting women. Recent critiques of anti-trafficking platforms laid out by such sex-worker rights organizations as the Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) as well as such feminist scholars as Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (1998) persuasively argue that efforts to curb the global traffic in women function to harm rather than assist both migrating and non-migrating sex workers. Rather than duplicate such critiques here, our objective in this essay is to outline some of the historical conditions of possibility for the emergence and decline of trafficking discourses[1] in the U.S.

The White Slavery Controversy

The origins of the particular use of the term "white slavery" to connote the act of selling women and girls into sexual slavery can be traced to late nineteenth-century transatlantic media flows. Fueled by a rapidly expanding communications system, a veritable traffic in media narratives transported stories of seduction and abduction from England's daily papers to the United States' muckraking magazines. The first and perhaps most significant exposé on white slavery was published in 1885 in England's *Pall Mall Gazette.* Written by the *Gazette's* editor, William T. Stead, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" scandalized British culture with its assertions that virgins were being bought and sold by wealthy aristocrats for five pounds a piece. The agitation surrounding this story led to a series of international conferences on white slavery and an international treaty designed to curb the global trade in women (Langum; Walkowitz).

As news of the story traveled from England to other continents via telegraph in the late nineteenth century, middle-class reformers in the United States began agitating against the international traffic in women. Many of these reformers aligned themselves with the social purity "abolitionist" movement, which sought to eradicate prostitution altogether. Since the 1860s, abolition groups had fought against occasional local "regulationist" attempts to legalize and tax prostitution. The abolitionist tendency had its cultural origins in the Second Great Awakening that swept New England in the 1830s, which generated a spiritual and cultural discourse that permeated U.S. suffrage and emancipation movements before and during the Civil War. In the late nineteenth century a new generation

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of reform-minded abolitionists sent representatives from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Federation of Women's Clubs, and the National Vigilance Committee abroad to attend the three international conferences on the traffic in women that were held between 1894 and 1899. These international gatherings foreshadowed "abolitionist" work done on behalf of women in such twentieth century international venues as the United Nations.

In 1907, a series of muckraking articles prompted widespread speculation that the white slave trade had reached U.S. soil. Commissioned by *McClure's* magazine, investigative journalist George Kibbe Turner's articles detailed how organized "vice trusts" profited from kidnapping and selling native and foreign-born white women into the sexual slave trade. Astonished readers learned that a major commerce in women was insidiously spreading its tentacles from the major urban centers of Chicago and New York outward to the rest of the nation. Even more shocking, top city officials and business leaders were allegedly facilitating the rapid expansion of this sordid trade.

Turner's 1907 exposé, "The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities" was *McClure's* largest commercial success of the year. Hoping for another publishing success, *McClure's* ran advertisements in other mass distribution muckraking magazines for Turner's sequel to the Chicago piece, "The Daughters of the Poor." An October 23, 1909 ad in *Collier's* promoted the piece as "the most startling and important article published in years—a plain story ... of how the White Slave Trade in American girls developed in New York under Tammany Hall and has spread to every large city of the United States." Weaving

together an elabourate story of "slum politics" in New York, the article implicated Tammany Hall and a Jewish association called the New York Independent Benevolent Association in a widespread white slavery operation. According to Turner, these institutions trained white slavers in Newark, New Jersey. Once properly trained in the skill of procuring young women, these "cadets" were assigned to New York City where they served the double function of generating funds for city coffers and constituting a pro-Tammany Hall voting block. Tammany Hall, in turn, funded its programs and favours for the poor with prostitution-generated profits.

On the heels of these exposés, progressive-era media ran additional tales of "white slavery" proliferated in the Progressive-era press, generating a national sexual and moral panic over the traffic in women. According to historian Jeffrey Weeks, a moral panic "crystallizes widespread fears and anxieties, and often deals with them by not seeking the real causes of the problems and conditions which they demonstrate but by displacing them onto ... an identified social group (often the immoral or degenerate)" (14). Historians offering diverging interpretations of the white slavery episode seem to agree that social threats embodied by "white slavery" exceeded any actual trafficking in women that may have occurred in the early twentieth century (Barry; Connelly; Gilfoyle; Langum; Rosen; Walkowitz).

Progressive-era anxieties over race, urbanization, increased Eastern European immigration, and changing gender relations were projected onto prostitution.

Progressive-era anxieties over race, urbanization, increased Eastern European immigration, and changing gender relations were projected onto prostitution (Mumford; Peiss; Ullman). Fear that the nation's white women were being kidnapped and sold into white slavery mobilized middle-class reformers to take action against the threat. Their outcry resulted in formal legislation aimed at eradicating the perceived social problem. Between 1907 and 1911, national and regional legal and institutional strategies to contain the alleged white slavery epidemic were initiated, many of which had far-reaching effects. The formation and rapid expansion of the Federal Bureau of Investigation occurred as a result of the panic, as did the creation of special vice units in U.S. cities. In 1910, Congress passed the White Slave Traffic Act, also known as the Mann Act, prohibiting the movement of unmarried women across state lines for "immoral" purposes. These institutional responses to white slavery shaped and transformed sexual geographies on a national scale. The Mann Act, for example, gave state borders new meanings while materially regulating the movement of women and criminalizing interracial couples.

A series of widely publicized events and a broader shift in cultural authority occurring in the 1910s functioned to shift public opinion away from white slavery as the preeminent way to account for the existence of white women in prostitution. In 1910, a criminal investigation into white slavery in New York City was revealed as a hoax. Only a month later a Grand Jury headed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. announced there was no organized trade in white women.[2] Stories of white slavery continued to proliferate in the form of popular captivity novels and the infamous "white slave" films. By 1915, however, the number of sentimental and sensationalist mass media representations of white slavery declined, while a significant movement emerged to account for prostitution through the classificatory system of eugenics-inspired criminology. Defective heredity displaced white slavery as the dominant explanation for women's entry into prostitution.

World War I displaced concern over trafficking altogether, while functioning to stem the influx of people entering the U.S. from abroad. While immigration to the U.S. continued in the aftermath of World War I, the numbers arriving on U.S. shores paled in comparison to the pre-war era. Racist immigration laws passed in the early 1920s led to a consolidation of national borders, effectively restricting the resettlement of non-western Europeans and Asians in the U.S.. While the public panic over white slavery abruptly disappeared, the institutions erected to curb the traffic in women proved quite durable. During this period, the "internal" movement of black Americans from southern towns to northern cities during the war led to volatile post-war race relations and violent attempts to reassert white hegemony. The Mann Act, under the jurisdiction of the FBI, was used as a tool during this period to stymie the movement of black men and suspected political radicals.

In the aftermath of World War I, trafficking made only brief appearances on the national and international agenda, in sequential League of Nations Conventions in 1921 and 1933 and the United Nations (UN), which debated a resolution on the traffic in women in 1949. Trafficking would not resurface again as the object of a significant feminist movement until the 1970s when a cadre of second-wave feminists resurrected the troubling prostitution-as-sexual-slavery thesis (e.g., Barry). It would not be until the 1990s, however, that discourses of trafficking would once again achieve public prominence on a mass scale.

Trafficking in Women and Girls (1980s and 1990s)

The 1980s and 1990s saw the end of the Cold War and the perceived defeat of communism as a viable alternative

to capitalist economies. Neoliberal policies—transmitted through International Monetary Fund (IMF) stabilization plans—require highly indebted nations to "free" the movement of capital, goods, and labour and reduce public spending in order to service debt repayment. After a brief period of euphoria, the "newly democratized states" of Eastern Europe came to be viewed as equal part threat and opportunity. Alongside stories of democracy's triumph, narratives of Eastern European lawlessness and social disruption flooded the media. In particular, the western media was fascinated with stories of women now "reduced" to individual workers in global economies.[3] Increasing anxiety about trafficking can be linked to the rise in transnational migrant labour during this historical conjuncture.

The emergence of the human rights discourse as the preeminent global moral framework is another significant factor in the production of new trafficking narratives. Its ascendance has been greatly facilitated by the quieting of cold war antagonisms and the resulting weakening of the nation-state. Increasingly human rights doctrine has become a site of struggle for various disenfranchised social groups, while such multinational institutions as the UN have become the addressee of claims made in support of oppressed groups.[4] Feminist interventions on behalf of women in this arena have frequently relied on discourses of vulnerability and injury to advance claims, thereby producing and legitimizing "trafficking in women and girls" as a global concern and universal framework for understanding prostitution.

To fully understand how discussions in the field of women's human rights have played out during the latest U.S. trafficking panic, it is important to analyze one UN document from a previous era. The 1949 *UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and Exploitation of Prostitution of Others* can be understood as an attempt to bring together disparate treaties in the new UN system (Wijers and Lap-Chew, 21). This document set the precedent for further UN resolutions on trafficking and prostitution. As an abolitionist statement, it advocates the criminalization of anyone facilitating prostitution, even with the consent of parties involved, and declares prostitution "incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person." This document's legal conflation of prostitution with trafficking and its notion of prostitution as a human rights abuse became the starting point for subsequent women's human rights work. As we discuss later, many groups have attempted to redefine trafficking, separating the phenomenon from prostitution *per se*, while other influential organizations have worked to fortify and disseminate these basic 1949 Convention principles. Although the Convention looms large in these debates, its doctrine on prostitution is also the very reason that it never became the final word on trafficking.[5] The document's sweeping conception of prostitution as exploitation would have required states to make such deep legal changes that many felt it was incompatible with their Constitutions and legal codes. While never widely ratified, the 1949 Convention remains a powerful rhetorical device in debates on the issue.

Women's Rights as Human Rights

In 1993, delegates at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna declared that "women's rights are human rights." This statement has been described as "a major symbolic and conceptual breakthrough" in human rights discourse and an important step in assuring truly universal enjoyment of human rights regardless of sex or gender (Bayes, Hawkeworth and Kelly 7). Like most pronouncements made at the UN, this idea did not spring forth as a result of deliberations between government delegations during the 1993 sessions. It was the result of months of preparatory meetings and years of activist strategizing. U.S. human rights advocates were deeply engaged in this work, as illustrated by Charlotte Bunch's plan for action published in the *Human Rights Quarterly* in 1990.[6] She describes human rights as "one of the few moral visions ascribed to internationally" and then makes the case that "the degradation and violation of women" should be viewed as human rights abuses (486-487). The idea of women's rights as human rights was therefore strategically similar to other successful NGO campaigns, such as those designed by Amnesty International. This idea functioned to create a gendered human rights subject through her association with horrendous abuse and torture.

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Women's testimonials at the World Conference describe individual personal experiences of rape, incest, domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and abuse due to sexual orientation (Reilly *et al.*). The material presents women's sexual experience as a site of heightened vulnerability and as a method by which human rights violators perpetrate most harm toward women. Importantly, this construction of gender is close to Kathleen Barry's thesis that sexuality is the tool with which women as a class are oppressed by men. Despite resonance with Barry's work, key spokespeople did not wholeheartedly adhere to the prostitution-as-slavery formulation. Trafficking of women into prostitution was included as part of the testimonial material in the form of presentations by Kim Bok-Dong, a Korean "Comfort Woman," and Lin

Lap-Chew of the Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV). Lap-Chew, in a presentation at a workshop on international trafficking in women held during the 1993 deliberations, questioned the utility of the 1949 Convention and differentiated the STV's approach from the new abolitionist campaigns emerging in the context of the UN Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (Lap-Chew 27). The STV advocated a focus not on prostitution *per se* but on "forced prostitution."[7]

Bought and Sold: The 1990s Panic

The position outlined by Lap-Chew in 1993 illustrates the contemporary division over what constitutes trafficking in women and girls. The STV collaborated with the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) located in Thailand to create new definitions of trafficking, sometimes known as the "broad definition," which includes other forms of forced labour and emphasized only coerced prostitution. The contemporary abolitionist perspective is usually associated with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) which aims to eliminate all prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. Despite these two clearly differentiated streams in the Vienna debate,[8] most U.S. human rights organizations simply added trafficking in women to their list of human rights violations after 1993. These groups believed they could remain agnostic on prostitution but nevertheless pressured for further action on trafficking both within and outside of the U.S. as a way to advance a generalized feminist agenda.

Many human rights activists believed it possible to create workable policy and legal changes to help trafficked persons without entering into debates about the legitimacy of prostitution.

Smaller rights groups, such as the Global Survival Network (GSN), documented the issue in multi-media form. In doing so, they began with a human rights narrative and ended with tabloid results. For example, the 1997 GSN documentary *Bought and Sold* constitutes an exposé of the activities of Eastern European trafficking operations. It includes footage of a GSN staffer apparently negotiating to buy a woman for several thousand dollars from a Russian trafficker. The similarities to "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" are striking. This film, along with such widely distributed documentaries as Gupta's 1997 *The Selling of Innocence* were used to educate key U.S. officials in the State and Justice Departments, university students, and members of NGOs. These productions, which circulated in expert and policymaking circles, had their corollary in sensationalized commercial mass media productions throughout the 1990s. Trafficking moved very swiftly from the narrow world of human rights NGOs to the mass media (in the form of newspaper articles, television "special reports" and in-depth documentary exposés) and back again to new legal frameworks, a feedback that had national and global effects.

In early 1998 an informal human rights coalition, the NGO Networking Group on Trafficking, formed in Washington DC. This coalition included groups with diverse viewpoints such as the International Human Rights Law Group, Global Survival Network, and sex worker rights groups. Participants were influential in working with Democratic Senator Paul Wellstone to support a "Sense of Congress" Resolution indicating the U.S. government's bipartisan concern about trafficking in women. Members of this group subsequently lobbied the State Department in relation to U.S. participation in the UN Crime Commission deliberations. It sought to create a new protocol on trafficking in persons and worked tirelessly to shape U.S. legal codes protecting victims and preventing trafficking. Both the protocol and the U.S. law were finalized in 2000 and had mixed results. The *Optional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (UN Trafficking Protocol) contains a convoluted definition of trafficking that includes language harking back to the 1949 Convention.[9] *The U.S. Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act* (*Trafficking Victims Protection Act*) focuses on sex trafficking using equally confusing definitions.[10]

At the beginning of this process, many U.S. human rights activists believed it possible to create workable policy and legal changes to help trafficked persons without entering into age-old debates about the legitimacy of prostitution. Many were aware of white slavery's problematic history and were informed of the harmful consequences for poor women, migrants, sex workers, and their families that previous campaigns against trafficking had wrought. However, because the dynamics of moral panics were never fully articulated or analyzed, activists pushed ahead, unable to predict the dubious alliances that would be forged as mass media and prominent women's groups highlighted the issue.

A particularly revealing moment illustrates how moral outrage on behalf of sexually victimized women can enlist support from unexpected quarters for an ultimately conservative outcome. On 8 January, 2000, the *New York Post* reported that a "powerful coalition of feminists," including Patricia Ireland of the National Organization for Women, Gloria Steinem of *Ms Magazine*, Jessica Neuwirth of Equality Now, and Gloria Feldt, President of Planned Parenthood, had formed to "fight an effort by member's of Hilary Rodham Clinton's women's commission to weaken laws on international trafficking of prostitutes" (Blomquist). The international agreement under consideration was the UN Trafficking Protocol and the per-

ceived "pro-prostitution stance" of the Clinton administration was the U.S. delegation's agreement—after much lobbying from the aforementioned coalition of human rights advocates—to support a "broad definition" of trafficking rather than a narrow one focusing solely on prostitution. Leaders of the nine-member feminist coalition skillfully invoked visceral fears about sex trafficking as a violation of women's human rights to win support for limiting the definition of trafficking to prostitution. Within the U.S. this political maneuver served conservative politicians as they campaigned against the Clinton Administration, while internationally it bolstered the abolitionist position described in the 1949 Convention. Jesse Helms sent a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, expressing his outrage at the U.S. position in the UN negotiations (Helms to Albright, correspondence, January 2000). The activities of the U.S. delegation in Vienna were halted temporarily as a result of these interventions and the U.S. representatives were instructed to renegotiate a narrow definition into the protocol. Furthermore, this event suggests the power of U.S. voices and organizations to shape understandings of trafficking on a global scale.

Because in the U.S. women's human rights had been created around a notion of sexuality as harm and a tool for violation it was very easy for a small number of conservative feminists to convince progressives to agree with them on the sex trafficking issue. The "politics of substitution" functioned on multiple levels during this episode: it obscured conservative machinations with emotive, overinflated reports of the perceived social problem and it demonized solutions that did not conform to dominant definitions of the problem (Jenkins 12-13). It is clear that many of the feminist groups involved in the campaign described above were not aware the panic's results. They fully believed that "sex trafficking robs women of their most fundamental and basic rights" and that the real issue at hand was the global sex traffic (Gloria Feldt, quoted in Blomquist).

The earlier white slavery panic led to significant changes in the law (e.g., the *Mann Act*) and in organizational power (the FBI). While the current case has not resulted in such dramatic developments in the organization of law enforcement, considerable changes in policy and funding have occurred as a result of recent anti-trafficking campaigns. The *Trafficking Victims Protection Act*, unlike the *Mann Act* of 1910, includes Congressional appropriations to fund service agencies and train personnel to deal with trafficking problems.[11] Funding has also been routed through the Department of Justice and the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Outside the U.S., a new operations strategy has recently limited funds distributed internationally by USAID, specifically for HIV/AIDS prevention and anti-trafficking initiatives. Addressing programs employing the term "sex work," this policy states that "[o]rganizations advocating prostitution as an employment choice or which advocate or support the legalization of prostitution" are now deemed inappropriate partners for USAID anti-trafficking grants or contracts" (USAID 7).

Much of the current U.S. policy and funding changes emerged during the Clinton Administration. It is illuminating to consider the ways in which trafficking policy has continued under George W. Bush's regime. Since January 2001, the Bush administration has pushed an increasingly conservative agenda regarding welfare, reproductive health (especially abortion), and HIV/AIDS. It should not come as any surprise that feminists employing narrow anti-prostitution definitions of trafficking have gained considerable power under this administration. New changes in the allocation of funds and in the power of organizations have occurred. *The Trafficking Victims Protection Act* required the establishment of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons in order to prepare an annual Trafficking in Persons Report. When the office was established in October 2001 the inaugural director championed the narrow view on trafficking and the abolition of prostitution.

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Recent Developments

Despite the continued importance of fears about trafficking in women among NGOs and to some policy makers, in the current milieu trafficking may be considered a lesser threat than terrorism. In some cases the media has understandably opted to report on terrorism instead of trafficking.[12] It is undoubtedly premature to declare an end to the current moral panic over trafficking. However, NGO and media debate on the issue appears to be diminishing and giving way to reports that highlight policy victories of this administration.[13] It seems likely that trafficking experts, employing either the broad or narrow definition of the term, will defend the bureaucratic victories gained by either side.[14]

It remains to be seen how the discourse on trafficking will ultimately fare in relation to fears about terrorism and so-called homeland security. However, it seems likely that anxieties about organized transnational traffickers will mesh with pervasive fears about terrorism, thus heightening concern about the inherent dangers of "border crossers" of particular ethnicities.[15] Anti-trafficking activities both inside and outside the U.S. may succumb to new surveil-

lance plans as the U.S. government becomes increasingly protective over its own borders and the activities of outsiders. Hints of such surveillance activities have already emerged in the new USAID policy:

> In the course of their development work, especially in STD and HIV/AIDS programs, USAID staff and primary and sub-grantees and contractors may become aware of individuals who may have been trafficked into the sex trade. When this occurs USAID staff or grantees and contractors must report this information to the U.S. Embassy Officer who handles trafficking. (3)

Fears about "shadowy, crime networks" have long been invoked by abolitionists in attempts to discredit sex worker rights organizations.[16] This amplification of the threat can be understood as an important element of moral panics, given that accusations of perversion or social threat are exaggerated when perpetrators are perceived as organized and powerful (Jenkins). Indeed, in recent anti-prostitution rhetoric, groups providing services to sex workers and youth have been accused of participating in an international network organized to promote sex between adults and children and "to legitimize, legalize and regulate prostitution" (Hughes).

Conclusions

In this paper we illustrated the ebb and flow of trafficking discourse in the U.S. by contextualizing ongoing concerns about migration, sex workers, traffickers, and global trafficking networks. Participants in moral panics tend to project other issues onto the matter at hand, while inflating the nature and extent of the alleged deviant act. Moral entrepreneurs[17] "naturalize" the concern and fail to see the multiple social and historical forces shaping the moment of crisis. Such awareness is certainly difficult given that discourses on trafficking reach most people via news reports created by journalists who are unaware of the history of such narratives, approaching each instance of trafficking as though it were sensational and new.[18]

The two trafficking panics discussed were not identical, yet the continuities and discontinuities between the two are worthy of analysis. In both periods, concerns about migration were projected onto concerns about women and sexuality: protecting white women's purity in the early phase and protecting non-western women from human rights violations in the latter. Fears about trafficking in women were employed as key elements in local political campaigns that had little to do with women's rights in the long term, as we have seen in our discussions of corruption in Tammany Hall and the controversy surrounding Clinton's stance on trafficking. Both panics also resulted in durable legal and policy changes that had material effects that greatly exceeded curbing trafficking.

Subtle differences between the two phases are also instructive. Today there may be more sites for challenging a simplistic equation of trafficking with prostitution than there were a hundred years ago. Global organizations such as the STV and GAATW have considerable influence and have framed their work on trafficking in terms of migrants rights. Additionally, these groups are not necessarily opposed to sex worker rights. Within the U.S. alternate networks and education projects have formed, publicizing links with migrant rights groups and developing persuasive new definitions of trafficking. Narrow, abolitionist views are powerful, but have not achieved a thoroughgoing hegemony. Several challenges face sex workers and international labour advocates as we enter the new millennium. It is important to insure that any gains and positive developments not be overshadowed by xenophobic rhetoric and narrow understandings of prostitution and migrant workers as security threats. We hope that this paper will contribute in modest ways to the production of frameworks that operate against these forces.

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[1]By using the term discourse, we seek to highlight that concerns over trafficking have both material and symbolic dimensions. On the one hand, trafficking is a sociological reality, which to some degree exists "out there" in the world. On the other hand, our understandings of sexual trafficking are always mediated through language and institutional discourses. We only know trafficking secondhand, through representations of the phenomenon created by a number of key institutions. These institutions include the mass media, NGO's, human rights groups, feminist anti-trafficking groups, and the United Nations, which together shape public perceptions of the global sex trade. Further, there is by no means a consensus over the identity, existence, and extent of sexual trafficking in the world today. Trafficking is a contested domain with numerous groups vying to define what the phenomenon

means and shape national and international policy decisions.

[2]For an analysis of the role of these events in containing the white slavery panic, see Soderlund.

[3]See Young for an analysis of women being "reduced" to workers in the new global economy.

[4]Thanks to Lisa Wedeen for insights into this process.

[5]The Convention was not ratified by sufficient UN member States to bring it into force, thus limiting any effect it has in human rights monitoring.

[6]Charlotte Bunch is an influential U.S. feminist human rights advocate and Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership. She is one of the most widely respected and well-known women's human rights advocates in the U.S. and worldwide.

[7]Thanks to Alice Miller for bringing the 1993 Workshop on International Trafficking in Women materials to our attention.

[8]These two positions have been elaborated at the Fourth International Conference on Women (Beijing Women's Conference) and the five-year follow up meetings in New York (Beijing +5). Jo Doezema and Cynthia Meillón provide detailed information about the trafficking debates at the respective conferences.

[9]Definitional sections include language linking trafficking to "the exploitation of the prostitution of others and other forms of sexual exploitation."

[10]The *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* (TVPA) contains multiple definitions of trafficking. "Sex trafficking" is defined as "the recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act." This definition is linked to service provision, grant-making and other assistance for trafficking victims. Human rights advocates note that the TVPA contains another definition in the Criminal Law section which does not narrowly define trafficking as prostitution. The section, invoked during prosecutions, includes peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude and forced labour as elements of the crime of trafficking.

[11]Congressional appropriations in 2002 were some US$63 million dollars (Office on Violence Against Women Website: http://www.ojp.U.S.doj.gov/vawo/laws/vawo2000/).

[12]Consider, for example, the fate of the much-awaited report on the *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in North America, Canada and Mexico* that was to have been released with much media fanfare on September 11, 2001.

[13]For example, a recent report on a conference held in Washington DC begins "The Bush Administration has more than doubled the number of prosecutions of people suspected of trafficking in human beings since 2001..." (*New York Times*, February 26, 2003: A3)

[14]Not all funding has been directed towards CATW allied groups. Some relatively new NGO networks employing the broad definition have been highly successful in tapping into funds made available as a result of the new trafficking legislation. It also seems likely that established groups and networks will now begin vying over the task of delivering "technical assistance" to high priority countries.

[15]Thanks to Alice Miller for this observation.

[16]Sex worker advocates are said to be paid large sums of money by "international pimping networks" to promote decriminalization and to, thus, further the cause of pimps and traffickers (CITE).

[17]The term "moral entrepreneur" comes from Stanley Cohen's insightful study of moral panics in Britain.

[18]We would like to thank Ann Jordan for providing us with this insight. Ms Jordan, director of the Trafficking Project at the International Human Rights Law Group, noted that the majority of journalists covering trafficking issues come to the story as if it was being "discovered" for the first time.

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MICHELINE MERCIER

Chair, Chère

Laisse-moi t'ouvrir les yeux, petite,
Et t'apprendre qu'un jour il y a ce diable de loup qui
D'un coup de griffe a marqué ta chair et volé ton innocence.

Venu de nulle part, il s'est vêtu du manteau de l'ageanu
Et tu n'as pas senti son odeur de mort.
Ce jour-là, il a léché la main de ton père et donné à ta mère
ce miroir perfide
lui accordant un monde utopique dont elle rêvait depuis longtemps.

A pleine dents, il a mordu
À l'aurore de ta vie et dévoré ton âme.
Enchaînée, allongée sur le bûcher
Il a jeté tes restes en pâture à sa meute.
Le peu de vie qui te restait a fait de toi une épave à la dérive.

Meurtrie, affaiblie, ne pouvant t'enfuir
Tu as accepté ton état d'esclave.
C'est ce soir que j'ai trouvé ton corps de fillette
Gisant au fond d'une sombre venelle
Cherchant à te réchauffer d'un rayon de lune.
Tu croyais que le soleil ne brillerait plus jamais pour toi.

Et comment pourras-tu pardonner aux loups de ton enfance
Volée, violée, accélérée, perdue à jamais?
Voudras-tu croire que tout n'est pas noir
Comme une nuit sans étoiles,
Que le solei brillera aussi pour toi et qu'il existe autre chose
que les lumières tamisées de la nuit.

Micheline Mercier has been writing poetry ever since she can remember. She has only recently agreed to show her works and is now in the process of publishing her first book of poems.