PROSTITUTION AND SEX WORK IN GLOBAL CINEMA

NEW TAKES ON FALLEN WOMEN

EDITED BY
DANIELLE HIPKINS AND
KATE TAYLOR-JONES

Global Cinema

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Prostitution and Sex Work in Global Cinema

New Takes on Fallen Women

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All Japanese, Korean and Chinese name appear in the traditional fashion with the surname first.

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A modified version of Molly Hyo Kim's chapter 'The Idealization of Prostitutes: Aesthetics and Discourse of South Korean Hostess Films (1974–1982)' previously appeared in *Acta Koreana* (2014) 17:1, 455–477. Reproduced with thanks.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Danielle Hipkins and Kate Taylor-Jones

In 2015 the French–Moroccan film *Much Loved* (Nabil Ayouch) found itself embroiled in a serious controversy. The film, which explored the lives of a group of female prostitutes, found itself labelled as 'pornography and debauchery' and was banned from Moroccan screens. The director and the lead actress, Loubna Abidar, reportedly received death threats and were forced to appear in court to answer the charges of indecency. The inclusion of multiple sex scenes alongside a portrayal of the police corruption, sexual violence and child abuse aimed to explore the murky and complex side of the Marrakesh sex industry and, as a result, offended many in the film's home nation.

The controversy surrounding *Much Loved* raises the question that this collected edition seeks to explore, namely to understand more about how women involved in sex work are represented in fictional screen narratives across a broader range of different national and transnational contexts than are usually considered together. This book is defined by the

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key idea that the figure of the female prostitute in all her varieties is a malleable cultural symbol that has been used to address a myriad of social fears and desires across global cinemas.[1] As the example of *Much Loved* suggests, the figure is still interpreted in the light of the 'whore stigma', as a result of which her representation is felt to haunt all women,[2] while her body also often remains entangled with the discourse of nationhood. With this book, we aim to ask how frequently nineteenth-century narratives of female prostitution, hence the label 'fallen women', are still recycled in contemporary visual contexts, and to understand how widespread and in what contexts the destigmatization of female sex work is underway on screen. We do this by bringing together the forms of representation in different national and transnational contexts and engaging international scholars in the question of how cinema has represented a figure that to many is simply labelled 'prostitute'.

The terminology is important to consider here. The terms themselves, 'sex workers', 'prostitutes' and 'sex-trafficked women', are culturally and politically loaded. All the chapters contained herein, explore how the broad term 'prostitute' can cover a variety of experiences and representations and we engage with the linked terms 'sex work', 'sex trafficking' and the figure of the prostitute, and even 'whore'. Contemporary debates surrounding sexuality continue to remind us of persistent and often highly damaging patriarchal ideologies, and the presence of prostitutes and prostitution in all its forms acts as an ideal site through which to debate contemporary gender politics. In this way, visual representations of prostitutes/sex workers/sex-trafficked women enable us to understand attitudes towards female mobility, sexuality, ethnicity and emancipation that cross national divides and affect gender identities (although all three figures function differently).

The rise of commercialised sex in the post-modern age has resulted in a polarisation of the debate. For writers such as Feona Attwood, we are seeing a sexualisation of western (and global) culture.[3] This process of sexualisation has resulted in female sexuality being constructed as 'active, recreational material, independent, consumerist and consumed, a key site of conflict, resistance and division'.[4] This rise in the academic study of all aspects of sexuality has seen the figure of the prostitute once more come into wider public circulation and debate. The sex worker movement and its supporters, rejecting the word 'prostitute' as degrading, have called for the movement of sex work into the category of embodied labour and the end of stigmatisation.

This postmodern, and indeed, often postfeminist sexual moment in the West needs to be balanced with the continuing repression of women seen in the presence of FGM, forced marriage, forced prostitution, domestic abuse and rape. Indeed, on the other side of the argument, scholar-activists such as Kathleen Barry, Sheila Jeffreys, Kat Banyard, Gail Dines and Katherine McKinnon are clear in their pronouncement of women's sexuality as nothing more than a tool of enslavement with all forms of prostitution and sex work as brutal and specifically gendered exploitation. As Jeffreys notes, for her all forms of prostitution, in all contexts, can never be anything more than a 'harmful cultural practice'.[5] For Banyard, the argument that 'sex work is work' is just another method to repress women via new dynamics of employment laws and the neo-liberal consumer agenda.[6]

This polarisation can be seen in the visual field with the postfeminist liberated narratives coming face to face with accounts of brutality and abuse. In the now infamous UK TV programme based on the same-titled novel, *Belle de Jour* (aka. *Secret Diary of a Call Girl*), we see a vision of a liberated 'working girl' who chooses to enter into the neo-capitalist structures via her own bodily value. This narrative is echoed across the globe in the East Asian dynamic of teenage compensatory dating seen in films such as *Girl$* (Kenneth Bi 2010) and *Bounce Kogals* (Harada Masato 1997) or the student/prostitute film in Nigeria. Indeed, 2016 saw two Polish films engage with this dynamic: *Piggies* (Robert Glinkski 2016) focuses on young boys selling themselves to men in Germany for the latest technological gadgets, while Katarzyna Rosloniec's *Mall Girls* (2016) explores the lives of teenage girls who sell themselves to pay for the latest designer goods and luxury clothing.

The figure of the female prostitute is always marked by a profound sense of ambivalence and it is this ambivalence that all the chapters share as a common theme.[7] As Patrice Petro notes, the prostitute can be seen as 'an emblem for the cinema as a whole, typifying literary intellectuals' simultaneous contempt for and fascination with an openly commercial (and hence 'venal') form'.[8] For Petro, this ambivalent positioning of prostitute resulted in the figure being marked by hostility and defensiveness and, as such, she became the primary icon that was imbued with multi-faceted meanings across arts and cultural texts. Moving beyond a perspective dominated by Anglo-American representation towards the global is vital if we are to understand more about how these meanings function, for, as Sarah Projansky explains, 'to identify a dominant

representation and then focus all one's analytic attention there […] is, at least in part, to reify that dominance.'[9] Similarly, by focusing only on one small, if powerful, segment of the heterogeneous mediascape—for example, the globalised conglomerate of Hollywood's film and television production—we risk producing a limited and one-sided debate on the representation of the prostitute and/or sex worker. A good example of this is the highly influential *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall 1990) that, as Hilary Radner notes, reflects a promotion of the American capitalist dream made attractive by the addition of romance.[10] In this endlessly popular film, the prostitute has, therefore, become the idealised neo-liberal subject that speaks to a small minority audience in the face of global inequality. Not least of all, Julia Roberts' iconic image keeps the white female consumer at the centre of the narrative, while this collection will tackle in detail visual representations of this figure from countries that extend not only beyond Anglophone domination, to Romania, Germany and Italy, but also beyond a white homogeneity with contributors writing on Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, India, Nigeria and Mexico.

One of the formative books for considering the prostitute on screen is Russell Campbell's 2006 oft-quoted book *Marked Women: Prostitutes and Prostitution in the Cinema*. Campbell's study constitutes the first and highly important attempt to look at representations of the prostitute on the screen across cultures and has been fundamental to the development of this book. While Campbell's work covers a wide field of survey, he himself has declared that any claims to universal validity for his models 'are tentative and suspect' as a result of his Western bias.[11] With our volume, screen studies from different national backgrounds, which, in Campbell's words typically 'tend to work from too small a pool of examples' are finally brought into dialogue, thus building on his work. A more recent 2015 book that addressed the representation of sex work on screen is *Selling Sex on Screen: from Weimar cinema to zombie porn;* in the introduction to this book, Karen Ritzenhoff and Catriona McAvoy observe that 'four main themes reappear: class differences and female economic independence; law, crime, and sex work; capitalism/commodification; and war and violence'.[12]

Our book, which extends beyond the USA and European scope of *Selling Sex*, will touch on all these themes. However, we argue that when we examine these films on a global scale, representation is also marked by many more intersections. Across the five sections of this book, the affects generated by sex work's increasing mobility; the rapidly changing

nature of the urban space; the prostitute as the site of transgression; and the recurrence of the global melodramatic tradition repeatedly intersect across cultures and over a time frame that stretches from the 1800s to the present day. A leitmotif of this collection is a preoccupation with the story of the 'fall' as a narrative that makes a statement about how poverty penalises women in particular or reinforces women's status as victims—the return to this narrative across radically different contexts offers a series of takes on 'fallen women', many of which are new, but some of which are also haunted by an intersection with nineteenth-century affects of pity and ambivalence.

The Chapters

Reviewing the Politics of Poverty and Pity

The most lamented figure of the modern debates on sex work is, of course, the sex-trafficked girl. This globalised figure has become the centre of several films and television shows from both Europe and the US. Increasingly, public attention to the trafficking of women and girls has resulted in the narrative of the prostitute (forced or enforced) being played out on the stage with regards to immigration, intentional patterns of abuse and global economic inequalities. Restrictive and limiting narratives of victimised women and bad men have become a dominant narrative in the media (as the Rotherham sex scandal clearly illustrates) and yet the variety of social, economic and global spaces and multiplicity of guises that the prostitute concurrently works under is often neglected.

William Brown, Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin, in their 2010 collection *Moving People, Moving Images: Cinema and Trafficking in the New Europe* explore how sex trafficking has come to intersect with a series of other narratives involving economics, migration and the debate on the boundaries of Europe as a geopolitical entity.[13] Our first essay in this section, 'Distant Suffering, Proper Distance: Cosmopolitan Ethics in the Film Portrayal of Trafficked Women', engages with some of the issues raised by Brown et al. as Jane Arthurs explores the ethical and political issues raised by using film narratives to construct victims of trafficking as objects of humanitarian intervention. Focusing on the film *Lilya 4-ever* (Luke Moodysson 2002) and the two-part TV series *Sex Traffic* (David Yates 2004) (both of which are about young women trafficked to work in the sex industry in Europe), Arthurs examines

how these texts were circulated and interpreted within particular discursive contexts, in this case, NGO and government anti-trafficking campaigns in Western Europe that took place in the early 2000s. Utilising Lilie Chouliarki's idea of a 'cosmopolitan' aesthetics of spectatorship (in which our philanthropic compassion for 'distant suffering' needs to be accompanied by a reflexive engagement with political questions about causes and solutions),[14] Arthurs argues that we need to see these women as more than voyeuristic objects of compassion. Using Rosi Braidotti's vision of a nomadic ethic, she calls for us to take into account issues of agency and the right to mobility when approaching the question of aid to those who are victims of sex trafficking. As she concludes,

> An open and reflexive subjectivity is the necessary condition for a truly cosmopolitan ethics to emerge in which we decenter our own privilege and power and pay attention to emergent forms of representation that express migrants' embodied, shifting desires and experiences in all their complexity so that we are open to being transformed by this encounter. Only then might we be able to answer the questions 'why?' and 'what needs to be done?' in ways that could promote global justice.

This idea of global justice and the right to mobility and indeed agency are echoed in Alice Bardan's chapter, '"Through Hardships To the Stars": The Moldovan prostitute in Nicolae Margineanu's *Schimb Valutar* (Exchange 2008)'. Focusing on the figure of the Moldovan prostitute working inside Romania, Barden asks us to reconsider normative modes of representation of Eastern European sex workers as either repressed victim or over-sexed consumerist. Her analysis of *Exchange* opens up the reader/viewer to the multiple levels of 'exchange' that are taking place inside the film and explores how the dynamics of mobility, consumerism and vulnerability are presented via the relationship between a Romanian migrant and a Moldovan prostitute. In particular, she uses postfeminism as a critical tool in order to understand the female prostitute's complex complicity in her difficult experience.

Coming to the Cinematic City in Global Modernity

In her chapter for the final section of this book, Fiona Handyside refers to the association between the prostitute and the modern, particularly in relation to the city, identified by both Walter Benjamin and Mary Ann

Doane. In Doane's words, 'the free and unanchored circulation of sexuality and money epitomised the modernity associated with the increased traffic of urban space'.[15] In the second section of this book, we examine how the narrative of arrival in the city has been explored through the motif of prostitution in the context of a global modernity. The role that the city has played in the cinematic representation of the prostitute is seminal. Across the globe, as social and economic structures changed, prostitution was intermingled with the notion of the increasing visibility of women on the streets, in the workplace and the attainment of social power. Polarised between woman as threat and woman as victim, as a commodity to be bought and sold, the prostitute has been marked as the site of capitalist consumption *par excellence*. Nevertheless, even as a symbol of capitalism, the prostitute is also occasionally charged with positive values, relating to social activism and determination. These values allowed writers, including Bertolt Brecht, to deploy prostitutes to voice social criticism. These tensions stretch across this second section of the book in which the notion of 'coming to the city' is used to explore the ambivalence about urban transformation and modernisation across Japanese, South Korean and Nigerian cinema in moments of dramatic change.

With his chapter 'Duality and Ambiguity: Prostitution, performance and the vagaries of modernity in Japanese cinema', Adam Bingham takes us into the world of post-war Japan and the role that the prostitute played in the works of three of the greatest Japanese filmmakers: Mizoguchi Kenji, Kawashima Yuzo and Naruse Mikio. In the post-war period, Japan faced a series of challenges in the wake of its defeat in the Pacific War. The post-war period saw Japan undergoing a series of economic, political and societal shifts. Using three films, all made in or just after 1956 (the year that prostitution was criminalised by the Diet), Bingham explores how, taken together, these films collectively depict both Japan's post-war policies and gender norms as well as the pervasive ambiguity that existed in the mindset of the average Japanese citizen about the way the country was developing. As an advanced capitalist culture emerged from the ruins of defeat and the subsequent American occupation, Bingham shows how the prostitute and the allied figure of the Geisha, were used as the means to explore the contradictions and confusions of the post-war modern moment.

The role of the prostitute inside a national cinema has often been a complex one as Molly Hyo Kim clearly explores in her chapter 'The

Idealization of Prostitutes: Aesthetics and discourse of South Korean Hostess Films (1974–1982)'. The late 1970s to 1980s was a difficult period in South Korean history. A series of military dictatorships saw a curtailment of personal freedoms and rights simultaneous to a process of compressed modernity thanks to which South Korean industry grew at a remarkable rate. This mass industrialisation process had little care for the individual and as people flooded into the urban environment, tales of poverty, abuse and hardship were common. The Hostess films were a series of popular features that explored the lives of women working in the sex industry during this decade. Despite the sexual content, these films managed to escape the vigorous eyes of Park Chung-Hee's censors, making them not only an interesting exploration of prostitution in this era but also an important, yet often ignored, inclusion in South Korean cinematic history. As Kim explores, the specific visual and narrative styles of the Hostess films, meant that a split between reality and fiction was established that allowed the fallen women to operate as more than just a symbol of urban depravity. We see the 'fallen woman' in this sense reborn, not via a narrative of redemption, but as the ideal self-sacrificial symbol who functioned for the wider social good despite her own lowly status, echoing the function of the prostitute figure in Italian nineteenth-century opera, explored in Chap. 10 of this volume.

Saheed Aderinto's chapter, 'Inside the "House of Ill Fame": Brothel prostitution, feminization of poverty, and Lagos life in Nollywood's *The Prostitute*' moves us to another region of the globe as he explores how the popular Nollywood film *The Prostitute* channels a variety of contemporary Nigerian cultural and social concerns. While Aderinto does not negate the very real ways in which African women are too often marginalised in cinema, he offers the argument that 'the story of prostitution in Nollywood films goes beyond the depiction of women as objects of sexual pleasure'. Via his positioning of the brothel and the prostitute at the centre of the urban Lagos environment, Aderinto illustrates that the prostitute functions as a means via which diverse topics such as class, poverty, corruption and gender can be critiqued inside the Nigerian state.

Transgressive Women?

This third section of the book offers an opportunity to drill down in more depth into the ambivalence associated with the prostitute discussed

at the beginning of this introduction. Niamh Thornton and Teresa Ludden's chapters offer two very different approaches to understanding how this ambivalence can be structured through the figure of the prostitute in cinema. Niamh Thornton's 'Where Cabaret Meets Revolution: The prostitute at war in Mexican film' focuses on the figure of the star in Mexican cinema, demonstrating how María Félix performed and was constructed in her performances as a prostitute. In the revolutionary melodramas produced during the Golden Age of Mexican cinema (1930s–1950s) about the revolutionary war (1910–1920), the prostitute is a common figure, onto whom anxieties about women's place in the new post-Revolutionary Mexico are projected. However, Thornton argues that Félix's performances as a prostitute in the films, *La mujer de todos* (Julio Bracho 1946) and *La Bandida* (Roberto Rodríguez 1963), enable us to identify 'a distinctive performative style'. Through dance, song and costume, camera and lighting but also in the ways in which she occupies filmic space, she is able to challenge the relative containment of the narrative outcomes and indeed escapes the punishment meted out to prostitutes in other examples of the genre. Moving from a star-focused study to a philosophically-inspired inquiry, Teresa Ludden's chapter considers two films from a key period of German cinema, the New German Cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. In 'Distorted Antigones: Dialectics and prostitution in *Lola* (Fassbinder 1981) and *Shirins Hochzeit* (Sanders 1976)', she proposes an innovative approach to reading the prostitute in these films through the lens of Hegelian dialectical relations. Rather than focusing on the melodramatic aesthetic that the prostitute generates, one that recurs as we have noted throughout this book, she considers how the prostitute is used as a symbol 'to intimate critical voices of opposition yet are contained within (Lola) or destroyed by (Shirin) patriarchy and capitalism which both films suggest are inescapable.' The figure of Antigone, who as woman is both the foundation of and the excluded from the polis, provides a new model for reading the prostitute as symbol. Offering detailed readings of the way in which the two films' aesthetics construct the prostitute around this tension, Ludden demonstrates how the figure of Lola retains an ambivalence that makes Fassbinder's film more pessimistic than Sanders'. Although it is in Sanders' film that the prostitute dies, while Fassbinder's film ends with a marriage of compromise, Ludden argues that, informed by Sanders' feminism, Shirin is 'is also a character who says 'no' at crucial moments of protest against injustice and exploitation and gains agency from being the narrator of her

own story.' Indeed it is less a realist depiction of prostitution that matters in these films, than 'the symbolism inherent in the figure of the prostitute herself'. Yet Sanders manages to juxtapose a phenomenological form of film-making with 'elements of distancing which never disavow mediation and constitute a mode of dialectical empathy'. Such deliberate dialectical empathy forms a thought-provoking contrast with the 'discursive contradiction' identified within the Hindi melodrama in the following chapter.

Suffering Heroines Revisited

If certain stars and directors foreground transgressive women through the figure of the prostitute, perhaps more commonly, as we explore in this fourth section, it is the figure of the suffering prostitute in a melodramatic key that continues to dominate representations of prostitution, exploiting the affective and cathartic resonance of the narrative of the 'fall'. Nonetheless, as the chapters in both the previous section and this section demonstrate, the prostitute's predominantly ambivalent mode creates a series of cinematic spaces in which she is able to transcend momentarily her suffering, and like the heroines of the previous section, reach towards new trajectories of becoming. 'Becoming' is the key word for Aparna Sharma's chapter 'Becoming and Contradiction in the Muslim Courtesan—The Case of *Pakeezah*' as she examines Kamal Amrohi's *Pakeezah* (1971), a highly acclaimed Hindi film that surrounds a Muslim courtesan, Sahebjan. This figure, Sharma argues, 'provides insight into a postcolonial society's equations of otherness surrounding gender'. Drawing on the work of Luce Irigaray, in her examination of the soundscape of the film Sharma argues that the film strongly supports the development or 'becoming' of the protagonist through a series of six musical performances within the film that 'articulate Sahebjaan's imagination and inner longing, a form of courtesan consciousness'. In this way, the film's treatment of the courtesan anticipates Sanders' representation of Shirin, discussed by Ludden in the previous chapter, as the two physically oppressed women find self-expression through song. These performances co-exist with a tension in the overarching narrative framework of *Pakeezah* in which the figure of the courtesan is reintegrated into the nation through marriage. This 'discursive contradiction', Sharma argues, reinforces a national heroic image tied to independent India's Nehruvian era (1950–1960s).

In the framing of the voice of the courtesan as powerful, but limited, and in the identification of the national with male power (or lack of it) as a rescuer for the prostitute, there are strong areas of overlap with the following chapter. In 'Le traviate: Suffering heroines and the Italian state between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries', Danielle Hipkins and Kate Mitchell consider the relationship between what was considered the most successful operatic melodrama in the newly emerging nation state of nineteenth-century Italy, Verdi's *La traviata*, first performed in 1853, and a 2012 film addressing the theme of the suffering female and the doomed romantic relationship in the context of contemporary prostitution, *Un giorno speciale* (Francesca Comencini). The chapter explores the potential pitfalls of melodrama; the director comes uncomfortably close in the discourse surrounding the film to a moralising stance on prostitution in which the girl prostitute can be constructed as victim. However, in its recycling of the trope of the 'traviata', or Magdalene figure, they conclude, the film itself does succeed in making a space for youthful agency, of showing at least the potential for the suffering heroine to find a voice as 'suffering actor', related to her inheritance of elements of the Italian operatic tradition. The chapter explores the cultural legacy offered by the opera heroine, in particular through operatic theories of 'envoicing' the female protagonist according to which 'any contradiction that the suffering Italian opera heroine embodied […] was surpassed by the sheer sonority of her voice'.

In the final section of the book, our authors consider the postmodern re-visioning of the city, privileged locus of the 'fall' itself. In her chapter for that section, Fiona Handyside refers to Parisian culture as the key site of the modernist attempt to 'grapple with the rapid shifts of modernity, their impact on gender relations, sexuality, and spatiality, and art's role in the expression of all that.' Katie Johnson's chapter 'Consumptive Chic: The postfeminist recycling of Camille in Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!*' forms a useful bridge towards the question of re-writing that modernity in Luhrmann's new vision of Camille. However, this discussion of Camille belongs firmly in this fourth section because she is in dialogue with the operatic tradition of the suffering heroine explored by Hipkins and Mitchell. The figure is drawn from the same key source text for *La traviata*, from the French novel (1848) and play (1852) *La dame aux Camélias*, both by Alexandre Dumas fils. *Moulin Rouge!*, Johnson argues, taps into a long tradition of re-writing the sympathetic and doomed heroine, and appears at first glance, a 'quintessential

postmodern hooker chic film'. For all its flamboyant postmodern irony, she argues, the film engages the very 'master narratives' of 'prostitution discourse, gender norms, racialization, and hetero-normativity'. Examining the film in relation to Cukor's *Camille* (1936), another version of *Moulin Rouge* (John Huston 1952), and ending with an analysis of the 'Lady Marmalade' music video (2002) produced by Missy Elliot, while drawing on Rosalind Gill's notion of a 'postfeminist media sensibility', Johnson argues that the recent re-cycling of this figure of Camille relates to a new and deadly (for feminism) attachment to the female body as fetishised object. By contrast with what Hipkins and Mitchell conclude about the feminist and female-directed *Un giorno speciale* in relation to its re-writing of the 'fall', Johnson finds that this mainstream popular narrative leaves little space for female agency. Returning to the theme of the female voice that offers a *fil rouge* through this particular section, women in Luhrman's *Moulin Rouge!*, Johnson argues, are quite literally drowned out by 'men's voices, plotlines, and songs'. If the performances of the courtesan analysed by Sharma in Chap. 9 challenge the dominance of the male gaze through an attention to female experience, Satine's performances in *Moulin Rouge!* stage her solely as the object of desire.

Re-Viewing Women in the Postmodern City

While *Moulin Rouge!* offers a postmodern take on the Parisian myth, in this final section, 'Re-viewing women in the postmodern city', our authors examine further how screen cities and real cities are constantly re-built, re-packaged and re-written in an era of radical uncertainty and global exchange, one in which femininity itself is no longer legible as object in a postfeminist era. Still haunted by Paris's status as 'the' city of the prostitute as symbol of modernity, Handyside's chapter 'Postcards and/of Prostitutes: Circulating the city in Atom Egoyan's *Chloe* (2009)' examines a film whose French original was set in Paris, and whose screenplay set the story in San Francisco, which significantly relocates the story to Toronto, while maintaining both Parisian and San Franciscan palimpsests, revealing the complex postmodern recycling and slippage around the pairing of woman and city that cinema in particular can construct. Looking at the interlocking ways in which the eponymous character, Chloe, plays a number of substitutes for characters within the film, and how Toronto itself is often used by Hollywood as substitute

US city, Handyside examines 'the invisibility of how both women and cities are offered up as a series of fantasy substitutions, valuable only in their readiness to shift sexual and spatial zones at the will of (male) capital's behest'. Considering the motif of glass, a dazzling new feature of Toronto's architectural landscape, a mirror of multiple images, and deadly killer, as the film's salient visual means of conveying this duplicitous reflectivity, Handyside explores the filmmaker's own narrative of compromise between commercial mainstream and his personal trajectory as Toronto-based auteur. In highlighting Egoyan's reworking of a Toronto city landmark as a kind of Arc de Triomphe, Handyside's chapter also offers a useful metonym for the potency of the cinematic narrative of the female prostitute, apparently echoing nineteenth-century iconographical formulations, but with a postmodern twist. As Handyside also makes clear, Egoyan's narrative betrays the way in which major global cities are very much about the expulsion of the prostitute body from the city centre to its margins. Whatever centrality Parisian modernism afforded the prostitute as object, the global city of postmodernity limits the putative agency of the postfeminist subject by keeping her at its margins.

The global city's relocation of prostitution to its margins, while depending on the opportunity to consume sex as an everyday commodity, is also the topic of the following and final chapter. In 'Handbags, Sex and Death: Prostitution in contemporary East Asian cinematic urban space' Kate Taylor-Jones 'explores how gendered dynamics of urban space simultaneously open up and close down a vision of empowered subjectivity' in the cinematic cityscapes of Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea. In East Asia the urban mode of existence has become the increasing norm, and as we have seen in the chapter by Molly Hyo Kim, the site associated with prostitution. Urban space, rather than place, emerges as a key term for describing the differing modes of access to the city space available to the teen protagonists of *Girl$* (Kenneth Bi 2010), all engaged in 'compensatory dating', but for some it is 'the only means by which lower-class girls such as Gucci can fully engage with the neoliberal consumer culture of Hong Kong'. When Gucci spies her own brother, waiting outside the station to meet a mystery girl waiting to sell her virginity (who unbeknown to him is his sister Gucci), we encounter a recurrent narrative trope in which the social hypocrisy of prostitution, morally outlawed but apparently practised by all, is underlined by the perverse brother-sister encounter. This narrative has global resonance

as we see it as a central plot point in a film as distant in time and space as Alberto Lattuada's post-war Italian classic *Il bandito* (1945). In *Girl$* the anonymity of the chaotic cityscape associated with such visual representations is intensified by its entanglement with the digital world that contains the potential to generate such accidents of fate. However, if the sister in the much earlier Italian film ends up dead as a result of the chance encounter, Gucci's savvy relationship with the cityscape and the negotiating power that the online environment gives her enables her to spy upon her brother from a distance and leave before disaster ensues. However, internal city spaces are less promising as it is indoors that we see the girls of this film lose power and agency.

The collision of public and private women is echoed in another film Taylor-Jones examines, the Japanese *Guilty of Romance* (Sono Sion 2011) when a woman working as a prostitute discovers that the client she has been sent to is none other than her husband. This film explores the clash of values between sex and family, but more importantly the fragility of the 'the boundaries between public and private, between dirty and sanitary' in the chaos of the cityscape. An essential element that Taylor-Jones also raises, appropriately as the final filmic analysis of this book, is the growing phenomenon of geriatric prostitutes in Seoul. With its narrative of the ageing prostitute abandoned and then punished by the state for attempting to help herself and other like her, Taylor-Jones shows how the Korean film *The Bacchus Lady* (E J-yong 2016) uses the prostitute figure to imagine the marginalised subject speaking from the margins back to the centre. The narrative power of the female prostitute in global screen cultures is compelling, complex and contradictory, but at its best, it is precisely this power to visualise lost and forgotten lives that her image enables.

Notes

1. Jan Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction. Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Maggie O'Neill, *Prostitution and Feminism* (London and New York: Wiley, 2001).
2. Jin Haritawarn, 'Reckoning with Prostitutes: Performing Thai femininity' in Christina Scharff and Rosalind Gill, eds, *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2011), pp. 215–229.