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Book Review: Sophie Day, *On the Game: Women and Sex Work*. London: Pluto Press, 2006

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The social forums are presented as more contradictory spaces, in which the horizontal, democratic logic of the networked movements vies with the undemocratic logic of command-centred institutions. Chapter 8 demonstrates the book's central argument of the intersection of political ideals, networked organizations, and new technologies by focusing on digital media and computer activism. Juris characterizes initiatives such as Indymedia as examples of 'informational utopics' (pp. 281–4), which have translated democratic political ideals into their 'technological architectures' (p. 269) and have thereby prefigured an alternative model for the information society. In the conclusion, Juris seeks to connect this prefigurative quality of the relatively unstable radical networks with the instrumental focus of institutional forces. This displays how his highly reflexive practice has changed his political perspective. Like Williams, he seems to argue for an engagement with the state to achieve reforms. But not seeking merely to control the market, he is still aiming for radical social transformation.

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Sophie Day, *On the Game: Women and Sex Work*. London: Pluto Press, 2006.

Sophie Day has written an excellent anthropological account of selling sex in London. This is the most extensive longitudinal analysis of contemporary sex work in the UK so far, and the richness of the data and analytical depth are the strengths of this book. The aim of the book is ethnographic rather than to take a stance on the theoretical debates that have proliferated in (mostly feminist) discussions of the inherent nature of selling sex as exploitative or as 'just work'. Selling sex is discussed in the late modern, capitalist context and reflected upon in the context of the socio-political-epidemiological changes that have occurred during the time of the research. Drawing on interaction with sex workers over 16 years, Day illuminates the women's experiences, allowing the women themselves to be heard through quotes from interviews. Day analyses the women's experiences with specific reference to contemporary and classical social theories such as: private-public, capitalism and the market; stigma; self, person and auto-/biography; law and social policies regarding prostitution; and epidemiology; as well as gender and sexuality.

Sex workers are sometimes described as public or common women. Sex is seen as belonging to the 'private' sphere, a part of loving relationships, and not to be sold. Sex workers transgress the boundaries of 'public' and 'private' and the book is loosely divided into two sections in which Day discusses the sex workers' experiences of these.

In the first section (Chapters 2–5), Day analyses the experiences of the sex workers in relation to a number of 'publics'. Day describes sex workers' relations to the 'state' as a public, showing how policies on controlling prostitution, sexual health and trafficking directly influence the everyday experiences of sex workers, and how these have changed the sex industry over the years. Day describes how the increasing awareness of HIV has changed the nature of sexual and power relationships between the women and their clients by increasing concerns about health, as well as amplifying the stigma of sex work. Also, the government's (in-)tolerance and regulation of prostitution creates shifts in the locales where sex work takes place (e.g. saunas vs. streets vs. agencies). The venue affects women's security: their ability

to support each other and vulnerability to violence. Furthermore, immigration policies have changed the demographic backgrounds of the women, which in turn has led to shifts in discourses and control with regard to trafficking. Generally, the women experienced 'the state as the public' as hostile forms of control and punishment, and as failures to provide support to them.

Individually, women made attempts to negotiate the stigmatizing public stereotypes of prostitution, and tried to protect their identities from persecution by changing names and obtaining various identities. Perhaps because of the stigmatization and the lack of support available to the women, sex workers were also very susceptible to violence, and mortality rates were high, even if the assaults did not always take place in the sex work encounter.

Chapters 6–10 move on to more private and personal experiences of how selling sex is negotiated in relation to other aspects of life. They look at how money is used to maintain a certain lifestyle; how dreams are realized; relationships with partners; motherhood and children; and the types of relationships that women have with clients. Day argues that in many ways sex work means living at the margins of society. However, this was not always a negative experience; sex work had also the potential of being empowering. It provided an opportunity to explore, cash in on and challenge heterosexuality. The pleasures of sex work are rarely openly discussed and the book sheds light on these. Sex work provided the women with access to a lavish lifestyle: money was infatuating and addictive, and provided independence and freedom, but women also explained how they formed intensive friendships with other sex workers.

As a realistic and honest longitudinal account of the lives of women in sex work that is presented in a way in which women themselves do much of the talking, the book has important policy implications. One would hope that those who draft policies on sex work would read this book in order to create policies that respond to the needs of women who sell sex. The book is also of interest to students and academics alike in gender studies, public health and medical anthropology.

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