

of “saving” women from trafficking – a very problematic situation. This book does foster a continuance of these feminist debates and, therefore, should be read, albeit cautiously.

Leeann Townsend is a first year Ph.D. student in the Department of Women's Studies at York University. Her interests include prostitution and trafficking, transnational feminism, and militarism.

THE IDEA OF PROSTITUTION

Sheila Jeffreys
North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2008

REVIEWED BY ELYA M. DURISIN

Sheila Jeffreys' primary concern in *The Idea of Prostitution*, an updated version of her 1997 text of the same title, is to subject the sex workers' rights position (such as the idea that prostitution is work or that women have choice in prostitution) to a radical feminist critique. Jeffreys takes issue with what she describes as the 'normalization' of the sex industry by sex worker organizations and some postmodern and queer theorists writing on sexuality, and attempts to show how the interests being represented by these parties are not those of prostitute women but actually those of the sex industry. She includes chapters on prostitution as male violence and international approaches to ending trafficking of girls and women for work in the sex industry. As Jeffreys explains in the last chapter, her purpose in this book is to challenge the idea that "prostitution is just work, and sex, and choice."

With this text, Jeffreys revives a radical feminist anti-prostitution analysis; however she does not successfully overcome its limitations, which have caused it to fall out of

favour among many sex workers, activists, and academics. Jeffreys maintains that there is one definitive truth about prostitution, that is, it is violence. This results in her discounting sex workers and sex worker organizations that do not support her arguments. In describing her understanding of prostitution as a form of male violence, she acknowledges that not all prostitutes support this position. However, Jeffreys' resolution to this situation is to suggest that those sex workers who do not share her perspective should not be listened to as they have not been given adequate opportunity to understand the harm of their occupation. For Jeffreys, prostitution is an inherently harmful violation of women's human rights, regardless of context or what the women involved might think.

Jeffreys responds to arguments put forth by sex workers' rights activists through reference to American sex worker organizations and sex worker performing artists; however she does not engage with current writing and research from sex workers or sex worker organizations. A review of recent sex workers' writings and community and academic collaborations with sex workers' rights organizations clearly demonstrates that sex workers, and the organizations representing their interests, have a complex and sophisticated understanding of the problems, challenges, benefits, joys, and so on, of sex work. The sex workers' rights position recognizes that sex work is many things to many different people, the breadth of which cannot be appreciated through a lens that apprehends male violence exclusively. Sex workers' rights organizations recognize that sex workers may experience violence and exploitative working conditions; however they do not advocate for an abolition of prostitution.

Although Jeffreys' text, first published in 1997, was updated and reprinted in 2008, she has not engaged with the breadth of newer writing on prostitution, sex work, and traffick-

ing. She instead relies heavily on Hoigard and Finstad (1992, 1993), Giobbe (1990, 1991, 1992), and Farley and Hotaling (1995) and does not engage with the plethora of methodological critique towards anti-prostitution feminist research. While Jeffreys maintains that prostitution is harmful to women in ways that other jobs are not and could not be, she does not discuss this assertion in relation to research on embodied, emotional, and care-giving labour, which is particularly relevant given the increase in service-related occupations such as domestic work in the global economy.

Jeffreys' discussion of trafficking in the concluding chapters of the text is particularly troubling in a climate where it is becoming increasingly difficult for women in many parts of the world to cross borders. She does not address how her position, one that sees all migration for work in the sex industry as trafficking and a violation of women's human rights, could be used by particular political interests to justify increased border security that would further limit women's rights to mobility.

This book is most useful if understood as a particular, and rather outdated, perspective on prostitution. It is reflective of a time in feminist theorizing and political debate on gender and sexuality in which feminists and sex workers were often pitted against one another. While it is important to recognize and discuss the problems with working conditions in sex industry, it is unclear what the advantages of this position are and why this perspective seems to have such lasting appeal among some feminists. Given the growth of the international and North American sex workers' rights movements, it is critical that academic researchers begin to take seriously the analyses of sex workers and the numerous sex worker organizations representing their interests.

Elya Maria Durisin is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political

Science, York University. She is also a board member at Maggie's: The Toronto Sex Workers Action Project.

SEXING THE TEACHER: SCHOOL SEX SCANDALS AND QUEER PEDAGOGIES

Sheila L. Cavanagh
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007

REVIEWED BY MARY J. HARRISON

In *Sexing the Teacher: School Sex Scandals and Queer Pedagogies*, Sheila L. Cavanagh invites us inside recent sex panics involving white female teachers in Canada, the United States, and Britain, such as Mary Kay Letourneau, Annie Markson, Amy Gehring, and Heather Ingram. Through a sophisticated analysis incorporating psychoanalytic, queer, feminist, film, postmodern, and postcolonial theories, Cavanagh suggests that our collective fascination with white, female teachers who engage in flirtations or sexual contact with “underage” boy students has everything to do with defending against our heteronormative anxieties and queer desires, and very little with concern about actual ‘harm’ to the boys themselves. In none of these cases did the boys involved identify with the “victim” label enforced upon them by what Cavanagh calls “the master narrative of child sexual abuse.” Yet, in spite of the boys’ explicit denial of their victim status, their respective teacher-lovers faced personal, professional, and, in some cases, legal reprimands which, according to Cavanagh, exceeded the consequences for men teachers in similar (or non-consensual) cases. Cavanagh’s investigation into this phenomenon plunges us into the underbelly of the sanitized, white/colonial, heteronormative social order to reveal a swirling mass of complex-

ties, disavowals, queer desires, and desperate fears.

Much is at stake for education and society when we interrogate school sex panics. As Cavanagh explains, the school is the site where we expect students to be exposed to “a higher order of learning,” including the demands of the future-oriented, heteronormative social order and the unjust myriad of exclusions upon which it relies. It is the white, female teacher who is charged with the social reproduction of white, heterosexual norms, ushering her students into what education and the moral majority imagine to be a “proper” future as productive citizens of the nation. When the white, female teacher—positioned in the cultural imaginary as maternal paragon of virtue, pedagogical saviour, and humble servant to the colonial mission—avows and acts upon her non-normative desires she queers the pedagogical encounter, the educational space and mission, developmental time, and what Jan Jagodzinski (2002) calls “the family romance in education.” Further, her transgression provides threatening evidence that heteronormativity is culturally, not naturally, mandated.

In a chapter that focuses on lesbian teacher/student relationships, Cavanagh introduces a clever concept she calls “postmodern eugenics.” This refers to the moral majority’s fear of the “proliferation of queers” through homosexual “contagion” (her use of “eugenics” highlights the colonial and racist overtones of this fear). We may usefully apply this concept to Cavanagh’s whole study insofar as the moral panic is partly fuelled by the fear that female teachers who behave in queer ways will inevitably rub off on children whom we imagine (paradoxically) to be both heterosexual and innocent. Importantly, Cavanagh does not condone sex between students and teachers, clearly stating that she considers such infractions unprofessional. Yet she makes the crucial distinction between what is unprofessional and what is criminal. Agreeing that sexual

abuse of male and female students unfortunately can and does occur by male and female teachers, Cavanagh nevertheless insists that we must develop ways of thinking beyond the “master narrative of child sexual abuse” to allow that some relationships between students and teachers, if unprofessional, are sanctioned by what she calls “social consent.” Students who engage in socially consensual sex with their teachers are hurt not by those relationships, Cavanagh argues, but rather by sensationalized media coverage, official silencing and denial of their sexualities, and enforced separation from their lovers. Concluding her study, Cavanagh reflects on her writing process and the resistance she encountered to her queer analysis of school sex scandals. Courageously, she causes a stir by insisting that the teachers featured in her book ought not be labelled—nor persecuted as—“pedophiles.” This chapter demonstrates the insidious workings and discursive restrictions of the moral panic: to the anxious and moral majority unable or unwilling to think beyond its investments in its current “master narratives” and cultural imaginings, Cavanagh’s notes on some scandals become scandalous in their own right. Where she calls for the development of a queer pedagogy which embraces the role of Eros in the pedagogical encounter—for “[w]ithout Eros, there would be no incitement to learn or to teach”—the moral majority hears only the threat that Eros seems to pose within the confines of the “master narrative of child sexual abuse.” I fear there is currently little room for the kind of radical queer pedagogy that Cavanagh’s study wistfully envisions, but certainly *Sexing the Teacher* represents a step in the ‘right’ direction.

Mary J. Harrison studies Education as a Ph.D. student at York University. She is interested in the social and political functions of moral panics especially as they relate to adult constructions of the innocence of youth, and to sex education in public schools.