

Continuing to think about Prostitution

I've been continuing some research into the philosophical basis of points of view on prostitution. The common ground reached from differing angles has been interesting to observe.

One of the factors is the balance of individual freedoms versus social responsibility. At some point those, like myself, who hold that the sex industry is inherently harmful, must be able to articulate how the (very few) people involved in the industry who do feel empowered should lay down their freedom for the sake of the (very many) who are exploited, diminished and unable to exercise their choice.

In Christian terms I can couch this in terms of caring for the weaker sister or brother, of valuing relationships and persons made in God's image etc. Someone from a feminist background explained it to me in this way – the problem of society is compulsion to adhere to gender stereotypes, prostitution is inherently framed by a male-dominant female-subservient stereotype, therefore it is socially responsible to not promote or condone that stereotype. It's a fascinating exercise.

To this end, if I was able to be in Hobart on the day, I would be attending the following forum at which Professor Sheila Jeffreys is speaking. Her conclusions on prostitution are similar to my own but she approaches it from a completely different angle. The details are:

*PUBLIC FORUM – Guest Speaker
Professor Sheila Joy Jeffreys*

*1pm Saturday 2nd June
Venue: Friends Meeting House
5 Boa Vista Road, North Hobart*

Legalising Prostitution = Legalising Violence against Women

Professor Jeffreys will explain that legalising brothel prostitution is a failed social experiment. It does not control the industry, or eliminate corruption, organized crime or street prostitution. Instead it exacerbates all these problems. It does not end the violence and abuse that women in prostitution suffer, but instead gives the seal of approval to the everyday violence of prostitution that women get paid to survive. It will make Tasmania a pimp state, which profits from prostituting women. She will explain how legalising the industry of prostitution threatens the equality of all women, including their rights to equality of relationships and equality in the workplace.

Professor Sheila Joy Jeffreys is from the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne and is the Public Officer of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia. Professor Jeffreys is the author of eight books on the history and politics of sexuality including The Idea of Prostitution and The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade.

*For Inquiries Contact Jennie Herrera, Whistleblowers Tasmania
03 62 282 727*

I have also come across the following resources which are helpful factsheets about the whole issue:

- http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/prostitution_fact_sheet.pdf
- <http://catwa.org.au/?q=node/56>
- <http://www.innovations.harvard.edu/cache/documents/1310/131041.pdf>