Beyond Moments of Disjuncture: The Visual Culture of the Sex Trafficked Asian (Woman)

Annie Fukushima

Human trafficking has found its way into mainstream television and a simple *Google Images* search of "human trafficking" illustrates that the face of a trafficked person is diverse, but the images are recognizable: the face of the children who are trafficked found in the *LifeTime* Series "Human Trafficking,"[1] the lower body shot of a woman, or a girl in high heels, and a child maybe from the Global South crying. The images invoke multiple realities tapping into U.S. dominant ideology surrounding the fear of children being trafficked and "First World" notions of the "Third World."

At the beginning of January 2008 The SAGE Project in San Francisco made visible their services through a banner campaign on San Francisco's poles in different languages with a simple question, "has someone taken your passport?" One banner includes a picture of someone whose wrists are bound up with rope the other of someone whose ankles were chained – neither of the images show a face/race/gender – only bound hands or shackled feet in stilettos.[2] The anti-trafficking movement has found usefulness in drawing upon visual tactics in order to move towards "abolition." In line with this approach the Polaris Project has a campaign of images that raises awareness regarding the fact that, "Slavery Still Exists"[3] (2005), the Prostitution Research Education has a visual image gallery,[4] the Southeast Asian Children's Project incorporates photo documentaries exhibited in 2007,[5] and there have been a myriad of films, both dramatic and documentary, showcasing sextrafficking.[6] The focus on sex slavery invokes Angela Davis's understanding of U.S. slavery where African enslaved women were vulnerable to rape.[7] The history surrounding sexual enslavement within the U.S. context has been written about since the antebellum 19th century anti-slavery movements, in the current context, the attempt to make visible the invisible is transnational and a continually contested terrain.

In this paper I analyze two different art events that engage contemporary notions of human trafficking through art: *WE, Asian Sex Workers* art exhibit in 2007, and The House of Sharing, Korea, an on-line art exhibition of "The Comfort Women" (1992 to present) that toured the U.S. in 2007. Both exhibition sites occurred in the U.S. but are transnational in their content, illustrating the diversity of art images that deconstruct the homogenized Asian female body through meaning and a sense of historical continuity. These events illuminate how visuality is "not just the 'social construction of vision,' but the visual construction of the social."[8]

Despite such public visual representations the lived experience of the trafficked person goes unnoticed, that is, unless one notices that the massage parlor down the street is open for business 24 hours and has surveillance cameras, or discover that the janitor that cleans one's building doesn't have his/her passport because it is being withheld, and that the neighbor down the

street, who has a live-in domestic worker, has taken away her employee's legal documents.[9] These examples are difficult to see even for the trained eye, for as former Ambassador John Miller has said "slaves don't stand in line and raise their hands to be counted." [10]

In 2005, over one hundred Korean women were found to be trafficked into San Francisco massage parlors in a government initiative referred to as Operation Gilded Cage. While the media focused on the conviction of the traffickers for illegal harboring of aliens, instead of for human trafficking, advocates that worked with survivors conveyed that it was clear the women were trafficked, and while the survivors could leave, they had no access to resources, no papers, and nowhere to go. However, in 2008 in a local proposition campaign to decriminalize prostitution, pro-prostitution advocates conveyed that in the past five years no one had been convicted of human trafficking, erasing the recent history of the over one hundred women trafficked into San Francisco. While this case was visible, the ongoing invisibilities of the trafficked Asian body continues to be rendered as happening elsewhere. This is part of a long history of U.S. discourse on the trafficked Asian body as not being the Asian in the U.S., but the Asian in Asia. Situating the trafficked Asian in U.S. discourse as elsewhere disembodies the trafficked Asian woman whose trafficked body is deeply tied to U.S. ideologies surrounding the submissive role of Asian women in the global economy and within the confines of the U.S. nation-state boundaries.

The Asian female body becomes an important site for linking Asia and the U.S. According to Kathryn Farr, a majority of the world's trafficked population is from Asia. Not surprisingly, while the world's trafficked population is from Asia, in the U.S. context the demand for Asian bodies is also evident in the presence of Asians in sex industry advertisements.[11] In spite of the 4% that Asians constitute as a population in the U.S. they are overwhelmingly represented within the U.S. sex industry in major cities. However, what does this mean for the U.S. and its Asian/American population? "'Asian women' or more accurately 'Asian female bodies' have come to matter for two linked registers of transnational labor: (1) the political economies of assembly-line manufacturing, military prostitution, and sex tourism, and (2) the discursive economies of representational practices and knowledge claims about Asian women workers in those interrelated sites."[12] For Laura Hyun Yi Kang, countries in Asia such as Thailand or Korea are as much Thai and Korean as they are American with "English neon signs, blaring pop music, and female bodies that fill the 'hot spots' of military prostitution and sex tourism." U.S. perceptions of Asian women in Asia cannot be disaggregated from U.S. perceptions of Asian/Americans. Kang's understanding of space and transnational bodies allows for a reconnecting of colonialism with the human trafficking of Asians.

Additionally two different art events that engage with contemporary discourse of human trafficking through art have been *WE, Asian Sex Workers* art exhibit in 2007, and The House of Sharing, Korea, an on-line art exhibition of

"The Comfort Women," both are transnational in their content illustrating the diversity of art images that deconstruct the homogenized Asian female body. Through the utilization of visual culture discourse on human trafficking, bodies on display, and social movement theory, I reframe the anti-trafficking movement and the possibilities for (re)articulating newer spaces for definition that may be delineated in an understanding of our notions of the gaze, queering our lens, and a decolonial feminist framework.

Conceptualizing the visibility of an anti-trafficking movement as utilizing visual culture, as well as simultaneously producing a visual culture, enables a deeper understanding of the multiple *scapes*[13] in which the anti-trafficking movement articulates itself both at the local and global level spanning across national boundaries and in its' varying locations. What does the visual culture of an anti-trafficking movement say about movement building and possibilities for social change? What institutions and ideologies are being inscribed in all extremes of an anti-trafficking movement, that as Bonaventura De Sousa Santos conveys are polarized in the global north? And are we in the participation through witnessing – voicing stories –restructuring an entire movement or solidifying its' structures? Where are its limitations through reinscription and its' (re)production in visual culture? Where are the spaces for possibility?

The two events analyzed in this paper do not define the entire traffic movement but rather illuminate the connectivity of the moments that have arisen in the anti-trafficking movement which enable the theorizing of local events as a means to understand the global.

The Visuality of Human Trafficking: From Chongshindae to "WE Asian Sex Workers"

At an exhibit which took place on February 12, 2007, movements, such as the 121 Coalition worked to mobilize the Asian American community, and the larger U.S. community. Previously on January 31, 2007, Michael Honda introduced House Resolution 121 that was shepherded by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, Tom Lantos. Titled, "Relative to the War Crimes Committed by the Japanese Military during World War II," Resolution 121 urged the Government of Japan to bring closure to the issue by formally issuing a clear and unambiguous apology for the atrocious war crimes committed by the Japanese military during World War II and immediately paying reparations to the victims of those crimes. As a means to solicit support before the February 15, 2007 hearing,[14] survivors such as Koon-Ja Kim traveled to speak at universities and in public spaces throughout the U.S. as a means to tell their stories. Events such as the "As long as I live" event that featured survivor testimonies and survivor art work in the U.S. began as early as 2000.[15] Prior to Koon-Ja Kim's testimony[16] to the U.S. Senate, Koon-Ja Kim visited University of California, Berkeley to share her testimonial as a survivor, "Comfort Woman"/ *Chongshindae* of Japanese militarized prostitution that impacted an estimated

200,000 women from the Asia-Pacific region, of which eighty percent were from Korea. Framed in the context of her testimonial were slides of paintings that she and other survivors made at the House of Sharing in Korea, a safe house for "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* survivors. One image in particular still burns in my memory, no physical marker of it exists on the Sharing House website, "Burning Virgins." Upon first glance the image looks like a vagina on fire and is reminiscent of the works of U.S. painters that have utilized the "cavity which defines women"[17] – the iconography of the vagina. However, upon a closer look, the survivor who painted the image informed the audience that when the war had ended for Japan the Japanese military attempted to destroy evidence of the militarized operation that forced thousands of women into prostitution by throwing the women into a pile and burning them. This survivor lived to tell her story because she was at the top of the pile of bodies.

The painting illustrates this particular survivor's memory and trauma but it is also a part of a myriad of paintings that have been produced out of the Sharing House. To date there are only 132 surviving "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* in Korea. The mobilization around this particular issue is in part due to the fact that most of the surviving women are in their 70s and 80s and as such there is little time for reparation, formal apologies, and the documentation of their stories.

"Comfort Woman"/*Chongshindae/*Sex Slaves, are among the many names that are used to speak of this particular historical moment of militarized prostitution, all were recruited to prevent the Japanese soldiers from gang-raping women in the occupied territories in Manchuria. The Japanese government was reluctant to release Japanese prostitutes because procurers were hesitant in providing Japanese prostitutes in large numbers, also the rapid spread of venereal disease among Japanese prostitutes and soldiers led to the drafting of Korean women. Japanese stereotypes and discrimination of Korean women's values surrounding chastity and Confucianism led to the assumption that Korean women were ideal prostitutes for the Japanese military. Testimonies by survivors such as that by Moon Pil Ki indicate that, "I was just lying there like a piece of wood. I hardly noticed any of their faces… How can I describe what they did to me? You know, I still have nightmares. Tonight, after you are gone, I will not be able to sleep. I will be chased by the images and voices of my past."

While for survivors such as Moon Pil Ki the reality of describing what militarized prostitution means to surviving "Comfort Women" lies in disconnect from those who have no sense of such trauma, literary representations such as Nora Okja Keller's *Comfort Women* (1998) work to create a means for those who have never experience militarize prostitution to enter through fictional narrations of "Comfort Women":

> Induk – the woman who was Akiko before me – cracked. Most of the other women thought she did because she would not shut

> up. She talked loud and non-stop. In Korean and in Japanese she denounced the soldiers, yelling at them to stop their invasion of her country and her body. Even as they mounted her, she shouted, I am Korea, I am a woman, I am alive. I am seventeen, I had a family just like you do, I am a daughter, I am a sister… Just before daybreak, they took her out of her stall and into the woods where we couldn't hear her anymore. They brought her back skewered from her vagina to her mouth, like a pig ready for a roasting. A lesson, they told the rest of us, warning us into silence.[18]

Disease and scars are reminders to those who survive. Women who were in this militarized prostitution often serviced anywhere from ten to fifty men a day, many didn't count, it didn't matter how many. Works of Korean/ American and Asian/American organizers continue to link the living history of the "Comfort Woman"/*Chongshindae* with U.S. militarisms that have operated in Korea since WWII.[19] And for some anti-trafficking advocates, contemporary women servicing military bases are the "Comfort Women" of the 21st century.[20]

On July 14-22, 2007 Asian "sex workers"/pro-prostitution Annie Chan, Tracy Quan, Mariko Passion, and Sarah Mac came together to exhibit art work that they argue resists perceptions of the Asian "sex worker" as the trafficked survivor. Through art, these women worked to counter dominant perceptions of Asian women as "victims" of sex trafficking. One of the artists/performers and self identified "sex worker" Mariko Passion in one piece displayed her body before the camera next to a "For Sale" sign and in another piece stared directly at the camera on her knees holding cash in her hands. These pieces articulate a space of possible redefinition, but also re-inscribe the body on display, before the predominantly white audience (only four out of the thirty attendees on opening night were visibly Asian in contrast to the primarily white audience). The event and its exhibits contested through art and performance conventional understandings of who is a "victim."[21] All art pieces on display were for sale, and buyers were offered a "free lap dance" by one of the performance artists and Mariko Passion. The blurring of the borders between the realm of the visual arts and performance culminated in the continued display of the bodies of both real and imagined "sex workers." Prior to the opening of the collaborative event and exhibit by Chan, Quan, Passion, and Mac, Mariko Passion staged a piece titled "John School"[22] in which she performed a rendition of the "Me So Horny" imagery of the Vietnamese prostitute in the film *Full Metal Jacket.* Mariko Passion conveyed the prostitute as empowered by performing S&M acts on a man who wore a military uniform. The performance included sexual acts, as well as urinating on, and kicking, the man performing the role of the 'john.' The display of images resembled an attempt to display the reality imagined by the artist and performer of "sex workers."

The onset of the "sex workers" movement in the U.S. is credited to Carol Leigh, a white and self-identified "sex worker" – who is also the founder of SWOP, the core group that founded *WE Asian Sex Workers*. Leigh's role in the movement began during the 1960s as part of the era's women's liberation movement in which the U.S. sex worker movement raised questions of control over women's bodies as such the movement was integral to shifting the feminist paradigm. Carol Leigh joined the white women's movement, deploying a second wave and "labor" focused stance on bodies for sale. Leigh argued that sex workers deserve labor rights mirroring rights obtained for working women via the women's liberation movement.

The "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* as well as the pro-prostitution movement in the U.S. conjure up questions surrounding the nationalism that is embedded in locating oneself within the issue of sex exploitation; who does it benefit to take a history of sex exploitation across national divides and when? The "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* event was part of a larger initiative for the U.S. to put pressure on the Japanese government to officially apologize for the exploitation of Korean women. Japan's denial of the exploitation of "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* during WWII continues well into the 21st century. In March 2007 Japan's minister Abe was sited as saying that there was "no evidence" of the prostitution of thousands of women in Japanese military camp-towns. The same year Asian/ American groups and their allies pushed for the passage of HR 121 in the U.S. requiring the Japanese government to formally apologize. Passage of such legislations have led to questions of how will countries that pass policies similar to HR 121 enforce Japan's apology? While such questions have arisen surrounding the nationalisms of Korean mobilizations surrounding "Comfort Women," what does this movement mean for the prostitute/"sex worker," whose experience historically has been relegated to the role of being discursively described as a "vice."

Towards a Theory of the Visual Culture of (Anti-)Human Trafficking

Guiding my methodology is Gloria Anzuldua's conceptualization of *La facultad*[23] as a means to understand a differential social movement.[24] Chela Sandoval draws upon Anzuldua to understand differential social movements as finding "its expression through the methodology of the oppressed. The technologies of semiotic reading, deconstruction of signs, meta-ideologizing, differential movement, and moral commitment to equality are its vectors, its expressions of influence. These vectors meet in the differential mode of consciousness, which carries them through to the level of the 'real' where they can impress and guide dominant powers."[25] As such, integral to this paper is a move towards studying the semiotics of an anti-trafficking movement in both its linguistic discourse, and its visual component.

The methodology of this paper engages visual culture and social movements with an interdisciplinary of frameworks that cross cultural

studies/visual cultural studies, historical, transnational feminisms, women of color, and social theory to deconstruct, and then reconstruct, what the anti-trafficking movement have to say about movement building and possibilities for social change. As conveyed by María Lugones, "it's not about how far one moves, but how one moves."[26] The analysis of the visual culture of an anti-trafficking movement enables a rethinking of how bodies perform redefinition/rearticulation and also solidify dominant ideologies – whether this performance is through the body itself or a (re)presentation of the body – flattened or not. The framework of this analysis is also informed by a Chicana feminist theory/practice due to the usage of art in the Chicana/o community for movement building and solidarity. Racial formations of the Asian and Latina in the U.S. that are embedded in raced, sexed, and classed perceptions of their bodies is integral for deconstructing (and reconstructing) how social movements interact with other social realities that are both local and global. The hypersexualized Asian body in mass media, in spite of the small percentage Asian/Americans constitute in the U.S., leads to the need to rearticulate/refigure what it means to be Asian in the U.S. imaginary in the 21st century as a contested site that is also resolidified as hypersexualized. It is not new to argue that the perceptions of Asian women's bodies are embedded in notions of the exotic Asian ("Suzie Wong" or "the geisha girl"), however, such an imagery perseveres in the 21st century.[27]

Drawing upon María Lugones notion of the tactical strategies of a street walker I hope that *you* as the reader can walk through the streets of my remembering of the events, my memories, in an effort to disrupt the dichotomies that have occurred in the movement.[28] Seemingly oppositional, these events reflect the ideological construction of the "Other" in the U.S. that is female(d) and sexed heterosexual. But, in drawing upon them, there is an attempt to move away from homogeneity, in which binarisms have developed in the movement. By unpacking these moments and illustrating points of continuity and disjuncture, the goal is to move away from homogenizing the complex dynamic of human trafficking.[29] In this paper I resist the notion of "unity" which for hegemonic feminisms is a deeper need for homogeneity. What this allows is more complexities and spaces for rethinking movement building.

The two events delineated in this paper are based on memory, my memory,[30] how I remember the events, but it also includes a questioning of this memory in the "Today" and calls for an understanding of memories within a movement of memories. As conveyed by Laura E. Perez and the politics of memory and Chicana spirituality is "the reality of a socially and materially embodied s/Spirit is consciously remembered, which we are called to witness and act upon, alongside other historically specific and related issues of 'race,' gender, sexuality, and class."[31] Through the utilization of my memory of these events, and the images that were painted, I move towards a thinking of not simply (re)memory and the construction of new memories, but also toward

thinking critically about how the visual creates new memories. Also how these memories are informed by old tropes that are ghosts of those seen before, illustrating that the visual is not simply an "activating principle," [32] but a complex phenomenon that articulates from the everyday body to the formation of a movement. I will return to these two particular events in a weaving fashion to delineate what visual culture means (and may mean) for an anti-trafficking movement in the U.S. and the broader implications.

As Crew and Sims delineate the objects within any exhibit are shaped by the exhibit's theme. However, I would like to suggest that this shaping extends beyond the exhibit's theme, the shaping and significance of any object is also defined by the location of the exhibit and by the viewer's perceptions of the significance of the objects.[33] For example, the World's Colombian Exhibition in 1893 was defined by the corporate board that organized the exhibition and the state's interest to celebrate American Imperialisms and expansion into the Asia-Pacific.[34] Historically exhibits illuminate the multiple meanings of objects on display, and the context within which they function. The location of the events described in this paper were not in an art gallery, but in an "ar + space," a rented out space in San Francisco. Locating the exhibit outside of an official art institution further solidifies its' peripheral location, both in the public imaginary, and its' social acceptance. This suggests that conceptualizations of space/place of both the "Comfort Women" and "WE Asian Sex workers" exists outside of official art institution , outside of the institutions of the museum, but always within the local/global economy.

Is "*WE Asian Sex Workers*" an example of *counteridentification*[35] or is it reproducing a dominant paradigm of stratification in which it is Asian women's bodies that are sold, and it is the Asian/Woman of Color that is exotic? Who is being outreached to in the line up of activities that, while focusing on the "worker," it is the customer who "cums"? While pro-prostitution advocates in the U.S. fight for "legalization" or a decriminalizing model that is similar to "legalization,"[36] these frameworks do not recognize the experience of the migrant worker of color who regardless of a "legal" venue for work, is criminalized because of their race/ethnicity.

What is at stake for women of color whose communities are deeply affected by human trafficking and exploitation, but who are also influenced by the tensions and binarisms that have developed white feminism? Research on both sides of the extremes, from anti-prostitution to pro-prostitution advocates delineates that those who tend to work in the most low paying aspects of the sex industry and which are often most visible on the streets are African American women, while in massage parlors, Asian women predominate.[37] Understanding difference is integral for deconstructing social movements, including the anti-trafficking movement, which has been deeply defined by struggles of power. As Alice Chai conveys, "what 'feminism' means to women of color is different from what it means to white women. Because of our histories, we identify more closely

with international Third World sisters than with white feminist women..." Chai's work allows for an articulation of the significance of thinking critically of notions of transforming resistance and opposition not merely within feminist social movements, but across all social movement boundaries.

Racialized Bodies in a Global Site

Similar to museum settings, the site of the two events are not a neutral sheltering of spaces/place for objects, but in the case of these two public spaces, the ideological conceptualization of women and bodies is intentional. While museums offer up values and beliefs about social, sexual and political identity,[38] what is offered in the case of the anti-trafficking movement and pro-prostitution movement in which displays exists in popular media spaces (internet, newspapers, print media) and sometimes an actual exhibition, is the silence surrounding the coloniality of race and gender where the bodies of the victim/ body to be bought/sold is figured as female and "exotic." I draw upon María Lugones to define the coloniality of gender, where, "the colonial, modern, gender system cannot exist without the coloniality of power." That is current gender systems are imbricated in colonial power systems. In order to reframe violence and agency where bodies are figured as a site of mediation, it is necessary to draw upon Anibal Quijano's notion of the "coloniality of power" and Enrique Dussel's notion of transmodernity as a means for an "imprint" of the possibilities of thinking from the colonial difference.[39] For Quijano, utilizing Latin America and its' relationship to the Global North (i.e., the U.S. and Europe) as an example, the coloniality of power is reified historically, the "coloniality of power is tied up to the concentration in Europe of capital, wages, the market of capital, and finally, the society and culture associated with those determinations."[40] As such, the coloniality of power works to create a dependence on the belief that the social interests of the U.S. and Europe are also the same for those in Latin America. Dussel seeks to destabilize notions of modernity as being situated in Europe and the U.S., where modernity is a planetary phenomenon that the Global South has contributed to, a transmodernity.[41] For the anti-trafficking movement to critically engage with anti-violence work in the context of colonialisms necessitates a critique and working beyond frameworks that have been deeply embedded in Europe and the U.S. But also an engagement with how colonial powers between countries such as those in Asia have solidified a dynamic of dependence with the U.S. and Europe that spans into the sex industry. Therefore, I feel that it is necessary to engage with not only women of color theories, but a queering of the lens through a decolonial framework is necessitated through centering a decolonial praxis.

Michel Foucault contended that where there is power there is resistance.[42] Drawing upon Michel Foucault as a point of departure to illustrate how sexuality in this context is fundamentally linked to power and knowledge, what I find in the contradictory spaces of silence, in which repression does not

simply manifest in our silences, but also around the silences of when violence occurs, is that in spite of the national and international attention on human trafficking and the implementation of federal policies within the U.S., such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the silences are pervasive in the few hundred cases that have been prosecuted in spite of the estimated 50,000 that are trafficked into the U.S. annually. The imagery of the "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* perpetuates this violence as still "somewhere else" that is solidified by the pro-prostitution/"WE Asian Sex Workers" event that contested Meredith May's imagery of the prostitute as a "sex slave."[43] Jo Doezema's essay, "Forced to Choose: Beyond the Voluntary vs. Forced Prostitution Dichotomy" contends that divisions have been created due to the "voluntary/forced" dichotomy, and that a preferable language is "choice."[44] As delineated in Operation Gilded Cage, while many may "choose" to prostitute, they do not choose the conditions, the exploitation, and violence. As conveyed by Aida F. Santos, debates on "choice" are also a "western" phenomenon, where building sustainable communities have required many women in countries such as the Philippines and Korea, to surround bases and to "choose" prostitution as a means of income due to the lack of other choices.[45] While "choice" then becomes a complicated battleground of those in the U.S. who genuinely choose to prostitute not because they lack options, the question then is, should they represent an entire movement where choice may not be an option for everyone and thereby taking into consideration interdependencies that have developed between the U.S. and occupied territories.

The utilization of art/visual culture in the Anti-trafficking movement may in itself be recognized as a counterculture to the mainstreaming of the global movement. Race in the context of the work of *Chongshindae* may be read as resisting the trope of the hypersexualized Asian body and the "WE Asian Sex Workers" resisting the imagery of a victim.[46] The visual components at both events, the paintings by the *Chongshindae* and the art exhibit by sex industry "workers" while they attempt to center exploitation by engaging with human trafficking, both reinscribe the already existing binarism that Asians are situated in a U.S. context: bodies to be saved and bodies that are sexualized/to be sold.

Some of the questions that arose during the event entitled "WE Asian Sex Workers" regarding the context of predominantly white viewers include: does the "sex workers" movement and the events that have arisen out of this particular movement, both cultural and political, appropriate Asian/Americans to further a white feminist agenda? The "Sex Workers" movement within the U.S. is heavily defined by white women, suggesting that the ghosts of the ideological divisions from the 1980s women's movement,[47] and even before, has found its way into the present. Both the pro-prostitution/"sex worker" and abolition movement historically are embedded deeply in an agenda that focuses on white female bodies. The Anti-White Slave trade movement that began in the late 19th century and which lead to the passage of the Mann Act (a.k.a., the "White Slave Trade

Act") was a response to "save" white women who were being trafficked from Europe into the U.S. Similarly the pro-prostitution movement that was mobilized in the 1960s was led by white women. What both suggest is that the anti-trafficking and "sex workers" movements which both impact people of color in the U.S. and the "Third World"/the "Global South," have been heavily defined in a U.S. context with white women at the center. However, the anti-trafficking movement has shifted not only within the boundaries of the nation-state, but also in the way it crosses national boundaries. Such realities open up possibilities for coalitions of resistance that recognize and practice a "form of resistance that renegotiates technologies of power through an ethically guided, skilled, and differential deployment."[48] Such spaces may be seen as spaces of resistance/mobilization/redefinition allowing for the questioning of the imagination as a space that has been colonized. The construction of imaginary landscapes derives from imagination as social practice in which "the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work, and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility" (Lugones 2003, 226). Lugone's theory of active subjectivity is useful for rethinking the multiple sites in which a theorizing occurs. This subject works/theorizes from what Lugones calls the "pedestrian" view: "the perspective from inside the midst of people, from inside the layers of relationships, institutions and practices."[49]

The anti-trafficking and pro-prostitution movements both draw upon these varying connectivities in order to further an ideological agenda across national boundaries/but it is also a site of contestation. This opening of spaces has led to the "disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce media, national policies, and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders." In the events, both international in their scope, from *Chongshindae* to "Sex worker" representations, both utilize the internet, the web, as a space to further their political direction: imagined bodies articulated through the space of the web and the imaginary in visual culture. Through such articulations the gaze then is reproduced, reinscribed, and at times, resisted. While conceptualizing racialized bodies in an anti-trafficking movement and pro-prostitution movement is useful for rethinking nationalisms and the multiplicity of *scapes* within which they operate, the visual components of these structures necessitates a (re)thinking of the body on display.

The Gaze: The Body (Re)Displayed

The body of the trafficked survivor, whether the imagery of "S/he" spans across multiple spaces on the web, campaign images, television, social service outreach materials, and more, invokes what Irit Rogoff's argues to be how "visual culture opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds and spatial delineations are read on to and through one another, lending ever-

accruing layers of meanings and of subjective responses to each encounter we might have with film, TV, advertising, art works, buildings or urban environments." [50]

The image of the trafficked person is contested in a multiplicity of sites, the "Comfort Women"/*Chongshindae* and the prostitute/ "sex worker" convey the multiple axis in which meanings of the "Other," the "victim," etc., are constructed. But also, definitions of the trafficked or "un-trafficked" are contested through its' own site of production: the anti-trafficking movement's use of visual culture. But as Lisa Bloom suggests in her essay, much more than contestation and the accrual of meanings occurs, but it is also a dialogue between different feminisms.[51] Irit Rogoff contends that popular portrayals of race/sex is as oppositional (i.e., whiteness constitutes itself through blackness), delineating that what is being constituted in the self portrayal through art/mass media attention/internet conversations and websites that convey the history of the trafficked survivor or those that resist this construction cross national boundaries is a conversation of embodied experiences with a dominant one. Here the question is not merely "Who Speaks" but when the "S/he" speaks, what are we hearing, or in the case of visual media, seeing, and as illuminated by Trinh Minh-ha, what structures are being altered?[52] Multiple ideological structures are altered, but a significant one that is transformed through witnessing is the listener/seer of the anti-trafficking event: the witness.

Such witnessing allows for the potentiality of disidentification,[53] here I am furthering José Esteban Muñoz's understanding of disidentification as not merely one that may be read in the work of art, but is a relationship that is extended to the audience's connection to the works, where the witness *transfigures* or reorients the experience to inform their own strategies and tactics in "powerful ways".[54] The audience that viewed the paintings by the *Chongshindae* are U.S. based Asian/Americans non-survivors contrast with the audience that viewed the images of the prostitute/"sex worker" who were primarily white and a mixture of self-identified "sexworkers"/pro-prostitution. José Esteban Muñoz contends that disidentification is the ability to read one's life, it is about "recycling and rethinking encoded meaning."[55] While Elaine Kim has illustrated that Asian/ American women have taken up the issue of the *Chongshindae* because of an identification with the issue, also a disidentification with the history has the ability to transform the audience to (re)encode what it means to be Asian in the context of violence/militarization instead of one that is often presumed to be operating in privilege and upward mobility. In contrast to the primarily Asian attendance for the *Chongshindae* event, a question then that is raised is what is the connection for the primarily white audience for the "We Asian Sex Workers" event? The images produced by the "sex workers"/Pro-prostitutes illustrate a similar pattern of *disidentification* in which their images reject the imagery of the exploited prostitute. While the "We Asian Sex Workers" event may be read as a site of possible transformation, questions arise when considering audience versus

performer/the source of the gaze versus the object, that is embedded in the reality that the audience for the "We Asian Sex Workers" event was/is primarily white versus the *Chongshindae* event that was primarily Asian/ American. Understanding an event's audience leads to questions of who is looking at whom. The gaze and the critique of the male gaze and its conversations have been replaced by more flexible conceptions of looking and imaging that account for multiple viewers and perspectives.[56] But, it is here that I would like to take a few steps back/forward, to deconstruct the image through Barthes and the "what are they looking at."

Taking Barthes language we can say of one of the images titled "Burning Virgins," and of its ability to invoke an image of a vagina on fire in shape/form, that it is an intentional image of advertisement illustrating how the language and imagery support each other.[57] In contrast to this imagery, the sign mentioned earlier of the "sex worker" on her knees holding money conveys a duality of meaning: the submissive Asian earns money through dependency on militarisms or has the agency to earn money in prostitution, where "choice" is not the debate for this prostitute. But, both images, signify that the general understanding, whether violence or liberation, is sexed heterosexually.

Of Other Spaces: Queering Our Lens As Decolonial Feminisms

Deconstructing The role of women in an anti-trafficking movement, and the way that they are signified through a reinforcement of a hegemonic gaze, in which it is not simply a looking at the images they produce, but also looking at them as gendered and raced. Anne McClintock's 1995 publication *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* "sets out to explore this dangerous and contradictory liaison between imperial and anti-imperial power. Women's bodies in the imperial divide are mediators/sites of mediation[58] in which debates surrounding their bodies in a colonial context configure around money and sexuality, violence and desire, labor and resistance.[59] Knowing such multiple sites in which imperialism and power is situated, and is contested, allows for a deconstruction of agency in the context of imperialism.

María Lugones is useful for rethinking the visual culture of an anti-trafficking movement as not merely defined by the dichotomies that have developed in U.S. ideologies, but one that is situated in both repression and resistance. As such, transformative work not only lies within the body of those who are directly impacted by discourse, such as the trafficked, but also in the (re)thinking of the gaze that develops from their representation. The continuation of a colonial logic lies in the knowledge productions of trafficking (and attempts to render it invisible) within institutions that govern the nation-state, and in how such knowledges are reinforced in the visual culture of an anti-trafficking movement.

For transformative work to occur in the anti-trafficking movement requires a rethinking of the language and images which reinforce a heterosexual imaginary. In deconstructing the visuality of an anti-trafficking movement it

becomes clear that it has yet to be queered strategically, in the sense that "'queer' refers to nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time. While I have attempted to 'Queer time' – a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance"[60] – by juxtaposing the embodied experience as an audience member and the continued dialogue in a "today" that is framed by the reader as reading it "today"/and the writer freezing the "today" in written text as a means to map[61] the framework that will inform my practice. To queer a lens of analyzing survivor/"sex worker" representations is to recognize that where women are situated in visual culture, where sex is delineated, is figured within the context of heterosexuality. In an interview, Tracy Quan is cited as saying, "I can totally understand why a man from the West would choose to visit a country where he won't be harassed or entrapped by vice cops." In this context it is the western man that buys women. The dilemma is that it is still framed that men buy/fill the role of a demand, where the demand continues to be predominantly women of color/Third World Women. Regardless of Mariko Passion's sexual identification, it was obscured where the performance was with a male customer/client/"john." Such tensions solidify Butler's conceptualization of performativity as being inextricably linked to regulatory sexual regimes.[62]

How can we critically engage with violence without turning it into an aesthetic? This paper has focused on the alternative sites in which anti-trafficking work depends on, not the museum, but the spaces mixed in with the everyday.

To center women of color, to center other imaginings of possibilities in the site of the hermeneutics of love/of memory/of other spaces, to critique and to analyze the performance of not simply the survivor but also the activist, is to queer the lens of an anti-trafficking movement. While scholars, journalists, and activists have critiqued the focus on sex trafficking as being limiting, I would like to suggest that centering the sexed and raced bodies of all forms of human trafficking as a site of analysis is useful for interrogating the multiplicities of power that exist, and the multiple sites of possibility.

There is a need to incorporate in critiques of human trafficking networks an analysis of the activist, which enables an opening of multiple perspectives of histories of traumas and community witnesses that are informed by dominant knowledge productions that both redefine and reproduce the visual culture of an anti-trafficking movement. The bodies of survivors of sex exploitation and human trafficking have been disembodied through violence, but also in mainstream media. To recognize the multiplicities of embodiment from those who experience militarized rape/violence to the attempts to erase it in the U.S. is a beginning of a decolonial feminist praxis. And while love inspires a remembering,[63] in reading how borders are defined by imperialisms, a rereading of such human rights discourse calls for the centering of readings that critique how bodies have been

defined as "Other" in their embodiment reinscribed by heteropatriarchal structures. In queering the conceptualization of movements not only through the critique of heteropatriarchal practices but also in its multitudes of locations in time and space/place, I would like to suggest that decolonial feminisms, as theory and practice, is possible.

Decolonial feminisms, a feminism that centers women of color theorization, allows for the articulation of how colonial legacies erase the sexing/gendering, and racing of trafficked bodies by normalizing not just the trafficked but also the silencing of the ongoing histories of human trafficking that are historically relegated to the Global South, or a past of the Global North. The violence of human trafficking is not the same across time-space, but locating its colonial nature both as a gendered/raced paradigm enables a slow breaking apart of the polarizations of who it is being trafficked.

Not all Asians are trafficked and not all trafficked individuals are women, but Asians are trafficked and so are women. The site of possibility lies in not only the body of the survivor, but also the bodies of witnesses that recognize the contradictory spaces that normalize violence, where violence is not merely a site of repression but also one that includes resistance.

End Notes

1. Christian Duguay, Director. "Human Trafficking." *Lifetime.* Mini Series. (For Sale Productions, Muse, September 30, 2008).
2. "SAGE Project Launches 2007 R&R Anti-Human Trafficking Campaign." November 9, 2007. Press Release. *The SAGE Project.* http://209.85.173.132/search?q=cache:eLriESBcCaMJ:www.uwba.org/about/press/11-16-2007_SAGE_2-1-1_press_release.pdf+2-1- 1+campaign+san+francisco+SAGE&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us
3. http://www.slaverystillexists.org/slaverystillexists/index.htm
4. http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/c-images.html
5. www.sacproject.com.
6. *Lilja 4 Ever* (2002); *Trading Women* (2003); *Fields of Mudan* (2004); *Bucharest Express* (2004); *Holly* (2006); *Human Trafficking* (2006); *Cargo* (2007); *China Dolls* (2007), *Not for Sale* (2007); *The Shanghai Hotel* (2007); *Trade* (2007), just to name a few
7. Angela Davis, *Women, Race, & Class.* (New York: Vintage Press, 2003), 3.
8. W.J.T. Mitchell. "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture." *The Visual Culture Reader.* Nicholas Mirzoeff (New York: Routledge Press, 1998), 100.
9. "Identifying and Interacting with Victims of Human Trafficking." *The Campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking.* http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/campaign_kits/tool_kit_health/identify_victims.html. Rescue and Restore list of individuals trafficked as the following: prostitutes; domestic servants (nannies or maids); sweatshop workers; janitors; restaurant workers; migrant farm workers; fishery workers; hotel or tourist industry workers; and as beggars.
10. "On the Record Briefing by Ambassador John R. Miller, Ambassador-at-Large on International Slavery, on Release of the Sixth Annual Trafficking In Persons Report." Special Briefing. Office of the Spokesman. (Washington, DC. June 5, 2006) http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/67559.htm
11. Annie Fukushima. "Bodies Imagined: Race, Gender and Sexual Difference in Sex Industry Advertisements" *Center for Race and Gender. (*University of California: Berkeley, October 19, 2006). In 2006 I conducted research where I found that overwhelmingly in Hawaii, Las Vegas, and San Francisco Yellow Page sex industry advertisements were not only overwhelmingly a demand for women/female, but always a majority of the advertisements were for "Asian".

12. Laura Hyun Yi Kang. "Disciplined Embodiments: Si(gh)ting Asian/American Women as Transnational Labor." *compositional subjects: Enfiguring Asian / American Women.* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), 165.
13. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
14. Kim, Koon Ja, Former Comfort Woman, House of Sharing and NAKASEC. Testimonial. (House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, February 15, 2007).
15. In the Fall of 2000 the art exhibit traveled throughout the United States and appeared in Toronto, Canada. The Exhibit featured works from surviving Korean "Comfort Women" at the House of Sharing. http://www.museology.org/final.swf
16. See Note 14
17. Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, "Female Imager." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Amelia Jones, Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 43.
18. Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Women* (London: Penguin, 1998), 139
19. Katherine H.S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S. – Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
20. Donna M. Hughes, Katherine Chon and Derek Ellerman, "Modern-Day Comfort Women: The U.S. Military, Transnational Crime, and the Trafficking of Women," Violence Against Women (forthcoming, 2002). http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/pubtrfrep.htm
21. Website about the exhibit conveys that the artist were responding to an article written by San Francisco Chronicle reporter, Meredith May, who wrote in 2005, *Diary of a Sex Slave*. The exhibit was part of the SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project) 2007 annual festival.
22. SWOP currently conducts John Workshops that are very different then those that have arisen in the late 20th century in organizations such as The SAGE Project. SWOP encourages Johns/Clients to attend workshops to learn how to treat prostitutes as well as they can when they are with a prostitute. In contrast, the SAGE Project John School shares with "Johns" who have been arrested the testimonies of survivors who share their experiences of being exploited. This school discourages Johns/Clients from seeking prostitutes by having them learn about violence against women and listening to survival testimonies.
23. Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 2nd Ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999. Originally published in 1987), 60-61. "*la facultad* is the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface… it is… the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols which are the faces of feelings, that is behind which feelings reside/hide… Confronting anything that tears the fabric of our everyday mode of consciousness and that thrusts us into a less literal and more psychic sens of reality increases awareness and *la facultad*."
24. Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
25. *Ibid* at 181
26. María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), 3
27. Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, "The Development of Feminist Consciousness among Asian American Women." *Gender and Society* (Vol. 1, No. 3, Sep., 1987), 289
28. María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), 226
29. Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 47
30. José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics,* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 4-5. ,Jose Esteban Munoz engages with memory in a similar fashion in which he interrogates his memory of Capote. By drawing upon Gomez, Munoz contends that his memory of Capote and his subject formation instructed him to remember power and shame of queerness.

31. Laura E. Perez, *Chicana Art: the Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 25.
32. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "Narrativizing Visual Culture: Towards a Polycentric Aesthetics." *The Visual Culture Reader.* Nicholas Mirzoeff. (New York: Routledge Press, 1998), 55
33. Spencer R. Crew and James E. Sims. 1991. "Locating Authenticity: Fragments of Dialogue." *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine. Eds. P. 171
34. Curtis M. Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Explosition." Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine. Eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (DC: Smithsonian, 1991), 361
35. José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics,* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). Jose Esteban Munoz draws upon Norma Alarcon to describe the evolution of *This Bridge Called My Back* as an example of a moment of *counteridentification* in which there is an attempt to break free of the inescapable sphere that may be seen as "anti-assimilation". The dilemma with this term, according to Munoz is that it reproduces the binaries.
36. Examples of this are SWOP's initiative to take a decriminalizing stance like that of Australia. Their model is to decriminalize across the board so as to decriminalize the entire industry (including "managers" and johns/clients). Decriminalizing models that are not pro-legalization may be modeled on the Swedish model of decriminalizing that only decriminalizes the prostitute, but heavily criminalizes with a federal penalty the "john"/client and the pimp.
37. Janet Lever, David E. Kanouse, and Sandra H. Berry, "Racial and Ethnic Segmentation of Female Prostitution in Los Angeles County." *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality* (Volume: 17 Issue: 1/2, 2005).
38. Carol Duncan, Civilizing Rituals: inside public art museums (London: Routledge, 1995), 2
39. Mignolo, Walter, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference." *The South Atlantic Quarterly***.** **(**Vol. 101, No. 1, Winter 2002), 57-96
40. Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from South* Vol. 1, No. 3, Winter 2002), 533-580
41. Mignolo, Walter, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference." *The South Atlantic Quarterly***.** **(**Vol. 101, No. 1, Winter 2002), 57-58.
42. Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1. Chela Sandoval cites Michel Foucault.
43. WE Asian Sex Workers. Original Site:
http://www.asianprincessartifacts.com/weasiansexworkers2007/who.html
44. Jo Doezema, "Forced to Choose: Beyond the Voluntary v. Forced Prostitution Dichotomy." *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition.* Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema, Eds. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 34-50.
45. Aida F. Santos. "Voices from the Philippines." *Women Resisting Militarism and Creating a Culture of Life. 6th International Meeting*. (Women for Genuine Security, babae, FACES, and Gabnet. Filipino Community Center, San Francisco USA, September 11, 2007).
46. There are tensions surrounding the usage of the term "survivor." Often times, pro-prostitution / "sex workers" resist this terminology because, while they may have "survived" some form of trauma/violence, to call themselves "survivors" is to center this experience. Anti-prostitution advocates often use the language of "survivor" as a means to recenter a shift towards empowerment rather than seeing those who have experienced violence/trauma as "victims." Some organizations attempt to get out of the politics by using the term "Commercial sexual exploitation", however, this is often used to refer to children who are commercially sexually exploited by a sex industry, which in most cases, on both extremes would agree that no one is pro-violence against youth/children.
47. Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 53. Chela Sandoval contends that the 1980s women's movement buckled from "within" due to ideological differences.
48. *Ibid* at 60.

49. María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), 6.
50. Irit Rogoff, "Studying Visual Culture." *The Visual Culture Reader*. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 28.
51. Lisa Bloom, "Creating Transnational Women's Art Networks." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader.* Ed. Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2003), 21.
52. Trinh T. Minh-ha. "Studying Visual Culture." *The Visual Culture Reader*. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed. New York: Routledge, 1998), 28.
53. José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics,* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 12. Jose Esteban Munoz defines disidentification as "To disidentify is to read oneself and one's own life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject."
54. *Ibid*. José Esteban Muñoz delineates this dynamic through the example of the minority subject that recycles or re-forms the object that they identify with (i.e., Jean-Michel Basquiat's illustration of *Television and Cruelty to Animals* and its portrayal of Batman or Warhol).
55. *Ibid* at 31.
56. Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time & Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives (*New York: New York University Press, 2005), 83
57. *Ibid*
58. *Ibid* at 24
59. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (UK: Routledge, 1995), 4.
60. Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time & Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives (*New York: New York University Press, 2005), 6
61. Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* "Introduction: Rhizome" (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 5. Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze contend that "Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even the realms that are yet to come."
62. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993),15.
63. M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminisms, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (London: Duke University Press, 2005), 277.

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