

Sloan makes a compelling argument that *rapto* could be, and often was, a matter of intergenerational conflict rather than assault or coercion, her selection of cases tends to reinforce her conclusions. Of the 212 cases she considered, only 16 of the young women involved claimed sexual assault, and even these women acknowledged the defendants as their “suitors” (9).

Runaway Daughters provides a well-written and lively account of daily life in nineteenth-century Oaxaca, and especially of the private and public lives of its adolescent residents. It is a welcome contribution to the historiography of gender roles and family relations. Given the clarity of its argument and prose, it will be of interest to generalists and appropriate for adoption in upper-level undergraduate as well as graduate courses.

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PATTY KELLY: *Lydia's Open Door: Inside Mexico's Most Modern Brothel*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

In the introduction to *Lydia's Open Door*—her brilliant ethnographic study of the *Zona Galáctica*, a modern state-regulated brothel in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico—Patty Kelly notes matter-of-factly that “this is a book about women’s sexual labor in neoliberal Mexico” (2). Although it sounds straightforward enough, the statement foregrounds two contentious debates, one among feminist scholars over prostitution versus sex work and the other among social scientists over the pros and cons of globalization. Kelly’s insightful engagement with these questions not only sheds considerable light on state-sponsored sexual labor in southern Mexico (and on state-sponsored sexual labor in general), it also provides useful correctives to the acrimonious theorizing that has come to characterize these two debates. And Kelly’s potent combination of theoretical engagement, ethnographic richness, careful contextualization, and lively style make *Lydia's Open Door* an important and welcome contribution to scholarship on prostitution/sex work, neoliberal modes of governance, and the feminization of poverty.

The book is comprised of a preface, introduction, seven chapters, conclusion, and epilogue. The preface locates the ethnographer and her project; the epilogue follows up on several of her principal informants. As these short framing sections make clear, *Lydia's Open Door* offers little of the methodological soul searching that has come to characterize so much contemporary ethnography. Although she operates firmly within a distinguished tradition of feminist ethnography, Kelly makes no apologies for her role in the production of knowledge about socially marginalized subjects, nor does she disguise her involvement with and affection

for the sex workers she studies and befriends. Instead, she insists that “writing ethnography requires the shaping of disorderly and wonderfully jumbled human experience into linear and orderly knowledge. Writing good ethnography requires doing so without sacrificing the contradictions of human experience or compartmentalizing social facts simply for the sake of analytical coherence” (29). This bold brushing aside of methodological concerns will doubtless annoy many of her colleagues, but it does keep the book from bogging down in expiatory *mea culpas*. Teachers who plan to incorporate the book into undergraduate classes may want to spend more time on the perils of ethnographic representation, but the students will likely appreciate the breezy tone, first person perspective, and engaging anecdotes that Kelly threads through her text.

The introduction situates Kelly’s study, locating it in a particular place (*Zona Galáctica*, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico), a particular time (the neoliberal era), and a particular historical context (as one of the Mexican state’s most recent attempts at modernizing the country through a combination of economic liberalization and intensified social engineering). “The history of the Galactic Zone,” she argues, “may be viewed as a local example of the process of global neoliberal capitalist expansion and modernization—a process marked by a widening gap between the rich and the poor, the decline of rural life, growing urbanization, exclusionary politics, decreasing state interest in social welfare, and increasing state intervention in the sexual and social lives of Mexico’s working classes” (4). Along the way, she provides a brief but enlightening explanation of neoliberalism, a genealogy of Mexican social reform efforts since the late nineteenth century, an overview of recent Chiapas politics (including the Zapatista revolt), an introduction to gender and sexualities in contemporary Mexico, and a deft rehearsal of the feminist debate over prostitution (paid sex as dehumanizing, patriarchal exploitation) versus sex work (paid work as a form of labor). Kelly expresses her sympathy for the “sex-as-work camp” but sensibly insists on seeing “prostitution as a form of labor experienced differently by different women, [and] rejecting the false dichotomy of exploitation/liberation” (27). To signal her independence, she deliberately uses both terms, noting that prostitution is a distinct form of sex work (which can also include erotic dancing, phone sex, pornography, etc.) and that “terms like *sexoservidora* [sex server] and *trabajadora sexual* [sex worker] do not suggest greater acceptance of sex as legitimate work or diminished stigmatization of the women to whom these words are applied” (28).

Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the recent history of Tuxtla Gutiérrez and municipal authorities’ investment in the legalization, regulation, and policing of prostitution. As Kelly points out, most ethnographic studies of Chiapas have focused on the culturally rich and materially poor indigenous highland communities.

In contrast, Tuxtla has been one of Mexico's fastest growing, prosperous, and modern cities, even in an era of economic austerity plans and political turmoil. As part of the modernization process, municipal authorities, regardless of political affiliation, have promoted state-regulated prostitution by establishing and maintaining the *Zona Galáctica*, a brothel complex located four miles from the city center and intended to "contain" prostitutes and their generally working-class clientele. "The benefits of the Galáctica for the city and the state," she argues, "relate less to revenue earned than to social hygiene and control of the poor and 'deviant,' providing a showcase for modernity and state power in the capital of one of Mexico's poorest states" (48). Uncontained "clandestine" prostitutes—including gay male transvestites—who persist in working downtown streets and nightclubs are routinely rounded up in police raids. At the invitation of municipal authorities, Kelly accompanies police on a raid and her account of the arrest, brief incarceration, fining, and public shaming of the offenders is one of the book's many highlights. She concludes that

the rounding up of sex workers is not unique to Tuxtla or to the conservative PAN. Rather it is a sign of neoliberal times, in which growing urbanization and concerns about social decay, crime, and hygiene have taken center stage in cities throughout the Americas. . . . Whether elites confine themselves in high-security enclaves or cleanse city streets of "marginal" populations and confine them elsewhere, what results is the same: a spatial segregation that produces social segregation, which changes the nature of urban space, city life, and social interaction (59-60).

Chapters 3 and 4 shift from Tuxtla and municipal policing to the *Zona Galáctica* and the disciplining of its sex workers by zone administrators, educators, and medical personnel. In addition to promoting (with mixed results) the state's public health agenda, "the focus on testing the bodies and controlling the activities of the female sex workers, while their male clients remain free from such regulations serves to reinforce and perpetuate already existing and broader patterns of gender inequality in Mexico, where women's sexuality is relatively circumscribed and heterosexual men's is not" (89). At the same time as the state exercises disciplinary powers over prostitutes, their work is subject to market forces and "a heightened sense of economic competition that further increases isolation and individualization among workers" (77). Combined with an understandable reluctance to come out publicly, state surveillance and economic competition make it extremely difficult for prostitutes to participate in collective action to better working conditions or demand the modest benefits

enjoyed by most government employees. For example, a 1996 strike to protest increased entry fees that sex workers feared would discourage clients achieved only nominal improvements and set no precedent for future action. A more traditional 1999 protest by rural workers over the city's appropriation of *ejido* land for the brothel site proved ineffective as well. As Kelly convincingly argues, its failure signifies "a broader global economic shift, in which the service economy is privileged over subsistence agriculture, in which sex workers are considered economically viable while campesinos are not, in which communal lands are taken away in order to make room for greater, more modern forms of exploitation" (120).

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are the ethnographic heart of *Lydia's Open Door*. In chapter 5, Kelly explores the economic, political, social, and cultural factors that push/pull some women into sex work. "Each woman," she observes, "enters sex work somewhere along a continuum ranging from choice (often among limited options) to force . . . [and] for sex workers . . . the circumstances under which a woman enters sex work determine much about how that woman experiences and practices prostitution" (123). This conclusion is no more surprising than the factors themselves: poverty, betrayal, personal misfortune, lack of opportunity, lack of education, lack of male support, flight from political violence, etc. At the same time, these obvious differences among women allow for greater or lesser agency on their parts and thus confound the exploitation/liberation binary that shapes much of the literature on prostitution/sex work. Especially interesting is Kelly's analysis of the ongoing tensions between Mexican and Central American sex workers which result in accusations of moral laxity directed against Central Americans for their alleged willingness to perform "unnatural" acts like oral sex, and of laziness directed against Mexicans for their alleged lack of initiative and thrift. Chapter 6 examines the everyday business of sex work at the *Zona Galáctica* and reveals a "process . . . riddled with multiple, overlapping, and sometimes surprising power relations [in which the] class, gender, age, appearance, experience, and ethnicity of both worker and client may come into play" (152). These power relations are grounded in commonly held cultural attitudes ranging from racism against indigenous-looking men to a growing preference for slender, young women to a general acceptance of male philandering (at least on the part of other men). Chapter 7 deals with the secrets sex workers keep from their families, children, friends, and neighbors. Since sex work pays much better than most working-class jobs—even with the notoriously low fees charged at the *Zona Galáctica*—prostitutes are often the principal breadwinners for their families, supporting themselves, their children, and sometimes parents, siblings, and other relatives. Despite these financial sacrifices, "the stigma of working as a full-time prostitute circumscribes . . . social relations, causes fear

and shame, and creates situations of inauthenticity in daily life” (194). Many women compensate by insisting that they work out of necessity (usually for their children) and condemning colleagues who appear to enjoy sex work or spend too much money on luxuries.

Kelly concludes her study with some “final thoughts” on the problem of sex work. Although she recognizes the advantages of working in a state-regulated brothel system, she notes that “implicit in the regulationist system is both the disciplining and stigmatization of those who work legally and the criminalization of sex workers who do not work within [its] bounds” (210). Much more preferable is New Zealand’s 2003 Prostitution Reform Act which protects sex workers’ rights (as workers) and makes “clients, sex workers, and brothel owners alike bear equal responsibility for minimizing the risk of acquiring or transmitting sexually transmitted diseases” (212). And in a final comment on the prostitution/sex work question, she again draws the connection between sex work and neoliberalism, adding that “it is not necessarily sex work that cheats and chokes women. It is an unjust economic system paired with an unequal gender-sex system that cheats and chokes women. Ironically, within such a system, women can sometimes find in prostitution a life better than the one they might have had” (212).

A short review cannot begin to do justice to the provocative insights or the rich ethnographic detail that Kelly provides in *Lydia’s Open Door*. It should quickly (and deservedly) become a staple of graduate seminars and upper-division undergraduate courses in any number of fields.

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LOUIS A. PÉREZ Jr.: *Cuba and the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

In *Cuba and the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos*, Louis A. Pérez Jr. adds to his impressive *oeuvre* on US-Cuba relations in the twentieth century. With his practiced command over the archival material, Pérez examines the power of metaphor in defining the United States’ imperial relationship with Cuba. Through a range of textual and visual sources, Pérez maps out the changing metaphors US actors used to depict “Cuba” from the early nineteenth century through the years following the Cuban revolution. Pérez asserts, “metaphors have consequences” (14), and he aptly argues how US representations of Cuba resulted in policies based on fictions and “figment[s] of their [US actors] own imagination” (23). Thus, this is not a book about Cuba, but rather it is a book about how North American ideas of Cuba enabled the