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Colleen Lucey’s *Love for Sale: Representing Prostitution in Imperial Russia* is a detailed examination of the “different modes of policing Russia’s sexually transgressive women” and perceptions of women as sexual commodities (p. 2). Lucey explores social conditions analyzed through major literary works complemented by satirical reproductions from illustrated popular magazines and paintings produced by prominent artists between the 1840s and 1905. The author suggests that the writings of many writers and commentators were “misogynistic, exploitative and fetishistic” and that the central conflict of the major nineteenth-century Russian literary works evolved “around the circulation of women: parents eagerly bartering daughters into profitable marriages; geriatric bridegrooms capitalizing on their wealth to purchase young brides; demimondaines exchanging companionship for furs and diamonds; and madams paying traffickers for new brothel workers” (pp. 6, 7-8).

In her book, Lucey focuses on the historical period between the 1840s, the decade when the state started to regulate prostitution, and 1905, the year of revolution, which led to a relaxation in censorship, including significant changes in the representation of sexually transgressive women. In this sixty-five-year period, according to the author, the topic of prostitution grew in social and cultural significance. It was also a period of the great reforms, industrialization, and shifts in anticipated gender roles due to women’s increasing access to education and financial independence, which led to their emancipation.

The monograph’s methodology is a close reading and a feminist interpretation of multiple texts written by both male and female writers. Lucey tackles complex perspectives on the question of venal love, with each chapter focusing on a specific type of commercial sex and transgressive behavior. Thus, chapter 1 explores prostitution in St. Petersburg and the reflection in fiction on a “vice adopted from western Europe” (p. 21). Lucey starts with Nikolai Gogol’s short story “Nevsky Prospect” (1835), in which femininity is seen as a demonic force. Nevsky Prospect was a locus for transactional sex and a place for both the consumption of luxury and sexual allure for the rest of the century. Gogol, Nikolai Nekrasov, and Nikolai Chernyshevsky, in *What Is to Be Done? (Chto delat’?*[1863]), proposed their visions on the paths for salvation of fallen women. Brothel as a
site of commercial love is examined through Petr Boborykin’s *Evening Sacrifice* (*Zhertva vecherniaia* [1868]) and Fedor Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* (*Zapiski iz podpol’ia* [1864]). Examining visual culture, Lucey offers her analysis of reproductions from the *World Illustrated* (*Vsemirnaia Illustriatsiia*) printed in 1879 and Vladimir Makovsky’s 1900 sketch, *The Blessing of the Public House* (*Osviashchenie publichnogo doma*).

The second chapter is devoted to the official regulations of commercial sex and the debates on women’s rights. It explores four writers, Vsevolod Krestovsky, Vsevolod Garshin, Leo Tolstoy, and Leonid Andreev, who tackled the “hypocrisy of state-sanctioned prostitution in ways that left readers angered and horrified that the state profited from the selling of sex” (p. 50). Lucey explores the literary works in the context of contemporary debates published by sociologists, medical professionals, and criminal anthropologists.

Chapter 3 shifts the narrative to elite prostitution. The author explores the literary and visual images of the demimondaine (*dama polusveta*) beginning with Mikhail Chulkov’s *The Comely Cook* (*Prigozhaia povarikha* [1770]), the earliest fiction on this subject. The demimondaine was associated with women who occupied the performing professions, such as actresses, singers, and dancers, and who provided commercial sex to upper-class men. As Lucey explains, “Russia’s female performers not only faced social stigma in that their profession was considered a dishonorable one; the vast majority of women employed in the theatrical arts also grappled with sexual extortion” (p. 81). Ivan Panaev’s 1855-60 *Sketches of Petersburg Life* (*Ocherki iz peterburgskoi zhizni*), caricatures from the illustrated press, Ilya Repin’s *A Parisian Café* (1875), and Ivan Kramskoi’s 1883 *Portrait of an Unknown Woman* (*Neizvestnaia*) are the focus of this chapter.

The dowerless bride and the marriage market are the subjects of chapter 4. The exploration of the theme of potential brides as women for sale begins with Aleksandr Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* (1833), which paints a world of courtship. The narrative then shifts to Evdokiiia Rastopchina’s *Rank and Money* (*Chiny i den’gi* [1838]) and Karolina Pavlova’s *A Double Life* (*Dvoinaia zhizn’* [1848]) in which these female authors produced a women’s view on women’s paths toward marriage. The discussion of literary works is contextualized by exploring contemporary views on the woman question and seen through the popularity of George Sand’s novels. Avdot’ia Panaeva’s novels provide another female insight on the marital crisis. Panaeva “did not create positive heroines like Chernyshevsky’s Vera Pavlova” and “felt women’s fate deeply and personally” (p. 125). She experienced significant “criticism because of her distrust of self-fashioned male liberators reminds modern readers of an everlasting tension over who owns the discourse of self-determination” (p. 126). Brief discussion of paintings by Pavel Fedotov, Vasily Pukirev, and Nikolai Shilder serve in this chapter as a visual background for the narrative. Dostoevsky’s *Gentle Creature* (*Krotkaia* [1876]) and Alexander Ostrovsky’s *The Storm* (*Groza* [1860]), *Easy Money* (*Beshenye den’gi* [1870]), and *The Dowerless Bride* (*Bespridannitsa* [1879]) outline the “dilemmas among Russians who felt the patriarchal structure threatened by women who increasingly demanded more personal and financial autonomy” (p. 141).

Chapter 5, expressively titled “Hyenas in Bonnets,” explores the female brokers of commercial sex and those who facilitated the separation of prostitution from intercourse. These manipulative women recruited their victims from the urban poor, recent widows, and motherless daughters. Fedotov’s *A Poor Girl’s Beauty Is a Fatal Thing, The Mousetrap* (*Bednoi devushke krasa – smertnaia kosa, Myshelovka* [1846]) and Shilder’s *The Temptation* (*Iskushenie* [1857]) serve as visual representations of female go-betweeners or “agents of sin” who were imagined as central figures in the system of regulation as they convinced women to
sign the notorious “yellow ticket.” Key fictional works examined in this chapter are Dostoevsky’s *Humiliated and Insulted* (*Unizhennye i oskorblennye* [1861]) and *Crime and Punishment* (*Prestuplenie i nakazanie* [1866]) and Nikolai Leskov’s novella “The Battle-Axe” (“Voitel’nitsa” [1866]). Even though sometimes these predator figures play small roles in the narrative, these works magnify the antagonism toward madams who serve a “latent fear that mothers (or surrogate maternal figures) would sell their daughters or female wards into the sex trade” (p. 165).

The final chapter explores kept women in fiction and centers on the transitional positions from wives and mothers into mistresses, double-crossing adulteresses, and kept women by choice. The chapter compares the heroines in Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Brat’ia Karamazovy* [1879-80]) and *Idiot* (1868-69). Then it shifts to Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (1878) and ends with Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaia’s novella “A Meeting” (“Svidanie” [1879]). Lucey compares two different Annas, from Tolstoy and Khvoshchinskaia’s fictions, and concludes that Tolstoy’s Anna’s future was sealed because she was “unable to merge her duties as wife, lover, and mother” and threw herself under the train, a symbol of modernity. Khvoshchinskaia’s Anna had an “open destiny,” as she boarded the train and left the scene (p. 191).

The book is wide in scope and the number of literary works explored is impressive. The analysis of the literary works, however, overwhelmingly dominates the exploration of the visual materials. As a scholar of print culture and word-and-image, I was particularly interested in inter-art analysis: how images and texts can be put into dialogue and to what extent they can be compared or thematically linked. In some cases, the book juxtaposes texts and images with forty or fifty years in between, which seems quite contradictory. For example, *Petersburg Firsthand* (*Peterburg voochiiu*), the illustration reproduced in the illustrated magazine *The Dragonfly* (*Strekoza*) in 1882, is used as a visual commentary on Gogol’s “Nevsky Prospect” published in 1835 and Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* (1864) is juxtaposed with Vladimir Makovsky’s sketch *The Blessing of the Public House* from 1900. Forty years is a very long period even in the seemingly static and unchangeable nineteenth century, when social changes were noticeable in both sociopolitical conditions and art modes. In addition, Makovsky’s work is examined within Linda Nochlin’s views, but Lucey does not address the Wanderers’ aesthetics and social criticism. Likewise, when analyzing the literary works and connecting them to the caricatures and other reproductions from illustrated magazines, the author completely omits the contemporary illustrations to these literary works. Thus, Leonid Pasternak’s illustrations to Tolstoy’s *Resurrection* (*Voskresenie* [1899]) or Mikhail Vrubel’s 1878 illustration “Anna Karenina’s Meeting with her Son” could have added an additional dimension to this monograph, which, according to the author’s claims, is a study of both literature and visual culture.

*Love for Sale* is a somber analysis of how the images of women providers of commercial sex were perceived and disparaged by Russian writers and were criticized in the visual culture. It lances the misogyny present in many literary works and dissects the crisis of marriage and relationships between the genders in the nineteenth century. Well researched and well written, this monograph is an excellent contribution to the field. Addressed to scholars and students in Russian and Slavic studies and women’s history, it can also appeal to general readers who are interested in gender aspects in literary works and their interpretation.
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