

Playwrights Fightback: Dramatizing Anti-Trafficking Narratives in John Godber's *Sold* Using Foucault's Transgression

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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is still an ongoing, vicious crime committed against humans worldwide. Many studies investigated the different narratives employed in the process of human trafficking. However, the investigation of the anti-trafficking narrative in John Godber's *Sold* has yet to be conducted. Thus, this article examines the narrative of trafficking women in *Sold* in light of Gayle Rubin's concept of "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," which explains why this heinous crime targets women. Then, it examines the anti-trafficking narrative introduced by the playwright in his *Sold*, in light of Foucault's concept of *Transgression*. The article conducts a textual analysis, enhanced by the assumptions of the two frameworks, to investigate the trafficking narratives and their anti-trafficking narratives in the selected text. It comes up with two narratives used to traffic women in the text: the first is the trafficking for sexual purposes, and the second is the forced labor, both of which acted on the trafficked victim, Anja. Consequently, it concludes that the anti-trafficking narrative is released with the help of transgression through the character of Ray, who defies the common narratives of trafficking when he risks the unity of his family to save a victim of trafficking. The playwright effectively conveys an anti-trafficking narrative that seeks to

shift readers' perspectives on their responsibility in rescuing trafficking victims and eradicating this inhumane crime.

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INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is an ongoing critical issue all around the globe that still impacts some people's lives (Piotrowicz et al.,

2017). Kevin Bales, a British sociologist and an anti-slavery activist, defines human trafficking in his book *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* as "the total control of one person by another for the purpose of economic exploitation" (1999, p. 38). He associates the issue of human trafficking with slavery, as the title of his book clearly denotes. Following this definition, it is clear that there are certain narratives that facilitate the targeting of human trafficking victims. Human trafficking is a problem that affects millions of people each year, including children and adults. It involves the exploitation of people for profit with the use of force, fraud, or coercion to control people and force them to work against their will. Many people consider it a continuation of slavery in the modern world. While in slavery, victims are owned by another person and are treated as property, and they are often subjected to physical and emotional abuse, they are also forced to work without pay or for very low wages (Aronowitz, 2011). In human trafficking, however, victims are often transported to a new location, where they are isolated and unable to escape their traffickers. These victims are forced to work in dangerous or exploitative conditions, such as in prostitution, forced labor, or domestic servitude.

John Godber (1956–) is a British playwright who is known for his social critique of social ills, among which is human trafficking. His play *Sold* (2007) talks about this heinous crime against humanity. The story of the play revolves around Anja,

a Moldovan girl, who falls victim to a trafficking network that takes girls from Eastern European countries and sells them for brothels in the rest of Europe. She was lured into having a better chance of living in the United Kingdom by her cousin Elena, who is a policewoman and a trafficker, but in fact, Anja was taken there to be exploited. She was deceived by the narrative that she would achieve her dreams in the promised land of the United Kingdom (Aronowitz, 2011), but unfortunately, she was trapped by the trafficking network, which demanded high transportation fees after taking her to the destination country. Traffickers exploited her shortage of money, and she could not pay them back the fees only through working in prostitution.

Accidentally, in London, there is a journalist, Ray, who is working on a story about human trafficking and the new slave trade. He meets Anja in a brothel and convinces her to tell her story, which reveals the horrible consequences that she has gone through, leading Ray to put a mortgage on his house to save her from prostitution. Ray's help has dissatisfied his wife, Caz, who is displeased with such an act. Moreover, he also assigns Anja the job of a maid at his house leading to more troubles between Ray and Caz. Anja sleeps in a bar attic that belongs to the married couple Les and Pat. One time, she is noticed by Kate, the maid who works for the brothel where Anja used to work, and she informs Les and Pat, which leads them to exploit her sexually several times, eventually leading to her demise. Anja's story shows the harsh

reality of victims of human trafficking, and it works as a reminder to the world to take action.

Women in general suffered from marginalization and oppression historically and stand as easy prey for their counterparts, i.e., men. From an economic perspective, Karl Marx, for instance, sees women as a domestic object that is a necessary instrument for men in society:

The bourgeois sees his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women. He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production. (Marx & Engels, 2004, p. 25)

For Marxists, woman falls into the category of serving men even if she is from the bourgeois class. This kind of narrative legitimizes the economic oppression of women, which in Anja's case is one of the main factors that led her to leave her country seeking a better economic status elsewhere. This narrative is also a legitimization, from an economic point of view, for the traffickers to gain as much profit as they can from the victim since their aim is profit. Women can bring them the profit they seek through exploiting their bodies, which is one of the most notable reasons behind targeting women in the trafficking crime.

Also, feminist thinkers argue that patriarchy defines women according to their sex category. Patriarchists view women as objects meant to satisfy their desires, as well

as bear and raise their children. Simone De Beauvoir in her influential book *The Second Sex* states:

With the advent of patriarchy, the male resolutely claimed his posterity; the mother had to be granted a role in procreation even though she merely carried and fattened the living seed: the father alone was the creator. Aristotle imagined that the fetus was produced by the meeting of the sperm and the menses: in this symbiosis, woman just provided passive material, while the male principle is strength, activity, movement, and life. (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 45)

This kind of narrative further enhances the idea that a woman is defined according to the binary opposition, meaning that she is considered secondary when she is compared to a man. This is true in Anja's case as she is seeking a job (a dancer) that fits her biological attributes in the destination country. This entails the internalization of the female characters to the narrative that they are weaker, and when they want to work, they seek a job that fits their biological determinacy.

The biological difference between women from that of a man is also one of the main factors that contribute to the issue of trafficking. Sigmund Freud (1931), in his work *Female Sexuality*, addresses this difference:

Quite different are the effects of the castration complex in the female. She acknowledges the fact of her castration,

and with it, too, the superiority of the male and her own inferiority; but she rebels against this unwelcome state of affairs. (p. 229)

On one hand, a woman is biologically weaker than a man and she lacks what the male possesses, a phallus, which is considered a merit for men and a demerit for women in the Freudian sense. On the other hand, women have what men want, which is a beautiful creature with whom they can fulfill their desires. This is the reason behind making women a very profitable commodity for the traffickers.

All of these narratives contribute to the fact that women are targeted by the traffickers and it is legitimized for them from economic, political and social points of views. In her book *Sex at the Margins*, Laura María Agustín comments on how discourse is enhancing the victimization process for the traffickers: "The journeys of women who work in the sex industry are treated as involuntary in a victimising discourse known as 'trafficking'" (Agustín, 2008, p. 8).

Thus, this article examines two types of trafficking in Godber's *Sold*: human trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labor. Anja, the victim, is a victim of these two narratives, who is forced to work to pay back her debt, and she is sexually abused in the play. Meanwhile, the anti-trafficking narrative is explored in light of Foucault's transgression, which is represented through Ray's actions and responses to the trafficking narratives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sex trafficking and forced labor are among the most well-known forms of human trafficking. These forms have been widely explored by writers in literature, which in turn has prompted scholars to investigate them further. For instance, in her article, Donna Bickford (2012) sheds light on sex trafficking narratives and their relationship with social perception and the efforts for social change. It integrates literary criticism with cultural analysis to examine a variety of text genres, such as reports from mainstream media and two types of sex trafficking novels. Throughout her analysis, she examines novels that depict victims of sex trafficking, like Patricia McCormick's novel *Sold* and James Levine's *The Blue Notebook*. Each narrative includes elements of familial collision, fraud, and deception as part of the actual trafficking process. She argues that when people write about their experiences, literacy acts as a place of survival and a coping strategy, allowing their ideas and feelings to take prominence and be acknowledged. She concludes that the capability of narrative to inspire actions aimed at ending sex trafficking is quite apparent in the selected texts. Bickford's article differs from the current study in terms of the data and the framework used, as it doesn't apply a theory to study the narratives and anti-narratives of human trafficking.

Living in poor societies is one of the main causes of trafficking, as seen in Nnyagu et al. "Depravity in Ifeanyi Ajaegbo's *Sarah House*" (2023). There are a lot of people who indulge in illegal activities to survive the harsh conditions they face. Children are

trafficked for the purpose of prostitution and other illegal activities. They assert that corrupt politicians are involved in the spread of such activities as they have agents who operate in the trafficking networks, meaning that trafficking turns out to be a common institutionalized narrative in poor societies. This, they argue, has led creative writers to write about this issue to show society this kind of corruption. Their paper examines the novel *Sarah House* to show the realities of child trafficking and expose its effects on people (Nnyagu et al., 2023). Their article matches the point of interest of the current study but differs in terms of the selected data and methodology.

Forced labor is the new form of slavery that is still prominent during the 21st Century, being perpetrated by criminals all around the globe, even in the most advanced, prosperous nations. Victims of human trafficking are usually enslaved and forced to work against their will. Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter, in their book *The Slave Next Door: Human Trafficking and Slavery in America Today* (2010), point out that, as a matter of fact, human trafficking and slavery are the third-largest criminal enterprise. It exists in the world of today, and it is flourishing. They argue that slavery is alive in the United States, thriving and being practiced all over the country. Their book gives a detailed account of the state of modern-day slavery in the United States.

The significance of the current study is different from the past studies conducted on human trafficking. It investigates the anti-narratives of human trafficking, which have not been studied before in the existing

literature written about human trafficking, especially in Godber's *Sold* using Foucault's *Transgression*. Likewise, Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex" is used to investigate the reasons behind the targeting of women as victims of human trafficking.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology centered on textual analysis to explore the trafficking and anti-trafficking narratives within the play. Textual analysis is particularly suited to this investigation as it allows for an in-depth examination of the text's themes, motifs, and theatrical strategies, providing insight into how the play addresses and critiques human trafficking. Two key theoretical concepts guide this analysis: Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex" and Michel Foucault's concept of transgression.

Rubin's concept provides a critical lens through which to understand the systemic factors that make women particularly vulnerable to trafficking. According to Rubin, the political economy of sex is structured in a way that commodifies women and perpetuates gender inequalities. This concept is used to dissect the play's portrayal of female characters and to highlight the socio-economic and cultural forces that contribute to their exploitation by traffickers. By applying Rubin's framework, the analysis seeks to reveal the narratives of power dynamics and economic motivations that drive the trafficking of women, as depicted in the play through the portrayal

of Anja's character, who is duped by the traffickers.

Foucault's notion of transgression is employed to illuminate the play's anti-trafficking narrative. Transgression, in Foucault's terms, refers to actions or behaviors that violate established social norms and boundaries. This concept is instrumental in analyzing how the play challenges and critiques societal norms related to human trafficking by examining instances of transgression within the play, as in Ray's actions, which defy the institutionalization of human trafficking. Foucault's *A Preface to Transgression* aids in understanding how the play's narratives disrupt conventional representations of trafficking and advocate for social change (Foucault, 1977).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trafficking Narratives in *Sold*

This study argues that Human traffickers exploit certain narratives to dupe their victims into this non-human crime. Thus, playwrights represent these narratives in their dramatic works, besides dramatizing anti-narratives for them to save the victim via raising people's awareness of the dangers of these acts. Anti-narratives of human trafficking are not well explored because the studies on human trafficking focus merely on the narratives of trafficking.

One of the narratives employed by the Human traffickers to entrap their victims is the fake promise to the victim to have a better life elsewhere. These traffickers see the victims as vulnerable prey that can

be easily manipulated and exploited. The play *Sold* starts with Ray and Jack, two journalists from London, as they discuss the state of human trafficking. Jack says to Ray, "I've seen some footage on the internet, you can buy an Eastern European girl in a car park, what's that all about?" (Godber, 2007, p. 388). This clearly denotes the current state of sex trafficking in the world, and goes in line with what Gayle Rubin calls a Sex/Gender system "As a preliminary definition, a "sex/gender system" is the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied" (Rubin, 1975, p. 159). Throughout this narrative, it is clear that the female body becomes a commodity that can be sold and bought.

Ray is supposed to get a lead for his article so that he will be commissioned, so he goes to a brothel to find a victim of human trafficking so that he can use her story. There, he meets Kate a native Londoner who works at the brothel as the person who responds to calls and arranges for the meetings between the customers and the prostitutes. Ray meets her and tries to find a source for his story, and she arranges for him a meeting with a prostitute called Anja, who is a Moldavian victim of sex trafficking. Kate tells him that "You'll like her, she don't speak much English but she does all the services" (Godber, 2007, p. 391). This line shows how Kate and society, in general, treat these victims as if they were objects with no feelings. She is talking about Anja's inability to speak much English as an

advantage that the customer would enjoy. Kate is brainwashed with the narrative that a woman's role is to serve only and be treated as an object. This is seen in Anja's case, who is exploited as a prostitute who can be bought and sold. Rubin explains this notion as "Women are transacted as slaves, serfs, and prostitutes, but also simply as women" (Rubin, 1975, p. 176). This is one of the narratives employed by the traffickers, which is the exploitation of the illiteracy of the trafficked persons. Traffickers utilize the common narrative that Westerners have the problem of superiority, believing in the supremacy of their race over other races, which legitimizes for them the exploitation of 'the other' as sex traffickees.

Anja, the victim of sex trafficking, starts to tell Ray about her trafficking story. She tells him about Elena, her cousin and one member of the trafficking network. Dramatically speaking, the playwright uses Elena in a flashback-like technique to recall Anja's story to Ray. Elena starts talking to Anja about a woman who had to pay the nurse to get her mother a bedpan in the hospital. She explains to her that this woman had to pay just to get a bedpan in the hospital emphasizing that things are bad in Moldova and there is no work here "... There is nothing! My friend has gone Italy, she is working. She is working a good job. Many girls are leaving" (Godber, 2007, p. 408). This kind of narrative is told by Elena to convince Anja that she is oppressed in this society and she has to leave, which goes in line with Rubin's idea that women are oppressed even in capitalist societies

"Women are oppressed in societies which can by no stretch of the imagination be described as capitalist" (Rubin, 1975, p. 163). This marks the actual narratives of trafficking in the play. Elena tries to convince Anja that things are bad in her country and a lot of girls are leaving for other places in Europe, where they are working and gaining a lot of money that they wouldn't dream of getting in Moldova. She tells her that "We must have dreams" (Godber, 2007, p. 408), dreams that are not achievable here but in other places where there are chances. Anja starts thinking of her dreams and tells her that she does have dreams that she dreams of dancing on TV in movies. This illusion of having a better life elsewhere is what motivates the victims of sex trafficking; they seek to achieve what they can't in their home country, and this was initially the dream of Anja.

Anja is convinced by the idea of travelling, yet the expenses are a critical concern for her. This makes Elena happy as she believes that she has reached her goal of getting another victim to be trafficked. She tells her, "Natasha tell me woman who can help." She adds, "You go, get job and then you pay, Natasha is making good money in Italy, she is paying back, is no problem" (Godber, 2007, pp. 408–409). This is the trap that traffickers use as a narrative of exploiting and cheating their victims. They take them to the destination country and demand them high transportation fees that they have to work in the sex industry to pay them back. Anja then thinks of her mother which makes Elena immediately respond

that Natasha is sending a lot of money to her mother "She is helping pay for operation. Natasha is sending money for her mama, so she can have operation. You could do that! If your mama need operation, Anja, you can pay, you can save money!" (Godber, 2007, p. 409). Sending money back home is another narrative sold to Anja by Elena to make her agree to go abroad, presumably to get money and achieve her dreams. She adds, "She is making good money, many girls are leaving for Italy, Spain, there are many girls who like in UK. ..." (Godber, 2007, p. 409). After she makes sure that Anja is brainwashed by her narratives, she tells her, "I will take you. In eight days, you have passport and I will take, you will meet lady who helped Natasha" (Godber, 2007, p. 409). This marks the trap that Elena has put on Anja; she instigates her and makes her think of her dreams of getting a better life and achieving her dreams, so that she can victimize her for financial gain. This is the way trafficking works: The traffickers seek vulnerable victims who need money or who are disgusted with their life in their country, and they tell them stories about people who left and made a better life elsewhere. At last, Elena tells Anja:

Elena You must think about it, she is making real money and is helping her mama and papa. You know what it is like here, you must pay for everything. A doctor here earns nothing, why you think you have big ideas, okay I tell you, forget it Anja! Forget it, you do not deserve to have the chance! Forget this! (Godber, 2007, p. 410)

By telling Anja that she doesn't deserve this chance, she provokes her into complying with her. It is important to note that there is a kind of truth in the narrative of traffickers. For instance, Elena mentions that doctors in her country earn nothing, compared to other privileged places. This truth is what makes the victims fall into the trap of the traffickers, since they know the harsh reality people are living, to the extent that even doctors are living a life of bread and cheese.

The trafficking narrative continues with Vlad, one of the traffickers, as he assures that these girls must be broken and treated like animals. Vlad states, "Sometime with strong girls they are hard to break. Sometime we need hundred men! With strong girl we need to have maybe hundred times. We have to teach lesson." He emphasizes the need to break these girls (Godber, 2007, p. 415, lines 16–18). He states that even if it takes raping a victim by hundred men to break a strong girl, we'll do it anyway. This kind of narrative of using rape as a weapon against women goes in line with the notion of Salih's et al. (2018) that "rape is depicted as a natural product of a biased society that considers women as weak and objects of rape" (p. 286). They don't even consider them as real human beings "It like breaking dog, you must learn! Yes, she must learn sit, stay, it like a dog, you must learn sit and stay, most girls learn this way in Italy, always in Italy, very good!" (Godber, 2007, p. 416). For him, his job is to break girls, making them do as their masters want from them and nothing else, just like animals. This is the reality about traffickers that they

see these victims as commodities that they can sell and buy according to the demand of the market which goes in line with Rubin's notion that "...one begins to have a sense of a systematic social apparatus which takes up females as raw materials and fashions domesticated women as products" (Rubin, 1975, p. 158), women for these traffickers are no more than products. This is the main reason behind the whole play, which is to display these horrible narratives of trafficking innocent victims.

While discussing her story with Ray, Anja reveals that the governments are involved in the trafficking industry. This is the most dangerous fact in the play, which is apparent in Ray's soliloquy:

Ray So during the World Cup between forty and sixty thousand prostitutes were imported into Germany? Nobody knows the actual figures, but between forty and sixty thousand. She said that they reckoned three million men paid for sex during this time! And all of the women paid taxes. She said it was a good time for her friend Katja and that the German government made four and a half billion dollars. She told me that her friends were looking forward to the Olympics in London: she said she knew a lot of girls who were looking forward to that! (Godber, 2007, p. 417)

This suggests that the governments both participate in and patronize the continuation of these human crimes. Indeed, it indicates unequivocally that victims of sex trafficking have turned into a tool for governments,

such as the German government, which benefit from human trafficking in the same way as traffickers since they license this sector to operate lawfully in their nations. As a result, this sector is institutionalized in these nations that support its existence for materialistic gains. This kind of institutionalization is mentioned by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* (1988):

Now there is a trait which is fundamental to the economy of pleasures as it functions in the West, namely that sex acts as a principle of measure and intelligibility. For millennia the tendency has been to give us to believe that in sex, secretly at least there was to be found the law of all pleasure, and that this is what justifies the need to regulate sex and makes its control possible. (Foucault, 1980, pp. 190-191)

This narrative of regulating and institutionalizing sex is what the governments are trying to do, as in the case of the German and British Governments, since they implicitly stated that they are looking forward to the Olympics as it is good for their profit. They are regulating sex and making it lawful in their nations while they turn a blind eye to one of the main sources of this industry, namely, victims of sex trafficking.

Anti-Trafficking Narratives in *Sold*

Ray is the only character who represents the anti-trafficking narrative in the play. He was astonished to hear that the government itself was engaged in this ruthless crime,

which instigated him and made him try and fight back against this kind of legitimization of this crime, making him utter the most important questions to Anja, "Would you like to leave here?", "Would you not like to get out?", "If someone got you out?" (Godber, 2007, pp. 417-418). This falls in line with Foucault's notion of transgression:

Transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses. (Foucault, 1977, p. 34)

Ray's crossing of this line is transgressive in the sense that he helps the victim of human trafficking while no other character in the play has offered this kind of assistance since they are following the power of the institution, which, as we see, permits and regulates such heinous activities. He represents the counter-discourse of trafficking by getting himself involved in defying the institutionalization of human trafficking. He is not brainwashed by the narratives of traffickers. On the contrary, he is the first character who humanely treats Anja. He is sad to hear about all these, atrocities as she has awakened the human side inside him by telling him her devastating story, so he wants to help in every way possible.

In a soliloquy, the dramatist wants to engage the audience in his anti-narratives by revealing Anja's inner thoughts to the audience:

Anja If you could see me now, Mama, what would you say? I am not your little Anja. Anja is dead, Mama. She died when she went to Italy. Mama, do you miss me? Do you ever think of me? I think of you. I think of you many times. I could smell you, I could smell the house, I could smell the cooking, Mama. I could smell when you were making the soup. But now with each day the smell goes, I can't smell you too good. I can't dream you. I don't dream any more, Mama, I dream now only in English. I hope you are well, Mama, I hope you are well.

She is in tears.

I want to be home!

Music.

Lights.

(Godber, 2007, p. 420)

Anja's devastating remembering of her mother marks the harsh mental state that she lives in. She yearns for her past passionately, remembering even the smell of her mother's soup, but now the smell is going away as she is no longer able to even dream about her, as she dreams now in English; nightmarish dreams in a language that is not hers. Last, she wishes that what she is experiencing is not real, and she only wants to wake up to find herself at home again.

During a family dinner, Ray, Jack and their wives are discussing the issue of human trafficking. Ray asks Jack if he has come across the news about the World Cup, he explains that a single brothel in Cologne "...dealt with over six hundred

men a day during the World Cup!", "Eleven thousand square meters it measured. ... State controlled" and "Forty thousand girls they brought in!" (Godber, 2007, p. 422). This is one of the common narratives adopted by some countries to traffic women for sexual amusement in brothels and prostitution in public international festivals like the World Cup, which maintains the trafficking industry as the state is allowing them to bring prostitutes to the country, and let them be involved in prostitution legally.

In this notion, Taylor explains Foucault's concept of disciplinary power as he says that "The concept of disciplinary power concerns individuals. As Foucault notes with reference to what he takes to be the ideal exercise of this power, "We are never dealing with a mass, with a group, or even, to tell the truth, with a multiplicity: we are only ever dealing with individuals"" (Taylor, 2014, p. 41). They are dealing with individuals; controlling them and their lives while getting profit from them. The author wants the audience to comprehend the reality that their country is aligning with the trafficking narratives and maintaining its existence.

Ray then expresses his offer to help Anja, saying, "I want to help you.", "Can I try and help you?" (Godber, 2007, p. 433). This is part of the anti-trafficking narrative in the play used by the author to fight back against this crime. Ray's help would definitely cause him problems, but he is defying the common narrative of trafficking by offering such help, which goes directly in line with Foucault's concept

of Problematization "Problematizations formulate the fundamental issues and choices through which individuals confront their existence" (Gutting, 2005, p. 122). Ray's attempt to help would be conceived as a problem by the traffickers, who would react violently to this threat to their business as they exploit their sex traffickers, covered and legitimized by the institution.

Ray does not have enough money to get Anja out, so he had to put a mortgage on his house to get the money. Actually, mortgaging the house is a real threat to the union of Ray's family, which can be understood as the author's mini-narrative of fighting back the trafficking narratives through portraying a character who went this far in helping a victim to be free at the expense of his family institution. Ray's volunteering to purchase Anja's freedom is aimed at alerting the people's frame of mind towards the atrocities of human trafficking narratives and the urgent need to create anti-narratives to this heinous crime against humanity.

Ray has taken an action that no other character has even thought of. He paid twenty thousand dollars to gain Anja's freedom, which indicates his true goodness as a human being who would act and choose the right thing to do when needed. His action is done as a transgressive act, Foucault mentions "The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a

limit composed of illusions and shadows" (Foucault, 1977, p. 34). Ray has crossed a limit by helping Anja pay off her debt. This lies as part of the anti-trafficking narrative in the text, represented by the act that Ray has done to free a victim who was wrongfully duped and victimized by the traffickers. To Ray, she is a human being with a life, and he is not ashamed of what he has done; rather, on the contrary, he is proud that he has saved a life "...I've made a difference..." (Godber, 2007, p. 438). What he wants is to make a difference, not only by saying but through actions that fight back against the traffickers.

During a scene with Ray, Jack, their wives and Anja. Anja starts to explain what it is like to be a victim who is both forced to work against her will and a sex slave:

Anja They make you make sex all time, with period, with no period, it is not matter, they take out some girls' teeth if they have small mouth.

Gemma Oh hell!

Anja One girl is twelve and they sell her much money in Middle East. Turkish men are very bad, they think we are nothing but meat.

Gemma It is just slavery, isn't it?

Jack Christ, well of course it is! (Godber, 2007, p. 454)

This adds more depth of knowledge to the characters and the audience about the harsh circumstances that these victims have to endure throughout their sex enslavement. The author is dramatizing Anja's situation

as he wants the audience to be aware that this crime is labelled as slavery since victims of such a crime are enslaved and exploited in every way possible by the traffickers. It indicates his intention to fight back and try to abolish the new slave trade by employing such terminology. This idea is more crystallized when Ray states, "How can things change unless we all do something about it?" (Godber, 2007, p. 454). Again, Ray emphasizes that actions speak louder than words. He invites the audience to think of counter-narratives that could help the victims of sex trafficking against the humanization and institutionalization of these atrocious non-human crimes.

Ray reveals that Anja is going to be their cleaner and they are paying her. It is all part of Ray's contribution to save this innocent victim. He doesn't recognize any limit in his transgressing act which goes in line with Foucault's explanation of transgression "... no limit can possibly restrict it" (Foucault, 1977, p. 36). It is also the author's narrative of telling the audience that these victims are forced to work in the sex industry and that they would be happy to be integrated into society if they had the chance.

Now Anja is temporarily free from the victimization of traffickers, and she is trying to integrate herself into this society, but unfortunately, this does not last long. In the pub that Anja goes to, she is noticed by Kate, one of the staff members of the brothel Anja used to work in. Kate goes and tells Les and Pat, the pub owners, so all three of them start the exploitation process again. Les confronts Anja that he knows about her past, then he tells her, "And I thought well maybe

there's a way of working it, you know, maybe there's a way of making it work. Coz I mean we could always work something out couldn't we. Because I dare say if you've done it once, you've done it a hundred times." (Godber, 2007, p. 479). He hints that he is lusting after her, as she is used to these kinds of things. Anja immediately tries to leave, but she is prevented by him as he continues with his narrative about making a date with her. Meanwhile, Kate enters and they both start paving the way to rape her. Anja responds to their narrative saying "No ... I not do this any more." (Godber, 2007, p. 481). She is clearly not willing to be a victim once more, but unfortunately, Les and Kate threaten her with the police, and she has to comply with their demands. They tell her:

Les drags Anja to a chair. He throws Anja to the ground as he begins to undo his trousers.

Kate And when you've done Les, you can do me. You hear that, when you done Les, you can get down here and do me ...

Les (to Anja) You hear that?

Anja Yes! Yes! (Godber, 2007, p. 483)

They also bring Pat to the scene to rape Anja as well. Anja's response is devastating, saying 'Yes' to the thing she hates the most and becoming a victim again, only this time not to the traffickers, but to people who are brainwashed by the trafficking narrative and making use of it for their own desires. She is raped multiple times by them and

eventually pushed from the stairs by Pat and died. Though the play ends tragically with the failure of Anja to achieve her dream of freedom, the playwright circulates an anti-trafficking narrative through the character of Ray, who jeopardizes his family union to save a victim, which in turn would raise public awareness of the urgent need to end this heinous crime against humanity.

CONCLUSION

The study examines the narratives and anti-narratives of human trafficking in John Godber's *Sold*. It concludes that there are two kinds of narratives in the play. The first one is the trafficking narrative that was highlighted and analyzed in light of Gayle Rubin's concept of "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex", which shows that the traffickers utilize narratives of poverty, illiteracy and Western supremacy to traffic these victims. Anja was duped into believing that she was going to achieve her dreams in the United Kingdom. She was promised by the traffickers that she would achieve her dream of becoming a dancer, while in reality, she was trapped in a debt bondage that led to her victimization for forced labor and sexual purposes. More importantly, the study concludes that the author has circulated an anti-trafficking narrative in the play represented by the character of Ray. Ray's actions have been analyzed using Foucault's concept of Transgression, which helped him to divert from the common institutional narrative of trafficking women, as in the case of Anja. Ray's family union was jeopardized as he

put a mortgage on his house to help pay Anja's debt. It is uncommon that a man would jeopardize the union of his family for the sake of a victim of human trafficking, but this is the author's way of circulating an anti-narrative that fights back against the trafficking crime. Finally, the study implies the workability of Foucault's theoretical framework as a strategy of releasing the hidden discourses in the literary texts, which are marginalized by the common institutional discourses. In *Sold*, the study contributes to the understanding of hidden anti-narratives of human trafficking, which are spotlighted by Foucault's transgression.

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