

4 Subverting the Archives

It is no secret, nor is it of controversy to claim that national archives service state power. After all, it was invented for this purpose, emerging out of revolutionary France and Napoleon's establishment of the public archive.²¹⁵ Its use for historians was, however, not a purely French invention. The professionalisation of history had begun in eighteenth-century German-speaking universities, with the first chair of history in 1804 generally marking the birth of the discipline.²¹⁶ Then, the historian Leopold von Ranke popularised the use of the archive, while developing a standardised practice of the footnote within the young University of Berlin.²¹⁷ The professionalisation of history as a discipline and the methods to which it commits itself in pursuit of faithful reconstruction were both an extension of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinking and the reaction of German scholars to the French revolution, with their desire to find their own place and path in history.²¹⁸ Based on this historical logic, archives are always intent on reinforcing the given body's institutional existence by constructing a footprint of the past according to the narrative which they, the organisation or state, wish to have retold in any given present. Thus, the archive in the normative sense will always be presented and appear as authoritative and complete.

The historian of prostitution in Paris, Alain Corbin, notes how the "organisation of archives influences the historians view".²¹⁹ A lack of critical reflection upon the internal logic of archives and how they service state power can easily lead to the preservation of the narratives they produce.²²⁰ Entire research disciplines such as gender studies and postcolonial studies have been premised on collapsing the misconception of the authoritative nature of the archive. They have demanded careful reflection on the part of the historian, so that the discipline of history does not end up preserving the archives internal logic of organising knowledge.

215 Michelle T. King, 'Working With/In Archives', in *Research Methods for History*, ed. by Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 55.

216 Peter Harrison, Aled Jones, and Peter Lambert, 'The Institutionalisation and Organisation of History', in *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline*, ed. by Peter Lambert and Phillipp Schofield (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.

217 Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 37–45.

218 Harrison et al., 11–14.

219 Corbin, *Women for Hire*, xix.

220 Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*, 22; King, 'Working With/In Archives'.

Even with critical approaches to the archives, Anjali Arondekar illuminates how the same old problems arise in, for example, how scholars returning to colonial sources as a means of queering the past overlook the fact that the archive still remains “*the source of knowledge about the colonial past*”.²²¹ Chapter eight of this book supports this perspective, showing that little, if anything, of the subaltern past can be extracted from the self-producing institutional logic of state or organisational archives. Nevertheless, I contend that it remains necessary to engage with the archives, so as to find their internal contradictions; this being part of the process of deconstructing the modes of documenting history and, thus, of becoming emancipated to a position from which new questions of the past might be asked.

Research on cultural transfers was born out of a critical position within the discipline of history in the European academy. As Michel Espagne stated, its goal “relates to the detection of the very heterogeneous structure of memory” which is only possible through an acute awareness that the archive, since its birth as a state institution, has always been a tool “orientated toward highlighting nationalism”.²²² As shown in chapter two, the rippling folds in European memory constructed a particular past of “white slavery” by giving emphasis to certain remnants of memory while rendering others invisible.

Although there is debate among historians regarding the degree to which “white slavery” in the late nineteenth century was a historical truth, an exaggeration, or a product of popular sensationalism, there is a standard narrative in the historiography that the phenomenon was either first discovered or that the discourse was first produced by a key group of idealised British actors, namely Josephine Butler, Alfred Stace Dyer, W. T. Stead, and William Alexander Coote. These actors are then presented as national heroes within the British and UN archives. Consequently, they are also presented as thus within the historiography, with the history told of them claiming they had taken an unknown problem out of the darkness by putting it on the transnational stage through their work of building international movements in the name of justice and moral righteousness. With a critical examination across international archives and with the use of other sources, this book henceforth collapses this story.

In terms of the campaigns against late nineteenth-century state-regulated prostitution and “white slavery”, the organisational logic of the British and League of Nations’ archives put particular emphasis on the above named British

²²¹ Anjali Arondekar, ‘Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 1/2 (April 2005): 11.

²²² Michel Espagne, ‘Plural Globality and Shift in Perspective’, in *The Practice of Global History: European Perspectives*, ed. by Matthias Middell (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 35.

non-state actors. Butler, Coote, Dyer, and Stead are all presented as having made a critique of the British state. This narrative, told by the state of it being criticised, gives an impression of transparency, apology, and the correction of historical errors. The counter story to be told, however, is that this alleged self-reflection was, in fact, a convenient tale which concealed imperialist agendas on the part of the Austro-Hungarian and British Empires, in which their employees and allies drove campaigns against “white slavery” in legitimisation of migration controls and international police cooperation. These alternative findings have been reached after having identified and analysed a number of cultural transfers which can be seen in a small number of sources over a 15-year timespan, all of which connected a small network of European actors.

These empirical findings are presented over chapters five to seven. It is, however, the goal of this chapter to make transparent how the standard narrative of “white slavery” has been reproduced in the archives and in the historiography. I revise several repetitions in the historiography, most of which have simply been taken for granted from Edward Bristow’s renowned work *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870–1939*. Many of the sources which Bristow relied upon for his claims have not been properly analysed and contextualised, not even by him. Thus, the journey of doing so begins with an examination of the several contradictory accounts in the historiography as to when the phenomenon of “white slavery” allegedly began, when it allegedly got discovered and when it got its name.

4.1 Revising the Established Narrative

The entire state of the art on late nineteenth-century “white slavery” can be drawn from the cultural turn of the 1980s to the lifeworlds depicted since the 2010s. Within this is an established narrative and an uncritiqued consensus that the phenomenon was either first uncovered or constructed and then thereafter pushed onto an international political agenda by British actors around 1880. At the same time, and dappled throughout the same body of literature, there are hints and claims that this global phenomenon of (predominantly Jewish-run) “white slavery” had begun in practice at some point in the 1860s.²²³ I will return to the first British-centric claim later, but for now it suffices to point out that it is

²²³ There are many works particularly focused on Eastern Europe which complicate knowledge, both on the lives and experiences of women who sold sex and on the Jewish population at the end of the nineteenth century. These, however, tend to begin their narrative or analysis in the 1890s, a period when there is immense documentation in the archives. See chapters five and six.

a result of a linear reading within British and the League of Nations archives.²²⁴ The second claim on the Jewish involvement in “white slavery” has two causes. Firstly, it is the result of historians anachronistically taking the assertions made in sources published after 1880 as historical fact.²²⁵ Secondly, it is because until now there has been no reappraisal of Edward Bristow’s seminal work on the topic.

Written in 1982, Edward Bristow’s *Prostitution and Prejudice* points to a rapid increase in reporting on “modern Jewish white slavery” between the 1860s and 1880s. My research corroborates this, but it contradicts his claim that it was “Jews themselves” who were the first to point to the problem. Referencing an 1867 edition of the Parisian Journal *Archives Israélites*, Bristow did not provide a page number nor author, but he did give a partial translation of the journal entry which he suggested said that the “white slave trade” could be found “in Paris, London, Brussels, Hamburg, Vienna, Warsaw, [. . .]” and that “one encounters more Jews than Christians [involved in it], according to the proportion that exists between the two populations”.²²⁶ Having consulted the journal, the article which Bristow was referring to was written by Leon Hollaenderski. Bristow’s interpretation and claims are in need of urgent reappraisal.

Hollaenderski was a polish-born Jewish intellectual who was in exile in Paris at the time of writing.²²⁷ As expressed in his article, he had indeed recognised that in comparison to the general population of Paris, a disproportionate percentage of Jewish women were in destitution and selling sex, but his concern was that they had no infrastructure to support them. With a heightened awareness of growing hostilities toward Jews within the cultural narratives circulating in Paris at the time, Hollaenderski pointed out that whenever these women decided that

224 Namely, the Kew archives in London, the London School of Economics women’s library, and the League of Nations’ archives in Geneva, Switzerland.

225 I will not dwell too much on this point here as it will be incrementally worked out throughout the rest of the book. Nevertheless, some prime examples include reliance on claims of “beginnings” made in the 1906 Marcus Braun Report (FBI undercover investigator) or 1886 and 1904 reports of Josef Schrank, the Viennese police medical doctor. Marcus Braun, *Immigration Abuses: Glimpses of Hungary and Hungarians. A Narrative of the Experiences of an American Immigrant Inspector, While on Duty in Hungary* (New York: Pearson Advertising Co, 1906); Josef Schrank, *Die Prostitution in Wien in historischer, administrativer und hygienischer Beziehung* (Wien: Selbstverlag, 1886); Josef Schrank, *Der Mädchenhandel und seine Bekämpfung* (Wien: Selbstverlag, 1904).

226 Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 20.

227 For biographical information on Hollaenderski, see Philipp Lenhard, *Volk Oder Religion? Die Entstehung moderner jüdischer Ethnizität in Frankreich und Deutschland 1782–1848* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2016); Zoya Szjkowski, ‘The Alliance Israélite Universelle and East-European Jewry in the ’60s’, *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 2 (1942): 139–60.

they wanted to leave the trade, they were far too often refused support by Christian institutions. He therefore proposed that the Jewish community establish similar kinds of rescue homes for Jewish women.²²⁸ Thus, not only has Bristow inappropriately and anachronistically written “white slavery” into this history of Jewish solidarity and resistance, his construction of this “discovery” by “Jews themselves” reproduces the anti-Semitic trope and coproduces the language of “white slavery” which the sensationalised narratives from the 1880s on came to frame.

Bristow, unfortunately, did not make it transparent how he came across the Hollaenderski source. This could lead to a reactionary conclusion that he himself produced such anti-Semitic claims. However, given his professional interest in the history of anti-Jewish prejudice and persecution, he shall be given the benefit of the doubt that this was no intentional false accusation, but rather the result of trust in anachronistic claims of a later unreferenced source.

Similar problems with the lack of analysis and proper contextualisation come with assertions of when “white slavery” was first coined in relation to prostitution. Harold Fischer-Tiné, Jens Jäger and Jessica R. Pliley all point out that the term was first used in reference to a phenomenon of Jewish prostitution in the 1830s; the knowledge of which they took from Edward Bristow, who in turn referenced the 1839 work of Michael Ryan, though without any further analysis.²²⁹

At the time of the publication of his *Philosophy of Marriage* as referenced by Bristow, Michael Ryan († 1840) had been a practicing British physician, who had had numerous publications, among them *A Manual of Midwifery* (ca. 1830), *A Manual of Medical Jurisprudence and State Medicine* (1836), and *A Manual of the Principles and Practice of Physic and Treatment of Diseases* (1837).²³⁰ Ryan was a contemporary of his fellow national, William Acton, who at the time was off in Paris studying venerology under Philippe Ricord.²³¹ Sharing similar interests with these Paris-based men in terms of questions on reproductive and sexual health,

228 Leon Hollaenderski, ‘Motifs et projet d’une maison de refuge pour les femmes et les filles adultes israélites’, *Archives Israélites*, 1867, 711–15.

229 Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 35; Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class and ‘White Subalternity’ in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2009), 190; Fischer-Tiné, “White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths”, 167; Jäger, ‘International Police Co-Operation and the Associations for the Fight Against White Slavery’, 96; Jessica R. Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2014), 15.

230 For an extensive examination of Ryan’s contribution to the medical field, see Howard Brody, Zahra Meghani, and Kimberly Greenwald, eds., *Michael Ryan’s Writings on Medical Ethics* (Dordrecht et al.: Springer, 2010).

231 For more on Acton and Ricord, see chapter two.

Ryan's book on marriage, published in 1837, aimed at providing the most up-to-date medical knowledge on the reproductive organs. Then, in 1839, he published a book on prostitution in London which was clearly inspired by the work of Parent-Duchâtelet (1836).²³² It was, however, Ryan's work on marriage, not on prostitution, that Bristow references as having been the first time that the term "white slave traffic" was used to describe the role of Jews in the organisation of prostitution in London.

While Bristow referenced an 1839 version of this book, this appears to have been a typo as the original was published in 1837, with two further editions being published in Philadelphia in 1867 and 1870, a number of decades after his death.²³³ Bristow, however, provided neither analysis nor contextualisation, no more than have other scholars since. This has resulted in the repeated claim that Ryan coined (or was the first to use) the term "white slavery" in the 1830s in relation to Jews, prostitution, and trafficking.

The language and symbolism of the "white slave" as a sexualised female has a complicated history in servicing differing agendas competing for power.²³⁴ Michael Ryan in his 1837 work on marriage comes across as a moralist, who at the same time wanted to present scientifically observed medical knowledge. These positions were not contradictory for him. Although at times he expressed a moral issue with the sexuality of young women, he likewise understood that natural tendencies lead them to seek out sexual pleasure, and that if it were not for the fear of consequences such as pregnancy outside of marriage, and the responsibility that comes with it, they would "rarely preserve their chastity, illicit amours would be common and seldom detected – seduction would be facilitated and prostitution become almost universal". The exception to this natural behaviour, he noted, would be the "few who are strictly moral and highly educated".²³⁵

Even if there is some moral judgement of this tendency, it may have been to protect himself and ensure his work is published and goes into circulation. After

232 Michael Ryan, *Prostitution in London with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York* (London: H. Bailliere, 1839). For more on Parent-Duchâtelet, see chapter two. Parent-Duchâtelet, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris, considérée sous le rapport de l'hygiène publique, de la morale et de l'administration*.

233 Michael Ryan, *The Philosophy of Marriage, in Its Social, Moral, and Physical Relations: With the Physiology of Generation in the Vegetable and Animal Kingdoms*. (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blackiston, 1867); Ryan, *The Philosophy of Marriage, in Its Social, Moral, and Physical Relations: With the Physiology of Generation in the Vegetable and Animal Kingdoms* (1837).

234 See chapters two and three.

235 Michael Ryan, *The Philosophy of Marriage, in Its Social, Moral, and Physical Relations: With an Account of the Diseases of the Genito-Urinary Organs Which Impair or Destroy the Reproductive Function, and Induce a Variety of Complaints* (London: John Churchill, 1837), 10.

all, Ryan also went to great strides to set out the economic argument of the unjust burden placed upon women by the poor law act of 1834. This, he noted, compelled women and their relations to support their “illicit offspring” while “it exempt[ed] the male seducer from all liabilities”.²³⁶

Continuing to make a point on unjust economics, Ryan went on to compare the 1836–1837 reports of the Society for the Prevention and Suppression of Juvenile Prostitution with the findings of Parent-Duchâtelet from 1836. Both works, Ryan argued, were “proofs that females are seduced in a large proportion, and do not become depraved by inclination. It is, therefore, in my opinion, a most glaring defect in our legislation, to exonerate the male sex from all responsibility and punishment for seduction and bastardy, because this sex is by far more guilty and vicious; for all physiologists admit the amorous impulse is stronger in males than in the females of all grades of mamiferae”.²³⁷

There is, of course, a contradiction with Ryan’s previous point that females without social and reproductive consequences would engage in frequent casual or commercial sex. The contradiction may, however, have had a function in being able to argue how economics and morals unjustly affect women, all the while defending the position within the acceptable morality of his day.

Ryan pointed out that the social and economic burden of women having to care for children alone increased the likelihood of them having to sell sex. While economic deprivation left them vulnerable to seduction and exploitation through the sale of sex, increased sex outside of marriage led to higher numbers of illicit children. Ryan tried to argue that men should share in the moral and legal responsibility for the consequences of sex outside marriage because they are ultimately equally, if not more, responsible for the situations women find themselves in who are either pregnant out of wedlock, selling sex, or both. Within the historical sources and historiography which refer to Ryan, his economic argument that prostitution was “often caused by necessity” is completely overlooked.²³⁸ To prove his point, he quoted at length “one of the public journals, which has the largest circulation, and the greatest influence on this point”. Unfortunately, a few words of “traffic” and “white-slave dealers” are taken from the quote and put out of context in the historical literature. Likewise, it is unfortunate that Ryan did not name the journal, nor the author whom he quoted as having written the following:

²³⁶ Ryan, *The Philosophy of Marriage*.

²³⁷ Ryan, 12.

²³⁸ Ryan, 13.

The principle source of that most-melancholy evil which the Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution seeks to remedy, is, the insufficient wages that are given to females in almost all the various departments of needlework. The instance mentioned by our correspondent, of a mother and her three children who are toiling for only 8s. a week, is, we are sure, not a solitary one, and that many unfortunate girls are literally compelled, at the close of their ill-requited honest daily work, to take to the streets for money to procure the necessities of life, is a notorious and a very deplorable fact. The miseries of this wretched class of females, who would be virtuous if they could afford to be so, and many whom unquestionably do submit to sad privations and severe toil rather than degrade themselves by mercenary pollution, are increased by the vile Poor Law Amendment Bill – a Bill which the manly Whigs rendered particularly cruel to the defenceless [sic] sex. Unfortunately, we know of no means by which the evil pointed out by our worthy correspondent can be redressed. But heartily wishing the Society in question success in their commendable object, we intreat their attention to this part of the subject. We may be permitted to take this opportunity of recommending the Society to adopt the most energetic measures for the suppression of that vile traffic which they have described. Notwithstanding the punishment of those wretches, it has been proved, in several cases that have come before our police magistrates, especially at the eastern end of the town, that the infernal traffic in question is still carried on to a great extent, principally by Jews. These white slave-dealers trepan young girls into their dens of iniquity, sell them to vile debauchees, dress them out in fine clothes, and take from them all the wages of their horrible calling; and when the miserable creatures are worn out by disease, they are turned adrift to perish in the streets, to steal, or to seek refuge in a workhouse or a hospital. The horrible death of at least one of these victims of this disgusting and cruel system, is yet fresh in the public recollection.²³⁹

In this quote, which is in fact an indirect quote containing borrowed and re-worked arguments, there are many layers that need to be broken down for proper contextualisation; none of which can lead to the conclusion that Ryan was the first to coin the term “white slavery”, nor that these uses of language in 1837 had anything in a linear sense to do with the concept of a transnational underworld of “white slavery” which was constructed over the incubational period of 1866–1881.

In his 1837 work on marriage and reproduction, Ryan quoted an uncited journal at length because he wished to garner support for his argument that young women entered prostitution due to a wage crisis, and women and children fending for themselves in the economy are left with little other choice. The author in the journal, however, was trying to speak to the London Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution (est. 1835) so as to influence their agenda.

Like Ryan, the Society understood the wage situation in 1830s London to have been the major or only reason why so many young women were turning to the sale of sex in order to survive. The Society, according to the quote provided by

239 Ryan, 13–14.

Ryan, had its main goal of remedying the situation of “insufficient wages that are given to females in almost all the various departments of needle-work”. The author(s) of the journal, however, were not so much interested in this point, though they did “heartily wish [. . .] the Society in question success in their commendable object, we intreat their attention to this part of the subject.” In other words, they begged the Society to refocus their goal so as to include the adaptation of “the most energetic measures for the suppression of that vile traffic”. “Traffic” here would have simply been used to refer to all elements of the trade of selling sex, but not with the same transnational or global sense of the term “white slave trafficking” by the end of the century.

The Society was a sort of rescue home which provided an alternative to a number of girls. It also circulated arguments in support of abolishing the Poor Law of 1834 and raising the wages of those most deprived. The author(s) of the journal which Ryan quoted wished for the Society to put its energy in the repression of prostitution, not only through the “punishment of those wretches” who engaged in the sale of sex, but particularly by cracking down on Jewish people involved in the organisation of the trade, which the author referred to as “white slave-dealers”. The author(s) as Ryan continues to quote them some lines later, went on to express their disappointment that the Society was no longer being as vigilant as they once were.

Ryan does not make any comment on the authors mention of “white slave dealers” and he appears only interested in finding support for his point that extreme economic inequality is the cause of prostitution. Nevertheless, the idea that he first identified the Jews as being responsible for “white slave trafficking” has long been claimed in works contributing to the historiography on “white slavery”. What is striking about this kind of language on Jews being a social ill is, that it sounds much like anti-Semitic descriptions that began to emerge in the 1860s and 1870s in the Austrian press.

It is curious to note this use of “white slave dealers” as a descriptive category for Jews in 1830s London. This would contradict or complicate the claim that the racial distinction of “Jews” from “whites” was, as Matthew Frye Jacobson maintains, a product of racialisation processes which began in the United States after 1850.²⁴⁰ This, however, does not have to cancel out the claim that the racialisation process for Jews predominantly took place in the US.

For further research on this topic, it is worth noting that Ryan’s work was for some reason or another put into circulation in the post-Civil War US, some thirty

²⁴⁰ See Matthew Frye Jacobson, ‘Looking Jewish, Seeing Jews’, in *Theories on Race and Racism: A Reader*, ed. by Les Back and John Solonmus (Oxon: Routledge, 2000), 238–51.

years after the authors death.²⁴¹ It was first republished in 1867 and then again in 1870 with the incorrect reference for the original publication given as 1836. This seems incongruous given the somewhat outdated nature of its content by that point in time. Further eyebrows might be raised when trying to fathom why a text focusing on the British context of its day should find itself republished twice in Philadelphia.²⁴²

It is generally accepted that in the later nineteenth century a secular hatred had emerged toward Jews, in contrast to the hostility and discrimination they had forever faced as a group within majority Christian cultures. The scientification of knowledge in the nineteenth century played a large role in the making of modern anti-Semitism as distinct from previous forms of prejudice. The kind of anti-Semitic language, which Ryan quoted without reflection in his 1837 work on marriage, is simply not reflective of his representation of Jewish scholars and Jewish involvement in prostitution which he conveyed in his book *Prostitution in London*, published two years later in 1839.

Doing quite the opposite of proving the existence of Jewish “white-slave dealers”, Ryan’s work on *Prostitution in London* explains the complexity of the Jewish community and their dealings with prostitution, rather than casting any sort of sole blame on them for the organisation of a traffic. Clearly inspired by the work of Parent-Duchâtelet, Ryan used numerous methods to produce knowledge on prostitution in London, and in line with the efforts of his contemporaries Acton and Ricord, he tried to understand how this knowledge could help prevent the spread of venereal diseases, even if at the expense of prostitutes’ freedom. One of Ryan’s approaches was to carry out interviews with experts; among them whom he consulted having been the secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution, James Beard Talbot.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Ryan, *The Philosophy of Marriage, in Its Social, Moral, and Physical Relations: With the Physiology of Generation in the Vegetable and Animal Kingdoms*; Ryan, *The Philosophy of Marriage, in Its Social, Moral, and Physical Relations: With the Physiology of Generation in the Vegetable and Animal Kingdoms* (1836).

²⁴² Without wishing to enter the sphere of conspiracy, it would be worth noting for further research that my findings show this is the period that knowledge transfers were moving between diplomats and statesmen based in the Americas, Austria, Britain, and Ottoman Empire on how anti-slavery rhetoric against racialised minority groups provided opportunity to legitimise migration controls on women suspected to be prostitutes. See chapters six and seven.

²⁴³ I have found very little on the history of the Society for the Repression of Vice and nothing on a Society for the Suppression of Prostitution. Detailed source-based work would need to be carried out to identify when and where these organisations were established; when they changed their names; and when anachronistic (or incorrect) claims were made about their alleged histories.

Talbot's responses to Ryan's questionnaire played a significant part in the book, which he had categorised into different topics. Under the subject of *Number pandering to prostitution*, Talbot brought up the matter of Jewish involvement in the sale of sex in London.²⁴⁴ Ryan provided extensive quotes from Talbot, who had said that "the keepers of brothels and procuresses are, generally speaking, Jews and Jewesses; but it is to be borne in mind, that almost all wretched girls are, what is erroneously termed, Christian." Talbot, however, went on to state that it is not "just for the Christian to decry the Jews", because "both are deeply implicated" and that he would even "boldly accuse the Christian of being far more guilty than the Jew."²⁴⁵ This would appear to be an indirect conversation or debate occurring between the unnamed author(s) of the journal article quoted by Ryan in 1837 and a response two years later by the head of the Society they were trying to convince to change their core agenda.

As Jews historically fulfilled intermediary and trading roles in Christian society due to their social exclusion and lack of rights, there would be good reason to believe that there was some factual basis to the early nineteenth-century observation in London that procuresses and brothel owners tended to be Jewish. This would of course need more cross-analysis with alternative sources. The argument that those who sold sex in the same period tended to be young Christians could also be accepted given that Christians made up the majority of the population and that women tended to leave the trade in their later years due to a series of factors related to aging, health, and market demand. Again, however, careful empirical research would be needed on how groups could be referred to in sensitive terms, as opposed to how they were being categorised by certain morally infused and prejudice-filled historical actors and institutions.

Research into the social and structural changes in the sale of sex in practice would benefit from comparative questions in terms of the observations made by Holleanderski writing from Paris in the late 1860s in the context of increasing Jewish poverty migration from Eastern Europe, and thus his claim that, disproportionate to the general population, more Jewish women were engaged in the sale of sex. Whereby, back in London in the 1830s, Ryan or rather Talbot suggested the involvement of both Jewish men and woman in the organisation of the sale of sex. This would indicate some kind of social change occurring in the nineteenth century or it would contradict sensational media and state claims in late

²⁴⁴ Ryan, *Prostitution in London with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York*, 192–97.

²⁴⁵ Ryan, *Prostitution*, 193–94.

nineteenth-century London that the brokers in the sale of sex were foreign (implied as Jewish) men from the continent.²⁴⁶

Chapters five and seven show how the social role of the continental procuress was constructed in Britain as an almost exclusively foreign fancy man following the transfer of the “white slavery” narrative into this new context in 1876. There is much work to be done on distinguishing how moral reformists and cultural commentators presented their arguments and claims in comparison to how social dynamics may actually have been. It is clear that historically gender not only played an important role in the social organisation of sex and its sale, but that gender and the sale of sex as concepts were weaponised by different groups, such as moral reformists and state actors, in an attempt to politicise and achieve imperial and racist change. Political claims about society did not necessarily have anything to do with social practices or structure.

Over the course of several centuries, change in the structures of the sale of sex surely did occur. Actors with particular privileges in the nineteenth century were also perceiving rapid change as occurring around them under the global condition. It is a continued challenge for global historians to understand change in the real world in relation to the perception of change as it occurred in the mind.

If it is correct that the roles of “panders” and “fetchers” in Elizabethan London were typically fulfilled by men, as was outlined in chapter two, then their task description would somewhat fit that of the late nineteenth century alleged or exaggerated function of a “trafficker”. Nothing in the scholarship I have examined suggests that these intermediaries of the sixteenth century were predominately Jewish. However, in the case study claims produced by the state for my empirical period of analysis (1866–1881) they were almost explicitly presented as Jewish, and in most cases as men.

While my findings strongly suggest an anti-Semitic claim with no empirical substance at the end of the nineteenth century, more research would be needed to either confirm or contradict such claims and to carefully distinguish between shifting social structures and shifting perceptions of the social world under the global condition.

In terms of Ryan’s use of the “white slavery” language in the 1830s, Jessica Pliley has argued that he was ahead of his time, as most people in Britain and America only started using the term later in the century.²⁴⁷ Rather than being at the forefront of a semantic fashion, the possibility should be left open that there

²⁴⁶ See chapters five and six.

²⁴⁷ Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI*, 15.

was a cultural transfer which occurred as a result of his book on marriage being imported, republished, and circulated in the US in the late 1860s. These kinds of questions and the observation of inconsistencies in the secondary literature call for careful dissection of the unsmooth narrative; one which presents an alleged event or utterance from the 1830s in London as having then simply globalised after 1880, following the discovery of a phenomenon by the same name as a result of a handful of British actors who turned their efforts against the problem into an international movement.

In 1830, Ryan did not have an agenda of blaming the Jewish for London-based prostitution. He had perhaps carelessly included an extended quote from a journal which he believed supported his argument that low or no wages was the sole reason for women turning to the sale of sex. The unknown person he quoted had, however, sought to make a sensation of Jewish involvement in the sale of sex and to garner public distain toward them as an *othered* group. It was this person's labelling of Jews as "white-slave dealers" that has until now been thrown around as part of the *beginnings* of this history in the historiography, but without the necessary contextualisation for asking how things could have been, what they might have meant, or how they may have changed.

The quote that Ryan included in his book on marriage had indeed an anti-Semitic tone to it. That said, his own direct expressions in the two works consulted for this research did not reveal any such derogatory language toward Jewish people. In fact, on the very topic of Jewish involvement in the sale of sex in London in the 1830s, he dedicates several passages in his 1839 work on prostitution. His findings or arguments on this topic are predominantly based on his (epistolary) interview with James Beard Talbot, the secretary of the London Society for the Protection of Young Females and the Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution.

Judging from how Ryan conveys his knowledge in the book, it can be assumed that he wrote Talbot as an expert on the topic of prostitution in London, asking him a series of questions or providing him with a list of topics that he would be grateful if he responded to in writing. This request could have perhaps led to an in-person interview, from which Ryan made extensive notes. Either way, it seems that Talbot had time to reflect on how he would answer as an expert, and in preparation he himself reached out to his own network whom he thought could help in formulating his responses, thus bolstering the authority of his opinion through the practice of quoting others, as was the culture of expertise in the nineteenth century. This trail of citations is how knowledge was produced on subalterns, such as those who organised and engaged in the sale of sex.

Under the subheading *Disturbances in improper houses*, Ryan continued reproducing knowledge based on his interview with Talbot. Listing the reasons why

Christians were even more so accountable than Jews for the problem of prostitution, the secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Prostitution had articulated his admiration for how “respectable” Jews of authority were doing everything they could to banish their co-religionists who engaged in one way or another in the organisation or provision of commercial sex. Talbot was convinced that Christians should be doing the same kind of ostracising and repressing of subalterns.

In support of his claim that the elite Jewish community was committed to cracking down on vice, Talbot quoted to Ryan a correspondence he had received from the “learned and philanthropic” Dr. Solomon Herschell. In a trail of citations, Herschell, according to Ryan’s quote of Talbot, had confirmed his awareness of the growing number of Jews who “are guilty of abetting the process of vice” and that he was doing all he could in his power to hold them “up to public disgrace” and to exclude “them from every mark of respect which the synagogue confers”.²⁴⁸ In fact, Herschell is said to have gone as far as making it his “decided opinion, that the only effectual remedy [. . .] [would be] by an Act of Parliament, [which inflicted] prompt and decided pains and penalties against the keepers of brothels, procurers, and procuresses.”²⁴⁹

This idea of using the law to repress go-betweens in the sale of sex was, however, nothing new in the 1830s. Targeting such third parties already had two centuries of legal precedent in Europe, as well as moral campaigns against them and their categorisation in London.²⁵⁰ Although Ryan put emphasis on the economic causes of prostitution when using his own words, in those quoted he endorsed an agenda of repressing actors who were engaged in some way or form in the sale of sex. The idea, however, that he was the first to label third-parties as “white slave dealers” is wrong and oversimplifies a number of matters.

Firstly, it distorts the complicated exchange of ideas on how to deal with (perceived) changing social dynamics in the sale of sex at the end of the nineteenth century. Secondly, it overlooks the history of repressing and categorising third parties since the seventeenth century.²⁵¹ Finally, it diminishes the power of the “white slavery” metaphor in the nineteenth century and how it was infused by the scientification of knowledge on gender and race which found its way into visual and written culture.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Ryan, *Prostitution in London with a Comparative View of That of Paris and New York*, 194.

²⁴⁹ Ryan, *Prostitution*, 195.

²⁵⁰ See chapter two.

²⁵¹ See chapter two.

²⁵² See chapters two and three.

Beyond Ryan being noted in the historical literature as the beginning of the language of “white slavery”, there is an alternative claim which suggests that Victor Hugo’s 1870 letter of support to Josephine Butler and “the Ladies’ Appeal and Protest” was the moment when the term “white slavery” and its French equivalent “*la traite des blanches*” (trade in white women) became more firmly associated with the notion of prostitution.²⁵³ Jessica Pliley and Mir Yarfitz have produced brilliant works which deconstruct the historical narratives of “white slavery”. Both make reference to Hugo’s letter, though neither make it clear how they came across it. My guess would that they read Butler’s memoirs on how she established an international organisation, for which she credited Hugo’s letter to the Ladies Protest Movement in England as having popularised the metaphor.²⁵⁴ There is, however, clearly a contradiction, or at least much missing knowledge in a chronology which says that Ryan in London in the 1830s was the first to label those involved in the organisation of trafficking as “white slave dealers”, while forty years later, Hugo writing from Paris in the French language was the first to popularise the metaphor in Britain.

Autobiographies and memoirs can be useful sources for capturing individual perspectives and understanding how different people recall the past. Yet, they should be treated with careful reflection upon how egos and memories are notoriously inaccurate, presenting their preferred version of how things had been. The account of events presented by Josephine Butler in her memoirs is not what can be found when reading between, outside of, and behind the British and League of Nations’ archives. Butler’s version of the story is the version of the past which has been repeatedly presented by the state and within the historiography. Thus, what can be concluded is that Butler’s version of history is the one which has been legitimated; this is, however, not the same as what could have been when looked at from a different angle.

Within the historical scholarship on late nineteenth-century prostitution and “white slavery”, there is an established, highly British-centric narrative that has never been questioned. This account of events can be found across the literature, including those who are writing on and from other geographies. Emblematic of this narrative is the summary by Julia Laite, which tells the story that begins with the implementation of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Britain in the late 1860s.

²⁵³ Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI*, 15; Yarfitz, *Impure Migration*, 22.

²⁵⁴ Victor Hugo, ‘Hugo to the British “Ladies National Association”, Paris, Le 20 Mars 1870.’, 1870. For the reproduction of the letter, see Josephine Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*; Josephine Butler, *Souvenirs personnels d’une grande croisade* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1900).

Laite argues that “the protest was almost immediate: taking the name – and the symbolism – of the ‘abolitionists’ who had fought against the British government’s support of slavery half a century earlier.” Out of this “new abolitionism”, the general consensus and Laite’s summary maintain that an alliance of British actors emerged including “radical liberals, evangelicals, moral reformers and feminist men and women” who all got behind the leadership of Josephine Butler, collectively launching “local” and then later “international campaigns against the government regulation of prostitution”.²⁵⁵

Within the historiography it is then understood that this campaign momentum culminated initially into the Ladies’ National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1869, with this British movement thereafter becoming “widely considered one of the founding moments of modern feminism” which soon was to “spread to the Continent and the Empire when the International Abolitionist Federation was formed by repealers in 1871 [sic]”.²⁵⁶

This established narrative continues that the founding of this international organisation laid the groundwork for the problem of “white slavery” to be given political and moral attention by British non-state actors in the years to come. Ever since it remains uncritiqued knowledge that

in the 1880s, as the CD Acts entered their last years of operation, [“white slavery”] came to be almost exclusively attached to exploitative or juvenile prostitution. This was thanks in no small part to the Quaker journalist Alfred Dyer, who acting on the tip of a friend, visited brothels in Belgium, exposed the trade in British girls into that country’s regulated brothels in the late 1870s. These revelations, quickly drawn upon by the press and by politicians, prompted a Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Law Related to the Protection of Young Girls, which sat and published its report between 1881 and 1882.²⁵⁷

As detailed in chapter two, the Ladies’ Protest movement against the CD Acts in Britain had indeed formed in 1869, with Josephine Butler having been selected as their leader. The rest of the story about a British campaign spreading to the continent and a British actor revealing the innerworkings of “white slavery” is what I contest.

In early 1870, in the months following the establishment of the British “Ladies’ Protest”, Victor Hugo and Giuseppe Mazzini indeed sent letters of support,

²⁵⁵ Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885–1960* (Hampshire/New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 7.

²⁵⁶ Laite, 7–8. The Federation was established in 1875, not 1871.

²⁵⁷ Laite, 8.

as did many other internationally renowned figures.²⁵⁸ In 1880, Alfred Stace Dyer indeed published his journalistic findings following his alleged “investigative” trip to Brussels during which he claimed to have uncovered the underworld trafficking of English girls.²⁵⁹ But the version of history quoted from Laite above is simply a reproduction of Dyers account of events, which like with Butler’s memoirs, does not reflect how things could have been if looked at from multiple other and strange angles. The fact that Butler’s and Dyer’s versions of history have been so long repeated and never revised suggests that their accounts legitimated, and were legitimated by, the British/European state, through the organisational logic of archives.

Three things are perplexing in the narrative from Hugo’s metaphor to Dyer’s uncovering. Firstly, that with the help of the printed word, these presented-as-heroic men turned a small and marginal, largely women’s protest movement against the British state into an international agenda against third party non-state actors. Secondly, that in encouraging the “Ladies’ Protest”, Hugo metaphorically denoted their fight against the “esclavage des femmes blanches”, but had not used the term “*la traite des blanches*” which became “white slavery’s” established French linguistic equivalent by the end of the nineteenth century.²⁶⁰ Thirdly, it is puzzling that there is no explanation for what happened in the ten years between the time Hugo produced a gendered and racialised metaphor and the time Dyer allegedly uncovered the real thing.

In 1870, there was a lot of activity around the topic of state regulation. The Parisian Chief of Police, Charles-Jérôme Lecour (1823–1900), had published his research which legitimised the continuation of “French system”;²⁶¹ letters of support for the “Ladies’ Protest” were arriving from the continent;²⁶² and Butler made a speech in which she stated “a slave trade is carried out in London! Girls of twelve are bought and sold, and lodged in houses of ill-fame. These houses

258 “The Ladies Appeal and Protest” in Britain was a manifesto signed by 124 women declaring the formation of the Ladies National Association in 1870 with the aim of repealing the Contagious Diseases Acts. For the collection of letters sent in support of their manifesto, see Association pour l’émancipation progressive de la femme, *La tolérance légale du vice. Lettres de MM. Victor Hugo, Cte A. de Gasparin, Père Hyacinthe, Mazzini, Marie Goegg, Mozzoni, M. J. Stuart Mill, etc* (Paris: Passey, 1872).

259 Alfred Stace Dyer, *The European Slave Trade in English Girls: A Narrative of Facts* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1880).

260 Hugo, ‘Hugo to the British “Ladies National Association”, Paris, Le 20 Mars 1870’, 1870.

261 C. J. Lecour, *La prostitution à Paris et à Londres 1789–1870* (Paris: P. Asselin: Librairie de la Faculté de Médecine, 1870).

262 Association pour l’émancipation progressive de la femme, *La tolérance légale du vice*.

should be put down”.²⁶³ From one perspective it could be suspected that it was circulating knowledge of the British repeal efforts, in combination with Lecour’s publication of *La Prostitution à Paris et à Londres*, that triggered figures like Valérie de Gasparin and Victor Hugo to send their letters of support to Britain while expressing their opinions on state regulation in France. By chapter seven, this perspective will have been complicated with an alternative possibility for the telling of this history. For now, however, it suffices to show how the established narrative does not fully reflect this transnational collaboration and solidarity of a cross-national cause which was there from the beginning.

British and French anti-regulationists in the early 1870s were well aware of Lecour’s work, with Butler herself being in direct correspondence with him.²⁶⁴ After Butler led a protest in Britain, the state of the art would then have it that she embarked on a continental tour in 1874/75 with the intention of building further international support for her home cause against the CD Acts. Prior to her tour, there was, however, clearly already a continental support network in place. After returning from her trips to France, Italy, and Switzerland, it is then said that the British Ladies National Association issued an invitation to their new continental allies, inviting them to the first International Congress for the Abolition of State Regulated Prostitution which took place in Liverpool in 1875. This Congress, in turn, having resulted in the establishment of The Federation.

The Federation was indeed established in Liverpool in 1875. However, its infrastructure was largely Swiss, as both the headquarters and the organ for publishing were set up in Neuchâtel. With the central goal of developing an international agenda for the abolition of state-regulated prostitution, the Federation was an international alliance aimed at collapsing a state-system which had been incrementally introduced throughout Europe and the colonies since the French revolution.²⁶⁵ The loose assertion or assumption made by some scholars that there is a historical relationship between the British slave trade, the early nineteenth-century abolition of slavery, and the late nineteenth-century campaigns against “white slavery” is more than an oversimplification. It is not even relevant

²⁶³ Unknown, ‘Meeting of Ladies; Speech Given by Josephine E. Butler to the Women’s Meeting, Lecture Theatre of the Midland Institute, Birmingham, Thursday 10 March 1870’, in *Josephine Butler and the Prostitution Campaigns: Diseases of the Body Politic*, ed. by Jane Jordan and Ingrid Sharp, 4 vols (London/New York: Routledge, 2003), vol. 2, 77–79.

²⁶⁴ J. V. Daubié, ‘Un souverain pontife (À propos d’une correspondance entre M. Lecour, chef de la police des mœurs, à Paris, et Mme Butler)’, in *La tolérance légale du vice. Lettres de MM. Victor Hugo, Cte. A. Gasparin, Père Hyacinthe, Mazzini, Marie Goegg, Mme Mozzoni, J. Stuart-Mill, etc.* (Paris: Association pour l’émancipation progressive de la femme, 1872), 59–64.

²⁶⁵ See chapter two.

as contextualisation; rather, it feeds a culture of amnesia and the elite memory politics of the European mind.

Many of the founding members of the Federation, including Josephine Butler, had been the children of a previous generation of anti-slavery campaigners. It is thus not otherworldly to assume that an international abolitionist, anti-slavery identity and vocabulary would have slipped onto them like a second skin. This is, however, not the same as suggesting that the moral problems constructed in their agendas had anything that calls for structural or semantic comparison with that of the generation or two before. British late nineteenth-century “abolitionism” was about identity, strategy, and politics. Repetition and reinforcement of a cognitive connection between the abolition of slavery and the abolition of state regulation does not tell anything about the lives of subalterns in any global context. Conversely, what it does is continue to empower what was clearly an incredibly successful late nineteenth-century strategy and campaign.²⁶⁶

Entitled *The New Abolitionists*, one of the Federations first publications in English gave the organisation’s official “account of the mission undertaken to the continent of Europe by Mrs. Josephine E. Butler”.²⁶⁷ A legitimised account of history, this is the kind of narrative that would have captured the late nineteenth-century liberal elite mentality and mind. *The New Abolitionists* was brought to its audience by the Dyer Brothers of London, a company who would become the Federations primary collaborator for works in English, while those in French were issued by their in-house publishing company in Neuchâtel.

Working with the Federation since 1876, the Dyer Brothers was owned and run by Alfred Stace Dyer (1849–1926), the man who in 1880 would allegedly uncover the “facts” of the “European slave trade in English girls”. Of a working-class background, Dyer had left school at the age of 12 to earn money for his widowed mother. He got into publishing through his marriage, having taken over his wife’s family tradition in the business.²⁶⁸ As a young man in the 1870s, he had become a committed Quaker, going on to use his publishing company for moral issues such

²⁶⁶ For earlier uses of the “white slavery” metaphor, see chapter 2 and Ennis, ‘Narrating “White Slavery” in and out of Fiction, 1854–1880’. For a previous problematisation of the metaphor and its semantic relation to the transatlantic slave trade, see Jean-Michel Chaumont and Anne-Laure Wibrin, ‘Traite des Noirs, traite des Blanches: même combat?’, *La sexualité à vendre ou à acheter*, no. 43 (2011): 121–32. <http://77dx.doi.org/10.7202/1002483ar>.

²⁶⁷ International Abolitionist Federation, *The New Abolitionists: The Narrative of a Year’s Work Being an Account of the Mission Undertaken to the Continent of Europe by Mrs. Josephine E. Butler, and of the Events Subsequent Thereupon* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1876), <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ygqn5e47/items?canvas=7>.

²⁶⁸ Steffan Rimner, *Opium’s Long Shadow: From Asian Revolt to Global Drug Control* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 86.

as prostitution and later to fund and facilitate reformist work against the Opium trade.²⁶⁹ Though his professional relationship with the Federation was tumultuous from the beginning, his moral tendency nevertheless made him compatible, while the Federation's salacious agenda caught his profit predicting eye.²⁷⁰

A number of years before his own renowned publication in 1880, Dyer had already realised the commercial or sensational appeal of working with the Federation. In 1876, his company was commissioned to publish the translated version of a Swiss work called *THE WHITE SLAVERY OF EUROPE*: from the French of Pastor T. Borel, *of the Geneva Refuge* (emphasis original). The original French version having had the somewhat duller title *L'état et la moralité publique: une question sociale* by Théodore Borel and Donat Sautter.²⁷¹

Originally having been a co-published book split into two sections, the individual works of Pastor Théodore Borel and Donat Sautter fell into the hands of all the "new abolitionists", who were subscribers to the Federation's Swiss-based *Bureau de Bulletin Continental*.²⁷² In the first 26 pages, Borel provided an animated first-hand description of "*la traite des blanches*", which is then followed by a subsequent section, conveying Sautter's rather solemn legal-political argument for the outright repression of prostitution based on the his facts about state regulation.²⁷³

It would seem that a good narrative captures an audience better than any sober argument; demand was so high for Borel's account, that Josephine Butler immediately had it commissioned for translation into English. With "not a single copy of the original left", she begged her close friend and the translator Joseph Edmondson, for one of his earliest versions "even if they were but proofs".²⁷⁴

Chapter five provides a detailed analysis of Borel's original, Edmondson's translation and Dyer's own publication so as to show how "white slavery" was not uncovered by a British actor in 1879/1880. This shows how the idea of "white slavery" had been transferred into the British context through this particular translation. This analysis, however, led back to another transfer, namely the term

269 Rimner, *Opium's Long Shadow*, 88–144.

270 For evidence of tensions from early on in their working relationship, see Josephine Butler, 'JEB to Miss Priestman (Feb 17th)', 17 February 1876, 3JBL/15/01, LSE Women's Library.

271 Joseph Edmondson, ed., *The White Slavery of Europe. From the French of Pastor Borel of Geneva. With Supplement relating to the Foreign Traffic in English, Scotch and Irish Girls* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1876); *L'état et la moralité publique: une question sociale. Par T. Borel et D. S.* (Neuchâtel: Bureau du Bulletin Continental, 1876).

272 This being the in-house publishing office of the Federation, which they predominately used to keep their members informed through their periodical, the *Bulletin Continental*.

273 Borel and D. S., *L'état et la moralité publique*.

274 Josephine Butler, 'Josephine Butler to Mr Edmondson', 13 April 1876, 3JBL/15/04, LSE Women's Library.

“la traite des blanches” which had come out of the French literary world and made its way into the agenda against the “French system”, through the novelist and Swiss woman of letters, Valérie de Gasparin.

The Genevan-born Gasparin had spent much of her adult life in Paris where she was engaged within literary circles. Based on this, I assume that she had consciously or unconsciously borrowed the metaphor *“la traite des blanches”* from Balzac (1854/1855), though more likely because of style and morality from Moléri (1862).²⁷⁵ Gasparin then turned this literary term into a campaign metaphor in 1870, which called upon the French Réveil Movement to organise against the system of state-regulated prostitution. At the time of starting this campaign, Gasparin had already been back in her home town of Geneva for several years, where she must have acquainted Pastor Théodore Borel, who was running a reform home for prostitutes. Borel took inspiration from Gasparin’s metaphor, only that, in 1876, he went on to publish the details of how this *real* “white slave trade” operated as a European underworld.

During the research phase for this book, I had initially been perplexed by the lack of coherency in the claim of the state of the art that Victor Hugo had once given a problem a metaphorical name, which Alfred Stace Dyer then described in terms of its real structure ten years later. A history of cultural transfers has, however, allowed me to address this confusion, and as a result override this established narrative that has been repeated in the literature on nineteenth-century prostitution since the cultural turn.

Written in English in 1886 and translated into French in 1900, Josephine Butler’s memoirs of her great crusade had given space to the role of Hugo and Mazzini in the history of how the international agenda against state regulation had come about. However, her memory, or preferred version of history, failed to recall the role of her Swiss-based colleagues Pastor Théodore Borel or Valérie de Gasparin. In fact, Butler has had several biographies written about her, none of which make mention of either of these actors.²⁷⁶ Neither did I come across them in the British based archives, which are the source that one can use to corroborate Butler’s version of the story.

Looking at the relationships of these actors from elsewhere, it becomes apparent that Butler had had a somewhat close working relationship with Borel, who himself was an acquaintance of Gasparin, who in turn was a regular corre-

275 For details on how the term *“la traite des blanches”* was coined and circulating in the French literary world, see chapter two.

276 For example, see Jenny Daggers and Diana Neal, eds., *Sex, Gender and Religion: Josephine Butler Revisited* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006); Jane Jordon, *Josephine Butler* (London: John Murray Ltd, 2001); Jordon and Sharp, *Josephine Butler and the Prostitution Campaigns*.

spondent of Hugo. Biographical data on Borel has, however, been difficult to find. He was possibly a Belgium-born citizen, who then moved to Geneva for his theological studies where he remained thereafter, running a refuge for prostitutes in the city.²⁷⁷ It was this occupation that brought him into contact with Josephine Butler on several occasions during her visits to Geneva on her 1874/75 European tour. According to Christine Machiels' research, the two hit it off. In fact, among other Swiss actors such as Alfred de Meuron, Henri Minod, and Aimé Hubert, Borel became one of Butlers close associates in Switzerland, the country in which the infrastructure for the Federation would be established later that same year.²⁷⁸

Borel and his co-author Donat Sautter de Blonay, had also been associates of the Comtesse de Gasparin and her family. Sautter had come from a non-aristocratic family but entered one in 1856 through his marriage to Emma Sophie Céline de Blonay; their son Ernest Sautter then married Valérie de Gasparin's niece Sophie Pauline Boissier in 1904. Given their home base in Switzerland and their involvement in the making of a movement against the "French system", one might assume that Gasparin and Sautter had some form of a moral-political relationship thirty years before it became a familiar one. While the Comtesse had no family connection to Théodore Borel, their relationship of trust became so close that she privileged him with her recount for her renowned husband's biography following his death, which was subsequently published a year later.²⁷⁹

Throughout her adult life, the Comtesse had also been a close acquaintance of Victor Hugo. Before the two headed into exile following the 1848 revolution, the Gasparins went on their first travel to the "Orient". Gasparin then took refuge in her home town of Geneva, while Hugo went to Guernsey. Both writers had moved in the same literary circles of Paris; thereafter remaining in contact and sharing ideas through personal letters.²⁸⁰ In fact, fitting her description as a

277 August Bouvier and Henri Heyer, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque appartenant à la compagnie des pasteurs* (Gèneve: Imprimerie Rey & Malavallon, 1896), 168; Rimner, *Opium's Long Shadow*, 99.

278 Christine Machiels, *Les féminismes et la prostitution (1860–1960)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2016), 45.

279 Borel's biography of the Comte Agénor de Gasparin was published in French in 1879 and then translated into English for distribution in America that same year. Gabriel Mützenber, 'Portrait et Destinée', in *Valérie de Gasparin: une conservatrice révolutionnaire*, ed. by Denise Francillon (Le Mont-sur-Lausanne: Ecole La source, 1994), 28. Also see Théodore Borel, *Le Comte Agénor de Gasparin* (Paris: Bonhoure, 1879); Unknown, trans., *The Count Agénor de Gasparin Translated from the French of Th. Borel* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, 1879).

280 In the 1860s, for example, the Comtesse was in personal correspondence with Victor Hugo. Following the publication of her latest novel, she had sent him a copy in 1866, to which he re-

“Swiss woman of letters”, Gasparin had, just like Hugo and Mazzini, written a letter of support to the British Ladies’ Protest in 1870.²⁸¹ I know this, not because it has been acknowledged anywhere in the scholarly literature or in the British/League of Nations’ archives, but because all of the letters of support sent to the “Ladies Protest” from the continent were published as a collective in 1872 by the “*Association pour l’émancipation progressive de la femme*”.²⁸²

Butler, the Federation, and the British state have long benefitted from an established narrative in the historiography which presents the building of an international agenda against state regulation and “white slavery” as having been the efforts of British actors alone. Having overhauled the chronology of events in this established narrative, a history of cultural transfers has allowed to show the complexity of other non-British actors involved in making “white slavery” a topic. So far, however, this story has been merely somewhat loosened and disentangled from its predominant association with British actors; the core of this narrative has yet to be told.

4.2 An Alternative Account

It has already been established that the metaphor of “white slavery” did not come from Victor Hugo in 1870, just as it was neither the case that Alfred Stace Dyer uncovered and then published the truth about the real thing in 1880. Rather, Dyer had become aware of the power for the non-fictional narrative of young white girls selling sex after his company published a translation of Borel’s account in 1876, who had in turn borrowed the metaphor “*la traite des blanches*” from Valérie de Gasparin and subsequently turned it into a *real* thing.²⁸³

In the established chronology and historiography, the British journalist W. T. Stead is typically credited with having started a populist movement against “white slavery” following his highly unethically investigative journalism in 1885

sponded. The full content of the letters is unknown as they were sold to a private bidder, see Victor Hugo, ‘Hugo (Victor) Lettres adressées à Valérie de Gasparin. Guernesey, Hauteville House, 6 Janvier [1866] & 5 Avril [1869] (Sold to Private Bidder in 2017 Auction)’, Private Antiques Auctioneers, Pierre Berge & Associés, accessed 14 September 2020, <https://www.pba-auctions.com/lot/81188/7121744?npp=50&>.

²⁸¹ Association pour l’émancipation progressive de la femme, *La tolérance légale du vice. Lettres de MM. Victor Hugo, Cte A. de Gasparin, Père Hyacinthe, Mazzini, Marie Goegg, Mozzoni, M. J. Stuart Mill, Etc*, 15–17.

²⁸² This association that had been established in Paris in 1871 with the dual goal of combatting prostitution and of demanding women’s right to vote.

²⁸³ See Ennis, ‘Narrating “White Slavery” in and out of Fiction, 1854–1880’.

which “revealed” how one could buy, technically rape (though he did not) and trick a girl.²⁸⁴ Likewise William Alexander Coote, also of Britain, is too recognised as having kickstarted an international agenda to make international law against “white slavery” as a result of his European tour in 1898, during which he met predominantly with diplomats.

While revisions could also be carried out to collapse these chronologically later British-centric narratives, the focus remains on the incubational period of conceptual development (1866–1881) which shows that, from the very beginning, knowledge production on “white slavery” was international. According to the established narrative on this period, the British government was pressured to react to Alfred Stace Dyer’s written actions and claims, which led to the subsequent convening of a Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1881 to discuss the matter. This version on how things could have been is simply taking Dyer’s own account of events in his *Narrative of Facts* for granted.²⁸⁵ Another version of the past is, however, to be found in a footnote that was slipped into a translation of Théodore Borel’s work, which Dyer himself published four years prior, making this British man the receiving end of a transnational transfer process.

Joseph Edmondson’s translation of Pastor Théodore Borel’s account of “white slavery” provided a complete reproduction of a letter to the editor of the *Times* written by British Consul Henry Barron on 3 February 1876. Barron warned against English women migrating as they could meet “their ruin by established traders in vice” who would try to lure them to “Belgium by deceptive representations”.²⁸⁶ In his short article, Barron insisted that the press should serve as a “chief means of warning against this danger”, while he proposed the solution to this problem be that “no offer [of a job for an English woman abroad], however specious, ought to be accepted without due investigation, and a written agreement providing for the payment of the return journey in case of a termination of the engagement”.²⁸⁷

Sir Henry Barron (1824–1900) was a prominent British career diplomat, who between 1871 and 1883 served as the secretary of legation in Brussels.²⁸⁸ Signing his letter as *Chargé d’Affaires* in Brussels as well as member of the Committee of the British Charitable Fund, it is perplexing that, despite being the first British

284 Stead, ‘The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’.

285 Alfred Stace Dyer, *The European Slave Trade in English Girls: A Narrative of Facts*.

286 H. Barron, ‘Englishwomen Abroad’, in *The White Slavery of Europe: From the French of Pastor. T. Borel Edited by Joseph Edmondson* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1876), 7.

287 H. Barron, ‘Englishwomen Abroad’, 7.

288 ‘British Armorial Bindings’, University of Toronto Libraries, accessed 31 March 2022, <https://armorial.library.utoronto.ca/stamp-owners/BAR006>.

person to name the problem, this highly ranked statesman is more or less entirely missing from the secondary literature, just as he is absent from the British and League of Nations' archives on the topic of "white slavery".

According to the historical literature and the official British state record, the writings of Alfred Stace Dyer in 1879/1880 kickstarted legal procedures in Belgium which took place between December 1880 and April 1881, marking the first court trials on the international "traffic in girls". Dyers unveiling of the "facts" are simultaneously established as having pressured the then British Foreign Secretary Granville to commission an independent investigation, for which he appointed Barrister Thomas William Snagge in November 1880. This is then said to have led to a Select Committee on the matter, a draft bill, an international exposure of the crime, and, finally, the emergence of international law in 1904 to combat it. This is, however, yet again another British-centric history, retold upon the narrative lines presented within British-based archives as well as those of the League of Nations in Geneva.

Over several months in 1881, the British Select Committee examined evidence on the problem of trafficking in girls from London to Brussels. Among the numerous witnesses they invited to give evidence were consuls from their posts in Belgium and the Netherlands and elite figures like the Belgian scholar Émile Louis Victor de Laveleye (1822–1892), one of the co-founders of the *Institut de Droit international*, or the proponent of international policing, Colonel Sir Charles Edward Howard Vincent (1849–1908). Of all the witnesses of high authority who were called forth, neither the (possibly) Belgian citizen Théodore Borel, nor the Brussels-based British diplomat Henry Barron got invited to take the stand, despite them being the first two to draw the British public's attention to the problem. Should they simply have been busy in the first quarter of 1881, it is also strange that their publications from 1876 did not even receive a mere mention in the minutes of evidence, nor in the report written by the appointed chief investigator, Thomas William Snagge.

Chapter five makes the case that Borel came to produce a narrative of "white slavery" by having built upon the metaphor and ideas of Valérie de Gasparin. Chapter six then takes a look at the circulation of knowledge and ideas among British and Austro-Hungarian diplomats who had spent time together in the 1860s in the Ottoman capital. These diplomats were the first to drive the agenda against "white slavery" beginning in 1876, with their push for migration control around the Mediterranean and new standards for international policing cooperation. Thus, I contend that the history of "white slavery" belongs just as much in the historiography of new imperialism and migration control, as it does in the history of late nineteenth-century women's rights and moral reformist movements. I have arrived at this conclusion having traced back a series of transferred

and entangled ideas which began their development in the Ottoman capital and territories in the 1860s.

Prior to taking up his post in Brussels, Barron had served as secretary and then as Chargé d'Affaires of the British embassy in Istanbul between 1866 and 1870. From the archival findings of two historians, Malte Fuhrmann and Anna Staudacher, I had known that Austro-Hungarian diplomats in the Ottoman Empire were already concerned with women migrating for the sale of sex, as expressed in their letters sent in 1875 and 1876 to the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Graf Gyula Andrassy (1823–1890).²⁸⁹

As previously mentioned, Edward Bristow pointed to a rapid increase in reports of “modern Jewish white slavery” between the 1860s and the 1880s.²⁹⁰ Although he did not provide any sources, I can confirm, having looked at the Austro-Hungarian press archives for this period, that Bristow is correct in his claim to an intensification of discourse. His lack of analysis or contextualisation, however, is problematic in that he simply assumes the content of the reports to have been a factual reflection of what had in real-time been.

In addition to Edward Bristow's examination of Jews and “white slavery”, Rafit N. Bali has also looked at the topic of *The Jews and Prostitution in Constantinople, 1854–1922*.²⁹¹ Despite his periodisation, Bali's primary sources are all from after 1880; for anything earlier he has relied heavily on the work of Bristow. In fact, in the secondary literature on “white slavery”, there is generally profound dependence on Bristow as a base reference with no reflection on the issues this produces in terms of anachronism and the rippling effect in narrative building along the citation trail.

For example, in his book *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, Malte Fuhrmann gives one of the earliest starting points to the emergence of “white slave trafficking” when he argues that Ashkenazi “human traffickers and pimps” originated during the 1851 Crimean War. He refers to Rafit Bali's book from 2008 to support this claim. The source provided by Fuhrmann via Bali is, however, from 1890, which neither he nor Bali had consulted. Rather Bali found the work quoted in Bristow's book from 1982.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Online: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 375–76; Staudacher, ‘Die Aktion “Girondo”. Zur Geschichte des internationalen Mädchenhandels in Österreich-Ungarn um 1885’, 97. For full discussion, see chapter six.

²⁹⁰ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 19.

²⁹¹ Rafit N. Bali, *The Jews and Prostitution in Constantinople, 1854–1922* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2008).

²⁹² Bali, 19–20; Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, 374.

It is, of course, common practice to refer to and trust the work of other historians when seeking contextualisation for one's own work. I too have done this, particularly in chapters two and three when, for example, exploring the history of biology as a discipline, or the toleration of brothel prostitution in early modern Europe. In taking a detailed and critical look, however, I have found endless problems with Bristow's work and more generally in the claims made by authors such as Fuhrmann, who, like many others, then go on to build upon Bristow's origin claim of "white slave trafficking" having emerged during the Crimean War, so as to then argue that these "white slavers" in some ways expanded upon the older structures of slave trading in the region.²⁹³ There is simply no historical grounding for such sweeping claims. Even if only a minor argument in Fuhrmann's otherwise empirically grounded work, the lack of contextualising can have, perhaps unintended, but deeply Eurocentric, anti-Semitic, and orientalist consequences.

To give another example of this problem with paraphrasing and referencing without having looked at the original source, Bali cited Bristow to argue that already in 1860, a French traveller in Constantinople reported on the trade "at the hands of the Jews".²⁹⁴ While Bristow's way of constructing an argument also has its problems, this is not exactly what he meant in stating that:

By the 1860s a French visitor to Odessa wrote that Jews there were responsible for a white-slavery market in Russian women to Turkey. This is feasible, especially since we know that Jewish brothelkeepers were already in place at the other end of Constantinople. The 1889 census shows that Jewish women ran 30 or 36 licensed brothels in Kherson province, where Odessa was located. In 1908 the American Consul there claimed that "the whole business" of prostitution is almost exclusively in the hands of Jews.²⁹⁵

While Bali simply took the beginning and the end of this paragraph to make a different claim, Bristow's assertions are neither all too reliable. Having consulted the pages of the "French visitor" in 1860 as cited by Bristow, I found no mention of Jews, Odessa, nor prostitution; neither did a fitting combination of these words turn up in any digital search. The author, Artamof, was rather speaking about the history of Moscow around the time of Napoleon's invasion.²⁹⁶ As for the second reference provided by Bristow for his aforementioned claim, I did not find the exact report from the American consul in 1908, but perhaps it is not necessary:

²⁹³ Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, 374.

²⁹⁴ Bali, *The Jews and Prostitution in Constantinople, 1854–1922*, 20.

²⁹⁵ Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 56.

²⁹⁶ Piotre Artamof, *La Russie historique, monumentale et pittoresque* (Paris: Imprimerie de Ch. Lahure et Cee, 1862), 300–302.

Arguably it is enough to point out the citation trail and to question the reliability of the claims based on who was making them. Even if an American consul in the early twentieth century did make a claim about the 1860s, this does not necessarily tell anything about how things were in the 1860s, but rather how a twentieth-century consul wished to recall or use history.

Bristow provided facts about “white slavery” by referring to the claims of an American diplomat. However, he did not directly consult the source. Rather his reference was to Marcus Braun who was an American undercover migration inspector. It was Braun who had included a quote of an American diplomat to Eastern Europe. To recap the citation trail, Bali (a historian) reinterpreted the claims of Bristow (another historian) who had claimed that the whole business of “white slavery” was run by the Jews in a particular time and place; Bristow ascertained this in reference to a migration inspector who had referred to an American consul.²⁹⁷ Bristow’s tall claims, repeated and reinterpreted by other historians, thus needs dismantling as a reliable account of how things in the latter nineteenth century might have been.

Chapter six examines the circulating reports about a “*Mädchenhandel*” (trade in girls) out of Eastern Europe to the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1868. Rather than these indicating anything of a truth about Jewish involvement in a transnational traffic, cross reference with the movements of diplomats, their letters and other non-archival sources, suggests that the campaigns were likely driven by a handful of diplomats interested in influencing the outcome or management of the Great Eastern Crisis.

In geographic and chronological terms, the anonymous reports of a “*Mädchenhandel*”, which allegedly operated out of the East of the Dual Monarchy to Ottoman Egypt in 1868 and then to South America in 1875, perfectly mirror the movements of one particular Austro-Hungarian diplomat, Maximilian Hoffer von Hoffenfels (1834–1901). While the content of these anonymous reports suggest the kind of political, imperial, and geographic knowledge that a well-connected and elite person like himself, a trained Orientalist, might have had.

Serving as the head of the Passport and Protection Department in Constantinople at the time of the first reports of traffic to Alexandria in 1868, Hoffer was then director of the consulate in Buenos Aires in 1875, at the time that the anonymous author announced that the known “trade in girls” from “Hungary and Austria via Trieste to Egypt”, which had been put to an end, was now purportedly booming in South America.

297 While I didn’t locate the report referenced by Bristow, for an earlier work of Braun on the same matter, see Braun, *Immigration Abuses: Glimpses of Hungary and Hungarians*.

After the initial media scandal of the South American branch of the “*Mädchenhandel*”, Hoffer wrote in January 1876 to his authority, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrassy in Vienna, so as to give him an account of the events. On 27 November 1875, a month and a half before receiving Hoffer's letter, Andrassy had received a similar letter from Carl Ritter von Sax (1837–1919), who was at the time in charge of the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Cairo. Like Hoffer, Sax had studied at the Orientalist Academy in Vienna, after which he was given a post in Constantinople where both men spent a year together, until Hoffer moved to Buenos Aires in 1872.²⁹⁸

Following a stint back in Vienna as Director of the World Exhibition in 1873 and editor of the *Internationale Ausstellungszeitung*, a supplement of the *Neue Freie Presse*, Consul Sax returned to the Ottoman Territories, this time as manager of the Cairo Consulate, until he was transferred to Edirne in October 1876.²⁹⁹ In Cairo, Sax was a colleague of Richard Ritter von Franceschi (1832–1880) with whom he and Hoffer had studied in the 1850s and whom he would in 1875 commission to carry out a thorough investigation into the accusations of “*Mädchenhandel*” from the Dual Monarchy to Alexandria.

Franceschi was consul in Galati and Constantinople between 1865 and 1869. In 1866, Sax was a translator at the consulate in Sarajevo before he was transferred to Constantinople in 1871. Hoffer had had several functions in Constantinople from 1856 to 1870 before he moved on to Buenos Aires. Given that these three Austrian diplomats had all been educated together at the Viennese Orientalist Academy and were intimately involved in the Ottoman region around the Mediterranean Sea, I would assume that they had read Lord Byron's *The Corsair* and that they had undoubtedly been informed of, if not having even seen, if only sketches of, the erotic slave market depictions of white Christian women sculpted by Hiram Powers in 1846 and painted by Jean-Léon Gérôme in 1866 and 1871.³⁰⁰ Furthermore, having all been on service in the Ottoman territories at the time that Valérie de Gasparin travelled to the “Orient” with her husband Comte Agénor de Gasparin, I also assume it was part of their job to have heard of, if not even obtained and read a copy of, the Comtesse's travelogue published in 1867 upon her return.

Gasparin has not been given much attention by historians writing in English despite her having been a well-connected, wealthy, and highly educated woman who had left her mark on the world as a prolific translator, organiser, and

²⁹⁸ For full analysis of these letters and of Hoffer's movements, see chapter six.

²⁹⁹ Engelbert Deusch, *Die effektiven Konsuln Österreich (-Ungarns) von 1825–1918: Ihre Ausbildung, Arbeitsverhältnisse und Biografien* (Köln et al.: Böhlau, 2017), 577.

³⁰⁰ For further details of these works, see chapter three.

writer.³⁰¹ In her lifetime, she published over 80 literary works which she used to express her views on politics, society, and religion. Having spent her formative years as a young woman within the artistic and literary circles of Paris in the 1830s, she entered into a marriage with the French statesman and author Comte Agénor de Gasparin in 1837. The couple shared a deep commitment to the Protestant faith as well as to the abolition of slavery, which they expressed through their mutual passion for writing.

The Comte de Gasparin was a former French statesman who had moved with his wife, Valérie nee Boissier de Gasparin, to her place of birth in Switzerland after the Revolution of 1848. The Gasparin's were wealthy and well-connected; enough so, that they embarked on two privately funded tours to the "Orient" in their lifetime.³⁰² In her 1867 travelogue, the Comtesse did not provide many names of the people whom they met on their journey, nor who had helped them with organising their trip; one British acquaintance, Lady Bulwer, is, however, mentioned for having helped Madame de Gasparin in fulfilling her dream of seeing the inside of a harem.³⁰³

With the Comtesse having had issues with finding someone willing to let her inside their harem, Lady Bulwer had arranged for her to enter that of Kâmil Pasha (1833–1913) in Istanbul. Bulwer's husband had been the British diplomat, Henry Bulwer, who, after being two years in Eastern Europe, was then posted as

301 For existing works on Gasparin's life and achievements, see Michèle Bokobza, *Madame la Comtesse de Gasparin: protestantisme radical, genre et pèlerinage au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2018); Denise Francillon, ed., *Valérie de Gasparin: une conservatrice révolutionnaire* (Le Mont-sur-Lausanne: Ecole La Source, 1994); Sarga Moussa, 'Tristes harems: l'exemple de la comtesse de Gasparin (À Constantinople, 1867) au regard de la tradition des voyageuses en Orient', *Viatica* HS2 (22 November 2020), <https://revues-msh.uca.fr/viatica/index.php?id=1011>; Michel Nadot, 'The World's First Secular Autonomous Nursing School against the Power of the Churches', *Nursing Inquiry* 17, no. 2 (2010): 118–27; Annette Smith, 'Madame Agénor de Gasparin ou les délices de la chaire', *Romantisme* 77 (1992): 47–54; Annette Smith, 'De Frederick Douglass à Madame de Gasparin: métamorphoses du récit de l'esclave', in *Carrefour de Cultures: Mélanges Offerts à Jacqueline Leiner*, études réunies par Régis Antoine (Études Littéraires Françaises 55) (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1993), 79–91; Annette Smith, 'Le soleil et le prisme: ambiguïtés de l'anticolonialisme au dix-neuvième siècle – le cas Gasparin', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 26, no. 1 (1998/1997): 193–203; Ueckmann, *Frauen und Orientalismus*.

302 Having departed France following the outcomes of the 1848 Revolution, the couple Gasparin embarked on their first tour of the "Orient" in 1848, visiting Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Their second tour would be almost 20 years later when they visited Istanbul in 1866. Valérie de Gasparin, *Journal d'un Voyage Au Levant (3 Vol); I: La Grece, II: L'Egypte et La Nubie, III: Le Desert et La Syrie* (Paris: Dudoux et Cie, 1848); Valérie de Gasparin, *À Constantinople*, deuxième édition (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1867).

303 Valérie de Gasparin, *À Constantinople*, 329.

ambassador to the Ottoman Empire 1858, where he remained for ten years, playing a significant role in building up the English Freemason's Lodge in Turkey. Although then going into semi-retirement in 1865, Bulwer remained in Constantinople and affiliated with the British Embassy during the period that Henry Barron became secretary in 1866 (Barron, being the man who ten years later from his post in Belgium, was the first person from Britain to warn against the dangers of allowing women to migrate independently due to the risk of them being trafficked).

I have no evidence to indicate that Bulwer had anything to do with the “white slavery” scandals that brewed in the Austrian and the British Press in the 1870s, but it is enough to assume that the staff of the British Embassy in Constantinople, including Bulwer and Barron, were well aware of the Comtesse's visit, subsequent travelogue and would thus likely have followed her campaign against state regulation which she began, with the support of her husband, in 1870.

As opposed to the assertions made by historians Bali and Bristow, that there is evidence of a Jewish “white slave traffic” toward the Ottoman Empire since the early 1860s, there was rather an emerging idea of the “white slave” in the Turkish market amid the Orientalist works of Gasparin and Gérôme from the mid-1860s. At the same time, the orientalist notion of “white slavery” in the 1860s further developed in the early 1870s Germanic world, which resulted in the entangling of anti-Semitic discourses as evidenced within circulating media reports and a painting from Berthold Woltze.³⁰⁴ While British actors like Butler, Dyer, Stead, and Coote turned the topic into an international sensation in the 1880s, a small group of British and Austro-Hungarian diplomats had already taken an interest in the traffic in women in the 1870s, after having spent time together in the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s.

In January 1876, the diplomat Hoffer von Hoffenfels had written to the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrassy and reported that his research in Buenos Aires had found no truth to the Austrian newspaper claims of a coercive “*Mädchenhandel*” out of the Habsburg Empire. Andrassy was a well-informed statesman, who at the time of receiving the letter would have been concerned with the Eastern Question and then the “Jewish Question”, which were burning among the European powers.³⁰⁵ Prior to this, however, Andrassy had served as

³⁰⁴ For the backdrop of this orientalist notion, see chapter three. For analysis of the further developments in the 1870s, see chapter six.

³⁰⁵ For contextualisation, see chapter three.

Prime Minister of Hungary between 1867 and 1871, all the while in the background helping re-establish Freemasonry in the country.³⁰⁶

From the letter that Andrassy had received from Hoffer, he had on the one hand learned that, according to certain newspaper claims, women arriving to La Plata were allegedly brought there against their will. On the other, he got to know of Hoffer's expert take on and proposed response to the situation. Hoffer countered the media claims as being untrue, at least in terms of coercion, while at the same time arguing that there was indeed an increasing problem of "bad immigration" toward South America. This, he explained to Andrassy, was in part caused by "the American Republic to the North" having "introduced measures to stop women of a dissolute lifestyle from entering their territory".³⁰⁷ Andrassy was then informed of a proposed solution to this problem.

In this same letter, Hoffer explicitly outlined to Andrassy that the "*Mädchenhandel*" scandal brewing in the Austrian press was an invention, but that it would nevertheless be useful for implementing and legitimising similar controls to those in the US at the ports of departure around the Mediterranean. Hoffer's diplomatic correspondence from Buenos Aires to Vienna in January 1876 would appear as a moment when a legal cultural transfer took place around the idea of controlling migrant labour populations. This would be done by controlling women's migration under the auspices of slavery abolition, so as to check for unwanted passengers trying to make their way toward the Americas.³⁰⁸

In the months following Hoffer's letter, his colleague Barron and Pastor Borel published their concerns about a transnational "white slavery".³⁰⁹ At the same time, the notion of a "Jewish" "traffic" in "white Christian girls" out of Eastern Europe was becoming entangled with the Western European women's movement against state regulation.³¹⁰ Chronology thus shows, that as opposed to having been a (British) feminist and moral-reformer led agenda since the 1880s, efforts against "white slavery" would be best understood in terms of the role they played in popularising and legitimising new ideas for territorial border control as well as for international police cooperation since the 1870s.³¹¹

³⁰⁶ Zsófia Turóczy, 'Hungarian Freemasons as "Builders of the Habsburg Empire" in Southeastern Europe', *Hungarian Historical Review* 11, no. 2 (2022): 334.

³⁰⁷ Maximilian Hoffer von Hoffenfels, 'Bericht Hoffers aus Buenos Aires an das k.u.k. Ministerium des Äußern', 12 January 1876, ÖStA HHStA MdA AR 2703/V, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv.

³⁰⁸ For more on this transfer in legal knowledge from the United States to Europe, see chapter seven.

³⁰⁹ See chapter five.

³¹⁰ See chapter six.

³¹¹ See chapters six and seven.

Laws were introduced into the legal codes of certain cantons in Switzerland in 1877 and in Hungary in 1878, which made it a criminal offence to “transport a person abroad for the purpose of commercial fornication”. At the same time, there is evidence of international police cooperation having taken place in 1877 with the arrest of the alleged trafficker Xavier Klyberg by a British police officer, who is said to have just happened to be in the Netherlands. Furthermore, and still before Dyer’s alleged uncovering of “white slavery”, there is also indication that between October 1879 and February 1880, 23 Jews were arrested while trying to disembark at ports in Brazil, in an effort by the police authorities to crackdown on an international “*Mädchenhandel*”.³¹²

Historians of migration control generally hint at new practices of exclusion and inclusion beginning in the 1870s. There is, however, almost no indication of how or what; rather, their springboard for further discussion tends to begin in the 1880s after newly emerging patterns for regulating and controlling the movement of people had become globally visible.³¹³ Popular discourse on “white slavery” in the 1880s was, however, part of this same development of new legal concepts of “abroad” and “borders” since the 1870s. Seen in this frame, it then becomes far less confusing why such figures as the champion of international law, Émile de Laveleye, or the first proponent of international police cooperation, Howard Vincent, were invited as witnesses during the 1881 British Select Committee. Just as it becomes more understandable why German Colonial Director Albrecht Wilhelm Sellin had already in early 1880 called for international police cooperation as the solution to alleged “trade in German girls to Brazil”, which he reported on in Otto Glagau’s anti-Semitic journal.³¹⁴ Through a revision of the use of archives and a look at new sources, this history of migration control and new

³¹² For a thorough discussion of these facts using source based analysis, see chapters five to seven.

³¹³ Fahrmeir, ‘Passports and the Status of Aliens’; Fahrmeir, Faron, and Weil, *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World*; Waltraud Heindl-Langer and Edith Sauer, *Grenze und Staat: Paßwesen, Staatsbürgerschaft, Heimatrecht und Fremden-gesetzgebung in der Österreichischen Monarchie 1750–1867* (Wien et al.: Böhlau, 2000); Erika Lee, ‘Enforcing the Borders: Chinese Exclusion along the U.S. Borders with Canada and Mexico, 1882–1924’, in *American Dreaming, Global Realities*, ed. by Donna R. Gabaccia and Vicki L. Ruiz (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 158–89; Adam McKeown, ‘Global Migration, 1846–1940’, *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155–89; Leslie Page Moch, ‘Connecting Migration and World History: Demographic Patterns, Family Systems and Gender’, *IRSH* 52 (2007): 97–104; Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit*; Torpey, ‘Passports and the Development of Immigration Controls in the North Atlantic World’.

³¹⁴ Albrecht Wilhelm Sellin, ‘Der Handel mit deutschen Mädchen nach Brasilien’, *Der Kultur-kämpfer* 1, no. 3 (1880): 41–41. For analysis, see chapters six and seven.

imperialism needs careful and critical integration into the conceptual history of “white slavery”.

4.3 Conclusion

European state and organisational archives have a particular history and structure which enable the reproduction of particular types of knowledge. Whole academic traditions of gender history, post-colonial scholarship, and more recently global history have made it their mantra to teach about how archives, their systems of organisation, and the contents of their sources can neither be taken for granted nor treated literally.

The development of the concept of “white slavery” is, like any history, a story of change over time. The second layer to the story told here, however, is just as much a comment on how power uses history, and how historians (unbeknownst to themselves) regurgitate the narrative of the archives. Just as there is no evidence-based truth to the hints and claims that a global phenomenon of Jewish “white slavery” began in the 1860s and 1870s, there is nothing of substance to support the established narrative that this same phenomenon was first uncovered and pushed onto an international stage by British actors in the 1880s.

There has long been a loud established historiographical narrative on “white slavery” which is British-centric. For some historians, this is a story of the suffering of subalterns being revealed through the efforts of campaigners against state-regulated prostitution. I, however, for the 1860s and 1870s, did not find any of these subaltern voices in the archives, nor when looking between, behind, and across them. Rather, a history of cultural transfers combined with a micro-historical approach brought me to identify a small network of transnational aspiring or elite actors who constructed categories and told stories of subalterns in legitimisation of their own agendas. This revised history shall be unravelled in the coming chapters.

As an alternative path to studying the past, a history of cultural transfers proves a useful means of avoiding a simple repetition of state or institutional knowledge, while at the same time consciously privileging the particular epistemology of the written text within, or at times found outside of, the archive. Not only does the concept facilitate the description of how things may have taken place as part of historical processes, it also serves as a method for identifying geographically dispersed sources and their relationships. This allows for a destabilisation of the organisational logic of the European archive from within. That said, the proper subversion of established knowledge requires a second deeper look at these same sources, for which a historically grounded micro-, gender-, and post-

colonial approach proves complimentary in questioning how European sources create and stabilise Europe through the production of the *other*.

Evidenced in a detailed examination of the sources and their citation trails, there are clear inconsistencies between facts and claims in the historiography on “white slavery”. This calls for a careful dissecting of this unsmooth narrative. The history of “white slavery” is not so much a history of women and moral reformists responding to the implementation of state regulation. Rather, “white slavery” earned its name and gained its meaning against the backdrop of orientalist knowledge production, but in the context of emerging European anti-Semitism and state efforts from the mid-1860s to manage re-territorialisation processes through the implementation of migration controls and international police cooperation.

There are issues with the state of the art in terms of claims about when Jewish “white slavery” allegedly started and when it got its name. Detailed analysis shows that claims are largely unsubstantiated and that things were far more complicated. There is still much room for further research into the nature of anti-Semitic claims and claims of anti-Semitism within the historiography. Shown here, this is the case for the works of Michael Ryan. He was not, in fact, the first in the 1930s to use the term “white slave dealers” for Jewish involvement in the sale of sex. Just as, Victor Hugo’s metaphor from 1870 was not the moment when “white slavery” became firmly associated with prostitution on an international level; no more than Dyer’s report in 1880 was the means by which it became a real-world issue. The purpose of this chapter was, on the one hand, to revise the established British-centric narrative by introducing the international actors who had already produced knowledge on “white slavery” in the 1860s and 1870s; one the other, its goal was to make transparent the citation trail upon which I methodologically came to an alternative. It is the subsequent chapters which will reveal the empirical findings behind the historical method. It is only here that we can begin to understand the power that the state obtained through the categorisation of the subaltern, not only to control those who were already subordinate, but to legitimise territorial ambitions in the face of opinions from both elites and the popular masses.