

Work, Money and Duality: Trading Sex as a Side Hustle, Raven Bowen [Bristol University Press, 2021, 194pp, £26.99 (paperback)]

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Work, Money and Duality: Trading Sex as a Side Hustle is an explorative piece of work researched and written by Dr Raven Bowen, an academic, activist, and organiser in the UK and Canada. Bowen is the CEO of the National Ugly Mugs (NUM), a UK-wide sex worker safety charity, and the cofounder of the 'Sex, Work, Law and Society' Collaborative Research Network of the Law and Society Association (LSA). This book has been created out of her PhD thesis and comes after long term engagement with conversations around exiting, re-entry, and duality.

In 7 chapters, Bowen takes the reader to the stories of her contributors, a population of on/off-street and online sex workers who hide their involvement in sex work to safeguard themselves against being outed. According to Bowen, "the book centres the experiences of people who live dual lives, they cannot be rescued and put into mainstream jobs because they already hold them" (p.1). Bowen centres on a particular population even within the study of sex work(ing); she studies the duality she finds between workers who do both sex work and square ('normal/accepted') work in varying amounts, locations, and timespans. Her work stands apart from other work on duality and sex work that focuses solely on 'exiting' sex work and moving towards more societally acceptable jobs. Bowen, through her book, problematises this dichotomy of 'in/out' of sex work while parallely commenting on other dichotomies that draw jagged lines of stigma on the working and living lives of sex workers. Bowen's contributors challenge the idea of who individuals within the sex industry can be, and how their dual lives can inform us about labour markets today and the precarity in which we all live. This book hopes to change approaches to designing interventions for sex workers in favour of collaborations instead of top-down interventions guided by past/ex-sex workers and non-sex workers. She argues that interventions should first listen to active sex workers in the sex industry. The core contribution of this book and research is to distinguish that duality is a part of transitioning (from sex work to square work or vice versa) but distinct from it; and that it should not be discounted as an 'in between' life but rather as a life of its own.

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Bowen's introduction to the book begins with what the book is not - an 'expose' on sex working individuals. This is crucial to understand why this narrative moves away from mainstream (and popular) work about people in sex work and allied industries - their lives, their pain and if reported at all, joy. It instead focuses on the duality the individuals practice in their places of work, how it spills into their personal lives, and how they engage with these multiplicities. Early on, the book counters the dichotomies duality is generally spoken about by introducing the reader to practical problems of doing different jobs. This practicality is broken into how multiple jobs inform each other, how these jobs are kept separate, and the conflict one feels when separate aspects of the same individual's labour are treated differently due to social stigma and/or acceptance. The introduction makes key points about the democratic nature of the research; for marginalised populations who suffer greatly through misinformation and misrepresentation, studies that centre communities, and researchers who practice forms of radical care are valuable and needed. The book is interspersed with the author's analysis of the thoughts being shared through the conversations from the study's contributors. The contributors all come from varying identities and backgrounds - across the gender spectrum, across square and sex work jobs, and across race, class, and domestic situations (with/out children, with/out housing). It weaves together the voices of these contributors to create a singular but diverse narrative of all the identities people inhabit. The book piqued my curiosity to know more about the relationship Bowen shared as the NUM CEO and whether the workers knew of her position, how that informed their relationships with each other, and whether it became a part of their conversations beyond the background check. Although this book did not touch upon these aspects, I am excited to read more of Bowen's work that may answer these curiosities for me, as a student interested in networks, labour, and power relations in aid work.

Chapter 1 reviews the concept of 'exiting' from sex work and contextualises duality in this framework, providing a continuum of what Raven Bowen coins *Sex Industry Work and Square Work (SIWSQ)* involvement. Chapter 2 describes how duality is 'done' while assessing how different contributors create their identities and the space around them to assist with the duality in which they engage. Chapter 3 examines how contributors separate their audiences within multiple workspaces and how they conceal, protect, and manage their identities. In Chapter 4, Bowen discusses Brexit and its effect on the labour markets, and a UK 'whorearchy' that is illustrated in a diagram for better understanding of hierarchies formed by 'race', class, dis/ability, a/gender and a/sexual differences and experiences. The challenges of living dual lives are further elaborated in Chapter 5, culminating in a call to end the exclusion of sex work(ers) in the feminist struggle by analysing larger arguments and evidence of alienation and precarity in Chapter 6. With Chapter 7, the book provides a framework with which future

scholars can look and think about sex work outside the shackles of victimhood, forced rehabilitation, and uncollaborative policy, scholarly and activist work. Throughout the book, larger structural concepts are made lucid through illustrated models – one such important one being the continuum that provides a typology of the different kinds of duality that exist when someone is doing multiple jobs at once.

In her postscript, she thanks her contributors, but also urges them to remain hidden. The book makes a strong argument against pushing marginalised populations into the face of danger by outing them for the sake of ‘visibility’ and problematises the point of visibility. The idea that support can only be accessed by sex workers who can be visible and ‘out’ further marginalises people who do not have the privilege or access to safety after being out.

Work, Money and Duality is a crucial read for students, academics, and independent learners across disciplines who would like to understand sex work and allied industries from the lens of those who work in multiple capacities in multiple industries. Bowen’s book takes away from stereotypes that sex work(ing) requires no skill, that sex workers are always in waiting, and that sex work is an ‘easy way out’. The book provides for a very important formative reading of research on sex work that is decolonial and democratic in its method and analysis and should be read by those in policy and intervention as they begin to understand the realities of those in sex work beyond ‘exiting’ narratives. The book also makes a case for people who work in activism with lived experiences to add to research; it gives new ground to explore relationships sex working researchers share with their friends and colleagues who become their research informants. The contributors in this book through their diverse experiences refuse to be marginalised in conversations about them ‘exiting’ and ‘transitioning’ in a precarious market informed by class conflict.

Although relatability is not the point of the book, and should not be expected from sex workers in order to have access to human rights, relatability stayed with me as a strong emotion after having read the book. Sex workers across the world are often reduced to characters - ‘the fallen’, ‘other’ woman that ‘good’ women (largely heterosexual and cisgender women) have to be afraid of, and fight against to keep the heteronormative, patriarchal world order. The simple fact that dual, multiple lives are led by everyone, in our lives as workers leading greatly precarious lives at the edge of growing global concerns brings us back to this - we all work for very similar reasons; and this goes beyond what we know when we say ‘sex work is work’. *Work, Money and Duality* brings back these concerns that all people who work within the job market today have with ‘the hustle’ - to earn, save, rent, buy and be, and that all of us,

especially people in 'informal' labour markets have the right to be protected as we work until we all do not have to work precariously anymore.