

Kajsa Ekis Ekman, *Being and Being Bought: Prostitution, Surrogacy and the Split Self* (Spinifex Press, 2014)

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:

My name is Kajsa Ekis Ekman. I'm a Swedish author and my book is called *Being and Being Bought: Prostitution, Surrogacy and the Split Self*.

Tell me why you think that prostitution and surrogacy are so similar?

They have a lot in common actually. They are both industries that exploit the female body in different ways, one for sex and the other for reproduction where the female body is reduced to a commodity to be bought and sold. They are also industries that, if you want to get theoretical about it, are at the exact intersection of patriarchy and capitalism. In patriarchy women exist for men, and in capitalism the poor exist for the rich. So if you combine these two, what do you get? You get prostitution and surrogacy.

Have you ever been accused of being anti-gay, because there are so many rich gay male couples now renting a womb?

Well, basically, the biggest group that buys surrogacy are not gay men, but of course the slogan is that "this is the way to create the modern family" and everything, so, of course, if you are against surrogacy, some would say gay men cannot have children in any other way, so you don't want them to have kids? But I would say I'm against it for what it does to women and children, not for who does it. I don't care who is using the services. I am against it because of who is being used in the services.

Many people say that if a woman wishes to do it in a non-commercial way, as a favor, that this is fine. What is your view on that?

That is the argument I cannot understand. That is the argument that I think is the strangest argument in this because the logic behind that goes that the less you pay, the less you exploit the person. According to that logic, if you pay somebody a lot of money for being a surrogate, you are exploiting that person, but if you pay one euro, or you pay nothing, you are not exploiting. I think it's the total opposite. Of course, if we're going to do it, if there's going to be surrogacy, of course you're going to be paid! You're there for nine months. You might die. You might become infertile. You are still going to miss your child whether you get paid or not. But I think the whole problem with surrogacy is not whether she is paid. The whole problem is the fact that her child which she is carrying doesn't belong to her, and that means that during the time that she is pregnant her body doesn't belong to herself. According to the contracts, the right to decide about hormone treatment, abortion and things like that become very complex because she is not carrying her own child. This is totally against women's autonomy.

As feminists who are campaigning to end surrogacy, what do we need to do now? What are our most important tasks?

We need to target parliaments. We need to target the EU parliament, our own parliaments, and to get into the decision-making there because we are facing big lobby groups, not only the buyers but the big agencies that are trying to get into Europe. They are really having seminars in all countries trying to get customers, promoting this as the new way to have a family, outsourcing the whole thing, you don't have to have your own baby, someone else can do it for you. Who are we? We have no money. We are just freelance feminists who are trying to say what we think. So we really need to get together. We also need to put this at the top of the feminist agenda. I always think it is weird when feminists say, "Oh, I'm against somebody grabbing my ass on a train, but I'm not against somebody taking my baby." Come on. Where is the perspective? You know what I mean? I think of the class perspective as well. A lot of feminists in the West would be the ones who buy children through surrogacy. They would think, "I'm on the advantaged side here. I am not the one being used," but we need to have solidarity with all the women in the global south who are the ones being used by this industry.

Kajsa Ekis Ekman, author of *Being and Being Bought: Prostitution, Surrogacy and the Split Self*: "We also need to put this at the top of the feminist agenda. I always think it is weird when feminists say, 'Oh, I'm against somebody grabbing my ass on a train, but I'm not against somebody taking my baby.' Come on. Where is the perspective? You know what I mean? I think of the class perspective as well. A lot of feminists in the West would be the ones who buy children through surrogacy. They would think, 'I'm on the advantaged side here. I am not the one being used,' but we need to have solidarity with all the women in the global south who are the ones being used by this industry."

See this interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srv-qnjZ-YU&t=1s>

A summary of the arguments for and against surrogacy:

<https://www.positive-parenting-ally.com/ethics-of-surrogacy.html>