

Reading Men's Diaries:
A Discursive Analysis of Posts on the World Sex Guide

by

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of sex tourism in recent years has had many effects throughout society, including increased specialization in sex tourism work, increased availability and information for sex tours through global technologies, and an increase in the number of sex tourism diaries available on the Internet. This study focuses on one source of sex tourism diaries: posts on the World Sex Guide written about tourists who had sex while in Latin America.

My interest is in exploring how posters on the World Sex Guide make sense of their involvement in sex tourism. Starting from the premise that the diaries constitute a forum in which a hegemonic masculinity is created and perpetuated I ask: what types of relations are valued and reproduced by the posters? How do the tourists construct the women whose services they seek? What do their narratives reveal about their own sense of selfhood in the process? To address these questions I situate the diaries as pornographic representations or rhetorical strategies that are constituted by their context, interpretations, and inscriptions. I then undertake a discursive analysis to reveal their purpose and implications. In particular, I argue that the performances posted on the World Sex Guide reinforce lines of gender, race, economics, status, nationality, and ethnicity in a way that bolsters Western hegemonic masculinities, the implications of which have import not only in online settings but offline as well.

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INTRODUCTION

Got a craving for dark-meat the next day & taxi driver took me to Casablanca. ... Within 5 minutes of going through the door, saw this young Dominicana with heavy hangers. Had an awesome session, but she wasn't up for a second round without more \$\$\$. Don't like the pressure so I tipped her and headed back to the floor. The chicks are aggressive & range from 6-8, typically. Sat bored at the bar for awhile, then saw an incredible Dominicana Tyra Banks look-a-like.... Literally, got up and went after her, pushing other hags out of the way. This girl was an absolute fantasy. How can such a slim frame support those globes? The complexion, the lustrous hair. You know the rest. Awesome GFE experience... she called me "Mi Amor" all the time and actually thanked me for choosing her. Tipped her \$20 on top of the \$45 paid to the madam. An absolute bargain.¹

The above narrative is an excerpt from a diary posted on the World Sex Guide by an author who calls himself *Ratbutt*. The narrative is apparently recounting his experience as a sex tourist on St. Maarten, an island in the Caribbean, and is part of a growing trend of online sex tourism diaries. Patterns of globalization have eased the process of travel such that many people are able to get on a plane and fly to Latin America for business or pleasure, thereby facilitating sex tourism for men such as *Ratbutt*. The proliferation of sex tourism has resulted in an upswing in many phenomena—including sex tourist chronicling on the Internet. As one of more than 12,000 entries on this particular site, such postings have become all the more common with the development of the Internet. Increased access to the Internet means that these diaries are potentially made available to billions of people everyday, which means that the implications of online sex tourism diaries are far-reaching—making them ripe for exploration.

To date, most of the literature on sex tourism has concentrated on determining the factors that account for its increase, the impact of sex tourism in the countries in which it

¹ All World Sex Guide quotes have been copied without edit and as a result all spelling, grammar and punctuation errors are intact as the original author posted them.

occurs, and the ramifications of sex tourism for those (primarily) women who provide the service. While these are all important issues, it is also the case that very little attention has been devoted to the demand side of the equation: the sex tourists themselves. The purpose of this study is to rectify this omission by investigating the narratives of sex tourists posted on the World Sex Guide.

The World Sex Guide

Although not everyone who has access to the Internet will seek out sex tourism diaries, those who do will likely to end up at the World Sex Guide (WSG). The WSG is the most prominent sex tourism diary website,² having more posts and readers than any other sex tourism diary (Bishop and Robinson 2002).³

When potential readers come to the entry page for the WSG site, they are asked to affirm that they are of the age of majority in their particular jurisdiction, which can range from the ages of 18 to 21 depending on the geographical location of the viewer. Once the viewer has indicated that s/he is of the age of majority in her/his jurisdiction by clicking the appropriate button, s/he is taken to the World Sex Guide home page. Images and advertisements change periodically; however, on a typical visit (on September 6, 2007), the following content was presented: picture reels of rolling images of women in thong underwear, women performing fellatio, and a close up shot of a penis entering a vagina—all of which were advertising a forum entitled “Mike in Brazil” with the opportunity to

² When the first draft of this thesis was written in 2006, the World Sex Guide was the first search result that appeared in searching “sex tourism” on Google.com. Presently, in 2008, the proliferation of sex tourism has meant that the WSG does not appear even within the first twenty results of the same search using the same search engine.

³ The WSG does not have a logbook to indicate how many people visit their site, so no quantitative estimates can be made as to exactly how many people visit the WSG site; however, the number of posts and the variety of different diarists suggest that the WSG site is popular.

“View the Videos.” Beside these ads there were flashing advertisements for an “All Access Pass: 12 Porn Sites for the Price of One” under which was an advertisement for “Nubiles—Hottest Teens” featuring a young woman exposing her breasts. Below this ad was a series of pictures of women’s faces advertising “Free Live Chat.” On the opposite side of the page was a menu of links to the rest of the website: the sex guide, escort and classified ads, the top 100 websites for escorts, the discussion forum, about us, and several other advertisement links for live sex shows, adult books, Viagra, and personal ads.

Upon accessing the sex guide, readers are taken to a page with a banner at the top depicting three women, two of whom have what appears to be ejaculate on their faces and one of whom is seductively looking at the camera, with script that reads “swallow it slut” and “Asian street meat.” Website visitors who want to access the diary and guide posts must click on one of the links, which are categorized and listed according to the location of the experience with the unit of analysis being the continent.⁴ As of September 2007, the site boasted that it had 12,801 posts in its database. Of those 12,801 posts the majority were centred around sex tourism in North America (Canada, the United States, and Mexico) at 6,938, and Asia, which made up 2,222. The Latin American category – comprised of more than 500 posts – has since been split into two different categories: Caribbean (361 posts) and Central America (215 posts).⁵

⁴ With the exception of Russia and Central Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

⁵ Of the 6,938 posts, there were two categories that were composed of non-diary entries: “Old Posts” and “Historical and Social Reports,” which made up a total of 20 of the 12,801 posts. The “Old Posts” category contained only one entry that let readers know that the escort reviews had been moved to their own database in 1999, and gave the link to their new location.

Once potential readers have selected the destination location that they wish to read about, they are taken to the posts, which are then categorized by country. On average, the posts are half-a-page to one page in length. The username of the author and the date that the entry was posted are listed for every diary entry. In several cases, the author does not post a username, which causes the author field to read “anonymous.”

My interest is in exploring how posters on the World Sex Guide—such as *Ratbutt*—make sense of their involvement in sex tourism. Starting from the premise that the diaries constitute a forum in which a hegemonic masculinity is created and perpetuated I ask: what types of relations are valued and reproduced by the posters? How do the tourists construct the women whose services they seek? What do their narratives reveal about their own sense of selfhood in the process? To address these questions I situate the diaries as pornographic representations or rhetorical strategies that are constituted by their context, interpretations, and inscriptions. I then undertake a discursive analysis to reveal their purpose and implications. In particular, I argue that the performances posted on the World Sex Guide reinforce lines of gender, race, economics, status, nationality, and ethnicity in a way that bolsters Western hegemonic masculinities, the implications of which have import not only in online settings but offline as well.

Overview of the Project

In situating this analysis, it is important to recognize that the growth of sex tourism and sex tourism diaries does not operate in a vacuum; rather, they are a part of an effect of a greater global shift. As such, chapter one provides an overview of the process of

globalization and explores the linkage between processes of globalization, tourism, sex tourism, and the Internet.

Chapter two outlines the theoretical considerations involved in the study with particular attention paid to the diaries as a form of pornography, pornography as representations, and the bodies through which those representations are performed. Methodological considerations of the study also comprise chapter two, including the selection and sampling methods used to manage the diaries, and the narrative analysis strategy that is employed in order to make sense of the diary postings on the WSG.

The actors in the diaries are introduced in chapter three, which focuses on themes concerning masculinity and femininity. The decided emphasis on heterosexual relations found in the diaries, as well as the novelty surrounding female homosexual relations, are explored in this chapter. The pornographic notion that men are entitled to and naturally govern women's sexuality—as conceptualized by Valverde (1985)—will be explored. Chapter three gives attention to the sexual acts that are part of the discourse of the diaries, the subjects and the objects in the diaries, and explores the androcentric and phallogocentric nature of the discourse.

Chapter four concentrates on an analysis of the “first world” and “third world” relations that are involved in the discourse of the diaries. In this chapter I argue that the WSG diaries are built on a discourse of difference that serves to “other” subject positions in their hierarchical constructions. Specifically, relations and assumptions of race, class, and exoticism that play into a larger discourse of sexuality and sexual relations are explored. These hierarchical relations are reproduced in each aspect of “first world/third world” relations; the dominant position in the hierarchies is the one taken by the tourist,

leaving the “third world” position in a situation of subservience—a characteristic that is consistently constructed as sexual throughout the WSG.

Lastly, the conclusion summarizes the key themes developed in the previous chapters, addresses the theoretical and empirical contributions of the research, and raises points of interest for further work on the issue that are beyond the scope of this project.

CHAPTER ONE

GLOBALIZATION AND SEX TOURISM

Sex tourism is rooted in a process of dissolving boundaries to international trade and travel, the creation of global institutions, international movement of money, and the formation of borderless relationships and communities—a process that has been referred to as globalization.⁶ In this chapter I map out some of the features of this globalization process—including the growing prominence of the Internet as a means of communication—and then connect these developments to sex tourism and sex work. In particular, I argue that globalization, while facilitating a sense of global community and avenues to impose global sanctions, also facilitates inequality along the lines of gender as well as geopolitics. The gendered dynamics of labour combined with global processes such as structural adjustment programs can be cited as some of the causes of the proliferation of sex tourism, which sets the stage for the creation and perpetuation of certain bodily inscriptions in online sex tourism diaries.

Globalization

Globalization is the process of international interactions, and the requirements and consequences of those interactions which occur between nations, organizations, and individuals (Sassen 2003; Goldin and Reinert 2006; Barker 2000). Globalization is driven by the growth, expansion, and refinement of capitalist production and is the basis

⁶ The specific nature of globalization has of late been contested, with some theorists positing that the face of globalization is changing as global patterns are adopted in national settings (Sassen 2007). Indeed, global conventions and laws are being taken up at the national level and activists are taking up struggles at the national level with an explicit or implicit global agenda (Sassen 2007: 82), which indicates that global patterns are emerging at the national level, but so too are national patterns emerging at the global level.

for many different facets of international interactions. The object of this growth, expansion, and refinement of capitalist production is to increase profit by increasing the demand for goods and services and decreasing the price of supplying the goods and services. Production is globalized when it is taken from a localized scale to a global scale, which is done by seeking out new markets, new ways to tap into markets, and new and less expensive resources to promote new and less expensive methods of production. For example, globalization is comprised in part by international interactions such as the movement of manufacturing offices to nations in which labour is less expensive and labour laws are relaxed in comparison to labour costs and labour laws in the organization's nation of origin—making the price of supply less expensive. Globalization also includes the resultant teleconferences, travel, and transport associated with the transfer. Another example is the lending of money from one nation to another and the accompanying criteria associated with lending, such as a focus on development of the cash crops for export in the borrowing nation.

The process of globalization entails more than just economic expansion; it also includes the creation of relationships and communities that transcend boundaries. Global relationships and communities contribute to the proliferation of shared norms, rules, understandings, and assumptions—in other words, shared discourses—that span boundaries and are ripe for exploration. As Thomas Risse (2007: 130) notes, “globalization consists not only of global material (mostly economic) forces, but also of whole sets of collective understandings which need to be investigated as part of it.... [C]ollective understandings and meaning structures offer interpretations to make sense of the material world.”

The collective understandings that are part of globalization add to notions of homogenization of understanding which contribute to the idea that globalization also carries with it a homogenization of culture. The expansion of markets, in some ways, has resulted in the promotion and eventual prescription of a “global culture”—which can ultimately be inferred as a Western “first world” culture of “development.” Technology, North American brand names, a slim body, individualism, material wealth, and getting more for less characterize this global culture. These modes of being are cunningly introduced into new markets through media and advertising, and become socially prescribed goals via their role as indicators of status. Entire nations—including both “developed” and “lesser-developed”—are influenced by the notion of the superiority of these advertised means of being, and a market is created. In many places this has also resulted in the creation of an larger labour pool with greater “needs” for increased monetary income to achieve the Western-prescribed means of being, which may not have been used or required in any form previous to the marketed “need,” may replace means of being that had already been available at cheaper prices, or may replace means of being that previously made use of local resources that were available at no cost.

Indeed, globalized technologies and global cultures have been posited as a benevolent force that is able to “wipe out racial difference and inequality” (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005). For some, global technologies have brought attention and commitment to global problems such as the global warming, hunger, and poverty. Globalization facilitates the sense that these problems affect everyone by making people feel like they are part of a global community—if the community is affected, all the members are affected—which stimulates a sense of global responsibility in some people. International

inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies reinforce the notion of global responsibility by instituting international conventions and understandings of things like human rights, animal rights, and economics. These international conventions and understandings are enforced by international courts and other policing agencies. Internet and international travel advertisements construct these technologies as contributing to a celebration of differences rather than reinforcing differences as a marker of inequality. A better quality of life is associated with capitalism, development, and access to technology, and corporate empires are constructed as the driving force that will give these developing nations what they are espoused to need.

On the contrary, Internet ads project those in developing nations as outside the reach of technology in “the places that race now resides” (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005: 339).⁷

The process of globalization rests upon a crux of difference, has been noted:

Globalization cannot be conceived solely as a matter of one-way, western imperialism. It must be understood instead as a process of mutual, if uneven, infiltration, with the West permeating the rest and vice versa. [A related point] is that the process of globalization cannot be thought of merely as a homogenizing affair. For it is also, on some level, about heterogenization. It is about the differentiation of the world.” (Inda and Rosaldo 2008: 24)

Tourism

Tourism is one of the manifestations of differentiation as the basis for processes of globalization. Like globalization, tourism is part of a system that is built upon inequality and places destination states and their people in an almost permanent position of subordination. Largely based upon economic inequality, tourism divides the world into the “seers” and the “seen.” Considering the basis of difference upon which tourism is

⁷ The theme of racialized bodies will be explored in subsequent chapters.

built, the development of the tourism market as a viable—and at times imposed—source of income in destination nations has resulted in many countries and cultures necessarily adhering to the expectations of North American and European tourists in terms of what should be seen in certain countries and what types of scenes, facilities, and modes of being are desirable to tourists from sending nations. As Julia O’Connell Davidson and Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor (2005: 90) note, “Tourism destinations are discursively constructed as liminal spaces in which it is both possible and desirable to transgress the normal boundaries and routines that govern life in the tourists’ local spaces.” Through advertisements disseminated by the state, hotels, tour organizations, airlines, and others that play upon the imagined ideal vacation destinations, nations are thereby constructed in a particular way in order to attract tourists.

In many Latin American nations, particularly in the Caribbean, states are focusing less on investing in a modern industrial nation (espoused as desirable as part of the “global culture” promoted during globalization) and instead are investing more in the image of a nation of tradition—traditional religion, art, music, and women—because the demand for tourism requires that foreign destinations be constructed as significantly different from the locale of potential tourists; that is, offering different landscapes, different food, different people, and different interpersonal experiences. These nations are thereby forced into a dialectic between the modern global-culture that is prescribed by globalization and is imported from and attainable by the “first world” nations, and the traditional ways of living that are used to attract tourists from “first world” nations (Enloe 2000). The focus on traditionality has been cited as detrimental to these Latin American nations by some writers because “the prospect of developing a modern society with a

diversified economy was linked ... with no longer having to service first world desires for exotica” (Fusco 1998: 160). In other words, in order to keep up in the international tourism market, the destination nations must cater to the desires and expectations of tourist-sending nations.

Inequality and ultimately difference are both the driving force behind tourism as well as the result. Globalization is focused on expanding markets and increasing access to resources and is thus characterized by an increased emphasis on the role of markets rather than governments in economic decision-making, and many “third world” countries reorienting their focus from an internal market approach to an open, export-oriented approach for external trade (Pyle 2001; Cabezas 2002; Urry 2000). In particular, “since the 1970’s, world financial institutions have encouraged indebted nations ... to respond to economic crises by developing tourism” (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005: 84). In many Latin American nations tourism is the largest and fastest-growing sector of the national economy (Cabezas 2002). Tourism is not only encouraged by international financial organizations as a means of expanding markets and ensuring payback of loans, the growth of tourism is also intimately connected to the expansion of new markets in the global arena. As systems of communication and transport become more developed, the world “shrinks.” International travel becomes more accessible, and industries involved with travel and tourism capitalize on these changes.

The effects of globalization are divided along lines of gender, class, and race (amongst other divisions)—divisions that can be quite apparent in the analysis of tourism. Organizations around the world are involved in the sale and provision of tourism goods and services; travel agencies, tour operators, air service providers, hotels, transportation

services, restaurants, and entertainment providers all supply goods and services to tourists. However, because many “lesser developed” destination states lack the resources to invest in tourism, many tourism goods and services are owned by “first world” investors. As a result, the vast majority of the revenue brought in by tourism goods and services do not stay in the “lesser developed” nation (Gregory 2003) but instead are collected by “first world” owners and employees of travel agencies, hotels, airlines, hotels, transport organizations, restaurants, and entertainment industries—thus maintaining the status quo of the economically better off “first world” and the economically underdeveloped “third world.” The status quo is further perpetuated by the provision a low cost labour pool required to maintain the flow of tourism investments, along with tax exemptions for multi-national corporations, lax environmental restrictions, and reduced or eliminated tariffs—all mandated by structural adjustment programs (Cabezas 2002; Sassen 2003).

The tourism industry creates further disadvantages in additional tangible, physical ways. For instance, while “first world” tourists enjoy the comforts that they have come to expect from all-inclusive resorts (such as potable water and electricity), the vast majority of the local people are often not able to enjoy such luxuries. The growth of the tourism industry also serves to concentrate and confine many “third world” workers in low-status, low-paying service-oriented positions, which is often in sharp juxtaposition to the tourists with whom they interact on a daily basis. As the jobs offered by tourism are seasonal,

low-skilled, and low-paying, many people are pressured to seek jobs in the informal sector⁸ of the economy.

The international tourism industry constructs, commodifies, and markets exoticized and gendered images of Latin American host societies that stress the passivity, servility, and “otherness” of their people (Gregory 2003). The passivity and servility of the host “Other” reinforces the wealth and power differential between the host and guest in the tourism industry; however, in addition to wealth and power the element of gender plays an important role. It is women who hold the majority of the jobs in the tourism industry (Kempadoo 1999) which, in combination with the perceived servility and passivity assigned to the nation as a whole, serves to reinforce the notion that women are particularly skilled at the production of pleasure in both the formal and informal sectors of the tourism industry—including the sex trade (Muroi and Sasaki 2000). The notion of the pleasure-producing female “Other” factors into the interpretation and construction of masculinity among male tourists.

Sex Tourism and Sex Work

The idea that the world is out there for the taking by ordinary citizens as well as adventurers emerged alongside the growth of tourism as an industry. (Enloe 2000: 25)

Traditional definitions of “sex tourism” encompass phenomena in which tourists engage in sexual relations while travelling in which there is some expectation of remuneration: money, food, shelter, or gifts. It should be noted that the concept “sex tourism” needs to be troubled, as the various elements that define it are difficult to set

⁸ For the purposes of this paper “informal economy” will be defined by a Western standard of employment which would not be recognized as legitimate by the government and which can be operationalized as those occupations that are not taxed by the government and not counted as part of a national product.

bounds upon. In terms of remuneration, in some cases it is impossible to define whether any remuneration was expected, as it may not have been discussed or may not have been given. In some instances, no sexual relations take place—although there may have been an expectation of sexual relations.⁹ Nor is there an agreed upon notion of what constitutes “travel.” In the case of the World Sex Guide, many of the posters note that they had to board a plane, or that they arrived in a certain country on a certain date, implying travel. But what about travelling to a neighbouring region with which one is very familiar? Or travelling to an adjacent neighbourhood? I will define “travel” as a transgression of the area in which the individual moves about on a frequent basis. While understandings of sex tourism provide a useful basis for the introduction of the concept, a more thorough definition—and that which forms the basis for this exploration—is one in which the travellers’ consumption of the bodies of local people approximate their consumption of other tourist attractions, regardless of remuneration.

Sex tourism demonstrates this notion that “the world is out there for the taking” via the consumption that characterizes it. The global tourism economy “incorporates poor countries into an essentially consolidated global system under conditions established by the wealthier nations” (Cabezas 2002: 47), and people living in “poor” countries are disempowered by the social arrangements that construct the hosts as subservient to the guests. The necessity to seek employment in informal sectors such as the sex trade has disproportionately affected women, and has done so on a global scale.

Jean Pyle (2001) suggests that increasing numbers of women are becoming involved in sex work, domestic work, and export processing due to a restructured global

⁹ Romance tourism and situational sex tourism—to be discussed in the next section—further complicate the issue.

economy that can ultimately be attributed to globalization. According to Pyle (2001), the economic facet of globalization has involved structural adjustment policies (SAPs) as conditions for the receipt of loans that require state parties to promote further globalization—often to the detriment of the position of women. SAPs are characterized by an opening up of the market to international forces, as well as government cutbacks in social services such as education and healthcare, and subsidies on necessities such as food, housing, transportation, and fuel (Pyle 2001; see also Sassen 2003). While these SAPs have caused both men and women to lose their jobs, because the familial domain is typically thought of as women's responsibility an additional burden disproportionately falls on their shoulders to make up for the missing services. The loss of jobs—in combination with the burden of the absent social services—has pressured women to enter into work in the informal sector, a part of which is sex work.

As part of SAPs, many countries have had to strive to attract multi-national corporations (MNCs) in which women have been the preferred workers. However, once the MNC has been in that location long enough for the workers to organize and demand certain rights, the MNCs often automate or relocate to countries with lower wages and less-organized workers. This leaves many women with non-transferable skills and leads to many of them turning to work in the informal sex trade.

Sex work has also provided an avenue through which some women have been able to access some of the socially acceptable modes of being that are prescribed by the global culture and disseminated by globalization in the absence of more formal or legitimate means of doing so. Since sex work is mainly dominated by women, Pyle (2001) notes that it is primarily women who take on the associated risks and insecurities

that are associated with sex work professions, including low wages, few benefits, little control over working conditions, long hours, harassment, health hazards, unstable income, and lack of rights or recourse. As O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor note:

In the Caribbean, a set of linkages between international debt, price fluctuations in the global commodity markets, economic development policy, and prostitution, as well as particular laws and social policies adopted by individual countries, have been important to the construction of a sexual Disneyland for heterosexual tourists. One side effect of this is the creation of highly concentrated, effective demand for prostitution in the form of affluent tourists seeking "entertainment". At the same time, the International Monetary Fund agreements and the World Bank structural adjustment loans, sector adjustment loans, and program loans that the Jamaican and Dominican governments entered into have served to swell the prostitution labor market, for the policy packages tied to these loans have had a devastating impact on the poor. (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005: 84)

The sex trade has been internationalized in combination with, and in relation to, the mechanisms through which globalization promotes tourism. The economics of globalization alone have resulted in a reduction in obstacles to trade and barriers to financial flows that has created more favourable conditions for the internationalization of the sex trade. In particular, it has facilitated foreigners' investment in the sex industry and eased migration for local people (Pyle 2001; Cabezas 2002). With increasing numbers of tourists arriving, more and more local people are travelling to tourist centres from surrounding areas to sell them products and services (Cabezas 2002; Enloe 2000), with one such service being sex.

It should be noted that tourism and a sex trade alone will not necessarily support a strong sex tourism trade. In their analysis of the causes of sex tourism, Simon Carter and Steven Clift (2000) note that sexual domination is required for sex tourism, and that an analysis of such domination is necessary before passing ethical judgment on women

involved in the sex trade. Their argument is that sex tourism is not simply about sex; it is about social relations that create the conditions necessary to foster it. Sex tourism requires a market in which women's options are limited enough to make prostitution a relatively attractive method of economic subsistence, male travellers who believe that foreign women are more available and submissive than women from their own country, an alliance between local governments in search of foreign exchange and travellers who are willing to buy sexualized travel, and a law that is enforced in a way that ensures the supply and control workers (Clift and Carter 2000; Seabrook 1996).

Martin Opperman (1999) adds to this argument by suggesting that the practice of touring for sex is driven by disappointment with the commercial approach to relationships and prostitution that predominates in Western societies. He suggests that Western men look for relationships that they feel are less business-like and more personal so these men seek commercial sexual encounters with women in "third world" countries because their money buys more than sex; it can buy companionship and sexual acts that transcend socially prescribed boundaries in their own countries. "Sex tourist destinations in poor countries thus offer the tourist both extensive opportunities for sexual experience and opportunities for types of sexual experience that would not be readily available either back home or in tourist destinations in more affluent countries" (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005: 84).

Along the same lines, it has been suggested that the economic constraints of the "first world" combine with social constraints to contribute to the desire to engage in sex tourism. Men within "developed" nations are constrained in their relationships with local women by their personal qualities (such as physical appearance), but when the tourist

travels to “third world” nations they are in a position to command more sexual access to local persons than they would be able to at home or in “first world” nations due to their relative position of social, political, and economic superiority (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005). In other destinations, tourists are not able to take advantage of socially constructed hierarchies to the degree that they can in Latin America and other “third world” regions. Even a “third-rate” North American or European has an elevated status above the majority of the local people in these nations. Some sex tourists have suggested that they chose to engage in sex tourism because of the constraint that they have felt from Western ideals of how to sexually engage with women (Seabrook 1996). Some have reported years of abstinence and self denial that culminates in the desire to engage in sex tourism “to make good a deficit of ‘fun’, sex and enjoyment” (Seabrook 1996: 38). It remains that the reason for engaging in sex tourism to clear their debt of destitution and self control must have a social or legal element to it, or else the men would have relations with women—commercial or non-commercial—in their own country.

Julia O’Connell Davidson (2005) picks up on social aspects of the phenomenon. She argues that the reduction of women to “other” women to be used for sexual gratification is most likely borne from a culture of misogyny to which a certain degree of racism is added. In the countries of the sex tourists, shifts in the legal and political construction of certain social hierarchies are perceived as undermining the “natural” privilege of the dominant group—most often the straight, white male. “These men’s transgressions are better understood as an attempt to re-inscribe the binaries of

man/woman, Madonna/whore, white/black, heterosexual/homosexual than as an attempt to subvert them” (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005: 93).

In addition to these social factors, analyses of the requirements of sex tourism also cite logistical needs such as economic opportunity on the part of the tourist (which allows for proliferation of the tourism industry) and relatively inexpensive destinations (which attract tourists to the country) (O’Connell Davidson 2005; Vanaspong 2002). Nations with developed tourism industries are often ripe for sex tourism and lead to the proliferation of sex industries because of the large number of tourists looking for “entertainment” as well as the large number of migrant workers employed by the tourism industry in tourist centres, which also contributes to the demand for commercial sexual encounters characterized by sex tourism.

It should be noted, however, that in isolation, the presence of a demand for sex by tourists will not necessarily lead to widespread sex tourism; supply is also a contributing factor. While much of the existing literature acknowledges that sex tourism is a complicated phenomenon, the factors that lead to supply are said to be difficult to define. It is generally agreed upon that sex tourism is inextricably linked to low levels of education and few job prospects in the destination nations, which thus limit the earning opportunities and abilities of the women in tourism economies (O’Connell Davison 2005; Bishop and Robinson 2002; Cabezas 2002; Doezema 1998). The presence of these factors makes the prospect of engaging in sexual relations for money, even as supplementary income to a more formal job, lucrative and attractive to many women, particularly in cultures in which the responsibility of the family falls to them. Under such

conditions, the fact that some women might “choose” to work in the sex trade becomes more understandable.

Sex Work and ‘Sex Workers’

It has been suggested that the reason the authors and readers of most sex tourism diaries are all male (or represent themselves as male) is that females are less likely to post about their experiences because while many females wish to transgress racial and gender boundaries when they travel, they are concerned with maintaining their reputation when they are back home (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005). Because of this adherence to the socially prescribed ideals of femininity, it is argued, many women do not engage in any of the prolonged behaviours and identity seeking that male sex tourists do once they are back home. It has also been suggested that the reason the WSG has a male majority of readers and writers is because of the androcentric and phallogenic nature of the pornography contained on the site. As Annette Kuhn notes:

To possess a woman’s sexuality is to possess the woman; to possess the image of a woman’s sexuality is, however mass-produced the image, also in some way to possess, to maintain a degree of control over, women in general. In this situation the female spectator of images of women has until very recently been faced with a single option—to identify with the male in the spectator and to see woman, to see herself, as an object of desire. (Kuhn 1985: 11)

It should be noted that interpretation of the diaries and their significance is left to the reader, and not all readers will interpret the diaries in the same manner. Each reader’s interpretation of the diaries will be affected by his or her social location—something which cannot necessarily be inferred from the diaries.

The topic of the posts is sex tourism, which encompasses a wide range of the phenomena (as discussed previously). The posts discuss the experiences of men who engage in sexual relations with women while they travel. The broad and non-traditional conception of sex tourism is the reason that ideas of ‘sex worker’ must also be explored and problematized. Arguably, the topics of the posts—the women with whom the tourists engage—embody a wide range of lifestyles that may not be conventionally labelled as that of a ‘sex worker.’

The traditional notion of the ‘sex worker’ is a person—typically a woman¹⁰—who receives money in exchange for sexual performances (Brennan 2005; Sanchez-Taylor 2001; Seabrook 2000). While this definition may describe many of the women¹¹ in the WSG, the label of ‘sex worker’ is not adequate. It does not encompass all forms of sex labour and, as in the case of this study, sexual interactions in which no remuneration takes place must also be taken into account. There are representations in the diaries that do not indicate whether or not the woman expected to be paid, or whether or not she was paid. These women, while falling outside of typical definition of a paid ‘sex worker,’ are nonetheless the objects of the sex tourists’ diaries. Because of these limitations with the label ‘sex worker,’ nouns such as ‘women’ will be used here in place of ‘sex worker’ or ‘prostitute.’

¹⁰ It is important to note that while the majority of sex workers are women, male sex workers are becoming more common—particularly in some regions of the Caribbean. However, it is less common for them to be considered sex workers and more likely for them to be considered boyfriends. It should be noted that in many hotels in Latin America tourists are prohibited from having local same-sex guests in their rooms, which privileges heteronormative masculinity and reinforces the assumption of the sex worker as female and heterosexual (Gregory 2003: 333)

¹¹ For the purposes of this exploration the sex workers will be considered female and will be referred to as “women” rather than “sex workers” in order to reflect the gendered nature of the posts, and so as not to reinforce the traditional definition of “sex worker” and to avoid the assignment of sex worker as a master status.

Some women do not expect money in return for sex and some women are paid in non-monetary terms in return for sex. As Denise Brennan (2005) notes, many women living in the Caribbean make the distinction between being interested in marriage for love (por amor) and getting married for a visa (por residencia). The experiences of the women who search for marriage as a method of escape from their social conditions are not outside the bounds of this study, and cannot be left out of the notion of sex work. At the same time, however, the inclusion of such broad forms of remuneration cannot be taken as an indication that sex work should be stigmatized to represent female greed and deviance. Much of sex work is borne of necessity and many of the women represented in the diaries do not sell sex as a profession; many women have other forms of employment that they consider to be their primary means of income, and they engage in sex work only when the necessity arises (Sanchez-Taylor 2001, Brennan 2005).

‘Sex Tourists’

The idea of the internationalized sex trade conjures up notions of sex tourism, sex tourists, and sex workers; however, these terms and concepts—while intimately linked to one another—are ambiguous in their definition and require clarification. Much existing literature is based on the premise that sex tourism consists of travelling abroad to engage in commercial sexual relations (Opperman 1999; Seabrook 1996). More specifically, the traditional definition of a sex tourist is someone who:

.... purposely takes a holiday to have sex, stays away from home for at least 24 hours, meets the sex provider for the first time, has sexual intercourse as a result of direct monetary exchange, and obtains sexual gratification in encounters which last a relatively short time. (Opperman 1999: 261)

Further analysis suggests that what defines sex tourism, sex tourists, and sex workers within sex tourism discourse is a debated subject. It has been suggested that only a small segment of the sex tours and sex tourists fit the criteria for purpose, time, sexual interaction, monetary compensation, and gratification that comprise the traditional definition of a sex tourist (Mullings 2000; Seabrook 2000). Consequently, this narrow definition excludes the experiences of many other travellers.

Opperman (1999) expands the notion of sex tourism in order to include people whose experiences have been omitted by the traditional definition of sex tourism, such as those who engage in commercial sexual relations while abroad on business or on vacation where the purpose was not expressly to sexually engage with women in exchange for money. Such tourists are termed “situational sex tourists” (Seabrook 2000). Many tourists who engage in sexual relations for remuneration while abroad are situational tourists who either get caught up in their own notion of being in a foreign environment that they perceive as having different a way of life from their own, or they simply take advantage of the opportunity when it arises.

The notion of the categories being too limiting to give an accurate picture of sex tourism and the sex tourist is echoed by other authors. Some writers (Mullings 2000; Seabrook 2000) maintain that the criteria for payment set out in the traditional definition of a sex tourist exclude the experiences of many tourists who do not pay women in currency. Many tourists who have sexual relationships while travelling compensate the women in other forms. Meals, a place to stay, small gifts and even payment of hospital bills are part of non-monetary compensation that occurs between the tourist and the women, which blurs the definition of sex tourism.

Romance tourism—suggested to be more common amongst female tourists—also troubles the definition of sex tourist. It has been cited as part of sex tourism even though the tourist may be interested in a long-term relationship (Sanchez Taylor 2001). Romance tourism is often characterized by a courtship in which the tourist may buy dinner or gifts for a local person in return for companionship, be it short- or long-term. Encounters such as these serve to further blur the boundaries of sex tourism as defined by the intention of the tourist, services provided to the tourist, and payment made to the local “Other.” Opperman (1999) suggests that the definition of sex tourism be re-conceptualized and broadened to include these experiences. He proposes that sex tourism should be thought of in terms of a continuum of variables rather than in specifically defined, static categories. Opperman therefore attempts to offer a more inclusive definition of sex tourism by expanding the criteria of monetary exchange, purpose of travel, length of time, relationship, sexual encounter, and the specific purpose of tourists within these categories.

O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor (2005) identify what they term “hardcore sex tourists” as those who travel specifically to engage in sexual relations. They go on to say that one characteristic of hardcore sex tourists is that they seek out the company of other hardcore sex tourists in the resorts, restaurants, and clubs that they visit, and once back home they create groups and clubs, produce publications for each other, and correspond with each other via the Internet. Indeed, one of the ways in which sex tourism is promoted and sustained is through the Internet. Sites such as the World Sex Guide offer hardcore sex tourists a venue for posting diaries and detailed descriptions

of their experiences for others to read. There are thousands of postings on the WSG in which tales of sex tourism abound.

The Internet

While it is useful to couch this study in the context of tourism and sex tourism it is also important to note that globalization—in particular access to the Internet—adds a specific element to the nature of the phenomenon. The data source for this exploration is comprised of online sex tourism diaries that are available for public consumption due to widespread access to the Internet; however, as will be discussed in subsequent sections, the analysis will not focus on any assumption of “truth” contained in the diaries because the Internet provides no assurance that any of its contents are reliable or verifiable. Instead, this study analyses the ways in which the bodies involved are constructed and how that lends to masculine and feminine subjectivities, and to “first world” and “third world” subjectivities in a ‘global forum.’¹²

People increasingly find intimacy and a sense of community through the Internet (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005). Shared understandings and meanings allow people to “seek a communicative consensus about their understanding of a situation as well as justifications for the principles and norms guiding their action” (Risse 2007: 131). The specific dynamics that accompanied the Internet have resulted in an increase in “speed, repetition and self-formulation of discursive imaginings between participants” (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005: 333). The Internet has created a forum for a global community in which ideas, discourse, and experiences can be shared at the touch of a button, contributing not only to

¹² It is acknowledged that access to the Internet is global in theory only, it remains that Internet access is correlated with wealth meaning those with lower incomes have less access.

a common understanding of a situation, as Risse suggests, but to a common discourse that can shift entire paradigms. Shifts in paradigms have implications not only for the specific situation being discussed in a chat room but carry effects that export into ways of interpreting and reacting to situations and people offline and external to the Internet.

The sense of camaraderie and venue for self expression offered by the Internet is particularly attractive to people who have few others to share their lives with (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005: 347). In the case of the WSG, the Internet provides an avenue through which these men are able to come closer to idealized identities through their narratives in two ways: 1.) the narratives posted on the Internet do not require face-to-face interaction in a context where an individual's history and image is up to them to create thus allowing individuals to construct themselves in any manner that they see fit, 2.) online chatters are able to construct their own idealized discourses, ways of being, and narrative strategies within their online communities. It is important to keep in mind however, that intimacy, affirmation, and community require a sense of inclusion and also an element of exclusion. Images and narratives of otherness can be found on the Internet in two ways. For one, the Internet offers a space in which subjects are able to define themselves by defining that which they are not, thus assigning the label of 'Other' and creating otherness. In addition to the otherness assigned to others, the Internet can afford people the opportunity to take part in the lives and experiences of others that they would not be able to experience otherwise, thus becoming an 'other' themselves.

Concluding Remarks

The process of globalization is characterized by transcending boundaries in the economic, institutional, and social sense and the result has been, amongst many others, an increase in travel, informal economies, and inequality. The result focused on in this study is the ability—in a global audience—to construct the self and its relation to others. The Internet contributes to a sense of a ‘shrinking’ world but also contributes a forum in which people are able to construct and perpetuate certain ways of being and acting without any face-to-face interactions in a social context that is created by the online chatters.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERROGATING THE DIARIES ON THE WORLD SEX GUIDE

It has been suggested that the practice of sex tourists documenting and recounting experiences of sex tourism is perhaps even more important in the sex tourist culture than the sex act itself (Bishop 2002). Indeed, there is an increasing number of websites appearing on the Internet dedicated to sex tourism. These sites range in type and form. There are blogs where the writing is done by one author and readers are either given no chance to respond to existing posts or sometimes a small space to post comments, Internet guides which are open to anyone with access to the Internet where travellers post their experiences in threads, and chat rooms where writers can post and respond to one another almost instantaneously. These sites also vary in their criteria for entry. Some have restricted access while others have unlimited access; some are free while others require payment. Some sites have a section that is free to access and a section that requires payment as well.

Given their prominence and diversity, it is evident that Internet sex tourism sites constitute a growing subculture that is amenable to sociological exploration. For instance, despite the private posting process, the nature of the forum makes posts a social phenomenon. In facilitating the sharing and reading of the posts, the Internet allows people to participate in a second-hand interaction—an interaction in which people do not have direct contact with each other but nevertheless engage with the thoughts and ideas of others. As well, because so many of these sites are freely accessible on the Internet—and are therefore potentially accessed by billions of people—they potentially have an enormous impact on social constructions and practices surrounding sex.

In this chapter I focus on the context of the World Sex Guide with an overview of theoretical and methodological considerations involved in this study. This includes an overview of the sample and a more in-depth description of the authors. The chapter concludes with my analysis of how I fit into the context.

The Diaries as Pornography

The definition of pornography is a hotly debated issue. On one side of the debate, porn is considered to be material, be it print, image, or motion picture, which is sexually explicit in its content. Sexually explicit material can be conceptualized in both the acts as well as the physiological aspects being described. It remains, however, that this definition encompasses a wide variety of material that is not commonly considered pornography. For instance, material such as anatomy or physiology textbooks are not likely to be considered pornographic, but contain images of genitalia that can, under this definition, be considered “sexually explicit” and therefore pornographic.

An alternate definition contends that pornography is not defined by its content; rather, it is defined by the social context in which it is produced and consumed (Smart 1989; Valverde 1985). As such, there is no inherently pornographic or sexual meaning to any act but that which we give it. Consumers’ interpretations of the acts—which are based on learned codes—make them pornographic. When an act, image, narrative, etc. is decidedly synchronized with modes of conventional signification, interpretation leads to the conclusion that it is pornography (Smart 1989). The way that consumers of text and images interpret representations is produced through messages that are taken from society. For instance, a representation of a schoolgirl and her principal is interpreted

much differently in the context of a *Playboy* magazine than it is in a Nancy Drew book. We use our knowledge of the usual relations between men and women to interpret text and images, which is what elicits the feelings that we get when we interpret the representations.

The social context results in expectations that give definition to what porn is, which is how people interpret it. Pornography reveals sexual relations constructed under conditions of racism, sexism, and capitalism (Smart 1989: 126). As Marianna Valverde (1985: 126) notes “Our experience in a sexist society helps in a very important way to determine how we will interpret representations of sex and gender.” The expectations that make up the social criteria of pornography include expectations surrounding relationships, the body, and more literal environmental expectations, amongst others. The physical expectation of porn is the environment in which the pornography exists—that it is usually hidden on the magazine racks, that it is something to hide from others, that it is restricted until the consumer comes “of age,” etc. The expectations surrounding relationships—for example, that a relationship between a man and a woman is often sexual and the proper way to ‘do’ sexuality—are often played out in pornography and inform the interpretation of it. The body is socially demarcated as private and mysterious, which makes pornography dangerous in its publication of the body. Porn is forbidden and that is what keeps it sexually arousing; it is based on “lawless seeing,” the idea that people are seeing something that they should not, sometimes without the knowledge of the subject. This is the “truth” of porn (Kuhn 1985).

The first page on the WSG website acts as part of a social context that points towards pornography in that it requires that readers be of the age of majority in their

particular district. If readers are not of the age of majority, or if they are uncomfortable with sexually explicit materials, they are asked not to proceed into the site—which is akin to keeping the pornographic magazines inaccessible by hiding them behind the counter at convenience stores. Posting on the site is rather informal, as opposed to the process of publishing a medical textbook, for example, and can be done by anyone of a certain age. As material that is considered pornographic, the site seems to be aimed at recreational readers, and it serves as entertainment for men from around the world—as is evidenced by the varied screen names and geographical locations of the authors of the posts. Lastly—the subject of the project at hand—the site sexualizes relations between the actors in the posts.

The codes by which pornography achieves a sexual response are not overt; they “are culturally transmitted and, in turn, they create a standard against which sexual activity can be measured” (Smart 1989: 126). This means that the additional codes become part of sexual material to elicit sexual response; they become normalized. It is demonstrated, then, that pornography derives its meaning from the social context in which it is produced, but also reproduces the social understanding of porn and the relations within it. That certain magazines, videos, books, and other print media are considered by most to be pornographic further confirms that the relations and ideas within these pieces are dangerous, sexually arousing, somewhat private, and of a sexual and intimate nature.

According to the “pornography as representation” view, the diaries on the WSG can be considered pornography. According to this view, porn derives its meaning and significance from the social context in which it exists (Valverde 1985). In the case of the

WSG, there are certain indicators that point in the direction of the pornographic definition; sexual explicitness is only one of these factors. As has been discussed, on its own sexual explicitness is not enough to define material as pornographic; however, in combination with other identifiers inferences can be made. While pornography derives meaning from the social context in which it is produced and exists, it also perpetuates these sexualized understandings further. What is arousing is learned and reinforced by sexualized contexts and discourses, which has implications for contexts outside of pornography.

Subjectivity and Performativity

One of the underlying premises of discourse analysis is that people construct the social world through language (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). There are three facets to this notion: 1.) people draw upon previously existing linguistic resources in order to create social expressions; 2.) people are continually and actively involved in a process of selecting and rejecting words and meanings from the infinite number available to them; and 3.) the chosen construction has effects on ideas and responses. Thus discourse analysis puts the subjective social expressions at the centre of inquiry rather than the “objective meaning” of social texts.

Subjectivity cannot be considered unified or fixed, as by definition it is how one is positioned in relation to others within one’s own perceptions. At once, a subject can be considered a deviant whore, a caring mother, a loving daughter, an impoverished student, etc. Subjectivity is how we experience and understand ourselves, but our sense of others

in relation to ourselves. The meaning attributed to the signifiers or language we use are constantly changing due to the discursive context (Weedon 1997).

How we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects, and how we give meaning to the material social relations under which we live and which structure our everyday lives, depends on the range and social power of existing discourses, our access to them, and the political strength of the interests which they represent. (Weedon 1997: 26)

We gain this sense of ourselves and others through discourse that is used to make sense of situations and experiences, which means that language affects our sense of self and others. Language as discourse has effects “in and through the actions of individuals who become its bearers by taking up the forms of subjectivity and the meaning and values which it proposes and acting upon them” (Weedon 1997: 34). It can thus be inferred that the manner in which the diaries of sex tourists examined here represent sex tourists and the women with whom they engage will contribute to a widely shared discourse on sex tourism and sex work.

As noted by Judith Butler (1993), the body experiences cultural inscription via repetitive acts. She refutes Foucault’s idea that bodies are blank canvases prior to social inscription and posits that there is no sex that is not gender because sex is shown to have gender from the beginning. This means that there is no “natural body,” no body that is without gender, no body that is blank, because “bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence” (Cahill 2004: 91). In terms of gender, Butler notes that the body is not a being, as being implies a passivity which lacks agency. Rather, the body is *done*, but it is not done by a voluntary subject who is free to choose whatever performance s/he wants. Gender is an effect of discourse that is present before gender; it is not the cause of discourse. Gender is a highly repetitive act that is done within a certain normative

framework. Gender categories are seen to be reinforced by social and historical relations in which certain bodies seem to be more acceptable than others (Butler 1990; Bartky 1988). Bodies are punished by cultures and laws when they do not subscribe to certain norms; norms of masculinity or femininity, for example. It should be noted that bodies are punished for noncompliance in many other fields than gender, including sexuality, race, etc.

In this study, therefore, I make the assumption that discourse is one of the vehicles for the performance of gender. Following Butler (1990), what is being examined in the Internet posts can be considered *gender performances*. While gender provides the primary lens through which the analysis proceeds, consideration is also given to the potential that other characteristics may be socially constructed performances that are exhibited in part via discourse. The term ‘performance’ is not meant to imply falseness in this instance; rather, it is used to explain the contingency of identity. That gender is “performed” means that it is something that is done *by* someone, not something that is done *to* someone. The fact that that the events in the narrative can be completely made up or completely truthful has no bearing on the performativity.

The Study Sample

Sex tourism sites can take one of three forms: the *travel guide*, in which travellers give other travellers and potential travellers tips on where to go in certain places for certain services, how much to pay, and what travellers can expect and/or not expect from women in certain locales; the *etiquette guide*, which outlines the procedures to properly procure women in certain places, and the proper behaviour that should ensue; and the *diary*, in

which the travellers recount experiences of sex tourism for the audience to read—generally as a form of entertainment (Bishop 2002). The present study specifically focuses on sex tourism diaries that have been posted on the Internet.

The method of sampling for the study was simple and inclusive. To control as much as possible for differing cultural conceptions, the focus of the study was limited to Latin American destinations. The entries were broken up according to destination country and the posts coming from Latin American nations were screened for type; only those fitting the criteria for a diary, as set out by Bishop and Robinson (2002), were included. The sample was narrowed significantly because only entries that could be considered purely diary entries were included in the sample for this study, while many of the entries can be considered a mix of diary and guide entries. All of the diary entries from Latin American nations that fit these criteria were examined and underwent discourse analysis. As a result, the sample for this study consisted of 65 entries.

Of the 65 posts that make up the sample for this study, all were written by authors that self-identified as men. Only 19 of the posts were written by anonymous authors while the rest used handles to identify themselves. The handles ranged in type from those emphasizing Latin America and/or tourism (*Che, Cuba Libre, Caribbean Traveller, the island man, Caribbean Travelor, Jaco Lover, DonGringo, panama jack, salty sun*), those with a sexual connotation (*hors' de auderv, BIGdick, Slammer, Sinner, mojo, Delivery Man, Laid Back, Q69*), average names (*Rich, Riccardo, JOHN, Chas, Ken, Andy*), seemingly unintelligible strings of letters (*Aaallluuu, pacatleo, sydnce, reglr, picum, Dun punny*) and other names (*Chops, Maximum75, BLONK, Rapha, Ratbutt, the dog, Heavy T, Tee-O, Big D, The Capitan, spent, 3 amigos, vistoliner, Bostonians*). The users of the

handles *sydnce* and *Slammer* each posted two diaries used in the sample; none of the other handles were used more than once.

Bishop and Robinson (2002) note that many Internet sex tourism diarists on sites such as the WSG are North American and some European. This is not surprising considering that the WSG is entirely in English with no opportunities for translation. Some of the posters alluded to their nationality; 17 identified themselves as American, 1 identified himself as Canadian, and one as Dutch.

There were varied indicators of the nature of the trips that the posters took. For instance, 11 of the posters mentioned that they were on business trips at the time of their encounters (one of whom indicated that he is a sailor), three of the posters used the term “holiday” or “vacation” to describe their trip, while the rest did not describe the exact nature. Contrary to the traditional definition of sex tourism, only 12 of the posts indicated that the traveller planned on engaging in sexual relations prior to leaving for their trip—the majority of these posters mentioned researching sex tourism on the WSG in the planning stages of the trip, which confirms a sense of homosocial participation in heterosexual relations (Flood 2007). The remaining 53 posts did not indicate that they were situational sex tourists; in fact, they did not mention anything about whether they had planned to engage in sexual encounters and it was not possible to infer this intention from their discourse. In 12 of the diaries the authors indicated that it was their first trip to that particular destination; 15 authors expressed that they had been to that location at least one time previously; and 10 mentioned that they were planning on returning to that location. Interestingly, 4 of the posters indicated that they had engaged in compensated sexual relations in other Latin American countries.

Of the sampled diaries, 31 of the diarists wrote in a manner that implied that they were travelling alone, while 14 indicated that they travelled with at least one other person. Two of the posters mentioned that they have girlfriends at home and one post mentioned the author's wife at home. Only one diarist expressed his age in his diary (late 20's); three diarists indicated that they used Viagra during their encounters

At the time of data retrieval, there were no posts written by an author who identified as female; all authors represented themselves as male either explicitly in the name (e.g. *'islandman'*) or by the description of his genitalia in the diary post. The manager(s) of the WSG acknowledge that the vast majority of WSG patrons are male (or identify as male). In the 'About Us' section it is stated that, "The World Sex Guide is a world wide community of men (and some women) who enjoy sexual relationships with other consenting adults." The fact that all of the diary entries sampled were written by authors who identified themselves as male speaks to the need for an analysis of masculinities, particularly with regard to tourism and informational technology.

Hegemonic Masculinities

As noted above, the entire sample was written by authors who identify as male. The sample of an entire group that identify as one gender is interesting and warrants further consideration of the WSG as an area in which the posters create and perpetuate certain types of masculinities. R. W. Connell and James Messerschmidt (2005: 832) argue that hegemonic masculinities are a "pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just as a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue." The posts on the World Sex Guide have created and exist in a domain in which there is a

particular conception of how masculinity is ‘done.’ At the top of this multidimensional, ever-changing, and historically dependent hierarchy is a revered way of doing masculinity—actions taken—which serves as a point of reference for all men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Lori Kendall (2002) notes that people who use multi-user domains (or “muders”) are often unable to identify with others in real-time situations. Kendall’s finding that men in chat rooms feel disempowered in daily life runs contrary to Connell’s (1995 and 2001) association of hegemonic masculinities with men who occupy a dominant position in the global marketplace. Typically, Kendall says, frequent muders would be considered computer geeks, and are sometimes thought to be socially awkward in more direct interactional settings. Although a value is placed on intelligence in the social mainstream, knowledge and interest in other popular phenomena create a disjuncture between the muders and the mainstream that results in a devaluation and discomfort on the part of the muders. In response, the muders have created a subculture which values different characteristics than in most real-time interaction. In multi-user domains, Kendall suggests that it is intelligence-based criteria (such as the level and number of post-secondary degrees as well as knowledge about computer programming) that gain the muders status, whereas in real-time characteristics such as sexuality or material objects are more likely to improve an individual’s social status. Users often take what is referred to as “roll call,” in which one user posts a category and each of the users present in the chat room at the time has to personally respond. For instance, a user may post a roll call entitled “education” in which each of the muders online at the time respond with the highest level of education they have achieved. This is also done with other characteristics, such as

knowledge of a certain type of computer program and the responses seem to be interpreted in an multidimensional hierarchical fashion which allows them to abide by and contribute to a hegemonic masculinity. This hegemonic masculinity is based on criteria that is set out by the muders, often couched in a historical context (that is set out by the muders and not necessarily valued in the mainstream).

Muders also gain respect in their online community by demonstrating their ability to answer questions posed by other muders about computers and computer programming. While this may inspire awe in many mainstream situations, in the online community it also earns reverence on the part of the other muders and affords them a certain status within the domain that would not necessarily be achieved via the same characteristics in real-time. In Kendall's study, the muders did not fit in with conventional constructions of masculinity (in terms of risk-taking, being sexually desirable, etc.) but these men changed the nature of what was valued when they were online; they valued knowledge about computers and technology and constructed an idealized masculinity that centered around it. It is important to note that many of the muders in Kindall's study were not able to access whatever the online idealized masculinity was at the time, however they always understood themselves in relation to it, were interpreted in relation to it by others and vice versa.

There are clues that indicate that the diarists on the WSG are similar to the men in Kendall's study in terms of disempowerment in "real time" setting versus virtual settings. It has been suggested that sexual narratives are an important element in gender performances as they represent competition in internal "pecking orders" (Flood 2007). One poster on the WSG writes:

I hear the massage parlours are cheap and great but I like the idea of meeting a girl in a bar and taking her out. This doesn't happen to me in the States every time so it is refreshing. I go in, come out with a hottie. AND, don't pay until you get them into your room. (Tee-O December 3, 2002)

This finding lays an interesting foundation for exploration of how tourists are able to construct themselves online according to particular constructions of masculinity while their masculine performances in the context of their “real time” life are unknown. Like the men in Kendall’s study, the sex tourists in my study can be said to form bonds over common interests—which are the social phenomena that form of the basis of this inquiry. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the commonalities in the posts that seem to serve in uniting men from around the world while they bolster hegemonic masculinities by dominating over women in terms of gender, race, status, and wealth. In the process, I argue that the diaries should be considered as a form of pornography.

This study seeks to further explore the relations being performed in the context of the WSG. The themes that emerge from the pornographic discourse in the diaries will lend clues as to the types of relations that are being sexualized and perpetuated as sexual; in particular, the tourists’ expectations of sexual relations that make up the social context of pornography. How do the authors of on the WSG construct themselves? What types of relations are being reproduced in the diaries? How are women being constructed in the diaries? How are the tourists constructing themselves in relation to the women with whom they engage? Is a hierarchy of acts, actors, or characteristics evident? I turn now to the methodology used to address such questions.

Discourse Analysis

It has been noted that in exploring discourse, it is not the size of the sample that matters, but the close examination in the detailed nuances of the texts that are most important (Potter and Wetherell 1987). Although most methodologies aim to analyze a large number of cases in the name of consistency, the goal of discourse analysis is not to reflect the “reality” beyond the text but rather to understand the intricacies, contradictions, areas of vagueness, organization, and areas of similarity, and what is actually said and written in the social expressions (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). Discourse analysis operates under the assumption that people are inconsistent and language does not necessarily reflect the conditions that it is intended to reflect. For the purposes of this study, a discourse is considered to be a social connection, be it written or verbal, and the discursive concern is with “talk and texts as parts of social practices” (Potter 1996: 105).

The discourse analysis performed in this study starts out with the application of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework, which focuses on the functions that language performs and why people chose the expressions that they do. This is done via the exploration of the meanings that participants, processes, and circumstances are creating (Young and Fitzgerald 2006). SFL asks the following questions: Who are the participants? What are the processes and circumstances (i.e. what is being done—the verb or action that is being taken)? What are the writers’ attitudes and stances? What holds the discourse together?

The use of a SFL framework allows the researcher to systematically extract the elements of language that are most often imbued with personal meaning in order to perform a discursive analysis. The patterns that emerge from the application of SFL can

be subsequently explored to “provide an explanation and interpretation of a discourse in terms of their relationships between language, power and ideology” (Young and Fitzgerald 2006: 23). The meanings are interpreted to explore the role of discourse in unequal relations of power. The results of the SFL process, along with extractions of more holistic excerpts of the text, are used in discourse analysis to answer the following questions: What performances are taking place? Who is doing what to whom and how? What can this tell about the subjectivities of the actors? What do the themes of the discourse tell us about the subjectivity of the participant(s)? What is being reinforced by the attitudes and opinions of the participant(s)?

While it is agreed that discourse analysis cannot be used to gain particular insight into the “objective meaning” of the narrative, it has been suggested that “individuals construct their self-image within an interaction, according to a specific interpersonal context” (Lieblich et al. 1998: 9). In other words, people use the discourse that is available to them, which is dependent on the context and which affects not only the way that they perceive themselves, but also how they are perceived by others. The perception of the self, including feelings, attitudes, notions, and values, comprises the subjectivity of the person making the expression—the actor—and should be considered in tandem with the ways in which the actor relates his subjectivity to the subjectivity of others (Alverson and Skoldberg 2000; Elliott 2005).

What can be learned from the WSG?

Through the analysis of the discourse in the WSG diaries we can examine both the cultural inscription that the discourse of the sex tourist imposes on the body of the

woman as a source of bonding with other men, and the way that bodies of sex tourists are represented within the diaries. Themes that emerge from the examination of the discourse surrounding the woman, the act, and the experience in general will indicate how the tourist constitutes his subjectivity. The examination of the subjectivity of the speaker will give clues as to the intent of the discourse in the posts. What meaning is being given to the discourse in the posts? What assumptions underlie the discourse used in the posts? What purpose does the discourse used in the posts serve? Through the discursive analysis of the WSG posts, themes that were common to many of the diary entries became apparent.

What people say in written script, interviews, and daily interactions can differ from what they “really” think (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). Even in an ideal instance in which other effects such as interviewer bias, social expectations, dishonesty, misunderstanding, and taboos are absent, language and meaning are still context-dependent—what people say may be dependent on the environment that they are in,¹³ but it also may depend on what was said earlier in the conversation or the organization of the conversation (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000: 202). This makes it difficult to conceptualize a precise relationship between verbal or written expression and “real” meaning. Discursive analyses are useful not in focusing on what is ‘true’ and what is ‘false’ but rather they explore the “trends and frameworks within which people tell the stories they wish to tell” (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005: 335).

¹³ Interestingly it has been found that there is not much difference between online and face-to-face interviews (Kendall 2002; Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005) however directed and poignant interview questions create a different environment complete with different expectations than would a general Internet forum. It should also be noted that there is no way of verifying the “truthfulness” of the online interview responses or the face-to-face responses and so the discourse rather than the ‘reality’ must remain the focus of this exploration.

The difficulty discerning truth from fiction is further compounded by the ambiguity of language. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) note, two different problematic premises are relevant in dealing with language. The first troubling premise deals with the expectation of consistency. Since language is a personal characteristic, people describing the same phenomenon cannot be expected to use the same language or even be considered consistent in their accounts of the instance. At the same time, since language is context-dependent, the same person recounting the same instance in two different contexts cannot be expected to use the same language or even give the same account in both contexts. As these authors note, “if we look at people’s accounts in a sufficiently unbiased and detailed way, we will see that they almost always contain a good deal of variation” (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000: 205).

The second problematic premise is that language is ambiguous and does not reflect a “reality” because the expression of a circumstance is affected by the personal nature of language. The inability to consider the narratives “reality” is exacerbated by the lack of accountability that accompanies the WSG diary forum. Diaries can be posted by anyone who has the desire to do so once they have registered with the website. Registration requires little more than a name and an age (in order to meet legal requirements that limit minors from accessing the site). However, there is no proof of age or name required to register on the site, and no investigation into the honesty of the registrants. This applies not only to the registration process, but also the posting process. The registered diarist can post whatever he wants within the limits of the site. The only limit of the World Sex Guide is that diarists cannot post any piece that indicates that they have had a sexual encounter with a minor; such posts are removed from the site.

The Internet as a posting forum makes for an unusual dynamic. When posting threads on a bulletin board, there is no chance for real time (i.e. immediate) responses from other people who are reading the posts. Participants are able to enter into discussions with other participants should they so choose; however, the responses take place in a hyper-delayed manner according to the schedules and interest of those engaged, and the majority of the posts have few responses. This contributes to the lack of accountability in what is written. In the vast majority of the diaries sampled there are no responses to other posts—only two make allusions to general implications of other diary entries. For example, if the author of a post says that he had fantastic sexual encounters in Havana, and a reader believes that the sex scene in Havana is terrible, that reader may post something contradicting the author’s original post; however, it would not necessarily show up in a space that indicates that it has any relation to the original post (and, even at that, posts such as these are rare—only one in this sample). Authors who post diaries in the World Sex Guide have very little accountability for what they post. This lack of accountability is exacerbated by the absence of face-to-face interaction characteristic of the Internet (Kendall 2002).

As a result of these minimal limits and lack of accountability, diarists are able to post their interpretations of their experiences—be they “real” or “fictional”—according to the subjective interpretation of the participants. In this context, the term “real” refers to the interpretation of events that actually happened; however, the concept of reality remains elusive because the interpretation of one witness to an event may not be the same as the interpretation of another witness to the same event. There can be no correct

interpretation, as objectivity and the one true way of knowing cannot apply to human experience.

Within the same context, the term “fictional” refers to events that have been completely or partially fabricated on the part of the diarist. There is no way to be sure whether any of the diaries that compose the data source for this study were in fact “real” or “fictional” and it is possible that the vast majority of the diaries fall somewhere on the continuum between “the real” and “the fictional.” For this reason, the diaries cannot be examined in the context of actual events; they cannot be used to explore how either the sex tourists or the women act or react in certain situations. Following poststructural thinking (Weedon 1997, Pearce 1995, Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000), fictional posts can be used to examine the discourse that sex tourists use when recounting experiences with the women they engage with in terms of the representation of the women and to explore the subjectivity of the sex tourist. In these terms, the subjectivity of the sex tourist—the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, the subject’s sense of self, and his ways of understanding his relation to the world—cannot be considered without taking an account of the subjectivity of others with whom the sex tourist comes into contact.

Instead of using realist methods of social inquiry that strive to exert similarities via the contortion of social expressions into preconceived categories, discourse analysis focuses on the similarities as well as variation in social expressions while at the same time taking into consideration that similarities are not necessarily a sign of validity. Due to the tendency to use language and describe accounts in ambiguous and varying manners, it is difficult to say what is “true” and what is “not true”; however, discourse

analysis makes possible the exploration of attitudes that are reflected in expressions. When are the different attitudes expressed? How are the expressions constructed? What functions do the expressions fulfill?

Locating the Researcher in the Research

As will be discussed further in the concluding chapter, one of the major shortcomings of a discursive analysis is the bias that I as the researcher bring to the research. Regardless of persistent attempts to attain “objectivity” it must be acknowledged that there is no way that any researcher can completely shed her social baggage, which influences both the research process and the interpretation of the findings. It might be easier to settle into the “knowledge” that objectivity is achieved if it were possible to pinpoint the areas in which a study of this nature are most likely to be biased; however, the study is “biased” in every aspect. This project is being undertaken by a feminist researcher and an activist who has a great deal of global social concern coupled with a sense of global social responsibility. As an active member of various groups that take a specific stance on sex tourism, particularly where children, are concerned I come from a standpoint that is critical of inequality and the exploitation that ensues, which leads me to subscribe to a relatively liberal framework of globalization.

While I readily acknowledge that some of the issues embodied in child sex tourism are not present in sex tourism involving adults, I believed that work in this area contributes to the “bias” of the research. I understand the criticisms of seeing sex work as exploitation and acknowledge that terming the work “exploitation” is biased in that it undermines the choice of the worker and reinforces the notion that the body is a sacred

space which must be treated in a certain fashion. My response to these criticisms is that the value that is placed on the virginity and purity of a woman's body results in a devaluation of sex workers bodies—a conceptualization of impurity and deviance that brings with it a host of meanings, assumptions, and experiences that are inscribed upon the body of the worker. The stories told by sex workers around the world demonstrate how “impure” and “deviant” female bodies experience different subjectivities than women who do not engage in sex work due only to the social construction of the sex working body. Sex working bodies are at increased risk of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and financial violence at the hands of clients, family, friends, and institutions. They are at increased risk of addiction and a range of social sanctions. In terms of the physical (as opposed to the social) construction of the body, sex working bodies are at increased risk for infection and pregnancy.

I argue, therefore, that sex work is exploitation not because the body is a sacred space but because the social construction of the body carries with it these implications. As I understand it, the conditions that sex workers are forced to endure on a daily basis make the work so risky that many women are forced into it by circumstances of poverty or lack of better options; to me this indicates coercion. It is not the case that sex work is inherently “bad” but the *social* constructions surrounding the body create unimaginable working conditions for women who are arguably forced into the trade, which is why I name it as exploitation. I do not argue that the exploitative nature of sex work cannot change—this is what I work towards on almost a daily basis—however, in my mind this would take a major societal shift in thinking surrounding women's bodies.

Nevertheless, the bias that is inherent in the research does not reduce its worth. The arbitrary nature of the language and discourse that comprises the data source and the substance of this thesis is constantly reshaping and perpetuating further discourse, performances, and ways of interpreting. The importance of discourse analysis cannot be underestimated—regardless of its inherent, irrefutable, and ever-present bias, which in itself is a resultant manifestation and perpetuation of the nature of language and discourse.

The purpose of this exploration is not to leave the reader with no way of representing the posters except as abusers (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), but rather to attempt to navigate the practice and production of bodies in this specific online setting. In other words, this exploration is not intended propagate ill feelings towards the actors but to encourage and undertake further analysis of the context and the content of the acting, specifically looking at masculinity, femininity, ‘first world’ bodies, and ‘third world’ bodies as a starting point for this multifaceted phenomenon.

CHAPTER THREE

MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

The perception that men and women are ‘opposite sexes’ (with accompanying ‘genders’—masculine/feminine) creates the expectation that one is either a man or a woman and that these two categories are essentially disparate. This sense of difference then becomes the demarcation of otherness when gradations of value are placed on the two distinct domains. (Gutterman 2001: 58)

As David Gutterman (2001: 57) suggests, it is critical to examine the social process of identification or identity formation by which individuals come to identify themselves and are identified by others. In poststructural terms, people use classificatory systems in order to organize their lives and make sense of that which would otherwise be considered unordered (Butler 1993; Mullings 2000). These classificatory systems enable people to both identify with and differentiate themselves from others. The classification and ensuing mode of identification gives individuals a sense of their place in a social structure, which manifests itself in the ways that they construct themselves in relation to others in the discourses that they use. In these terms, the discourse used is not only an indication of the subjective relation of a person to his or her social environment, but it is also a reproduction of that subjective position.

The purpose of this chapter is to reveal the ways in which gender identity, subjectivity, and social identification play out in the narratives contained in the World Sex Guide diaries. The discourse in the diaries relays a complex intersection of gendered characteristics to reinforce notions surrounding socially constructed sexed bodies. The following analysis seeks to demonstrate that the discourse used to describe the actors, the specific acts in which they engage, the environment in which they are engaging, and the

relational aspect of the actors to each other construct the bodies involved in particular, contrary manners. The masculine body is constructed as the primary body with primary characteristics while the feminine body is constructed oppositionally—as a secondary or less significant body.

The Male/Female Divide

The pornography found in the diaries of the sex tourists reproduces particular notions of masculinity and femininity and the relationship between the two. In order to make meaningful classifications to organize their lives, individuals often construct categories to be mutually exclusive by conceptualizing difference as ‘otherness,’ which effectively defines a category by what it is not. In the case of the masculine/feminine categories comprising gender, masculinity “is achieved by the constant process of warding off threats to it. Masculinity does not exist without its opposite, it is precariously achieved by the rejection of femininity and homosexuality” (Gutterman 2001: 61). This sentiment has been echoed by Arthur Brittan (2001: 52): masculinity “will always be an expression of the current image that men have of themselves in relation to women.” While both Gutterman and Brittan’s statements are problematic in that they reinforce the idea that homosexuality and masculinity are mutually exclusive, what should be extracted from these statements is that the social construction of masculinity is tied not only to gender, but to sexuality.

Heteronormative relations—actions that not only reinforce heterosexuality but position heterosexuality and heterosexual actions as the norm—are reproduced in the pornography of the diaries, particularly with regard to masculinity (Gutterman 2001; Rich

1980). These heteronormative relations stem from the cultural requirement of heterosexuality (Gutterman 2001: 62), which creates a need for clear binary categories of gender so that sexual partners can be ‘properly’ chosen. Discourses of (hetero)sexuality are then used to establish and reinforce categories of gender that enable the perpetuation of the heterosexual norm. Since the categories required by the system are oppositionally and hierarchically defined, any deviation from either the category of gender or normative heterosexuality is met with efforts to silence, change, or eliminate the differences (Gutterman 2001). Steven Gregory (2003) notes that the understanding and adherence to global social hierarchies is dependent on a heteronormative model of masculinities—what heterosexual men believe themselves to be, possess. They represent a framework in which men create, interpret, and negotiate their relations with others and the social world. Heteronormative masculinities are naturalized, flexible and durable because of the eroticization of social distinctions which are imbued with sexual control and discipline. The “currency of male sociality, comprising culturally constituted beliefs, values, and structures of feeling, as well as concrete social powers and prerogatives, plays a critical role in mobilizing, coordinating, and “naturalizing” male power in hierarchical social systems.

Under the broad umbrella that is heteronormative masculinities fall hegemonic masculinities. R.W. Connell (1995) defines hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (77). Connell argues that hegemonic masculinities are only attainable if there is a link between the cultural ideal and

institutional power. In the context of sex tourism the adventurous “first world” masculine, information technology, economics, and international travel provide the cultural and institutional crux on which hegemony lies.¹⁴

Gregory (2003) argues that it is the global economy that enables hegemonic masculinities because it is the putative control that Western men decide that they have over Latin American women that allows them to enact control and dominance as potential husbands, boyfriends, or clients, which falls in line with Connell’s (2005) notion that hegemonic masculinities are characterized by a successful claim to authority. Through the social practice of this form of heteronormative masculinity—what Gregory calls “imperial masculinity”—these men “collectively construct and naturalize ideologies of racial, class, ethnic, and sex/gender difference that both register and re-inscribe the social/spatial hierarchies of the global economy” (2003: 325-326).

The tone of the constructions of the male position found in the diary narratives creates the ideal masculine as big, subject, and able to take up a space within the pornography of the diaries. The dominance of the male position over the female position as referred to by Connell is manifest in the positive constructions of masculinity, for instance, the ability to engage in limitless sexual relations with as many women as possible while giving as little in return as possible in terms of economic or emotional remuneration. Men have been said to elevate their value and social capital by their association with hegemonic masculinity predicated in the ability to engage with women

¹⁴ Connell (2000) further adds to the conceptualization of hegemonic masculinities by saying that colonialism and imperialism contribute to the formation of gender, racial, and sexual hierarchies and that Western masculinities were built upon dominance of labour and sexualities of the ‘other.’ Connell adds that the current hegemonic forms of colonial masculinity are ‘transnational business masculinities’ which are the masculinities associated with those men who control the dominant institutions.

sexually and on “heroic ideals of global adventure, risk, and self-exploration” (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005: 334). One of the more overt displays of self-constructed global risk taking and exploration was from *Heavy T* who starts his entry by thanking the posters of the WSG for their information and then introducing himself by saying: “I’m an adventurous man with an appetite for crazy, wild and seedy places. San Jose is for me. I’m already planning my next trip back. Boy did I have fun. Here is how it went” (August 1, 2003: 84).

There is a heteronormative conception that is rooted in biology forming the basis of the idea that masculinity is tied to the attraction of the opposite sex. It has been suggested that a man’s social identity as a “real man” is intimately connected to his ability to attract a “real woman”—a sexual body that clearly illustrates the social and biological differences between a man and a woman (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005). The formation of masculine identities by the ability to attract what is considered to be feminine is pertinent to the discursive measures that the vast majority of the diary authors take in order to make it seem that they were desired by Latin American women for more than just their money:

[R]ight after we gave them a ride, we went back to the first disco and seen most of the same girls plus more...We were the youngest and the most wild, so all the girls wanted us. There was one prostitute that wanted me bad, but I told her I didn’t like to pay...The one prostitute that wants me told her friend that she didn’t want any money, just some dick. I had dances with her awhile ago and was rubbing on her. I guess she got too hot. I took her home and gave her what she wanted plus a lot more. (Chops January 22, 2001:27)

More specifically, the basis of the construction is that biologically, men and women are meant to have sexual relations with one another. One of the implications of this idea is that a man is considered to be more masculine if women are attracted to him. As a result,

the construction of the women as “girlfriends” who are interested in the tourist emotionally rather than financially is important in securing the masculinity of the tourist. The search for Western hegemonic masculinities meant that male homosexuality was omitted from the discourse in the diaries except in the case of *BLONK* who, contrary to the rest of the posts sampled, gave up his claim to masculinity when he reported being robbed and raped after being tied up by two women:

Well, she tied me up (much tighter than I suspected) and starts sucking me off. The other one disappeared into the sitting room and made a call (I found out soon enough) ...she comes back ...joins in a little time from time...disappears again about 15 mins later...then reappears with a dude like 6 feet 250 pounds. He tells me that I better keep quite or the cops will bust me. They empty my wallet (CC too) the girls disappear, he gagged me, gave me a few body shots and then screwed me in the ass. I still have emotional problems because of the experience and will never return to Jam, not ever! be careful if your goin' gal hoppin or a meet some nice church gal and have a few kid or something. (*BLONK*, July 30, 2000: 39)

Male heterosexual urges and the ability to attract women are constructed as being part of what it means to ‘be a masculine man.’ In reporting that he was robbed *BLONK* gives up some of his claim to masculinity which is exacerbated by the inclusion of his anal rape by another man—which constructs him in an inferior masculinity.

In most of the other posts, however, it is the women that are placed in inferior positions by being constructed as being available for use at all times, whereas the tourist assumes a dominant position when he constructs himself as being able to decide when, where, and in what manner he engages with the woman. Just as other rights are treated, they are often not seen as valuable unless they are missing or unavailable.

It seems to us that almost every girl is willing to fuck for about \$10 USD.
(3 amigos August 9, 2001: 14).

Many girls looking for tourists, and they are not shy. Me being black with ancestry in the Caribbean, I was thought to be Cuban and the action did not come my way until I spoke. As for my friend, who is white with blue eyes, it as always looking his way....We find more ass just standing on the balcony of the hotel than walking in the street. Well, that's not entirely true. There is ass everywhere. It appears to all be horny also. (Bostonians, August 3, 2005: 18)

The heteronormative idea that men have all-consuming sexual urges connects to a sense of entitlement that men feel towards women. For instance, one diarist notes that after being denied boarding his plane to Costa Rica because of an expired passport, he called the State Department and “told him how I needed to get to Costa Rica fast, because my dick was about to explode” (jaco January 25, 2005: 64). Implicit in his statement is the notion that sex tourists are entitled to, or have rights to, sexual encounters and the bodies of women; in other words, that the females must satisfy the biological urges of the men and that other men will understand and support this view. This notion is also manifested in the diaries when the authors construct their experience as negative on occasions when they are asked to pay more than they believe that they should. For instance, when an anonymous poster was asked to pay for the night that he was about to spend with a woman he “told her that I don't pay for a lady's companionship” and then ordered the woman to leave (Anonymous, December 8, 2005: 113).

In her analysis of the intersection of sex tourism and the Australian male identity, Suzy Kruhse-Mount Burton (1995) notes that prostitutes are often considered to be cold and are criticized for making little effort to disguise the commercial nature of the interaction. Men often find this demeaning because it reminds them of their inability to find a partner free of charge. The inability to find a free partner undermines male identity because of the commonly held heterosexual idea that the ability to attract women is one

of the core components of masculinity. By constructing the woman in a way that makes it seem that she wants to be with the tourist because she finds him attractive— rather than for his money—he is more likely to retain his masculine qualities of bravery and domination in his own mind and in the minds of the readers. This is reified in the diaries of the WSG in the way that interactions in which payment is not discussed—interactions that were more intimate—are constructed in a positive manner:

So, back to my place (one of the more expensive hotels just out of town) and we get down to action. The weird thing is that no money had been discussed yet and Daisy was acting more like my girlfriend than anything else.... Great sex too. Turned out she had a great body, wonderful 38D tits, and was a great fuck. Not only did she begin by french-kissing me, she then taught me the true meaning of tit-fucking before letting me go down on her until she came (several times). She didn't even want to use a condom until I insisted. All in all, a truly excellent fuck.... I was going to give her \$40 but then, being soft-hearted, offered her \$50, including the \$6 cab fare back to town. OK, I know it's much more than the \$20 that seems to be the going rate for 30 minutes upstairs in the bar, but I thought it was well worth it for a really pleasant evening with a very nice girl. San Jose is great. Cheap, non-threatening and just really nice people. (Anon, June 15, 2000, 80-81)

This discourse used by this diarist significantly decreases the economic tone of the encounter. By using the words “give” and “offered” rather than “paid” the sense of contractual obligation is removed.

While the pornography in the diaries reflects the idea that the essence of masculinity is the ability to attract a woman, masculinities are also embodied in the ability to attract non-professional women because it was akin to conquering someone. As Enloe (2000: 21-23) notes, tourism is “infused with masculine ideas about adventure, pleasure, and the exotic.... Masculinity and exploration [have] been as tightly woven together as masculinity and soldiering.” The notion of adventure and frontierism play a large role in the construction of hegemonic masculinities (Enloe 2000; Schaeffer-Gabriel

2005) and the diaries found on the WSG further this point by illustrating the intersection of masculine constructions and discourse on development. In the diaries notions of the masculine ability to conquer are tied to notions of exploration and the ability to experience something that has never been experienced by anyone before. While this idea will be further explored in the subsequent chapter focusing on first/third world relations, it merits noting at this point that engaging in sexual relations with someone who is not a professional differs from engaging with someone who is a professional in terms of economics, experience, consumption, and attitude:

I did not like Havana because it was too dangerous and crowded at night. The girls were also too professional in their attitudes. (3 amigos, August 9, 2001: 14)

Engaging with a non-professional woman means that she is inexperienced and not as consumed as her more professional counterpart. The idea of the unknown is generally seen as different and that which is a source of danger. The masculine is thereby tied to conquering the unknown because it is represented as a way in which the men face the different and the dangerous and convert it into something that is conquered, known, and charted. *DonGringo's* entry illustrates the value placed on knowledge and the introduction of the unknown:

From the quizzical looks on their bright young faces, it was apparent this would be their first time with pocket rockets. Imagine their delight when the two teen ticas tangoed with the tinglers! As for me, I felt like Christopher Columbus bringing coffee back to the Queen! (DonGringo, October 7, 2001:77)

Heteronormative masculinities are constructed as more than just the ability to attract women; masculinities are also characterized as the ability to pleasure a woman.

For example, an anonymous poster notes that as soon as he started to engage in sexual acts that focused on the woman, her English improved:

She spoke limited English but we both knew what we wanted.... I pointed to my mouth and her pussy. She said “Yes” I started in on her. Her English got better. She told me “Slower, slower” and showed me her G spot. I ate her for what seemed like eternity. She then sat on my face and I tongue fucked her for about five minutes. She had already come multiple times. (Anonymous, March 21, 2005: 1)

This tourist is able to construct himself as knowledgeable in terms of how to pleasure a woman, in the above quote *Chops* notes that he “took her home and gave her what she wanted plus a lot more” (*Chops* January 22, 2001:27)—effectively turning the driving force of the encounter into her desire rather than his—and the anonymous poster on the previous page mentions that the woman that he was with “she came (several times)” (*Anon*, June 15, 2000, 80-81). The notion that masculinities hinge upon the ability to attract a woman and the knowledge of how to pleasure a woman is based on heteronormative ideas that men and women are meant to have sexual relations with one another and that being able to pleasure a woman is part of what it means to be masculine. Also reinforced is the notion that women need men to take care of their needs, which is further compounded by the idea that part of what it means to be ‘developed’ is taking proper care of the women of a society (Enloe 1990; Rousseau and Porter 1990). In this respect, the role of the tourist to satisfy the woman is dictated not only by their respective genders, but also by their places in the socio-political realm. In constructing the experience in a way that focuses on his ability to satisfy the sexual desires of the woman, the diarist demonstrates his masculinity because he is able to satisfy the woman; however, that masculinity is compounded because he constructs himself as able to conquer the exotic female (who is set apart from females in the home country of the

tourist by her sexual aggression and desires) by solving her immediate problem of sexual longing by pleasuring her. Sexual satisfaction would be the mode of triumph because of the way that the exotic woman is constructed; her sexuality is more mysterious and deviant than the sexualities of women who the tourist would consider local to his home.

While the tone of the masculine subject in the diaries is that of grandeur, lacking limits, and size, the ideal feminine by contrast is constructed as insignificant: small, object, not to be noticed. The discourse used serves to reinforce the inferior position of the woman by constructing her position as slight in relation to that of the man. Many of the words used to describe the woman were words that constructed her as smaller than him. For example, many diarists referred to the women as “girls,” whereas in speaking about the men in the country, none were referred to as “boys” but as “men” or “guys”:

Gentlemen, let me tell you that Port-au-Prince is not as bad as you think with regard to females....The pool became extremely “friendly,” if you will, and the next thing you know, there were tits and ass everywhere, and people were looking for a place to get busy. It was hilarious; there must have been a dozen couples (I saw one girl run into a house with two guys). Mine was 22, about six feet tall and had beautiful hips, legs and teeth. She was very clean and I could not believe how forceful she was about the sex; very good with her mouth. We did not stop until I saw sun starting to come up. I got a chance to see her a couple of other times while I was there; nice kid. (Anonymous, date unknown: 34)

The author starts out his argument that Port-au-Prince is a good place for “females” by addressing “gentlemen,” both terms being relatively neutral in terms of age and hierarchy. While keeping neutral with his use of “guys” in his description of the men he saw that night, the discourse in the post turns from relatively neutral to hierarchically loaded when he uses the terms “girl” and “kid” to describe the women in his experience.

Generally, narratives that involved experiences that were positive overall for the tourist described the woman in similar ways, using other diminutive terms for women such as “cute,” “small,” “tiny,” “kid,” and “little.”

On the way out of the Su Escorial I spotted a tiny chica. (Anonymous April 3, 1999: 100)

She was slim and I fucked her tiny little ass too. It was a pleasure of heaven. (Aaallluuu, November 29, 2001: 24)

The use of words like “tiny” and “chica” also reinforce that women are childlike; they lack reason and need protection and care.¹⁵

The pornography contained in the diaries makes possible an analysis of the representations of general aspects of masculinity. Everything contained in the diaries is in relation to the men who read and write them and, as such, everything that is written in these diaries is filtered through the author as part of *his* discourse. Writing in relation to the author more often than not results in the failure to construct the women as meaningful counterparts. Oftentimes the bodies of the women are described only in relation to the tourist, descriptions are lost within assumptions and meanings that are part of the common discourse, and the focus is targeted upon the experience of the man, which means that unless the woman does something that he considers to be out of the ordinary, fantasy-granting behaviour that he expected, she is often incidental to the experience and/or the post. That being said, what is learned about constructions and expectations of femininity is inextricably linked to issues of race and class, and the ways in which they intersect to become inseparable from one another.

¹⁵ This theme will be further explored in the subsequent chapter on the first world/third world aspects of the diaries.

Sex Acts and the Masculine/Feminine Response

It is interesting to note that the discourse surrounding the sexual acts was gendered not only in terms of the specific acts conducted, but also in terms of the attitudes towards the sex acts. In applying the SFL framework and discourse analysis techniques, the acts were broken down by who was performing each act and who was the recipient of the act. Patterns emerged through the categorization of the acts according to who performed them on whom, with the main categories being “tourist performing on the woman” and “woman performing on the tourist.” Of the category of acts performed by the tourist on the woman, violence and force emerged as valued themes. Words such as “rip,” “fuck,” “take,” “bang,” “shagged” (like dogs), “gave” (it to her) and “snuck” were often used in entries that referred positively to the acts and the women. These words were treated as if they were the desirable modes of interacting with women; they were used in particularly positive entries while other words were not as positively written about. For instance:

Afterwards ... I invited the one I liked to my room ... but ended up going to her place.... There I banged (free of charge) ... Woke up next morning ... and went to the Resort. That day we went with them to the Capital in a rented car. Later that night I stayed with my girl at a nearby beach front room (which I paid about \$8) and fucked her all night.... So that made it fun.... She was kind of like my girlfriend.... She even wanted me to stay (No WAY!). (latino, March 29, 2001: 58)

Some of the most common words describing actions performed by the tourist on the woman that were written about with moderate enthusiasm and constructed as moderately desirable were “do,” “French kiss,” “finger,” and “kiss.” These moderately constructed actions were never written about as negatively received which is contrary to the category of words describing actions that were performed by the woman on the tourist. The verbs used to describe the actions being performed on the tourist by the

women were at times constructed as dissatisfactory and un-pleasurable. The moderately constructed verbs used to describe the actions of the tourist on the women while at times constructed as secondary in importance to other actions such as “bang” or “fuck,” were never written about as disappointing or dissatisfying to the woman,

It was the less explicit verbs that were constructed negatively or as least desirable in the diaries. These words—such as “felt” and “sucked”—would be considered more normalized and more acceptable as part of most Western sexual repertoires. The stance that precipitated from this attitude is that the men place value on the sex acts that are most outside the norms—it was something outside of what would occur inside the norms the acts would be considered not worth it to the male and would be written about in a negative light.

Several of the diaries include mention of the reciprocation of sexual acts. While all descriptions come from the point of view of the tourist, the main focus of the acts was usually the performer with secondary description given to the reaction of the recipient. In descriptions of sexual acts that were being performed on the tourist by the woman, the discursive focus was on his subjective evaluation and satisfaction with her and her performance; however, in descriptions of sexual acts that were being performed on the woman by the tourist, the discursive focus was on how the tourist was able to make her react. In both cases, the subjective evaluation is of the woman in relation to the man.

The description of the bodily responses to sexual acts took on a gendered imbalance. Of the 65 posts in the sample 21 of them make mention of the male climax, while only 5 make mention of the female climax or bodily response. The explicit descriptions of how her body responded to the act further shifted the focus from the idea

of two people being involved in the experience to an individual experience from which the woman was missing or ignored. For instance, the above quoted anonymous traveller noted, when he sexually engaged one of the local women in Aruba, her English improved (March 21, 2005). In his performance of sexual gratification of the woman, the tourist is able to focus on his ability to “gentrify” the woman that he is engaging with, which turns the focus from her pleasure to his ability.

Another anonymous poster exemplified the descriptive nature of writing about the woman’s bodily reaction:

I start nailing her standing off the bed while I hold onto her tits. Then I move her legs a little closer and put 1 leg on the bed and 1 leg standing. Now I get an even deeper angle. She's moaning like crazy.... I take my left hand and grab her left tit, and with my right hand reach around and rub her clit while I bang her deep and hard!!! She can't take it!!! She's moaning so much, I stop and ask her if she's alright? She says "Yes yes, you finish... finish for me..." and she turns over and says, "Finish here!" and starts stroking the area between her tits. (September 26, 2005: 134)

The focus is diverted from her to him and his ability to elicit such responses from the woman, which defines her by his actions upon her. This again serves to reinforce his identity as a man while at the same time constructing her as a vessel or prop for his use.

While the notion of the woman as incidental will be discussed in subsequent sections, at this point it is interesting to draw attention to the homosocial nature of many of the posts. As has been discussed, the main audience of the posts is assumed to be male however the involvement of other men in sexual experiences also appears in some of the diary postings. As stated previously, several (14) of the tourists explicitly mentioned that they travelled with a companion. One author makes mention of his friend watching a woman perform oral sex on him and two of the posters wrote that they had sexual

relations in the same room as their friend. Both authors construct the experience as arousing but almost like a challenge because they were able to hear their friends and the women their friends were with:

They said that we could sleep over in there room where they shared 1 bed. The girls had there PJ's on which was more like lingerie. My friend slept next to his girl and I slept next to mine. ~~~~Next thing I know the bed starts shaking and I hear smacking. Well, my friend was getting ready to bang his girl. I decided not to stay behind so I woke my girl up with a kiss DFK she started pulling my shirt and whatever I had left off. It was an orgy on the bed and I'm thinking this bed is going to break (sydnce January 20, 2002: 51)

One author noted that he was able to hear another couple having sex in another room, and another wrote that he was excited by the fact that the walls did not reach the ceiling in the room he was in and so the rest of the bar could hear them having sex:

The walls of the rooms at 747 don't reach all the way to the top—for improved ventilation?—so all of our neighbors could hear us going at it, including the slurping sounds we made as we worked on each other! (Sinner, October 11, 2000: 91)

The practice of masculinity has been theorized as a homosocial performance in front of and granted by other men (Kimmel 1994). If we accept that sexuality is a key path to masculine status it would make sense that men's heterosexual experiences, interpretations and narratives are often heavily influenced by homosocial settings and relationships (Flood 2007). Men attempt to improve their position in hierarchies of masculinities by performing or competing in wealth, power, status, physical prowess, and sexual achievements (Flood 2007: 341), which perpetuates the dominance of certain hegemonic masculinities. The assumption of a male audience on the WSG serves to demonstrate this point that masculinity is performed for men—often as a right of passage but always in search of gender affirmation. The reported involvement and proximity of

men to the heterosexual relations reinforces an interesting code of masculinity: the homosocial constructions and affirmations of masculinities, and dominance over women, take precedence over homophobia. In this instance, homosocial relationships take primacy over heterosexual relations in the name of hegemonic masculinity.

The Girlfriend Experience

The general manner that masculinity and femininity intersect with race, class, and development in the diaries suggests that the woman needs to be cared for by the man; the service that is constructed as part of masculinity is to offer protection and comfort for the woman. The reciprocal service that is constructed as part of femininity as it intersects with class, race, and development ¹⁶ is that the woman then takes on a subservient role for the man—a notion that is relevant to the sexual relations between the tourists and the women in the WSG. Opperman (1999) suggests that men want more than just sex in their encounters; they want affirmation of emotional interest from the woman or some kind of indication of caring on her part. The diaries suggest that the tourist considers the ideal interaction with a woman and the ideal role of a woman to be the traditional subservient caretaker. In the majority of the posts the woman is constructed in an inferior position in relation to the tourist in order to provide such an experience; the “girlfriend experience” speaks to this notion.

In the 65 posts 15 of the diarists explicitly termed their experiences the “girlfriend experience” or explicitly mentioned that the women with whom they engaged were treating them like “boyfriends.” The criteria of the girlfriend experience was clearly reproduced in many other posts that although not explicitly using this term, constructed in

¹⁶ The intersection of class, race and development will be further explored in the following chapter.

a positive manner many elements of what others had already posited as “the GFE.” The GFE in the pornography of the posts serves to reproduce gendered relations that extend beyond the physically sexual but still have no emotional attachment or involvement for the male body. The GFE inscribes the female body with the role of an emotionally engaged partner who is at the same time sexually available and willing to engage in sexual acts that the discourse terms to be more personal than professional. The female is valued for her domestic services while— as will be explored in the subsequent chapter—the male is valued for his economic power and sense of adventure.¹⁷ She must ensure her emotional servitude to the tourist as well as take on additional tasks relating to his emotional and physical upkeep, which may include bathing him, cooking and cleaning for him, and holding his hand in public. For one diarist, his GFE begins with a massage:

.... [S]he told me to get undressed while she went and got a towel, I got undressed and laid down on my stomach, she came in and put the towel under my head, she proceed to give me a massage from heaven starting at my feet and working her way up, we made small talk, she told me to turn around and started at my feet again skipped the middle and went to my chest then down the middle, pouring more oil on her hands and she gave me a hand job... (Q69, September 1, 2000:43)

In the case of *salty sun*, the girlfriend experience given to him by a Costa Rican woman made him want to see her again:

She was treating me like her boyfriend, kissing me and bumping and grinding me [It was] the best girlfriend sex I have had in years. We got cleaned up and went down to have lunch together. I could have stayed with her the entire time, but she had to go take care of her child, so she was leaving town for a week or so. She said she would come back before the end of my trip, so we made plans to see each other again when she returned. (August 23, 2001: 89)

¹⁷ According to western hegemonic masculinity it is the public sphere (economics, work) that holds greater value than the private (household, reproduction) thus the construction of the feminine as domestic means that he is placing greater value on the masculine than the feminine.

The GFE was constructed in opposition to relations with professional women, or relations that felt particularly economically based.¹⁸ Preference was given in many of the diaries to sexual relations with non-professional women; women who have not engaged in sexual relations with many other people:

If you are really looking for a perfect 10, you may have to pay for it.... But this is not my thing. I prefer to have a Cuban girlfriend than a paid prostitute, no matter how hot she is. (vistaliner, date unknown: 17)

She asked US\$20 for a bj and sex, which was fine by me. In fact I wasn't at all interested in sex with a street whore and only wanted a bj. (Slammer, July 18, 2001: 38)

It is interesting that *Slammer* does not actually indicate what sex acts he “actually” engaged in. *Slammer* is intriguing because he clearly does not consider “sex” to include oral sex. He indicates that he does not want to have “sex” with someone who he considers to be a “street whore” but will receive oral sex from her. This understanding of sex comes from and contributes to a heteronormative discourse that upholds a narrow definition of ‘legitimate sex’ as heterosexual vaginal intercourse. *Slammer* is constructing vaginal intercourse, and arguably the vagina, as being more valuable than oral sex and the mouth, while at the same time placing increased value on women he does not consider to be sex workers and devaluing those he does.

Part of the non-professional nature that was valued in the GFE was willingness on the part of the woman to engage in sexual acts that were deemed to be personal and off limits by most women:

I was surrounded by 5 great looking 23 year olds that were kissing my ass, American women should take lessons from these girls. I was in heaven. (Andy, January 12, 200: 95)

¹⁸ The economic basis of relations will be further explored in the subsequent chapter on “first world/third world” relations.

My first time with two women at once. They disrobe and we start kissing again. I've never experienced this type of passion. Wish the American girls had 1/2 this much sexual energy. (Anonymous, June 17, 2001: 131)

The next day I met a Chick Named Janet (black/Latina mulata). She was about 5"6" with a slim waste and big juicy ass and titties ... fucked her in the ass, and busted in her mouth. I'll never forget her. I enjoyed her company and her pussy. She was about 38-26-38. Her tits made a great pillow on the nights I spent with her. I'd fuck her, then wake up to her sucking my dick. (Anonymous, September 5, 2000: 31)

We had the protected sex the first 2 times but as there were no condoms left, so we have to do the third time without a condom. I think that my trip to Cuba was the best that I ever had in my sexual life, as most North American girls are very bitchy. (Aaallluuu, November 29, 2001: 25)

In her article entitled "It's Just Like Acting," Teela Sanders (2005) discusses the performances that are put on by women working in the sex trade in order to live up to the standards that are expected of them by their patrons. Sanders notes that the patrons of these women have preconceived notion in their minds of what will constitute a positive experience for them and it is up to the woman to live up to these expectations by performing the part. Through her research Sanders relays that the women that she spoke with had ways of coping with the intimate nature of the work that they do; for instance, demarcating bodily exclusion zones that are off limits to clients and reserved for private, personal interactions. This separation enabled the women to feel as though they are engaging in "regular" sales work rather than sex work.

Preconceived notions of which acts and areas of the body are personal and off-limits and which acts and parts are available for use are constructed not only in the minds of the women, as Sanders suggests, but also in the minds of the tourists, as the diaries suggest. *Salty sun*, impressed by his experience receiving oral sex without a condom, states that it was "the best girlfriend sex I have had in years" (August 23, 2001:89).

These experiences—in which the tourists are allowed access to parts of the body and acts that they regard as “off limits”—are constructed as positive constituents of the GFE. In these terms, value is placed on the ability of the tourist to push the limits of the preconceived sexual boundaries between himself and the woman:

Twenty minutes later I felt I was going to come she turned around on her own took my condom off and swallowed every little drop. She was amazing... (Sydnce, January 20, 2002: 52)

In his diary entry, *Sydnce* is particularly impressed by the woman’s willingness to ingest his ejaculatory fluids, thus constructing the act as abnormal and himself as superior—to other readers as well as the woman—by being able to transcend that boundary.

Unusual acts (or those that broke the norms) that were performed on men by the women were the ones that were constructed as most desirable for the men. Oral sex that remained within the norms was written about in a different way. For instance in his diary entry, *Heavy T* makes specific mention of the removal of the condom which breaks some of the norms of oral sex:

She was super cool didn’t rush real gave the girl friend experience kissing like crazy... started blowing me with a rubber that was ok but her body was so fine I just wanted to hit her pussy we had sex in 3 or 4 different positions. she romped like crazy then I let her finish me off by blowing me but this time she pulled the rubber off and sucked me like crazy until i blew my stack all over her. (Heavy T, August 1, 2003: 84)

Part of the corporeal experience of the girlfriend experience is engaging in sexual relations without the use of a condom, as noted by the popular abbreviation “BBBJ” which stands for “bare-boned-blow-job” as used by 11 of the posters. As *Sydnce* notes of his time in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic: “by surprise she went down on me for a BBJ very nice and made me quiver” (January 20, 2002: 52). The norm that *Heavy T* and *Sydnce* reproduce in their entries is that of caution; it has become common practice to

protect against sexually transmitted diseases and, for the women, pregnancy is an issue. When the norm of protection is broken it reinforces the value placed on the violation of the norm; the sexual event is constructed as exciting and contributes to a positive overall tone in most of the entries. The sex that was reproduced was naked and dangerous—but mostly for the woman. Particularly true in the case of oral sex, although the risk of contracting an STI through oral sex is generally low it is the woman who takes on the majority of that risk.

The notion of “personal versus professional” sex may also contribute to the norms that manifest in the use of a condom. Some posters commented that wearing a condom made the experience too formal and too “professional,” which was constructed as detracting from their experience. An anonymous poster expresses satisfaction that he “got a bbbj from each girl” but that satisfaction is dampened by the professionalism of the women that he ran into when he “had to negotiate that at the door” (July 16, 2004: 4), thus making it less of a girlfriend experience.

Another standard of the GFE in the diaries was that the women were deemed to have a “good attitude” and to be enthusiastic about being with the tourist. While having a “good attitude” is constructed by the tourist in many ways, the woman’s willingness to engage in a variety of sexual acts is a necessary component. Should the woman resist any expected physical acts or engage with a negative look on her face, the encounter was most often written about in a negative tone, regardless of whether or not the tourist was able to engage in the act that he desired. For instance, *Don punny* writes about his experience with a woman in Jamaica:

Last week I picked up a 19 year-old country girl, tall, skinny, with a nice ass and firm tits. J\$1000 (that's US\$25) for bj and fuck. Only problem was

her attitude which was sulky and hardly spoke except in a monosyllable. Took her to my place nearby and got naked. She gave a pretty decent bj (no condom). About halfway through decided I didn't want the fuck as I didn't like her attitude, so changed position and jerked off over her tits, which really pissed her off. She's lucky I wasn't turned on enough to plaster her face! (December 11, 2001:39)

He then goes on to tell the reader that Jamaican women have a “shitty attitude” and his experience was not worth it “even though it's cheap, masturbation is even cheaper and a lot more fun” (December 11, 2001:39). *Don punny's* entire entry focuses on the attitude of this woman who he deems to have a “bad attitude,” constructing the whole experience as unpleasant. Other posters made similarly negative comments:

Yeah, she was great looking, looked like my brother-in-law's wife, but it was an uninspired fuck. Lots of “don't touch me there,” “I don't like that”, etc.... But she was great to look at. After a bit I decided to finish her doggy style, fucked her hard, and pulled the condom to shower her butt. You know, she never came back downstairs. (Rapha January 31, 1999: 45)

Tried to stick it in her ass later but couldn't take her bitching and moaning so I quit. (Tee-O, December 3, 2002: 86)

Even though she was physically aroused, she kept looking up at the ceiling, detached, but since it was my first encounter this time around I didn't care. (Sinner, October 11, 2000: 91)

While the GFE involves the appearance of a certain amount of emotion, the emotion is superficial, short lived, and expected on the part of the woman rather than the tourist. The tourists construct themselves as completely emotionally detached to the women with whom they engage. In describing his first night in Costa Rica with his friend, an author who calls himself *mojo* notes:

After hours of gymnastics and late night eating, I stumbled in, after my buddy's work out, only to find her in the clean up mode in the bathroom. Without hesitation and without her hesitation she began sucking and blowing my rock. We wound up on the bathroom floor for a hard quick slam to end an insane first day. (Mojo, April 29, 1999: 97)

Mojo uses a non-emotional discourse in describing his sexual encounter with his “buddy’s *senorita*.” He either neglects to include any mention of conversation or mental involvement in the engagement or specifically constructs the encounter in the manner that he does in order to have the reader believe that there was no conversation or discussion – even on the topic of remuneration – throughout the encounter. He also uses words such as “quick slam” emphasizing the speed of the interaction and highlighting the lack of time to develop an emotional or mental connection with the woman.

The corporeal experiences that are promised by the diaries are produced by rarely making references to sustainable relationships. The focus on the body means that emotions are constructed as second rate at best. There is little room in the discourse for the tourist to write about any feelings he has for the woman, making it impossible to construct a romantic relationship between the tourist and the woman. Additionally, even when tourists construct their experiences as extremely positive only seven mention making an effort to see the same woman more than once, which severely impedes the development of a sustained relationship. One poster indicated that he would like to marry a woman that he engaged with and is planning on seeing her again, two posters indicate that they saw the same women on different trips, five diarists wrote that they spent the night with the woman and one diarist specifically notes that after an extremely positive experience with a woman he was struggling not to ask her to spend the night:

On the third time, I had to use my big head to not ask her to spend the night because I think she was hoping I would. She even gave me a nice T-shirt. She had only been working for 1 month and still had an innocence about her. (legman, December 27, 1998: 97)

To display this sort of attachment to a woman is unusual in the hegemonic masculinities of the diaries, even if it is due to a bodily experience that the tourist reports he had.

At its core, therefore, the purpose of the GFE is to satisfy the needs of the tourist sexually and emotionally, without the tourist having to reciprocate any of that emotion. The role of the tourist then is to receive sex and occasionally emotion from the women with whom they engage; the role of the women is not to give, but to be taken. To give implies a personhood of the woman which (as will be discussed later in chapter) is missing in the diaries. The construction of the woman is in relation to the tourist and relies on the tourist, which detracts from that subjective position. The result is an object whose purpose it is to be consumed or taken by the male to define himself and his identity as a sexual masculine body.

The Subject

Subjectivity can be understood to be the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual; the subject's sense of self and ways of understanding his or her relation to the world (Weedon 1997). Access to subjectivity is "governed by historically specific factors and forms of power at work in a particular society" (Weedon 1997: 91). In the case of the pornography produced in the diaries of the sex tourists, the production of subjectivity is accomplished in conjunction with the production of complex western hegemonic power relations of gender and race, amongst others, while at the same time being influenced by said power relations. Both gender and race relations can thus be said to be a cause as well as an effect of subjectivity. In the WSG diaries it is the subjectivity of the male that pervades the pornography rather than that of the female.

Within the male-female relations the male takes a dominant role, which subjugates the female subjectivity in the androcentric representations.

Disneyland

One of the ways in which subjectivity is accomplished is in the construction of the setting as a utopia, which has the effect of reinforcing that the dominant perspective within the discourse is that of the tourist. Some of the writers refer to their destinations as “Disneyland” or other fantasy theme parks. For instance, one anonymous poster wrote: “Campo is my Disney World!” (February 10, 2000: 6), while *Legman* described San Jose as a “Disneyland for horny males” (December 27, 1998: 96). Referring to the country as “Disneyland” suggests that the author understands his destination as a place where fantasies are lived out. O’Connell and Sanchez Taylor (2005: 94) suggest that sex tourists experience “Disneyland” as a place in which they are able to live out their fantasies:

The sex tourist resorts they visit are Disneylands because here they experience themselves as desirable, and thus successful, heterosexuals. In the mirror of the Other, they find themselves reflected back at half their age or weight, or twice as beautiful.

In the case of the WSG, it is the tourist who takes on the subjective position and the female who is constructed as the other who is present to reflect his subjectivity back in a positive, masculine way.

Diarists continually construct their destinations and concurrent experiences as pleasurable; their interpretation of the destination location in relation to themselves, as their Disneyland, indicates their subjective position. O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor (2005: 90) note “the male tourist, constructed as King, gets to rule over a fairytale world of “dusky maidens,” constructed as naturally sexual and sexually available

prostitutes.” By constructing the destination in this way the tourist makes it clear that he is writing solely about his own subjective perspective. As is made evident by both the existing literature and the diary narratives, it is not the women who are living out their fantasies; these diaries describe the Disneyland of men. The conditions of the women’s lives are far from what most would consider to be “utopian.”

Literature on this issue indicates that the women involved often live in conditions that North Americans usually consider extreme poverty. Economic, psychological, and physical abuse is common in sex work. Working conditions vary widely and most women have little control over the terms and conditions under which they work. The health risks posed to the women are immense, and income is unstable because demand can be cut off by enforcement of laws or when isolated male-dominated industries (such as military bases) are shut down or relocated (Pyle 2001). The instability is compounded when prostitution is illegal because laws against sex work are often levied against the worker; it is the women who are arrested, charged, and fined rather than the johns, establishment owners, or other actors involved. Sometimes the sex industry is run by organized crime and often involves corrupt officials and police. The involvement of such actors can put the women in vulnerable positions because the agencies and actors who are mandated to protect people either ignore their problems or are involved as users. Thus it is unlikely that this context is what the tourists were referring to when they called the destination “Disneyland.” Moreover, consumption is focused on the tourist and the “props” that are being consumed/required for consumption are present for the tourist only. In their discussion of the postmodern tourist George Ritzer and Allan Liska (2000) suggest that the postmodern tourist recognizes that there is no “authentic” tourist experience and in

many cases the false experience—as embodied by Disneyland—is more real an experience than trying to experience a “real” way of life in a foreign destination.

The similarities between of the discursive constructions of both Disneyland and sex tourism can be broken down for further analysis. In the case of the Disneyland theme park, there are no houses for the characters to live in, necessities such as doctor’s offices and grocery stores that the Disney characters would need to survive are absent from the park, and maintenance crews make themselves virtually invisible. Everywhere external to the “real” Disneyland the characters are inanimate objects to which no agency or life outside of a certain movie or context is attributed. In the “real” Disneyland the characters come to life for the express purpose of interacting with children; the characters literally come to life because of the tourist. In the case of the sex tourists’ construction of Disneyland, however, this process manifests itself in a silence surrounding lives beyond their own. The ability to live out fantasies in a utopian setting, the type of characters that people can interact with, the assumptions/knowledge about their lives and their humanity/human characteristics, and the treatment that ensues are all applied by the sex tourists in the way that they construct their destination in these diaries.

Emotions

While one part of the masculine is the mind and the modes of emotional relations that go along with it, emotional are not an accepted part of masculine subjectivities. One anonymous diarist takes it under his own initiative to explicitly state that although he recounts a successful experience in Costa Rica, he is not in love:

The word fantastic pales when trying to describe my experience with her: I'll never divulge her name. I'm not in love but I have found something worth going back for again and again. (April 3, 1999: 100).

Following his very positive description of his experience the Caribbean, this poster felt the need to clarify that he felt no emotional attachment to this woman, thus indicating that objectification and the physical experience is valued within this certain masculinity, while emotion is cause to lose status as it threatens masculinity.

Nevertheless, feelings that are tied to bodily experiences are acceptable within the pornography; the tourists wrote rather candidly about whether they enjoyed the acts in which they engaged. One was impressed with his experience with two women in San Jose, Costa Rica:

The show they put on with the double dildo was amazing! They ate each other's pussies and made a fair amount of noise while doing it. I then fucked each one of them. Well worth the money. (August 8, 2002: 71)

Further to this point, although the body is privileged in the mind/body split, feelings that are intrinsically tied to the body are not privileged in the same manner (if at all). For instance, an author who calls himself *the island man* notes that he “had great anal sex with Jennifer it was hurting her but I liked [it]” (July 8, 2002: 50). Similarly, *picum* (September 17, 2004: 102) writes: “I also grabbed her tits very hard and squeezed them so hard, but she did not seem to feel any pain. I really could use her body without limits.” There are several entries like this that refer to the tourist inflicting pain, and all but one of them (see excerpt on page 62) mentioned that the tourist continued whatever was causing that pain, thus devaluing the woman's body as well as her mind.

Similar implications of transgressing boundaries are found in the pornography of the men who ejaculate either in or on the women with whom they engage. The majority

of the posts end with the ejaculation of the tourist, regardless of whether he has made mention of the woman having an orgasm. *Iguana Six* (March 15, 2004) wrote nothing about the pleasure of the women in his post:

Condom on, the blond started with a decent blow job, while the dark girl start tweaking my nipples and licking my ear. I got the mestiza to lick my balls while the blond turned up the heat with her BJ. Getting Ginger to lick my balls was impossible. The intercourse was pretty good, but we went through many condoms, since they changed them whenever we switched partners. I tried to get them to both lie down next to each other for the money shot, but as I started to come Ginger fled while I chased her around the bed with my spurting rod in my hand.

In writing about his friend's experience, one poster notes not to worry about the sentiments or logistics of sex but to "shoot the load and get out" (Bostonians, August 3, 2005: 22).

The androcentric construction of sex is common in much of mainstream pornography today, thus identifying the patriarchal power dynamic in which the sex is constructed (Bolso 2001; MacKinnon 1997). Several diarists made special mention of their ejaculation on the face and/or breasts of the woman. As in most pornography, the diaries are focused solely on the male climax rather than on the woman. It is assumed by the writers that this practice gives no enjoyment to the woman, and some even assume that it is displeasing for the woman. *Maximum75* wrote:

I pulled out and flipped her around onto her back while pulling the condom off and just made it, busting a nut right onto her perfect chest. She wasn't all that thrilled with that part. (March 31, 2003:3)

Although the women are constructed as displeased by being ejaculated upon, they are constructed as having no choice because it is done without consultation, which demonstrates the priority given to the tourist's interests over those of the woman as well as the disregard for both the mind and the body of the woman.

Some of these tourists even wrote that they took off their condom when they were about to ejaculate so that they could do so inside or on the woman, reinforcing the notion that it is the tourist who is constructed as having control in the situation and the devaluation of the subjective position of the woman. As *Rapha* (January 31, 1999: 45) wrote: “After a bit I decided to finish her doggy style, fucked her hard and pulled off the condom to shower her butt.” Besides the prospect of either party contracting a sexually transmitted disease from having sex without a condom, the woman is at further risk of getting pregnant, which would devalue her body on the sex tourism market and leave her with little recourse for gaining any support from the father.¹⁹

The emphasis and value placed on masculine subjectivity results in—or perhaps requires—the devaluation and removal of the female subjectivity either in full or in part. While the previous section examined the tone of the discourse surrounding women, the analysis of feminine subjectivity requires an examination of the place that women occupy in the discourse.

Feminine Subject Position and Agency

Subjectivity requires the attribution of a self-conscious perspective of a person as it is the “conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (Weedon 1997: 32). Poststructuralist theory suggests that subjectivities are precarious, contradictory, and in a constant process of reconstitution through discourse each time humans write or speak

¹⁹ Joanne Nagle (2003) notes that the women are left with little recourse for gaining support from the father because of their 1.) relatively low chances of being able to track down the tourist once he had left the country; 2.) sexual history should the case come to the courts; and 3.) skin and hair colour (which is likely dominant over that of the tourist - in sexual relations the person of recessive skin and hair color are accorded relative freedom of responsibility should a pregnancy ensue).

(Weedon 1997). Due to the nature of Internet diary postings, the women had no charge over the constructions of their own subjectivities. In these instances the diary is posted by an individual rather than in tandem, which means that the tourist is able to filter the story but the woman is not. So it is not surprising that no attention was paid to the ways in which the females understood their relations to the world and how the tourists affected the ways in which the women related to their environments; however, inferences can be made about the construction of female agency.

It is important to keep in mind that although women are often acknowledged as being human, this does not necessarily imply a subject position or agency. For instance, many of the entries that let the reader know that the woman lived outside of the immediate experience did so by mentioning the conditions of relative poverty in which the woman lived. This was done either by making comments about their state of dress and/or the actual personal living situation of the woman or by making comments about the general situation of poverty in the country. For instance *3 amigos* wrote about his experience in Cuba: “The people are very poor and it seems to us that almost every girl is willing to fuck for about \$10 USD” (August 9, 2001: 14). The acknowledgement of being a human rather than just an object or a plaything can be interpreted as constructing the woman as having personhood; however, further examination reveals that agency is not implicit in this construction as the same descriptions can be made of an inanimate object: a plaything. Describing the shabbiness of a doll’s dress or the conditions in which an action figure sits when it is not in use does not constitute the acknowledgement that it has its own personal place and personal interactions with the world.

In the case of the diaries posted on the World Sex Guide, it is debatable as to whether the removal of the agency only in part constructs the woman in a situation of greater empowerment than the removal of the agency in full. Of the few instances in which female agency was constructed by the diarists, the vast majority were written in a malevolent manner that serves to place the women into two categories: sexually aggressive and/or deviant. Thus, there were very few times that the self-conscious perspective of the woman was acknowledged, and even in those cases nearly all subjectivities were constructed in a negative manner. For instance, writing of his experience with Jamaican women *Slammer* commented: “Of course, it’s quite true that you have to be very, very, careful, and many of the girls in the resort areas are just trying to rip you off” (July 18, 2001:38). This reinforces ideas of female deviance that are embodied in several disciplines, such as classical criminology in which theorists such as Otto Pollack posited that the type of crime women committed was enshrouded in secrecy because women are inherently deviant (Comack 2000). Pollack maintained that the deviance of women was rooted in their biology; women hide menstruation and they are able to fake orgasms. These deviant subjectivities were generally reported in the World Sex Guide only when the tourist felt that the woman was out to steal from him. For example:

After dancing and partying for a while we went back to the hotel room and had a great night of sex. I put all my valuables in the safety box like the passport, plane ticket, money and jewelry and hid the key while she was in the bathroom. You can never been too careful around these girls. (Waka, March 23, 2002: 49)

Some places charge you. The El President merely asks your ho' to sign in at the front desk for “security” and there is no charge. She has to sign out on her way out. This is good in case the bitch rips you off. (Tee-O, December 3, 2002: 85).

There is no suggestion of why the tourists suspect the women of being out to “rip them off.” This means that no humanizing process is applied to the women, thus denying them a selfhood in the pornography. If the tourists suspect that the women’s motivation for being with them is financial due to their situation of relative poverty (which was briefly mentioned by some), such acknowledgments could potentially threaten the image that the tourist has created for himself as the sexually desirable male by pointing towards alternate reasons for the woman to be engaging with him.

Amelia Lucia Cabezas (1998) explores discourses on prostitution and how those discourses construct women working in the sex trade. Her findings are similar to those of this study; namely, that women are continuously constructed as pathological deviant subjects. She suggests that such constructions are rooted in Christianity, which held men and women as opposites of one another; men were to be aggressive and sexual and women were to be virtuous wives. It follows then that because of their sexuality, women working in the sex trade do not fit into the category of “proper women.” Since they cannot be typified under that category, they are constructed as everything that the proper woman is not—sexual and non-virtuous, which is synonymous with deviance. Cabezas’ subsequent work goes on to say that this idea of the deviant woman is reified in law but also in more latent ways and not just by people of the “first world.”²⁰ For instance, it has been suggested that police in some Latin American nations make arbitrary arrests of women who are outside of their homes at night because they are suspected by being ‘sex workers’; “all *Dominican women* are suspect” (Cabezas 2002: 45; emphasis in original).

²⁰ Further analysis of racialization of sex work will be explored in the subsequent chapter on “first world/third world” relations.

The notion that all women in the society are deviant is at the root of these arbitrary arrests.

In her study of masculinities and online relationships, Lori Kendall (2002) suggests that when interacting in this group setting, men tend to see themselves as the victims when it comes to interactions with women. This point is echoed by Frank Barrett and Stephen Whitehead (2001: 20) when they suggest that we do not have a fixed social identity because of the changing and fluid nature of the social and, as such, “any sense of self can only come about through working to achieve a sense of ‘belonging to’ to the social world.” The sense of belonging referred to by Barrett and Whitehead necessarily comes from a construction of exclusion of others (Flood 2007); in the case of the diaries the “others” are the women and likely men who are part of hegemonic masculinities in “real time.” Kendall goes on to say that in online interactions with other men, the blame of a decidedly unsatisfying experience is laid upon women and then men “derive support for their view of themselves as wronged men” through their online interactions (Kendall 2002: 170). This finding gives support to the belief that the authors of the WSG diaries are male, and that they are writing for a male audience. Although Kendall’s study involves chat-room-type relations in which the patrons of the room respond to one another in real time, parallels can be drawn with the bulletin-board-type methods of Internet diaries. The WSG diarists commonly constructed themselves as the victims and by complaining about others that are “not like them” they effectively reinforce the identity that they share while at the same time demonstrating what type of gender identity and gender perceptions are acceptable within the forum which potentially falls in line with the idea that these men are marginalized in their offline lives. Thus other inclusions

of agency were made only when describing the woman's sexual desire for the tourist which brings him closer to the hegemonic masculine ideal. To the extent that a woman's thought processes were acknowledged, these were limited to how much the woman desired the tourist:

Mean while out of nowhere come another street girl and starts looking at the girl sucking me. I asked her why is she staring. Well she said "If she could join in to the party." I said "sure." I told her 2 is a couple but three is a party. She threw her hand bag on the floor push the other girl aside and started sucking. The girl got upset but shared they were gorgeous girls. (Delivery Man, November 3, 2000: 59)

First, I want to say without sounding like being an ego trip, when I walked out on the casino floor about 10 pm, I could not believe the how many women were checking me out.... In the first 20 seconds I had a very pretty, young girl come over, smile at me, then put her hand on my dick. (Chas, August 13, 2000: 60)

One girl was trying to entice me. She liked me but I wasn't totally convinced. She had her girlfriend who worked there come talk to me. Her girlfriend told me that this girl really knew how to fuck. How could I turn down a reference like that. (Rayne, August 2, 2000: 132)

Another manner in which some of the women were attributed partial agency was as sexually aggressive subjects, a category that provides further justification for constructions of domination by the tourist. Even though this was a prominent theme throughout most of the diary entries, the category of the sexually aggressive woman composed few of the entries in which agency was accorded to the woman. The theme was realized mainly through general descriptions of Latina women rather than specific attributions of thought to any one woman in particular. For instance, a diarist who calls himself *Sky* wrote about his interaction with a Nicaraguan woman in Costa Rica:

For that half hour she fucked me in every position I could think of, became incredibly wet, and kept grinding away on me after I came until she moaned her way to a climax. It's true what they say in the Nicaragua section if Wendy was

any indication ... those Nicas really LOVE to fuck! (April 15, 2005:83)

It is difficult to identify this attribution as full agency and autonomy because acknowledging what is supposedly considered to be a cultural characteristic in a counterpart does not require the acknowledgement that this counterpart takes up her own subjective position in the world. As such, when a tourist writes that a woman had sexual desires for him, this does not acknowledge that the woman is an individual because it is clear in most cases that this characteristic is being attributed to all women.

The construction of the exotic woman as sexually aggressive blurs the role of the tourist in this situation, especially in relation to the binary categories that can be applied to the tourist and the woman: tourist/local, man/woman, and masculine/feminine. In terms of these binary categories, more often than not one is defined as being what the other is not, thus what is masculine is defined as what is not feminine. As being aggressive is typically part of the masculine role, the categories are blurred by the aggressiveness that is part of the role of the exotic woman, which demonstrates the intersection of gender and race in this instance. Most of the tourists write positively about sexually aggressive women; however, women that the tourists deem to be 'too aggressive' are written about in a negative manner because they threaten the masculinity of the tourist:

She started giving me a covered BJ, and just was way too aggressive, to the point where it was not even pleasurable at all and I made her stop.
(Jaco Lover, April 23, 2005: 63)

Generally, women are either constructed as aggressive enough to stroke the masculinity of the tourist or too aggressive, which was deemed to be displeasing to the tourist

It is still worth mentioning, however, that consent to whatever manner in which the tourist decides to use her is implicit in the construction of the sexually willing woman; thus, the tourist does not need to gain consent for his actions. The construction of the woman as either the sexually aggressive or willing requires that she be cast as compliant. On the one hand, the construction of the sexually willing female effectively enables the tourist to separate mind from body, place value on the body, and then write without conscience about his use of it.²¹ On the other hand, the devious woman provides avenues of justification for the tourist because she is constructed as “asking” for how she is treated. The blame is thus shifted from the actor onto the recipient for the subjugation that he imparts onto her:

I told her that we should go back to the bar and dance for a bit and we did, then I left without paying her!! I totally forgot and I saw her the next day in town and told me I owed her money. I said “OK—I need to go back to the hotel and get it”—so we got into our car and proceeded to go on to the next town on our agenda. I fucked for free and laughed my ass off because everyone who knows a whore, knows she will shank you in a heartbeat if given the chance. (Laid Back, July 5, 2000: 79)

This construction allows readers to form bonds over the common, justified, and “acceptable” treatment of these women.

The hierarchical construction of the sexually assertive female allows the tourists to construct themselves as sexually desired by most of the women because they were willing to engage with a positive reaction; however, it also allows the tourist to reclaim power from the situation when he constructs the woman with the “bad attitude” as an inferior being so as not to lose his position of superior power (which would threaten his

²¹ A notion that seems to contradict Butler’s charge to discount the mind/body divide, however upon deeper analysis agrees with her notion that there is no ‘natural’ body that is free from inscription, assumptions, meanings, understandings.

masculinity). For example, *Dun punny* explains how he reacted to a woman who took on a “bad attitude” during their encounter:

Problem was her attitude which was sulky and hardly spoke except in a monosyllable. Took her to my place nearby and got naked. She gave a pretty decent bj (no condom). About halfway through decided I didn't want the fuck as I didn't like her attitude, so changed position and jerked off over her tits, which really pissed her off. She's lucky I wasn't turned on enough to plaster her face! (December 11, 2001: 38)

When the woman in this entry did not interact with what the tourist deemed to be the appropriate level of enthusiasm (thus threatening the desirability of the tourist), she was constructed as deserving of punishment by the tourist, which enabled him to regain his position of greater power while at the same time reinforcing the masculine identity boundaries by vilifying the feminine. The feminine subject is used by the masculine subject to create and define his self by negating her personhood.

Attribution of a Lesbian Identity

While the masculine subject was able to define his self, the same privilege was not accorded to the female and the feminine self. The above analysis of the malevolent and relatively absent feminine subject speaks to this notion; however, it is further exemplified in the construction of pornography involving two women. It is in these constructions that the subject's lack of control over the identity of her self becomes particularly evident because the tourist uses his own discourse and subjectivity to define her identity and subjectivity when sexual actions involving two women are negotiated. The ideal of the exotic experience, sexual availability and complicity, as well as financial power make constructions of women engaging in sexual relations with other women common to 12 of the diaries:

I gave her a drink and danced with her too after having fun for a while I paid them 180 us for both and we went to a cabana which is about 5 mins away, first thing I made them fuck each other for about 30 mins then I interviewed and we all started fucking... (the island man, July 8, 2002: 50)

I wound up negotiating for Grace and Johanna to come home with me.... Foreplay lasted awhile as the two girls got very into things.... After a couple of hours I ran out of energy and lay on the bed with a pretty tica in each arm when suddenly Johanna got very frisky with Grace. They starting kissing, Johanna was the aggressor and Grace gently resisted. I spend the next hour watching these two have hot and steamy foreplay and sex. (Andy, January 12, 2000: 96)

The focus of these diary entries becomes the women engaging with other women and is constructed as a positive experience for the tourists writing the posts.

The posts which involved the tourist negotiating sexual contact between two women represent a potential loss of further identity because in those instances the women are constructed not only as promiscuous, available, sexually hungry, and embodying a physical description (all in relation to the tourist), but they take on a master status of a lesbian-for-male-pleasure. No mention is made of what the women consider their sexuality to be (for instance, whether it was personal choice, coercion, or experimentation); the focus becomes the decidedly “lesbian” actions of the two women, thus removing any real attributes of the women and replacing them with what the man experienced or, more accurately, what he says that he experienced. This discursive move effectively marginalizes any category of sexuality that deviates from the dominant categories of heterosexual and homosexual. The tourists use their North American/European ideology of sex and sexuality to label the women both in terms of their desirability (by constructing them as exotic) and also in terms of their sexual orientation (by not acknowledging how the women might categorize themselves even

though they blatantly stretch the traditional North American/European ideas of sexuality with their profession).

Of the posts that involve two women engaging with one man, some did not mention the women engaging with each other, just with the tourist (albeit at the same time). In these posts the women remain reified as promiscuous and exotic:

They were both young hard bodied Columbians, both 10's. I nagged both, at both and had one sit on my face while the other rode me and vice-versa ... then for the big finish I had them both kneel down in front of me for a double blow job. (BIGdick, January 15, 2005)

They didn't care they both begged for more then the girls wanted to change partners I had no problem but, I think my friend got a little jealous because I think he fell for the girl he got pissed and left the apartment and went back to the jeep we rented. They girls didn't move and I ended up fucking both. I felt like I was in paradise/Porno film. We did all the possible position in the Kama sutra.... In the morning one of the girls awake me with a BBBj which I was happy to accept. I DFK and fingered her sister while the other blew me. These Dominican women know how to treat a man. (sydnce, January 20, 2002)

The construction of the "exotic lesbian" is evident in posts where there was resistance to engaging in such relations:

While I recovered, I suggested that the girls might like to play together. Marlene was a bit reluctant at first, but when I offered them and extra \$50 they started to fondle one another quite convincingly. In fact, I'm pretty sure the white girl was really getting into it and at one point was really giving Marlene's pussy a good licking. (Slammer, February 17, 2000:41)

In describing his encounter with two women in Puerto Rico, *Rapha* wrote:

Maria went down on the Dominican. Watching her blond head bob between those beautiful black thighs was worth every dime, but it was just the beginning.... Lulu was not interested in returning the oral favor to Maria, but all in all it was fantastic. Both women wee gracious and good humored and they were a good team. (January 31, 1999: 44)

Rapha's inclusion in this description of his financial power over these women demonstrates his exertion of discursive power within the context of the diaries. He is able

to construct each woman in whatever manner he wants with little, or potentially no, regard for what she considers her subjectivity to be; her identity and subjectivity is dependent on him.

The Body/Object

The removal of the agency of the women leaves them only as objects in the pornography. In each entry the woman becomes one of the objects that constitute the utopian setting in the diarist's discourse, which requires the process of objectification. This means that there must be a removal of any human processes or characteristics from the woman. It is important here to consider objectification in terms of the removal of autonomy rather than the lack of attribution of self or simply the process of becoming an object. Whether these diaries are tales of actual experiences or are simply imagined is a moot point, the agency of the woman was there for the author to write about, it was the author's decision to remove the agency of the woman, thus contributing to her objectification.

The object of the women is manifest in the diaries in bodies; there is a marked separation of the mind from the body and the mind is represented as masculine while the body is represented as feminine. There are, however, differences between the ways that the masculine mind and the feminine body are represented. The masculine mind is asserted as dominant and positive in all of the diary entries; it is autonomous, yet lends itself to identity within a group; it is not questioned. The feminine body, however, is not constructed as dominant and positive; it is subjugated and often inferior; it is not constructed as autonomous, it is dependent; it does not lend itself to a group and is often questioned. The feminine body is inscribed with meanings and assumptions via the mind

of the male. The case is, as argued by Butler (1990), that there is no natural body that exists prior to cultural inscription; bodies are part of performances and representations. The feminine body can be as separate from the feminine mind as possible, however through its constructed performance it contributes to the male subjectivities via the mind and discourse of the male.

Most of the women's bodies were questioned and constructed as inferior bodies based on their adherence to predetermined physical standards. The standards are invented by the tourists and are not often explicit. The standards effectively (re)assert the subjective mind of the tourist and its importance, while not explicitly mentioning that the standards are constructs of the tourists' subjective position as normal and understood by all. Several themes pertaining to the physical standards to which the tourists held the bodies of the women are apparent in the diaries.

In some entries the tourists wrote about the condition of the women's bodies and thus whether or not they were constructed in a desirable manner. In discussing why the experience did not live up to his expectations, an author who calls himself *Rich* wrote: "She was very attractive, except for on thing: her pussy! Too played out and clearly had a kid or 2" (March 9, 2002: 51). A similar comment was made by *Chas*: "Again, this was great pussy. Tight, not previous child birth" (August 13, 2000: 61). Such comments are common to the diaries posted on the World Sex Guide. They effectively apply a common struggle that women face to a relatively new form of production in the public sphere.

For years feminists have criticized the capitalist nature of the public sphere and the barriers that it creates for the inclusion of women. One such difficulty that women face when entering the public workforce is being forced to choose between work and

family. In particular, women face discrimination in hiring practices when they are at an age in which they are believed to start having children; under the capitalist structure it is not economically beneficial to hire a woman who will be going on maternity leave because someone else will need to be brought in and trained to do her job temporarily. Also, lack of high quality, affordable daycare—compounded by the traditional belief that the woman should be the primary caregiver—further complicates the choice between work and family (Kimmel 2003; Armstrong 2000).

Rich's comment takes this struggle and applies it to women's involvement in sex tourism industry. It sets the body of women who have not had children as the ideal and reinforces the value placed on bodies who have not previously engaged in sexual relations, thus devaluing the bodies of women who have already had children and sexual relationships. The choice between work and family is complicated by these ideals as choosing to have children has great implications on the amount of money a woman is able to make in the sex tourism industry. A main difference between this choice as it traditionally presented itself and the non-traditional manner that it manifests itself in the case of sex tourism is that traditionally, women could choose to have family and the major implications of that choice dissipated once she had advanced beyond the time that society deemed to be her childbearing years and once she entered the workforce. In the case of sex tourism, however, in choosing to have children the effects on the body are permanent, which means that the implications do not dissipate.

In many of the posts, numbers were used to describe the women in order to indicate the degree to which each body lived up to the standards of the writer. Generally, women who were assigned either 9s or 10s were considered above average, women who

were assigned 7s or 8s were constructed as average, and women who were assigned a 6 or below were constructed by the author to be below average:

So we visited each one until we reached one club with more girls than guys ... honestly you see a little of everything, from 2's to 10's. I only settle for 8 and above. The girls go up to you, some even pinch your ass. (latino, March 29, 2001: 58)

We bugged out after a couple of smelly 4's approached. (Anonymous April 3, 1999)

The girls range in quality, but there were several 8-9's each night there. The 7-8's were still good looking, were a lot friendlier, and took their time, so I traded off between the hot ones and the 7-8's. (Anonymous, July 16, 2004: 4)

The girl was again native about a 7 on the popular scale and she spoke just a few words in English... (Q69, September 1, 2000: 43)

They were both about 7-8, although Marlene in particular had the most amazing set of black 32B's with incredibly long black nipples, very nice. (Slammer, February 17, 2000: 40)

Went to Seaman's first night based on info from the board. Seamans has great Columbian talent... a lot of the girls are 7+ & a few are outright stunning. (Ratbutt, November 2, 2005: 46)

Describing the women in this manner effectively removes them completely from the description process. The tourist is the active agent that is able to choose how the woman is to be rated, and is the one to relay that information to the readers of the post. There is no agreed upon criteria for what characteristics would constitute a 10 or a 6, or what constitutes "outright stunning" or a "smelly." Just like any language, it is subject to the interpretation of the reader since there is no inherent meaning to it. And so the reader can imagine his idea of a 10 or a 6, without any knowledge of how the woman really looks. This removes any human quality or individuality from the woman herself, which renders her unimportant to the process. At the same time, the reader is better able to imagine

himself in the place of the diarist and create his own fantasy based on the experience of the author.²² The next step in creating fantasies after finding out that certain acts are possible is the insertion of the new subject into the fantasy and any modifications that the new subject may envision. This insertion is easier for the new subject when there are fewer preconceived constructs of different subjects in the experience.

In addition to the use of numbers, many of the authors of the diaries refer to the women in terms of their physicality; women are described by their race, their weight, breast size, age, etc:

There was one 5'9" 36-23-45 chick who had a tight round ass and a flat belly to boot. (Anonymous, February 4, 2002: 36)

I wanted nice slim girls, not the fatassed types that you see in the street and I would prefer one dark-skinned girl and one light-skinned girl (real fantasy stuff). She said to hang on while she checked who was available.... It turned out I got pretty much what I had asked for. (Slammer, February 17, 2000:40)

In his brief analysis of diaries of sex tourists, Ryan Bishop (2002) notes that the women were most often portrayed in terms of their parts when a tourist wrote about a negative experience with the women. This theme was not evident in the posts in the World Sex Guide, as the women were often referred to in terms of their parts (unless they were being assigned a number to describe them as a whole) regardless of the overall tone of the experience with the tourist:

Finally I saw this girl (petite, small breasts, nice legs, beautiful thighs and she was wearing tight jeans, but didn't look sleazy...and that I like) and invited her to dance.... Later that night I stayed with my girl at a nearby beach front room (which I paid about \$8) and fucked her all night. We

²² In this respect, the fact that the World Sex Guide is one of the most prominent sex tourist sites in the world suggests that the readers find the site useful and perhaps entertaining (Bishop 2002). Part of the entertainment comes from the manner in which the experiences of the diarists contribute to the fantasies of the readers by allowing them to realize what opportunities are possible for sex tourists.

even showered together.... This girl was a 10, 18, great breasts, tight pussy beautiful legs, nice smile, cute face. (latino, March 29, 2001: 58)

Tried one of the new ones, a Caribbean honey named Yakira from the Limon area. Her hair was in elaborate cornrows, she had an attractive face with pretty eyes, mocha complexion, huge nature breasts with very little sag, but a thicker waist to go with the natural rack, and nicely trimmed pubes. (Sinner, October 11, 2000: 91)

I saw a number of ticas that I could have approached, but two ticas approached me (both were 8's in the face).... All in all, they had bodies rather and 7 & 8 and the sex was a 8 & 9. (Big D, March 5, 2001: 90)

This discourse effectively serves to dehumanize the woman by acknowledging her part by part while at the same time objectifying those parts by not constructing them as attached to/comprising a human. In this regard, the diarists commit a deliberate discursive move when they break down the bodies of women, which they methodically judge by invisible and unpublished standards and then disclose how these women's parts measure up to these subjective standards in no certain terms. The diarists, in this instance, are not simply ignoring the subjectivity of the women but taking steps towards the removal of the subjectivities while at the same time acknowledging their own subjectivities by rating the women's body parts by their own subjective standards. In these terms, the diarists cannot be considered passive in the denial of the women's subjectivities; they are active agents in their removal of the women's subjectivities.

This notion is echoed in other ways that the tourists refer to the women; in some cases, rather than describing just their bodies the narrative is relational to the tourist. A poster using the handle *Bostonians* notes in his post: "I will be in there at 4 pm with the new acquisition" (August 3, 2005: 21). In this instance, *Bostonians* is referring to a school-aged girl that caught his attention on the street earlier that day. He chooses to

describe her as an “acquisition,” which makes her identity entirely unknown in regards to who she is, what she does, even what she looks like. Although she herself is the acquisition, which makes her marginally important to the description, without him having acquired her, she would be nothing but an object without a name.

Although the removal of the woman from the description of her may at first seem to be meaningless because of the possibility that the entire entry could be fictional (that is, there was either no woman at all or the tourist described her completely differently than she looked), it has the effect of shifting the focus from the woman to the reader (and, to a degree, the diarist). It can be argued that the agency or the “mind” in the “mind/body” dualism was removed and so the woman had no choice but to be identified by her body. When description of that body is omitted from the post, so too is the woman, which renders the woman without any semblance of identity that she may possess. Thus the mind of the diarist and the reader (arguably the male mind) is positioned as more important than the mind or body of the woman; the identity of the woman is thereby completely dependent on the male.

Just as there was a noted silence surrounding feminine subjectivity, a similar silence presented itself upon examination of the male body. While much is disclosed about the female body, the actual male body seems to be a relatively invisible part of these posts. Apart from constructing themselves as white, and as males due to the presence of a penis, the diarists did not include mention of their own bodies—other than to make the allusion that they are governed by them, while at the same time rationalizing and judging the bodies of the women that they engaged with part by part. The silence surrounding the male body indicates that the diarists do not hold the standards for

themselves that they do for the women. This also leaves the vision of the experience up to the interpretation of the readers, allowing them to create their own fantasies from the experiences of the diarists by easily substituting themselves for the tourist.

Nevertheless, themes can still be drawn from the discourse surrounding the descriptions of the male body. The specific language used by the diarists suggests that their penis is an extension of themselves—and sometimes it even has its own mind. These words include “Mr. One-Eye,” “member,” and “DonGringo Jr.” (by an author who calls himself *DonGringo*). In contrast, words used for female body parts—“rosebud,” “pink snapper,” “fillet,” “salad,” “carne” (Spanish for “meat”)—are all external to the woman and have nothing to do with her or her body.

The positive, subjective references to male body parts and the derogatory, objective references to female body parts fall into line with a recurring theme within the diaries: an emphasis on the notion that it is part of the male biology to have overwhelming sex drives and a need for sexual engagement. In this respect, the idea that the male is the natural sexual aggressor and that females are objects to be sexually conquered may explain the diarists’ interpretations and use of said bodily references. The sexually aggressive drives of males manifest in the diaries in many different ways. *DonGringo*, a frequent writer, said: “Alas, the only fare de jour was a 30 something with a body like an unmade bed. Sensing my disappointment, no my DISTRESS, the bartender asked if I’d sit and have a drink for a few minutes” (October 7, 2001). In a forum where more subtle expressions are sometimes lost in interpretation, capitalization is a way of expressing extreme emotion. When *DonGringo* is unable to find a woman with a body that he considers satisfactory, he expresses this extreme distress. The idea of males

having uncontrollable biological urges to engage in sexual relations with women effectively marginalizes experiences of anyone who deviates from the heterosexual norm by placing the emphasis on heterosexuality. This construction places value on a very narrow definition of sexuality and thus leaves no room for the posting of entries that entail sexualities that fall outside of that norm.

Concluding Remarks

Connell's (1995, 2001, 2005) notion of a hegemonic masculinity—a masculinity that is posited as the norm which enables and depends on the subjugation of women—is visible in the WSG. There is a basis of heteronormativity that pervades the entries on the WSG which manifests in the ways heterosexual sex is posited as the norm and alternate sexualities are silenced. Sexuality is closely linked to construction of gender and throughout the WSG masculinity is defined and reproduced via heterosexuality, while femininity is bound within the subjects construction of both heterosexuality and alternate sexualities. The masculine body is constructed as large and meaningful through its placement at the centre of all of the posts, which meant that in the diaries the feminine body was constructed as incidental to the experience being relayed in the diary entry. The subject of the posts was always the masculine body, which is apparent in the sexual acts, sexual processes, and the construction of physical bodies. The feminine body is constructed in opposition to that of the masculine body, which allows that diarist to perpetuate boundaries of masculinity in his construction of the feminine body as less desirable and thus inferior.

It should be noted that masculinity and femininity are inextricably linked to racialized and locationally dependent constructions of the actors involved. Completely untangling the discursive knot that they comprise was found to be impossible. As such, the following chapter attempts to explore some of the “first world”/“third world” themes that pervaded the diaries with an awareness that the bodies being considered are not only gendered, but also racialized and regionally situated.

CHAPTER FOUR

“FIRST WORLD” BODIES AND “THIRD WORLD” BODIES

A prominent set of themes in the pornography on the World Sex Guide involved privileging features commonly associated with “developed” countries—whiteness, “first world” culture, consumption, and economic power—while their opposites, commonly associated with “developing” countries, were constructed as inferior. The exception to this generalization was the idea of the “exotic,” which involved a specific combination of femininity, race, class, and development. Although sometimes constructed in a reverent manner by the diarists, the “exotic” is primarily a construction based on a foundation of difference.

While some diarists took the stance that Latin American women were exotic and mysterious, the attitude from which the stance is borne is based on constructions of difference. These constructions were written in accordance with a hierarchical conception of race and nationality, which allows the tourist to flex his racial and economical muscle:

The best night i had was when me and my mate went twos up with a Guatemalan bird with pontoon eyes (one was twisted and one was bust) and i was getting sucked off and my mate was giving her kidney punches and telling her she was a cheap fifty dollar whore and spitting on her. Hilarious ... she was paid double. (Anonymous, February 18, 2004: 62)

By constructing bodies that are different in terms of race, gender, geographical location, and development, the tourists serve to define and reinforce the racial, gendered, geographic, and developmental position that they occupy. As O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor (2005: 84) note:

For example, the American, Dutch, or British male tourist to sex tourist areas in Thailand, the Philippines, Brazil, or the Dominican Republic, will find it possible to secure powers of sexual command over the person of a prostitute for 24 hours for a sum that would not even purchase him five

minutes of oral sex back home; he will find it relatively simple to secure sexual access to girls or boys of 13 and 14 years old; or to find an attractive young a racially Other woman who is willing to act as his girlfriend-cum-domestic servant for the duration of his holiday in exchange or a small amount of money and/or gifts and meals.

The construction of difference does not only serve to reinforce the breakdown and categorization of bodies according to those characteristics, but also prescribes a value to those attributes.

Socially constructed notions of what it means to be of a certain race or to hail from a certain region of the world pervade, and are perpetuated by discourse. This chapter will delve into the way in which the discourse in the WSG follows this suit in terms of constructions of racial difference, exoticism, consumption, commercialism, and economics that are informed by years of demarcation by white Western societies. These diaries not only take on the relatively passive role of reinforcing this demarcation, but actively perpetuate such interpretations.

As has been noted above, there has been a debate surrounding the nature of globalization, specifically, whether globalization is on the decline or threatening to do so due to nationalization of global patterns (Sassen 2003). The diaries posted on the WSG lend support to the argument that global patterns rest on national identities. Throughout the dairies national identities are key on the part of both the men and the women—the World Sex Guide depends on the fragmentation and nationalization of identities in a global setting.

Posts on the WSG are broken up according to the destination country, which automatically gives the women mentioned in the posts a default identity that is presumably different than that of the tourist and of the reader (as it is assumed that men

are writing for men coming from a similar social location, as mentioned in chapter two, and thus that they are from the same country). One poster closed his entry by saying “Take some purses and perfume as gifts. After all we are all ambassadors of the United States when we travel. Enjoy” (thanksfidel April 3, 2004). In only three of the 65 posts did posters use local currency to describe a price that they paid; all of the other posts that mention currency use American dollars, suggesting one or both of the following: there is the expectation on the part of the writers from the United States that they are writing to men of the same nature and/or the US dollar is becoming a global currency, which supports the notion of the globalization of the economy.

Racialized and Exotic Constructions

Racial and ethnic identities are based on social interpretations and take on particular meanings in certain contexts with specific actors. A person’s racial, ethnic, and national identity can depend on where s/he is at any given time (Nagel 2003; Rousseau and Porter 1990; Enloe 2000). For instance, a Nigerian person in Nigeria may have an ethnicity based on both communal and individual “knowledges” of religion, language, community of origin, or region, but a Nigerian in North America is often simply seen as “Black” no matter what these other details may entail. This oversimplification is found throughout the world and speaks to the socially constructed nature of race and ethnicity; notions of what it means to be “Black” or “Latino”—in terms of what actions should be expected, what reactions should be taken, what language to use, and other typifying characteristics—are often created and perpetuated through different social experiences. Oftentimes when a locale or subject is unfamiliar to a person, inferences will be made

from other sources, for instance, what s/he has seen on television or in movies, read in books, or heard from others—sources which themselves may be based upon stereotypes. Meaning is given to people’s ethnicity based on their social context, their subjectivity, and the subjectivity of the people interpreting them. In this instance, ‘subjective position’ is understood to be what people think themselves to be ethnically and what perspective they hold because of the skin/body they think that they are in.

Keeping in mind that some theorists have argued that the Internet and global technologies are creating a world in which race is an incidental characteristic (rather than one that is an organizing characteristic and a source of inequality) I argue here that the ethnic and racial meaning that is attributed to the Latin American women in the pornography contained in the diaries is informed by years of demarcation of difference by white Western societies. The sexuality of Latin American women is a sign of exploitation, tourism, and imperialism (Cabezas 1998: 79). Although hierarchical notions of race and geographic location extend far back in time, colonialism and imperialism have had great impact on the subject positions of Latin American women and thus a great impact on the ethnic meanings and stereotypes attributed to Latin women. The “exotic” is a prominent category in these constructions (Rousseau and Porter 1990); it lies beyond what is familiar; it is fascinating and terrifying; it is different (which reinforces the goodness of what can then be considered “normal”); it is not completely prohibited but it is dangerous. The “exotic” also defies what is considered to be “normal”—norms of nature, culture, morality, and religion.

It will be demonstrated that notions of the exotic body are inextricably intertwined with ideologies of development and sexed bodies, as alluded to by O’Connell Davidson

(2005) who suggested that a woman involved in sex work disrupts the “first world” imagined binaries of man/woman because she is not congruent with the idea of the “proper woman” who is supposed to be pure, sexually passive, and virginal. Away from the repressive sexual ideals of Western Europe, different cultures—and particularly the women in them—became sites where sex was neither penalized nor pathologized.

Womanhood among the colonized represented uninhibited, unbridled sensuality and sexual pleasure for the colonizer. Exoticism in its various expressions brought legitimacy to Western rule and is distinguished from their European racisms by fostering the illusion of an admiration for, delight in, and attraction to the Other, while positioning the Other as inferior and suitable for domination. (Kempadoo 2004: 36)

If white womanhood stands for fairness, purity, frailty, and domesticity, Black womanhood stands for the exact opposite. These characteristics of white womanhood are often conceptualized as the components of humanity—components that are defied in the “exotic” woman and so her status is often reduced to that of a beast or object, reinforcing the “correct” and “valued” position of the colonizer.

During the nineteenth century diversity and ethnicity were romanticized by writers and artists. Constructed as either degenerated humanity or innocent primitives, the exotic grew more appealing (Rousseau and Porter 1990; Enloe 2000). Those people deemed to be “exotic” were seen as being in need of government and domination in the name of becoming civilized, modernized, and converted. In a similar fashion, racialized constructions are used in the WSG diary entries by the tourists to position themselves and their counterparts: the ethnic subject position of the diarist is constructed as dominant over the subordinated ethnic subject position of the woman. One way in which this is manifested is by creating the woman as atavistic. For instance, one entry notes:

“As I walked by one said "Fuckie, Fuckie, Suckie, Suckie" I stopped said “What did you say?”....They all had the same pitch, “Fuckie, Suckie, \$40.” (Anonymous, March 31, 2003: 2)

The diary entry constructs the woman as having limited knowledge of the language of the tourist. The language recounted in the diary entries sounds similar to how a child might refer to the sexual act should it be part of the acceptable vocabulary of children.

While constructing the women as if in a state of underdevelopment akin to a child is common, there were also periodic appearances of entries that constructed the women as though they were of a different species. For example, *Caribbean Traveller* notes of his experience in Barbados that:

Every and anything is available and if you don't see it just ask. Also the girls are very interactive, they mix with you, give you lap dances, entertain everyone... Just amazing, Barbadians are what I call a special breed. (February 4, 2005: 7)

By making reference to Barbadian people as a “special breed” *Caribbean Traveller* implies that Barbadian people are not of the same breed as he is. As noted by Cynthia Enloe (2000), women from the “third world” are often constructed by colonizers as atavistic in terms of their sexuality. In times of more explicit colonization it was believed that women of colour were closer to nature (read: lesser developed) because they wore lesser or no clothing, and they did not engage in the western norm of monogamous relationships. This colonial construction has led to—and continues to inform—the belief that “third world” women are exotic in their sexuality because they have a biological predisposition to take immense enjoyment from sex, and even sexually aggressive due to the enjoyment that is derived from sex:

The nicest thing about Cuban girls is that they love sex and it is as natural to them as eating or breathing. (Riccardo, July 31, 2003: 10)

Although the discursive conceptualization of “exotic” women is closer to nature and further down the atavistic hierarchy of development, the sexuality and sexual drive in the construction of the exotic woman is high. Kruhse-Mount Burton (1995: 196) notes that within sexual discourse, the “lost paradise of natural sensuality is embodied by the ... women who are believed to enjoy pleasing men.” The construction of women who enjoy pleasing men has led to a reverence of the exotic in discourse surrounding “third world” women. For instance, though *Caribbean Traveller* is attempting to compliment Barbadian women in his post for their sexual prowess and entertaining performance, he serves to position them on a different plane from his own “breed,” which becomes part of the differentiating, subjugating discourse because of historical understandings and thematic interpretations. At the same time, the white/non-white and “first”/“third” world binaries are discursively added to by the notion that non-white women of the “third world” not only have a predisposition to enjoy sex, but also to be sexually aggressive. While giving discursive meaning to what it means to be non-white, this construction at the same time gives meaning to ideas of white women, effectively constructing them as “unwilling and inferior sexual partners” (Kruhse- Mount Burton 1995: 196).

The diaries demonstrate some reverence for the exotic via constructions of the body as a temptation that should be used only occasionally; the women are considered an indulgence or “treat”:

I had to go to Puerto Plata for 2 days of business. I was last here in April of 2001. I did not partake in any sex action last time. This time I decided to treat myself. (Rich, March 9, 2002)

The notion of consuming a woman as a “treat” serves to add to the mysticism of the exotic body and constructs the woman as a temptress—although many of the authors construct themselves as in a constant state of temptation by these women:

I returned to the place on the Malicone where the two of them met. He was ready to go. She agreed to blow him for \$5, so who can say no to that? (Bostonians, August 3, 2005: 22)

The construction of the state of temptation implies that the diarists value the bodies of these women because their bodies, or the use thereof, are wanted by the tourists:

The guy next to me won a BJ in a raffle. Yes, as raffle. The guy got to pick any Tica in the house for a free BJ. I talked to him later and it turns out that he ended up spending \$30 as he couldn't take it and had to fuck her too. (Tee-O, December 3, 2002: 86)

Existing literature suggests that there has been an increase in demand for women whose appearance and mannerisms correspond to the exotic Latin American cliché (Fusco 1998). In her interview with two Cuban *jineteras*, Coco Fusco found that certain women catered to the tastes of certain nationalities of men. For instance, “Spaniards really like black girls with braids, so all the *negritas* are wearing their hair like that now....The Italians like *mulatas* with wild hair” (Fusco 1998: 158). The hairstyles that the Cuban women in Fusco’s study wear are part of their performances of race and sexuality. Third wave feminist theory suggests that gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nationalism are performed (Nagel 2003; Butler 1993). Race and nationalism are policed and reinforced which reifies and results in certain types of racial and national sexualities being part of the performative constructions of sexual roles. The demand for women to have certain characteristics that fall in line with ideas of exotic has caused shifts in racial performances.

Fusco (1998: 155) goes on to say that for a long time the *mulata* woman has stood for illicit sex: “According to the old adage of the Caribbean plantation, white women were for marrying, black women were for work and *mulatas* were for sex.” Exoticized and racialized stereotypes still carry enormous power, so much so that to engage in sex work in some Latin American nations means in essence to assume an exotic *mulata* identity by association (Fusco 1998: 155), reinforcing the notion that the identity of the woman is not her own; rather, it was defined by Latin Catholicism and white plantation owners and colonizers, and imposed to this day when men go abroad with preference to have sex with typical looking Latin women with dark skin and gyrating hips.

One of the most prominent ways in which the construction of the prowess of the exotic sexual body is reinforced in the diary entries is the manner in which—in the vast more than half of the entries—the tourist explicitly wrote that it was the woman who approached him rather than the tourist himself initiating the encounter:

All three of us were approached immediately. Smiles flashing and eye lashes batting one could hardly contain the desire to touch. (Anonymous, April 3, 1999: 99)

Well, it wasn't to long before we were approached by a beautiful brown skin young lady nice ass. (Anonymous, December 13, 2000: 30)

There was nothing but Americans and ticas in there this night. I saw a number of ticas that I could have approached, but two ticas approached me (both were 8's in the face). (Big D, March 5, 2001: 89)

The construction of exotic sexualities is compounded in several entries that either allude to or explicitly note that it is not only the women that the tourist explicitly constructed as a “sex worker” whom expressed sexual interest in the tourist or that were sexually attainable to the tourist but that all women in the destination were sexually available and willing, which falls in accordance with constructions of Latin American

women as atavistic/primitive foreign territories to be conquered by white Western men. In this instance, the immediate avenue to conquer is constructed as engaging in sexual relations. For instance, as *Che* writes about Havana, “You might get to meet a Cuban who has never chatted before with an American or slept with an American” (November 17, 1998: 34). This constructs *Che*’s body as masculine by equating himself with being brave and “first world” by identifying himself as “familiar/normal,” while at the same time the woman is constructed racially as “different” and “lesser-developed” and feminine by being inferior, inexperienced, and available for “exploration.”

The vast majority of diary entries contain a reference to the overtly racialized performance and/or appearance of the woman to some degree, which serves to differentiate the woman from the tourist by creating her race as deviant. In one post *Slammer* writes “She didn’t seem to mind at all and continued to suck me and jerk me until I blew my load all over her face and tits. I must say it looked quite nice and sexy against her black skin” (page 38, July 18, 2001: 38). Such entries explicitly point out that the racial background of the woman is different from the diarist’s own race and the race(s) of women that he usually encounters. By making reference to the race of the woman, the tourist effectively constructs his own race—which is predominantly white (Bishop and Robinson 2002) as the norm and all others as deviant. When mentioning race, the tourist implies something that it is different than what is considered normal:

The overall experience was still a cut above the rest, as she made excellent sound effects and talked dirty to me in Spanish. It’s a turn on to have a Latina hottie scream “Ay, papi!” (Sinner, October 11, 2000: 39)

I first fucked the Latino and then African. I cum in Latino’s pussy.... Next day I was having lunch at one of the restaurants on Obispo Street, I saw one of the African women with huge breasts.... It was a fun of the lifetime, fucking a big black ass. (Aaallluuu, November 29, 2001: 24)

The tourist latently constructs himself as brave, powerful, and knowledgeable of the female through his tale of sexual relations when he acknowledges the racial difference between himself and the woman because he is able to conquer the atavistic being. Constructing women in this exotic manner allows the tourist to inflate his masculinity in two ways—by constructing himself first as an object of sexual desire and next within a role in which he conquers the atavistic woman via sexual relations.

The nature of the relationship, specifically who is exploiting whom, is seen by some as unclear because it is questioned if the tourists are being deceived and then whether they actually get the performance they wanted (Opperman 1999; Kruhse-Mount Burton 1995). It is suggested in several of the posts that the women are emotionally unavailable or unwilling and make little effort to please the tourists or disguise the commercial nature of the interaction. In writing about his first day in St. Marten, *Ratbutt* notes that he “had 3 different girls over the course of a few hours, two of them were pure GFE joy, one chick was watching the clock” (November 2, 2005: 46).

As noted above, there are studies that indicate that while the racial and sexual identity of the women are dictated by “first world” white men, some women consciously make an effort to reserve some parts of their bodies and some sexual acts for their own personal sexual interactions (Sanders 2005). This move may be interpreted as an effort to retain part of their identity as personal in order to keep their entire sexuality from being consumed by the work that they do. The criticism of women engaged in “sex work” and the suggestions that they are exploiting the tourists imply that they should not be able to reserve any piece of their sexual identity for themselves, and that they should sell their bodies and their sexualities in their entirety. In non-sexual work, employees are not

required to give up entire pieces of their identity or their being for any reason, and they are able to reserve these without criticism; however, the same is not true of sex work. The ideal woman gives up her complete sexuality, her body, and her subjectivity, which leaves her with virtually nothing. Everything needs to be made available to the tourist for his consumption.

If we accept Butler's (1993) theorizing of gender performances, it remains that the women that engage with the tourists put on a performance of their own. There is little way to confirm the specific subtleties of the performances of the women because one-sided nature of the forum; however, it is possible to consider the power dynamics that produce/are produced by the performances of both actors. The argument can be made that although the sex tourist gains certain degrees of power due to his construction of his performance of masculinity, the woman gains power in the discourse as being an "exotic" Caribbean woman of sexual desire. As noted above, in several of the posts Latin American women are constructed as the ultimate temptation, as something that is desired by the tourist. While this construction affords the woman a position of relative power, her power is confined to the specific context of sexual relations and is valid and useful only when constructed as such by the tourist. In short, the scope of the woman's power is limited and cannot be imported into other realms (such as gender, economics, and race).

When difference and culture are not being used in the WSG to construct the mysticism of the exotic, they are constructed as obstacles. It is primarily sexuality and race that are focused upon in these posts in terms of what sets the Caribbean women apart from the women that the tourist commonly engages with at home. Few of the entries

make mention of culture, except select references and mostly towards differences in socioeconomic status and language:

Apparently “making love” is not what most Dominican Men are known for. Of course conversing in broken English and Spanish can be challenging... (Anonymous, October 24, 2001: 56)

This is a really poor country, but the people are extremely friendly and the ladies lovely. (Anonymous, July 10, 2002: 49)

In one rare instance, during a description of the circumstances of his encounter, one diarist gave analysis to the racialized subjective position of the people in Jamaica:

In Kingston, educated middle-class people and elderly people tend to be decent and polite, but the majority of Kingstons 1 million poor people tend to be hostile and unfriendly towards white skinned people who they usually regard as colonist and imperialist oppressors, unless you are buying something from them. They don't seem to be as hostile towards Asian's or Indians since they didnt own slaves. (hors' de auderv, October 22, 2004: 35)

While most of the explicit racial constructions are imposed on the bodies of women, the bodies of the male tourists are not exempt from the effects of racialization—no category can be considered without effects on that which opposes it. In these constructions gender and race are inextricably linked. For instance, Dominican men are constructed as less masculine than North American and European men, while Jamaican men represent a threat to the North American and European masculinity and, as a result fewer, men go to Jamaica to tour because it is not as easy for them to construct themselves as a successful heterosexual male as it is in the Dominican Republic (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005). The construction of the tourist as a “successful heterosexual male” plays an important role in the constructions of the female bodies. The diaries commonly portray the white masculine bodies of the tourists as brave, intelligent, rational, and dominant, a construction that is both a necessary condition as

well as an effect of the construction of Latin American women as “other.” This not only serves to reinforce the discursive meanings but also to perpetuate and disseminate them in a worldwide forum.

The ‘Pura Vida’

The concept of the “pura vida”—meaning “pure life” in Spanish—expressed by the tourists speaks to the racialized and exoticized inscription of bodies. The “pure life” is constructed as corporeal—the manner in which humans lived before “civilization” and “development” changed the social interactions. The term ‘pura vida’ is ironic in the context of poststructuralism and discourse analysis because poststructuralism argues that there can be no “pure” form of anything because we are all affected by the meanings and assumptions that history and environment have loaded into our discourse, and ‘pura vida’ itself is no exception. That the term is assigned to ways of living in the “third world” links the notion to ideals of race and development and serves to reinforce the construction of Latin American women and men as atavistic. However, the positive construction of the pura vida immediately serves to “other” all other ways of living, thus creating a notion of exclusivity that is described in a way to be valued. The detail to which the experiences of the sex tourists are described combine with the discourse that serves to marginalize those who differ significantly from the author on one or more of many characteristics to further extend the notion of what fantasies should/can look like:

By the end of the second round, WITHOUT ANY INTERMISSION!?, I was begging for water and a rest. She on the other hand, was tickling the twins²³ to see if she could get us back into the ring for round 3!!! As I lay

²³ In the same way that the male penis is referred to using terms such as “Mr. One-Eye” or “DonGringo Jr.” lending to the notion that the penis is a being with its own subjectivity, the tourist’s testicles are also given positive names that imply a subject position.

there on the mat, with stars spinning round my head, it was apparent that JR and I were down for the count. Exhausted, I thought "she was worth every bit of \$50" ~~~~Pura Vida. (DonGringo, October 7, 2001: 78)

Pura vida is used generally as a closing statement by the diarist and is made common by similar uses by several posters. It can be inferred from the diaries that the diarists are celebrating their experience of the pure life while they were in Latin America; a summation statement that would be used to characterize the trip in a succinct manner. The tourists then are indicating that these women enable them to engage in the pure life, whereas their lives at home are impure.

The criteria of the pura vida are echoed throughout the diaries—whether the term is used or not. The pura vida is characterized by the ability to be governed by the natural forces that guide men to engage in sexual encounters; these corporeal, non-romantic encounters are considered pure in and of themselves. The pura vida is used as a term of excitement in summation because it expresses a way of engaging in sexual relations that is different from the “first world” sexual experiences that are likely more common for the tourist, which emphasizes his dominant perspective and ability to characterize the experience without the subjectivity of the woman. As discussed in the previous chapter, the types of relationships being reproduced/represented, while involving a woman, are almost homosocial because of her relative absence from the sex and her reliance on the tourists for identification in the relationships.

The pure life is lived when the tourists are able to satisfy the biological sexual drive of males that is constructed as a validation of their gender. The sexual urges of males are written about as if they are natural, uncontrollable, and often insatiable; thus, the ability to live out the fantasies that are based upon these urges is what in turn

validates the gender of the authors. The pornography in the diaries reproduces the type of sex that is regarded as necessary to make men into men: sex that is driven by raw biological need. It goes on to promise that certain fantasies make the reader a member of the elite group of men who have realized the meaning of being a man via these lived experiences. The pure life then is characterized by the ability to engage in almost limitless sexual relations with women without acknowledging anything beyond the body, further illustrating the privilege attributed to the mind over the body. It is important to note that the universality of the construction of the sexually insatiable male is unknown. The diaries make it impossible to detect how this construction plays out in racialized and developmentalized terms; however, the construction of the pura vida is clearly demonstrated as racialized and developmentalized in its application to women.

The focus on the body and under-emphasis and marginalization of the mind indicates that the pura vida is about bodily sexual acts. It is made evident by the majority of the authors that they make a distinct separation of mind and body and that the experience that they have is purely about the body and entirely physical. This is emphasized in the ways in which the tourists construct their focus on the physical experience and spend little space writing about other connections, factors, etc. In each entry the woman becomes one of the objects that constitute the utopian setting in the diarist's discourse—a setting that involves the process of objectification and therefore requires the removal of any human processes or characteristics from the woman.

The non-romantic encounters of the pura vida marginalize the subject, feelings, and emotional attachment. While few of the diarists make mention of the mind, feelings, or subjectivity of the women, some go as far as to explicitly de-value the opposite side of

the inherent dualism. As one diarist who calls himself *spent* says, “honest sex is always better than \$300.00/night head games” (October 20, 2002: 13). The head games referred to by the diarist are associated with what he considers to be ‘regular’ and ‘normal’ sexual interactions that are common to his more familiar “developed” Western society. It can be inferred that by remaining ‘un/underdeveloped’ these women are able to engage in a pure life, and to offer it on a rather short-term basis to tourists who seek it. The honesty that is reproduced in the diaries means that there are no misconceptions about what is being asked for and what is being given between the two actors: sex.

Consumption and Economics

North American and European tourists’ very presence in the Caribbean is predicated upon a particular, and vastly unequal, world political and economic order, and the individual tourist necessarily enters into relationships with poor and working-class locals or migrants as the politically and economically privileged party. (O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 2005: 85)

One of the main themes that emerged in the arena of relations between the “first world” and the “third world” is the value placed on consumption. Consumption is a prominent factor in the diaries as it is constructed as the main goal of the vast majority of the tourists. Consumption of bodies has a status-increasing effect on the men, and a devaluing and status-decreasing effect on the women; for example, *Rich’s* comment (March 9, 2002:51) about the woman being “too played out and clearly had a kid or 2,” or comments about the women’s vaginas being loose, etc. These bodies are for limited consumption and yet they are consumed without limits by these men—bruising them,

hurting them, sex without condoms, and having multiple sex encounters are all part of consumption without limits.

The objectification of women is a necessary step in the process of consumption of their bodies. When a body is constructed as unable to experience negative sensations, it is easier to consume to its limits. There is little recognition that the body is that of a living, feeling subject. The bodies of these women are considered to be available for use by the tourists at any time and this use or consumption is without limits. Overt discourse of domination is not uncommon:

She moaned and she gasped and I fucked her hard and grabbed her hair with one hand and the other hand was on her throat as if I was raping her.... JUST GREAT. (picum, September 17, 2004: 102)

In his diary entry *The Capitan* makes note that the woman that he is having sex with is bruised all over but continues to use her anyway:

We strip down and the girl's body was in horrible shape for her age. She was severely bruised and her body looked like that of a 35 to 40 year-old lady.... We start messing around and she has me start fingering her. So I slip one finger in and then two. She seems to be really enjoying this and puts three fingers in then four and soon I am fisting the hell out of this 18 year old chick. (The Captain, January 26, 1999: 103)

The Capitan's post does not question or remark as to why she would be bruised and in horrible shape. The anonymous poster who was quoted in the previous chapter saying "[s]he's moaning so much, I stop and ask her if she's alright" (September 26, 2005: 134) was an anomaly amongst the other posts in that it indicated that he acknowledged her personhood by stopping to make sure that she was okay. It should be noted though that the author constructs himself as successful in his sexual endeavour because she is moaning in enjoyment to much which is when he stops to ask if she is alright.

The disregard for the physical state of the women's bodies constructs them as expendable; they are material commodities to be consumed even as they go through a process of devaluation because they get older or bear children. Condoms are condemned by most of the tourists, even during oral sex, which indicates that more thought is given to the pleasure of the tourist than to the body and subjective position of the woman. Sexual relations with or without condoms are available to be consumed for a price:

I offered them an additional \$20.00 to suck me off without the condom.
(BIGdick, January 15, 2005: 47)

'Abnormalities,' unless impeding the sexual consumption of the woman because they are located on her genitals or face, are considered to be of marginal importance to the tourist, making it evident that certain parts of the body carry value:

What a wildcat! Enthusiastic, almost porn star quality BBBJ, intercourse with a condom, and she just loved facials. The only disappointment was that her diet was not working, and I swear to you she seemed to gain 15 lbs upon taking off her clothes. (Iguana Six, March 15, 2004: 110)

The construction of certain body parts as more valuable serves to further demonstrate that the tourists construct the women with whom they engage as objects that are incapable of having meaningful feelings or whose feelings carry lesser weight in comparison to the 'needs' or the 'desires' of the tourist to be sexually satisfied in a manner that satisfies the ideals of a "first world"-created fantasy as well as "first world" consumerist ideals.

The discourse of the diaries relays the idea that what is being consumed serves to reinforce the tourist's masculinity. This connects, for instance, to Kruhse-Mount Burton's (1995) argument that by being with a non-professional woman the tourist is able to forget that he is paying for sex and believe that he is engaging in sexual relations with a friend—thereby reinforcing his masculine status in being able to attract a woman.

Consumption allows the tourist to increase his status because the consumption is on his terms and the woman has to abide by what he wants; exotic non-professional performances are consumed by the tourist on his terms.²⁴

The consumption of authentic experiences with women who are not “sex workers” reproduces a type of relation between the “first world” and the “third world”—namely, the valorizing of consumption—which puts a premium on the position of the “first world” because of their economic ability to buy and consume while subjugating the position of the “third world” because of their propensity to be bought and consumed. However, the preference for consumption of experiences with non-professional women also takes root in male/female power relations, which intersects with ideas of subjectivity and masculinity in this pornography as it is the man’s subjectivity that is acknowledged in these diaries and the body of the woman. The discourse of the diaries puts the “first world” in a position of superiority according to the standards that are set out by the “first world” in several ways. For instance, the ability to consume is a value of the “first world” and the mind is privileged by the “first world”—both of which are reproduced in the diaries—while being consumed and the attribute of the body are “third world” characteristics in the diaries.

Consumption is intimately tied to the masculinity of the tourist, and is situated in an economically based discourse:

Going to Cuba is the best thing I ever did. If I calculate it on a dollar per great story to tell the boys back home, Cuba was the best investment I

²⁴ In some instances the sex worker remains with the tourist for the duration of his visit or for an extended amount of time and the sex worker is not paid after each sexual act (Opperman 1999). In these cases, the worker is paid at the end of the stay, which is often done so under the guise that it is for her education or a hospital visit for a family member. This practice enables the tourists to uphold the perception—be it for the reader or for themselves or both—that they were with a friend rather than a paid sex worker.

could have made.... Local clubs, bars and even in a supermarket I met women who were so eager to spend time with me. I repaid them for their enthusiasm to be with me, with meals, drinks and cab fare home. I think that maintaining my own innocence was as important to me as not exploiting the Cuban women. (Che, November 17, 1998: 34)

While rationalizing his own involvement in sex tourism in economic terms, *Che* makes it clear that the trip to Cuba was worth it because of the small amount of money that he had to expend relative to the large number of stories that he gathered to tell his male friends at home. In these terms, the act of telling the stories is an important part of his experience, which serves to affirm the notion that masculinity is constructed through others via the dissemination of “experiences” (Bishop 2000; Kendall 2002). The importance of telling the stories supports the notion put forth by Flood (2007) when he says that masculinity is constructed, affirmed and perpetuated in homosocial environments in which heterosexual sex is performed via narratives for other men.

In her previously noted analysis of the causes of sex tourism, O’Connell Davidson (2005) elaborates on the requirement of patriarchal relations to propagate this phenomenon. She notes that sex tourists have a patriarchal view of relationships—in particular, sexual relations—which manifests in the desire to engage with women who claim no control over what sexual acts take place and who do not ask for money. Asking for money, then, is seen as a means of control over the situation for the woman, and to be on the other end of the economic request is conceptualized as being the opposite of masculine/dominating in the patriarchal view of the tourist. The threat to the tourist’s masculine position contributes to the reason why the WSG diaries indicate that they would rather engage with non-professional women than professional “sex workers”, and why experiences that are decidedly “too professional”—in which the woman asks for

money or is constantly looking at the clock—are deemed to be unsatisfactory while the opposite is satisfactory:

The one thing that I noticed about the D.R. girls. They do not act like hookers. They seem to genuinely enjoy sex. She slurped and tongued my dick until I could not take it no more....After cumming inside Patricia, she pulled off my rubber and licked the cum off my cock, which surprised me. She was very polite and continued to kiss me, especially my breast nipples. As we were putting our clothes on, I paid her. I noticed all week that D.R. hookers do not ask for the money in advance. Also, they do they hit on you for tips. You would think these girls have gone to a hooker's etiquette school. (Chas August 13, 2000: 60-61)

In these terms both the “first world” privilege of consumption as well as notions of patriarchal masculinity and femininity are reinforced.

Consumption also intersects with notions of race and the exotic. Tourism cannot be considered independent of politics, in which race, nationality, and exoticism play an important role (Enloe 2000). Gender, class, nationality, race, and space intersect differently in the context of tourism; some intersections lead to a discourse of mysticism, some intersections lead to a discourse of entitlement and consumption. The politics of intersections are exacerbated even more so in dealing with sex tourism as compared to less-sexualized tourism. Tourists in Latin American countries often consume race, ethnicity, and exoticism on a constant basis, both actively and passively; however, sex tourists are even more overt and explicit in their consumption.

Some of the diaries noted taking pictures of women, both clothed and unclothed:

On the way back to the hotel, we took some photos of 2 women and they were offended. (Bostonians, August 3, 2005: 19)

They posed for an obligatory photo, then took turns in the shower. (DonGringo, October 27, 2001: 72).

Taking pictures of the women, like the diaries on the Internet, allows the consumption to transgress the beyond the boundaries of the vacation, as the women are thereby constantly consumed and masculinities can be affirmed and reaffirmed each time the picture is viewed. Some of the entries made note that they took photos of these women while they were naked and although the photos were not posted in the threads that were free to the public to read, the diaries that required payment to read were advertised as housing many photos. While many of the posts did not explicitly state that they forced the women to pose for pictures, if these relationships are taken at face value, the tourist ultimately holds the power because it is he who has the economic power and it is unknown whether the women have a choice in having their picture taken, which potentially makes the photos coercive.

Posting the photos on the Internet can be read as akin to showing off a trophy or prize. Although a picture adds a degree of humanity and individuality to the woman (by making her existence more real), there are few imaginable reasons for posting the photos other than the pride that they bring the tourist from showing off what he has conquered to people that he knows are like-minded and value the same things as he does. At the same time, photos disclose the identity of the woman to readers worldwide, and by doing so the tourist makes evident that he positions his desires of pride over her desires of confidentiality. The posting of a woman's photo adds to the appropriation of the Latin American culture by the tourist because it allows him to reinforce his story with the addition of a picture that is consumed not only by him, but by others worldwide. It is also a way of sustaining the consumption of the woman after the immediate consumption of the encounter has ended, thus alienating her from her labour.

Economical Considerations

In the same way that consumption is such a major theme in the diaries, so too is the valorization of economic power. The WSG diaries speak of fantasies that have been lived out for a fee that most of the authors consider to be nominal. The utopia in the diaries is made possible by the economic dynamics of “developed” and “developing” regions. Tourists from the “first world” arrive in Latin American countries and their “buying power and social status is increased tenfold upon arrival in a cash starved country” (Fusco 1998: 154). The masculine identity is tied closely to class which manifests in sex tourism when tourists are drawn to Latin America where they are able to get “more bang for your buck” (Bishop and Robinson 2002; Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005). The pornography depicts a place where tourists can consume the bodies of women as if objects, where they can engage in bodily experiences without the concern of a relationship, where they can have sex with Latina women who know how to please a man—all for a small price. The feminine body is constructed as valued for its sexual and domestic qualities (as in the girlfriend experience) while the masculine body is valued for its bravery and economic stability.

Commodification of a sexual encounter dictates certain requirements of the relationship between the actors. When sexual relations are built on the premise of economic payment, expectations of the parties involved are different from the expectations that are placed on parties involved in non-economically based sexual relations. The human connection that assumedly serves as a basis for most non-economic sexual relations seems to be replaced with the economic basis of a bargain. In the diaries

relations of all types are fair game for commodification, including platonic relations. As

Sticks notes:

I had barely sat down when 3 beautiful women began motioning me over to where they were sitting. I hurriedly brushed off a local drifter who had been shadowing my every move by giving him a buck to 'leave me alone,' then waved the most attractive chick over to my location. She came right over and was equally excited as I was—but spoke no English. After a 10-minute frustrating babble session she blew me a kiss and slowly walked away. Suddenly the drifter—who spoke Spanish AND English began to look a little more valuable to me so I began to hunt him down.... He was my man—so within 10 minutes he was 'my true friend.' (February 15, 2005: 8)

The commodification of sexual relations is the basis for the vast majority of the diary entries. The tourists write as if they travel with certain expectations of what they are going to get and how much they are going to get it for; the sexual act is rationalized into components which are priced out accordingly:

Of course, paying over \$20 is acceptable, providing that you get exceptionally good service, or, I don't know, for example anal; but this would be in a form of a tip. BBBJ is not one of those special services - should be a standard. (Riccardo, July 31, 2003: 11)

The tourists construct themselves as being entitled to an encounter that satisfies not only their physical need to ejaculate, but to do so in a manner that is satisfactory to their mental preconceptions of the type and price of the encounter as well. As noted in the previous chapter, the imagination allows humans to conceptualize what their ideals might look like. The ability to travel to foreign destinations where others have been known to have sexual experiences—and women have been constructed as willing, if not eager, to engage in those sexual experiences—allows the imaginations of many men to create scenarios of erotic sexual encounters with exotic women. This means that there are often preconceived notions that the women must live up to in order to satisfy these ideals.

One anonymous post reads “I was going to give her \$40 but then, being soft-hearted, offered her \$50... I know it’s much more than the \$20 that seems to be the going rate for 30 minutes upstairs in the bar” (June 15, 2000: 80). This post is more a demonstration of the tourist’s economic power (which is likely far greater in Latin America than in his local country) than of his supposed “soft heartedness” or concern for the woman he engages with. In these terms, the financial power of the men in the pornography is reified by the tourists constructing the women as in need of financial assistance and constructing themselves as the answer to their financial needs. The construction of the benevolent giving masculine falls in line with the idea that there has been a shift from the post-war hypermasculinity to include more effeminate characteristics. More often hegemonic masculinities include some of these effeminate characteristics while still being based upon a “collective masculine imaginary that draws on previous historical narratives of masculine bravado in wars, colonizing projects, and as frontiersmen” (Schaeffer-Gabriel 2005: 336). However, the diarists are careful not to give too much acknowledgement to the financial situation of the woman, as this would detract the common construction of the masculine ability to attract women without money. For instance, one diarist notes that the woman he meets really wants a foreign boyfriend—but there is no analysis offered as to why she might want one:

I still think of that experience even today. And she never asked for any money. She wanted to marry and leave the country, so fellas be careful. You may pay in one way or the other. (Anonymous, July 10, 2002: 50)

Instead, the payment and the woman’s need for money is often mentioned after a description of the sexual act that they engaged in, at which time the author starts in a

discourse that shows his economic power/generosity—all the while constructing himself in a masculine light:

I got the full girlfriend treatment from her all night, kissing, hugging, she even wanted to hold my hand. About midnight I took her home and we went at it for hours, she was so horny. I got a BJ w/out a condom, she rode me fast and hard and I banged her in every conceivable position. She spent the night and I had not even paid her anything. I banged her again in the morning and she spent the day with me...I got the girlfriend experience again as I bought her a couple small trinkets as we shopped. She had to go home about 5pm to check on her son, we made plans for her to come back that night and head to the back the next day but she never showed up ... that's what I got for being the nice guy!!!! (Andy, January 12, 2000: 95)

When money is not cited as at the root of the sexual exchange, the tourist appears to be doing the woman a favour by giving her money for sex. Though the notion of being charitable to the woman is sometimes constructed in a favourable manner, in the diaries it is necessarily preceded by the tourist getting what he wants first.

While some tourists construct themselves as the solution to the worker's money problems, some tourists also posit themselves to be the solution to other trade-based problems encountered by the woman:

It's always so nice to go visit the old Hoes and get to know the constant flow of new Hoes. Action the same in Jaco/San Jose during the low season as the high season. Sometimes I feel like I'm single handedly supporting all these poor whores' children and relatives in their native countries. It's not always easy having such a big.....heart. (Reeko, aka El Diablo/Santa Claus, (September 20, 2003: 69)

Another tourist notes that he was worried about not paying women enough, then came to the following conclusion:

You may get a fuck for \$15 if the girl is average looking and for \$10 if she is a dog. So, you see; even an ugly one, if she gets a john once a month, makes more than some factory worker, who does his (her) 9 to 5 in one month. Now, I think it would be fair to assume, that good looking girl can get fucked 20 times a month @\$20 each time, to say the least. So she makes \$400 - that's 50 times as much as someone who does real job - 8

hours or more a day... think about those other good looking girls, who chose not to fuck for money, and have to work 2.5 months for \$20 ... turn your back on them, and find one of a million other Cubanas who will be glad you took 'em. (Riccardo, July 31, 2003: 11)

One tourist, *Bostonians*, recounts how he refused to pay a police officer the bribe he requested when he caught *Bostonians'* friend having sex with a Cuban woman on the beach. *Bostonians* did, however, give the police officer a beer and let him watch, about which he writes: "After saving her life because it is not allowed for Cuban women to be with a tourist in a sexual manner, she owed me" (August 3, 2005:22). Although it may be accurate that Cuban women are not allowed to be with a tourist in a sexual manner, the question remains: what does this inclusion add to the diary entry? There seems to be little added other than an assertion of how the tourist was able to dominate the woman. In addition, this inclusion echoes the sentiment of the tourist solving the problems that the woman encounters as a result of living in a "third world" country or the notion that the "first world" can help save the "third world," which manifests as a valued ideology within the context of these diaries.

These constructions of economic power are interesting in that they position the tourist as having power over women who are in perpetual debt to him because he is able to provide them with finances and satisfy their sexual 'desires.' But when the investments of each of the actors are evaluated it can be said that the tourist has invested a lot of time, money, and energy into being where he is, and although some of them may travel on business, there is still the expectation of living out a fantasy with an exotic woman. So, ultimately, the tourist has a lot invested too, and without the women it is debatable whether these men would be there (in general or there in particular). They would not have the same expectations of such a sexual time (which they obviously consider to be

desirable because they paid so much money to be there). And yet the tourists still construct themselves as the ones with the power. If these women did not embody something that these tourists want, the tourists would not pay the money to be there; they would have sex with women who are local to their home, probably for less money.

On a related note, many of the diaries contain a certain sentiment that indicates that tourists should take caution in how much they are paying the women. The tourists strive to retain the economic power that they enjoy in Latin American destinations. An anonymous poster recounts that a friend of his “makes twice what he paid an hour [to the sex worker] making false teeth in Georgia.... No use spoiling the help” (April 3, 1999: 99). Comments such as this one that refer to women as “the help” automatically put the woman in an inferior position—constructing him as having more power and her with less within the context. Another poster slips a piece of advice into his diary when he writes: “DO NOT PAY WHAT THEY ASK” (Thanksfidel, April 3 2004: 11). Such posts make it clear that the tourists’ own financial needs are more important than those of the women with whom they are engaging, while at the same time constructing Caribbean women as devious. The reason for not paying the woman what she asks (cited by all of the authors) is that when tourists pay above what they deem the services to be worth, it causes the women to demand these prices and not settle for less money; in short, it causes inflation. The inclusion of this piece of advice in otherwise diary-like entries indicates a sense of urgency in heeding it—perhaps fuelled by the realization that reliance on race, class, and charm alone is sometimes insufficient to secure their sexual fantasies. Making sex tourism less economical because of “self inflicted” inflation potentially leads to a loss of

financial power that the tourists held over the women, which is at the root of the whole phenomenon.

Concluding Remarks

The “first world” body is differentiated from the “third world” body in the diaries by race and economic status. The discursive implications of race and economic status manifest in many different ways, including the ability to consume, to dictate the nature of the interaction, to initiate the interaction, and to further define the body of the other actor involved. “First world” ideals of consumption are valorized in the entries via the positive constructions of the use of bodies and the utility gained versus the perceived expenditure. The “first world” body is constructed as taking an active role in many of the entries on the WSG; this body was able to define the exotic nature of the “third world” body in accordance with imperialist and colonialist constructions and consume the “third world” body without regard to the limits or boundaries she put on it. The “third world” body is constructed in the inferior, passive position as the body that is to be consumed.

It is important to again note that the theme of masculinity and femininity were inextricably linked with the “first world” and “third world” theme. This link is exhibited, for instance, in the parallel of the feminine body being constructed as small and insignificant and the “third world” body being constructed as passive, while the masculine body is constructed as large and important and the “first world” body is constructed as an active body.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to explore what is accomplished by the dairies posted on the World Sex Guide by interrogating the discursive inscription of the bodies involved in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, exoticism, and development. The process of discursive inscription is described by Butler (1990) when she notes that there is no natural body; rather, the body is something that is done. In the case of the WSG, it is the discourse of the dairies that do the body—they imbue the bodies involved with assumptions and meanings by constructing them in a certain way. The inscription on the posters, and their inscriptions onto the women with whom they engage, are governed by, and propagate a hegemonic masculinity which all other men are interpreted in relation to. The assumptions and meanings attributed to the bodies by the discourse are perpetuated in the reading, understanding, and bonding over the dairies by the readers.

The gendered inscriptions that were made upon the bodies in the WSG were difficult to separate from the first/third world inscriptions. Both type of inscriptions manifest as overt and latent—there were overt constructions that used particular words or patterns, and there were latent constructions that required a deeper analysis of the themes of the dairies or the tone of the entries. Gendered constructions in both the overt and latent forms were often almost inextricably intertwined with racialized constructions, and many similarities in the types of constructions were evident.

In both themes bodies were constructed as different and hierarchically organized. Each body was defined by what it was not—the other body—thus creating an understanding built upon difference. One body was constructed as the norm, which meant

that the other body was constructed as deviant to the norm, and discursive sanctions were attributed to both positions. As the bodies were constructed in opposition to each other and hierarchically organized, their mutual exclusivity necessarily meant that they could not occupy the same position on the hierarchy and so one body was always superior to the other.

Masculine and Feminine Bodies

The diaries were all presented as though they were written by males engaging with females. The androcentric nature of the diaries means that the masculine body was positioned as the centre of the hegemonic experience, thus constructing it as the norm. Through androcentric constructions a hierarchy of bodies and actions is created and the male-centred nature of the diaries means that the masculine body is valued above the feminine body.

Heteronormative “knowledge” of the masculine and feminine bodies was constructed and perpetuated throughout the diaries. The masculine body’s biological drive for sex is constructed as common throughout the entries, which contributes to the “knowledge” that the feminine body is meant to be used to quench the sexual appetite of the masculine body.

The sexual acts that were described in the diaries had clearly defined roles for the masculine and the feminine bodies. The masculine body was constructed as the receiver of the sexual acts in most instances which speaks to the androcentric nature of the diaries. It was the masculine body that was approached in the initiation of most of the experiences, it was the masculine body that was propositioned, and it was the masculine

body that received most of the sexual acts (kissing, dancing, caressing, and oral sex). The girlfriend experience (GFE) was constructed in the dairies as the ultimate experience in which the masculine body received more from the feminine body—bathing, massaging, kissing, holding hands, cooking, and cleaning were all received by the male. At the same time that the masculine body is constructed as receiving there is necessarily a feminine body that is giving. The feminine body is constructed as initiating the experience, propositioning the masculine body, performing the sexual acts, and enacting the girlfriend experience.

The reception by the masculine body is constructed as a coveted position to be in, which is reinforced by the notion of accumulation that is valued in capitalist societies. The assumption of valuation of accumulation means that it is most often more desirable to be the recipient than the donor; thus the masculine position is higher on the hierarchy of gender that is constructed and perpetuated within the discourse.

The constructions of the subject and the object fall along similar lines as the androcentric recipient and donor constructions. The subject of each of the diary entries is always the masculine body, which makes sense since it is the masculine body that is writing the entry. Although there is room for more than one subjective position in the entries, the feminine body is not accorded a subjective position. Instead, the feminine body is positioned as an object by the failure to attribute human feelings, thought processes, or conditions to her.

While this construction again perpetuates a valuation of the masculine position over the feminine position it—along with the construction of the receiving/giving bodies—also serves to reinforce an understanding of difference between masculine and

feminine bodies. The genders that are constructed through discourse are just that—genders. This necessarily means that they are built upon an understanding of differences between masculine and feminine bodies, or else the discourse would be “humanizing” rather than “gendering”; gendering requires the breakup of certain attributes, acts, and processes into more than one category. Assumptions of difference precipitate differential treatment based on socially constructed understandings that are mistaken for “biology.” If discourse is accepted as both a manifestation of social conditions as well as a perpetrator, this means that the discourse in the WSG is not only abiding by the construction of inequality between genders, but is also serving to further inscribe bodies with gendered prescriptions or expectations.

In this light, it is interesting to read the introductory sections of the World Sex Guide website. The number of posts in the “Historical and Social Reports” category increased since the original retrieval of the data on March 19, 2006 which follows up on the promise made by the site administrators in the “About Us” section in which it is stated: “In the near future we plan to expand our mission by becoming a resource guide for women involved in sex work so that they can find organizations which provide support and social services.” Further to this notion, it is stated that the World Sex Guide plans to:

.... provide financial support to organizations which follow a “harm reduction” policy. Basically harm reduction is when support and social services are provided to those in need without judging their activities, and with an intent to lessen the harm and burdens faced by those individuals. In addition we will also support groups which seek to assist sex workers whom wish to leave the business. (World Sex Guide; retrieved September 6, 2007)

In a paragraph of the same section it is acknowledged that the WSG is a community comprised mostly of men, yet the text goes on to say that the WSG is going to take steps towards helping women out of the trade. One cannot not help but ask: how likely is this site to help women exit the sex trade? Most of these women take on sex work to augment other jobs that do not pay enough. They do so to make up for lacking social services for themselves and their families. So what is the chance that they are going to have access to the Internet, gain knowledge of the WSG site, have a good enough command of the language, have the time to read through all of the material, and feel comfortable posting?

It is worth noting that as of January 16, 2008, the “Historical and Social Reports” section of the WSG had 16 postings. Of those 16 postings, six were about current news on the sex trade and three posts condemned sex tourism. All three of these posts were written by authors who represented themselves as male and all of them asked how diarists would feel if it was their sister or daughter in the trade, highlighting the degradation that was being constructed in the diaries. The remaining seven entries were posted by authors who represented themselves as being involved in the sex trade. Interestingly, however, the purpose of all seven of these entries was to give tips to tourists or to other women engaged in the sex trade. One author who calls herself *Amy* (June 21, 2000) runs through her step-by-step suggestions for an interaction with attention to both intimate details—“In your bag: Bring a little Ziploc bag with an extra pair of nylons and a few panty shields, because you don't want to ruin your undies”—and other more general tips—“Don't drink hard liquor at work. No gin and tonic, no margaritas, no Scotch.... Drink Perrier, soda, wine or champagne, light drinks that do not dim your sense of where you are and what's happening.”

While this may be a useful resource to women who are involved in the sex trade, it remains that they may not be able to access this information for a host of reasons. While the tips in this section of the site may be a step towards social responsibility, they are not helping women to exit the trade as was indicated in the “About Us” section of the site. Whether or not the administrators of the WSG are taking other steps towards helping women out of the sex trade is unknown.

Picking up on Schaeffer-Gabriel’s (2005) it can be argued that the section functions to provide posters with the discourse of saving the women. It enables the tourists to acknowledge that these women may be coming from less than ideal circumstances and justifying their interaction with them. They are able to construct themselves as being “soft hearted” or “offering” the women more money than they would normally get which is part of western hegemonic masculinities.

“First World” and “Third World” Bodies

In the same way that bodies were differentiated and placed on a hierarchy according to their gender using gendered discourse, bodies were racialized with the discourse in the diaries as well. Using discourse of difference, the race of the diarist was posited as the norm, while the race of the women was thus made to be deviant. The racialized constructions were not so easily seen as being placed on a hierarchy because of the mysticism and exoticism attributed to Latin American bodies. The bodies of the women were constructed as hypersexual and, in some instances, were revered for it. The inscription of the oversexed Latin American body has roots in imperialism and colonialism (Cabezas 1998; Rosseau and Porter 1990; O’Connell Davidson 2005; Enloe

2000), which suggests that these constructions are built on a foundation of hierarchical conceptions. The exotic body is based on the notion of the race being biologically lesser developed and thus closer to human nature. The 'pura vida' also speaks to this notion of the racially deviant body being atavistic in comparison to the body that falls in accordance with the racial norm. Themes of the exotic, while complimentary to the body at first glance, are borne from conditions and understandings of inequality, which necessarily means that the discourse in the diaries perpetuates these understandings and conditions.

The themes of racialized bodies ran parallel with the imposition of states of "development" on the bodies involved in the diaries. The state of development of the bodies—"first world" and "third world"—manifest in the way that they were exoticized and the pura vida, but also in the way that consumption of one by the other was valorized in the diaries. Consumption was the main goal in each of the entries examined, which tied in closely with the economics of the interaction—the consumption of the feminine body by the masculine, the price paid in comparison with what was given, and the notion of getting a deal with the economic nature of the interaction displayed as little as possible. The body being consumed is set up for failure because of the economic basis of the interaction, combined with the need to disguise that nature in order to be considered successful by the consuming body. The consuming body dictates what the interaction will look like according to his ideals, which leads to the understanding by the reader that the consuming position is desirable over that of the body being consumed.

Concluding Remarks

What do the diaries on the World Sex Guide accomplish? Poststructuralism tells us that their communicative nature means that they manifest and reproduce a common discourse. The goal then turns to an exploration of the discourse, which is what this study has endeavoured to realize. The discourse that is manifest and perpetuated in the diaries on the WSG is a discourse that is constantly in the process of change and development. It is rooted in understandings of difference, and thus of inequality, between genders, races, geographical locations, and economic fortitude. According to Connell's (1995) definition of hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77) it can be said that regardless of whether the WSG diarists are able to experience hegemonic masculinities in "real time" they are able to do so virtually via their self-constructions. These men are able to construct themselves in positions in which they are able subordinate women in terms of gender, exoticism, racism, economics, states of development and likely in other areas that are beyond the scope of this exploration. These understandings are shared amongst posters on the WSG as is demonstrated by the commonalities of the posts that form the basis for this analysis, and they are also perpetuated to readers the world over.

The social context in which this pornography is produced and exists serves to perpetuate such discourses and understandings of sexual engagement, treatment of women involved in the sex trade and women in a more general sense both online and offline. The hegemonic masculinities that are carried out on the WSG are built upon an

understanding of dominance over women in terms of gender, race, sexuality, nationality, economics, status and wealth. The WSG contributes to an entire way of understanding and interpreting the world based upon certain performances and subjectivities that have dominance as their common goal. Ways of interpreting and reacting that are based upon the purposeful dominance of one group over another are violent in their aim. The deviant nature of the pornographic context and discourse of the WSG results in a sexualization of the violence found within it as men are learning to be aroused by it which has devastating implications for women in the global community.

Nevertheless, like all research projects, this exploration does have its shortcomings, and there are many things that could be improved upon should the study be replicated. One limitation is the choice of website. While the World Sex Guide was chosen because of its relative popularity, a wider sample of websites would make for more generalizable findings. Another possible limitation is the manner in which the diaries were selected. While the selection is inclusive in that all dairies that fit the criteria for diary entries set out by Bishop and Robinson (2002) were included, the interpretation of the diary entry has no universal referent. In this regard, it would be interesting in future research to use different criteria and categories to break down the entries and compare the themes that emerge with the themes from this project. Lastly, the nature of the data used in this study does not allow for deeper analysis. There is no opportunity to probe for further expansion on any of the areas in the diaries, nor is there the opportunity to ask for clarification. The use of this type of secondary data once again leaves the researcher dependent on her own subjective interpretations of the entries.

As the forces of globalization rage on, sex tourism is becoming more common as is the ability to write in a forum that is accessible to half the earth's population. Discourse is not without affect and it is important to question the implications of these growing phenomena. Despite the shortcomings and narrow scope of this study, the changing face of the phenomena in question calls for further in-depth research exploring further themes, other destination regions, and more websites.

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