A FINE ROMANCE?

TOURIST WOMEN AND LOCAL MEN'S SEXUAL ECONOMIC EXCHANGES IN THE CARIBBEAN

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ABSTRACT

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Existing research on the phenomenon of 'sex tourism' has focused on the practices of Western heterosexual male tourists who pursue sexual contact with local females in South East Asia. These men's behaviour is widely understood as a form of prostitute use which rests upon global inequalities and racist fantasies, as well as gender inequalities. A number of studies have shown that female tourists also enter into sexual liaisons with local men in poor and developing countries, but these women's behaviour is not interpreted in the same way as that of their male counterparts. Although researchers generally acknowledge that sexual relationships between local men and tourist women involve an exchange of money or goods and gifts, there is a tendency to view sexual encounters between tourist women and local men as a 'fine romance', rather than as a form of sexual exploitation.

This thesis is based upon ethnographic and survey research that explored sexual economic relationships between tourist women and local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. It explores the complexity of power relations which shape these relationships and shows how both parties draw upon dominant discourses on prostitution, sexuality to obscure the commercial basis of their relationships and to downplay the significance of the economic and other inequalities which exist between them. Above all they interpret their relations through a lens of gender essentialism and popular beliefs about racial difference. This tendency to essentialise gender and oversimplify questions about race can also be found in many feminist theoretical accounts of sexuality, prostitution and sex tourism. The thesis argues that there is a need for more complicated and nuanced theoretical models of prostitution, sex tourism, sexual exploitation, victimization and consent, and the kind of power that is exercised within heterosexual relationships.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father

Donald 'Pretty Foot' Taylor
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Chapter 1

PROSTITUTION, TOURISM AND SEX TOURISM

Prostitution is widely understood by academics and lay-persons to involve the exchange of sex or sexual services for cash and/or other economic benefits (Phoenix, 1995), and a 'prostitute' is generally thought of as someone who makes a living by selling sex. However, this simple definition is actually very difficult to operationalise. Most academic works on the subject have focused on female prostitution, and one immediate definitional problem arises from the fact that gender inequalities mean that all sexual relationships between men and women can have an economic element (for instance, marriage is both an economic and a sexual institution, and in 'courting' and dating there is often an expectation that men will cover all financial expenses).

Simone de Beauvoir (1972:569) emphasises this point with a quote from Marro: 'The only difference between women who sell themselves in prostitution and those who sell themselves in marriage is in the price and the length of time the contract runs'. This suggests that regardless of similarities between prostitution and marriage, prostitution can be fairly easily distinguished by its brief, businesslike, and sexually explicit character. In practice, however, this is not necessarily the case, as prostitution contracts vary enormously (see O'Connell Davidson, 1998). Clients do not always want brief, anonymous and sexually instrumental encounters. Some want companionship as well as sex, and are willing to pay for a woman to spend several days or weeks with them, and/or they may return to the same woman regularly. In these cases, they may give much more than a set fee in return, for instance, gifts, meals, clothing, holidays, even advice and emotional support.
In other words, men sometimes enter into more diffuse relationships with prostitute women which resemble a non-commercial sexual relationship, and which can even shade off into a partnership or marriage. This makes it very difficult to draw a sharp boundary between prostitution and non-commercial sexual relationships. Although relationships at each end of the continuum are easy enough to classify (the difference between a relationship between a husband and wife and that between a client and a street walking prostitute who have never met before is clear), there is a grey area somewhere in the middle of the continuum which is ambiguous to participants and observers alike. How explicitly commercial does a relationship between a man and a woman have to be before it is defined as prostitution, and at what point does what started as a commercial relationship change into a 'genuine' non-commercial partnership?

Figure 1:

The Commercial-Non-Commercial Sex Continuum

Brief, anonymous Long term diffuse
commercial contracts sexual-emotional

Grey Area

Definitional problems also arise from the fact that people tend to think of prostitution as 'a way of life' that is permanently adopted by 'the prostitute', whereas in reality, people may move in and out of prostitution, or use prostitution to supplement income from another form of employment. In this sense the definitional problems associated
with prostitution are like those associated with paedophilia. As Ken Plummer notes, 'pedophilia is so often hived off from its social context that it becomes the property of people rather than a form of experience. Activities become beings and the talk is no longer of pedophilia but the pedophile' (1981: 228, original emphasis). The same kind of points can be made about prostitution. Because female prostitution has long been a focus of moral and political concern, the stereotype of 'the prostitute' is a woman, and the label 'prostitute' refers to a permanent status. The stereotype of 'the client', by contrast, is a man, and his status as 'client' or 'prostitute-user' is fluid and temporary, rather than permanent.

This reflects the double-standard that is applied to male and female sexual behaviour in most societies (see McIntosh, 1978; O'Connell Davidson, 1998). Female prostitution is seen as a form of female sexual deviance, but male prostitute use is naturalised as an expression of men's biologically determined sexual needs. Thus lay people and academics have long found it hard to distinguish between female 'promiscuity' and 'prostitution' (see Gilfoyle, 1992), because a promiscuous woman is labelled a 'whore', and a prostitute woman is imagined as a sexual deviant, rather than an economic actor. Academic as well as popular discourses on prostitution have tended to essentialise notions of gender, and this is true of feminist critics of prostitution (Jefferys, 1998; Millet, 1975) as much as it is true of orthodox sociological treatments of the subject. Prostitution is imagined as an institution which allows men to pursue their sexual desires as agents, and which denies women agency, transforming them into passive objects of male desire. The idea of homosexual male prostitution can be accommodated (though very little research attention has been given to it), but the term 'female client' becomes an oxymoron.
These problems of definition have become particularly acute in academic debates on tourist-related prostitution in developing countries. As this chapter will show, the 1980s and early 1990s literature on sex tourism focused on the relationship between tourism and formally organised, highly commodified prostitution in South East Asia. Research attention was primarily directed towards male tourists using brothel prostitutes in Thailand and the Philippines, so that 'sex tourism' was clearly and easily understood as a type of prostitute-use. From the mid 1990s on, however, there has been growing interest in sexual relationships between tourists and locals which have an economic element, and yet do not conform so neatly to traditional understandings of prostitution (Gunter, 1998; Pruitt and LaFont, 1995). These relationships are a feature of the informal tourist economy, in which locals 'hustle' a living from a combination of various activities, including selling souvenirs, drugs, providing taxi services and tours, acting as a guide, interpreter and/or companion.

Very often, interactions between economically powerful tourists and economically powerless locals have a sexual element, but the sexual exchanges which take place in this informal sector are not always subjectively viewed as prostitution by the tourists and locals involved, or classified as such by academic researchers. Often, researchers speak of 'romance tourism', and/or analyse the phenomenon through a concern with tourists' sexual activities in general, rather than prostitute use in particular (Oppermann, 1999). This is especially the case when the sexual interaction takes place between tourist women and local men.

This thesis is a study of sexual encounters between tourist women and local men and boys in the informal tourist economy in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. It looks at the nature and form of the relationships they establish with each other, and
documents the subjective perceptions, motivations and attitudes of both local males and female tourists. My research explores the power relations that lie behind and shape these relationships, and is necessarily concerned with the definitional and theoretical problems associated with prostitution and sex tourism. In existing research, the activities of women who travel for sex are interpreted in a very different way from the activities of their male counterparts, and this, it will be argued, is because theorists of sex tourism tend to work with an essentializing model of gender and sexuality. Because women are assumed to be essentially sexual passive and receptive, and men are assumed to be essentially sexually active and predatory, there is a refusal by theorists to look beyond gender and consider imbalances of power in terms of 'race' and class and age. When a white male tourist buys drinks and meals and gifts for a local black female who is half his age, researchers are willing to stretch their understanding of commercial sex to define this as a form of prostitution. When a white female tourist does the same thing with a local black male, the conceptual gaze of researchers means that they are reluctant to use the term 'prostitution'.

The gendered structures of the informal tourist economy mean that the local men who enter into sexual relationships with tourist women rarely depend exclusively on 'sex work' as a means of subsistence, and rarely enter into straightforward 'cash for sex' exchanges, so that their behaviour does not fit with established models of 'prostitution'. Since they rarely define themselves as prostitutes, and the women they have sex with do not subjectively perceive themselves as prostitute-users, it is very difficult for researchers to incorporate female sex tourism within existing models of sex tourism.

This thesis is based on research which shows that female tourists who enter into
sexual relationships with local men and boys whilst on holiday in Jamaica and the
Dominican Republic exercise very similar powers to those exercised by male sex
tourists. At a theoretical level, it is concerned with questions about how best to
conceptualise these powers. It provides a critique of those theorists and researchers
who essentialise gender differences in their analyses of sex tourism, and the tendency
to give primacy to patriarchal gendered power in discussions of sex tourism. It argues
that is only by focusing on power in its many different manifestations, and exploring
the ways in which gender power is racialised and classed, that both male and female
sex tourism can be adequately theorised as a form of sexual exploitation.

This chapter briefly reviews the existing literature on sex tourism, and highlights the
particular problems that the phenomenon of women travelling for sex poses for
current models of prostitution and sex tourism.

Sex Tourism: Research and Theory

Ryan Bishop and Lillian Robinson (1998) note that tourism in general has been
marginalised by mainstream political and economic researchers and that sex tourism
in particular has further been avoided as a research area within the field of tourism. In
the 1980s, however, a small number of feminists began to express concern about the
phenomenon of ‘sex tourism’, using the term to refer to mass prostitution which is
linked, directly or indirectly, with the development of tourism in ‘Third World’
countries. Wendy Lee (1991: 141) argues that ‘tourism and prostitution are now a
"package commodity" marketed on an international scale’. Why sex tourism has
emerged, how it is organised, the forces which shape supply and demand, what
contributes to the phenomenon’s growth and who profits from it have been the main
questions behind much of the recent research on the subject. Although this research
has contributed greatly to our understanding of the issue, it remains partial in the sense that it focuses primarily upon male sex tourism to South East Asia, and is very much concerned with forms of prostitution that conform to the standard, traditional model of prostitution as a brief and highly commercial exchange of cash for a specific sexual service.

Male Sex Tourism to South East Asia

Tourist-related prostitution in South East Asia is powerfully related to external military and economic interventions in the region from the 1950s onwards. Although some forms of prostitution existed prior to these interventions, Bishop and Robinson note that the international military presence took the sex industry to 'more visible levels that cohered with modernization strategies and generated staggering economic returns' (1998: 160). In their study of the Philippines, Roselia Ofreneo and Rene Ofreneo (1998: 102) note that 'by far the most significant impact on prostitution in the Philippines was the establishment of United States military bases in the country'. As a result of the historical links between the military entertainment networks for Rest and Recreation (R&R), countries that had at some point in their history hosted foreign military bases were particular targets of sex tourism (Heyzer, 1986).

Some feminist studies in this area have focused on the link between gender and the military’s masculinist ideology which shaped international politics and defined R&R operations (Moon, 1997). Militarised masculinity is constructed as a specific sexualised identity which R&R was designed to reaffirm. Cynthia Enloe (1992) argues that the creation of a particular sexualised US serviceman was important to sustain morale within the military organisation as well as to fix relationships between local and military cultures. **R&R contracts were set up between US military bases and**
various countries in South East Asia to sustain a sense of masculinity amongst the General Infantry (GI’s) who were based in the region during and after the Vietnam War. R&R in the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea and Vietnam, created a diverse range of commercial sex establishments, expanding the existing sex industry with an explosion of bars, clubs and brothels. While prostitution may have existed before the R&R contracts, militarisation played major role in developing the sex industry. On the one hand the US military sanctioned and facilitated the existence of brothels to meet the assumed 'physical necessities' of the troops (Sturdevant and Stoltzfus, 1992), while on the other, the local business community, international businesses and the military sought to profit from the many small scale operations (Truong, 1990).

It is estimated that from the 1960s to the mid 1970s, thousands of local women and girls engaged in prostitution serving the thousands of American men in service in South East Asia. Lee (1991) estimates that in Thailand between 1966 and 1974, the number of 'special job workers', a euphemism for prostitute, increased from 1,246 to over 7,000, while some 20,000 'entertainment' establishments nation-wide generated over US $20 million (Truong, 1990). In the Philippines, U.S. military bases continued until 1992 when the base agreements were not renewed. Rene Ofreneo and Rosalinda Ofreneo (1998) estimate that by 1990 there were over two thousand registered R&R establishments throughout the Philippines and over 17,000 registered women entertainers in Olongapo and Angeles City combined.

Japanese economic investment in tourism was also instrumental in encouraging large scale tourist-related prostitution (Hall, 1992; Leheny, 1995; Mitter, 1986). For example, in the early 1970s, South Korea made a conscious and determined effort to
enter into the sex tourism sector as part of a planned economic development programme which targeted the Japanese businessman with special ‘Kisaeng tours’ (prostitution tours) (Hall, 1992). These all expenses paid tours were designed to ‘boost the morale’ of personnel of Japanese companies. Swasti Mitter (1986) explains that Korean women were trained to accept their new role as ‘Kisaeng girls’ to further the government’s economic plan:

Prospective Kisaeng are given lectures by a male university professor on the crucial role of tourism in South Korea’s economy before they get their licenses. And South Korean ministers have praised the sincerity of girls who have contributed to their fatherland’s economic development (1986:64).

Michael Hall’s (1992) study of South East Asian sex tourism also highlights how international politics and economic relations impacted on Taiwan’s sex industry. After the Vietnam War, American servicemen were replaced by Japanese male visitors whose influx was limited by political relations with China in 1973 when Japanese recognition of mainland China resulted in a shift of Japanese sex tourism away from Taiwan to South Korea. However, attempts to control prostitution in Japan rekindled Japanese sex tourists’ interest in Taiwan and has resulted in a growth in tourist related prostitution on the island. In the 1990s, Vietnam also started to look to tourism as an economic programme for development, and where the communist regime had enjoyed some success in its attempts to wipe out prostitution and ‘rehabilitate’ prostitute women following the war, tourist development is now resulting in large numbers of Vietnamese women prostituting themselves, this time to mostly Japanese tourists (Cooper and Hanson, 1998).

Sandra Sturdevant and Barbara Stoltzfus (1992) observe that R&R centres became
models for tourist 'playgrounds' and the development of the tourist prostitution industry in Asia. Post-war economic restructuring in the region was problematic. These countries had a considerable economic dependence on the income from R&R which had to be replaced. For many of these countries tourism was viewed by local governments and encouraged by international bodies, as the best and quickest way to obtain foreign exchange. Entry into the tourist market rested on exploiting the existing entertainment infrastructure created by the US military. For example, in Thailand tourist investment from the World Bank and other international banks for infrastructure development was combined with small scale investments by foreign investors. Plans were made in 1975 by the World Bank President, Robert McNamara, who had been the U.S. secretary of Defence when R&R contracts were signed, which offered investment to develop a tourist infrastructure uniting airlines, tour operators and those controlling the sex industry (Bishop and Robinson, 1998; Truong, 1990). In return the Thai government gave generous incentives to foreign investors and tax exemptions were put forward on certain import duties and business taxes. Profits could also be remitted so that little of the wealth generated stayed in the country (Lee, 1991).

The influence of small scale investments in shaping the nature of tourism in both Thailand and the Philippines should not be underestimated. Many of the girlie bars, go-go bars and sex floor shows were foreign owned and run. The Thai government's desire for an 'open' economy encouraged many U.S. expatriates to invest in the 'personal services' sector. These 'sexpatriates' have 'a strong vein of imperialism' (Seabrook, 1996: 33) and find that their status as white men gives them the racialised, gendered and economic power to place them at the top of the social hierarchy (O'Connell Davidson, 1995). By law, Thailand requires that 50 per cent of ownership
of such establishments has to belong to a Thai national, however this obstacle is usually overcome by marrying a Thai woman (Truong, 1990). The most famous red light areas and clubs are those that were developed by ‘sexpatriates’ (for example, the Soi Cowboy area and Pat Pong Road in Bangkok). Expatriates success in the sex industry relies on their personal links with their country of origin which make their establishments familiar in unfamiliar surroundings.

Prostitution-tourism has thus become an integral and profitable component of tourism since the early 1980's, and the commercial sex industry has become a significant economic sector in several countries in South East Asia. A large number of women are employed directly or indirectly in sex work in the region, though estimates range so widely that they should be treated with caution (Lim, 1998). Those working in the formal sex industry are sometimes registered and surveyed by the Ministry of Public Health. In some countries this occurs even if prostitution is illegal. However, the illegal, hidden and mobile nature of sex work in tourist areas means a large number of women, men and children working in bars, on beaches and on the streets are impossible to detect and therefore record. Nonetheless, International Labour Office research estimates that between 0.25 and 1.5 per cent of the total female population in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand work as prostitutes and that the sex sector accounts for between 2 per cent and 14 per cent of the gross domestic product (Lim, 1998). This means that over a million prostitutes work in the sex industry in South East Asia alone.

The financial incentives make prostitution an important illegal economic activity on a par with drugs trading, and many people are dependent on the earnings of sex workers for their survival. Brothel owners, managers, pimps, taxi drivers, owners of rooms and
apartments and support staff for the establishments from which prostitutes work can equal the numbers of prostitutes working from them. In 1997 a survey by the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand found out of a total of 104,262 workers in 7,759 establishments only 64,886 were sex workers, the others were support staff (Lim, 1998). The police and corrupt politicians and public officials also benefit by skimming off the sex industry through bribes. Without a welfare system, the families of migrant sex workers often rely on remittances as their only source of income.

It is important to recognise that there is local, as well as tourist demand, for prostitution in South East Asia, and that the brothels, massage parlours and teahouses which cater to local demand are often even harsher environments for sex workers than those which cater to tourist demand. Bishop and Robinson's portrayal of the conditions in the Thai sex industry is representative of the situation in other South East Asian countries:

Because the amounts of money paid by clients and to workers in the local sex industry are much smaller than the sums that change hands with tourists, the venues and conditions of employment are much grimmer. The vast majority of the women employed to service Thai men are indentured laborers. More and more of these are illegally trafficked from Burma or South China, much as Thai women are taken to Japan and Europe, revealing an infinite regress in which one nation exploits the female bodies of another, “less developed” country (1998: 160).

Nonetheless, tourists do represent a significant portion of demand for prostitution in South East Asia. It is, of course, difficult to measure exactly how many tourists engage in sex with local sex workers, but there is reason to believe that a high
percentage of single Western travellers to South East Asia practice sex tourism.

Martin Oppermann (1999:6) reports that survey research with Australian tourists found that 'the incidence of having engaged in sexual activities was the highest amongst those who had travelled to Thailand (94%) and the Philippines (96%)', while survey research with German tourists suggested that, as a conservative estimate, there were 'about 100,000 German sex tourists in 1992'. This kind of survey evidence also reveals that male tourists who have sex with locals whilst on holiday do not always define themselves as prostitute-users or think of their sexual partners as 'prostitutes', and this draws attention to the existence of what Julia O'Connell Davidson (1998: 76) terms 'informal tourist-related prostitution'.

Though the stereotype of sex tourism has become that of middle-aged men going into formally organised brothels, GoGo bars and nightclubs in countries like Thailand and the Philippines, tourist-related prostitution in developing countries can actually take many forms. In the informal sector, people solicit from beaches, bars and discos, they generally do not negotiate prices up front or contract specific sexual services of x amount for x service. While there are professional sex workers it is also the case that some locals who do not identify as prostitutes will sometimes enter into brief encounters with tourists to supplement their income if they already have jobs, or for a chance to migrate through friendship/marriage to a tourist. It is therefore easier for tourists to imagine that they have a girlfriend/boyfriend rather than seeing themselves as entering into an overt prostitution contract. On the whole, however, studies of male sex tourism to South East Asia do not look at the informal sector in any depth, but rather focus on traditional and explicit forms of prostitution. Because the term 'sex tourism' has come to be so strongly associated with white men travelling to South East Asia to use brothel prostitutes and 'go-go' bar hostesses, female tourists' sexual
activities in developing countries tend to be viewed in a different light from those of their male counterparts.

**Female Sex Tourism**

To date, the phenomenon of women travelling for sex has not attracted much research attention (Albuquerque, 1998). However, what research there is suggests that small, but increasing numbers of women are travelling for sex to various destinations which offer the tourist cheap package deals (Kempadoo, 1996; Pruitt and La Font, 1995; Meisch, 1995). On the whole, researchers and theorists have tended to treat female tourists' sexual behaviour as qualitatively different from male sex tourism. Some researchers have focused on changing gender roles, even suggesting that sexual encounters between tourist women and local men can have positive features:

> Whereas sex tourism serves to perpetuate gender roles and reinforce power relations of male dominance and female subordination, romance tourism in Jamaica provides an arena for change. By drawing on their respective traditional gender models as well as their imaginings and idealisations of each other and new possibilities the partners in these relationships explore new avenues for negotiating femaleness and maleness (Pruitt and LaFont, 1995:423).

Other researchers have held onto traditional constructions of gender roles to interpret the behaviour and experience of Western women who travel to poor countries for sex with local men in a very different way from that of Western men who engage in the same practice. Tourist women have sometimes been sympathetically described as ‘lonely women’ whose ‘economic and social ability to travel alone is being exploited by Caribbean tourism’ and the ‘beach boys’ who either offer them the possibility of a
‘holiday romance’ or ‘sexual harassment’ (Momsen, 1994:116). Indeed, few studies refer to the phenomenon of ‘female sex tourism’, but prefer instead the term ‘romance tourism’ (Dahles and Bra, 1999; Momsen, 1994; Pruitt and LaFont, 1995; Meisch, 1995). Nor are the activities of local males necessarily viewed as ‘prostitution’. Heidi Dahles and Karin Bras (1999), for example, argue that their study of female tourists and local men in Indonesia does not try to look at the activities of the men from the point of view of prostitution. Instead, they consider relations between the two groups as an ‘inversion’ and transgression of usual gender norms of both the West and Eastern cultures, in that local young men have sex with older, Western tourist women, who are their economic superiors. They argue that it is important to understand the cultural meanings attached to these interactions within the context of a wider subsistence strategy. They note the men’s ‘romantic and sexual behaviour’

has to be understood as a part of their entrepreneurial strategies to make a living as well as to secure their future. As romancing the tourist seems to be the major economic strategy of these boys, they may well be labelled romantic entrepreneurs (1999:281).

The men’s activities are regarded as just one part of a ‘hustling’ strategy in which they continue to have gender power even if they do not have economic, racialised, aged or social power in the tourist setting (Press, 1978). The patterns of ‘romantic overtures’ that emerge in Indonesia are similar to those in tourist areas in the Caribbean, which are again often interpreted as a phenomenon very different from male sex tourism. In her study of beach boys in Barbados, for example, Joan Phillips (1999:186) also stresses the entrepreneurial side of hustling as part of local men’s masculinity and further states that ‘hustling can be viewed as the exploitation of white females by
young Black Barbadians’.

Researchers rarely draw attention to the similarities between female tourists’ so-called ‘romance tourism’ and the informal tourist-related prostitution that involves local women and tourist men. Thus, although research evidence from a number of different countries produces a fairly consistent picture of how ‘beach boys’ and ‘guides’ operate and the nature of their sexual interactions with female tourists, there is no consensus as to whether these interactions should be understood as a form of prostitution or as an expression of ‘promiscuity’ on the part of both tourist women and local men. Commentators seem uncertain whether these relationships are exploitative, and if so, undecided as to who is exploiting whom.

This uncertainty reflects broader problems about the ways in which sex tourism has been theorised. As the following section shows, macro level theorizing about male sex tourism has focused on questions about gendered, and to a lesser extent, ‘racialised’ and economic power. The same kind of analysis has then been applied to micro level interactional features of sex tourism (individual men’s demand for sex tourism is explained as an expression of patriarchal, and to a lesser extent, ‘racialised’ power). This model is extremely difficult to apply to tourist women’s sexual interactions with local men, which means that there is no real framework for analysing ‘female sex tourism’.

Macro analyses of sex tourism have tended to reflect a misunderstanding of male sex tourism as only offering the usual straightforward cash for sex transactions. The informal sex sector which operates around tourism offers men a wide range of sexual economic-exchanges that are not always organised as narrowly focused prostitution contracts. In this informal sector women and children work freelance and do not put
limits on time or sexual acts or negotiate prices up front. Some do not consider themselves to be prostitutes, as their primary reason for entering into sexual relationships with tourist men is the hope that it will lead to marriage and a passport out of the country. Tourist men who have sexual encounters with women and children in the informal sector also do not necessarily self identify as prostitute users (Gunther, 1998; O'Connell Davidson, 1998). Both prostitute and client status are fluid and it is not always possible to draw clear boundaries around what constitutes prostitution or romance.

**Theoretical Dilemmas**

Perhaps the most comprehensive macro level analysis of sex tourism in South East Asia is provided by Than-Dam Truong (1990), who focuses on the dynamics of the sex tourist industry as an interplay of international and local economic interests brought together in an infrastructure of tourism. She argues it is impossible to analyse the economic impact of sex tourism without acknowledging that it rests on massive gender and social inequalities. As she notes:

> the emergence of sex tourism and sex-related entertainment is an articulation of a series of unequal social relations, including North-South relations, and relations between capital and labour, male and female, production and reproduction. This articulation has been induced by capital and state interests and therefore cannot be considered as an outcome of a policy mistake, or an effect of uncontrollable poverty. Rather, it is evoked by an interplay between external and internal economic and political forces (Truong, 1990, 129).

Truong examined the connection between the international tourist industry and the development of the local tourist sex sector. She shows how the rapid growth of the
tourist trade has been designed by international financing sources and political
institutions which encouraged tourism development projects in indebted countries
desperate for foreign exchange. Host countries are left to supply cheap, preferably
non-unionised labour and provide attractive incentives to encourage foreign
companies to invest in tourism while predominantly foreign owned hotels, tours
operators and airlines supplied the capital, knowledge and experience and reaped the
profits. Within this framework women’s labour and sexuality have become important
commodities to tourism. On the one hand, women are a cheap source of labour for the
hotel and service sectors, and on the other they contribute ‘personal services’ (sexual
services) which increase the appeal of the tourist product. As Noeleen Heyzer (1986)
notes, while tourism created a variety of jobs, employment opportunities within
tourism are gendered in ways that mean:

jobs for young women are usually concentrated in public relations, in the
promotional aspects of tourism, as cashiers and waitresses, in traditional
entertainment, in new entertainment and servicing including sexual services
demanded by visitors and by business tourists, the bulk of whom are men
(1986:54).

Sex tourism is thus founded on economic, political and social relations that are highly
gendered. But while the organisation and structures of the tourist industry are above
all characterised by a basic gender hierarchy which places men at the helm, 'racialised'
and economic inequalities are also of great significance for the sex tourism industry.
Sylvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine’s (1995) research in the Philippines concludes
that:

the gender inequalities apparent not only in the fundamental nature of
exchange in sexual services, but also in the character of employment and earnings in the industry (in other words, men's purchase of women's bodies is usually mediated by male auxiliaries who take a slice of women's profits). is further exacerbated by the fact that overall ownership and control .....is firmly in the hands of men. Interwoven in this basic gender hierarchy are the spectres of race, class and nationality (Chant and McIlwaine, 1995: 217).

Likewise, Michael Hall (1994), acknowledges that gender relations provide the base upon which sex tourism flourishes because local cultures were/are dominated by patriarchal interests which shape economic, social and cultural structures, but also notes that 'the significance of economic marginality and racial inequality as a casual factor in prostitution' is also an important factor. David Leheny's (1995: 381) study of Japanese involvement in South East Asian sex tourism builds on this point by adding that 'it's [sex tourism's] existence relies on a peculiar and unstable combination of sexuality, nationalism, and economic power'.

In these ways, then, macro level analyses reveal sex tourism as the outcome of economic, social and political processes that are both gendered and 'racialised'. Researchers and theorists who have turned their attention to the demand side of male sex tourism have therefore started with questions about patriarchal power and its links to racialised and economic power. This has meant that, on the whole, micro level analyses of sex tourism have started from the proposition that what needs to be explained is white Western men's desire to use South East Asian female prostitutes. Notions of masculinity have thus been placed under scrutiny. Suzy Kruhse-Mount Burton's (1995) study of Australian sex tourists to South East Asia, for instance, links the impetus to travel with Australian men's attempts to sustain a masculine identity in
the face of changing gender relations at home. Other commentators have linked the search for masculinity through sex tourism with that of affirming a national identity in opposition to an inferior local male 'Other' (Lee, 1991; O'Connell Davidson, 1995, 1998). Wendy Lee (1991) links the use of prostitutes with masculinity, racist stereotypes and economic inequalities. She argues that racialised fantasies about 'sensual and passive' South East Asian woman fuel the demand for sex tourism and sustain ideas about a mutually beneficial exchange between the client and sex worker. In addition, the ideological and psychological motivation which legitimised prostitute use by men is sanctioned and reproduced by capitalist power relations in the form of a racialised and gendered sex market.

In explaining the demand side of sex tourism, feminist commentators have tended to fall into a theoretical trap Anne McClintock identifies, that of simply tagging 'race' and class on to existing models of gender inequality:

race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather, they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other - if in contradictory and conflictual ways (McClintock 1995: 5, original emphasis).

This is to say, feminist commentators start by treating sex tourism, like other forms of prostitution, as first and foremost a reflection of male power and female powerlessness, and then, because sex tourism mainly involves the prostitution of poor women in developing countries, tag notions of 'racialised' or 'North-South' inequalities onto the explanatory framework. Thus, for example, Sheila Jeffreys (1997) does not separate tourist-related prostitution from more traditional types of
prostitution which are founded on patriarchal power. She argues that economics alone cannot explain global prostitution and trafficking, and that feminist analyses must emphasise 'the ways in which the maintenance of masculinity as a foundation for male supremacy interacts with economic forces to construct global prostitution' (1997:315). Cynthia Enloe also concludes that while sex tourism rests on the articulation of economic, gender and 'racialised' power, 'The very structure of international tourism needs patriarchy to survive' (1989:41).

These theoretical models, which assume 'the prostitute' is female and her client male, make it very difficult to understand or explain tourist women's sexual interactions with local males.

Kamala Kempadoo (1998: 6) has pointed out that men and children as well as women are involved in prostitution in the Caribbean, and notes that this trend 'acutely challenges the tendency to essentialise the sex worker with biological notions of gender'. However, it seems that even where researchers recognise that male sex workers exist, they draw on essentialized notions of gender to interpret the behaviour of women who provide economic benefits in exchange for sex. Thus, the tourist woman who buys meals and gifts for her local sexual partner is enjoying a 'romance', not using a prostitute. In most of the literature on the subject, traditional notions of gender inform an interpretation of the white tourist women as passive innocents, 'used' by local men who are actively seeking money, a ticket off the island and maybe love, as well as sexual experience.

For example, Heidi Dahles and Karin Bras found themselves unable to provide an adequate label for the sexual activities of the men they interviewed in Indonesia. Their dilemma is captured in the following quote, 'prostitution is not the right concept to
characterise these relationships, love is not the right concept either’ (1999: 287). They could not define the men they interviewed as 'gigolos' because they did not ask for money up front but rather gained financial benefits during a relationship. Other researchers have also faced this conceptual dilemma (Crick, 1992; Pruitt and La Font, 1995). On the one hand, researchers acknowledge that these sexual relationships are based on an exchange of money or goods and gifts, yet on the other they argue that the actors' narratives of romance and courtship make the term 'prostitution' inappropriate.

This reflects broader theoretical problems with feminist analyses of sexuality which tend to overlook the significance of heterosexuality and how it is constructed in relation to race and class. Diane Richardson, observes that:

heterosexuality is rarely acknowledged or, even less likely problematised. Instead, most of the conceptual frameworks we use to theorise human relations rely implicitly upon a naturalised heterosexuality, where (hetero-)sexuality tends either to be ignored in the analysis or is hidden from view, being treated as an unquestioned paradigm’ (Richardson, 1996:1).

This problem has been discussed by Laura Brace and Julia O’Connell Davidson (2000), who argue that some feminist theorists tend to hold onto an over simplistic view of gender power. Others like Carol Smart (1996), have also noted that heterosexuality and penetration does not always or necessarily have to mean rape or oppression for all women. These authors urge us to advance debates in order to develop more complicated understandings of the relationship between gender and sexuality.
This thesis aims to move beyond an essentialised view of prostitution and sex tourism to examine the power relations that shape interactions between tourist women and local men and boys in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Like William Faulkner’s (1936) *Absalom, Absalom!*, sex tourism is a multilayered story about hierarchies and difference and anxieties about ‘all those visible signifiers of otherness, of nonmaleness, female sexuality, racial difference, latent homosexuality, daughter-texts’ (Boone, 1997: 1070). In Faulkner’s story of Sutpen, the doomed Southern father figure who sets out to create his own dynasty, issues of race, gender and class are pivotal and interlocking. They touch of all the characters, but in different ways. As the story develops the reader finds that the characters destinies are simultaneously intertwined and shaped by global relations of power that are economic, racialised, gendered and sexualised. The characters are caught in a repeating story which perpetuates these hierarchies of power relations. As Joseph Boone observes, the characters are ‘trapped in a labyrinth of repeating stories and proliferating interpretations that remain frustratingly incomplete, unresolvable, and partial’ (Boone, 1997: 1069/70). This thesis explores the significance of such power hierarchies and the significance of ideas about difference for relationships between tourist women and local men in the Caribbean.

The following chapters try to show the complexities that lie behind the action of tourist women who have sex with local men, rather than to stereotype them as either ‘passive victims’ or as ‘cunning exploiters’. In so doing, I am trying to move towards a more complicated and nuanced model of sexual exploitation, victimization, consent and the kind of power that is exercised within heterosexual relationships. The thesis focuses on the subjective experience and interpretations of tourist women and local men who enter into sexual encounters in tourist areas to draw attention to some of the
problems with existing analyses of prostitution and sex tourism.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodological issues and theoretical framework upon which the work is based. It draws attention to how definitional problems influenced the research design, and considers a number of ethical and theoretical issues. Chapter 3 is concerned to unpack the historical, social, economic and political context within which tourism has developed in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, and provides background information on the formal and informal tourist industries in both countries. Chapter 4 draws on both survey and qualitative data to provide some basic information about the tourist women who enter into sexual relationships with local men and how both parties perceive these relationships. It shows very clearly that neither party considers themselves to be engaging in a form of prostitution.

Chapter 5 introduces several case studies which examine the subjective experience of tourist women and local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. It explores their motivations for entering into sexual encounters and describes how these relationships are managed and imagined as equal, mutually reciprocal sexual relationships, despite the economic and other inequalities which exist between tourist women and their local male partners. Chapter 6 examines then looks at the discourses on gender, prostitution and sexuality, which make it possible for both tourist women and local men to construct their relationships as mutual romances rather than an exploitative form of sexual exploitation. Chapter 7 and 8 look in detail at the significance of ideas about race for the management and interpretation of sexual relationships between local men and tourist women.

The concluding chapter argues that regardless of how individual tourists women and local men may subjectively perceive and interpret their relationships, the phenomenon
of female sex tourism rests upon, repeats and reinforces power hierarchies and the concepts of difference that is used to justify it. It argues that theoretical models of prostitution and sex tourism need to move away from gender essentialist understandings of sexuality in order to accommodate the complexity of the power relations that underpin sexual economic exchanges between tourist women and local men in poor and developing countries.
Because you make so little impression, you see. You get born and you try this and you don’t know why only you keep on trying it and you are born at the same time with a lot of other people, all mixed up with them, like trying to, having to, move your arms and legs with strings only the same strings are hitched to all the other arms and legs and the others all trying and they don’t know why either except that the strings are all in one another’s way like five or six people all trying to make a rug on the same loom only each one wants to weave his own pattern into the rug; and it can’t matter, you know that, or the Ones that set up the loom would have arranged things a little better, and yet it must matter because you keep on trying or having to keep on trying and then all of a sudden it’s all over and all you have left is a block of stone with scratches on it provided there was someone to remember to have the marble scratched and set up or had time to, and it rains on it and the sun shines on it and after a while they don’t even remember the name and what the scratches were trying to tell, and it doesn’t matter.

This thesis is concerned with the interaction between local men and tourist women in tourist resorts in the Caribbean. Although these two groups of people may agree upon certain ‘facts’ about the relationships they form (for example, ‘we met on the beach’, ‘we danced’, ‘we had sex’), their motivations for entering into such relationships, the meanings they attach to them and the ideas they draw upon to make sense of their encounters are very different. Each local man and each tourist woman may purposefully set out to make a rug of a particular kind and pattern, so to speak, but they are nonetheless ‘all mixed up’ with and strung to other people and structures, so that though they try, ‘the strings are all in one another’s way’. Their action is constrained by a complex web of connections, connections which are often invisible to them.

The complex relationship between structure, subjectivity and intersubjectivity has always been a central concern of sociological theory, and it also presents huge methodological problems for empirical research. This chapter has two main aims. First, it describes the research methods employed in my study of sexual-economic exchanges between female tourists and local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Second, it considers some of the theoretical, practical and ethical difficulties I encountered in trying to document and explain the power relations between these two groups of people as they ‘try to weave their own pattern into a rug on the same loom’.

**Background to the Research**

This thesis has its origins in a research project funded by ECPAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism), which I undertook in 1995 and 1996, together with Julia O'Connell Davidson. The project was designed to investigate the demand for
child prostitution, and focused heavily on tourists' involvement in child sexual exploitation. A series of field trips to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Venezuela, India and South Africa were carried out. Fieldwork in each country was concerned first to discover the forms which child sexual exploitation takes, its relation to the formal sex industry and to informal aspects of the tourist industry, and the kind of intermediaries involved, and second, to explore the attitudes, motivations and identities of those who sexually exploit children in a commercial context (O'Connell Davidson and Sánchez Taylor, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996d, 1996e, 1996f). The research did not aim to measure the scale of the problem of child prostitution nor to produce numerical data on sex exploiters. Instead, ethnographic methods were used to develop an insight into the lived experience of children working in prostitution and the worldview of those who sexually exploit them and/or benefit financially from their sexual exploitation.

Because the research for ECPAT involved fieldwork in several different countries and regions of the world, it equipped me with a very broad overview of the phenomenon of sex tourism. In particular, it highlighted the fact that female prostitution in general, and sex tourism in particular, are not homogenous phenomena but take many different forms. Patterns of demand for sex tourism in the Caribbean and the economic, political and legal and social framework within which sex tourism takes place are not identical to those found in South East Asia where the bulk of empirical research to date has been done, and this has implications for theorising on the subject. As discussed in Chapter 1, feminist researchers looking at the formally organised sex industries in South East Asia have generally focused on affluent Western men who travel to sexually exploit women and children employed in brothels or go-go bars (Lee, 1991; Moon, 1997; Sturdevant and Stoltzfus, 1992; Truong, 1990). This narrow
focus has made it easy for them to work with a fairly straightforward definition of
prostitution and with theoretical models which give centre stage to gender inequalities
and patriarchy. The inequalities of power between, say, a Burmese teenage girl
trafficked to work in a Thai brothel and an affluent German male sex tourist who uses
her are visible, extreme and simple. However, sex tourism is unfolding in different
ways in other developing countries, ways that do not always involve the development
of a highly commodified sex industry.

Fieldwork funded by ECPAT in India, South Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean
found differences in the organisational structure of prostitution and the demand for
sex tourism in different countries. Tourist-related prostitution often took place within
the informal tourism economy, and even within the informal sector, prostitution was
not a homogeneous phenomenon. There were some women and children who
arranged their encounters with tourist clients without third party involvement and as
fixed contractual exchanges of x sum of money for x sexual service, but others often
entered into more open-ended transactions. The latter form of exchange often blurred
into non-contractual sexual relationships within which the local woman/teenager did
not self identify as a prostitute, but was in a powerless relation to her sexual partner.
The male tourist also often did not self identify as a client, but was in a powerful
position in relation to his partner (see O’Connell Davidson, 1995 and 1998). Such
relationships were often diffuse in nature and included encounters lasting one night to
those which would last the entire holiday period.

Our research also found male sex tourists to be a heterogeneous group in terms of
their sexual preferences and practices, as well as their background characteristics. Sex
tourism allows many different types of men to enter into various forms of sexual
contracts which can affirm them in different ways. Though some men travel to a
given destination specifically in order to pursue multiple, anonymous explicitly
commercial sexual encounters, others travel telling themselves simply that they hope
to find a ‘girlfriend’ and experience a ‘holiday romance’. Where the former group
often acknowledge themselves as prostitute users, men in the latter group rarely self
identify as ‘client’ or view their ‘girlfriends’ as prostitutes. The existence of an
informal prostitution sector, within which women and girls solicit from beaches and
tourist bars and discos and do not necessarily negotiate prices up-front, makes it
possible for many male tourists to overlook or deny the commercial basis of their
sexual relationships with local women/teenagers. Because they do not have to enter
brothels, go-go bars or seedy hostess clubs, or negotiate a ‘deal’, they do not
recognise their encounters as a form of prostitution and are instead often able to feel
that they have simply been ‘picked up’ by local women who genuinely ‘fancy’ them.
When they later give cash or gifts to the local female, they can imagine this as a
gesture of generosity rather than payment for services rendered (see O’Connell

We also found that male sex tourists drew on sexualised racist ideas to justify or hide
the commercial nature of their sexual encounters with local women and children. Men
interpreted their sexual encounters with local women and children through the lens of
a racist discourse which exoticises the Other and taps into the romantic fantasy of a
‘primitive’ paradise. Locals who inhabited tourist destinations in Latin America and
the Caribbean were regarded as ‘naturally’ sexually open, and women and children
were seen as possessing an animalistic hypersexuality. Tourist men could therefore
tell themselves that it was only natural for the local women and children they came
into contact with to want to have sex with them (O’Connell Davidson and Sánchez
Taylor, 1996a and b).

In all these ways, the research for ECPAT led me to see the phenomenon of sex tourism as more varied and more complicated than was often suggested in the existing literature on the subject. My view of the demand side of sex tourism was further complicated by the fact that during field research in India, Latin America and the Caribbean, I interviewed local men and teenage boys who told me that they too entered into various kinds of sexual relationships with tourist women in exchange for some form of economic benefit. In many respects, what they described sounded identical to relationships between local women and tourist men in the informal prostitution sector. However, the way in which they talked about their experiences with tourist women was very different from the way in which local women and girls usually spoke of their experiences with tourist men. Few considered themselves to be ‘prostitutes’ or ‘sex workers’, even when they made a living from entering into sexual relationships with tourist women, and few viewed relationships between tourist women and local men/boys in a negative light, or as an expression of economic and political inequality. This was in marked contrast to our interviews with local women and girls in tourist-related prostitution, the vast majority of whom discussed their own involvement in prostitution as the outcome of global and class inequalities, and gender and race discrimination.

This sense that sexual-economic exchanges between local males and tourist women are somehow quite different from sexual-economic exchanges between local females and tourist men was echoed in the small research literature that I found on the subject. Researchers like Deborah Pruitt and Suzanne LaFont (1995) and Lynn Meisch (1995) appeared to accept local men and tourist women’s accounts of their involvement in
sexual relationships at face value (as ‘romances’ not ‘prostitute-client exchanges’), and so to see them as sharply differentiated from the phenomenon of male sex tourism. The impetus for this thesis was to interrogate such relationships between local males and tourist women more closely, to explore them in relation to structural inequalities (national and global) of gender, race, class and sexuality, and to consider what these relationships can tell us about current theoretical understandings of ‘sex tourism’.

I began the research for this thesis with a field trip to Jamaica in the summer of 1997, when I focused on questions about the types of sexual economic exchange that were taking place on the beaches between female tourists and local males. In the same year, Julia O’Connell Davidson and I successfully applied for Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funding to research tourist-related prostitution in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic (Award No: R000237625 ‘The Informal Tourist Economy in the Caribbean: Gender, Race and Age’). This project gave me the opportunity to further develop my research on female ‘sex tourism’. The ESRC project set out to investigate the significance of gender, age, race, and nationality for patterns of social inclusion and exclusion within the tourism economy in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, paying particular attention to the relationships between social exclusion and tourist-related prostitution. It also looked at male expatriate involvement in promoting and organising tourist-related prostitution, including child prostitution. The experience of divergent groups of locals and expatriates were documented with the aim of contributing to theory and policy development. Within this remit I was able to develop and extend my own research interests and gather data for this thesis. I was able to carry out independent research on the interactions between tourist women and local men on the beach and investigate how they
interpreted these sexual encounters. This research project took place over two years and entailed five research trips, two to the Dominican Republic and three to Jamaica which supplemented data I had previously gathered on female tourist related sexual exchanges in the Caribbean.

Map 1: Jamaica

![Map of Jamaica](image1)

Map 2: The Dominican Republic

![Map of the Dominican Republic](image2)
Research Design and Methodology

This thesis is based on ethnographic research in Negril in Jamaica and Sosua and Boca Chica in the Dominican Republic conducted during seven fieldtrips undertaken between July 1997 and January 2000. There are some significant differences between these two countries in terms of their cultural, social, economic and political histories (see Chapter 3), but both are afflicted by a crippling economic dependency on the West and on the tourism industry. More importantly for the purposes of my research, in both countries informal economic activity has developed around tourism and this includes local men who enter into various forms of sexual-economic exchange with tourist women. Indeed, sexual interaction between tourist women and local men is a highly visible feature of tourism in both countries, making them ideal locations for pursuing my particular research interests.

Since the primary aim of the fieldwork was to explore the lived experience of tourist women and local/migrant men who enter into sexual-economic exchanges in tourist resorts in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, ethnographic techniques were seen as the most appropriate methods of data collection. I therefore relied mainly on observational techniques, and unstructured or semi structured interviewing with tourist women and local men, and sought to develop research relationships with ‘key informants’, who often helped me to establish links with networks of tourist women and local men working in a given resort. In total, 86 local men and boys who had entered into one or more sexual relationship with a tourist woman were interviewed, (62 in Jamaica and 21 in the Dominican Republic), 39 female tourists who had had one or more sexual relationship with a local man while on holiday (19 in Jamaica and 20 in the Dominican Republic), and 19 expatriate women who had either married their
boyfriends or were single and engaged in sexual-economic exchanges with local men (8 in Jamaica and 11 in the Dominican Republic).

The majority of interviewees were selected on an opportunistic basis and interviews took place in hotels, bars or on the beach. A number of interviews were pre-arranged through informants or using the snowballing technique. The interviews were semi-structured. I gathered basic background data on interviewees (age, occupation, place of origin, how long on holiday or working in tourist resort etc.) and then allowed local men and tourist women to give me details of their work/holiday/relationship experiences. I also asked unstructured questions about their perceptions of ‘race relations’, gender and beliefs about sexual health. Length of interviews varied from twenty minutes to over two hours. A number of interviewees were interviewed two or three times, either during the same research trip or on return field trips. I observed interactions between tourist women and local men on the beach, streets and in hotels during the day and in bars and clubs at night. Field notes were kept throughout and interviews were written up as soon as they were completed.

The broader remit of the ESRC funded project also required me to undertake formal interviews with tourism officials, hotel managers and tourism workers, police superintendents, and representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in AIDS prevention and/or involved in out-reach work with sex workers, and interview work with taxi drivers, pimps, brothel owners, female prostitutes, male sex tourists and male and female expatriates. This yielded data that were extremely valuable in terms of contextualising my research on sexual-economic exchanges between tourist women and local men. I also undertook Internet research and documentary research on the phenomenon of female ‘sex tourism’.
Although the research carried out for the ESRC project provided valuable background data, my research questions, agenda and analysis went beyond the ESRC research remit in two main ways. First, my empirical focus was on tourist women and second, my theoretical focus was on the significance of sexual-economic exchanges between local men and tourist women for contemporary feminist models of prostitution, sex tourism and sex exploitation. A different set of methodological questions from those which informed the ESRC project were conceptualised to guide research design and generate data.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed to overcome practical methodological problems during the research. I found that the local/migrant men and tourist women involved in relationships rarely subjectively viewed their encounters as a form of prostitution. Though this was an interesting finding in itself, it also often made it difficult to directly question local men and tourist women on certain details of their sexual experience. A number of key male and female informants were prepared to speak openly about the number of sexual encounters they had had, and the economic element of their relationships i.e. whether they gave or received cash or gifts. However, tourist women sometimes shied away from discussing details of their sexual relationships in interviews especially if they had constructed them as a ‘romance’, even though they did give details about their relationships and their attitudes towards the local culture, race and gender and tourist experience. Because of the small number of female tourists who spoke openly about the economic element of their relationship, it was difficult to elicit information about condom-use, the number of local men they had entered into sexual relationships with and the types of financial exchanges that had taken place. I felt it necessary to gather more information on the whether or not tourist women entered into sexual economic
relationships with local men in order to check the observational and interview data from tourist women involved in relationships with local men, especially regarding condom use.

People are generally reluctant to discuss intimate sexual practices. Richard Parker et al note that:

> While the stated norms of a society may ideally require one mode of behaviour, in reality a wide range of different behaviours may actually be found in any given community. What people say and do in public with regard to sexuality may differ greatly from and even contradict their private sexual behaviour. The forms of sexual behaviour that are prescribed in different situations may contrast sharply with the ways in which individuals may behave voluntarily (1999: 420).

Research on sexual health has tended to be either quantitative or qualitative (Clift and Carter, 2000), but researchers are increasingly employing a combination of methods in order to build a more complete picture of people’s sexual behaviour (Bolton, 1999; Parker et al, 1999). In seeking to more fully understand the behaviour and attitudes of tourist women, I designed a questionnaire to supplement data from interviews and provide information against which to triangulate the qualitative material (see Appendix 1.). I hoped that the anonymous nature of a self-administered questionnaire would allow tourist women to respond to questions that they might not feel comfortable discussing in an interview, and thereby increase the reliability of the data. Because the questionnaire also allowed me to gather general data on the background and characteristics of a large number of unaccompanied tourist women it also made it possible to check whether my sample of interviewees was representative. The
questionnaires were completed by 240 tourist women in three tourist resorts, Negril in Jamaica and Boca Chica and Sosua in the Dominican Republic (the survey design and methodology will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four together with a breakdown of the findings, a copy of the survey is included in an appendix). The survey gave me details of who entered into sexual relationships with local men, their patterns of travel, how many relationships they had entered into, how they perceived these relationships, information on sexual health practices, types of economic benefits given to the men, and attitudes towards the local culture. This information supplemented the interview data from both the local men and the women and helped me to confirm the existence of a particular pattern of behavior adopted by some female tourists.

In order to fully understand relationships between local men and female tourists, it was also necessary to explore the gendered, racialised, economic, legal and political power relations which underpinned the encounters. Derek Layder has observed that ‘forms of power underlie or underpin the observable dealings between people’ (1993: 153, italics in original). I felt that there was a need to examine the structural dimensions of the material conditions shaping and constraining people’s lives. This included understanding local, national and international economic structures and policies, as well as dominant discourses on race and gender. This was related, at a micro level, to understanding how gendered, racialised, sexualised, economic and aged power are subjectively experienced and mediated by local men and tourist women. The research design thus incorporated multiple methods and data sources, including documentary and Internet research in Britain which supplemented the detailed ethnographic research on the lived experience of those researched.
Secondary documentary data were collected from different sources in Britain and the Caribbean. This included data on patterns of tourist development and foreign investment, official and unofficial statistics on the formal economy, tourist demand, legal codes regulating prostitution and third party involvement, beach vending and other forms of work. Historical background data, including that relating to the history of race ideas, were collected. Newspapers articles on tourism, sexuality, and gender were gathered, and Internet sites which promoted tourism in general and sex tourism in particular, were also searched for information.

This research strategy, with its emphasis on gathering data from multiple sources, also allowed for validity checking through triangulation. During field trips, ethnographic techniques were employed to explore the experiences of local/migrant men, women and children involved in the tourist economy and interviews were conducted with a non-random sample of those involved in sex tourism. Female tourists’ and local men’s subjective perceptions and experiences were triangulated against data from other interviews for the ESRC project, including police superintendents (2), lawyers (4), government and tourist authority officials (6), and representatives of relevant NGOs (14), doctors (2), tourism managers and workers (25), taxi drivers (30), and other tourists, as well as alongside data from documentary sources.

**Triangulation and Validity**

In a discussion of the different ways in which power is exercised and understood, Orlando Patterson observes that ‘in all societies... there is a distinction between what is actually going on and the mental structures that attempt to define and explain the reality’ (1982: 19). In my research, I aimed to use ethnographic techniques to observe what actually goes on between tourist women and local men who have sex with them.
in tourist resorts in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic (i.e., to identify patterns), and the ways in which both parties to the exchange attempt to define and explain this reality.

The ways in which tourist women and local men narrated and explained their experience was therefore an important focus, but I could not simply accept these subjective accounts as factual descriptions. While feminist methodologists have often urged researchers to 'give voice' to the researched who must be 'heard and listened to' (see Stanley and Wise, 1990; O'Neill, 1996), it was not possible for me to take an uncritical approach to the narratives my subjects told about their relationships. For example, many tourist women were quite simply unaware of how poor some of the local men they had sex with were. When they told me that their 'boyfriends' had derived no economic or material benefit from their relationship, this often reflected the tourist women's ignorance of the meanings their local sexual partner attached to being bought a meal in a tourist restaurant, or having a hot shower in a hotel. Equally, when local men told me that their white tourist 'girlfriends' were nice because they were not 'racist', this view was often based on the simple fact that the white woman concerned was willing to have sex with a black man, rather than on any close interrogation of her attitudes towards 'race'. Furthermore, local men often drew on sexualised racisms about 'the black male' in order to construct themselves as exercising control within their sexual encounters with tourist women, and tourist women frequently drew on the same racist and gendered stereotypes to explain why local men were interested in having sex with them. The initial, superficial explanation offered by both groups of actors for what was going on in tourist resorts thus often centred on myths about black male sexuality.
If I had taken these subjective accounts at face value without exploring their contradictions and locating them within a wider structural context, I could only have developed a partial and rather confusing picture of the encounters between local men and tourist women in the Caribbean. My account would also have actually reproduced, rather than questioned, the racist and sexist stereotypes which individual actors draw on to make sense of their experience. Jayati Lal (1996) states that:

> If we are to be truly open to what our research subjects tell us, we must be willing to read against the grain and yet within the larger contexts that situate their responses. Although partial truths are an inevitable outcome of research that is situated and constructed around specific locations, this should not necessarily lead to, or be an excuse for, distorted representations. There is always a need to situate responses into larger historical and societal contexts that can frame a meaning, in order to avoid the risk of either giving voice to stereotypes or perpetuating stereotypes about one's research subjects (1996: 204).

It was therefore important to set local men and tourist women’s understandings of what was going on against evidence on local and international structures of class, race and gender, economic and political policies, and popular discourses on gender, race and sexuality. Popular discourses on gender, both in the European/North American societies and the Caribbean, were particularly significant in terms of shaping subjective perceptions of exploitation, agency and consent. Both local men and tourist women’s accounts of their encounters tended to reproduce the idea of sexual agency as ‘masculine’ and sexual passivity as ‘feminine’, even when tourist women had travelled to a tourist resort with the specific intention of having sex with multiple.
I also found that interviewees' perceptions of what was going on and why changed over time. There was a discrepancy between the perceptions of those men who were actually currently making a living from sexual economic exchanges with tourist women, and those who had ended their beach 'careers'. Local men who were involved in the informal sex industry in one way or another usually provided very positive narratives within which they constructed themselves as agents who chose relationships for their own instrumental reasons. Power imbalances between themselves and their tourist partners were generally ignored. Men who had stopped entering into sexual economic relationships with tourist women tended to reflect back on their experience in a more negative way. They were more likely to challenge the women's motives for entering into such relationships, and to talk about constraints on their own agency. It was therefore important to triangulate data from local men at different stages in their 'careers' in order to obtain a more nuanced view of their subjective understandings of sexual agency and consent. This shift in perception also applied to tourist women's accounts of their relationships with local men. It was therefore an advantage that the research was spread over three years enabling me to trace the changes in subjective understandings of individual case studies.

**Definitional Problems**

Without a definition of the substantive topic being researched, the researcher cannot gather empirical evidence about it. Deciding on definitions means that the researcher will have to draw on theoretical knowledge to determine the exact boundaries of the subject area under study. Since part of my motivation for studying sexual-economic exchanges between tourist women and local/migrant males in tourist resorts in the
Caribbean was dissatisfaction with existing models of ‘prostitution’, ‘sex tourism’ and ‘sexual exploitation’, I found I had entered a definitonal minefield. Many of the theoretical and definitonal problems had practical consequences for the design and execution of this project. For example, I could not set out to investigate ‘prostitution’, because the tourist women and local men involved, did not always or necessarily interpret or define their activities as ‘prostitution’ or self identify as ‘client’ and ‘sex worker/prostitute’ respectively. This was the case even when they accepted that their sexual encounters involved some form of economic exchange.

Established definitions of ‘prostitution’ are often based upon contentious theoretical and moral understandings of the phenomenon and frequently fail to accommodate the wide variety of different forms of sexual economic exchanges that take place in different contexts (Kempadoo, 1998). As described in Chapter 1, the weaknesses in the established theoretical models of prostitution and sex tourism have meant that there is no common framework to accommodate the variety of sexual economic exchanges which are emerging in the developing world (Hall, 1994). Sexual contracts do not always resemble those traditionally identified as prostitution in the West. They can be loosely specified in terms of time and type of contact, in the sense that they have no time limit or physical restraints (e.g. sex workers will kiss or hold hands with clients) (O’Connell Davidson, 1998). Benefits derived from such exchanges are not always or necessarily passed on in the form of simple cash payment and sexual economic exchanges may have a different relationship to the market economy and the social community (Zalduando and Bernard, 1995).

Some Caribbean feminists who are critical of orthodox approaches frame ‘sex work’ as a form of resistance against poverty and poor economic opportunities, and
construct it as a form of wage labour akin to other forms of emotional labour such as child care and wet nursing. Kamala Kempadoo for example, argues that paid sexual relations are an integral part of the social fabric of the Caribbean:

Subaltern understandings and lived realities of sexuality and sexual-economic relations, such as found in various African or Caribbean countries for example, where one can speak of a continuum of sexual relations from monogamy to multiple sexual partners and where sex may be considered as a valuable asset for a woman to trade with, are ignored in favour of specific Western ideologies and moralities regarding sexual relations (1996: 72).

Whether or not such commentators are right to suggest that women’s sexuality is viewed as an economic asset in the Caribbean, the fact remains that female prostitutes are legally and socially constructed negatively as sexual ‘Others’ in most Caribbean societies, just as much as they are in most other countries of the world (Alexander, 1997; Cabezas, 1999; O’Connell Davidson, 1997, 1998). However, while the law in both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic construct female commercial sexual exchanges as ‘prostitution’ (in Jamaica female prostitution is illegal, and in the Dominican Republic there are laws which restrict its practice), in neither country does the law recognise men as ‘prostitutes’. No laws specifically seek to prevent or regulate the activities of local men who enter into sexual relationships with tourist women in exchange for some form of economic, social or cultural capital. Such men violate neither prostitution law nor codes regulating economic activity. There is no formal legal prohibition against, or regulation of, men selling sexual services to women, and men who do so are not legally defined as ‘prostitutes’ or ‘sex workers’.
As well as problems of how to define the type of sexual exchange which was the focus of my research, it was difficult to define the context in which these exchanges took place, for the concept of the ‘informal economy’ is also much debated and contested. Sometimes referred to as the ‘second economy’, ‘black economy’, ‘unofficial economy’, ‘parallel market’, ‘underground economy’, ‘counter economy’ or even ‘private enterprise’, the informal economy is usually defined as if it is somehow outside of state regulation (Roldan, 1985). Yet tourism is an industry which involves both formally organised employment and informally arranged economic activity, and both types of ‘work’ appear to be important to the industry in the sense that the tourist’s experience relies crucially on services provided by massive corporations and by individual ‘entrepreneurs’ whose work may be illegal as well as unrecognised and informally organised. More recently in the sociological literature, there has been a critique of the tendency to regard the formal and informal sectors as distinct domains, which can be analytically separated (Harding and Jenkins, 1989; Mingione, 1985). The situation in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic supports this the anti-dualist position (this point will be developed in Chapter 3). When we focus on sexual economic exchanges between local men and tourist women, there is a great deal of overlap. For example, when hotel workers (who are employed in the formal tourism sector) supplement their income or raise their living standard by entering into sexual relationships with tourists (an informally arranged means of earning). It is therefore difficult to define them properly as either formal or informal sector workers.

The ‘informalisation’ of tourism in many developing countries has resulted in a wide range of informal economic activities such as ambulant vending and home based tourism-related activities i.e. handicrafts, transportation and services such as massages, manicures as well as the informal sex industry (Chant and McIlwaine,
Philip Harding and Richard Jenkins's (1989: 15) comments about the West are equally applicable to tourism in the Caribbean. They observe that:

While we recognise the importance of informal economic activities and regard them as central and integral features of 'developed' capitalist economies, we cannot accept the existence of a separate 'informal' or 'hidden' economic domain, somehow isolated or critically different from the economic mainstream.

Michael Witter and Claremont Kirton (1990:2) define an economic activity as informal if 'it violates some law, official regulation, or generally accepted standards and/codes of business behaviour'. Under this definition, activities such as unlicensed beach vending, or the sale of information as well as illegal activities, such as female prostitution or the procuring of female prostitutes, are considered informal. However, this would appear to exclude the activity of men who have sex with tourist women for money or some other benefit, since this is neither illegal, nor recognised as a form of 'business'. Silvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine (1995) employ a rather broader definition of informal activity, which includes work not overseen by an employer and therefore with no legal protection or employment benefits even though workers may be registered and possess trading permits. But even this does not fully cover the area I was investigating, since many of the local men I interviewed moved between the formal and informal sectors and used sexual economic exchanges as a way to supplement a small income from other formal or informal activities. However, it seems to allow greater scope to include the activities of the men I studied than do other definitions.
In many ways my research set out to investigate something which is without a name. It is concerned with men who have sex with women for money or some other material benefit, and yet neither the men or the women involved, nor most commentators, view this as either 'prostitution' or 'work'; the law does not recognise the existence of such exchanges or construct them as illegal; the exchange takes place within a sector of the economy which is hidden and is not officially recognised. As defining a concept is a form of labeling, developing a language which did not impose a single given interpretation was therefore important. Throughout this thesis, local men in the Caribbean who enter into sexual economic exchanges with tourist women will be referred to as MSTs (Men who have Sex with Tourist women) and tourist women who enter into sexual encounters with local men will be referred to as WSLs. I will use the term 'sexual economic exchange/s' to describe sexual encounters that have some form of financial or material benefit for MSTs. Finally, the term 'hustling' will be used to refer to the activity of participating in the 'informal economy', in Chant and McIlwaine's (1995) sense, and local people who depend exclusively on activities undertaken in the informal sector for their subsistence will be referred to as 'hustlers'.

The real identities of people interviewed and informants have been disguised and pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the anonymity and privacy of research subjects.

Identity, Power and Theory in the Research Process

In his discussion of classical political theory and the racial contract, Charles Mills argues that:

In the disincarnate political theory of the orthodox social contract, the body vanishes, becomes theoretically unimportant, just as the physical space
inhabited by that body is theoretically unimportant. But this disappearing act
is...an illusion...The reality is that one can pretend the body does not matter
only because a particular body (the white male body) is being presupposed as
the somatic norm (Mills, 1997: 53).

This point is also relevant in relation to methodological issues. Orthodox research
methods texts have traditionally paid little attention to questions about the gendered
and ‘racialised’ identities of researchers because ‘researchers’ are assumed to be
white and male and so to share a common position in relation to their research
‘subjects’. In reality, however, all researchers enter ‘the field’ with a particular
racialised, aged, class and gender identity. My own identity draws on a Jamaican-
Spanish heritage (with Spanish language skills), and working class British upbringing.
Racialised identities are also sexualised, and in my everyday life I am conscious that I
am marked in ways that are not just gendered and racialised but also sexualised. This
kind of baggage does not disappear once a researcher enters the field.

As a researcher, I found that (to return to Faulkner’s analogy) my own arms and legs
were also connected to the individuals I was attempting to research. Like them I was
also on the loom, woven into the same material base that influenced the lived
experience of everyone I encountered. This had implications for the research process
at multiple levels. Orthodox researchers often like to think that they stand outside of
the loom, unconnected to others simply observing the pattern that is being made by
others. In reality, however, researchers are part of the social world they research and
their relations to those they research is shaped by social relations of power.

Though recent contributions to the research methods literature increasingly
acknowledge the impact of the researcher’s identity and emotional life as part of the
research process (e.g. Coffey, 1999), much of the mainstream literature on methods has not considered the impact of the gendered and racialised identity of the researcher. Textbook advice is usually both colour blind and gender blind (Collins, 1990; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Winddance Twine, 2001), and in this sense mainstream discourses on methods have reproduced traditional discourses about gender and race, with the researcher constructed as masculine (active, aggressive, powerful) and the those researched constructed as feminine (passive, powerless, submissive and receptive).

Andrew Killick notes that concepts of the field are 'rooted in anthropology's colonial and patriarchal traditions' and that this asymmetry of power relations is assumed to apply regardless of the identity of the researcher (1995: 77). The ethnographer is supposed to maintain control over the field and research subjects. Although feminists have criticised standard texts on methods (for instance, Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1993), there is still a gap between our lived experience as researchers and the sociological discourses which set out how research is supposed to be done.

During my fieldwork there were situations where my identity was a disadvantage and I faced difficulties that a white or male researcher would not have encountered. For example, I often had to deal with unwanted sexual attention from local men or suspicion from white tourist women who saw me as 'competition'. But it was also possible for me to exploit certain aspects of my identity to obtain information that another researcher might not have been able to get so easily. For instance, I was able to 'pass' for a variety of 'racialised', social and sexualised identities and blend into a range of different cultural contexts. I found that in tourist areas in the Caribbean I was continually repositioned on social hierarchies. My ambiguous and multiple identity allowed me to draw many different people into relationships based on an (often false) sense of a shared cultural, gendered or racialised identity. Drawing people in was a
rather passive approach to building rapport. It allowed research subjects to ‘recast’ (Coffey, 1999) my identity to a certain extent in ways which meant that they felt comfortable about disclosing information.

Useful as this was to the process of collecting data, it often raised ethical dilemmas surrounding the political and personal responsibilities of the researcher, as well as many painful personal reflections on the nature of racism, sexism and identity. Such research experiences also demonstrate the ambiguity and the power of social constructions of gender, race and class in any given research context. If the ‘research process’ is mediated by the researcher’s identity, which becomes a research tool in itself, it is important to consider just how this influences the research process.

Both black and white feminist scholars have discussed the advantages of possessing a shared identity, or ‘double consciousness’ in research in terms of achieving rapport with interviewees and therefore gathering what is considered more ‘authentic’ and valid data (see Collins, 1990; Marshall, 1995; Stanko, 1995). However, sharing an identity does not always result in an automatic acceptance or disclosure of information, or indeed more accurate information (see Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1995; Phoenix, 1995; Winddance Twine, 1996). And as Kum Kum Bhavnani (1995) notes, any interaction between the researcher and the researched has to balance ‘multi-faceted power relations which has both structural domination and structural subordination in play on both sides’ (1995: 35).

As a researcher I could not ignore the fact that I am marked in particular ways which have important theoretical and practical implications, because I am researching the real world where these ‘markings’ represent a complex layer of social and political power. Eva Moreno notes that ‘how the body is socially marked has significance for
the kind of field relations we establish and the kind of data that is gathered’ (Moreno, 1995: 246). This does not necessarily mean that researchers cannot develop rapport with research subjects who are differently marked, since subjects reveal themselves to different people for different reasons. Furthermore, the fact that subjects reveal only a partial view of themselves in interviews does not mean that the data gathered are not valid (see Bhavnani, 1995). It does mean, however, that as a researcher I had to understand and ‘manage’ my own difference and the assumptions made about me by research subjects (based on gender, ‘race’, class etc.) at every stage in the research process. I often found myself having to exploit the meanings that research subjects attached to aspects of my identity in order to achieve access and rapport, in much the same way that MSTs play on female tourists’ assumptions about gender, race and sexuality in order to draw them into relationships. This gave me added insights into the motivations and perceptions of both ‘hustlers’ and ‘hustled’.

Like Janet Foster who found that ‘being small, young and female was a decided advantage in negotiating most aspects of the field’ (1990: 167-8), I used the fact that, as a woman I was considered by most research subjects to be non-threatening.

Different aspects of my identity were emphasised or negated to obtain and maintain rapport with different research subjects. Martyn Hammersley argues that researchers ‘must exploit whatever resources they have to exert control over the relationship, on the grounds that in present circumstances the only choice is between being dominant or being dominated’ (1992:196). Although this either/or scenario may reflect researcher’s experience when dealing with those more socially powerful than the researcher, there are times when even black women researchers enter research situations in which they are the individuals with power and so need to be especially aware of their ethical responsibilities towards their research subjects.
Interestingly, I found that whilst my identity in the West is marginal because of my racialised and gendered self, in the research context the dynamics changed. My relative economic power and privilege became an important issue. This was especially the case with black Jamaican and Dominican research subjects, in relation to whom I had greater economic power and a higher professional status. Moreover, because ‘blackness’ is not an unambiguous category, I was also often attributed a different status by black research subjects because my ‘light-skinned’ complexion placed me higher up the social hierarchy/pigmentocracy than those darker skinned than myself. At the same time, however, my blackness often allowed me to personally experience certain aspects of the discrimination and sexualised racism that oppresses black Jamaicans and Dominicans. White tourists and expatriates, sometimes also local police and tourism industry workers, would often assume that I was a local woman and respond to me as such.

The job of an ethnographer is to get close to their research subjects in order to understand and interpret a given social practice or culture. To do this meant that I had to continually renegotiate my ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ in relation to different groups of research subjects. Miri Song and David Parker (1995) have noted that one problem with the literature on ‘racialised’ identities and research is that:

- racialised categories applied to the researcher and the researched are conceptualised as too rigid and homogenous. ‘Black’, juxtaposed to ‘white’ does not easily accommodate individuals who are of mixed descent, or who are bi-cultural and suggests too unitary an experience of ethnic minority status (1995: 242).

In the West, racialised categories are far more ‘black and white’ than in the Caribbean.
and I often found that my mixed race identity combined with my Westerness made me an ‘outsider’, or else a very particular kind of ‘insider’.

**Control over the Research Process**

On a practical level, one of the key problems I faced concerned control over the research process. Feminist methodologists have often urged researchers to reflect upon power relations and to try to establish non-hierarchical relationships with research subjects (Stanley and Wise 1993; Stacey, 1988; Skeggs, 1998). However, this search for equality can result in a loss of control over the research process, and also seems to overlook the complex questions about commonality and difference that were discussed above. My research focused in part upon a ‘deviant’ population, and researcher control in studies of such populations is notoriously difficult. I had to rely heavily on key informants and simple luck. Many of the interviews I conducted were opportunistic and usually had to be completed at once on first meeting, in the location that the encounter had occurred, no matter how inconvenient or unsuitable. This frequently meant conducting interviews on the beach during the day or in noisy bars at night, and so coping with many distractions and disturbances. This lack of control led to practical problems with respect to recording data. It was not possible to tape record interviews in crowded bars with reggae or merengue music blaring out. It was equally difficult to take notes when working. I tried to ensure that I wrote up interviews immediately after they had taken place, but if an opportunity suddenly arose to interview another subject before having written up the first interview, I would have to take it.

It was impossible to impose a strict timetable on the research, and often difficult to arrange formal interviews or organise a fixed research schedule (see Foster, 1990).
The tourist women were on holiday, and although they were often happy to talk to me if I approached them on the beach or in a bar, they were often unwilling to arrange another time for the interview as they did not want to be ‘tied down’. It was also difficult to formally arrange meetings with MSTs. I found that when I did so, they often either would not turn up, or would turn up on the assumption that I was really interested in them for reasons other than my research. Furthermore, because MSTs were sometimes also involved in illegal activities (such as dealing drugs), they were often suspicious of strangers asking too many questions, and few were happy for interviews to be tape recorded. In Jamaica, the fact that I had a tape recorder was interpreted by one of my respondents as evidence that I was working for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

All the resorts in which I carried out research were small and compact. Although this concentration helped in terms of locating research subjects, it also generated several unforeseen practical problems for me as a researcher. First, it meant that I would often bump into both locals and tourists whom I had interviewed and find that they would want to continue what they considered to be my ‘friendship’. At times this proved useful in that I could gather more information on them and their activities, however at other times it was a major disadvantage. Once the researcher has entered into a cordial and ‘friendly’ relationship with a subject in order to elicit information from them, it is very difficult to sever the relationship. I was obliged to continue my polite interaction with informants who were no longer useful, even when it was inconvenient and unfruitful for me to do so, or when the informant had made explicit a sexual interest in me. Other valuable informants proved costly, as every time I saw them they expected me to buy them a drink.
Safety in the Field

Although tourist destinations in the Caribbean are relatively safe for women, my research practice was also much affected by issues of safety in the field. As a woman conducting research on sexuality in deeply patriarchal societies where women are not expected to talk openly about sex, I was extremely conscious of the danger of provoking a sexually hostile response. There is a growing awareness of the risks involved in social research, specially for lone women and those undertaking ethnographic research (Craig, Cordon and Thorton, 2000), although, to date there has been little discussion of harassment or violence during the research process (with the notable exception of Gearing, 1995; Moreno, 1995 and Willson, 1995). Feminist writers have tended to focus primarily on undertaking research on women and focus on research encounters where the researcher is in a position of power undertaking research on the powerless. Because I was interviewing both men and women, I found that I needed to pay attention to limiting and controlling the boundary between my ‘professional’ identity and my ‘social’ self, as well as to negotiating assumptions based on my phenotypical characteristics and gender identity.

Jean Gearing (1995) conducted fieldwork in the Caribbean and she discusses the ways that anxieties about sexual attack constrained her research (although she is careful to note that she did not consider the Caribbean any more violent or dangerous than the USA). Issues of safety in the field and minimizing personal risk during fieldwork was a priority during field trips. Much of the research was conducted late at night in seedy bars, discos and sections of the beach, so taxis were taken to and from certain research sites and accommodation was sought in central established locations in the resort.

Male informants and interviewees were interviewed in public spaces, but this
precaution did not always prevent them from paying me unwanted sexual attention. Several strategies were developed to limit the loss of control that occurs when a male research subject expresses such a sexual interest. Although I needed to present as sexually ‘knowing’ in order to get male subjects to disclose their sexual histories and experiences, I also needed to present as ‘normal’ in their eyes. This was often difficult as women who do present as sexually knowing are often regarded as also being sexually available. Margaret Willson (1995) observes that in order to manage field relations, ethnographers often feel the need to present a specific sexual and personal identity: as asexual, naive, chaste, non-threatening or as supposedly sexually active’ (1995: 270). I therefore affected a presentable heterosexual identity and I often made reference to a fictitious husband and children. Conducting overt research also reduced the risk of sexual harassment, in the sense that the more strongly I established the fact I was doing research, the less likely men were to think I was sexually interested in them.

Establishing a level of social distance, and asking for their consent to be interviewed helped to override the imbalance of gender power. My status as an academic researcher was used to establish an honorary masculine status. Nonetheless care had to be taken that too strong an assertion of my ‘masculine’ authority as a researcher did not threaten to undermine the interview, resulting in interviewees clamping up and feeling intimidated and threatened. There was a thin line between being too ‘feminine’, which allowed some interviewees to take control, and too ‘masculine’, which alienated the research subject. Managing this line was a matter of experience and careful judgement, and I had to rely on my intuition and general ‘life training’ in how to manage myself as a gendered, sexualised and racialised embodied being.

There is no way of firmly separating our ‘social’, ‘private’ and ‘professional’ selves in
the course of research, and the researcher must be aware of how identity can
impact on those who are being researched (see Bolton, 1995; Bourgois, 1995).

Nevertheless, it was impossible to manage all aspects of the field in such a way as to
avoid any unpleasant experience. In both countries, I found that being taken for a
local woman meant that local people sometimes attempted to ‘police’ me in various
ways. A Jamaican MST once rebuked me, saying my bikini was too ‘revealing’ and
that I should ‘cover up’, and this despite the fact that he was with a female tourist who
was wearing nothing but a thong. Incidents such as this illustrated how Jamaican
women’s sexuality is policed and how local men view tourist women as different
from local women. Because I was simultaneously conducting research for the ESRC
project, I also had to conduct interviews with white male tourists and expatriates. This
sometimes jeopardized relationships I was trying to establish with local men. Seeing
me talking to white men prompted some MSTs to angrily accuse me of being
prejudiced against and rejecting black men, or of ‘thinking that I was better than’
Jamaican blacks. There were also a couple of occasions when rejecting the sexual
advances of MSTs I had interviewed led to overt and threatening hostility from them.

The ethical considerations which make covert research problematic also provided a
strong incentive for working overtly. Being open about the fact that I was conducting
research on different aspects of gender, sexuality and tourism made it easier to be
seen talking to lots of different men, male tourists as well as local hustlers and others
working in tourism. Because the local beach community was small, many of my
informants knew each other either personally or by sight or reputation. They watched
each other as well as the changing tourist population to find out what was going on,
and who was with doing what with whom, and they would comment among
themselves about the activities of tourist women. Letting men know the purpose of
my interest helped to protect my ‘reputation’ and gave me standing as a professional,
allowing me the freedom to conduct my research. It also helped to dampen their hopes
that I could be a possible ‘client’ or ‘girlfriend’. Both of these points were important
to maintaining trust and rapport in the field.

Rapport, Empathy and Emotion

A key issue in ethnographic research is how to establish and maintain access and
rapport. My earlier research on sex tourism for ECPAT involved gaining access to a
relatively powerful social group (Western male sex tourists), something which is
generally an arduous task (see Puwar, 1997). In practice, gaining access to this
research group presented much less of a problem than did building rapport with
interviewees whom I generally found personally offensive in terms of their attitudes
and practices. However, I quickly learned techniques for concealing my true response
to the attitudes they expressed which was essential for developing a rapport within
which they would disclose the details of their sexual practices. I also found it
emotionally difficult to conduct interview work with women and children working in
prostitution, though for different reasons. Almost all of them were living in extremely
difficult circumstances and described experiences of sexual and physical violence, as
well as poverty and privation. I felt sympathy for them and wanted to help, but knew
there was nothing I could do as an individual to help them change their situation and
this sense of helplessness was hard to manage. The research for ECPAT thus left me
experienced in interviewing male sex tourists, who were often repulsive and abusive
characters, and from whom I felt entirely emotionally distanced, and in interviewing
women and children involved in the sex industry who were relatively powerless, who
often had long histories of sexual victimization by local men as well as tourists and expatriates, and with whom I genuinely empathised.

Undertaking research on sexual economic exchanges between tourist women and local men was a different matter. It was not so easy to demarcate the two groups as ‘goodies’ and the ‘baddies’ or manage them emotionally as such. As a woman, there were often ways in which I could ‘connect’ with the tourist women I interviewed, and as a black person from a working class background, there were often ways in which I could ‘connect’ with the local men I interviewed. I could often genuinely sympathise with the women’s desire to exercise greater control in their sexual relationships with men, even though I had no sympathy with the ‘solution’ they had found to their problems (i.e., visit ‘Third World’ countries where their economic power and racialised and/or national identity equipped them with the kind of power and privilege that only men enjoy back home). Equally, my genuine sympathy for the MSTs I interviewed regarding their experience of racism, poverty and social exclusion was continually interrupted by my lack of sympathy with their attitudes towards gender and sexuality. These men were often desperately trying to find someone to help them out of their dead end situation, and confided in me their experience of racism, childhood abuse and so on, and yet they were also often very macho, aggressive, homophobic and misogynist.

Despite, or perhaps because of my ambiguous emotional response to both MSTs and WSLs, it was still possible to achieve a level of rapport and empathy. Emotion is implicitly acknowledged as a research tool when methodologists discuss empathy as central to achieving verstehen. Feminists have also identified emotion as essential for developing the interpretive method (Collins, 1991; Jaggar, 1992; Stanley and Wise,
Empathy is an essentially reflexive process, where we shift between our own emotional experience and moral universe and that of the people we research. This means that even those who hold deeply racist, sexist or homophobic attitudes are not wholly monsters, but remain human beings. In order to get close to individual we research, we often have to suspend our normal reactions to unpleasant world views and cannot always challenge them as we would in a non-research setting.

Conclusion

In writing up research on socially, politically and/or economically marginalised groups, it is easy for researchers to reinforce stereotypes, rather than interrogate stereotypical representations. Jayati Lai (1996) urges us to develop a politics of representation which is sensitive to the danger of inscribing the ‘Other’ as an specific object, and this is particularly relevant for this thesis. So far as MSTs are concerned, I am politically concerned not to represent them merely as stereotypes of black masculinity, yet, as mentioned above, many of the MSTs I interviewed presented me with accounts which embraced a stereotype, focusing on the mythical performance of the black phallus, and celebrating heterosexuality and traditional gender roles. These accounts reproduced a collective, generic story about blackness, masculinity and sexuality, the effects of which were contradictory. On the one hand, this story reaffirmed the racist ideas of many of the WSLs, and empowered them in various ways. On the other hand, this story was often experienced by MSTs as a source of power which off set other experiences of domination and marginalisation. My task in presenting the research is to challenge the basis of racist and gender stereotypes, and to show the structural constraints operating on MSTs, and yet to do so without presenting MSTs as merely passive objects of sexualised racism.
Because people are agents, not puppets, and because they act on the basis of their ideas and beliefs about the social world, it is important that sociological researchers listen carefully to what those they research say about their subjective experience. At the same time however, people’s knowledge can be partial or incomplete, and social researchers must therefore ‘examine the underlying mechanism which structure people’s actions and prevent their choices from reaching fruition’ (May, 1993: 7). The methods of data collections and analysis adopted for this thesis aimed to explore the phenomenon of female sex tourism as the outcome of both structure and agency. It aims to show that both local men and tourist women are agents, acting purposively (trying to weave a rug of a particular pattern, in Faulkner’s terms). Yet they are also constrained by structures and by the discourses available to them to make sense of those structures. However, the constraints on each group are different and unequal. Stevi Jackson (1996: 25) observes that ‘we each live our sexualities from different locations within social structures’. Lack of attention to the structural bases of power, she continues, leaves us with ‘no way of establishing regularities underpinning diverse ‘sexualities’, of relating them to dominant modes of heterosexual practice or of locating them within power hierarchies’.
Chapter 3

POWER RELATIONS BEHIND 'HUSTLING' AND THE TOURIST FANTASY

Try to picture the following scene: a disco or club in Chicago, or Blackpool, or Hamburg, or Gothenburg where the walls are lined with young, unemployed, poorly educated, local black men, waiting to approach women in their 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s and ask them to dance. The women are mostly white, all are relatively well off and well educated, dressed in their glad-gear, and respond flirtatiously. At the end of the evening, few of these women will leave unaccompanied. They take their young man (often 20 or 30 years their junior) home with them, and though it may be a ‘one-night stand’, they often spend up to two weeks wining and dining him, and buying him gifts before making their (sometimes tearful) farewells, and returning to the disco to pick up a new lover. Though there are some venues in North America and Europe which almost fit this description, they are few and far between, and the men involved are usually migrants rather than locals.

In tourist resorts in the Caribbean, however, such scenes are commonplace. This thesis is concerned to describe the sexual encounters between tourist women and local men and boys in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic and explore the power relations that lie behind them. The aim of this chapter is to set the stage for empirical data and analysis which follows by exploring the material and discursive context in which MSTs and WSLs meet and interact.
The Global Economic and Political Context of Tourist Development

Most tourists would say that their presence in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic is explained by the region's golden beaches, blue sea, sunshine and natural beauty, and by the relaxed and friendly local culture. This, after all, is what attracts them to the Caribbean, which is marketed by the tourist industry as a natural 'paradise'. But conditions for tourism do not exist in nature. Tourist paradises have to be created. In the Caribbean, tourism, like other economic, political and social sectors of life, has been largely shaped by traditional colonial-dependency relationships (Randall and Mount, 1998). As such it taps into a legacy of existing, unequal, economic and social relations establish by colonial powers. In the 20th century, these relations have been conditioned by the dominating economic and political presence of the US in the Caribbean basin, and more recently European business interests in the region have also shaped the political and social landscape.
Tourism in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic is bound up to a set of historical and current linkages between international debt, price fluctuations in global commodity markets, national and international economic development policies, and laws and social policies concerning prostitution, employment, gender and racial discrimination. These have all become important factors in the creation of the tourist's 'paradise'. The international tourist industry in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic is part of a wider international framework for economic development which reproduces existing global inequalities (Patullo, 1996; Thomas, 1988). As this section will show, the tourist's experience and very presence in the Caribbean is thus predicated upon the unequal economic and political world order which has placed Caribbean countries in a subordinate position in relation to the affluent West, shaped their economic policies and plans for development and influenced their sense of self and nationhood.

Jamaica and the Dominican Republic both service a heavy external debt. Their economies were badly affected by the global economic crisis of the 1970s, and both countries' governments subsequently entered into a succession of International Monetary Fund Agreements (IMF), and World Bank structural adjustments loans, sector adjustment loans and programmes loans. The policy packages tied to these loans have had a devastating impact on the poor, and adjustment processes have involved massive currency depreciation and a concomitant drop in the price of labour so that wages in both countries are among the lowest in the Caribbean region (Anderson and Witter, 1994; Holland, 1993). With official unemployment rates hovering at around 15-20 per cent in each country and wages for those who have jobs extremely low, many Dominicans and Jamaican now need alternative sources of income to supplement or substitute for extremely low waged employment. Structural
adjustment has therefore been associated with the growth of the informal economic sector in both countries, as people try to 'hustle' a living (LeFranc, 1994; Safa, 1997).

The level of poverty and the life experience of local people in developing countries like Jamaica and the Dominican Republic contrast greatly with the level of wealth in affluent countries and the lives of tourists. While tourist developments in these countries are enclaves of luxury, living conditions and opportunities for local people are extremely meager. The Dominican Republic and Jamaica are poor countries with a large sector of their populations declared as living below the poverty line. In 1996 it was reported that 44 per cent of the Dominican population was poor (EIU, 1998a), and 28 per cent of the Jamaican population in 1998 were estimated to be living below the poverty line (EIU, 1998b).

Both countries have traditionally been dependent upon agriculture and have a large rural population which has been hit by a serious depression in agriculture due to failing monocrop cultures and inadequate land reforms. Sugar, the main crop is over supplied in the world and has dramatically fallen in price. The banana industry is also in trouble and still waiting a solution of the US and EU trade agreement to prevent a further fall in exports. Coffee exports also fell by 58.5 per cent in 1998 (EIU, 1998c). In the Dominican Republic an estimated 3 million out of a population of 8.5 million people live in rural areas, and up to 35 per cent of the population is without access to potable water and living in housing that is not connected to electricity. Health care is limited and there is no social security system in place to support those who cannot find employment.

A large proportion of the Jamaican population of 2.5 million also live in poor rural areas. Many people live on 'captured land', a system where by squatters occupy
unused land, build wooden shack houses and grow subsistence crops. These houses usually lack basic amenities such as running water and electricity. In Jamaica, the unemployed, black urban working class and poor rural population have few prospects of gaining formal employment. Access to education is scanty and literacy rates are as low as 15-20 per cent. Although there is a basic system of social security provided by the Jamaican government for those in formal employment, many people are excluded from this including a large number of women and casual workers.

Both countries have been forced to adopt stringent economic measures and to develop tourism in order to secure international loans. During the 1980s, the Dominican Republic’s external debt more than doubled from $2bn 1980 to $4.4bn in 1990 (EIU 1998a). Increased payments became unmanageable and all but short-term debt services were suspended in 1986. During the 1990s, the Dominican economy reinvented itself by a series of bilateral agreements with creditors and by introducing two key players: export manufacturers and tourism. Both sectors were facilitated by a currency devaluation which reduced the basic cost of labour to around 50 cents an hour (Howard, 1999). Forty industrial free trade zones were created to become the country’s third largest employment source. These free trade zones supply cheap, predominantly unskilled, female labour, to mainly foreign companies who export their goods and profit. Loan programmes set out by the IMF and other international financial institutions between 1997-1999 specifically aimed to bolster tourism by developing a 'stabilisation' programme which increased hotel capacity and improved the infrastructure of tourist resorts. The tourism sector soon became the largest foreign exchange earner in the Dominican Republic.
In 1998, The Economic Intelligence Unit reported that ‘Jamaica’s export performance over the last two years has been by far the worst in the Western hemisphere’ (EIU, 1998b: 4). The crisis in the Jamaican economy is rooted in the system of production that was introduced by the British. Patricia Anderson and Michel Witter note that:

the Jamaican economy in 1950 typified the colonial model of dependant underdevelopment. It was an open, import-dependent, monocrop economy with 90 per cent of its foreign exchange was earned from one crop, sugar (1994: 4).

As the sugar markets collapsed, Jamaica diversified its economy into tourism, mining and manufacturing. However, a series of loans were negotiated in the 1980’s and Jamaica’s debt almost doubled. The debt burden was primarily to the World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions who put pressure on Jamaica to chase much needed foreign exchange through tourism, as its agricultural export sector (sugar, bananas and coffee) collapsed. Other attempts to restructure and draw foreign investment to Jamaica, resulted in the creation of two free trade zones, the Kingston Export Free Zone and the Montego Export Free Zone. Some jobs were created but these were mainly for young women (on the threshold of the minimum wage) and migrant Asian workers who have been brought in to work on even lower pay than the Jamaican work force. Today, without the income from tourism, Jamaica’s economic situation would be calamitous.

Tourism has been heralded by many developing countries as the answer to many of their economic problems. The tourist industry is one of the fastest growing industries around the globe, employing as much as seven per cent of the world’s working population (Black, 1995). It is estimated by the World Tourism Organisation that by
2015 one in nine jobs will be in tourism. In recent years tourism has become the largest foreign exchange earner and major source of employment in the Caribbean region (Caribbean ACP Countries Profile, 1996). For the Jamaican and the Dominican economy, tourism is the most important contributor to the GDP, far outstripping foreign exchange generated by exports (Howard, 1999; Mullings, 1999). Both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica welcomed over two million visitors each in 1998 (EIU, 1999a; EIU, 1999b) and these figures are set to increase despite problems in Jamaica with tourist harassment and concerns with standards of food hygiene between 1998-2000 affecting the UK and German markets in the Dominican Republic (The Santo Domingo News, 6.1.2000). It is little wonder that tourism has increasingly been hailed as the economic panacea of poor countries like the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

Tourism investment patterns and visitor patterns differ between the two countries. Jamaica’s growing dependency on tourism initially started under British supervision in the 1950s. Investment has been steady and today tourism is the only economic sector which is not contracting, resulting in a greater dependency on the holiday industry. Tourism investment has traditionally come from middle class and upper class Jamaicans, so that today about 90 per cent of the tourist industry is in the hands of Jamaicans. Nonetheless, the foreign investors are increasingly funding large scale hotel complexes to accommodate the enlarging number of visitors.

Europeans account for around 20 per cent of tourist arrivals, with the US market accounting for around 70 per cent of total visitors in 1997, making it Jamaica’s biggest market. To encourage this, special concessions have been made so that US and Canadian visitors do not even need a passport to visit Jamaica for a holiday. A
driving licence ID provides entry into Jamaica for US citizens. This means that Americans are increasingly becoming ‘global citizens’ and tourists in general are given access to freedoms and civil liberties that are not extended to ordinary local people in the host country, who are finding it increasingly difficult to travel to the US or Europe due to rigid visa restrictions and immigration laws.

Mass tourism in the Dominican Republic did not develop until the 1980’s with large-scale investment by foreign conglomerates spearheading a rapid growth of the tourist industry from the outset. In the 1990s the numbers of smaller expatriate investors increased. In some tourist areas as many as 70 per cent of the hotels and restaurant establishments are foreign owned (Ministry of Tourism Office, 1998). There has recently been a shift in the tourist market with arrivals from Europe increasing rapidly and overtaking those from the US. Europeans are now estimated to account for 57 per cent of visitors, while just over 30 per cent of tourists come from the US and Canada (Ministry of Tourism Office, 1998). This is reflected in investment patterns in tourism for the Dominican Republic.

The desire of foreign investment to expand into new markets has lead to the introduction of all inclusive package deals in the Dominican Republic. Foreign owned companies like the German owned LTI, British owned Thompson and the Spanish company Occidental have invested heavily in the Dominican Republic taking advantage of the generous incentives given by the Dominican government. These incentives include a ten year exemption on income tax, corporate and local tax, as

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1 In the 1990s migration rates have steadily fallen to the US, Canada or England as tighter controls in host countries have limited quotas of migrants. This was once an important economic alternative for Dominicans and Jamaicans and encouraged by the local government who benefited from the remittances that migrants sent home (Anderson and Witter, 1994; Howard, 1999; Itzigsohn et al, 1999). Peoples inability to migrate legally has resulted in alternative, often illegal, routes of escape from a failing economy and also resulted in the growth of the informal economy.
well as duty free imports on goods not locally available. The Dominican government also allows foreign companies to repatriate what ever profits they make to their home country so that very little of the wealth created by mass tourism remains in the country. The majority of the economic benefits that tourism generates in the Dominican Republic are reaped by the large international tourist conglomerates and airlines rather than by local businesses or local people. As Truong (1990:115) comments, 'given their weak position, many developing countries have not been able to retain a very large proportion of the foreign exchange earned from tourism'.

Though tourist development in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic has greatly benefited private foreign investors and large banking institutions which draw out much of the profit, it has not radically transformed the lives of ordinary, working class people in these countries. Though tourism has generated a number of formal employment opportunities in hotels, bars, restaurants and other leisure areas, well paid jobs are open only to those with education and/or training, and higher administrative roles, including management and head chef, especially in the Dominican Republic, are often occupied by expatriates rather than locals (Freitag, 1994). The formal tourist sector primarily offers locals low paid work (at the minimum wage to just above), or at best low level supervisory jobs, usually with long working hours. Local workers are typically occupied in jobs such as waiters/waitresses, kitchen helpers, maids, bellhops, ground keepers, security guards.

Large numbers of locals therefore turn to the informal tourist economy to substitute for or supplement formal employment, 'hustling' as taxi drivers, guides, souvenir sellers, craft vendors, food vendors, shoeshine boys and bottle collectors, hair braiders and masseurs. Tourist-related female prostitution also provides a source of income for
third party beneficiaries, such as procurers, bar owners, pimps, taxi drivers, local landlords etc. Indeed, the number of local people involved in economic activities outside of the formal sector is estimated to be much larger than the number of locals in formal employment in tourism. In Jamaica, an estimated 84,000 are directly employed and a further 170,000 indirectly employed or involved in a tourist-related activity (EIU, 1997/98; EIU, 1998b). Tourism is also one of the largest employment sectors in the Dominican Republic with an estimated 44,000 Dominicans employed directly in the formal hotel sector and an estimated 110,000 indirectly employed in the tourist industry in 1995 (EIU, 1998a).

Recent sociological literature on the informal sector has rejected the dualist approach which assumes that capitalist patterns of employment are divided into two sectors - the formal and informal (Harding and Jenkins, 1989; Pahl, 1988; Roberts, 1989; see Chapter Two). The two sectors tend to operate along side one another, with the informal sector soaking up the surplus labour and those excluded from the formal sector. A wide range of activities take place with the informal tourist sector. While these activities generate low incomes, the informal economy is not necessarily a 'euphemism for poverty' (Castell and Portes, 1989:12) as it can 'often bring higher monetary returns and offer even higher social status' than 'legitimate' jobs in the formal sector (Gordon, 1980:103).

In both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, the informal tourism economy offers earning opportunities to those excluded from the formal employment in tourism by virtue of their age, immigration status, lack of education or training as well as those negatively affected by employers' gender or race discriminatory recruitment practices. The heterogeneous nature of informal employment means that economic
opportunities vary and can incorporate people with different life histories and at different points in their life cycle. Hierarchies of power and opportunity exist in both the formal and informal tourism economy in each country, and an individual’s involvement in the informal tourism sector is strongly linked to how they are positioned within these hierarchies. These hierarchies are linked to macro level factors such as gender inequalities, immigration law and law enforcement policies and patterns of tourist investment, and of particular relevance here, to race ideas and colonialism’s legacy of a ‘pigmentocracy’.

Race and Exclusion: The Legacy of Colonialism and Slavery in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica

Historical and contemporary race ideas have influenced formal and informal employment opportunities in both countries. Social, economic, legal, political, gendered and sexualised structures are structured by a colour hierarchy which tightly inter-links privilege and social, economic and political power with whiteness, and poverty and powerlessness with blackness. Like most of the Caribbean and Latin America, Jamaicans and Dominicans recognise a vast range of skin tones, hues and shades, each with a given social meaning and standing (Brathwaite, 1971; Hoetink, 1973; Lowenthal, 1972; Morner, 1967). Differences in the processes of racialisation can be traced back to distinct forms of economic development which lead to different forms of race relations and patterns of mixing (Hoetink, 1973).

The two countries have experienced different colonial and independent histories and different processes of economic development which have shaped their current national character. The Hispanola became a Spanish colony in 1492, and was marred by a turbulent colonial history where the territory changed ownership several times.
The territory fought and won independence from Spain in 1844, after contentious and lengthy wars of liberation, and renamed itself the Dominican Republic. Jamaica became a British colony in 1655 and was to remain one until 1962 when it achieved independence through relatively peaceful political and judicial transformations.

The development of a plantation economy in the Dominican Republic was restrained until the late nineteenth century. The territory was largely governed by economic development which focused on cattle rearing and rested on small farm holders who settled on the territory as home, and did not demand a high level of slave participation. Numbers of slaves in the Dominican Republic were generally lower than those on other territories. In 1785 it is estimated that the country’s population consisted of about 40,000 of Spanish decent (as migration of small scale Spanish farmers to the Hispanola was greater than to any other territory), 40,000 black slaves and 70,000 black or mulatto freed people (Black, 1986). The territory was largely dependent on a mixed population for its survival when migration from Spain reduced. The Hispanic attitude towards mixing therefore adapted itself to this and developed a more ‘liberal’ countenance to better integrate its mixed population.

Nevertheless, the racial hierarchy today is pronounced. Dominicans are very conscious of ‘race’ as a signifier. They have an array of categories based on phenotypical characteristics, for example *mulato claro* (light-skinned mixed race). *mulato ocuro* (dark-skinned mixed race), *moreno*, *trigeño* and *prieto* to define different shades of skin tone in mulattos. In addition they can also draw detailed distinctions to refer to types of combination of hair and skin types: *grifom, jabao* and *colorao*. 
‘Blanqueamiento’ (whitening) the Dominican society, both physically and ideologically, was a process actively encouraged by successive Dominican governments during the nineteenth century, culminating with the Trujillo era in the twentieth century. Trujillo introduced the category *Indio*, a racialised category that was socially constructed drawing on eurocentric race discourses to unite all non-white Dominicans under one official national identity (Fennema and Lowenthal 1987:29). David Howard’s (1998) research on perceptions of race in the Dominican Republic showed that the legacy of Trujillo’s regime persists today. He found that nearly 40 per cent of those surveyed perceived Dominican society to be predominantly *Indio/a* rather than black. This newly created racialised discourse allows Dominicans to separate themselves from negative discourses associated with blacks, while not questioning the status and value of whiteness. Robert Miles observes that eurocentric discourse of ‘race’ have ‘become accepted by those populations whom it was used to exterorise and exclude as a legitimate discourse by which to identify both Self and Other’ (Miles 1989:75-76). In the Dominican Republic these discourses have indeed underpinned the process of racialisation.

Racial inequalities have yet to be addressed on a political or social level in the Dominican Republic and many Dominicans still buy into ‘racismo’, a Latin style racist ideology, which believes in the whitening process and which keeps white Dominicans at the top of the social hierarchy and blacks at the bottom. Many Dominicans deny their national black heritage and refuse to accept that the population is anything other than *mulato* and white. As Comas-Diaz notes, ‘many Caribbean Latinos have difficulty accepting their own Blackness’ (1996:171).
Historically, Jamaica’s economic system differed to the Dominican Republic’s in that it was one of the biggest sugar producers in the Caribbean and known as one of the largest slave societies in the Caribbean in the 17th and 18th century. Jamaica’s role as sugar producer for Britain shaped economic, social and political relations. For the British, ideas of ‘race’ were employed as the fundamental principle for organising social structures in Jamaica. The British Empire developed a scientific based racism and through medical classification and a mixture of myth and fantasy (Butchart, 1998; Jahoda, 1999), constructed an array of stereotypes (Gilman, 1986). The system of reification gave the British Empire the means of justifying the slave trade and the economic policy it supported, but more importantly helped to carve out a unique British identity constructed in opposition to the inferior Other.

Under colonial rule, the criteria for determining an individual’s position in the Jamaican social hierarchy was ‘racial’ (James, 1993; Potts 1990). Race determined legal, economic, social and political status. Keen to inculcate divisions and dominance, the colonial administration legally divided the population into a hierarchy, expressed through skin colour in which various physical characteristics were drawn out and emphasised (Henriques, 1965; Lowenthal, 1972; Turner, 1982). Whites with full power and privileges were at the top, free coloured people, holding limited privileges in the middle, and black slaves at the bottom. Winston James notes that in the Anglo-Caribbean:

not only did the pigmentocracy operate at the level of ideology per se, it also performed as a material force joining tightly together colour with class position and privilege, neatly overlapping, over-layering and imbricating
them, thus generating and upholding the *forced coincidence* of colour and class in Caribbean societies which has lasted to the present day. (1993:234)

Although a class of free blacks also developed under slavery, mixing did not occur in Jamaica on the same scale as in the Hispanic Caribbean according to David Lowenthal (1972). In Jamaica, racial segregation and not the ‘whitening’ process shaped race relations. Fewer white European migrants settled in Jamaica, and those that did maintained their distance from the black population. The process of racialisation therefore developed very clear defined boundaries and divisions between racialised groups and classes, to the extent that racial prejudices and intolerance became more common even between different groups of blacks and coloured. For example, as early as 1826, there were reports of free coloureds who clearly did not want their children to associate with black slave children in missionary schools (Turner 1982). After emancipation, colonial discourses upheld white hegemony and British dominance while allowing some shift in the perception of the black population. Although the mass of the black population were still largely regarded as dangerous and unstable as ‘subjects’, the concept of civilization became the tool used to distance some mixed and black Jamaicans from the ‘Dark continent’ and the black ungodly beasts which represented the uncivilized and powerless (Bryan, 1991; Fryer, 1989). This new discourse continued to engage with the dominant idea of eurocentric biological theories of difference, but allowed for some social movement for lighter skinned blacks or blacks who used the Christian church to differentiated themselves from African blacks.

Post-independence propelled Jamaica to a search for a national identity and to address issues of racial discrimination. It was important to encourage its population to reclaim
and be proud of its black identity and culture (Thomas, 1999). Colin Clarke argues that the cultural explosion which took place after independence partly reflected ‘the need to seek a national identity that was non European, authentic rather than imitative, and based on the characteristics of “the other”’ (1996: 187). Folk black culture was given due respect and energised as a way to distinguish itself from the British ‘other’. This consolidated a national identity which was inclusive of the poor black majority without threatening the established Creole culture. Jamaica adopted the national motto ‘Out of Many, One People’ which is now used on all tourism marketing, yet racism still lingered. Even in the 1980s, Jamaican beauty pageants were stages where racial hostilities were aired and discrimination battles were fought (Barnes, 1997). Natasha Barnes argues that these pageants upheld the fact that ‘people of colour- not just women of colour - were unfit subjects for national representation, in spite of their efforts to prove to the contrary, nothing noble or enlightened could be reflected in their image’ (1997: 287). Jamaicans continue to value ‘good hair’ (straight hair) and lighter skin as a sign of beauty and status. This is reproduced in popular music such as Buju Banton’s hit about his ‘browning’, referring to the colour and status of his girlfriend (Williams, 1999). A report by UNICEF notes that Jamaican children are still taught to value and feel that straight hair and noses are ‘good’ and view kinky hair and broad noses as ‘bad’ (Government of Jamaica/UNICEF, 1995). As Sian Williams comments, social pressures on dark skinned Jamaicans to acquire the status symbols of whiteness continue to be acute.

Like Cuba, Jamaica has found it difficult to eradicate three centuries of anti-black policies in forty years (see Sarduy and Stubbs, 1995). While politicians may refer to the economic deprivation a large part of the population is living under, they pay little attention to the racist discrimination that also affects the life chances and
opportunities open to black Jamaicans. This is because middle class Jamaicans often
believe that racism largely disappeared with the end of colonialism and that it is only
poverty which holds back the poorer black people in Jamaica. Though it is true that
there is some upward mobility amongst black Jamaicans, it is also the case that there
is little downward mobility amongst whites, and in this sense, race and class remain
linked in Jamaica. This is evident in the tourist industry, where (as in the Dominican
Republic) it is easy to find white Jamaicans in ownership and senior management
positions, and all but impossible to find white Jamaicans hustling in the informal
tourism economy.

The Informal Economy, Prostitution and Sex Tourism

Informal economic activity has a long and significant history in Jamaica and the
Dominican Republic. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, enslaved men and
women, who could not act within the formal economy except as the property of their
owners, were often either encouraged, or forced by circumstance, to engage in various
kinds of informal economic activity. This bolstered the formal sector by allowing the
slave community to reproduce itself. For example, a substantial part of Jamaican
informal domestic trade in the internal economy at this time was occupied by slaves,
usually women, even though they had no rights to legal licenses to trade (Turner,
1982). Today, opportunities for work in the formal and informal tourist sector in
Jamaica are still heavily racialised and gendered. Women participate as ‘higglers’,
dominating local markets (Hart, 1996; Le Franc, 1996; Witter and Kirton, 1990), also
as domestic workers, hairdressers, dressmakers and in sex work.

Meanwhile, men are involved in a wide range of economic activity from the drug
trade, to other sectors such as agriculture, construction, vending and tourism. The
importance of the ‘ganja’ (cannabis) trade in Jamaica should not be underestimated as it has been reported that it finances state deficits through inflows of short term capital (EIU, 1998b). Some drug entrepreneurs also use their earnings to set up small businesses in tourism, or transport in the formal sector (Le Franc, 1994). (It should be noted however, that drug dealing is an extremely high risk activity, and if caught, a drug dealer can lose everything he has managed to acquire through drug dealing.) The informal economy is therefore just as important as the formal economy in keeping Jamaica afloat. It is also an increasingly significant employment sector for both women and men (Anderson and Witter, 1994).

**Photograph 1: Masseuses on a Dominican beach**

In the Dominican Republic, informal economic activity also has a well-established history which cuts across gendered and racialised lines. Years of economic insecurity and low employment rates have meant that Dominicans have developed a large informal economic sector in urban towns. Side street entrepreneurs sell fruit and food, jewellery and even electrical goods (Howard, 1999). A wider range of informal
activities take place around tourism. Women plait tourists' hair, give massages on the beach and sell fruit; boy children wash the sand off tourists' feet, collect bottles, sell popcorn and shine shoes; men sell souvenirs and offer taxi services.

Young women, more so than men, have traditionally migrated to towns from rural areas in search of work in Hispanic cultures, as they have fewer opportunities to work locally (Crummett, 1987). Pressures for women to migrate are underpinned by government policies which failed to integrate women in agrarian reforms on the one hand, while pushing for a cheap labour force for the new Free Trade Zones on the other. Tourist areas are now seen as the new zones of opportunity and many women and young people migrate to them in search of work. Once there often the only form of subsistence comes in the form of entering into sexual economic exchanges.

In both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, prostitution and other forms of sexual-economic exchange are amongst the many opportunities for earning in the informal tourism economy. It should however be noted that there are marked differences between the two countries in terms of the scale and organisation of tourist-related female and male prostitution. The Dominican Republic has a varied and large female sex industry which has prompted some tour operators to describe it as the 'brothel of the Caribbean' or 'the new Thailand'. There exists a formal sex industry that pre-dates and exists independently from tourism. This sector largely caters to local domestic demand, businessmen and seamen. Women work in hostess clubs, massage parlours, 'dating' services, brothels, casa familials and on streets within a highly organised formal, hierarchical and stratified sex industry (Cabezas, 1999). Prostitution in the tourist areas is largely made up of women who prostitute themselves independently and on what might be described as a freelance basis. These women migrate from
cities and towns in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to work from bars and discos that cater to the tourist trade.

Photograph 2: Sex tourist in a Bar in the Dominican Republic

As noted in Chapter One, the formal sex industry is not as developed and organised in the Dominican Republic as it is in some South East Asian countries (Lee, 1991; Truong, 1990; Moon, 1997; Studevant and Stoltfus, 1992). Prostitute women’s working practices have developed to accommodate tourist demands for loosely specified, open ended transactions, as well as more business like and commercial cash-for-sex exchanges. The boundaries between prostitution and non-contractual sexual exchanges involving local and migrant women seeking marriage as a strategy have become increasingly blurred (O’Connell Davidson, 1998). The majority of the women involved are the sole earner in their families and are unable to find work which pays as much as sex work.

Child prostitution is also widespread and large numbers of children between the ages of 12-15 can be found soliciting on the streets, parks, beaches and in clubs in tourist areas (UNICEF, 1996, O’Connell Davidson and Sánchez Taylor, 1996a). Dennise
Prichardo who works for a street children’s organisation called *Caminante* just outside Boca Chica, identified distinct patterns concerning children’s entry into prostitution. She told me that:

Many minors, both boys and girls start to work in prostitution between the ages of 13-14. Girls are considered sexually available by the time they are 12-13, while the boys tend to move from shoe shining into offering sexual services as a way of distancing themselves from shoe shining which is considered a childish profession.

Young boys, often street children, are in a vulnerable situation, very similar to that suffered by girls and some women in prostitution (see UNICEF, 1994). At the other end of the hierarchy are the ‘Sanky Pankies’, men aged 18 - 30 who often work for hotels or have some other employment in the tourist sector and work in the informal sex sector as freelancers. The local Dominican male sex industry is therefore just as varied as the female sex industry and encompasses the gay and heterosexual market. de Moya and Garcia (1999), identify two groups of male sex workers known as ‘insertive’ and ‘anally receptive’ sex workers, who service the demands of gay men as well as ‘straight’ men who have sex with men to reaffirm their *macho* identity and women. Many of the male sex workers are initiated at a very young age and are referred to as *Palomos* or ‘cock-pigeons’ (de Moya and Garcia, 1999).

Tourist-related sexual exchanges between local men and tourists began in the early 1980s when the Dominican Republic became known as an international gay destination (de Moya and Garcia, 1999). The shift away from gay sex tourism to a mixed gay and heterosexual sex tourism came about in the late 1980s when increased concern about AIDS and its perception as a ‘homosexual disease’ and the association
of AIDS with poor black countries (especially Haiti) led to a dramatic decline in gay tourists visiting the Dominican Republic. Although professional *Sanky Pankies* may offer sexual services to both men and women the majority do not consider themselves to be either homosexual or prostitutes.

The gap left by gay tourists was immediately filled by a growth in demand for heterosexual prostitution. Large-scale tourism which developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, offered cheap package deals to North Americans, Canadians and Europeans and large numbers of male sex tourists were drawn to tourist areas offering the single male cheap and exotic sex (Cassier, 1995). *Sanky Pankies* also adapted to the new market and became more oriented towards female tourists in their work (de Moya *et al.*, 1999). An increasing number of young men are migrating to tourist areas specifically to engage in this form of work. They become involved in the sex industry in much the same way that young women often enter the industry, through friends and family who encourage them to migrate and help them to find jobs and settle into a tourist area.

Data from a survey on hotel workers and tourists in the Dominican Republic by Steven Forsythe *et al* (1998), reveals that 29 per cent of male hotel workers and 5 per cent female hotel workers had sexual relations (usually multiple) with tourists. Of the male hotel workers who had entered into sexual relations with tourists, 52 per cent were employed as hotel entertainers. One NGO worker who runs health programmes with hotel workers argues that the tourist industry has institutionalised the *Sanky* philosophy and turns a blind eye to workers having sexual contact with tourists (Dotel, 2000), as they are rarely constructed as prostitutes by the hotel industry. Others who are successful enough can make a living solely from their sex work,
sometimes earning up to $1000 per month offering sexual services to both men and women (de Moya et al, 1999).

In Jamaica, a country with a much smaller population, female prostitution is a far less visible phenomenon than it is in the Dominican Republic. Female prostitutes tend to work in small Go Go bars, known as ‘exotic dance clubs’, or in street prostitution. Owners of dance clubs make money by charging clients an entrance fee and by requiring them to pay a bar fine if they wish to take a dancer out of the club, or to an upstairs room for sex. Big clubs in main cities like Kingston and Montego Bay are open all week, while at weekends, dance clubs open up in even the smallest towns in rural areas. Women are contracted by club owners to work for the weekend or another set period of time. They are recruited through a unique system, rather like a ‘spot-market’, a recruitment system where unemployed workers gather at a selected place at a specific time to be picked for work by employers. On Thursday mornings dancers and club owners from all across the island gather at a bus park in Savannah la Mar, Westmoreland (Williams, 1999). Here, dancers and club owners meet to negotiate the terms of an employment contract, including pay (between $1A4000 a night), accommodation and travel. There are also intermediaries who help the negotiations for a small fee from the owners. It is usually a seller’s market, in that the demand for labour is greater than the supply. This means that some of the women are in a relatively powerful position, as they have greater control over the negotiation. Women can also get advice from other women on terms of their contract. If an owner has treated another woman badly, other women will refuse to work for them. Women who work the clubs are sometimes in a position to choose whether or not to ‘sell their flowers’ (have sex for financial gain) as some women can earn enough from dancing and tips alone. However, the majority of women do offer sex for a short time. As the
business is 'highly mobile and lucrative' (Williams, 1999: 6), requiring very little capital to start up, many of the owners are small entrepreneurs and are in a weak position in relation to the dancers they employ.

Demand for the sexual services of ‘exotic dancers’ and street prostitutes comes predominantly from local men, seafarers and to a lesser extent, foreign businessmen. Although cruise ship passengers are increasingly providing demand for female prostitution, Jamaica attracts few long-stay male sex tourists. Jamaican women and girls thus typically serve clients who want brief and narrowly focused transactions, rather than more diffuse, longer term sexual-economic relationships. Though male tourists can find a small number of young girls and women working tourist areas and beaches, female sex workers in Jamaica take a very instrumental and professional attitude to their work and do not lose sight of the commercial nature of the relationship. Some women prostitute part-time to supplement a low income in the formal sector, while others work full time or for periods of time when economic necessity forces them to (Campbell et al, 1999). The majority do not see their sexual transactions with clients as a way of migrating. More importantly they do not wish to blur the boundaries of the commercial transaction they enter into with clients. They do not kiss, sleep or spend time ‘dating’ their client, unless paid extra to do so. In this respect they are more like European and North American prostitutes (see O’Connell Davidson, 1998). Furthermore, women working in exotic dance clubs are quite often in a more powerful position to negotiate terms because they are in a seller’s market. All of this makes Jamaican prostitutes unappealing to the majority of male sex tourists, consequently there is a lack of interest in Jamaica as a male sex tourist destination.
In Jamaica, as elsewhere in the world, prostitution is considered to be, by definition, a female occupation, and the idea that Jamaican men can sell sex to women is still viewed as laughable. Thus, although heterosexual sexual-economic exchanges between local men and tourist women can be blatant and conspicuous, the phenomenon is not viewed as a form of sex work by locals or tourists. In the Rough Guide for female travellers for example (Noakes, 1997), women are told to expect advances from Jamaican men, but not that the men’s activity is a form of prostitution. It is known that a small number of Jamaican men work in tourist-related male homosexual prostitution, though the phenomenon is largely undocumented and under researched. This kind of sex work remains secretive, for it is violently policed. Jamaican ‘society is intolerant of homosexuality at any age’ (Williams, 1999: 8), and even if a man is merely suspected of selling sex to a male tourist, he runs the risk of being chased, beaten and even stoned by local men and women.

State Regulation of Sexuality

Gayle Rubin (1999) has observed that ‘the state routinely intervenes in sexual behaviour at a level that would not be tolerated in other areas of social life’ (1999:157). These interventions serve, above all, to enforce and naturalise heterosexuality, heterosexism and the heterosexual state. Jacqui Alexander (1997) argues that the concept of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ is of key significance for understanding tourist development in the Caribbean. Tracing the relationship between tourism, gender, heterosexuality and the neo-colonial state in the Bahamas, she describes a ‘process of heterosexualization’ which depends on the ‘socialisation of citizens into heterosexuality through legal mandates and through service in tourism’ (1997: 68). This process conflates citizenship with a heterosexual identity while
sexualising local people and positioning them as 'commodities' for consumption within a tourist culture and industry for a neo-colonial state. Thus the:

Neo-colonial state continues [the] policing of sexualised bodies, drawing out the colonial fiction of locating subjectivity in the body (as a way of denying it) as if the colonial master were still looking on, as if to convey legitimate claims to being civilised (1997: 83).

Bahamian nationalists may have rejected the old colonial rule, but have not rejected the discourses on 'nature', 'civilisation', gender or nationalist heterosexist politics imposed by colonialism.

Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, like the Bahamas, are dependent on tourism for their economic survival. They also have formally and informally organised tourist industries, which reflect and reproduce gendered, racialised and sexualised hierarchies. Men are favored and free within this framework, while women's entry into formal employment is limited to undertaking low paid reproductive labour or jobs that otherwise 'service white femininity through more personalized services', as hairdressers, masseuse and beauticians (Alexander, 1997: 90). In both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, women who enter into the informal sex sector are socially stigmatised and legally harassed.

Laws covering female prostitution in the Dominican Republic are complex and contradictory. The act of prostitution is not illegal, and though there are laws which criminalise those who benefit from a prostitute's earnings, brothels are in effect regulated rather than prohibited, for 'prostitution operates in a grey area of the law, and therefore police and other authorities can bend and break the rules according to their own dispositions and levels of corruption' (Cabezas, 1999: 115). Meanwhile,
public disorder and indecency laws are used to harass and control female prostitutes. By contrast, Jamaican law on female prostitution follows the British common law model of prohibition, which makes soliciting, as well as third party organisation of prostitution, illegal. The Town and Communities Act (Law of Jamaica Vol. 17), prohibits loitering and soliciting for the purposes of prostitution and these crimes are usually punishable by fines. Pimping and encouraging women to become prostitutes are considered misdemeanours, and assisting and managing a brothel an offence.

Despite differences in prostitution law, law enforcement practices for female prostitutes in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are similar. In the Dominican Republic, female prostitutes are routinely rounded up and arrested on indecency charges or informally fined by corrupt police. Military and police corruption is widespread (see Ferguson, 1992). In tourist resorts like Boca Chica and Sosua, corrupt police dictate the locations that the prostitutes can work from. They demand money from bar and disco owners in exchange for turning a blind eye to prostitution on their premises, and they also extort money and sexual services from prostitute women as a method of supplement their extremely low wages. In Jamaica, law enforcement is also focused on female sex workers who work on the streets, beaches or in tourist bars and discos, so that female prostitutes in both countries have restricted access to public spaces and are regularly rounded up by police (Cabezas, 1999; Campbell et al, 1999).

In neither country are local men who enter into sexual economic exchanges legally constructed or controlled as ‘prostitutes’. In Negril, Jamaica, for example, not a single man was arrested for offering sex to tourist women in 1998 (interview with Negril Police Superintendent, 1999). Likewise in the Dominican Republic, men are left to act
freely as intermediaries or providers of sexual services in tourist areas, while women’s freedom of movement and freedom to make contracts with tourists is heavily restricted. In this way, sex laws effectively reinforce gender inequalities by fixing gender identities and heterosexual relations. Women who enter into sexual-economic exchanges are defined and controlled as legal and social ‘Others’, but the legal and social status of men who engage in the same practices remains unaffected.

State control of female sexuality is visible in other ways. Abortion is illegal and heavily stigmatised in both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, and this kind of state control over women’s bodies further bolsters gendered relations of power within heterosexual relationships. Local discourses encourage women to have children, since being a mother gives women social status and approval. However, fathers usually play a marginal role in Caribbean households, leaving women responsible for financially supporting their families, often leaving children with grandparents in order to migrate to find work and sending remittances to maintain them (Cabezas, 1999). Nonetheless, many women still aspire to the ideal heterosexual union, even though relationships between working class Dominicans and Jamaicans do not often result in legal marriage and monogamy (La Font, 1996).

Heterosexist state policies not only exclude prostitutes, but also homosexuals and people with HIV and AIDS, from rights of citizenship. All these groups are Othered, policed and criminalised for committing ‘unnatural crimes’ against God and man. Defining the heterosexual man in opposition to the homosexual deviant has been central to the creation of heterosexual states (Kimmel, 1994), and this process has been even more crucial to new national identities in the Caribbean. The volatile nature of new nationalisms and nation state movements at different historical times and
locations have also been associated with powerful symbols of manhood, a
masculinisation of power and general engendering of the population (Lewis, 2000;
Sheller, 1997; Yuval Davis, 1997). The construction of the state as a brotherhood
requires careful policing and distancing from homosociality. In Jamaica this has
resulted in a national discourse that is riddled with homophobia. Sodomy is an offence
and punishable by fines and imprisonment. In the Dominican Republic homophobia is
not inscribed in law, but homophobic attitudes continue to prevail to make
homosexuality a clandestine activity (de Moya and Garcia, 1996). Thus, states play a
key role in producing and sustaining a gendered regime within which men and women
are powerfully defined by their supposed sexual difference.

The State and the Informal Tourism Economy

It was noted above that dualist models of the formal and informal economies as two
separate and distinct spheres of economic action are problematic, since the two
sectors tend to operate along side one another, and are often interlinked. The
relationship between the formal and informal sector is often one of co-dependency,
with the ‘informal’ acting as a net for those unable to operate in the ‘formal’ sector
(Gershuny, 1985; Harding and Jenkins, 1989). Though the ‘informal’ economy has
often been imagined as somehow outside of state regulation (it is described as the
‘unofficial economy’, the ‘underground economy’, the ‘counter’ or ‘second’ economy
and so on), in reality the state’s relationship with the informal sector is more complex.
In some situations, those involved in the informal economy are afforded official
protection and/or made subject to indirect forms of official control (Redclift and
Mingione, 1985).
Moreover, in developing countries, the state often depends on actors in the informal sector to supply labour and services that are essential to support formal industries such as tourism. For example, in Cuba rapid tourist development in the 1990s meant that demand for transport outstripped the capacity of the official transport sector, and cheap informal taxi services developed to fill this gap. Individual entrepreneurs used their beat-up 1950s Pontiacs, fuelled by 'black' market gasoline, to drive tourists around the island, and though this form of earning was technically illegal, it nonetheless made an important contribution to the tourism economy. In the Dominican Republic, the same dependence on 'informal' activities is to be found. For instance, the country is dependent on tourism but too poor to provide the kind of municipal services tourists tend to expect. Tourists carelessly dispose of litter on the beaches, and Dominican boys, some as young as four years of age, collect the bottles and tin cans tossed aside by affluent visitors to sell them on for a small sum. Through their informal economic activity, local children provide a service (maintaining beautiful litter free beaches that are demanded by tourists) that would otherwise have to be funded by the state.

The state can thus indirectly benefit from informal economic activities, as well as from the formal economic sector, even when informal economic activity is not taxable and technically illegal. The state's relationship with informal tourism in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic is especially contradictory because a great deal of what is supplied by informal actors is wanted and valued by tourists (souvenirs, cheap transport, cold drinks, fruit and sweets on the beach, massage, hair braiding, and also drugs and sexual services), and yet at the same time tourists do not wish to be continually surrounded and harried by vast numbers of 'hustlers'.

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For this reason, both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic have recently taken measures to crack down on ‘tourist hustlers’ and have enacted legislation to curtail ‘tourist hustling’. To maintain the tourist fantasy of ‘Jamaica, No Problem’, the Jamaican government has taken several steps to protect tourists from being constantly pestered by hustlers offering trinkets, drugs and sex. In a survey undertaken by the Jamaican Tourist Board (1997), 56 per cent of tourists to Jamaica in 1997 reported that they had experienced some form of harassment during their stay. Of those who had been harassed, 60 per cent said that had been asked to buy drugs, 86 per cent had been pressured to buy something that they did not want, 30 per cent said they had been ‘followed around’, and 12 per cent had been solicited for sex (www.cnn.com/travel. news). In 1997 the Jamaican government planned to increase fines by over 100 per cent for breaches of the Town and Communities Act, which covers tourist harassment offences.

By 2000, both the Jamaican and the Dominican Ministries of Tourism were attempting to regulate and control the level of hustling that takes place in tourist areas by giving licenses and short training courses in tourism to vendors, hair plaiters and tourist guides. These licenses have to be paid for and are therefore beyond the reach of many who have traditionally worked the beaches. On some beaches, officially sanctioned hustlers have to wear special T-shirts which identify them as licensed vendors, which satisfies the tourist industry’s aim to provide some ‘local colour’, while limiting local people’s access to earning opportunities from tourism.

Though women can sometimes get licenses for hair braiding, massage or fruit vending on the beaches, most of the activities for which it is possible to obtain licenses are considered to be ‘masculine’ (life guard, guide, boat-hands, watersports sales,
club/restaurant promotion). Silvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine (1995) have noted that gender inequalities in the informal economy are often even more marked than in the formal sector, and in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, anti-hustling measures have shored up gender inequalities in the informal economy by restricting women's access to the beach, the prime location for earnings from tourism. Men who are in a position to obtain a license are well placed to supplement their income by selling drugs and/or entering into sexual-economic exchanges with tourists, and/or procuring female prostitutes for male tourists. Because MSTs enjoy greater earning opportunities in both the formal and informal sector, they do not normally depend solely on their sexual relationships with tourist women to survive. This leaves room for a certain amount of ambiguity about whether their relationships with tourist women are based on economic need or sexual desire/romantic interest.

So far, this chapter has drawn attention to the fact that tourist development in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic has taken place in the context of a very particular world political and economic order. From the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, productive activities in Caribbean societies were primarily organised to service Western economic interests, and as such, the mass of ordinary people living in the Caribbean were excluded from the benefits of their wealth, and unable to pursue their own independent interests. For centuries, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic were politically marginalised and unable to exist as independent states or make connections with others. The formal economy in both countries was contingent upon ties in the West, which left the informal sector to sustain the local population.

Although today, both countries are legally independent states, on a closer inspection we find that their unequal position in the contemporary world order reflects their
historical position as colonial appendages. Large numbers of ordinary Jamaicans and Dominicans remain excluded from the mainstream economic structures of the global economy upon which their national economies depend. This kind of exclusion from the ‘real’, public world abandons individuals ‘to contingency and self-seeking in a economy of makeshifts’ (Brace, 2001: 4). They are forced to look for casual labour and become freelance hustlers, selling the only thing they have - themselves. However, because the selves they must sell are gendered, as well as raced, opportunities for hustling are different for men and women. As has been seen, this remains the case even when men and women both hustle a living by entering into sexual-economic exchanges with tourists.

The remainder of this chapter addresses questions about tourism and the demand for hustlers’ services. It looks at the place of hustlers in the social organisation of tourism in the Caribbean and explores how they fit into the ‘experience’ bought by the tourist.

TOURISM AS THE BUYING AND SELLING OF FANTASIES


Dean MacCannell has argued that to understand tourism, one has to analyse what he calls ‘cultural experiences’:

The data of cultural experiences are somewhat fictionalised, idealised or exaggerated models of social life that are in the public domain, in film, fiction, political rhetoric, small talk, comic strips....All tourist attractions are cultural experiences (1976:23).
In the Caribbean, the data of the ‘cultural experiences’ that tourists can purchase and consume is sexualised, as well as raced and gendered, for the processes of heterosexualisation of host countries in the Caribbean are matched and complemented by the marketing processes in the West. Tourist destinations in the Caribbean are marketed as heterosexual paradises. Resorts become liminal spaces where heterosexual romance is fulfilled and stereotypical visions of heterosexuality, femininity and masculinity can be played out (Marshment, 1997). The holidaymaker is assumed to be heterosexual (as well as white) by tourist companies, whose marketing offers idealised versions of heterosexuality at three main stages of life development. In brochures, the single heterosexual is portrayed as young, slim, sexually attractive and seeking a partner. The married, mid-life and fully reproductive heterosexual is depicted as the epitome of the family unit that the single heterosexual is supposed to aspire to. Finally the brochures provide images of older attractive heterosexual couples enjoying a comfortable retired life together. The same brochures depict local black people as smiling and happy, the embodiment of ‘natural’ gender roles and also ‘proper’ race relations, with blacks serving whites. All these images perpetuate heterosexuality as the norm and mark out holiday destinations as places that are heterosexual and stripped of the tensions and conflicts that mark ‘real’ life back home.

In the tourist bubble, gender, race and heterosexuality intersect to create an escape from the anxieties about difference experienced back home. Differences of race and gender are invisible because they are woven into the fabric of the tourist setting. The local culture is read as being free from the usual racial tensions, because for the tourist the proper racial hierarchy is restored and left unchallenged. Gender and heterosexuality are also celebrated in ways that they are not at home. For instance,
tourist discos in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica are places where heterosexuals can perform and exhibit themselves to music using dance forms governed by gendered and heterosexual rules which are highly sexualised. Lillian Bishop and Ryan Robinson (1998) explain that the desire to:

perpetuate an understanding of Other cultures as qualitatively and quantitatively different with regard to sexual practices and mores from those of the European-North American cultures whence the representations emerge. The perpetuation of these discursive practices maintains cross-cultural beliefs about sex and sexuality. The beliefs, appropriated in turn by the international tourist industry, help cast activities surrounding the sex industry....These tropes portray the activities as part of the “history” and “tradition” (even religion) of a given site so important in the commodification of culture necessary for tourist consumption (1998: 114).

Western constructions of Other cultures extend to tourists the tools to read and interpret local music as confirmation of their racialised and sexualised prejudices. The rhythms of merengue and reggae usually invoke notions of sensuality and lustfulness in the Western listener. Heterosexual couples are encouraged to dance close together with bodies touching, and to move in a synchronised unison. Roles that are ascribed to dancers within the dance are gendered and often related to traditional courting dances. Women have to follow directions from their male partner who takes the lead. The purpose of the dance is to feminise and masculinise the gendered body (see Thomas, 1993 for a discussion on the gendered body in dance). Richard Dyer argues, ‘that with heterosexuality in dance, the nearer you get to sex the less sameness and equality can be tolerated’ (1993: 63), as the woman has to know her subordinate position in
relation to the man. Both merengue and reggae dance genres have explicit gendered roles ascribed to the dancers, making these dances a very public expression of gender and heterosexuality.

In Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, music and dance have become an integral part of the courting process in sexual-economic exchanges in the Caribbean. They allow the local man to get close to the tourist women, to let down inhibitions and neutralise constructions of inequality based on economic, racialised and social power, while celebrating gender difference and heterosexuality which feminises the women and masculinises the men.

Debates on the meanings attached to the different genres of reggae in recent years have focused on questions of sexuality. The tourist industry appropriates the spiritual and roots forms of reggae, with a softcore sexual undertone, such as Marley’s ‘Let get together and feel alright’ for day time background music, and other tracks like ‘Stir it Up’, recognised as ‘softcore’ sex records, are used for evening play (Ross, 1998).

However, at night the more overtly sexual genres come out. While the lyrics of older forms of reggae focused more on race and class struggles, modern reggae, and a form of reggae called ‘slackness’, has taken sexuality as one of its main topics. Carolyn Cooper (1990, 1995) argues that slackness is a transgressive genre which challenges traditional patriarchal structures and gendered norms of sexuality, giving women space to take control of their sexuality through dance. However, this can only be done at the same time as praising and valuing heterosexuality, denouncing homosexuality and by being ultra feminine.

In both countries the music is taken by European and Americans to signify a freer and more natural setting. For example one tourist guide writes:
dancing is something of a way of life in the Dominican Republic, they take music with them everywhere on noisy portable stereos and you will see even two year olds moving to a beat, developing their sense of rhythm. The national sound is *merengue*, a typically Latin beat, relentless, bustling and compulsive (Henderson, 1997: 574).

Heterosexual tourism in the Caribbean therefore has a rich pre-existing cultural, political and legal framework upon which to weave the fantasies of Western tourists who are looking for a rest from the fast pace of life in the developed world and the gendered tensions of every life. A large part of the modern tourist experience is the desire to feel different. Men want to be able to imagine themselves as a playboy or James Bond and women want to feel like the Spice Girls or Madonna, all of whom use an exotic and racially marked backdrop to position themselves as radical, cool and sexualised.

Though we can say that tourists want to feel different, and to consume difference, there is another sense in which they demand familiarity and sameness. Indeed, because tourists are, on the whole, interested in consuming fictionalised, idealised or exaggerated models of social life, the tourist industry has to create and sell what is actually a contradiction in terms – ‘staged authenticity’. The tourist who buys a holiday in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic, for example, does not actually wish to experience the reality of social life as experienced by most ordinary Jamaicans and Dominicans (poor sanitation, lack of access to potable water, crowded and dangerous transport, and so on). Instead, tourists generally want to believe that they will experience something authentically Jamaican/Dominican whilst on holiday, whilst
simultaneously being provided with access to all the comforts and privileges they are
used to enjoying in North America/Europe.

Knowing that profitability partly depends on creating the right balance between
familiarity and difference, the big tourist companies take pains to ensure that tourists
to developing countries enjoy a whole range of social, economic and cultural benefits
which their local hosts lack. For example, tourists have access to a hot and cold water
supply, electricity, sewage disposal, telephones, shopping facilities, swimming pools
and restaurants. Local government spending on creating and supporting the tourist
infrastructure takes money away from local community projects to provide these basic
facilities for local people (Ferguson, 1992; Patullo, 1996), and tourist development is
also often associated with other environment and social costs. Though some tourists
are concerned about the ethics of tourist development in poor and developing
countries,² the fact remains that large numbers of Western tourists benefit from the
cheap packages offered by big tour operators, and do not want to see or acknowledge
the poverty of locals whilst they are on holiday (Holland, 1998). The big tour
operators thus try to ensure that these inequalities do not intrude on the tourist
experience, and tourist areas become enclaves of wealth in the midst of poverty,
‘bubbles’ where the hardships of local people are invisible and an alternative reality is
staged.

Creating such bubbles means controlling all aspects of the tourist ‘experience’, and
many of the large tourism companies operating in the Caribbean have built their own

² Patricia Barnett, Director of Tourism Concern argues that ‘tour operators are frequently saying that
tourists don’t care and won’t pay more for their holidays’, while research by Non-Governmental
Organisations (NGO) like Tearfund show that tourists would rather pay more for ethical development
policies which include local people rather than excluding them from the benefits
(www.gn.apc.org/tourismconcern, 1999)
hotels and offer cheap, ‘all inclusive’ packages. These packages include charter flights on the company owned airline, hotel accommodation (usually in a beach front location), food and drink, entertainment and sports, all for one price, which is paid at travel agencies in Europe/North America. They are sold as the ‘money free’ holiday, as the one price means that tourists do not need to take any money except for souvenirs if they do not venture outside the hotel compound. The ‘all inclusive’ concept was originally created in the 1970s by Jamaican businessman, John Issa, who runs the SuperClubs hotel chain which includes Hedonism, Sandals and Breezes.

‘All inclusives’ were initially designed to compensate for the lack of infrastructure that existed in many of the tourist areas that were being developed (and, especially in Jamaica, to protect tourists from political violence). Richard Carrick, a Director of Airtours, one of the UK’s four biggest tour operators and a key player in developing Dominican tourism is quoted as saying:

the majority of long-haul all inclusives impact on closed economic systems - we are looking at a lot of the requirements having to be imported so the local economy does seriously lose out....they may not have the right economic climate or the means to supply the hotel. It is fair to say that if you take the Dominican Republic for example, inevitably the pace of tourism growth will outstrip the ability of the local economy and infrastructure to cope’ (Wheat, 1998:4).

The ‘all inclusives’ thus serve multiple purposes. They act as a closed economic system, restrict the out-flow of economic benefits to the local community, and ensure that the large, international travel conglomerates exercise a high level of control over the fantasy that is created and marketed. In these hotels, as in other non-inclusive
hotels used by the big tour operators, there are 'no problems' and tourists have access
to the same amenities that they would at home. Tour operators attempt to divorce the
holiday experience they sell from the economic and social inequalities which make up
the everyday reality of most Jamaicans and Dominicans, and little of the 'real'
Jamaica or the Dominican Republic is allowed into hotel complexes. Although it is
claimed that there is no such thing as a private beach in the Caribbean, in practice,
restrictions such as the introduction of pay beaches and hotel security prevent locals
from accessing beaches unless they are licensed to work on them. Hotels are
surrounded by fences and security staff to keep local people out (Patullo, 1996;
Thomas, 1988). The only locals to enter these complexes, apart from hotel employees,
are selected vendors given permission to sell crafts or hair braiding services on the
premises.

Photograph 3: Local Man Attempts to Make Contact with Tourists in All Inclusive
The level of control that tour companies acquire through the 'all inclusive' system is dramatic. It is an example of the vertically-integrated model used in mass tourism to ensure that all tourist services including transport, organised excursions and trips, entertainment and food, remains firmly under the control of the tour company (Burns and Holden, 1995). So, for example, a tour company like Thompson will show an in-flight video telling tourists that it is dangerous to buy soft drinks from Dominican establishments. At 'welcome talks' in Jamaica, Thompson representatives warn tourists against using local taxi drivers, drinks sellers or guide services. It is therefore no surprise that the 'all inclusive' has had a detrimental affect on small local and expatriate businesses in tourist areas. Increasingly, tourists only leave the hotel complexes to experience a little 'local colour', rather than to purchase meals, sightseeing trips, watersports instruction and so on. The majority of the profits made by foreign capital are transferred back to the 'centre' economies. What little that does stay in the Dominican Republic, tends to remain in the hands of privileged Dominicans with government connections, for as Lee notes, 'while a country as a whole may not benefit from tourism, individuals do' (Lee, 1991: 94). Even in Jamaica, where a high percentage of the tourist industry is owned by Jamaicans, many of the owners invest their profits abroad leaving very little profit in the local economy.

This kind of control makes it much easier for tour operators to provide the tourist with an idealised, fictionalised version of local life, a 'fantasy island' to consume. This latter is epitomised in Hedonism II (and now Hedonism III), a SuperClubs hotel in Jamaica for couples and single people who want to experience the sensual and 'wild' Jamaica. As the marketing brochure puts it, Hedonism provides:
A non-stop, flat out party. This is an active vacation for the mind and body, spirit and soul. Here pleasure comes in many forms. Choose one. Or two. You won't confuse it with Kansas. Hedonism II. A lush garden of pure pleasure. For couples and singles.

At Hendonism II, guests are greeted every morning while having breakfast, in a very tactile and familiar way, by young female and male entertainment staff, dressed in either skimpy bikinis or tight swimming shorts. Tourists are encouraged to dress in a casual manner (or not to dress at all), to participate in organised children’s party games such as musical bumps, but with a sexual angle (for instance, they are told to assume their favourite sexual position when the music stops) and to attend themed evening parties like the ‘pyjama party’ and ‘toga night’. One American woman I interviewed told me that, ‘when in Jamaica, you have to do what Jamaicans do’. In reality, however, Jamaicans generally hold very conservative and prudish attitudes towards sex and the body. It is unusual for people to touch each other publicly, even in a loving relationship, and many Jamaican women still wear T-shirts over their swimming costumes when swimming in the sea.

What tourists experience at Hedonism, as in other less overtly sexualised ‘all inclusives’, is very far from authentic Jamaican culture, and in fact, tourists are generally aware that what they are being sold by the tour company/hotel is an artificial version of local culture. Although there is strong demand for ‘all inclusive’ holidays and some of the people who buy such packages never leave the hotel compound in which they are based, most tourists – whether package holiday-makers or independent travellers – do also make some attempt to get behind the façade they
are presented with, and explore the ‘back region’ of their tourist resort. As McCannell notes:

[This] division into front and back supports the popular beliefs regarding the relationship of truth to intimacy. In our society, intimacy and closeness are accorded much importance; they are seen as the core of social solidarity and they are also thought by some to be morally superior to rationality and distance in social relationships, and more “real”. Being “one of the them”, or at one with “them”. This is a sharing which allows one to see behind the others’ mere performances, to perceive and accept the others for what they really are (1996: 94).

The extent to which tourists wish to consume the ‘back region’ varies. Some are satisfied by simply taking an organised coach tour of the surrounding countryside and stopping at some equally authentically staged version of reality to buy souvenirs. But others want to experience contact with ‘real’ local people, to dance to authentic reggae or merengue music in discos or clubs which real local people use, to drink in authentic bars, eat the authentic local cuisine, and so on. The Caribbean has been marketed to them as a culturally different place, and the local people’s difference is part of what they wish to consume. This cannot be satisfactorily achieved in the artificial environment of the hotel complex, and yet, as has already been noted, they do not wish to experience what really lies behind tourism. Most tourists want to consume a back region that is as idealised and fictionalised and exaggerated as the front region. This is what hustlers can sell them.
The Risky Nature of Hustling

A hustler, as one informant told me, ‘gives nothing away’ and is respected for his ability to solicit money from unsuspecting others in order to survive. In Jamaica this art of resistance and inventiveness is captured in the stories of Anancy, handed down by slaves, about a spider with a quick wit and cunning ways that help him to survive and beat the system by telling people stories and making them believe his stories are real. Loic Wacquant’s (1998) definition of the hustler’s takes on some of the qualities of Anancy. Wacquant argues that hustlers depend on their ability to deceive and manipulate others for economic profit, often by creating another, alternative reality.

Because hustling is regarded as a highly gendered occupation, only local men in the Caribbean refer to themselves as ‘hustlers’ or ‘players’ (Martis, 1999; Phillips, 1999). As in other forms of work, hustling is perceived as involving the exercise of skills that are central to constructing and reaffirming a particular autonomous masculine identity (Seidler, 1989). Local men use the term hustling as a concept which stretches beyond the description of simple economic action to embrace much more complex notions of self, honour and identity. In the Caribbean, hustling entails a whole range of practices and codes of behaviour which provide men who are excluded from the formal, public economic and political spheres with opportunities to obtain honour and respect. As Jay MacLeod (1995) maintains, hustling subcultures should be understood, not only as an attempt by its members to counteract any negative judgements from others, but also to provide ‘a context in which some semblance of self-respect and dignity can be maintained’ (1995: 117).

However, to be a ‘hustler’ is a risky business. Dictionary definitions of hustling imply that it is a dishonest set of underhanded activities to secure earnings by dishonorable
people (Longman English Dictionary, 1995). Hustlers may obtain some economic benefits, a sense of agency and respect and status from peers in their immediate community, but it rarely provides a route out of the socially and economically marginalised position they occupy. It is difficult for hustlers to do anything other than sell themselves or to step outside of the ‘economy of makeshifts’ and be ‘saved’ by finding self worth (Brace, 2001).

Hustlers are widely considered to be people who lack substance and integrity, because there is a tendency to conflate a particular way of acting or set of practices (hustling) with the essential qualities of the person who carries them out. The person who participates in marginal economic activities such as hustling, pimping, and prostitution, is attributed fixed traits and qualities, and thus anyone who hustles, pimps or prostitutes is reduced to nothing more than these properties. It is no surprise to find that the term ‘hustling’ has largely been applied to the informal economic activities of black and other marginalised males (Gordon, 1980; MacLeod, 1995; Polsky, 1971; Valentine, 1978; Wacquant, 1998). Blackness becomes synonymous with hustling which is in turn synonymous with dishonesty, a lack of substance and integrity, and vice versa.

There is also a strong association between hustling, race, sexuality and money. Black male hustlers in particular are valued for their appearance and ability to attract women, which plays an important element of sustaining respect from peers as well as generating earning opportunities (Pryce, 1979). Men have used their sexual relationships in various ways to for economic benefit and survival, often blurring the line between receiving and supplying sexual favours for financial gain (Wacquant, 1998). For example, Iceberg Slim’s account of his life as a pimp clearly states that ‘a
pimp is really a whore who has reversed the game on whores' (Slim, 1996:xii), and acknowledges the ways that some men have used their sexuality to get money from women.

**Conclusion**

This thesis is concerned with subjective micro-level interactions between local/migrant men and tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, but these interactions cannot be understood without reference to the macro-level context and intermediate social setting in which their interactions takes place (see Layder, 1993). The aim of this chapter has been to examine the material context that frames the subjective experiences of MSTs and WSLs in tourist resorts in the Caribbean. It has looked at the historical context that continues to shapes current economic, social, political and cultural relations between the West and the Caribbean. Tourist development in the Caribbean is controlled and dominated by foreign interests and concerns. This in turn influences employment practices and opportunities for local people who are mostly left to find a living hustling on the margins of the tourist economy. Ideas about race, gender and sexuality are also woven into the economic, social and political framework that create the tourist’s ‘fantasy island’ and the subjective experience of those who serve in it. The following chapters will look at the ways in which these groups interact, and they interpret their interaction.
Chapter 4

AMBIGUOUS ENCOUNTERS

This chapter provides the reader with some basic information about the tourist women who enter into sexual relationships with local/migrant men and how both parties perceive those relationships. It starts by presenting empirical data from a survey of tourist women’s sexual behaviour. The data suggest that around one-third of single or unaccompanied female tourists to Jamaica and the Dominican Republic enter into sexual relationships with local/migrant men, and they also show that a large number of those women acknowledged an economic element to these relationships. However, none of those surveyed understood their sexual encounters as a form of prostitution, but rather tended to describe them as romantic relationships. The second half of the chapter explores how this vision of ‘romance’ is constructed and maintained within encounters between local/migrant men and tourist women. It addresses questions about who these women’s sexual partners are, where and how they meet, the way that local/migrant men present themselves and ‘manage’ tourist women’s potential anxieties about relationships through the ‘chat up’ lines they use, and other forms of interaction.

Survey Design and Methodology

A questionnaire was designed to yield basic data on tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic who had sexual contact with local men, including their nationality, age, occupation and racialised identity; their perceptions of the ‘sexual culture’ of the host country; how often they had travelled to that country and other
known sex tourist destinations; how many different local sexual partners they had and whether they perceived these relationships as ‘real love’, ‘holiday romances’ or ‘purely physical’; whether or not they gave money or made other gifts to their local sexual partners; whether or not they took safer-sex precautions. The idea was that data from in-depth interviews with local/migrant men and tourist women could then be triangulated against this information, so that I would have some way of assessing its validity and the representativeness of my sample of interviewees. However, the survey findings are also of interest in their own right.

Questionnaires were administered to 240 female tourists in three tourist resorts: Negril in Jamaica and Boca Chica and Sousa in the Dominican Republic. All tourist women who were on a given section of the beach at the time of survey were approached, and those who spoke English and were single or travelling without their partner/spouse were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire for a study on tourism and sexual health. They were also told that the questionnaire contained questions on sensitive topics, and assured of anonymity and confidentiality. For further reassurance, envelopes were provided for finished questionnaires (see Wellings et al, 1994). Questionnaires took on average between ten to twenty minutes to complete and included a mixture of multiple-choice questions and open-ended attitudinal questions. The questionnaires were distributed, completed and returned on the spot.

This process was repeated at different times of the day and on different sections of the beach in order to obtain the widest possible sample of tourist women. Respondents were usually sunbathing, alone or with friends, relaxed and largely unoccupied and refusal to participate on grounds other than language was minimal. There were only
fifteen refusals in all. The very high response rate (92.5%) was perhaps due in part to women’s familiarity with questionnaires on sexual behaviour and health in Women’s magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*. Many respondents expressed curiosity and concern for the topic under investigation, which may also explain their willingness to take part. Women tended to answer all questions, and there was very little missing data.

Although only English speaking women were able to complete the questionnaire, the sample included a cross section of tourists from Europe and North America. Set against EIU statistics on tourist arrivals for the two countries, the sample appears to be reasonably representative in terms of the nationality of tourists. Although the Caribbean attracts large numbers of German, Dutch, Italian and Spanish tourists, they are underrepresented in this sample because many did not speak English and the questionnaire could only be completed by those who are fairly fluent in English (however 23% of respondents spoke English as a second language).

Data was coded using SPSS following the design of the questionnaire. This allowed me to compare findings in Jamaica with that of the Dominican Republic as well as give me general background data on female tourists and their sexual behaviour in the two countries.

**Survey Findings**

The survey of 240 tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic found that almost a third of the sample (75 women) had engaged in one or more sexual relationships with local men during the course of their holiday. The women who had entered into sexual relationships with local men were not an homogenous group in terms of background characteristics. They ranged in age from girls in their late teens
to women in their sixties, though women in the 30-40 age group were the most likely

to have had sex with local men.

In terms of racialised identities, respondents who had entered into sexual relationships
with local men more or less mirrored the composition of the sample as a whole, which
is to say the vast majority were white. There are no background data on tourist
arrivals to each country broken down in terms of racialised identities, so it is not
possible to say whether respondents, 77% of whom self-identified as white, 10% as
black and the rest as Asian or ‘Other’, are representative of tourists to Jamaica and the
Dominican Republic more generally. However, there was a marked difference
between the samples drawn from the two countries. In Jamaica 15% of those surveyed
self-identified as black, 2% as other and 1% as Asian. In the Dominican Republic
none of the women self-identified as Black, Asian or other. Jamaica attracts a large
number of English speaking American, Canadian and British tourists, who all have a
significant black population. Black British and Afro-Americans have also had a long
historical link with the English speaking Caribbean rather than the Hispanic
Caribbean, and so tend to travel to the English speaking Caribbean. Overall, 37% of
white female tourists surveyed had entered into sexual relationships with local men,
while only 17% of the female tourists who identified as black, Asian or ‘other’ had
done so. However, the sample of black tourists is far too small to base any
generalisations upon.

The survey findings suggest that there may be a connection between sexual behaviour
and the number of visits made to a given destination. In Jamaica, only 11% of those
who admitted to having a local sexual partner were on their first visit to the country.
Some 32% had visited Jamaica between two and four times, 36% had previously
visited the islands more than five times. Of those women who had *not* had sexual
relationships with local men, almost the reverse was true: 68% of them were visiting
for the first time, while just over 30% had previously taken holidays in Jamaica. In the
Dominican Republic, there were many more first time visitors in the sample as a
whole (52%, a figure which may reflect the fact that the Dominican Republic has only
recently started to attract large numbers of tourists from English-speaking countries),
but 41% of the women who had entered into sexual relationships with local men were
nonetheless on return visits to the country (see Table 1).

**Table 1:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of previous visits made to country</th>
<th>Female tourists who had sex with local men</th>
<th>Female tourists who had not had sex with local men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jamaica %</td>
<td>Dominican Republic %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On first visit</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 4 previous visits</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more previous visits</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response to these questions</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>N</em></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey found that 66% of tourist women who had entered into sexual
relationships whilst on holiday had formed only one such relationship. Most of these
were either first time visitors to the country or repeat visitors continuing a ‘friendship’
established on a previous holiday. However, 27% of women in both countries
reported entering into sexual relationships with two or more partners during visits
(Table 2). These women were virtually all on return visits to the country, and would
appear to fit with Albuquerque’s (1998) category of ‘veteran female sex tourists’, that is, women who make repeated visits to a given country in pursuit of sex with multiples of local partners.

Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of local sexual partners in the course of holiday</th>
<th>Jamaica %</th>
<th>Dominican Republic %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents’ Perceptions of Relationships with Local Men

Respondents who reported that they had entered into sexual relationships with a local man or men in the course of their stay were asked whether they had ever been approached by a prostitute, ‘gigolo’ or ‘Sanky Panky’ (terms used in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic respectively to refer to male prostitutes). Nearly 25% answered, yes, they had been offered sex on a commercial basis, but not a single respondent in either country admitted to having ever taken up the offer. Clearly, these women did not perceive their sexual encounters with local men as prostitute-client transactions or view their sexual partners as prostitutes/gigolos. This is interesting given that over 50% of them did acknowledge an economic element to their relationships (see Table 3). They were asked whether they had ever ‘helped’ their local boyfriend(s) out by giving cash, gifts or by buying them meals. In Jamaica, 38% of the tourists who had
entered in sexual relationships with local men said that they had given their boyfriends cash, 33% had helped with gifts and 54% had bought meals. Only 35% stated that they had never ‘helped’ their boyfriend out in any way. In the Dominican Republic, women were rather less likely to acknowledge economic support provided to local boyfriends - 33% said they had helped with meals, 8% with gifts and 17% admitted to giving cash.

Table 3:
Female tourists reporting ‘helping out’ their local sexual partner(s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of ‘help’ given</th>
<th>Female tourists in Jamaica %</th>
<th>Female tourists in the Dominican Republic %</th>
<th>Female tourists in both countries %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gave help in form of cash, gifts and/or meals</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never ‘helped’ local partner(s)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were also asked whether they would describe their relationships with local men as ‘true love’, ‘holiday romance’ or ‘purely physical’. In Jamaica, women who had sexual relationships with local men were more likely to describe these relationships as ‘holiday romance’ (42%) than as ‘real love’ (13%), whereas in the Dominican Republic, they were more likely to describe their relationships as ‘real love’ (39%) than as a ‘holiday romance’ (26%). Women who visited the Dominican Republic were more likely to state that they were in long term relationships with only one man often moving to the island to find work or were frequent visitors. Only two respondents described their sexual encounters as ‘purely physical’, with a further eight women stating that their relationships were both ‘purely physical’ and ‘holiday
romance' (Table 4). Those who described their relationships as ‘holiday romances’ used the term in a fairly flexible way. It covered a broad spectrum of sexual encounters, everything from a one night stand to relationships that lasted a week or a month. One women stated that she had three ‘holiday romances’ in the space of a week, for example.

Table 4:
Female tourists’ descriptions of their sexual relationships with local men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of relationship</th>
<th>Jamaica %</th>
<th>Dominican Republic %</th>
<th>Both countries %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday romance</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real love</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purely physical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both physical and holiday romance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several types</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safer Sex Practices

Of the 75 tourist women who reported entering into sexual relationships with local men in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic, 15% (n=11) stated that they took no precaution whatsoever against the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (and it is interesting to note that these were women who described their relationships with local men as ‘real love’). Condom use was reported by 67%, and 19% of the sample stated that they used precautions against the risk of STDs but did not specify the exact
nature of these precautions. Some respondents even confused contraceptive protection with protection against STDs. Three women (4 per cent) for example, stated that they used the pill as protection against STDs, while a further four women (5 per cent) stated that they trusted the fidelity of their partners. Those who stated that they used condoms were asked who supplied them. The majority replied that both partners supplied condoms, with only 16% stating that they themselves provided condoms.

These findings may compare unfavourably with similar research on gay males’ safer-sex practice (see, for instance, Clift and Forrest, 1999), but they are consistent with research that has found an extremely high level of unprotected sex between heterosexual tourists in European holiday destinations. Research on single tourists who have sex while on holidays in Europe (mostly with each other, rather than with local people) suggests that between 25% (Bloor et al, 1997) and 71% (Conway et al, 1990) do not consistently use a condom. These studies, like other work in this area (Holland et al, 1991), further suggest that women are less likely to use condoms with new partners than men and are more likely to engage in unprotected sex than men as they often experience problems getting their male partners to use condoms. Indeed, it has been convincingly argued that women’s inability to enforce condom-use is a measure of their relative powerlessness in heterosexual sexual encounters (Holland et al, 1998). In the light of such research, the fact that 68% of female tourists who had sex with Jamaican and Dominican men reported condom use suggests that the women enjoyed a relatively high level of control within their sexual encounters, and it is equally important to note that those women who had multiple sexual partners and/or who acknowledged ‘helping’ their partner(s) out financially in some way were also those most likely to use condoms.
Unusual Liaisons

Only one female tourist interviewed from a sample of 27 WSL’s, had entered into a sexual relationship with a middle class local man who was her economic equal or even superior. Clearly this type of relationship does not involve a transfer of economic benefits from the woman to the man. On the whole, however, tourist women do not come into contact with middle class locals, and their sexual liaisons are generally distinctive from those which they usually form back home in one or more of the following ways: the women have far greater economic power and enjoy a much higher standard of living than their local/migrant sexual partners; the relationships involve a transfer of economic benefits from the woman to the man; and the woman is often older than her sexual partner. It is also the case that most of the white tourist women who have sexual relationships with black local/migrant men do not have lovers, friends or family of Caribbean heritage back home.

Tourist women tend to visit resort towns, rather than major cities, and spend their time on the beach, in their hotels and in tourist bars and nightclubs. The local men they meet and enter into sexual relationships with are usually either hotel or bar workers, or ‘beach boys’, in other words, young men who make a living by engaging in various forms of ‘hustling’, which as described in previous chapters, may include any one or combination of the following: promotion for restaurants, clubs and watersports businesses, renting out beach chairs and umbrellas, acting as tour guides, selling drugs, procuring female prostitutes for male tourists, life guard, providing jet ski rides, boat tours or snorkelling instruction.

These men do not own the tourist businesses they work for. Employment is seasonal and earnings are low. Those selling rides and tours are generally paid on commission.
and if they do receive a basic wage, it is not enough to subsist on. As in other
Caribbean holiday destinations, the men involved in such beach work are usually
between the ages of 16 and 35 and come from a poor socio-economic background
(Albequerque, 1998; Phillips, 1999; Pruitt and LaFont, 1995). They are often migrants
from poor rural areas or inner city sites who move in the hope of finding work. Many
have not even finished basic secondary education, and lack any qualifications. One
such interviewee in Jamaica earned extra cash by writing letters for other male beach
hustlers who were illiterate and unable to write to their tourist ‘girlfriends’ back home
themselves. Most MSTs live in poor housing, often in shanty towns built on ‘captured
land’ and without running water or electricity, and are unable to pay for basic health
care. Young working class men who have some qualifications and/or access to jobs in
the formal tourist industry may have a slightly better standard of living, but the
important point to note here is that there is a huge discrepancy between the living
standards, educational level and life chances of most local/migrant men and that
enjoyed by the tourist women who have sex with them. (See Table 5. which provides
background information on the sample of local/migrant men interviewed in Jamaica
and the Dominican Republic.)

The local/migrant men interviewed in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic stated
that they enter into sexual relationships with as many tourist women as they possibly
can. These relationships usually result in some form of material or financial benefit
for the man.

A few of my interviewees admitted to engaging in explicit sex-for-cash exchanges
with male tourists, female tourists and/or tourist couples, but on the whole, the
economic element of sexual relationships between local/migrant men and tourist
women is less formally arranged, and so less visible to the tourist women concerned.
### Table 5:

**Background details on local/migrant men and boys interviewed in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Detail</th>
<th>Local/migrant men and boys interviewed in Jamaica</th>
<th>Local/migrant men and boys interviewed in the Dominican Republic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in some form of tourist-related sexual economic exchange</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in informal tourist, but not involved in sex tourism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/tourism worker involved in tourist-related sexual economic exchange (including taxi drivers and <em>moto conchos</em>)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/tourism worker not involved in tourist-related sexual economic exchange (including taxi drivers and <em>moto conchos</em>)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of men also involved in:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procuring prostitutes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing drugs</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>6 (4 ESE / 2 IE)</td>
<td>11 (3 CSE / 8 IE)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migration status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic migrant (outside of tourist parish)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International migrant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational background</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or more child</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESE - Involved in Economic Sexual Exchanges
IE - Involved in Informal Economic Activity
The survey found that about two-thirds of the women who had sex with local men acknowledged an economic element to their relationship(s). But this figure is unlikely to accurately describe the true level of economic benefits transferred to local men by these women for there is likely to have been under-reporting by tourist women, who may not interpret their own behaviour as 'helping out financially'. For example, one woman who filled in the questionnaire stating that she had not helped her boyfriend out financially later noted that she was paying for a house to be built on his land. She described this as a 'business proposition' rather than a gift to her boyfriend.

Moreover, in interviews MSTs observed that they often do not reap a financial reward from their relationships with female tourists until after the woman has returned home, at which point she may respond to requests for assistance by sending them gifts of money. Furthermore, tourist women do not always realise how their local partners extract a financial benefit from them. MSTs explained in interviews that the trick is to take women to bars, shops and restaurants where friends work, ensure that they are over-charged for goods, and then split the reward with the friend. Finally, many tourist women do not appreciate just how poor the men they have sex with are, and so do not understand that simply letting them have a hot shower in a hotel room, or paying for a snack or drinks can be construed as a material benefit.

The real point, however, is that a significant number of tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic enter into sexual relationships with local men that have at least some economic element to them. This is potentially problematic for most tourist women not simply because it represents a reversal of Western gender norms regarding
heterosexual relationships (as does the fact that the female tourist is often older than her local sexual partner), but also because it could be construed as a form of commercial sex. For women, buying sex represents a transgression of gender roles as well as moral codes, and certainly very few of the female tourists I interviewed were comfortable with the idea of having sex with a man who was motivated simply by a desire for economic gain. Given the huge disparity of economic power between tourist women and their local partners, and the significant transfer of economic benefits that takes place with their relationships, how is it that these relationships appear to the women as a form of romance, rather than a form of prostitution? The remainder of this chapter begins to answer this question through a focus on the interaction between local/migrant men and tourist women, where and how they meet, and the way that local/migrant men present themselves and ‘manage’ tourist women’s potential anxieties about relationships through the ‘chat up’ lines they use.

Making Contact

In both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, tourist areas are relatively small and compact and the hotels, beaches and discos are the key sites of contact between local/migrant men and tourist women. Tourist women also make initial contact with MSTs touting various services or goods on the streets. Local men who work in hotels have easy access to tourist women. Although most hotels claim to censure sexual relationships between workers and tourists, in practice those working in the formal tourist industry are the most likely to have sexual relationships tourist women and very few are sacked for having sexual relationships with guests/tourists. In fact, hotels generally employ young and attractive staff and expect them to be attentive to guests’ needs in order to promote a holiday atmosphere. It is rare to see older locals, or those
who might be considered ‘unattractive’, in front of house positions as receptionists, waiter/waitress or entertainers. Young Dominican men are hired as ‘entertainers’ to play volley ball and other beach games with older tourist men and to teach tourist women to dance, for example. Hotels often hire ‘entertainment’ staff to befriend the tourist. The manager from Hedonism informed me that:

Staff can dance with guests, entertain them, befriend them, show them round but are not allowed to fraternise with them, or get caught in their room, as they will be dismissed. Distance needs to be created. No sex, drugs or getting involved, as the management is responsible for anything that goes on here.

There is an inherent contradiction in this statement. Staff, especially the entertainers, are allowed to get close but not ‘personal’, and even if they get personal it does not become an issue unless they are caught in a compromising position on the hotel premises. This attitude is shared by the majority of the hotels in the Caribbean whose policies formally forbid tourist/worker sexual relations but in practice turn a blind eye to such relationships.

In the Dominican Republic, discos are another focal point for contact between tourist women and local men. Entrance to discos in tourist areas is restricted for local/migrant women, who either have to enter with a tourist or local men or show marriage ID to prove that they are not prostitutes. Dominican men, however, have unrestricted access if they can pay a small sum or are known to the club’s personnel. The ‘Paradise Club’, about a mile outside Sosua, is one such venue. It has a large circular dance floor, surrounded by a raised balcony where the bars are situated. Club guests stand and drink and watch those on the dance floor. There is also a quieter patio area outside with seating. The club’s atmosphere is created by tourists of both
sexes and all ages, large numbers of young Dominican and a few Haitian men and a small number Dominican women who have entered with tourist ‘boyfriends’.

*Sanky Pankies* look serious and will show off their dancing techniques and attempt to make eye contact with tourist women. ‘Outright flirting or harassment is seldom part of their etiquette’ (de Moya *et al*, 1992: 14). These men present as shy but friendly, non-aggressive, gallant gentlemen who offer to teach tourist ‘ladies’ how to dance or explain to them some of the finer details of their country. They make no explicit sexual overtures, but flatter the tourist women’s appearance, for instance by commenting on the colour of their eyes, hair and skin.

In white racist societies, dance floors have long been sites where blacks and whites could meet (Mumford, 1999; Bakare-Yusuf, 1997) and in both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, the dance floor is the main arena of seduction. Dancing allows men to get close to and intimate with tourist women, many of whom will be unaccustomed to either *merengue* (Dominican Republic) or reggae (Jamaica), both of which are forms of dance that allow the man to display sexual interest and arousal. As noted in Chapter 3, the rhythms are sensual and couples dance close together with bodies touching and sometimes grinding. In *merengue*, partners hold on to each other. The woman’s right hand is in the man’s left, and her left hand is on his shoulder while his right hand is at her waist, guiding her through the steps. The woman is dependent on the man. She needs his support when she is twirling and she is in a subservient position to him in the context of the dance - she has to surrender and follow him, if they are to dance well. Reggae can be danced in many ways as there is a wide range of reggae genres. In general, however, couples dancing reggae stand very close and grind their bodies together in time to the music. Again the woman has to follow the
directions from the man. Other modern forms of reggae have developed the dance style called ‘slackness’ which can involve quite sexually explicit body movements, like ‘whining’ where the lower half of the body gyrates.

Photograph 4: Tourist Woman and Local Man Dance the Merengue

In Negril, the beaches are rather more important sites of initial contact between local men and tourist women than in the Dominican Republic where the beaches are smaller and have less sporting activity taking place on them. Men who run water sports activities walk up and down Negril’s seven mile long beach all day talking to tourists offering them rides and trips, but also establishing contact from which to build relationships. As competition on the beach is harsh, establishing a personal
connection allows for a friendly rapport and trust to build between the tourist and the hustler. Tourists rarely purchase hustlers’ services when first asked, but will be more inclined to take a trip with a ‘friend’ later during their holiday. This is also an important way of getting to know tourists who may later be seen at a beach dance, or in a bar or disco.

Negril’s beach night life includes large open air concerts with big named reggae artists and reggae bands who play at different establishments every night along the beach. On music nights the crowd at such venues is about 50 per cent tourist and 50 per cent locals. There is a busy atmosphere and tourist women are constantly approached by local men, while others watch for her reaction to those who talk to her. Men generally approach tourist women to talk and ‘reason’. They introduce themselves and ‘sweet talk’ their way into conversations. One Jamaican called Peter, told me how you have to give the tourist woman lyrics:

lots of lyrics....to control the mind, what ever ya say, like nice tings, ya pretty, like ya eyes are green, ya move nice, I’m gonna do this, they gonna do that for you, show her a good time, take her here, take her there, because you’re on vacation, ya know what I’m saying, all that kinda of story, all different kinda of story.

Peter stated that the purpose of such lyrics is to help ‘calm the woman down’, make her feel ‘special’. Scripts therefore incorporate traditional heterosexual pick up lines and flirting innuendoes. In Jamaica rather more than the Dominican Republic these lines will be jazzed up with explicit sexual references, as in the following example:

Girl, I’ve been watching you, you’re a sweet lady, a sexy lady, I want to get to know you, you’re a special lady, you’re a special lady, I wanna get close to
you, I'm working now but later I'm gonna make some time available for you so I can get to know you, you're a beautiful lady, don't go away until I talk to you later.

These scripts have to make an immediate impact on the tourist woman, as other local men are almost literally queuing up for her attention. How the lines are delivered and how the body is positioned during the performance is also important. The men have to manage their bodies in such a way as to exhibit their sexual power/potency without simultaneously creating a sense of threat or danger. Lines are generally spoken at a slow and relaxed pace that does not smack of insolence or insincerity, but is pitched in such a way as to allow the tourist woman to tell herself that the man is really interested in her. In some cases, men have to rely more heavily on body language and intonation than on the actual words spoken, as many tourists do not speak the local man's language. This kind of communication problem can actually often help to prolong relationships rather than hamper them as the absence of a shared language can add to the sense of 'difference' and 'romance'.

Scripts have to be carefully balanced or they do not work. One Jamaican MST had very limited luck with the following lines said all in the same breath: 'How long you been in Negril? Have you got a boyfriend? I want to talk to you, I want to sex you up, I like you'. This approach missed the relaxed and sycophantic pace of the usual sweet talk and went straight to the essence, namely sex. Effective sweet talk hovers around that essence and is gushing, flattering, tenacious and calming. However, local men also know that there are some female tourists who want to enter into several anonymous sexual encounters and prefer a direct approach that they can quickly take up or reject. As one Jamaican interviewee said:
Some ladies, they just come for two weeks, just for satisfaction. To satisfy their needs and their wants and they don’t remember you. Many guys are treated like that. Like they use them or something. Lots of times I see that happen.

Some men therefore sometimes try their luck by taking a more direct approach in the hope of getting picked up by one of this type of tourist woman.

Identity and Self Presentation

MSTs in Jamaica tend to take on one of two identities: the first and most successful group are distinguished by their dread locked hair and are sometimes pejoratively referred to as ‘rent-a-dreads’ (Albuquerque, 1998; Karch and Dann, 1981; Pruitt and LaFont, 1995), the second group are extremely well groomed. They usually have short neat hair and a casual and smart look, and are referred to bald heads, or pejoratively as ‘gigolos’.

Rent-a dreads are the most visible and identifiable as MSTs. It is usually assumed that they are the only group of men working the beaches and are therefore easy targets for others to label as selling sex. One rent-a-dread said that, ‘people all over the world want to know more about the culture, the food, the music and of course the vibe’ of Rastas. These men are much in demand by tourist women from all nationalities as they offer a version of black male identity that is safe and gentle and black male sexuality that is strictly heterosexual and romantic. Dreaded local men take on a black identity that is universally identifiable as Jamaican, even though in reality Jamaicans would not accept it as the most representative Jamaican identity. The Rastafarian movement is recognised the world over as a black movement forged in Jamaica with a specific black identity, and yet, the relationship between Rastafarians and Jamaicans
has not been smooth. Rastas were initially regarded as a threat to Jamaican nationalism primarily because they were not a nationalistic movement. They promoted a form of ‘racial nationalism’ by insisting that they were not Jamaicans but Africans and forced an awareness of black consciousness and African heritage onto the Jamaica population (Nettleford, 1972). This stance generated some fear and disapprobation among ‘respectable’ Jamaicans who, until after independence, had never considered Jamaica a black nation. Many Rastafarian communities and Rastas remain somewhat marginalised from mainstream Jamaican society (Thomas, 1999). Nonetheless, Jamaican tourism capitalizes on the Rasta image and uses representations of Rastafarian culture to sell tourism (see Photograph 5. overleaf).

The stereotype of the Rasta is that of a passive and non-political black identity, not interested in the material world but with a developed social and moral philosophy. In Jamaica, Rastafarism is used as a cultural prop to sell tourism and an image of Jamaica as peace loving and laid back. Rent-a-dreads use the trappings of Rastafarism as props to conjure up a safe black male identity. Young Jamaican men arrive in tourist areas without dreads or leanings towards the Rastafarian religion but soon realise that in order to be successful with tourist women they must dread up. Once dreaded their chances of dating a Jamaican woman becomes limited as most Jamaican women refuse to go out men who dread their hair. They therefore have to be committed to entering into relationships with tourists.

The men in this group are heterogeneous in terms of age, experience and appearance. There is an enormously variance in age. Most are in their 20’s and 30’s but some can continue working the beach at 50 or older, (an option that is not usually open to local women in the informal tourist sex industry). Within this group there are the ‘serious
Rastas’ and the younger and trendier designer dreads, but all rent-a-dreads draw on a discourse of pseudo-rastafarianism to present an image which lives up to stereotyped representations of Rastas as simple country living folk. They express a philosophical wisdom which bridges differences and finds honour in poverty. Racial conflicts and barriers are subdued by a rhetoric of ‘one love’ and same blood. Economic inequalities are dissipated by a belief that ‘Ja’ will provide allowing for contentment in the simple things in life while rejecting the materialism of the ‘Babylon system’. Sexual relationships are embraced as a way of showing natural love.

Photograph 5: Jamaican Postcard Featuring a Nude ‘Rastaman’.

These men usually say that they are farmers or small land holders who live in the country and only venture into Negril, which is part of the ‘Babylon’ system, now and then, to sell goods they have grown or made. Rastas are generally excluded from
positions of employment in the formal tourist industry as they are not regarded as ‘respectable’ and so have less opportunities for formal employment even though some may be skilled or semi-skilled.

Some rent-a-dreads have travelled abroad or lived some period of their lives abroad and present as very cosmopolitan. Offering difference as well as the familiar, in a safe environment gives them an advantage. Some of the younger men wear labels, designer clothes and gold, and in this way present simultaneously ‘Third world’ and ‘First world’. They like material goods and appreciate what the West has to offer, but their Jamaicaness makes them different. Men who have travelled outside Jamaica are usually in a better position than those who have not travelled outside to reach a wider range of women because they have a greater insight to the world of the tourist.

Those who have not travelled try to learn as much as possible about different countries and cultures. One interviewee in the Dominican Republic told me that he read Jackie Collins novels not just to improve his English but also to learn things about what tourist women liked. This was important as women often want someone who can combine the ‘exotic’ with the familiar. For other women, however, there is an advantage in having a man whom they do not understand by their side.

In the Dominican Republic, the term ‘Sanky Panky’ is used to refer to men who enter into sexual-economic exchanges with tourist women, and whilst it is a pejorative term it is not necessarily understood as identical to the term ‘prostitute’. Indeed, it was originally coined to refer to a specific regionalised and racialised phenomenon – the term originates from Sosua, where it is said to have developed to refer to the mixed raced children born to Dominican mothers and migrant Jewish male refugees who arrived in Sosua in 1948 (de Moya et al, 1992). This mixed raced community was said
to be racially distinctive from other Dominicans. When the tourist industry developed in Sosua these local beach boys adopted reggae music and dreaded their bleached locks which attracted the attention of tourists. Because of the sexual element to their relationships with tourists, they were jokingly said to enjoy ‘hanky panky’, which became ‘Sanky Panky’. Today, most MSTs are clean cut and smartly dressed, but some still dread their hair and use a recognisable non-Dominican black identity and play on the success of the rent-a-dreads in Jamaica.

Dreaded Sanky Pankies have experienced hostility from the police, not because they are believed to be selling sex, but because they embrace a black identity which runs contrary to Dominican nationalism. One man whom I interviewed told me that his dreads had been cut once by police who wanted ‘to teach him a lesson’. Another man distanced himself from a Dominican identity by dreading his hair and pretending to tourists that he was a drug dealer of Jamaican heritage in the hope that this would make him more successful with tourist women.

In both countries, then, men who dread up are marginalised and reviled for embracing what is viewed as a specifically black identity. They are excluded from most types of formal employment, largely rejected by local women as potential sexual partners and ostracised by wider society. Yet for many tourist women, these men represent the ‘authentic’ Caribbean male. However, in both countries, it is also men with dreaded hair who are most likely to be identified as ‘gigolos’, and this is certainly something that ‘bald heads’ play on. Clean cut local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are more likely to be employed in the formal tourist industry and so to have a visible source of income other than from commercial sex. They also refer to their non-dreaded appearance when trying to convince tourist women that they are the ‘real’
Jamaican or Dominican man who does not sell his body. According to these clean cut men, only those with dreaded hair are 'Sanky Pankies' (Dominican Republic) or ‘gigolos’ (Jamaica). According to Jamaicans with an unkempt Rasta appearance, only bald heads and those with short, neat dreads are ‘gigolos’. According to those with short, neat dreads, only those with long, unkempt locks are ‘rent-a-dreads’. And so on. In this way, the ambiguities which surround the notion of the ‘gigolo’ or male prostitute become incorporated into the process of seduction.

**Honour, Denial and Seduction**

Both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are honorific societies, and a tacit but distinct code of honour governs relations between beach hustlers, as well as their relations with tourist women. All avoid being publicly labelled a ‘gigolo’ or a ‘Sanky Panky’, even when they admit to accepting money or gifts in exchange for sexual favours, and even if this is their main source of subsistence. In neither country is the label of ‘gigolo’ or ‘Sanky Panky’ automatically attached to a man who enters into explicit sexual-economic exchanges, or to a man who engages in one specific type of behaviour, but is rather a branding which can result in dishonour. Fear of being branded allows the men to police the boundaries of their activities and create distinctions between those who enter into sexual-economic relationships with tourists. So, for example, in Jamaica, a man might be branded a ‘gigolo’ if it is believed that he only has sex with tourist women and not local women, and/or if he enters into brief relationships with multiple tourist women. A man who has sexual relations with multiples of Jamaican women, by contrast, would not be labelled a gigolo but rather ‘is given respect and called a cool dude,’ as one interviewee told me. He continued to say that men who only date tourist women, like the ‘rent-a-dreads’ are ‘the worst’
because they do not have relationships with Jamaican women. To be branded a gigolo in Jamaica also means being suspected of homosexuality, for a male prostitute is understood to sell sex indiscriminately to anyone who will pay.

It is also interesting to note that the label ‘gigolo’ or ‘Sanky’ does not necessary describe a permanent status. A man branded as a gigolo can lose this stigma if he finds the ideal tourist woman who will ‘look after him’. Entering into a long term relationship with a tourist woman wins him ‘respect’ from other beach hustlers and local men, and cancels any previous stigma. Jeopardising such a relationship by entering into sexual relationships with other tourist women and ‘cheating’ is regarded as foolish. However, having relationships with other Jamaican women while involved with a tourist woman is not considered in the same way, and this partly has to do with the fact that tourist women are regarded as ‘Sketels’ (whores) and not respected.

The codes of honour which inform and regulate sexual behaviour are complicated and have to be negotiated with tourist women, as well as other men. They are much more significant and powerful in Jamaica, where the need to distance oneself from the label of ‘gigolo’ is greatest (partly because the phenomenon of gigoloism is well known among tourists, partly because it is associated with homosexuality and other supposedly ‘unclean’ sexual behaviours). This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. For the moment, it is important to note in both countries, local/migrant men’s seduction scripts centre around reassuring tourist women that they are not talking to or being propositioned by a ‘gigolo’ or ‘Sanky’. They need to counteract any doubts tourist women may have about their status, and seduction scripts are therefore strongly linked to notions of honour and ‘reputation’. The scripts are thus designed to firmly establish the man’s lack of interest in material or financial gain, to distance him
from the stereotype of the gigolo or Sanky in terms of his sexual interests and
behaviour, and to construct him as a ‘real’ and authentic black man (Jamaica) or Latin
lover (Dominican Republic). They draw upon three main discursive areas: work and
migration; sexuality; and race and nationality. Table 6 below sets out the lines used
and the meanings they are intended to convey.

Table 6:

'I'm not a Gigolo/Sanky Panky’ Scripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive Areas</th>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Intended to convey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work and Migration</td>
<td>I work in tourism</td>
<td>Not desperate for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m a country boy</td>
<td>Not interested in the material world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I sell drugs</td>
<td>I’m not degraded by selling sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I like my country</td>
<td>Not interested in you for a Green Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m going abroad in a few months</td>
<td>Not interested in you for a Green Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>I don’t sell my body</td>
<td>I’m not a gigolo/Sanky Panky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m not promiscuous</td>
<td>I’m not a gigolo/Sanky Panky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m not a homosexual</td>
<td>Only homosexuals sell sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t go down on women *</td>
<td>Only men who sell sex go down on women. I’m a real man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Nationality</td>
<td>I don’t usually go out with white women</td>
<td>Only gigolos and Sanky Pankies go out with white women or tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tourist women*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m not a Rent-a-Dread/Rasta</td>
<td>Rent-a-dreads sell their bodies. I’m a real Jamaican/ Dominican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have white blood #</td>
<td>I am like you - only black men sell sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’m a Rasta</td>
<td>I’m a real ‘natural’ black man. I don’t sell my body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*only used in Jamaica   #only used in the Dominican Republic
Though few MSTs self-identify as sex workers, it is none-the-less possible to state that some of them take a much more focused and strategic approach to forming such relationships and extracting the maximum benefits from them than others. In both countries, for example, there are men who consciously (and skillfully) identify and target the women who they believe are most likely to enter into a sexual relationship and most likely to be generous. They also carefully and consciously present a self that draws on established gendered, racialised and sexualised discourses of the black male in such a way as to make themselves attractive to those women. In the Dominican Republic the local men tap into a racialised masculinity which pulls away from the stereotype of the aggressive and dangerous black masculinity and leans towards a more romantic ‘Latin lover’ stereotype. This links into Dominican discourses on race which discriminate against a black identity in favour of a Hispanic identity. Men tended to present as almost shy, positioning themselves in places where the target woman will notice them but then waiting until she makes eye contact or shows interest in them before actually approaching her. This minimises the chance of rejection and helps to dispel fears that he is a ‘Sanky’.

Jamaican men are much more vocal and direct in their approach to tourist women than are Dominican men. They are more likely to present themselves as conforming to stereotypes of the ‘hypersexual black male’ than the gentle or romantic ‘lover’ (see chapter 7 which examines links between discourses on race and sexuality in more detail).

Few of the men who enter into sexual-economic exchanges with tourist women rely on such exchanges as their sole source of income, or view it as a form of work. More
importantly, even those who would self-identify as professional sex workers rarely enter into explicit sexual transactions. Most encounters between tourist women and local/migrant men involve a non-contractual and diffuse exchange which can last anywhere from one night to the whole period of the holiday. The man’s status as ‘not-a-gigolo’ cannot be simply and firmly established during the initial chat-up stage of the encounter, but must continue to negotiated and maintained throughout the duration of the relationship. Very few of the local men discuss financial remuneration up front, before the sex act has taken place, as this would suggest that there was a financial motive behind their interest in having sex with the woman. Most commonly, men aim to develop a ‘relationship’ with a tourist women within which the woman will spend money on the man and give him gifts (including cash gifts). There is also the hope that upon her return home, she may send the man regular sums of money and/or sponsor him to enter a European or North American country.

Establishing an ‘authentic’ and long term relationship and maintaining contact with tourist women is valued for a number of practical reasons. It is more productive to focus efforts on a woman who is visiting for a substantial period of time and who will potentially provide for the local man throughout that period by paying for meals, drinks and buying gifts. It is also hoped that the tourist will return to visit him again, and in the meantime, send him money from abroad. This is the ideal set up that most MSTs aspire to achieve. It not only assists them economically, but gives them kudos and social status among their peers – it proves they can secure a tourist woman to give goods and money, which also demonstrates that they can sexually perform and satisfy her. In tourist areas, telecommunication offices are usually busy with local men making phone calls to ‘girlfriends’ asking when she will be returning or pleading for
her to send remittances. Letters of a romantic nature laced with pleas for financial help are also sent in the hope of developing a long term relationship.

Those taking a highly organised and strategic approach can make substantial sums of money from sexual-economic exchanges with tourist women. For example, one Dominican informant, Juan was a 34 year old, ex-Sanky Panky who, though now retired, had spent ten years in the Sanky Panky business and had made a great success of it. He had worked very strictly to a plan, his aim being to make women fall in love with him and then encourage them to send him regular amounts of money every month. At one point, he had ten women each sending him an average $US150 a month. He told me, ‘sex is not for pleasure but a business, I don’t care if the woman is beautiful or not. I’d rather go out with someone ugly if she’s got money’.

Discourses around Dominican masculinity allege that a Dominican man will have sex with anyone because Dominicans ‘love sex’. Juan was not alone in the instrumental use of his body and making a distinction between sex and love. Another interviewee made a distinction between younger women and older women ‘I prefer younger women, but I go with older women because they have money’. Antonio de Moya et al, (1992) also found that some Sanky Pankies made a distinction between ‘sex’ as work and ‘making love’ as recreation. At the time Juan started working the beach at Sosua, he was co-habiting with his Dominican girlfriend who was also a sex worker. He said that he had been very much in love with his girlfriend, but that ‘poor people can not fall in love’. At the time of interview, he had just married a twenty-six year old German woman, who had a child by him, and who had bought a hotel with some money provided by her rich family, which Juan now ran.
In the Dominican Republic, successful Sankies like Juan will often teach the ‘trade’ to younger male friends or relatives (de Moya, forthcoming), and can take a highly organised and collective approach to it. Three interviewees told me that they belonged to a ‘sindicato’ (a union), and stated that such sindicates are not uncommon. They involve groups of four or five men who agree to protect and support each other while working the resort. They pool resources and exchange advice and tips for catching tourist women which are vital to newcomers. For example, they borrow and exchange clothes, and ‘cover’ for one another with excuses when they have more than one women ‘on the go’ at the same time. The sindicato also guards the reputation of their members, ensuring that no one calls any of their members a Sanky Panky, and that no-one suggests to their tourist girlfriends that they may have ulterior motives for pursuing the relationship. They will also protect each other’s interests by ensuring that other Sanky Pankies do not hit on a tourist woman who is already the ‘girlfriend’ of a member of their group. The sindicato acts as a school where information and experience is passed on. It provides these men with help in creating a successful image to attract tourist women and tips on how to identify potential clients.

Tips and learning ways to ‘size up’ potential female tourist girlfriends are also shared by beach hustlers in Jamaica and other Caribbean islands (Alburquerque, 1998).

‘Sizing up’ women involves picking up on certain clues and cues. For instance, men judge how long white female tourists have been on the island by the shade of their tans. A woman with a dark tan has been in the sun and is likely to be leaving soon, while a pale tourist is more likely to have just arrived. It is always preferable to get someone who has just started their holiday and is going to be on the island for at least a week or two. Local men also read the demeanour of tourist women – for example, a woman lying in the sun in a bikini is considered to be more adventurous and more
likely to accept their advances than a woman who sits in the shade reading or a woman who wears a swim suit rather than a bikini. Women who are overweight, older and/or who might be considered 'unattractive' are generally considered a good bet, for it is widely believed they will be interested in local men's sexual advances since, in one informant's words, 'no one look at them back home'. Overlooked in their country of origin, it is assumed they will easily succumb to the attentions of local men.

In both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, local men also draw on stereotypes about different nationalities to identify potential sexual partners. Women from Quebec are assumed to be direct and explicit about sex and generous with their money; English-speaking Canadians are thought very easily seduced; German women are said to either be very serious and or very instrumental in their attachments; Italians are reputed to like men with very dark skin or Rastas and to be sexually open; American women are thought to sometimes be racist but also to have money; English women are assumed to be accessible, but reputed to have little money.

**Conclusion**

MSTs are highly skilled social actors, and looking at the details of how they interact with the women helps to explain how WSLs can interpret the relationships they form with them as romances, rather than commercial sexual transactions. However the women are not passive 'victims' who are simply manipulated by MSTs. They too are actors pursuing their own ends. The following chapter looks in more depth at the type of relationships formed and the way both MSTs and WSLs interpret them.
Chapter 5

ONE LOVE? TOURIST WOMEN'S FANTASIES AND LOCAL MEN'S DREAMS

The tourist industry markets Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, like other economically underdeveloped holiday destinations, as culturally different places (Momsen, 1994, Marshment, 1997), and all tourists from developed countries are encouraged to view this 'difference' as a part of what they have a right to consume on their holiday. The British tour company, Thompsons, for instance, shows their package tourists a 'Destination Video' on the flight to the Dominican Republic. The video shows sun baked, white sand beaches, lined with swaying palm trees; colourful markets crowded with local people selling knick-knacks; Dominican men, women and children dancing to merengue music in open bars, and tells the tourists ‘In a few minutes, all this will be yours to enjoy’. ‘These people love to dance’, the voice-over explains, and tells tourists that ‘Despite poor living conditions, the people work hard for a living and are always ready with a smile’. In amongst the pictures of happy ‘natives’ (who smile despite the fact they have to live in a ‘developing nation’ which is ‘still perfecting technology that we take for granted’), come pictures of tourists going horse riding. ‘If you go horse riding’, the voice-over continues, ‘please don't worry about the horses’. Tourists are then assured that Dominican horses are a special breed which are ‘naturally thin and boney’, and are not malnourished or maltreated, even though they may appear to be so to Western eyes. The subliminal message is clear: ‘these people’ are not like ‘us’. Their difference will make the tourists’ holiday
an enjoyable and unforgettable experience, and also means that the tourist has no real connection or responsibility towards 'them'. It would be inappropriate for tourists to respond to the visible condition of either horses or people in the same way that they would back in their own, fully 'developed' country.

Ryan Bishop and Lillian Robinson (1998) trace the history of discourses and representations that drive the desire for Otherness in South East Asia. They argue that Euro-American fantasies construct Other sites as a more natural space, inhabited by more natural and sexual Others, and so fill a space that is lacking in Western cultures. Many of these constructions are full of contradictions about Otherness:

People with the power to travel and encounter—not to mention conquer—other cultures have constructed and represented them in markedly paradoxical ways: savage but wise, uncivilized but attuned to nature, potent/fecund but uncontrolled, materially wealthy but only so in potentia, indolent but productive, immoral but happy, craven but carefree (Bishop and Robinson, 1998: 115).

Dean MacCannell further notes that tourism allows a form of 'moral involvement with diverse public representations of race, poverty, urban structures, social ills', and that in search of 'moral identity', 'modern man [sic] has been condemned to look elsewhere, everywhere, for his authenticity, to see if he can catch a glimpse of it reflected in the simplicity, poverty, chastity or purity of others' (1976: 40). The search for authenticity is thus a search for 'real' life, a life which is connected physically, emotionally and which can sometimes involves hardship. However it also uses essentialist notions of the Other to construct this 'real' life.
‘Third World’ tourism provides a space where an ‘authentic’ version of a supposedly more ‘natural’ and ‘real’ life can be experienced. It appeals to those tourists who want to use their tourism to ‘get back to nature’, to escape from modernity. As tourism increasingly involves mass tourism, which means a loss of individuality, many tourists attempt to step outside of the normal tourist experience of being herded in groups and taken care of by big corporations, by ‘going native’. Paula Black’s (1998) research on tourists found that there is a subjective distinction made between ‘travellers’ and ‘tourists’. Travellers try to avoid tourist resorts and organised mass tourism in order to experience the ‘real’ local culture. Holidays for travellers are therefore ‘intrinsically bound up with the self concept and self actualisation’ (1998:5), and this is often achieved by misinterpreting the discourses on race, gender, class and age of the local host culture they are visiting. For example, they may experience their own racialised and gendered identity in a different way, without fully understanding how racialised, gendered and economic structures in host cultures intersect to create hierarchies which actually reinscribe their social, racialised and economic power.

The tourist industry has also responded to the tourists’ desire for ‘authenticity’. The more affluent tourist to the Caribbean can now go into hotel complexes designed to look like ‘paradise found’. They will stay in palm-thatched huts (simple and yet fully equipped with air-conditioning, hot showers etc.) surrounded by tropical gardens with water features and huge ‘exotic’ flowering plants. And even the budget tourist on a package deal to Jamaica or the Dominican Republic is encouraged to imagine that they will experience something ‘authentically’ Jamaican or Dominican in the course of their holiday. Whether ‘traveller’, affluent tourist, or low budget package tourist, ‘authentic’ experience is often understood as involving some kind of closer or more ‘genuine’ contact with local people; as getting behind the ‘front’ of the official tourist
industry to the ‘back region’ of local people’s ‘real’ lives. Beach hustlers appear to offer an entrée into that ‘back region’, and for this reason both male and female tourists are often eager to accept beach hustlers’ overtures of friendship and offers to guide them around the ‘real’ Jamaica/Dominican Republic. Sexual relationships with local people are often a logical extension of this desire to ‘know’ the Other.

In an article that focuses on Australian male sex tourists, Suzy Kruhse-Mount Burton (1995: 192) argues that to define sex tourism as a form of tourism motivated by the desire to engage in commercial sex ‘masks the complex process by which individuals choose to seek sexual gratification, first within prostitution and secondly as part of the tourist experience’. The complexities are even greater in relation to female tourists who do not view their relationships with local men as a form of prostitution. The previous chapter provided an overview of sexual-economic relationships between tourist women and local/migrant men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. This chapter explores these relationships in more depth. Using a series of case studies, it pays particular attention to the significance of tourism for both parties’ understanding of those relationships. It looks at how women tourists who enter into sexual relationships with local men spin fantasies (often full of contradictions) based on what has been collectively heard, imagined and believed about the culture and the people of the countries they are visiting. These tropes are part of how we construct ourselves, as well as the Other, and are therefore of great significance for cross-cultural sexual interactions.

Tourism is equally important for local men in terms of making sense of their sexual relationships with European and North American women. It provides a context in which the economic element of such relationships is ambiguous (a tourist girlfriend
can be seen to have given a local man cash because she is grateful to him for guiding her round the island, showing her cheap places to eat and so on, or because she is genuinely emotionally attached to him and cares about his financial plight, rather than because she is paying for sexual services rendered). And collective fantasies about the culture and the people of tourist-sending countries are also important to many local men who dream of finding a woman who will truly care for them, help them to migrate and realise a better life.

**Karen and Amadeus**

I first saw Karen and Amadeus on the beach in Negril. Karen was sunbathing, and every once in a while, Amadeus would quietly bring her a drink. I started talking to Karen, who told me she was a 57 year old divorcee from Toronto. Originally from Germany, she migrated to Canada when she was eighteen to work as an *au-pair*. The family she worked for maltreated her, and she left. She then managed to get a job in telecommunications and worked her way up the company over a number of years.

About ten years ago she ‘got bored’, decided to become a chef and was now working in a school. Her eighteen year long marriage to a German had ended seven years ago. Karen had been visiting Negril for holidays for eight years, and had met Amadeus on her first trip to Jamaica. However, they had only started a sexual relationship eighteen months ago. ‘It’s fantastic, amazing,’ Karen said, ‘I’d known him for years and then all of a sudden, it was wow! He’s so loving’. Amadeus said nothing.

Amadeus works as a promoter. He walks up and down Negril’s seven-mile long stretch of beach all day, from eight o’clock in the morning until sundown, trying to persuade tourists to take a trip on his boss’s glass-bottom boat. When Karen visits Jamaica, he takes time off work. He is 38 years old, but looks ten years older. Like
many of the local men working on the beach, he is from a poor area inland in the mountains, one hour and a half away by bus. Amadeus had left school, without qualifications, at the age of fourteen, and had been working on the beach for most of his adult life. He has grown his dreads long and is a small, but muscular man with rough working hands. He dresses in tattered clothes and never wears shoes on the beach. He earns very little from promoting boat tours, which is paid on a commission-only basis, making his real money from selling ganja, which he grows himself, to tourists. Tourists usually buy in bulk, but he says that it is getting increasingly difficult to earn his subsistence from ganja, as there is a lot of competition.

Karen's Fantasy

Karen referred to Amadeus as a ‘countryman’. Her life with Amadeus was quiet, introspective, isolated and protected from the view and comments of the outside world. During her visits, the two of them were alone together most of the time. They rarely went out to the night spots on the beach and Karen had few local or tourist/expatriate friends. Karen would always hire a motor bike for the duration of her visits. ‘I let Amadeus drive it’, she said, and they use it to get around Negril and sometimes for little trips into the countryside.

Since the sexual relationship between Amadeus and herself developed, Karen visited Jamaica as often as she could, for two weeks at a time, because she could only afford to go on charter flights. She used to get package deals and stay at a hotel, but now she rents one of five little Canadian-owned self contained cottages (which look more like large wooden sheds) on the beach. The complex is surrounded by barbed wire, but unlike more expensive hotels and apartment-hotels, local friends are allowed to enter the complex to visit guests, so Amadeus can stay with her. Karen invited me for
drinks with them. When I arrived, Karen did most of the talking while Amadeus brought us drinks and said very little. The cottage has one small room with a large bed, a small table and chest of draws and a small en suite bathroom. It does not have air conditioning and can get very hot and humid inside, so they leave the door open for air to circulate. There are no cooking facilities inside the hut, but they have a little camping stove where she or Amadeus cook food.

Karen told me that she likes to cook large pots of food to feed Amadeus when she is there because she knows when she goes back to Canada ‘he eats very little, it’s as though he’s eating as much as he can, stowing it up before I go away’. They lead a ‘simple life’ while Karen stays, but not as ‘simple’ as the life that Amadeus leads when she is not there. According to Karen, Amadeus lives in a small hut, growing food for himself on a small plot of land. ‘He cooks over an open wood fire’, Karen told me. She had visited Amadeus’s home once and decided that they could not stay there when she visited as it was too ‘primitive’.

Apart from cooking Amadeus food, Karen told me that she also helped him by sending him money and bringing him gifts over from Canada. In Canada she received letters from Amadeus which she described as ‘so wonderful’ and ‘touching’. She took one of these letters out to show me. Karen said that though Amadeus is not very openly affectionate, his letters show his real feelings and are ‘very naive’. The letter she showed me was written on the back of a flyer advertising a reggae band ‘because he has no paper’. A large heart was drawn on it, and inside the heart in big, childlike lettering was written ‘THANK YOU FOR HELP’. The ‘love letter’ proceeded to say that the J$12,000 Karen had sent had arrived at the bank, and then followed a shopping list of things Amadeus wanted Karen to bring on her next visit, starting with
peanuts. At the end of the shopping list came the words ‘BECAUSE WE NEED HELP, I SAY A PRAYER TO GOD TO THANK HIM FOR YOU’. The letter ended with ‘I LOVE KAREN’, followed by lots of colourful little hearts.

Karen was enthralled by the simple charm of the letter. She did not expect much from him and was glad to have received anything at all as she knew how difficult it was for Amadeus to do something that was not ‘natural’ to him. At the same time as idealizing the ‘simplicity’ of the ‘real’ Jamaican way of life, Karen continually stressed the poverty of Jamaican culture and the Jamaican education system. She told me she was doing her best to educate Amadeus about the wider world. On her visits she teaches him to read and write, and also to appreciate classical music. ‘He would always listen to the same reggae radio station’, she explained, so one day she decided to play him a tape of Mozart, ‘and when I told him that they shared the same christian name, that really made him sit up and listen’.

Karen described her relationship with Amadeus as ‘intriguing’ and interesting because their lives were so different. She wanted to take him to Canada because he had ‘never seen snow or flown and never travelled’, and she was excited at the prospect of seeing his reaction. He is like a child to her, and she takes pleasure in giving him access to the same privileges that she enjoys (although only when he is with her). Once she took him to Swept Away, a large ‘all-inclusive’ hotel on the beach. Karen had been offered a free lunch there by one of the hotel’s expatriate employees, and she decided to take Amadeus along with her and buy him some clothes from the Swept Away shop while they were there. However, as they approached the hotel, a security guard stopped Amadeus and refused him entry. Karen was angry. She told me that she had said to the guard, ‘How dare you stop one of your own race?’ Then, taking control of
the situation, she had grabbed Amadeus’s hand and said ‘No-one is going to stop you’.

It might seem from this story that Karen positions herself as an anti-racist, but it is interesting to note that while she challenged a security guard’s right to deny Amadeus entry to a hotel in Jamaica, she did not challenge immigration laws which would deny him entry to visit Canada. Karen had tried to organise a trip to Canada for Amadeus, and when describing the long bureaucratic process involved in trying to get him a visa, she defended Canada’s immigration policies arguing that there are many Jamaican ‘undesirables’, and that Canada therefore needed to be ‘strict’. A lot of visiting Jamaicans over stay their visas, and get involved in drugs or crime, she explained, and then went on to make a distinction between those Jamaicans who live in Canada and those who have never left Jamaica. While Jamaicans out of Jamaica are ‘a real problem’, Jamaicans in Jamaica are different. They are like Amadeus, who is:

- a very simple man, he’s from the mountains, lives in a small shack and cooks his own food on a fire, he knows nothing else. It would be a real culture shock for him to visit Canada. He’s not used to an urban environment or all the technology, he lives in primitive conditions and he really doesn’t know anything better.

Karen’s sexual relationship with a local man had not led her to question or challenge racist practices and ideas. Instead, Karen saw Amadeus as an ethnic other, a noble savage, which in turn helped to place her in a position of power – the power to ‘help’ and ‘educate’ him. As Pettiman (1997) argues, traditional configurations of power shift focus when tourist women enter into relationships with local men, so that while gender politics may change, ideas and politics about race and class do not. Seeing
Amadeus as ‘uncivilised’ enabled Karen to construct herself as ‘civilised’. Pearce (1988) who traces the attitudes of early white Americans to the Indians observes that the Indians were important to English identity as they showed the English ‘what they were not and must be not be’. Thus:

looking at the Indian in his lack of such power, the Englishman could be sure of what he himself was; looking at himself, he could be sure of what the Indian should be. In America, from the very beginning the history of the savage is the history of the civilised’. (1988: 8)

It is important to Karen that Amadeus is different from the blacks back home, many of whom enjoy the same rights and freedoms that she does in Canada. Using her racialised and economic power to help an ‘underprivileged’ man allows her to feel empowered, useful and noble.

Karen was willing to pay for Amadeus to visit Canada (and this included paying for several trips to Kingston to get his new passport and supplying the letter of introduction required for the visa), but she was not planning to develop their relationship into a more committed or closer union. Although Amadeus was teased on the beach by the other men, who told me that he would be married to Karen before the year was out, Karen made it quite clear to me that she enjoyed being single and had no plans to get involved with or marry someone who would ‘swamp’ her with their emotional demands. So when she recently visited Jamaica for a holiday with her mother, she did not even bother to introduce Amadeus.

What she liked about her relationship with Amadeus was that she had the power to arrange the relationship to suit her needs. ‘Amadeus isn’t so intrusive, he’s not like a Western husband. We each have our space,’ she told me. Yet at the same time, she
still had control over him and could feel wanted by him. For example, when her ex-
husband lost his business, he moved in to stay with her and her 80 year old mother on
a temporary basis. Amadeus phoned her and became ‘very jealous’ when her ex-
husband answered the telephone, and Karen was pleased and reassured by this
reaction. ‘Jamaican men are very loyal to their women,’ she said proudly, even though
moments earlier she had disapprovingly told me that Jamaican men have lots of
children with different women.

Karen’s relationship with a local man whom she constructed as a ‘noble savage’
enhanced her tourism experience, but she did not really want Amadeus to join her in
civilisation. Many tourist women seem to find the idea of caring for and taming a
‘noble savage’ romantic, and beach hustlers in Negril are quick to tap into this when
‘chatting up’ female tourists. Many are conscious that this image is what attracts
certain WSLs and they claim to be ‘country’ farmers, who only venture into Negril
now and then to sell products they have grown or made. The women who go for such
men are sometimes referred to as ‘rasta women’. They want to live the ‘hippy dream,
weave baskets, farm and cook on an open fire,’ as one expatriate woman observed
with some contempt. The real point is that for these women, as much as for those
tourist women who want to see themselves as ‘beautiful’ or sexually desirable, sexual
relationships with local men provide a means to reconstruct a self-identity. The
‘Other’ becomes a mirror which reflects back the female tourist’s chosen image of
femininity.

The tourist woman’s femininity is also constructed in opposition to local women.
Karen, like many of the female tourists interviewed who were having relationships
with local men, stated that feminism has yet to reach Jamaican women. Jamaican
women expect too much and want to be financially supported and kept by their men, instead of sharing the responsibility. Karen claimed that this was why Amadeus had never married. When tourist women describe local women in these ways, they are feeding back lines used by local men in their scripts for seducing female tourists. These scripts centre around the idea that the man simply wants to find a ‘wise woman’ who is capable of looking after herself, who earns money and wants a fair and equal relationship, rather than being dependent on a man. Local Jamaican or Dominican women are portrayed as lazy scroungers who do not want to work and only want money from men. The following quote from a Jamaican beach hustler who was trying to ‘sweet-talk’ me is typical: ‘I don’t like Jamaican women. They too feisty. Soon as they meet a man they don’t want to work. You can’t clap one hand, have to have two hands and Jamaican women don’t clap’. Men claimed that if they ever found a woman who would support them, they would remain loyal to her. Karen trusted Amadeus to be faithful to her because she had these things to offer him.

Local women are represented by local men as conforming to a traditional gender role of being dependant upon men and lacking ambition. Such representations are far from reality. It has been estimated that the rate of female single headed households in both countries hovers between 30 per cent and over 50 per cent in some areas (LaFont and Pruitt, 1997; Fox, 1999, Fernández-Pacheco, 2000). However, it is not difficult to see how the depiction of local woman as demanding and dependent is flattering to European and North American women like Karen, who can view themselves as more ‘advanced’ and ‘progressive’ in their ideas about gender equality. Such women also often like the fact that many working class men in Jamaica, like Amadeus, are self sufficient in terms of performing household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, as well as perhaps able to grow some food. This reverses European/North
American gender norms, and through many tourist women’s eyes, makes Jamaican men superficially appear to embody an ideal of the ‘new man’.

Some women also linked local men’s self-sufficiency with the self-sufficiency of nature and the land. People living in the Caribbean paradise do not really need money to live as everything is supplied free, by nature. Food grows all around, there is all year round sunshine so there is no need for central heating and people live at a slower, relaxed pace. One tourist woman in the Dominican Republic told me, ‘you could spit a grapefruit pip onto the ground and it would grow, this land is so fertile’. The absence of medicine trees and education trees and shoe trees seems to have not to have reached her notice. But these tourists also believe that living in paradise makes people healthier and endows them with a natural wisdom that is not found in the West.

On subsequent research trips to Jamaica, I never saw Karen again, but I did regularly bump into Amadeus who was still on the beach, touting boat tours. He usually forgot that he had met me before, and would approach me as he would any other tourist woman, which is to say with a great deal of physical contact and overtly sexual remarks woven into a sales spiel for boat rides (‘Mmm, you have a sexy pum pum, you want to go on a boat ride with me?’ and so on). When he remembered me, he would back off and stop making sexual comments. On my last visit he said that he had not seen Karen for a long time. She had been to Germany and was now back in Canada, but he did not know when he would see her again, and he never did visit her in Canada. ‘Times are hard’, he said, and it was getting more difficult on the beach because there was a lot of competition and he was not having much luck.
Amadeus' Dreams

Amadeus holds very traditional Jamaican views on sexuality. He disapproves of 'slackness' and is glad that there is little female prostitution on the beach in Negril: 'tourist men come looking for girls, but no way can the girls work the beach, no slackness allowed on the beach, no homosexuality, no prostitution'. However, it is quite acceptable for local men to kiss and touch tourist women on the beach - that is not a form of 'slackness'. Amadeus certainly does not regard his involvement with Karen (or any other tourist woman) as a form of prostitution, even though he benefits financially from such relationships. He does not consider himself to be a 'gigolo'. This is partly because he uses essentialist gendered and racialised models of sexuality, to interpret his behaviour (a discussion of this point is in the following chapter), but it is also because he is dreaming of something more than just cash. He is looking for someone who will help him 'improve his life' in material terms, but he is also looking for care, sex, honour and respect.

Amadeus has lived alone for most of his life. His father left his mother before he was born and his mother migrated to England when he was nine and left him with his grandmother. When his grandmother died he was left to fend for himself at the age of thirteen and started staying with older women because they would often give him a place to stay for the night. He has been living on the beach for twenty years and has hustled tourists in one way or another during that time in order to make a living.

He earns about $US60 ($JA 2,500) a week basic from his job and tries to make up his wages with commission and by hustling ganja. His weekly income varies and is not reliable. He is employed by a man who was given the business by his father, and Amadeus is acutely aware of how he had no one to take care of him; 'my boss has his
father to look after him if he ill, but I got to look after myself and make provision to be alright’. Amadeus’s needs are simple; ‘I don’t need to have a car, but a house, a home and a family so I can show what I have done with my life’, were very important to him. Like many men in the Caribbean he was too poor to support a family. He has an eight year old daughter who lives with her mother and grandmother in the country and who he enjoys seeing regularly. He likes children and believes that parents should talk and explain things to their children and not just beat them as he had been beaten as a child. He also wanted to ‘find a nice girl, have some fun and treat her right’.

His relationships with tourist women were varied, diffuse and not straightforward cash for sex exchanges as this would have labelled him a gigolo. He was looking for someone he could trust not to use him so he targeted ‘big’ (older) women, avoiding the younger ones who went with five or six different men during their holiday. ‘Big women’, were more likely to fall in love and did not always insist on condom use, something which Amadeus and other Jamaican and Dominican beach hustlers often read as a sign that the woman trusts them and therefore takes the relationship seriously. He received letters from some of his former ‘girlfriends’, but did not remember them unless they sent him a photograph of themselves.

Though Amadeus knew other men who had migrated with the help of tourist girlfriends, he worried about leaving Jamaica in haste with someone whom he did not know very well, and so had never travelled abroad. He said that there are men who ‘go back’ with tourist women very quickly, but that he would only go to live with a tourist in her country of origin if she had visited five or six times, and then, only if she had set him up with a job, as he did not want to ‘sit around the house all day not making money’. He wanted to be able to buy presents and be independent and equal.
He did not want anyone to have power over him and tell him what to do. But, mostly, he wanted to stay in Jamaica as it was his home, and yet he felt that there was no future on the beach.

Amadeus was a proud man. For example, he was proud of the skills that he had learnt on the beach. He had a lifeguard license (to get this, he had to pay $JA 2,000 to undergo the training demanded by the Tourist Board). He could dismantle the engine of a jet-ski, he could navigate the reef around Negril in the boat, and he knew a great deal about the sea life of the region. When he hustles tourist women, he is offering them all his skills and knowledge, not simply or even necessarily sex. He also took pride in his relationships with tourist women, especially in the fact that he is honest and that they can trust him. The tourist women who go with many different men during a holiday do not understand this, he said, and they upset the order of things on the beach. But then, Amadeus concluded, this is the nature of some women. Some women are not satisfied by just one man and have to have many, but they nevertheless still ‘fuck up the system’.

Life on the beach was hard and getting harder. Police were doing more regular raids and checks for drugs. Police corruption was rife and to avoid arrest if caught, beach hustlers usually had to offer a bribe of a couple of hundred Jamaican dollars ($10). He had a plot of land in the mountains where he grew his ganja, but the police were starting to get strict on this too, and burn down any ganja fields they found. Selling drugs was the main way that many local hustlers made their money from tourists. Jamaica is associated with drug use in the minds of many tourists, and during spring break and the summer hustlers can make quite a lot of money in this way.
In Amadeus’ story we see that for some Jamaican men, entering into diffuse and long term sexual relationships with tourist women provides urgently needed economic support whilst simultaneously allowing the local man to maintain his sense of pride and honour. And yet in entering into such relationships, men also expose themselves to the risk of rejection, disappointment and betrayal. The more that local men look to relationships with tourist women for something more than simply money (some kind of care and emotional support, a sense of personal honour), the greater the emotional risks appear to be, and this is well illustrated by James’ story.

James

James is a twenty-six year old Haitian who left his family to find work in the Dominican Republic. Those Haitians who manage to migrate and make a living in the Dominican Republic are considered success stories at home. His two eldest siblings died before the age of eighteen leaving him the eldest, and so responsible for his mother and younger siblings. He first came to the Dominican Republic aged nineteen. He had been working in Haiti in a wholesale clothing company, but the job was poorly paid and he was encouraged by some friends to migrate and make use of his language skills. James had learnt basic English from missionaries in Haiti and then improved his language skills through reading books and listening to tapes. His education had been curtailed because of lack of money, but he had not given up on educating himself. He was widely read, intelligent and insightful about the social, political and economic situation in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

When I met James, he was working promoting time-share and vacation clubs on a casual basis for various companies. As he speaks four languages fluently (French, Spanish, English, German) he usually has no problem finding such employment.
Time-share and vacation club promoters are not usually paid a basic wage, but rather earn commission on each tourist they manage to bring to a hotel to listen to the sales pitch. Though James actually gets US$30 commission on each tourist he brings in, he tells tourists that he only gets paid US$10 for each tourist who goes to the hotel and stays for a full half hour of hard sell by salespersons (most of whom are white expatriates earning decent money). He finds that tourists are more likely to agree to the arrangement if they believe they are helping him out. The tourist will be given a T-shirt and a taxi ride to and from the hotel in exchange for enduring the sales spiel.

Since James’ earnings are commission-based, his weekly income fluctuates. In a good week he can get up to seven tourists in, and so earn US$210, but this is not usual. In a bad week he may earn only US$30, or even nothing at all. The work is also temporary, as hotels like to change their promoters every two months.

James does not have a work permit for the Dominican Republic and although sometimes the Dominican Government turns a blind eye towards ‘illegal’ migrants, at other times Haitian migrants are rounded up and deported (Howard, 1999). The widespread and profound anti-Haitianism in Dominican society makes life very hard for Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic. James has been spat at and kicked by Dominicans in Sosua, where he works, but feels that he has to stay because so many people back home are economically dependant on him. Many of the Haitians I interviewed who work in tourism in the Dominican Republic do not tell their relatives how they are treated, as they do not want to add to their worries.

James would like to become a psychologist or counsellor, but cannot afford to go back to college. He is acutely aware of racism and poverty and angered by his lack of opportunities. His vision of his future is bleak:
I think I will live a poor life and maybe one day I will be knocked down by a car and put out of my misery. I don’t know why it’s like this. Sometimes I ask, “Why did God make me black and poor?” There’s no reason why I was born black and poor and others are born white and rich.

Although James has some insight into the global political inequalities which make him poor and tourists rich, and can speak with contempt about how rich and spoilt tourists are, he nonetheless knows that a relationship with a tourist woman represents the only way that he is realistically likely to escape poverty and the miserable life he anticipates. James knows, as do all beach hustlers in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, that it is possible to strike it lucky, to win the lottery and find a woman who will transform your life. One of his friends is now living in England with an English wife some twenty years older than himself, and his own uncle had managed to ‘make good’ by marrying a Canadian woman.

This means he approaches tourist women with some kind of hope, even though he has a keen sense of inequality. James has entered into several ‘friendships’ with tourist women, but certainly does not look upon these relationships as simply or primarily economic. He told me about a bad experience he had once had with a Dutch woman. James described her as ‘fat and unconfident’. She was on holiday for two weeks and had already had a relationship with a Dominican man which had ended because he had asked her for money after they had had sex. In addition, she had paid for everything they had done together, and had then found that her Dominican boyfriend had cheated her by telling her goods, drinks and meals cost more than they actually did, and then keeping the extra for himself.
James said that he liked her and had felt sorry for her. She had gone on holiday to escape a relationship she was having with a married man in Holland who would not leave his wife and commit to her, and was now even more depressed after her bad experience with a Dominican man. James decided that he would show her how much he liked her and prove to her that he would not use her by paying for everything himself. He took money out of his savings to take her out, and was much teased by his friends for wasting money on a tourist who would only be there for two weeks. But James thought that she was ‘nice’ and worth it. He told her that Haitian men are different from Dominicans. Dominican men have a casual attitude towards sex while Haitian men are more ‘romantic’ and ‘sensitive’ to the sexual needs of women.

At first, he said, they did ‘everything but sex’ (meaning they did not have penetrative sex). But one night she ended up staying at his place because there was a taxi strike. They had a soapy shower together and then lay on the bed, at which point James realised that any woman who would have an intimate soapy shower with him would also have sex. He decided to ask her what the problem was, and she said that she did not think that black, ‘Third world men’ used condoms. She did not have any with her and did not know how to ask him if he had, and whether he would use them. So James showed her his supply of condoms and they had penetrative sex (after she had read the packets of condoms and reassured herself that they were safe). Their relationship continued from there, and when she left, she promised to write and phone. James never heard from her again. He felt used.

James’s account suggests that the Dutch woman had moved from a relationship where she felt she had no control or power (with a married Dutch man), into one with James where she had total control, from deciding when they met, to how their sexual
relationship developed. James was caught between wanting to prove that he was
different from the other men she had met in the Dominican Republic, wanting to
maintain a sense of honour and pride, and wanting to have a relationship that would help him. Julien Pitt-Rivers (1977) notes that ‘honour is always connected with personal autonomy’ and is inseparable from patriarchal constructions of masculinity.

In the Spanish region of Andalucia that he began studying in the 1950’s, Pitt-Rivers found that ‘the notion of personal autonomy is expressed in a romantic attitude to marriage which makes it disreputable to marry for money rather than for love’ (1977: 91). This link between honour, personal autonomy, gendered identities and heterosexual romance is also important in relation to many Haitian and Dominican men’s understandings of their relationships with tourist women.

To enter into a sexual relationship purely in order to make money would imply an absence of personal autonomy, an integral element of masculinity, and so a loss of honour. Thus James feels that any relationship between himself and a tourist woman cannot be based on a desire for money alone. If the tourist woman does not fit his ideal of beauty, he will focus on the beauty of her personality instead. He continually stressed to me the sincerity of his relations with his tourist girlfriends. For James, it was definitely the Dutch woman who had acted dishonourably in their relationship. He did not feel he had lost honour as a result of the encounter, even though it had cost him money he could ill afford.

James experienced racism in every aspect of his life and understood the high social value given to whiteness over blackness in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In Haiti the ruling elite and government figures were mostly rich, white people. Several of his family members had married white people from North America or Europe and he had
noticed the dramatic change in attitude towards them by every one in his home district. His uncle, for example, had married a white Canadian woman in Haiti and James was surprised to see how his status within both the white and black community had grown. His uncle was now invited to various parties and people (white people) who would normally overlook him started to talk to him and ‘pay attention’ to him. James said that his uncle’s wife made him chose between his family and her as his uncle had to realise that he was not in a position to help them out. His uncle choose his wife and now lives in Canada. James understood this. James was also desperate for the same recognition. He felt his own worth and wanted it to be valued. Pitt-Rivers tells us that:

Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognised by society, his right to pride (1977: 1).

According to the above quotation, status is given to those whose pride is justified by others. Some people dream of being recognised and valued through relationships. Frantz Fanon (1986), for example, critiqued black men who equated being loved by a white woman as being valued as a white man and yet who individuals attract can often be read as a measure of their standing in society or an expression of their identity. Gary Nash (1999), for example, observes that inter-racial relationships are sometimes used as a way of constructing an identity in ways that defy the official racial ideology and offer an alternative expressions of self. For James, being valued by someone who is valued (i.e. by someone white) was partly a way of obtaining a personal affirmation as well as a way of overcoming the social inequalities he faced.
Not all the local/migrant men who have sex with tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are pursuing this kind of dream of honour and economic security through a long term relationship with a ‘good’ tourist woman. Some are willing to enter into brief and/or explicitly instrumental sexual-economic exchanges. Some will even tell you their ‘rate’ for sex. This does not necessarily mean that they view themselves as ‘gigolos’ (a fact that is explored in the following chapter), and nor do the women who have sex with them necessarily view themselves as prostitute users. Because women are having sexual encounters in the context of Caribbean tourism, they do not feel bounded by the social rules and conventions that would constrain them back home. They are there to consume ‘difference’, their sexual relationships with local men are part of this ‘difference’. They view them as part of their holiday experience, not a separate economic transaction with individual men.

**Girls Just Want to Have Fun**

Jessica was dropped off at Chicago airport by her boyfriend and set off for Jamaica with a group of white women friends she referred to as the ‘girls’. She is in her early 30’s, white, rather over weight and dour looking. The ‘girls’, who ranged in age from women in their late 40’s to their daughters in their teens, are regular visitors to Jamaica from Chicago. Jessica said they all ‘know the score’. Jessica was very proud of her ability to play the game. She argued that all Jamaican men are liars and cheats and she ‘wouldn’t trust one of those guys further than I could throw one’. But she ‘loves Jamaica’, she loves the attention that she, like many other tourist women, get from local men. ‘For instance,’ she says in a flirty way and with a girlie grin on her face, ‘a girl no one looks at twice back home gets hit on all the time here, all these guys are paying her attention, telling her she’s beautiful and they really want her’.
She flicks back her hair and continues, ‘there are some women who want to believe in
the fantasy and lie to themselves, and who am I to disillusion them?’ But Jessica
knows that the men she meets in Jamaica are ‘just out for the money’. Many of the
women know what is going on. For example, two of Jessica’s friends are ‘dating the
same man and they know about each other’. But a lot of women will not acknowledge
that ‘their guy is sleeping around or that he does it for the money’. Jessica can
acknowledge it. ‘I hate men,’ she says with conviction. ‘Jamaican men are obsessed
with their dicks, that’s all they think of, just pussy and money and nothing else’.

Photograph 6: Beach Scene: Tourist Women and Local Men on a Dominican Beach

Yet Jessica also felt safe in Negril. She was not afraid to go out by herself or turn up
alone at Arthur’s (a busy beachside bar with live music), something she would never
do in Chicago. Not all of her friends take men back to the hotel with them, some of
them are happy just to enjoy the attention and the flirting in the bars. Like those men who go ‘peeping’ in red-light districts (see Hoigard and Finstad, 1992), or telephone massage parlours or brothels to book appointments they will never keep (see O’Connell Davidson, 1998), many of these women do not want to actually have sex, but are excited by the possibility of it. So, for example, Jessica’s married friend does not take MSTs to spend the night with her, but she likes to go out wearing revealing clothes that she would never wear at home, and chat to a cluster of young black men half her age in busy beach bars.

Jessica had a slightly paranoid view of Negril. On the one hand, she felt safe. But on the other, she was convinced that local men on the beach monitored her actions, watching and observing everything: ‘They want to know who us tourist women talk to, who we’re associating with. They want to make sure we’re not circulating lies about them’. She said that at first the men thought she was a threat, but now they knew her and trusted her, though she imagined that they still check up on whom she talks to and what she says to other tourists.

One evening I met Jessica when she was particularly angry. Her MST had just dumped her for a Japanese woman who was a regular, well paying client. Jessica was fuming with rage. As she pointed her MST out in the crowd, I could see he was extremely well groomed and expensively dressed in designer clothes that had clearly been bought abroad. Jessica first complained that he had ‘strung her along’. But then, not wanting me to think that she had been used by him, she told me ‘Anyway, I got more out of him than he got out of me’.

Jessica comes from a country with a history of racial segregation and lives in a particularly segregated city - Chicago. She had no contact with black people while
growing up, and now lives in an all white neighbourhood. She has no black friends or contacts and holds attitudes about race relations that verge on being white supremacist. Where Jessica is from, inter-racial relationships are frowned upon, ‘Oh yes, in Chicago this could never happen’ (referring to blacks and whites in the same night club and dating each other). Sexual relations between a white woman and black man are especially taboo. She has never told anyone back home what she does when she goes in Jamaica; ‘It’s a secret, it’s time out, like a fantasy and then you go home’.

Many other women I interviewed saw tourist resorts in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic as liminal spaces which they referred to as the ‘twilight zone’, ‘lala land’, the ‘wild West without a deputy’, and an ‘adventure playground’.

Jessica and other tourist women like her do not question white racist ideas about interracial relationships or challenge racism back home. Rather, such women accept the notion of a racial hierarchy and welcome their position in it. It is not just sexual experiences that these women seek, but sexual encounters with the ‘embodiment’ of their racist sexual fantasies. Tourist destinations become a safe environment within which they can enact control over a masculinity which is imagined stereotypically as aggressive and violent (see Chapter 8).

Sexualised racist fantasies construct both the Dominican and Jamaican male as highly sexed ‘Others’, however the discourses which are used to conjure up the fantasies differ. Frankenberg (1993) notes that masculine narratives in the West are often differentiated by ‘race’. Thus, black masculinity is perceived as being hypersexual, uncontrollable, animalistic and mentally inferior (Mercer, 1994) in opposition to a middle-class white male masculinity which is interpreted as protective, gentle, controlled and high-minded (Bederman, 1995). While racialised stereotypes based on
this binary model of hegemonic masculinities are very crude, they persist as part of a hierarchy of multiple masculinities which are racialised and gendered (Connell, 1995).

For white women, sexual relationships with local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic appear to be very much linked into their sense of their own whiteness. White women feel valued in the Caribbean in ways in which they are not back home. Their economic power and status means that they are not treated as local women, but respected and protected. As two white British women explained to me during an interview:

M: Some people move down here and one thing about living here is that you either love it or hate it, you love it or hate it and like, Brenda and Susie and I love it here, and give us the choice we wouldn’t want to be any where else but here... It’s like, let me, see in the old, old days when everybody cared for each other, where as in civilisation now, in big, big cities, you never see any one, you don’t know your next door neighbour.

S: Oh yes they’re wonderful. I’m not worried about getting stabbed in the middle of the night because they will come to my rescue in a minute.

JST: Do you feel safer here?

S: Absolutely, safer than anywhere else I have been living.

M: People like us, they all know us and I can walk home at three o’clock in the morning and I don’t have a problem.

The value attached to whiteness means it is easy as well as safe to ‘have fun’. Take, for example, the case of Shula, a white, Australian divorcee who visits the Dominican
Republic regularly. Shula has been living in Toronto, Canada for over 10 years. Now in her late forties, she is an intelligent and attractive woman, who has many of the traits that are considered desirable in a woman. She is slim, blond and ‘sexy’. She told me that she goes to the Dominican Republic ‘purely for the sex’.

She was on the beach with her twenty year old Dominican companion when I met her. He was listening to music on his Walkman while she sunbathed and read. She does not speak Spanish and he does not speak much English, so their verbal interaction was very limited. Shula had been a regular visitor to the Dominican Republic for the last two years and had had a number of relationships with Dominican men. Previous to that, she was a regular visitor to Jamaica. Her niece had married a Dominican she had met on holiday and was now living near Boca Chica with no plans of returning to Canada. When Shula visits, she stays with her niece whose husband helps her to find ‘nice’ Dominican men and advises on those he knows. She told me:

I’m not naive, I’ve been around the block. I come for the sex, of course the sun, but mostly for the sex. I’m not coming to live and set up house with a guy I just want some fun and good sex.

She described her relationships as ‘purely physical’ and always brings boxes of condoms with her to the Dominican Republic and insists on condom use. Many of the men whom she has sex with ‘are up front’, she says, and show their 'AIDS test cards', but others still do not like using condoms - ‘But I say no condom, no sex’.

Shula feels that she has a high level of control in relationships. She prefers younger (at least 15-20 years her junior), black men and says she likes going out with men who know what you want, so that there is ‘no commitment and cut the chase’. She gets attention paid to her in Canada but she liked the fact that she has to ‘fight
Dominican men off with a stick’. It is a boost to her ego. She has discovered a space where she feels powerful and in control, sometimes more in control that white male tourists. She had meet some male tourists who had been ripped off by some Dominican prostitutes and she had told them not to be so ‘naive’. She felt more worldly than most tourist men and relished the idea that she could manage and negotiate the Dominican Republic and black men in the Dominican Republic better than most male sex tourists.

Although Shula acknowledged that her relationships with Dominican men were purely instrumental, she did not view her activities as a form of prostitute use. She said that she never paid for sex, and convinced herself of this by making a distinction between men who simply like sex, and ‘gigolos’ who have sex for money. She always looked for those who just wanted ‘good sex’ and she insisted that good sex in the Dominican Republic was usually ‘free’. She used racist stereotypes to construct local Dominican men as naturally hypersexual and therefore willing to have sex with tourist women like her for nothing (see Chapter 8). She told me that Dominican men all have several girlfriends and launched into stories of men she had known who had cheated on her, or cheated on their girlfriends with her. Dominican men could not be trusted. She also had stories of tourist women who had been foolish enough to fall in love with Dominican men they met while on holiday.

One nineteen year old Canadian she knew had fallen in love with ‘scum’. She had married him and went back to Canada to wait for his visa to come through, meanwhile, he was off with someone else who was now pregnant. Shula said the man in question had only married the girl for a green card, and she was never going to be put in that situation. However, over the two year period that Shula had been going to
the Dominican Republic she had entered into several different types of relationships. While most of her relationships were short term and purely physical, she had also entered into sexual relationships that had lasted longer than one holiday. These relationships were attractive to her because the 'ground rules' have already been set down and understood, allowing her to enjoy her holiday to the full.

This chapter has been mainly concerned with the way that sex with local men becomes part of a larger 'cultural experience' for tourist women, and how that cultural experience revolves around, in McCannell's (1976: 23) terms, 'fictionalised, idealised or exaggerated' models of racial Otherness, gender and sexuality. The contours of female tourists' encounters with local men are dictated by the particular type of affirmation the woman wishes to achieve. While some female sex tourists simply want the power to control a sexual relationship with a man and/or feel beautiful and wanted, such as Jessica and Shula, others, like Karen, prefer to use their power to affirm themselves as kind, good caring women. Both types of tourist woman value the fact that the relationships are temporary and take place in a far away and supposedly culturally 'different' place. In the following section, I consider the ways in which tourism represents a liminal space for many local men as well for tourists.

Liminality and Transgression for Local Men

I met Trevor in a beachside bar in Negril one night. I had seen him a few times before and made eye contact, but had not yet talked to him. He appeared very different from men like Amadeus who work on the beach, as well as from MSTs who enter into short term and more narrowly instrumental sexual-economic exchanges. He wore expensive, smart casual clothes and was usually with couples and did not seem to be hitting on tourist women in the manner of the other men. When I got talking to him,
he told me he was a partner in a restaurant on the beach. He was 32 years old and was originally from Black River in St Elizabeth and had been working in Negril for nine years.

His first job in Negril was as a waiter in the Grand Lido, one of the biggest all-inclusive hotels in Negril. He worked there for a couple of years, but was sacked when workers tried to unionise and took industrial action against the hotel for pay and conditions in 1996. He then moved to another hotel, and started to learn Italian which enabled him to move on to work for a tour company which specialised in providing tours for Italian holiday makers. He said he had travelled widely in Europe. At first, Trevor told me that he managed to open the restaurant by working very hard and living cheaply in the mountain so he could save money and ‘have something’. When I asked him how he managed to save and travel to Germany, England and Italy on waiters’ wages, he simply laughed.

In Jamaica, more so than in the Dominican Republic, there is a small but established swingers scene consisting of people who are willing to purchase sexual services from local Jamaican men. Some swingers clubs even organise group trips to Hedonism in Negril (see www.desire.co.uk, 2001). Although many of these couples are not particularly looking for sexual encounters with local men, a small number are looking for black ‘studs’ to fulfil a sexual fantasy. Trevor later confided that he services couples and even had an American couple that had been visiting him regularly for eight years. Some couples ask him to pair up with a female sex worker for a foursome.

Other men I interviewed also told me about couples propositioning them, or asking them to procure a gigolo for them. One taxi driver told me that he is regularly
approached by couples looking for a ‘fucker boy’ and that many taxi drivers make extra money from procuring men/boys for couples.

There is another important dimension to tourist sexual-economic exchanges which local men can more easily seize upon as a benefit. Stephen who sold boat tours on the beach, explained to me how he enjoys setting up his friends with couples that are willing to pay. He likes orchestrating the encounter and giving his friends the scripts and lines to use with couples, although he is not interested in the sexual act himself. ‘His thing’ is having control and a vicarious involvement. Tourism represents a space in which Jamaica’s strict code of sexual morality can be temporarily suspended, nowhere is this more clear than in the superclub all-inclusive hotel chain ‘Hedonism’, described in Chapter Three. Stephen likes to go to Hedonism because ‘people come and do all manner of things and then go back in their suit and clean face as if nothing had happened – they forget what they do’. He obtained a sense of control over entering such a liminal space. He likes ‘to watch’ and saw nothing wrong in tourist husbands or boyfriends watching their female partners having sex with a black stranger. Local men state that it is fun for them to enter such spaces, but when local women do the same, it is constructed as sex work.

Because it is about ‘fun’, local men can enter into sexual encounters without constructing themselves as gigolos. They usually have access to other sources of income which means that they are in a position to chose who they have sex with. Trevor, for example, said that he never went with ‘ugly women’, only attractive ones and did not care whether they had money or not. While we talked, an overweight Italian woman approached him and asked him ‘how much?’. He refused her approach
saying that he could not be bought. However, he then told me that if she had been a young attractive tourist, he would have gone with her.

**Conclusion**

Tourist resorts market difference and Otherness, and this makes them unreal spaces for locals as well as for tourists. Local people recognise that tourist areas are not ‘real’, but fictional places where social, cultural, moral and sexual relations are constructed differently. On the whole, local people, even MSTs, do not take their children to tourist beaches, for fear that they will be negatively influenced, or polluted, by them. Rent-a-dreads and the sexual mores of tourist areas are also regularly mocked by dance hall DJ’s. The following chapter focuses in greater depth on existing constructions of gender, prostitution and sexuality and how they are reworked in the tourist bubble to empower MSTs and WSLs and to blur the meanings of their encounters.
Chapter 6

PROSTITUTION, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

In 1996, an article about the ‘gigolos’ of Negril appeared in a German newsmagazine (Spiegel Spezial, 1996). Written by a female journalist and including photographs of local men, the article implied that every ‘dread’ on the beach was a gigolo/male prostitute. It stated that for $US20-30 a woman received a basic sexual service, $US75 bought them a ‘four hour special’ and $US150 would pay for an ‘all night special’. Many of the local men I interviewed were angered by this article, even though some acknowledged that there were some men on the beach who enter into sexual relationships with female tourists as a means of subsisting. However, they strongly objected to the fact that such relationships were referred to as ‘prostitution’ in the article. As one informant put it, ‘Of course the men will take gifts and tings and accept meals if the woman buys, but that isn’t the same as being for sale’. And as Chapters 4 and 5 have shown, it is also the case that women tourists who have sexual relationships with local men seldom interpret these relationships as a form of prostitution.

Research on sexual encounters between local men and tourist women in various ‘Third World’ holiday destinations has generally been informed by an ethnographic research tradition that focuses on subjective meanings that people attach to their environment and interactions in order to ascertain ‘people’s understanding and interpretations of their social world’ (May, 1993). They have therefore been mainly concerned to document the way in which local men and tourist women perceive and
interpret their sexual behaviour and relationships, and since neither the local men or
tourist women subjectively view their encounters as a form of prostitution,
ethnographic researchers have often ended up making a conceptual distinction male
‘sex tourism’ and female ‘romance tourism’, and between female ‘prostitution’ and
male ‘entrepreneurship’ or ‘hustling’ (Dahles and Bras, 1999; Pruitt and LaFont;
1995; Meisch, 1995). So far as questions about the meanings that local men and
tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic attach to their interactions are
cconcerned, the findings of my own research are broadly consistent with this type of
ethnographic study, and one of the aims of this chapter is to explore the way in which
popular discourses on gender, sexuality, prostitution and race allow local men and
tourist women to construct their relationships as ‘romances’ rather than as
‘prostitution’. However, this chapter also argues that the conceptual distinction many
commentators make between romance tourism and sex tourism is problematic, and
draws attention to weaknesses in existing theoretical models of ‘prostitution’.

Cultural Brokers and Holiday Romance

Cecilia Karch and Graham Dann's (1981) study of ‘beach boys’ in Barbados provides
a detailed analysis of encounters between local men and tourist women from an
interactionist viewpoint. Concentrating largely on micro level features of these
encounters and the roles played by beach boys and tourists, they use the idea of
performance to try to understand the dynamics of their interactions. From looking for
possible sexual partners on the beach, through making the initial approach into the
right balance between an overt sexual overture and a simple ‘hello’ from ‘friendly
native’, to developing the friendship, the beach boy’s performance is designed to
maximise the possibilities of charming tourist women into bed. Karch and Dann focus
mainly on the men’s agency in negotiating sexual relationships with tourist women, and the ways in which they overcome the potential barriers to such relationships through the roles that they play and the scripts that they use:

If the beach boy is to be successful in his endeavours then he must ensure that the tourist plays the role of “willing client”. At the same time he has to manage the impression of casting her in the role of “friend” or “lover”... For the beach boy it is important that the tourist does not discover that the latter is but a means to the former. His objective is to delay the revelation that payment is required for his services until they are rendered. Premature disclosure affects the whole basis of working consensus and the dynamics of role imputation. If the tourist becomes aware that she is merely a “client” it is unlikely that she will continue to impute the role of “friend” to the beach boy. Instead he will be thought of in terms of “male prostitute”, and in the majority of cases, the relationship will be either terminated or suspended for renegotiation of identities (1981: 253).

Karch and Dann’s account of the ways in which beach boys manipulate the perceptions of tourist women has been reproduced by other studies of tourist/local sexual relationships in the Caribbean (Pruitt and LaFont, 1995; Albuquerque, 1998; Phillips, 1999; Press, 1978). In interviews, most local men who enter into sexual relationships with tourist women state that they experience a high level of agency and control within such encounters. As ‘Amp’, a thirty-three year old man in Negril told me:

I like making friends with tourists and I like tourist women. If I like someone then I want to make love to them, but I don’t believe in selling love and I don’t like the gigolos on the beach.
Amp targeted women aged in their fifties and sixties, because he said that older women were more likely to 'fall in love', but preferred younger women if he could get them. He also prided himself on his love-making abilities. Like other men I interviewed, and like Karch and Dann's Barbadian beach boys, Amp also viewed his encounters with tourist women as a testament to his skills of manipulation. Just as Phillippe Bourgois' (1995) drug marginalised informants in Harlem did not perceive themselves as 'victims', the local men I interviewed did not view themselves as the sexual prey of tourist women or as dupes of the system they live in (although some did consider themselves to be socially and economically marginalised as a result of racism, poverty and lack of education).

Though studies of sexual relationships between local men and tourist women in the Caribbean may have stressed local men's sense of agency and control, they have not always presented tourist women as simple 'victims' of these men's manipulation. Deborah Pruitt and Suzanne LaFont's (1995) study of female tourist sexual relationships with local men in Jamaica, for example, focuses on questions of gender identity. They argue that Western women's increased economic power is allowing them to use their travel experience as a way of exploring 'new gender behaviour' and identities in a way that has some positive outcomes for local men, as well as the women themselves. Pruitt and LaFont carried out ethnographic research in Negril between 1989 and 1992, and again focused on the micro level interactions of the actors involved. Both local men and tourist women, they argue, construct their sexual relationships as a form of 'courtship' rather than as 'prostitution'. Furthermore, the relationships are diffuse: 'The local man is not merely a sexual object, but rather the woman's personal cultural broker' (1995: 425).
Because Pruitt and LaFont rely on the subjective narratives of the local men and tourist women involved to understand these relationships, they define them as ‘romance tourism’ and hold that they are very different from the phenomenon of male sex tourism. Encounters between tourist women and Jamaican men ‘did not serve to perpetuate gender roles or reinforce power relations of male dominance and female subordination’ (1995: 423), they argue, and cannot therefore be labelled as ‘sex tourism’. Pruitt and LaFont do identify and discuss the economic, social and racial inequalities which underpin local men’s sexual relationships with tourist women. However, their focus on changing gender roles prevents them from exploring ways in which their research subjects’ worldview might reflect or express imbalances of racialised, economic and social power. Their account is also limited by its failure to interrogate tensions and contradictions in local men and tourist women’s accounts of their own behaviour, and this is a problem with studies in other parts of the world which have treated sexual encounters between local men and tourist women as ‘cultural exchanges’ which shade into ‘friendships’ (Brown, 1992; Crick, 1992; Dahles and Bras, 1999). Naomi Brown (1992), for example, refers to young Gambian beach boys as ‘cultural brokers’ who play the social role of mediator between tourists and the local host culture. Again the boys/men are described as initiating the contact which can lead to friendship (sexual or otherwise), and as concealing the economic element of the relationship.

Heidi Dahles and Karin Bras (1999), who conducted research in Indonesia, also describe the socially and economically marginalised young men, known as ‘Kuta Cowboys’, who offer sexual services to tourists as a type of ‘broker’, whose behaviour has to be understood ‘within the context of small-scale entrepreneurship in the informal sector characteristic among street guides and beach boys’ (1999: 268).
Dahles and Bras recognise that these relationships represent a strategy for economic subsistence (also a migration strategy). However, because the men do not enter into straightforward cash for sex exchanges, and because they say that they want to sexually experience white women to demonstrate their masculinity, Dahles and Bras do not consider Kuta Cowboys as engaging in a form of prostitution. Lynn Meisch’s (1995) discussion of male Otavalo’s (indigenous persons of Ecuador) sexual relationships with tourist woman also implies that a mutual desire for ‘difference’ (Otavalo exoticise ‘blonde babe’ Others, European/North Americans exoticise ‘noble savage’ Others) makes questions about exploitation or power irrelevant and unnecessary. The same assumption is made by Cleo Odzer (1994). Though her work focuses first and foremost on female prostitution in Thailand, she makes reference to sexual relationships between tourist women and local men and describes Thai beach boys as follows:

Ko Samet boys were beautiful male specimens, many with very long hair and perhaps an earring or two, the perfect look to attract a Californian, Israeli, or Swedish girl. Any nationality would do, as long as she had blond hair. Ko Samet boys loved blond hair’ (1994: 252).

While Odzer noticed that Ko Samet boys were impoverished, she insists that they ‘loved their lives there. Work is a small part of it. Water sports and Western women were the rest’ (271: 1994). Even after recounting some of the hardships of these boys’ lives, she does not problematise the relationships they enter into or consider the vast inequalities of economic, social and political power between the Ko Samet beach boy and the Californian, Israeli or Swedish tourist woman.
In short, then, in academic commentaries on, as well as participants own narratives about, sexual relationships between tourist women and local men in ‘Third World’ holiday destinations make a sharp distinction between female ‘romance tourism’ and male ‘sex tourism’. In the following sections, I want to look at the discourses on prostitution and gender which make it possible to read these sexual-economic relationships as ‘not prostitution’.

European/American Discourses on Prostitution and Sexuality

Elizabeth Grosz (1995) states that ‘gender essentialism’ refers to the idea that a fixed essence differentiates women from men, giving each gendered qualities which are ‘assumed to be given and universal’. This essence includes psychological traits such as care, emotionality, empathy, non-competitiveness, and so on, as well as biological or ‘natural’ characteristics, such as muscular strength, size and hormonal make-up. Essentialist theories have been criticised on a number of grounds (Fuss, 1989). The assumption that all women share a set of common, fixed attributes means that historical and cross-cultural differences are ignored or denied, as are issues of class and race. Also essentialism ignores the social relations which create gendered roles, as it confuses these roles with inherent qualities. Essentialist definitions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ as binary opposite categories also provide the basis for popular, commonsense discourses about sexuality and prostitution. These discourses make it inconceivable that women could be prostitute-users, or that heterosexual men could be prostitutes, for they construct the prostitute as female.

Though the idea of ‘the prostitute’ has a long history, it was scientifically identified, defined and pathologied in the West during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thomas Laqueur, (1987) describes how in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries, an ethnophysiological belief system constructed male bodies as superior to female bodies. Men were considered to have ‘heat’ in their bodies while women possessed ‘cold innards’. This was a necessary difference, for if women were ‘hot’, men’s seed would shrivel up and die as if in a desert when it entered them (1987: 5). Women who had too much desire, or had curly, dark and plentiful hair were considered abnormal and ‘hot’, they would shrivel sperm and be unable to get pregnant. This set of ideas about gender and sexuality overlapped with ideas about race. They converged to make black women ‘natural’ whores, and to make white women who had ‘too much’ sexual desire or experience (i.e., whores) into Others. In nineteenth century Europe and North America, the prostitute body continued to be constructed in opposition to what was taken as the norm of femininity: ‘the virtuous woman was constructed in relation to the production of the unvirtuous prostitute woman, just as the opposite was the case’ (Bell, 1994: 41). Thus, the prostitute became what the white, sexually pure, bourgeois woman was not - a deviant, lower class female. The prostitute body smelt rotten, of death and disease because it became a sewer that held the rotten blood and waste of others (Corbin, 1987).

Nineteenth and early twentieth century pseudo-scientific discourses on sexuality which embodied ‘the prostitute’ overlapped with discourses on gender, race and nationhood. As Ann Laura Stoler (1995: 4) notes, bourgeois discourses of sexuality ‘at once classified colonial subjects into distinct human kinds, while policing the domestic recesses of imperial rule’. Bodies were constituted into a hierarchy of socially constructed sexual subjects which served to distinguish the bourgeois subject from ‘the rest’ (Foucault, 1990). The white, working class prostitute woman, who embodied immoral and irrational sexuality, threatened the purity and superiority of the white race. The white female prostitute was given ‘black’ characteristics (Gilman,
1985), and set up in opposition to the bourgeois, pure, white woman and mother of Empires and countries. Regarded as ‘unnatural’ and degendered by virtue of their active and instrumental approach to sexuality, prostitute women were viewed as having stepped outside the imagined sexual community of ‘good’ white heterosexuals (O’Connell Davidson, 1998). These ideas have become myths which still fuel public perceptions of prostitution and the legal construction of prostitute women as a separate class of public, sexually deviant beings.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to note that these gender-essentialist, commonsense understandings of prostitution also inform many feminist analyses of sex commerce in the contemporary world. Even though these analyses are extremely critical of dominant attitudes towards prostitution, they nonetheless conceptualise female prostitution in a very different way from male prostitution. So, for example, radical feminist writers treat ‘sex tourism’ as though it simply involves men travelling abroad to engage in brief, highly commodified exchanges of sex for cash or kind with prostitute women or children. Thus Cynthia Enloe (1989: 36) defines sex tourism as travel ‘specifically to purchase the sexual services of local women’, while Shelia Jeffreys (1998) holds that ‘sex tourism’ is more accurately termed ‘prostitution tourism’ and argues that:

Prostitution tourism depends upon pro-prostitution abuse attitudes formed in the abusers' country of origin. Affluent cultures in the West and in the east which teach boys and men that the sexual use of women and children, irrespective of their pleasure or personhood, is a natural right of their masculinity, produce sex tourists and prostitution abusers (Jeffreys, 1998: 70)
These commentators treat sex tourism and prostitution as first and foremost an expression of male patriarchal power and female powerlessness. The assumption is that women cannot be sexually predatory but only preyed upon, and that in heterosexual sex, women are always dominated and controlled by men. Only women (and possibly homosexual men) can therefore be sexually exploited. Kathleen Barry makes this explicit when she says:

The common denominator in all sexual exploitation is the disruption of and violation of a woman's identity, that sense of 'who I am' and 'who I can be'. Prostitution and incest are twin acts - they are the terrorist models of female subordination in that they invoke girls' and women's splitting from their selves, segmentation of the unsegmentable, partitioning of human realities that can only be whole (Barry, 1995/96, 70).

These essentialist understandings of male and female sexuality help to explain why female tourists' sexual encounters with local men in Third World holiday destinations are viewed as 'romance tourism' rather than sex tourism. Such commentators do not think that the local man's sense of 'who I am' and 'who I can be' is violated by the act of sex with a tourist woman, even if she pays him for sex. Instead, it is assumed that his masculinity (i.e., sense of self) is positively reaffirmed by the act. The man is assumed to be necessarily getting some benefit beyond the economic, simply because he is a man getting to have sex with a woman. Likewise, it is assumed that the female tourist must be being exploited in some way, simply because she is a woman giving a man sexual access to her body.

For writers like Kathleen Barry and Sheila Jeffreys, prostitute-users are by definition male, and this assumption is shared by many researchers and theorists who would not
regard themselves or be regarded as ‘radical feminists’. Julian Marlow (1997), for example, criticises the way in which radical feminists construct prostitute women as ‘victims’ exploited by their male clients, arguing that this has a dangerous impact on general perceptions of all women. However, he also argues that male and female prostitution are very different, because men who have multiple casual sexual partners are socially constructed as normal and not stigmatised in the way ‘promiscuous’ women are. He then goes on to conflate male prostitution with men’s ‘natural’ sexuality and desires for sex.

It seems that it is very difficult to escape the inclination to view prostitution through a gender-essentialist lens, and this means that the sexual behaviour of female tourists in economically underdeveloped countries presents researchers with a conceptual dilemma (see Chapter 1). In the following section, I want to show that the discourses which make it so difficult for researchers and theorists to categorise sexual-economic exchanges between local men and tourist women are also significant for the way in which local men understand their interactions with tourist women.

**Discourses on Sexuality and Prostitution in the Caribbean**

Euro-American discourses on prostitution, which are rooted in essentialist understanding of gender and race, have also passed into Caribbean societies after centuries of close social, cultural, political and economic ties. This means that local men in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica also interpret their sexual encounters with tourist women through reference to a set of highly gendered, commonsense understandings of gender, ‘prostitution’ and ‘courtship’. For Jamaican and Dominican men, as much as for the radical feminist theorists mentioned above, the body which is objectified, commodified, sold or traded across a market is a female body. Most of my
Interviewees further held extremely traditional views on female prostitution, voicing strong and derogatory opinions about 'whores'. Female prostitutes in the Caribbean are subject to very repressive police control, often involving violations of their human and civil rights (Cabezas, 1999; Campbell et al, 1999), and many Dominican and Jamaican beach hustlers believe that this is right and proper. Interviewees told me it was a good thing that the police were clamping down on street and beach prostitutes as these women cause trouble, rob tourist men, and generally give the tourist resort a bad name.

Local men I interviewed often argued that local women did not need to sell their bodies and only did it for the 'easy money' – they were 'bad women' – and saw no parallel between their own sexual activities and those of local women who have sex with tourist men. One reason why it is easy for them to make and maintain this distinction is because they are not legally or socially constructed in the same way as female prostitutes, they are not subject to the same kind of state control or stigmatized by their immediate local community. For example, men who have sex with tourist women are not forced by police harassment to work from one controlled location, such as particular bars or specific sections of the beach. Another reason why they do not view themselves in the same light as female prostitutes is that they do not usually depend solely on sexual relationships with tourist women for their subsistence, but generally engage in a number of different income-generating activities.

Not one MST interviewed ever questioned male tourists' right to purchase sex. In conversations about the morality of prostitution, they focused entirely on prostitutes' failure to be 'good women'. The same essentialist model of gender informed their view of tourist women. Though some female tourists are regarded by MSTs as 'bad
women' because they engage in ‘promiscuous’ sex, they are not imagined in the same way as male prostitute-users.

The ideas about gender and sexuality that MSTs use to make sense of local women’s relationships with tourist men, and their own relationships with tourist women, are rooted in the colonial history of Caribbean societies. This history is laced with various systems of sexual labour founded upon slave women’s oppression and with the sexualised-racist discourses used to justify these forms of sexual exploitation (Beckles, 1989; Henriques, 1965; Kempadoo, 1999; Morrissey, 1989). It is said that in the colonial Caribbean, Europeans were liberated from the restraints normally placed on their sexuality. The colonies provided ‘countless men and even some women, with the opportunity to express their sexuality in ways which could have been difficult, if not downright impossible, at home’ (Judd, 1996: 172). A multi-layered ideology of racialised-sexism served to sexually stratify women on the basis of their colour. White women were awarded respect, Mulattos and ‘coloured’ women were valued for their ‘socio sexual companionship’, while Black women were considered animalistic and suitable only for ‘covert sexual adventurism’ (Beckles, 1989: 146). This system of stratification is succinctly captured in the following colonial saying: ‘A white woman for a wedding, a mulatress for bed, and a black woman to do the work’ (Prien quoted in Potts, 1990).

Research on Caribbean prostitution has centered on ‘racialised and gendered processes within the context of the wider global economy, with black women at the nexus’ (Kempadoo, 1999: 23). However, ideas about ‘the black male’ have also been central to discourses on gender, sexuality and race in Caribbean societies where notions of masculinity are linked to sexual practices and identities, as well as to ideas
about the ‘colour hierarchy’ which developed throughout colonialism and continued after independence. Both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are societies which overtly value masculinity and male sexual prowess as a feature of a patriarchal society and national identity. Both formal laws and informal codes and conventions governing sexuality in each country are underpinned by a system of gender relations based on male power and female subordination (Cabezas, 1999).

Roger Lancaster argues that Latin American machismo is ‘an organisation of social relations’ which places different values on male and femaleness and is a ‘field of power entailing every bit as much force as economic production’ (Lancaster, 1994: 236). In the Dominican Republic, machismo rests upon a set of beliefs about gender and sexuality within which men have uncontrollable sexual urges which need to be fulfilled, and masculinity is displayed and confirmed by controlling the sexuality of women and making them subservient to men. Machismo is a sexualised ideology of power which not only determines who is a man and who is not, but also serves to regulate relations between men and women and relations between men (Lancaster, 1992). Central to machismo is the importance of the phallus. Possessing a penis, comparing penis size and illustrating the power of the penis underpin definitions and constructions of masculinity in the Dominican Republic. Antonio de Moya and Rafael Garcia (1996) describe how:

across the island, short penis size in a new-born is seen as a hindrance, while a large penis is usually associated with community curiosity, fascination, praise, and likely success in future love affairs...young men socially compete with each other over genital endowment, conferring special privileges upon the winner, which might include, in some instances, orally or anally penetrating
peers in secret encounters. The size of boys penis is usually known to
relatives, and proudly communicated to neighbours and friends (1996: 127).

Dominican men are encouraged by their peers to be as promiscuous as possible with
women, but sexual contact with men is also permitted within certain, set contexts.
Patterns for interpreting male-to-male sexual contact follow the model generally
associated with Latin American *machismo*, whereby only the male who is anally
receptive loses his masculinity and is socially stigmatized:

> if a male partner assumes the insertive role during homosexual relations, his
male gender identity may not be threatened, as only the receptive male is
considered to be homosexual (de Moya and Garcia, 1996:122).

Dominican men are initiated into sexual activity young, usually at around the age of
thirteen or fourteen with an older male or female (de Moya and Gracia, 1999). It is
important for young boys to prove to others that they are not homosexual by having
penetrative sex, whether by penetrating a male or a female. Thus while Dominican
society is homophobic in the sense that ‘men’ must be ‘men’, and the ultimate social
goal is the heterosexual union of marriage and procreation, it nonetheless tolerates
bisexuality (de Moya and Gracia, 1996). This toleration can be understood as
maintaining a *machismo* system within which masculinity must be expressed through
very overt, public signs of ‘virility’.

For local men who enter into sexual-economic relationships with tourist women, these
discourses make the sexual element of the encounter more socially significant than the
economic element. One man in the Dominican Republic who did actually
acknowledge his financial interest in such relationships told me:
Sometimes the women sleep with you and go, not giving you anything. They have used you, but you have used them too, because you are a man and a man has needs and needs to use women. It is very machista here so it’s good to have sex with lots of women.

Thus, male honour is enhanced rather than compromised by sleeping with many tourist women.

Sexual prowess is very important to Jamaican constructions of masculinity as well. Again, boys are usually initiated into sexual activity at a young age, between the ages of thirteen and fifteen (Chevannes, 1993; Williams, 1999). Signs of sexual activity even in younger children is not generally discouraged or restricted but seen as ‘natural’, providing the activity is heterosexual rather than homosexual. Jamaica has a fiercely homophobic society, and fear of being branded a homosexual by peer group pressures young boys to become heterosexually active at a young age. Though there is some evidence to suggest that boy children are sometimes sexually abused by older males, Sian Williams (1999) argues that such crimes are underreported because the fear of being stigmatised as homosexual outweighs the desire for help or support.

Homosexual acts are viewed as degendering the participants, so that men who have sex with men cease to be ‘men’. Because they are not ‘men’, it is considered possible for male homosexuals to be ‘prostitutes’, and in Jamaica, the idea of male prostitution is strongly associated with homosexuality. In interviews, MSTs would assure me that they were not ‘gigolos’, and cite their heterosexuality as proof of this fact. Gigolos, they argue, are paid to have sex and so will have sex with men as well as women. It is thus very dangerous for a man to be identified as a gigolo, as this would leave him open to the accusation of being homosexual. Homophobia is entrenched in the
collective psyche of many Jamaicans sometimes to the point of violence (Skelton, 1995). A clear example of the extent and consequences of homophobia is provided by the 1997 prison riots. In the summer of 1997, the Jamaican government announced that condoms would be distributed among prisoners to prevent the spread of AIDS in prisons. Violent riots erupted because both prisoners and prison guards were so outraged by the implication that homosexual acts took place in prisons. During the riots, prisoners distanced themselves from this accusation by brutally murdering sixteen prisoners believed to be homosexual (The Guardian, 1997, 25.8, p 10). It was common for male and female Jamaicans I interviewed in Negril to reported incidents of gay bashing on the beach and elsewhere. They tended to view the use of violence against gay men as perfectly justified and acceptable. The persecution of homosexuals is also enshrined in law, as consenting homosexual acts between adults are still illegal in Jamaica, and can result in lengthy prison terms.

Because homosexuality is so hugely stigmatized and violently policed, there is a great need for men to be seen to be heterosexual and to publicly affirm masculinity, multiple sex partnering in the Jamaica is therefore very common (Chevannes, 1993). A survey by David Simeon et al (1999) on the sexual behaviour of Jamaican men found that thirty-four per cent of sexually active men had more than one partner. Elisa Sobo (1993) notes that Jamaican men often ‘exhibit hypermasculine behaviour’ when they cannot afford to affirm their masculinity by providing for their children. Thus, sexual power replaces economic power as a means of demonstrating masculinity and proving manhood. There is a greater emphasis put on ‘sexing’ as many women as possible, whether they are local women or tourists, as this not only establishes a man’s heterosexual and masculine identity, but is also believed to be central to maintaining a healthy body. Jamaican folk-beliefs about the body are based in an
ethnophysiological belief system such as that which Thomas Laqueur (1987) identified in eighteenth century Europe. Sex is central to this belief system, it is imagined to maintain the body’s equilibrium, and men claim that without sex their body’s ‘discharge’ (sperm) would mount up, causing bad health by blocking energy and even leading to madness. It is therefore important that men have regular sexual intercourse to ‘clear the line’ as men’s sexual urges are believed to be naturally overpowering and detached from any form of emotionality or physical attraction. (Sobo, 1993). Lack of regular sex can also affect women by making them nervous and deprive them opportunity to reproduce which cleanses their bodies. Childless women are regarded as unnatural, referred to as ‘mules’. They are also sometimes associated with prostitutes because they have sex, without the obligation of procreation. Sex in Jamaica, is therefore regarded as a pre-requisite for a healthy body, and as such, it is unthinkable to live without it.

Many of the men on the beach in Jamaica claim to be Rastas and follow the highly gendered teachings of the Rastafari religion. Ernest Cashmore (1979) describes conventional Rastafarian sexual ethics and gender relations as strictly heterosexual. He notes that there is an ‘antipathy towards feminism, homosexuality and birth control’ (1979: 79). Under Rastafarian law women are subjects via their men folk who preserved male superiority over them. Within this patriarchal system, women exist solely to provide care and reproduce for the men.

Thus, in both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, women are regarded as vehicles for confirming a hegemonic heterosexual masculinity. It is viewed as ‘natural’ and manly for men to have sex with many women, and since the status of ‘man’ is incompatible with the status of ‘prostitute’, those who enter into sexual-economic
exchanges with tourist women do not consider themselves to be engaging in a form of prostitution.

**Along the Continuum: Desire for Love or Money**

Prostitution is ‘simultaneously a sexual and an economic institution’ (O’Connell Davidson, 2001), but as Dennis Altman notes ‘in all but the most rigid of societies the relationship between money and sex is complex and fluid, and the demarcation of prostitution correspondingly vague’ (1995: 103). ‘Ordinary’ heterosexual relationships nearly all contain some form of implicit economic element to them (de Zaldvondo and Barnard, 1995), and it is therefore difficult to draw the precise boundaries of ‘prostitution’. However, popular discourses on sexuality usually construct ‘prostitution’ as a phenomenon involving brief, instrumental exchanges of cash for sex. The focus is on ‘remuneration, deviance and detachment’, and this not only pathologises prostitute women, but also turns ‘emotional indifference’ into one of the main, defining characteristics of prostitution (Laketeh, 1991: 2).

As was noted in Chapter 1, there is a gray area between sexual encounters which are organised and imagined as quick, simple cash-for-sex exchanges, and long term, complex and diffuse sexual relationships. Because individuals make sense of their own behaviour and interactions through reference to popular discourses on sexuality and prostitution, sexual experiences which take place within this gray area are ambiguous. They are not necessarily subjectively perceived or socially labelled as ‘prostitution’, and even if an individual derives economic benefits from such sexual activities, she or he will not automatically self-identify as a ‘prostitute’ or ‘sex worker’. However, because emotional indifference is seen as such an important characteristic of prostitution, ideas about emotion are important to the way in which
relationships are subjectively constructed. Research on female prostitution suggests that American and European women who strongly identify as prostitutes/sex workers often see emotional detachment as a mark of their professionalism. Some take pride in their ability to separate sexual from emotional intimacy, and to perform ‘emotional labour’ rather than be genuinely emotionally involved (Chapkis, 1997). Dominican and Jamaican men who enter into sexual-economic exchanges with tourist women also view emotional involvement as a boundary marker between commercial and non-commercial sex. As one Dominican MST said:

I have to love the person I have sex with. No amount of money could make me make love to someone I did not love. You can’t put value on a body to sell it, although many people sell their body without regard to the life within it

A Jamaican MST put it like this:

I’m looking for a woman who will love me and will help me get on. If you love someone you don’t see colour or inequalities and you try to help that person reach the same level you are at. Of course, if I went with a woman to the States it would be difficult, it’s different culture and I would need some understanding. I would have to compromise and she would have compromise to. If I go, I might not find a job right away and things are difficult, but if we work together we could get on. And if someone loved me, I would love them back.

Like James and Amadeus who were discussed in the previous chapter, men like this see their love and emotional involvement with tourist women as proof that they are not professional gigolos (see also Pruitt and LaFont, 1995). Showing an emotional attachment to the woman makes the man respectable and honourable, it also means
that the tourist woman cannot be constructed as a ‘whore’ or ‘client’, something which would also bring shame on the man that she dates. The idea of ‘love’ is important in the scripts used to woo female tourists (as one young Dominican man said to me about one minute after meeting me, ‘Let me give you my heart in return for yours’), and many of the men on the beach make a clear distinction between ‘lustful’ women who only want sexual experience, and those who are looking for intimacy and love. But the language of love is not always or only used as way to manipulate women into parting with money in exchange for sex. Many of the men who enter into sexual relationships with tourist women are looking for something much more than a one-off payment in cash or kind. As Javier, a Haitian migrant in Sosua said, ‘I want someone to pull me up from the situation I’m in’. He then went on to tell me that ‘There’s a star that shines for everyone, you just have to keep looking for it, and one day you’ll find your star’.

Those men who are explicit about the fact that they enter into sexual relationships with tourist women purely for immediate economic benefits have a totally different attitude towards the idea of love. Elvis, for example, was a thirty-year-old Dominican who had migrated to Sosua at the age of twenty-seven, having become ‘bored’ with country life. He said he was looking for tourist women who wanted to have ‘sex and sometimes love’, but any falling in love should be strictly on the women’s part, and this because it encourages them to part with their money:

I don’t let myself fall in love with the women. I can’t let myself do that, because these women come and are only here for one or two weeks, and then they go. But some women fall in love with the men and take them away and marry them. If a woman stayed and made some commitment that would be
different, then maybe I would too. But I’m not having some long distance relationship. When they go, I don’t write them letters. I can’t waste my life on a woman who will only come once a year and want emotion through letters.

A Jamaican informant, ‘the Best’, likewise viewed sexual encounters between local men and tourist women as a ‘fair exchange’, as instrumental rather than emotional transactions (although not ‘prostitution’):

A man will have sex with a woman but she must have money that will lift him a little, even if its a little, but it’s better than nothing. She might spend $US100 but he has shown her the island, taken her here and there and given her a good loving - it’s all a fair exchange.

Gender, Heterosexuality and The Fiction of Romance

Stevi Jackson (1995, 1999) argues that heterosexuality is not just sexual but also a social, political and cultural ideology which frames individual’s identities and experience, but that is primarily founded upon a gender hierarchy allowing men sexual rights over women. For tourist women embracing a heterosexual identity, the power relations within sexual encounters with heterosexual local men can be represented as ‘normal’, with men on top, even if racialised, economic, aged and classed power equips the women with control and choice. Even when the acts that take place within the sexual relationships they enter into mirror those of a prostitute-client relationship, tourist women can use discourses about gender and heterosexuality to create a fiction of romance, or a relationship based on mutual interest rather than interpreting their experience as a form of sexual exploitation or prostitution.
Ideas around compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1988) and the reproduction of gender differences are critical to understandings and interpretations of gendered forms of prostitution. Prostitution is generally accepted as an institution that engenders men through their ability to purchase affirmation of their sexuality. Suzanne Kruhse-Mount Burton (1995), notes that Australian men's sex tourism is used as a way of restoring 'what it is to be male' (1995: 201). Ann Allison's (1994) research in Japan, introduces us to another form of ritualised male bonding based on expressing masculinity through visits to hostess clubs in Tokyo. These clubs do not provide sexual services but do help maintain the sexualised masculine identity of the groups of men that visit the clubs. Strip clubs and lap dancing clubs provide similar ends. Julia O'Connell Davidson (1998) sums up this process succinctly when she says that prostitute use can be 'a ritual through which men acquire and demonstrate to each other their capacity to control themselves and so reinscribe a particular form of masculinity' (1998: 168). However, while male client's masculinity is validated and affirmed, the women who provide this affirmation are themselves degendered and turned into dehumanised objects, non-persons (O'Connell Davidson, 1998).

Tourist women, however, are not degendered by entering into various, often unspoken, sexual economic exchanges with MSTs. Instead, like the male clients of female prostitutes, they enjoy a greater sense of themselves as gendered and sexualised persons and can experience their 'femaleness' an empowering way. However, the subjective experience of such relationships with MSTs is only empowering if they are not understood as a form of prostitution. Female tourists, (like some male tourists) therefore typically require a fiction of romance in order to experience their relationships as empowering. This requires a large effort on the part of the men to create scenes of seduction and to adhere to a particular rigid
heterosexual etiquette. By accepting essentialist discourses of gender and institutionalised heterosexuality, MSTs and WSLs can turn their encounters into 'love making' rather than commercial sexual exchanges. Constructing this fiction is made easier by common sense understandings of prostitution, which by definition make clients male and prostitutes female. For example, when I asked a tourist woman why she did not think that men on the beach were prostitutes, the woman answered, 'prostitutes wear short skirts and high heels'. This woman and others like her do not see MSTs as prostitutes and cannot therefore, conceive of themselves as 'clients'.

Another way of looking at this is to think about gender and erotic life. Dominant discourses on gender teach that men are able to separate their sexuality from their emotional life and needs, in fact, it is often taken as a sign of true manhood to be able to 'find them, fuck them and forget them', in the words of a Shabba Ranks song that is often repeated by male sex tourists. There is no contradiction for many (but not all) men between gender identity and the eroticisation of emotionally indifferent anonymous sex. Women, by contrast, are usually taught to make an erotic link between sex and romance. For many women, it would not be sexually arousing to enter into a brief, businesslike prostitution contract. To enjoy sex, women (and some men, see O'Connell Davidson, 1998) need to view themselves as engaging in some form of romantic relationship.

In the survey data, tourist women's interpretations of their sexual relationships while on holiday suggest an inability detach sexual interaction from ideas about heterosexual romantic love. Like Doreen Rosenthal, (1998) who conducted research on singles clubs in Australia, I found that sexual interest was often veiled by ideas about emotional attachment or love. The majority of WSLs described their encounters
as ‘holiday romance’ or ‘real love’, while only three out of 75 described their relationships as ‘purely physical’. Twelve percent ticked both ‘holiday romance’ and ‘purely physical’, again illustrating how women often have to hold onto some notion of romance in order to enter a causal sexual relationship. Even WSLs who had entered into more than one relationship with MSTs described their relationships as holiday romances. This perhaps reflects an implicit acknowledgement of that fact that women who express purely sexual desires are still socially constructed as ‘bad’, labelled ‘whores’, and considered to be promiscuous, emotionless and predatory, traits which are deemed to be masculine, while ‘good’ women are supposed to be caring, loving, asexual and subordinate to men. This fine line between being constructed a whore or regarded as a good girlfriend and possible wife introduces an element of tension and risk around WSLs encounters with MSTs. Western discourses about gender largely dictate that ‘good’ women only pursue their sexuality within the confines of a socially recognised heterosexual relationship. WSLs do not want to reject these heterosexual patterns. However, they do want to exercise greater control over their sexual lives without risk of being punished and excluded in the way that Other women who step outside of the limits set by heterosexual codes of conduct are. This tension around gender roles and sexuality also has implications for safe sex practices between MSTs and WSLs.

**Condom Use: The Tension between ‘Real Men’ and Empowered Women**

You want to jerk off
Ejaculate
But me af to draw for mi rubbers
Sex nice, but the AIDS ting
Ya die like flowers, die like flowers
Mi ah to draw for mi rubbers, for mi rubbers

Rain start to fall
Mi temperature rise
Mi sight is going check Jackie out
Mi find out Jackie have something under disguise
Babe bummy bummy upon Jackie’s tight
Mi af to draw upon mi rubber, for mi rubbers

Mi stop[ right and mi take a look in mi crystal ball
Mi get to find out
Most pretty girl you can’t trust them at all
She with Peter, Mark and she off with Paul
She have married man over White Hall
Mi af to draw for mi rubbers, for mi rubbers

(Frisco Kid, 1999, whose latest lyrics blame women’s promiscuous sexuality for the rise in AIDS outbreaks)

In explaining why he did not like to use condoms, Derek an MST in Jamaica said, ‘they interrupt the fantasy – the sex fantasy, the one everybody has, that culminates in penetration, getting your rocks off, washing your back out’ (a Jamaican phrase for ejaculation). For him sex was focused upon the man achieving orgasm with little mention of pleasure on the part of women during the act. Sex, he went on to explain was natural, ‘spontaneous and something which captures the moment’ and condoms usually ‘spoilt the moment’. He also said that using condoms was like ‘making love to plastic’, and anyway he did not have AIDS because he was not a homosexual, he was a ‘real man’. Derek succinctly summed up what many of the men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic felt about condom use. Although at first, they all told me that they used condoms, they later would confess that they did not like using them, could tell when someone was ‘clean’ and avoided condom-use because they felt that it undermined their performance and ruined the ‘moment’.

There are many discourses around condom use and disuse. For many sex workers around the world, the use of a condom marks off commercial sex from private sex, especially if those relationships are with women (Clift, 1995; Laurindo da Silva,
Not using condoms is therefore proof that the encounter is not associated with a sexual economic exchange.

Condom use is also viewed as challenging heterosexual masculinity and changing the meaning of the sex act. Heterosexuality is defined by rigid rules of conduct within the sexual act, (penetrative, spontaneous sex with women in a passive, receiving role). The introduction of condoms into the sexual arena undermines many of these suppositions (Aggleton and Wilton, 1991). Condom use is often seen to deny men their inalienable right to full penetrative sex and to go against ‘natural’ sexual urges and drives by calling for responsibility and calculation. Women who carry condoms are considered assertive, and therefore challenge patriarchal definitions of gender (Holland et al, 1996, 1998). Finally the use of condoms seemingly questions the heterosexuality of the male partner by implying that there is an association between their sexuality and the ‘homosexual virus’. All these things threaten to emasculate men who are required by women to be truly masculine in order to reaffirm their own femininity.

The data on condom use by WSLs and interviews with MSTs imply beliefs about heterosexuality and perceptions of traditional and alternative gender roles inform safe sex practices in the Caribbean. In the survey data (see Chapter 4), it was reported that 14% of tourist women who had entered into a sexual relationship with a local man in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic had not used any precautions against the risk of STDs. These women described their relationships as ‘real love’. Discussing the emotional impact of HIV on sexual relationships, Gill Green (1995) notes that:

many people disregard the risk of HIV in sexual relationships because loving, or even simply knowing someone can lead people to assume that they are
The value of personal relationships, affection and trust between partners, often overrides concern about HIV infection. (1995: 145).

More importantly unsafe sex is often taken to signify the kind of closeness and commitment which are seen as the cornerstone of monogamous heterosexual relationships. 'Love' implies a future as defined by heterosexual models of marriage and family. The use of condoms usually shuts down these avenues and implies a lack of trust. In the case of WSLs and MSTs sexual exchanges, not using a condom helps to make a sexual economic-exchange appear to be a normal heterosexual relationship.

Janet Holland et al.'s (1991) research (based on young, heterosexual British women’s practice and knowledge of safe sex), found that condom use is ‘defined in terms of men’s needs’. From a feminist perspective they argue that:

condom use in heterosexual encounters cannot be understood without taking account of the gendered power relations which construct and constrain choices and decisions, and second....condom use must be understood in the context of the contradictions and tensions of heterosexual relationships (1991: 128)

Furthermore, notions of love, romance and relationships are shaped within set parameters of male sexuality and ‘young women who assert their own needs have to negotiate sexual relationships with men which resist the common sense of masculinity and feminine sexuality’ (Holland et al, 1992:113). Traditional heterosexual relationships are viewed as being inherently unequal and an arena where gendered powers are exercised, negotiated and resisted. In this sense, a woman asking for condom use during sexual intercourse can be problematic and seen as going ‘against the construction of sexual intercourse as man’s natural pleasure and woman’s natural duty’ (Holland et al 1991: 131). Holland et al (1999) argue that a woman asking a
man to use a condom in a sexual encounter is interpreted as challenging a man’s masculinity and a woman’s subordination to him, and emphasising her sexual experience.

Both interviews and survey data from my research with tourist women shows that women who stressed romance were less concerned with consistently using condoms, and often confused protection against STDs with more general family planning concerns. They tended to be women who were visiting Jamaica or the Dominican Republic for the first time or revisiting a ‘boyfriend’. In these two groups women tended to be either younger, in the 15-20 age group or older, in the 40-50 and 50-60 age groups. In interviews, some older women stated that they did not use condoms because they felt they were no longer at risk of an unwanted pregnancy, while younger women on the pill felt they were protected against pregnancy and stated that they ‘trusted’ their boyfriends. These women used their relationships with local men to reaffirm a traditional gendered role. By contrast, women who entered into sexual relationships with local men in order to subvert traditional gender roles and assert their desirability as heterosexual women, tended to insist on condom use (see the discussion of Shula in Chapter 4).

The fact that 67% of WSLs surveyed reported using condoms suggests that the majority feel relatively empowered in relation to their local sexual partners. The fact many take condoms in preparation for sexual encounters also suggests an acknowledgement about the purpose of their trip. Women who travelled to Jamaica were more likely than women in the Dominican Republic to supply condoms, but overall the survey found 16% of single women travellers who had entered into sexual relationships with local men initiated condom use and supplied condoms. In
interviews, women who were more open about their pursuit of sexual experiences told me that they would not have sex with men unless they used condoms. These findings are in marked contrast to previous research on women and condom use. Michael Bloor et al (1998), for example, found that women’s risk behaviour abroad, is different from their behaviour at home. They argue that this suggests that risk behaviour is shaped by the characteristics of their sexual partner and that the low rates of condom use reported by female travellers is because the decision to use condoms is made by their partner, rather than by the female traveller. If this is the case, my research data implies that female tourists who enter into some form of sexual economic-exchange with MSTs in the Caribbean experience a higher level of control in relation to their male partners than do female tourists who have sex with other tourists in European holiday destinations and are able to negotiate condom use.

**Consensual Lovers or Victims?**

Discourses about gender and heterosexuality are also significant for women’s understandings of questions about coercion and consent. In both popular and feminist thinking, questions of consent in heterosexual encounters are largely questions about female consent and victimisation within heterosexuality. Feminists who unproblematically portray women as victims have recently been criticised for taking an uncritical approach to issues of agency and consent. Sharon Lamb’s (1999) edited collection of articles raises many interesting points about notions of victimisation. She argues that we need to recognise that a woman can:

not only [be] made a victim by her victimization but also made a victim by our culture’s understanding of what that word means, of social practices (such as
Lamb does not discuss the fact that males can also be victimized and this is because the victim has largely been understood as a female. Especially in regard to analyses of sexual abuse and exploitation, feminists have concentrated primarily on women and children’s experience of sexual abuse (Phillips, 1999). However, even though the vast majority of acts of sexual violence and exploitation are perpetuated by men against women and girls, and statistically it is much less common for boys and men to be sexually victimized, the gender-essentializing model of ‘victim’ allows no space to describe or explore cases of women abusers or male victims. As Janice Haaken (1999) notes ‘males are less likely to identify themselves as victims of sexual abuse because the position of victim is so feminized in the culture’ (1999: 25). Haaken also notes that the cultural vocabulary of victimization is a ‘far more pervasive theme in female than in male development’, and that males are far more likely to describe forms of sexual contact that would be considered ‘abusive’ if experienced by a women, in positive terms. Such differences shape ideas about who is and who can be sexually abused. Though feminists are now beginning to look at questions of women’s use of violence in intimate relationships (Renzetti, 1999). The tendency to assume that men cannot be victimized by women remains ubiquitous.

If cultural, social and political constructions of sexual ‘victims’ are gendered, so too are questions of sexual consent. The problem is made even more complex by the fact that subjective understanding of consent, agency and desire are interlocking and often shift and change within any given sexual encounter or relationship. Lynn Phillips (1999) looked at how teenage girls subjectively constructed their consent to sexual
relationships with older men. She then interviewed older women who had entered into
relationships with older men when they were teenagers. She found that while the
young girls saw themselves as agents who were making informed choices rather than
as victims, the older women tended to look back and feel that they had not actually
been as mature as they thought they were when they consented to sex with older men.
With hindsight, they stated that they often had been victims of power imbalances
within their relationships.

The young women did however point to unsatisfied social, emotional and material
needs as reasons for entering into relationships with much older men. Thus, even as
they described themselves as consenting they also recognised various external
pressures to do so. In the same way, it could be argued that MSTs are agents who
chose to enter into relationships with tourist women to satisfy ‘social, emotional and
material needs’. They too receive social kudos by reaffirming a heterosexual identity
and at times they are also engaging in a racialised fantasy. But does this mean that a
young man in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic who consents to enter into a
relationship with an older tourist woman is not being exploited in the same way that a
young female sex worker who consents to the financial rewards offered by an older
male tourists is exploited?

Martha Hodes (1996) examined illicit sexual relationships between black men and
their white mistresses in the slave South. She found that the women largely had the
power to conceal these relationships and maintain their reputation, and notes that:
‘questions of consent and agency are difficult to untangle in a slave society. If a
coerced slave man complied with a white woman, that compliance was in some
measure strategic’ (1996: 249). She goes to observe that some slave men who were
propositioned chose to risk refusal, while others used their sexual relations as a way of resisting laws and taboos around miscegenation. In the latter cases, sexual liaisons with white women were conflated with politics and experienced as a show of masculinity which reaffirmed the men, rather than a form of sexual transgression and exploitation. Again essentialist notions of masculinity can be seen to colour subjective perceptions of consent and agency.

Issues of control, consent and agency within relationships between MSTs and WSLs are also made ambiguous by the very fact that they are not constructed as ‘prostitution’. Because the MST’s motivation for entering into sexual relationships with tourist women is (usually) economic, his sexual desire must often take second place to his material interests and his consent is thus similar to the kind of consent given by prostitute women. But where professional, experienced female prostitutes are often in a position to impose certain boundaries within the prostitution contact (for instance, refusing to kiss or to perform sexual acts they personally find too intimate or repulsive - see O’Connell Davidson, 1998), the degree of physical intimacy between MSTs and WSLs is largely controlled by the WSLs. For example, one Dominican interviewee, Martin, had been suffering from a bad toothache for a few days, his face had swollen, but he was unable to purchase antibiotics or painkillers to heal the infection because he had run out of money. However, despite the discomfort, he still felt he had to ‘snog’ his tourist girlfriend goodnight in order to secure his future income, because she expected this.

MSTs’ relationships with tourist women are often founded upon the same economic desperation that drives many of the local women and girls to enter into sexual economic arrangements with male sex tourists. However, because MSTs and tourist
women interpret their experience through reference to highly gendered, commonsense understandings of both 'courtship' and 'prostitution' within which women cannot be sexually predatory but only preyed upon and passive, the MST is neither viewed nor views himself as exploited. In addition to this, the female body is usually constructed as an object of desire to be used by a man, rather than an instrument of desire which can use men. Desire for female bodies by men is considered automatic. Even though some bodies are considered more desirable than others, because heterosexual sex is understood and imagined as insertive, any female body can serve as a receptacle. By the same token, women who are imagined as objects and receptacles cannot be seen or easily understand themselves as sexual agents, users, abusers or exploiters.

Romance Tourism, Sex Tourism and Prostitution

So far, I have been emphasising the fact that local/migrant men who enter into sexual-economic exchanges with tourist women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic do not view themselves as prostitutes, and in previous chapters, I have shown that tourist women rarely understand their own behaviour as a form of prostitute use. Does this mean that researchers like Deborah Pruitt and Suzanne LaFont (1995), Lynn Meisch (1995) and others are right to distinguish female tourists' sexual behaviour from that of their male counterparts?

It is true that some tourist men travel in order to indulge in brief, straightforward cash for sex exchanges in brothels or other third party controlled establishments. But male tourists also engage in a wide range of different types of sexual-economic relationships with local women, children and men. In the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as in South East Asian countries, a large informal sex industry operates around tourism which includes women, children and men working on a
freelance basis from bars and beaches. In this informal sector, sexual-economic exchanges are not always organised as straightforward, narrowly focused prostitution contracts (see O'Connell Davidson, 1995, 1998). As noted in Chapter 1, some women and children do not negotiate prices up front, or place limits on the time spent with the tourist, or specify and delimit the sexual acts they are willing to perform. Some do not self-identify as prostitutes, since their primary motivation for entering into sexual relationships with male tourists is the hope that it will lead to marriage and a passport out of the country. Many women are willing to act as tourists’ ‘girlfriends’, to offer affection, to dance with them, hold their hands, rub their backs, wash their socks and so on, and do not ask for ‘payment’ but rather accept ‘gifts’ of clothing, meals and cash from their ‘boyfriends’. Sexualised racisms are used by the tourist men to tell themselves that sex is more ‘natural’ and that promiscuity is ‘a way of life’ in the countries they visit, and that they women and children they have sex with are not prostitutes, but are just ‘doing what comes naturally’ to them (O’Connell Davidson and Sánchez Taylor, 1996).

This means that male tourists who enter into sexual relationships with local women and girls in the ‘Third World’ destinations they visit do not always or necessarily perceive themselves as prostitute-users or think of themselves as ‘purchasing the sexual services of local women’. In a survey of 661 German male tourists who had sex with local women in the Dominican Republic, Kenya, and Thailand, Kleiber and Wilke (1995, cited in Oppermann, 1998) found that only 20% considered themselves to be ‘sex tourists’ even if they had travelled with the specific intention of developing a sexual relationship with a local woman. Are these men ‘romance tourists’ because they do not subjectively view their own behaviour as a form of prostitute-use?
The female romance tourism/male sex tourism distinction also rests on the assumption that women always and necessarily want ‘romance’ or ‘intimacy’, not just sex. Yet women, as well as men, can sometimes be sexually hostile and predatory, and there is growing interest in the idea that women might have the desire and the ‘right’ to pay for sex just like men. There is increasing evidence from contact magazines and small ads sections to suggest that some women are engaging in straightforward forms of prostitute use in North America, Europe and Australia. For example, women’s magazines have started to publish articles discussing women who find it ‘erotic’ to pay for sex, while some describe the experience as a new found freedom and ‘worth every penny’, others are unsure what to make of the phenomenon (Marie Clare, June, 1994a/b; Voice, August, 1994; Cosmopolitan, April, 2000; Burchill, July, 2000).

Women have also appeared on television to talk about their experiences of ‘holiday romances’ (Kilroy, 1998). Clair Alexander (1996), who undertook research on black British masculinities in the East End of London also gives an account of white women from other European countries travelling to England looking for black men for brief, anonymous sexual encounters (1996:99).

Interview work with beach boys in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, as well as with taxi drivers and other informants further suggests that some women do actually take a narrowly instrumental and impersonal approach to sex with local men, and are quite willing to enter into explicitly commercial sexual relationships. This group of women are certainly in the minority, but are nevertheless present, and will specify their exact requirements as purchasers of sexually objectified bodies. They pay third parties to procure men or boys of a particular age, penis size, skin tone, body type and even smell, and negotiate prices up front. Nor can it be assumed that it is only men who seek out vulnerable prostitutes. Again, they are certainly in a minority, but there
are female tourists who sexually exploit boy children as young as eleven or twelve years old in both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

In interviews, some tourist women acknowledged that it would be hard for them to have sexual relationships in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic without the economic incentive. As one 57 year old woman from Canada stated about her relationships in the Dominican Republic:

> Where else could someone like me, whose the size I am and the age I am get a man anywhere else but here? Here it doesn’t matter, they love women, all women and it’s easier because I don’t have children and can give them a standard of living.

Others commented that the best thing to do with local men is to ‘just fuck them and let them go’, while a British female tour representative, Nikki, told me:

> I tell my single women that come down here to ‘love them, fuck them and leave them, and you’ll have a great time here. Don’t look to get married and don’t call them’. Lots of women come here and think they are different and want to believe it. But with Dominican men - day one, it’s I love you, I love you. Day two it’s, I love you, I love you, I want to marry you. Day three it’s, I love you, I love you, I want you to have my children and day four, it’s VISA.

Nikki and others like her offer a little network of support, advise and tips on how to manage the local men in much the same way that guide books and internet clubs offer male sex tourists tips on how to manage and get the best out of the local female sex workers and women (O’Connell Davidson, 2001). Internet sites may not be as explicit as some of the male sex sites, but nonetheless do offer an alternative community
In some recent feminist works on prostitution, women’s prostitute use is advocated as a ‘right’ or form of gender equality. In an article describing her first experience of visiting a brothel as a client, Veronica Monét (1997) begins by saying how angry it had made her to be excluded from the activities that men are allowed to enjoy:

No Girls Allowed. I hated that feeling, because if a man could do something, so could a woman. After all, I had cut my teeth on toys trucks and cars, raised live snakes and lizards, target practiced with all types of guns, and ridden dirt motorcycles. Suddenly, here was another male bastion I wanted to force my way into (1997: 167).

Monét’s analysis of her experience is contradictory. In one passage she states that she wants to be a buyer because ‘It’s delightful to pay for what you want and then let someone else orchestrate it for you’, in another she states that the sex worker she paid was the one in control of the encounter, ‘she was the one in charge of the hour we spent together’ (1997:169). However, it draws attention to the fact that women can use prostitutes for much the same reasons as men.

Cleo Odzer’s (1994) autobiographical ethnography of the sex industry in Thailand is also interesting in this respect. Odzer condemns the female sex industry as a reflection of unequal gender relations within which Thai women are dominated sexually, socially and economically. Odzer, herself admits to ‘hanging out’ with Thai men (1994: 256) but part of the appeal was that ‘I knew the Western men on the beach wouldn’t approve. Ko Samet was loaded with Western women with Thai boyfriends. I loved it. What a switch!’ (1994: 270). In Odzer’s account, ‘Third World’ boys and
men provide a platform for revenge against Western men. Travelling to Thailand meant that ‘there was nothing that a farang man could do that I couldn’t’. In Thailand, her economic power not only affirmed the value of her whiteness, but cancelled out the social significance of her gender: ‘Ah, this is the life. Learning a new sport. Indulging myself with massages, videos, exotic food. I felt like a farang again. This was my heritage-decadence and self-indulgence. How wonderful to be a Westerner!’ (1994: 252). Like many male sex tourists, Odzer denigrates the locals she uses to make her feel like a farang and as good as a white man. Ko Samet beach boys and other Thai men were ‘exotic and adventuresome in a foreign land’, but, ‘having the Thai in one’s home country was another matter altogether’ (1994: 273).

This highlights the significance of race for analyses of sex tourism, for the idea that tourist women who have sex with local men are not really ‘sex tourists’ reflects a theoretical privileging of gendered power over questions of racism and racialised power, as well downplaying the significance of economic power. Interview work with female tourists show very clearly that notions of ‘racial’ Otherness and difference play a key role in allowing women tourists, as much as their male counterparts, to ignore imbalances of age and economic power between themselves and their local sexual partners. Racist ideas about black men being hypersexual and unable to control their sexuality enabled them to explain to themselves why such young and desirable men would be eager for sex with older, and/or often overweight women, without having to think that their partners were interested in them only for economic reasons. The men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic are not selling sex, but doing what comes ‘naturally’ to them. Only women who had entered into a series of brief sexual encounters began to acknowledge that ‘it’s all about money’.
Like male sex tourists, being able to command 'fit' and sexually desirable bodies which would otherwise be denied to them reaffirms female tourists' sense of their own privilege as 'First World' citizens. The Caribbean is a space that is constructed as different. Sexual mores are different, people are naturally promiscuous and sex is more natural. A few of the women interviewed expressed overtly hostile racism towards local men. They wanted to transgress both the racialised and gendered codes that normally govern their sexual behaviour, while maintaining their honour and reputation back home. Most, however, tap into exoticizing rather than denigrating racisms and use their economic power to control the relationship in ways in which they could never do with men back home. White women I interviewed explained that they felt valued in the Caribbean in ways in which they are not back home (just as Cleo Odzer described feeling valued in Thailand). Their economic power and their whiteness means that they are not treated as local women but respected and protected. Their bodies are also valued over local women's bodies and they are offered a stage upon which they can simultaneously affirm their femininity through their ability to command local men and reject the white men who have rejected them.

This chapter has shown the ways in which essentialists models of gender and sexuality underpin discourses on prostitution in the Caribbean and the West. This has lead to the problematic distinction between male sex tourism and female 'romance tourism'. Theoretical development in this area has therefore been held back because theorists have not looked at how gender and heterosexuality is differentiated by economic, racialised as well as gendered power and as a result have not explored how some women are empowered to enter into heterosexual relationships where they are not necessarily or always oppressed. The following chapter explores the significance of discourses about race in more detail.
Chapter 7

A RACING DESIRE

Kevin Mumford opens his book on the geneologies of early twentieth century US subcultures and spaces where inter-racial sexual relations developed by stating that ‘sex across the color line always represents more than just sex’ (1997: xi). This chapter will argue that the same point holds good in relation to local/migrant men and tourist women who have sex in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Both local men and tourist women come from societies in which social power and esteem are organised hierarchically along lines of class, gender, race and age, and the rules and conventions which normally govern their sexual lives correspond closely with the maintenance of these hierarchies. This means that:

the legitimacy of particular kinds of sexual relations often rests critically upon questions of the social identity of the participants (their gender, their ‘racialised’ identity, their age, their social status, etc.)... Meanwhile questions of social identity may in turn partly hinge on the establishment (or refusal) of particular sexual relations. Engaging in same sex sexual relations often leads to a person’s gender identity being called into question, and in racist societies, a person’s ‘racialised’ identity/privilege is often compromised by sexual contact with an ‘inferiorized’ Other (O’Connell Davidson, 1998:126).

Tourist resorts in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic offer both MSTs and WSLs opportunities to step outside the rules and codes which normally govern their sexual lives. In this chapter and the following Chapter 8, it will be argued that sexual relationships between tourist women and local men gives each party a sense of being
able to adjust their position on social hierarchies that are raced, gendered, classed and aged, and so to positively affirm certain aspects of their social identity. Because they involve transgressing racialised and gendered norms which usually govern sexual behaviour, their sexual relationships are often subjectively experienced as some form of revenge on hegemonic white male power. While some commentators read these relationships as subversion of that hegemonic power, and so as a form of resistance against it, I want to argue that they are better understood as reinforcing existing hierarchies of social power and esteem.

A Racial Production?

Robert Miles (1989) argues that race is not only concerned with phenotypical characteristics but also with secondary forms of identification which are used in the process of racialisation, such as temperament and behaviour which have become associated with a given group. The cultural and behavioural traits which signify race can be understood as a series of acts that have to be performed in order to constitute a racialised identity. One of the survival strategies that has long been adopted by black people is a process of performance which turns 'blackness' into a cultural commodity - a 'product of self-commodification' (Lott, 1993: 39). Eric Lott's (1993) study of blackface minstrelsy in the nineteenth century describes how a performative blackness was used by black people in the US as a 'way of getting along in a constricted world'. Black people 'not only exercised a certain amount of control over such practices and performance but sometimes developed them in tandem with white spectators', he argues (1993: 39). These practices, designed to make blackness non-threatening to whites, then became taken to be authentic cultural signifiers of blackness by white people. They were circulated as representations of what blackness was, shaped white
people's assumption about how black people should behave, and created a library of stereotypes. The 'racial production' was therefore a complicated process which combined both structural and emotional pressures to produce a cultural commodity of blackness.

Eighteenth and nineteenth century European explorers and travellers produced images and representations of Caribbean societies which naturalise the supposedly exotic, erotic and 'relaxed' people of tropical islands, and today these images are reproduced and marketed by the tourist industry (Lowenthal, 1972, Burns and Holden, 1995:36). A number of studies have examined the contrived images that are staged in tourist spaces and argue that these images are 'ahistorical or atemporal', representing local people 'as idealized and exotic, isolated and authentically living others, torn out of their wider contemporary socio-economic and socio-historical context' (Cohen, 1993:37). Local/tourist interactions in tourist resorts are framed within these phoney versions of island life. Locals are attributed attitudes and modes of behaviour which often bear little relation to their society's true values in order to help construct resorts as places in which tourists can behave in ways they would not normally behave at home. To make a living, locals often have to accept what is actually unacceptable within their own society, (for example, to learn to welcome 'naked' i.e. topless women on the beach, drunk tourists looking for sex, young tourists smashing up hotel rooms and vomiting in restaurants). There have been incidents in which tourists have been arrested in the Caribbean for 'lewd and suggestive dancing' and 'indecent exposure', but these are rare (The Gleaner, 1997, 1 August, p 5).

Ellis Cashmore (1997) argues that there is a desire to consume black culture, or at least an acceptable, packaged and saleable form of black culture, as a way of closing
the culture gap between whites and blacks. In tourist destinations as well as in the
West, integrating black cultural forms into ‘white’ culture is often represented as a
sign of equality and acceptance. In multi-cultural Britain for example, ‘Cool
Britannia’ is represented by embracing certain aspects of blackness and black culture,
which have increasingly become commodities. Bob Marley’s ‘One Love’ is used to
sell washing up powder and reggae tracks can be heard backing adverts for everything
from mortgages to drinks and cars. However, this does not mean that reggae (or other
‘black’ musical genres) cross over into mainstream popular culture. It continues to be
marginalised because it is associated with cultural definitions that are linked to
specific racialised categories and normative popular culture tends to be ‘white’ culture
(Garofalo, 1993). The success of blackness in the commercial market is largely due to
its sexualised image. Representations of black culture are heavily laden with sexual
overtones, to the extent that designers like Bella Harding can sum up its attraction
without fear of being accused of racism, by saying: ‘Black culture is compelling for
its strange tension, its moodiness, its sexiness. I think everyone’s had some fantasy
about a sexual liaison with someone black. No wonder it sells’ (quoted in St Hill,

The commodification of blackness and the integration of local forms of music and
dance are key elements in the constructions of difference which ‘sells’ Jamaica and
the Dominican Republic as ‘different’ and sensual tourist destinations. In the
Dominican Republic more overtly racialised images can be found. For example, in the
larger hotels, romantic, pantomime versions of black slavery are exhibited as local
women dress as ‘mammies’ to plait tourist’s hair, or visually aesthetic ‘cool’ young
muscular black men are hired to play volleyball on the beach with tourist men (and
more often than not let them win). Both countries use music and dance to help tourists unwind and let their hair down.

The discos in Sosua and beach bars in Negril are key sites in which notions of sexuality and 'Otherness' are brought together. Both the Dominican Republic and Jamaica have a distinctive musical culture which has been exported worldwide and become synonymous with a particular ethnic group (Davis, 1992). The Dominican Republic is known as the ‘land of the merengue’ (Duany, 1992). Formed out of a hybrid mixture of African and Hispanic musical traditions, for a long time, merengue was a marginal folk cultural form which was not accepted by the Dominican elite who considered it undignified because of its association with poor blacks. This changed when Trujillo used merengue folk music to symbolise Dominican national identity. Reggae has undergone a similar transformation in Jamaican culture. Associated with the Rastafari movement, a marginal group largely rejected by many Jamaicans until after independence in the late 1960s-1970s, when it was adopted as part of a black folk culture which formed an element of the new national Jamaican identity.

Unlike American rap music, which has become synonymous with a particularly violent form of black masculinity, merengue from the Dominican Republic and the older reggae genres from Jamaica represents ‘native’ black music that white people do not regard as threatening. Although Bob Marley sings of oppression, his music is not regarded as anti-white and merengue lyrics are predominantly apolitical allowing the tourist industries in Jamaican and the Dominican Republic to appropriate these musical genres to construct their fantasy island. Regarded as ‘happy’ music, local music helps to create a more ‘authentic’ experience for the tourist, so that Bob
Marley's songs and the latest *merengue* tunes are played endlessly in shops, hotels and on the beach and in tourist buses.

The association between blackness, black culture and 'sexiness' means that the 'performance' that is expected of both black men and women in tourist resorts is highly sexualized. Social interactions are shaped by how embodied identities are read and managed. Often one of the first things that is noticed about a person is their race and gender which give us clues as to how we should respond to the them. The response is therefore shaped by ideas and discourses about gender, race and sexuality.

In research on black male migrants in Sweden, Sven-Axel Mansson (1993) found that many migrant men were surprised, bothered or offended by the ways in which local Swedish women viewed them as 'exotic' and sexualized them. Others, however, incorporated these representations and stereotypes into a survival strategy, working them in such a way as to obtain financial benefits from the women who sexualized them. In the Caribbean, it is almost impossible for local men who work in tourism to avoid the sexualizing gaze of tourist women and they therefore have to find a way to manage that gaze. Engaging in the kind of racial performance and production that Lott describes is one way of taking some control in the encounters with tourist women.

In one sense, then, tourist areas are like stages and, to use Erving Goffman's (1990) terminology, become 'fronts' or exhibition spaces for various representation of the 'Other'. Just as Judith Butler (1997) argues that gender is performed through a repetition of acts which embody historical and cultural ideas, and that gender performances are policed and sustained by everyone in order to give the fiction of gender credence, so we can argue that the fiction of 'race' is also reproduced and naturalised, policed and sustained by individuals caught within a tight colour
hierarchy (Puwar, 2002). MSTs and other local males who work in the tourist trade in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic can certainly be read as performing their gender, but these gender performances cannot be analytically separated from their racialised and sexualised identity as part of a embodied and commodified performance which is interpreted as 'natural' and real.

Butler notes that there are certain spaces in which she ‘becomes’ a lesbian in a ‘thorough and totalizing way’ as the ‘professionalization of gayness requires a certain performance and production of a “self” which is the constituted effect of a discourse that nevertheless claims to “represent” that self as a prior truth’ (italics in original, 1997: 304). By repeating the performance of a particular ‘I’, an identity is performed, sustained, ‘established, instituted, circulated, and confirmed’. There are also senses in which Jamaican and Dominican men who wish to ‘pick up’ tourist women on the beaches, bars and discos of a tourist resort have to become somewhat more ‘authentic’ and ‘real’ representations of black or Latin men. As one man in Jamaica commented about moving to Negril, ‘when ya come to a tourist area ya have to change’. Frantz Fanon (1986) claimed that black men who go to France had to change because they found that ‘in the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema’ (1986:110-111), and experienced their bodies and self through different racial and gendered structures. So too, local men who move to tourist areas also have to learn to negotiate and manage their blackness in a different way and rethink who they think they are.

One of the most obvious and visible ways in which men change to make themselves appear as more ‘authentically’ black is to grow dreadlocks. The importance of dress and appearance has always been a signifier of identity through which codes about
race, gender, class can be read. Codes for clothing also indicate and infer sexual identities.

The Jamaican dread ('rent-a-dread') image acts as a model for all other MSTs in the Caribbean and beyond. Thus, MSTs in the Dominican Republic and Cuba claim a rasta identity or grow their hair in a style that is recognizably 'Sankie Panky', and even in Indonesia, men working the informal tourist sex industry grow dreadlocks (Dahles and Bras, 1999). Dreads are read as a natural and more authentic black hairstyle. They also represent a particular set of ideological, political and cultural statements with symbolic meanings which valorise blackness. As Kobena Mercer notes:

Dreadlocks spoke of pride and empowerment through their association with the radical discourse of Rastafari which, like Black Power in the United States, inaugurated a redirection of black consciousness in the Caribbean (1994: 107).

Reggae music, which is associated with Rastafarianism, also becomes the signifier of a sexualized Otherness, and is played by beach boys in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Gambia, as well as in the Caribbean (Dahles and Bras, 1999, Odzer, 1994, Brown, 1992). The Rasta identity is worn very strategically by some Caribbean MSTs to represent an accessible, non-threatening and 'spiritual' black masculinity that is recognised the world over.

Whether dreaded or not, all of the MSTs interviewed (some of whom had never spoken to a white woman until they reach a tourist resort), used their racialised identity as part of their 'seduction patter' for tourist women. Their blackness and proximity to an 'authentic' black culture becomes the most conspicuous feature of their identity on the tourist stage. Their 'difference' is the key to sexual-economic
exchange, for this is what the tourist wishes to 'consume'. Local men know this, but because the tourist is also racially 'different' it is possible for them to construct the exchange as a mutual and equal one. As one Dominican informant said:

Tourists want to experience everything. After a couple of days tourists get bored of eating and drinking and resting and want something else. Want to experience something else to feel good. Sex is part of that winding down process. It's normal that people come on holiday and want to have sex. I also like having sex to relax and feel good with people from other cultures. That way we teach each other a little something.

But it is interesting to note that in the 'chat up' lines and scripts local men use, racial, rather than cultural difference is emphasised. They will comment on white women's phenotypical characteristics: 'I like your skin, so white', or 'I love your blue eyes/blonde hair' and so on. In Jamaica in particular, seduction scripts centre on overcoming 'difference' and pursuing 'racial harmony', for example:

The black and the white are the same. If you cut me, ya see blood, if I cut you, ya see blood. So we are all one, ya know, it doesn't really matter to me.

Jamaican MSTs especially will 'play the race card' in order to neutralise rejection by tourist women. For instance, if a white woman turns down an MST's advances, he may say, 'Why are you looking at me as if you hate me? You don't like black men?' or tell her that tourist women cannot be racist in Jamaica as it is not their country. The idea is that the woman will then have to speak to him to prove that she is not racist. Sometimes, when a woman appears reluctant to get involved in a conversation but has not directly rejected an advance, the man will explain to her that he is 'not the same' as the blacks in her country of origin – 'Jamaican men are different'. Jamaica also
receives a large number of black American and British tourists, and with black tourist women very different lines are used. Here, MSTs use ideas about racial unity to make the black female tourist feel she is his preferred sexual object, and ‘chat up’ lines will often involve the MSTs insisting that he never has relationships with white tourist women.

The idea of tourism as a ‘stage’ and local men as producers of a ‘racial performance’ for the benefit of tourists may capture some aspects of tourist-local interaction, but it gives the impression that the men are simply acting out a racialised stereotype for the tourist to consume, as though the ‘self’ they commodify is like a costume that can be taken on and off, a role that can be taken on and dropped. I want to argue that this is too simple. The discourses about race and sexuality which have shaped tourists’ beliefs about self and Otherness have also exerted a powerful influence over local men’s ideas about themselves and Others. The man who first approaches a white tourist and tells her he loves white skin and blue eyes, and then when she rejects him moves on to a black tourist and tells her she is his sister and that he loves her brown skin and eyes, is obviously aware of the fact that he is manipulating ideas about race to further his own ends. But he may also buy into ideas about racial and sexual difference, so that there will be aspects of his ‘performance’ that seem to him to be actually connected to his ‘self’ and identity rather than purely instrumental.

Furthermore, because in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, just as much as in any European or North American society, questions of social identity partly hinge on the social identity of one’s sexual partner, local men can view sexual relationships with white and/or affluent tourist women as a means of repositioning themselves within social hierarchies of class, race and gender.
Revenge and Reinscription

Masculinity has long been differentiated by race and class. Rather than imagining a single fixed and biologically determined ‘masculinity’, Western post-enlightenment scientific and political discourse has constructed multiple ‘masculinities’ through complex processes of power and subordination (Frankberg, 1993, Mercer, 1994). Discourses that constituted ‘the black male’ acted as ‘a symbolic role’ for the construction of white gender systems (Connell, 1995). Stripped of the same patriarchal rights as the white man, black men represented the opposite of that which white male hegemonic power stood for. Where the white man was rational and disembodied, the black male was deemed irrational by nature and dangerously hypersexual. The large penis attributed to all black men gave physical expression to these qualities. As a huge, walking phallus, the black male represented ‘a threat to white womanhood and cultural superiority’ (Young 1996: 183), and therefore had to be controlled.

These ideas have not only been significant for European/North American understandings of white masculinity and sexuality, but also for the construction of black male identity and sexuality in the Caribbean, as many of the ideas about gender and masculinity were exported through colonial rule. They provide the basis for discourses on masculinity and sexuality which amount to the kind of ideological framework that I shall refer to as a ‘dickology’: a set of ideas about sexuality and manhood which guide and give meaning to men’s sexual behaviour. In the Caribbean, dickologies are not only locked into colonial discourses of the past, but also bound to contemporary discourses on nationhood. Nationalist politics rest on and reproduce specific normative gendered identities and the codes of honour which are linked into
them (Enloe, 1989; McClintock, 1995; Yuval Davis, 1997). Although theorists have paid most attention to the relationship between nationalism and women’s sexual behaviour and honour, it is also the case that ideas about male sexual performance can become part of nationalist rhetoric and pride.

Certainly in Jamaica, working class black men often buy into a dickology which teaches that national identity, masculinity and sexual prowess are linked. Jamaican MSTs I have interviewed are insistent that Jamaican men are sexually strong and have great staying power as a result of a national heritage. Sexual stamina is one of the benefits of being born in Jamaica, a country where the heat and natural foods maintain a healthy sexuality. Although Dominican MSTs do not feel the same need to make public pronouncements about their sexual skills, they too will often claim that all Dominicans are good in bed because of their ‘racial’ heritage – ‘mixed Spanish and Indio’. In tourist settings, MSTs have a limited range of discourses from which to construct a sense of self and masculinity which will command respect from their peers. Their blackness and lack of economic power leaves them with few options to reaffirm their masculinity except through demonstrating the ‘truth’ of established ideas about Jamaican or Dominican male sexual prowess.

In both countries, a positive sense of ‘self’ is constructed in relation to ideas about white male sexuality. Jamaican MSTs often feel that they are somehow ‘getting one over the white man’ and proving their own superior masculinity by ‘sexing’ white tourist women. Ideas about black male sexual prowess are maintained and cultivated by Jamaican men as a form of empowerment. Dominican MSTs on the other hand distance themselves from the image of the hypersexual black male, putting more emphasis on being ‘romantic lovers’ who know how to treat women, and
appropriating that part of the white male's hegemonic masculinity/sexuality that is deemed honourable and acceptable. For Dominican MSTs, the difference is cultural rather than racial:

Dominicans are more natural about sex, they grow up with sex in the head. We don't have computers and things or think too much, so we have more time to develop our libidos... so of course we Dominicans have more stamina than people in the West. While in the West they think about other things and don't develop that side of life.

But myths about racially or culturally determined sexuality can become self fulfilling prophecies as the only benefit many local men derive from being Dominican or Jamaican is from embracing these sexualised racisms. This is well illustrated by the example of Mr W, a Jamaican MSTs.

**Racing Subjective Identities**

Mr W was 38 years old when I interviewed him. He had worked in the informal tourist industry from the age of nine, when he ran away from Kingston to Montigo Bay and earned money by diving for coins that tourists threw into the sea from their yachts. He told me proudly that he used to shout 'Throw any spare change Mam, Sir! Spare change sir! I diver man Sir! Watch Number One Diver!'. The tourists would toss coins into the ocean and he would dive for them, coming back to the surface with the coin in his mouth to show the tourist. He had been hustling money from tourists ever since. When I interviewed him, he was working in as a promoter for one of the most successful 'party' bar/restaurants on the Negril beach, but he also supplemented his income by having sex with tourist women when he could. These encounters not only brought material benefits, but also served to reaffirm Mr W's racialised and
gendered identity in various ways that would otherwise have been difficult for him to achieve.

The following extracts from my conversations with Mr W highlight the way in which discourses about race and sexuality intersect, as well as the ways in which sexualized racisms can be internalised and then performed as essences which are subjectively experienced as empowering. Mr W accepts all the stereotypes about black masculinity and sexuality as statements of physiological fact, and uses them as a framework for his sexual practice: strictly heterosexual, ‘Jamaican’ and centrally focused on the performance of the black phallus:

I don’t want to say I don’t like white women. Because woman is woman. Because I’m a man and I love women. I’m a sex oriented person, so I won’t say I’m against white women. When someone doesn’t like sex they are sick in their mind, or maybe they’ve had such bad luck it’s changed their feelings. For a woman it’s soft tender feelings. They say black men have big dicks. OK, I’ve got a big dick. I want to be honest with you. I’ve got a nice dick, but the ladies don’t like their men to have fifteen minutes and then go to sleep. They have to be satisfied. This is why sometimes ladies play with themselves or go with other women because their man don’t treat them right. You have to squeeze their nipples and make them satisfied. Need a man with a hard dick, big dick to sex them for two and a half hours and make them satisfied. That’s why white ladies and black ladies come to Jamaica looking for men to satisfy them. Cos’ black men have hard dick, stiff dick, some small but always straight and stiff. I get my dick from my dad. My dad had lots of ladies, ladies liked him. You’ve got some black men with small dicks but not like white
men. White men have the smallest dick-half inch like this [shows half of his little finger] and that’s no good. That’s why women sing the song ‘I don’t want no teenie weenie ting’. The two best female DJs in Jamaica at the moment, they sing about how they want men with big dicks who can sex them for two and a half and three hours. [At this point Mr W was going to unzip his flies to show me his penis. I assured him that there was no need.] I’m not shy. Put me against ten white men now and I’d have the biggest dick. In Jamaica they love sex. In Jamaica they talk about sex but in other countries they don’t. White women will always come to Jamaica. No one can stop them. The Jamaicans are the best. Jamaican men got the biggest and best dicks.

Two main themes recurred in Mr W’s narrative: the myths around difference in black and white male sexual performance and the superior sexuality of the black male, and the myths around the passivity of women in the sexual act and male activity and sexual power. For Mr W, ‘sexing’ white tourist women is an arena where racialised and gendered hostilities can be both vented and controlled. Western tourist women become passive as recipients of the powerful black penis, and gender relations are restored. Equally important, by ‘sexing’ white women, he exercises the same patriarchal rights that white men have and avenges himself against white patriarchal racism. In his account of Jamaican slavery, he focused on the white man’s unlimited sexual access to black women:

Slavery was very bad. Say I am a slave and you are a slave and you were a very beautiful girl,... the master would take you and sex you as he wanted. He’d whip me and then sex you and then whip you. There’s no respect. He’d lock me up, chain me and use you and chain you up and take you when ever
he wanted. I’d have to watch the white man take my wife and sex her. That’s completely different now because people are free.

The history of Jamaican slavery and oppression is very much a popular living memory for Jamaicans. For some Jamaican men, concepts of freedom are linked into obtaining gendered power and having the freedom to enact their masculinity by being able to choose their sexual partners, a privilege that white men have always had.

Black nationalist movements, from those which took place in Haiti in the 1790’s to those which formed in the 1960s in the US, all largely concentrated on giving black men the same gendered, patriarchal rights and power as white men. Jamaican independence followed a similar pattern. Racial equality was equated with a masculine model of citizenship which continued to subordinate women and exclude them from political, economic, legal or social power (Sheller, 1997). The construction of male gender identities and sexualities are central to many Jamaicans’ sense of nationhood and have to be exhibited and displayed for all to see in order to reinforce their existence. Women are used as conduits to gender power and selfhood, by allowing men to display their sexuality to themselves and others. For men like Mr W, sexual interactions with tourist women reaffirm their freedom, Jamaican citizenship and gender equality with white men, and seem to redress some of the injustices of the past.

The Jamaican man’s supposed ability to perform great sexual acts is directly contrasted against the supposed inability of the white man to perform sexually. Though Mr W was unusual in terms of the degree of sexual hostility he expressed, his attitudes towards black and white male sexuality were shared by almost all my
interviewees. So, for example, another Jamaican MST explained to me that white men cannot perform sexually because:

the cold shrivels your bamboo [penis] the heat makes it hard. Jamaican men have the heat and strong bamboo. It’s in their blood, they can warm up the cold white woman and the black women do the same for the white man. Jamaicans that go to England, they lose their potency if they go to cold countries and that’s why white men dick’s are shruveled or sometimes they have no dicks... Black women give white men what their women never give them, they play with their balls and they have to suck the white man because the white man can’t fuck them because their bamboo is so small... That’s why they call prostitutes bitches, because they suck white men’s dicks.

As this quote shows, the idea that white men are unable to perform sexually feminizes the white male. By emasculating white men in this way, some Jamaican men who are denied any real social or economic power are able to rescue a sense of masculine power and honour.

Jamaican prohibitions against oral sex are also important to constructing a black male identity that is opposite and superior to the white male. The white man performs the ‘dirty’ act of cunnilingus because he has to in order to satisfy a woman. The black Jamaican is able to sexually satisfy a women simply through penetration, the white man’s penis is inadequate to the task, thus he must resort to other methods:

Most Jamaican don’t like to do oral sex, like the white guys and the American guys, the Europe guys. They start that, that’s their hobby, it’s like they were made for that. Once they make sex with a girl, they start that, that’s what they
like. Most Jamaican men don’t like it. They like just making sex all night, stay real long and strong, you know how we stiff and don’t sleep.

Refusal to perform this act is a sign of being a ‘real’ black man and a ‘real’ Jamaican. while ‘bowing down to a woman’ is construed as the first step towards homosexuality (in fact the very term used for cunnilingus, ‘bowing down’, shows how the act is constructed as disempowering and emasculating). ‘I don’t suck white women. It’s against God’s law’ and ‘I don’t eat meat. I’m vegetarian’ are standard lines from Rasta MSTs, indeed, this is part of the their ‘seduction patter’ for tourist women.

Rasta MSTs are proud of the fact that sex is purely a matter of: ‘kiss her face, kiss her mouth, touch her nipples’ and penetration for hours. However, though Rasta MSTs insist that they do not perform cunnilingus and this is an act only performed by ‘bald heads’, ‘bald heads’ will insist that Rastas do perform oral sex because they are the ‘real’ gigolos. For a man to ‘bow down’ is to make himself less than a man, and while a ‘real man’ can take money from a female sexual partner without dishonour, the person who is not really ‘a man’ and who takes money for sex (especially oral sex) is a prostitute, and without honour.

Even these ideas about racial difference, masculinity and sexuality get turned into a cultural commodity within the tourist industry. In tourist clubs and bars, entertainers will often refer to the supposed sexual difference between black Jamaican men and white men. A ‘humorous’ song called ‘The Big Bamboo’ is very popular with tourists. This song draws on nineteenth century ideas about the black Jamaican penis which promulgated by writers like Edward Long (see Fryer, 1989), a Jamaican planter and judge who wrote an influential book in 1774 on black ‘inferiority’ and ‘animalism’. Long was extremely attentive to the size of the black male’s penis,
noting that the penis of Africans was larger than that of Europeans and ascribing weak intellects to black men because of their animalistic passions. The song which contemporary black entertainers sing in Jamaican tourist resorts maintains the myth of the large black penis, but ridicules the white man for his ‘inadequacy’.

The song starts by saying that the Big Bamboo ‘stands tall and straight’ and how women love it. The entertainer will then begin to humiliate the white men in the audience by directing the following lines to them in a very obvious way: ‘I see you sit like a millionaire, but I hear that your bamboo is as small as a little boy’s’ and ‘I see you sit like a boss but I hear you ain’t got no bamboo at all’ and finally ‘I hear you sit in the sun all day but your bamboo will never be the same colour as mine’. The song does not challenge any sexualized racist stereotypes. It acknowledges that white men have economic and social power but seems to suggest that black Jamaican men can take comfort in the ‘fact’ that white men do not have sexual power. And yet since this song is performed for, and enjoyed by, a white audience, it seems to recognize that economic power is a more socially valuable form of power to hold, and so to flatter the white male as much as to humiliate him. Though the song might be read as an ironic commentary on racist stereotypes, in practice, the MSTs I interviewed in Jamaica did value the fame accorded to the black penis, and subjectively experienced discourses about racialised-sexual difference as an empowering affirmation of their masculinity and racialised identity. This was not unique to Jamaica, but a general phenomena in the Caribbean. For example one, Cuban MST interviewed during the course of research for ECPAT told me ‘I would rather be caliente [hot] than intelligent, the more fame you have, the more people want to fuck you. What use is being intelligent if no one want to fuck you?’. Like many other local Cuban men subjectively experience sexualised racisms as empowering. These overtly sexual
Discourses on race, masculinity and sexuality are rather different in the Dominican Republic. *Sanky Pankies* do not tend to talk much about the size and quality of their genitals, and white male sexuality is not denigrated and belittled as in Jamaica. This is because popular discourse on race in the Dominican Republic suggests that Dominicans are closer to 'whiteness' than to 'blackness'. As one MST put it, 'Dominicans are really Spanish'. It follows, then, that Dominicans 'naturally' want white women - 'we go crazy for blond, green and blue eyed women with fine features and white skin'. The *Indio* identity represents a split from and reworking of ideas about an animalistic and hypersexual black male sexuality. The Dominican men I interviewed did not construct themselves as 'black', but rather saw themselves as different from white European/North American men because they are 'dark Latin lovers', 'caliente' (sexually hot), passionate and possessed of great sexual stamina. Unlike white men, who are inhibited sexually, sex comes naturally to Dominicans and they love all forms of sexual pleasure. As there are no social prohibitions against cunnilingus, *Sanky Pankies* can claim that 'Dominicans are the best lovers'.

Ideas about race in the Dominican Republic mirror those in other Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the nineteenth century, as the noose of Spanish colonialism weakened, many of the ex-Spanish colonies experienced an ideological conflict around 'race'. The white elites of newly independent Hispanic colonies had to find ways of including a large and mixed population of mulattos and blacks if they were to be successful in uniting a nation to compete in the modern world. Eurocentric ideas
on ‘race’ were debated and often criticised by intellectuals in Latin America. European racist theories which rested on the concepts of inferior and superior ‘races’ and so justified the domination of blacks by whites could not be taken on board so easily in Latin America where such a large proportion of the population were black. As Richard Graham (1997) notes:

Latin Americans faced a difficult intellectual dilemma regarding race. On the one hand, racial heterogeneity characterised most of their societies. On the other, many Latin Americans aspired to an ever closer connection to Europe and sought to follow its leadership in every realm......Scientific racism explained why some succeeded while others failed, seemed to make clear the reasons for contemporary realities in international relations and justified the dominance domestically of the few (whites) over the many (coloured)......Yet, with the mixed and varied racial composition of their societies clearly before them and a growing sense of national identity impelling consideration of national futures, these leaders also hesitated. What to believe? What to do? (1997: 2-3).

In Brazil, for example, mixing was repositioned in the debates as a positive way to whiten and unite the population (Skinmore, 1997). Promoting mixing to lighten up the population did not challenge ideas about difference between the races or question the superiority of whiteness. In this way, the white and lighter skinned elites could accept their mixed population in the belief that they were heading towards civilisation rather than savagery. Harry Hoetink notes that there was ‘a continuous absorption by marriage of coloureds into the ‘white’ group ...... provided the former are somatically, and also economically, acceptable to the latter’ (1970:116). ‘Mixing’ in
the Hispanic colonies, therefore occurred on a larger scale than in other European colonies, providing certain criteria were met. However, hierarchies of race did not disappear. The power of whiteness continued to be the yardstick against which social status was measured. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Dominican Republic was another racially mixed country that had generally accepted these new racial theories in an attempt to create a national identity.

Photograph 7: A Dominican Man on a Tourist Postcard

Notions of ‘whitening’ therefore took on huge social importance in nineteenth century Dominican society. As in other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, it was hoped that immigration from Europe would ‘improve’ and whiten the population, diminishing the significance of black and mulatto social groups (Graham, 1997). However, the Dominican Republic was confronted with a number of obstacles that threatened this plan. First, the numbers of white migrants from Europe were reduced by white in-migration falling. Second, Haiti, was seen to threaten and block this aim by ‘flooding’ the country with black people.
Relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic were fundamental in shaping ‘Dominicaness’. James Ferguson argues that ‘the Dominican independence struggle was..less an anti-colonial conflict than an attempt to define a state separate from Haiti’ (13:1992). Discourses on national identity developed in direct opposition to a black and ‘African’ Haiti rather than in opposition to a white Spain, which was upheld as a model to racially mimic. Dominican nationalism was built upon the need to protect Dominicans from the threat of Haitian invasion, despite equally real threats from the US and Europe (at least they were white). As in many other communities, the construction of an ‘Other’ was inextricably linked to concepts of national identity (Anderson, 1991; Triandafyllidou, 1998). Thus, Dominicans used racial discourses to differentiate themselves from Haitians and build a sense of national unity.

The figure of Enriquillo played an important role in the creation of a national myth of the Indio. In 1882, Manuel Jesus Galvan published a book about Enriquillo, one of the Indian leaders who fought against the Spanish, gained peace for himself and his followers and joined the Spanish to fight against rebel slaves runaways. It was a best seller of its time and is regarded today in the Dominican Republic as one of their great national works of literature. Galvan’s Enriquillo is embellished with acceptable traits of nobility and goodness. He became Christian, wanted to assimilate European culture and respected the ‘good’ Spanish, but rebelled because of the maltreatment of a few ‘bad’ Spanish. He is the noble savage who wanted to be taught to be more civilised by the Spanish. In this story structure, Galvan manages to unite debates about Dominican nationalism and independence without rejecting Spanish colonialisation or questioning Dominican nationality (Fennema and Loewenthal, 1986). Enriquillo became a point of reference for Dominicans who could not be considered white or Spanish, but wanted to cast-off the negative black identity associated with slavery,
oppression and ignobility. The racialised category of *Indio* was born and prevented blackness from being represented as part of the Dominican identity by a conscious denial of black-African national heritage.

This figure offered Dominicans a way to reconstruct their racial history. It was especially important for the mulatto population ‘who in particular attempted to figure as the ‘real’ autonomous population of Santo Domingo, presenting themselves as the descendants of the pre-colonial Indian population’ (Fennema and Lowenthal 1989:11, own translation). The ‘*Indio*’, became a national identity that disassociates Dominicans from blackness and slavery and embraces a mixed native Indian and white heritage. To be Haitian is thus widely seen as the very antithesis of ‘*dominicanidad*’. In popular discourse, Haitians are racially and culturally inferior and this discourse has justified atrocities against the Haitian population. For example, in 1937, Trujillo used a nationalist and racist discourse to justify ordering troops to massacre between 15,000-25,000 Haitian migrants (figures vary from different sources and the exact number is unknown), including women and children (Vargus-Lundius, 1991). Today the same racist clichés are still used by politicians to justify the deportation of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian decent who work in Dominican agriculture. Between November 1996 and March 1997, an estimated 35,000 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent were deported to Haiti. It is estimated that there are around 500,000 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent working and living in the Dominican Republic mainly around sugar plantations (Howard, 1999).

Anti-Haitian discourse was and is also tinged with sexual overtones, where by the black ‘Other’ is imagined as a promiscuous, incestuous and uncontrollable sexual creature who breeds and threatens to corrupt the racial purity of the Dominican
people. These sexualised and racist narratives are inseparable and filter down insidiously into every aspect of social relations in the Dominican Republic. Michiel Baud (1996) argues that one should be careful not to automatically assume that anti-Haitian sentiment among the Dominican poor is as ‘virulent’ as in the Dominican elite, nonetheless: ‘in adult conversation, Haitians are cursorily blamed with the introduction of AIDS, unfair competition on the labour market and low morality in Dominican society’ (1996:140).

As the construction of Dominican nationalism depends on the total denial of the existence of an ‘African race’ within its borders, the large black and mixed population are faced with two options. Either they are must unquestioningly collude with the racist discourse, or they face being excluded and treated like a Haitian. The colour line thus becomes an imagined reality as it shifts around to accommodate the perceptions of light skinned and dark skinned Dominicans who are bound by it.

Recent evidence suggests that the Dominican Republic’s population is now darkening, rather than ‘whitening’ (Davis, 1992). White immigration levels are low and tourism offers the only injection of white expatriates and visitors to the country. The Dominican elite apparently fear racial and cultural Africaization of the country as numbers of Haitian migrants increase to fill manual employment vacancies while Dominicans try to migrate to the United States (Grasmuch and Pessar, 1991; Ferguson, 1992; Howard, 1999). It is estimated that almost half a million Dominicans live in New York and are becoming increasing politicized on issues around ‘race’ and black identity. However, for those left behind, there is little intellectual or popular debate on this question. It is generally accepted that there is no racism in the
Dominican Republic and yet young people are still told and believe that liaisons with white men or women will better their status.

Dominican MSTs talk about race in a very different way from Jamaican MSTs and even those with phenotypic characteristics that would usually be associated with African heritage do not see themselves as ‘black’. Some men will describe and trace their ‘colour’ lineage, rather than their racial heritage in their family to reduce ideas of racial difference between white tourist women and themselves. So, for example, one MST was worried that I may think he was black, and therefore proceeded to tell me that his mother was very white and that his father was ‘Indio’, that his mother’s sister was white and lives in the States and so on, in an effort to position himself towards the top of a ‘pigmentocracy’. Others would insist that though they were dark-skinned, they were not of African descent, since slaves were only imported into Haiti, not into the Dominican Republic, so that there is no ‘black’ blood in the Dominican Republic.

This anti-Haitian, anti-black discourse means that black female tourists are mostly ignored by Dominican Sanky Pankies as possible romantic conquests. In practice, very few black female tourists travel to the Dominican Republic and those who do are often mistaken for local women (or worse still, Haitians). However, one Sanky Panky told me that even if black women visited the Dominican Republic in greater numbers he would not target them as potential lovers because other people would not be able to tell that he was with a tourist, and therefore he would not obtain the same level of status and kudos that is associated with walking down the street with a white tourist woman. Whiteness, or rather what it symbolises, is thus sexually valued by both Jamaican and Dominican MSTs albeit for slightly different reasons.
Processes of racialisation in both the West and in the Caribbean have worked with the same discursive threads, wherein whiteness is esteemed and blackness is devalued. However, they have created multiple ways of interpreting the raced, gendered and sexualised body. In tourist resorts, some aspects of these discourses on identity are reconfigured, but others are reinforced. Local male actors are encouraged to use their ‘blackness’/ethnic identity as part of the commodity that they are selling, conforming to tourist stereotypes. Yet they can sometimes subjectively experience this as a form of personal affirmation in a space where black bodies are socially marked and devalued.

For MSTs, playing with these stereotypes cannot properly be described as a form of ‘resistance’ against the hardships of poverty, racism and class. Their success within the informal tourist economy depends upon them using their racially marked body as an key element of the exchanges they enter into with tourists. Like domestic workers and others in the service industry, where people are often selling more than simply their capacity to work (Anderson, 2000; Hochchild, 1983), but a part of their identity that is normally considered ‘inalienable’, such as a pretty face or a smile, MSTs have to perform their blackness to subsist. In so doing they necessarily reproduce and reinforces existing beliefs about race difference rather than challenge the tourist fantasy of the Other. Their performance, like that of the minstrel, is contradictory and complicated. On the one hand it is a site of transformation which influences social meanings and restraints, and in this sense provides MSTs with a space in which to claim respect as well secure some (generally meager) financial benefits from tourism. But on the other hand it is loaded with sexualized racist and classed meanings and so rests crucially on the very structures and discourses which exclude working class black men from mainstream economic, social and political life.
In the following Chapter, I want to look at what blackness signifies for the tourist women who enter into sexual relationships with local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.
As far as I'm concerned any man in any tourist area is a *Sanky Panky*, not just in the Dominican Republic but in any tourist area in the Caribbean, any tourist area I've been to it's all the same. (WSL in the Dominican Republic, 1998)

After comparing prostitution cross-culturally and historically, Laurie Shrage (1994: 142) observes that 'one thing that stands out but stands unexplained is that a large percentage of sex customers seek (or sought) sex workers whose racial, national, or class identities are (or were) different from their own'. She goes on to suggest that the demand for African, Asian and Latin American prostitutes by white Western men may 'be explained in part by culturally produced racial fantasies regarding the sexuality of these women' (1994: 148). There is long history of sexual exploitation of women under colonial rule and Western men have long projected racist fantasies onto the 'primitive'/natural Other (see hooks, 1992, Collins, 1993, Gilman, 1985). But the long haul tourist industry is turning this kind of colonial fantasy into an item of mass consumption.

It was noted in Chapter 6 that male sex tourists often construct the local women they pay to have sex with as sexual and social 'Others'. They are 'not really prostitutes' but 'nice girls' who enjoy sex (O'Connell Davidson, 1998). In this way, the sexual encounters that women in 'Third world' countries have with tourist men are naturalised. Racism thus plays a key role in protecting many male sex tourist from the
knowledge that they are buying sexual attention. This is also the case for many WSLs. The women imagine the black men that they have sexual relationships as beings possessed of a powerful and indiscriminate sexuality which they cannot control. This racist stereotype explains local men’s eagerness for sex with tourist women, regardless of their age, size and/or physical appearance. Again, the Other is not selling sex, just 'doing what comes naturally'.

There has been a tendency for historians and some feminists to absolve white women from any responsibility as regards imposing or reproducing processes of racism, for the white women is herself often constructed a victim of the white male. This perspective has recently been challenged (Carby, 1987; hooks, 1982, Ware, 1996). As Anne McClintock (1995) notes colonial white women may have been barred from managing formal power but:

Nonetheless, the rationed privileges of race all too often put white women in positions of decided - if - borrowed - power, not only over colonized women but also over colonized men. As such, white women were not the hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting. (1995: 6)

White women had access to racialised power which meant that they too were active agents of racism and benefited from this system of oppression in economic, political and social terms. Furthermore, white women often found that contact with Others at home or through travel allowed them to transgress gendered constraints. In the reconfiguration of racialised and gendered power, they became honourary males in relation to blacks. In particular, it has been argued that women travellers in the nineteenth century used travel as a tool for controlling how they were perceived,
empowering themselves and/or masculinising their identities (Enloe, 1989; Hall and Kinnaird, 1994; Veijola and Jokinen, 1994).

There is also some evidence to suggest that white women were able to express ‘masculine’ powers over black male bodies and sexuality too. So, for example, a soldier named Hilton in 1816 reported observing a white woman examining the genitals of male slaves at a slave market in the Caribbean “with all possible indelicacy” (Beckles, 1996). In slave societies, some white women also managed to have sexual relations with slaves (Hodes, 1996).

Today, the majority of WSLs in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic come from the same countries that sent large numbers of male sex tourists to the Caribbean; namely the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands. These countries’ racist discourses were constructed through histories of colonialism/imperialism and slavery (Miles, 1989; Young, 1996). How these racisms manifest themselves may have shifted over the years but at their core remain myths of racial inferiority and superiority which persist in popular culture through stereotyping and images which are still often highly sexualised. The image of the Other is just as significant today in the developed world as it was in the nineteenth century as a way of defining self, nation and whiteness. Where in the past white colonials invaded and conquered other parts of the world, and developed tropes about those they found there to construct an oppositional Other, modern discourses play on fears about migrants ‘invading and swamping’ Europe, the US or Canada. These debates on migration and the ‘Third World’ are not only territorial and economic, but also reflect and reinforce assumptions about who can be included as part of ‘the imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991). They highlight concerns about drifting into multi-culturism thereby
weakening an established and highly racialised national identity. Issues of race thus remain fundamental to constructions of identity.

In this section I want to consider how ideas about race and difference shape tourist women’s subjective experience of sexual relationships with local men in tourist areas in the Caribbean. More particularly, I am concerned with how female tourists’ sexualised fantasies of the Other impact on their understandings of the boundary between commercial sex (prostitution) and non-commercial sex, and allow them to affirm a particular view of themselves as racialised and engendered beings. For many women, sexual encounters with the Other are not only viewed as something quite different from ‘prostitution’ but also as a form of anti-racist practice, or ‘loving across the boundaries’.

The Caribbean as a ‘Different’ Space

Both interview and survey data suggest that questions about race and gender are extremely important to WSLs in terms of how they subjectively interpret their experience. The idea of ‘cultural difference’ regarding sexual practices and mores is important to them, just as it is to male sex tourists (see O’Connell Davidson, 1998). Those who took part in the survey were asked whether they thought that Jamaican/Dominican people’s attitudes towards ‘inter-racial’ sex, teenage sexuality, casual sex, prostitution, and homosexuality were stricter, more relaxed, or the same as European/North American people’s. Those female tourists who had entered into sexual relationships with local men tended to view the host culture as sexually different and more liberal than Europe/North America. Where only 50% of tourist women who had not entered into sexual relationships with local men believed that attitudes towards ‘inter-racial’ sexual relations were more relaxed and tolerant in the
Caribbean than at home, over 70% of tourist women who had entered into sexual relationships believed this to be the case. A similar pattern emerged between the two groups of women on attitudinal data about local attitudes towards casual sex and prostitution in the host country. This finding was supported by interview work with female tourists. WSLs described their holiday destination as a different space, where it is possible and acceptable to do things that they could not or would not do at home (such as dating black men).

When asked a general question about whether local people’s attitudes towards sex were different from those in Europe or North America, female tourists with a local ‘boyfriend’ were more likely to affirm this statement than were tourist women who did not have local ‘boyfriends’. In Jamaica 88% and in the Dominican Republic 75% of WSLs stated that sexual attitudes in the host country were different from those at home. By contrast only 50% of female tourists who did not enter into sexual relationships (36% of female tourists who did not enter into relationships stated that they did not to know what local attitudes were towards sexuality).

When asked to describe the differences they had noticed, the majority of WSLs focused on local men’s sexual behaviour. So, for example, in response to an open-ended question about differences, some 60% of WSLs in Jamaica said that Jamaican men were sexually promiscuous, had a casual attitude towards sexual encounters and were direct about their sexual interest. Only 6% mentioned any connection between local men’s sexual behaviour and money. In the Dominican Republic, the survey produced similar findings, but women also described Dominican men as ‘macho’.

Tourist women who had not entered into a relationships with a local man were less

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59% said that attitudes towards teenage sex were more relaxed; 80% said that attitudes towards casual sex were more relaxed and 64% said that attitudes towards prostitution were also more relaxed.
likely to comment on differences, but those who did often stated that local men seemed more sexually aggressive.

The survey findings thus suggest that tourist women who had entered into sexual encounters not only constructed the Caribbean as a space with different sexual attitudes and mores, but also imagined Caribbean men themselves as different. The men were described as more macho, obsessed with sex, and more 'natural' about sex. One respondent in the 40-50 year old age bracket wrote, 'sexually provocative behaviour (if no actual sex) starts at a much earlier age [i.e., younger than twelve]. In some ways Jamaican men flaunt sexuality in different ways, seem repressed about some sexual matters (homosexuality)', while another woman in the 50-60 year old bracket reported that her boyfriends, 'tend to be younger and unable or unwilling to spend money on dates'. Indeed, 29% of the female tourists who had sexual relationships with local men made a point of noting that their partners were much younger than themselves. There is a sense in which tourist women who enter into sexual relationships with local men appear to imagine Caribbean society and men in ways which reproduce European enlightenment ideas about black men as irrational beings, rooted in nature and unable to transcend the body. These ideas make it acceptable for them to partake in casual sexual relationships with (often younger) local men.

Simply imagining a person or group of people as sexually available is not enough, on its own, to make that person or group desirable. Most of the tourist women who have sex with local men in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic could also go to 'Singles' Clubs and bars back home and find themselves an available man. But they want to be desired by and have sexual access to a particular kind of man, not just anyone. It is
important for these women to attract men who are considered to be desirable and who are sexually valued by others in order to demonstrate their own attractiveness. The fact that they are publicly seen as able to attract and ‘tame’ a man who is reputed to be the raw, highly sexed ‘Other’, a ‘real’ man with a ‘primitive manhood’ affirms them as ‘real’ women in a much more immediate and public way than would the ability to command the sexual attentions of an older, less physically attractive white man back home.

WSLs often objectify Jamaican and Dominican men in much the same way that male sex tourist objectify local women. It is not uncommon to find tourist women approaching men on the beach, asking to photograph them, and making exclamations of admiration about their ‘lean’, ‘muscular’ bodies. In this, they seem to follow a long tradition of visually devouring the black male body (see Marriott, 2000; Mercer, 1994). Certainly, the body matters to these women. For instance, in response to an open-ended question asking them to describe their 'boyfriends' in the questionnaire, many respondents emphasised that their partners possessed black bodies of great sexual value. At one extreme, there are women who objectify their lovers to such an extent that they are reduced to nothing but a racialised category. For example, one German woman, in the 20-30 year old age bracket, condensed her description of the three lovers she had had in the Dominican Republic during the space of one week to one succinct sentence: ‘they have black, black, black, skin’. Other women would vary the description but still invariably emphasised the body, as in: ‘sweet, friendly, gorgeous-great body’; ‘dark skin, younger, small frame’; and ‘Handsome, physically fit, 27 year old’.
Preconceptions about the local culture and sexual mores were also connected to the women’s evaluation of themselves as white Western women. Like many male sex tourists, women with local boyfriends often constructed the Caribbean in opposition to the West (Brace and O’Connell Davidson 1996). In interviews, some female tourists with local sexual partners described Jamaica and the Dominican Republic as undeveloped ‘Third World’ countries, and contrasted them against the ‘civilised’ Western world. Applying these notions helped them to naturalise social inequality. As one Scots woman said of the Dominican Republic, ‘It’s just like Britain before its industrial phase, it’s just behind Britain just exactly the same. Kids used to get beat up to go up chimneys, here they get beaten up to go polish shoes. There’s no difference’. Local people are also viewed as emotionally and intellectually ‘undeveloped’, and this means that local men are perceived as still being ‘in touch’ with their animal instincts and basic emotions. This is a form of racism which attributes what are normally thought of as ‘feminine’ (because rooted in nature) qualities to ‘Other’ men. One American women described the ‘simplicity’ of Dominican men like this, ‘they will treat you exactly how you treat them. So if you treat them like shit they will treat you like shit. If you treat them good they will give you their best’. Another women explained that Jamaican men are ‘intuitive’;

I find that if you’re with a Jamaican for a while they can tell you what your going to do before you do it yourself because they tap into you, they watch your moods, while we just take everything for normal.

For many WSLs, the Caribbean man is the perfect opposite of the white European/North American man. Where white men discard white women as soon as their body ages and loses its sexual value, Dominican/Jamaican men continue to
desire them. Judy, a fifty-five year old Canadian, loved the way she became a sexual object in the Caribbean, reversing the years of neglect in the West:

You see when you go to a disco, [white] men eye up a woman for her body, what ever. Dominicans don’t care because they love women, they love women. It’s not that they’re indifferent or anything. They are very romantic, they will never be rude with you, while a white man will say something rude to you, while Dominican men are not like that at all. A white man will say to me, like, ‘slut’ to me and I have been with a lot of Dominican men and they would never say anything like that to you. They are more respectful. Light cigarettes, open doors, they are more gentlemen. Where white men don’t do that. So if you have been a neglected woman in civilisation, when you come down here, of course, when you come down here they are going to wipe you off your feet.

Western women find that in the Caribbean they are chased and ‘romanced’, sweet talked and ‘loved’ by men. Once again (or for once) they find that they exist as sexual objects. Judy, like many tourist women, used racist stereotypes of black males to argue that local men have an uncontrollable sexuality, a ‘natural’ love of women, to explain to herself why she is suddenly perceived as an object of desire. It is important for many female sex tourists to affirm their sense of ‘womanliness’ by being sexually desired by men. In Western culture, part of a woman’s gender power and honour rests on being an object of male sexual desire. In the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, tourist women can find that mature age and obesity become sources of power rather than drawbacks in the competition to be desired. Claire, a forty seven year old Canadian woman with a weight problem told me this story:
I had a friend who was a flight attendant. She was beautiful. Beautiful body, blue eyes and long, blond hair. But we came here, and I used to go to the discos with Jenny and I'd be dancing all night long and she wouldn't be, and she asked me ‘How come these men make such a fuss over you and never bother with me?’ Well, I said to her that I’m heavy, blue eyes and blond so they think I have more money than you have. It’s true. And to this day they think that I have more money than I have and they probably have more money in the bank than I have.

By coming to the Dominican Republic, Claire felt that she could reposition herself on aged, gendered and racialised hierarchies and restore her social worth. While in Canada ‘no one looked at her twice’, in the Dominican Republic she was desirable and sought after. In a competition for the attention of men, she could beat other women who back home are considered much more desirable and therefore more powerful. Although Claire acknowledges an economic element to the attention she receives, her belief that Dominican men ‘just love women’ allows her to gloss over and ignore the idea that the men may be motivated by a desire for money, rather than her body.

O’Connell Davidson (1995, 1996, 1998) has drawn attention to the fact that men who practice sex tourism are not a homogeneous group in terms of their sexual practices and attitudes towards sexuality and race. Likewise, the racisms espoused by female tourists who enter into sexual relationships with local men are multi layered and differentiated by nationality, age, class and racialised identity. I want to briefly consider two very different ways in which the tourist women I interviewed engaged with popular discourses about race and sexuality.
Some of the older WSLs I interviewed, particularly Americans, held beliefs about 'race' and attitudes towards 'interracial' sex that are based upon an ideology that is overtly white supremacist. One woman who had moved to the Dominican Republic told me that she had a dog that she had trained 'only to bark at the coloured people. I don't let any Dominicans into my house'. This quote illustrates a level of fear as well as hostility and for women like these, the black male is a sexual taboo, he is imagined to embody an animalistic sexuality which both fascinates and repels. He represents a type of masculinity which is simultaneously dangerous and transgressive. These women do not want to enter into long term relationships with local men, or integrate them into their everyday lives. As one woman put it, 'this is time out'. Historically in the USA, there have been white women who have 'crossed the tracks' in search of brief, illicit sex with black men, a practice which was and sometimes still is, heavily stigmatized and socially condemned (Mumford, 1997). In the not so distant past, transgressing this boundary was often a matter of life and death and could result in the lynching of the black men involved. Even now, for those who imagine black men through the lens of white racist ideology, the idea of sexual contact between white women and black men remains the ultimate taboo, and so carries with it a sense of risk, danger and excitement.

The desire to sexually experience someone who is imagined as your 'racial inferior' implies a high level of sexual hostility and some of the women I interviewed were overtly hostile about their local sexual partners. For example, Jessica a forty-five year old white American woman from Chicago, (who was discussed in Chapter 5) told me that Jamaican men, 'are all liars and cheats... They're obsessed with their dicks. That's
all they think of, just pussy and money and nothing else’. And when asked whether
she would ever take a black boyfriend home and introduce him to her friends and
family, she was emphatic that she would not - 'No, no, never. It's not like that. This is
something else, you know, it's time out. Like a fantasy'. This is more than simply a
fantasy about having multiple anonymous sexual encounters without getting caught
and disgraced. It is also a highly racialised fantasy about power and vengeance.
Women like Jessica are looking for black men with good bodies, firm and muscle clad
sex machines that they can control, and this element of control should not be
overlooked. Stuart Hall (1996:445) has argued that ‘fear and desire double for one
another and play across the structures of otherness’. They are often interlocking and
fixes sexual desire into racism. In this way, racisms actually fuel desire by attaching
value to those aspects of black masculinity which are seen as desirable to valorize
certain aspects of white femininity. Les Back (1994) observes that discourses around
race and racism are often ambiguous and contradictory. At times, supposedly positive
characteristics (such as music or fashion), are adopted by whites as a way of
augmenting their identity. However, this does not challenge the racist foundation on
which these stereotypical characteristics are based.

WSLs typically buy into a highly gendered form of racism. Although the primary
focus of their fantasy centers on black men, they also employ racist discourses to
construct black women as the inferior Others, in order to help imagine themselves as
truly chosen and desired. WSLs who were frequent return visitors to Jamaica or the
Dominican Republic or who had migrated to live there often expressed very
derogatory attitudes towards local women. Many had very little contact with local
women and perceived them as negatively ‘different’. As one thirty-four year old
German woman said, 'I am everything a Dominican woman is not - educated,
independent, feminist’. Another expatriate WSL told me how Jamaican women were ‘the worst’. Not only were they jealous of her boyfriend who was a ‘reggae star’, and resentful of the idea that she was stealing their men, but also they were envious of her successful business, whereas she argued that she ‘wasn’t taking anything away from anyone’. Others repeated the men’s patter about local women being lazy and only wanting money from their boyfriends or husbands, while one women simply referred to Dominican women as ‘bitches’ (see Chapter 5).

These gendered forms of racism helped tourist women to construct a race/gender hierarchy with white women on top. They also help to create a division between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ women. Tourist women who enter into sexual relationships with local men are, according to the conservative/orthodox standards of their own societies, transgressing the social boundaries and laws which govern acceptable heterosexual female sexual behaviour. By these standards they are ‘bad’ women because they are having sex with black men, with many men, outside of wedlock and so taking their sexuality outside the control of men. To justify their own deviation from these codes requires tourist women to develop an alternative model of honour, one which places less emphasis on female sexuality purity. By attaching a great deal more importance to notions of female independence, care and equality with men, black women become ‘bad’, (money grabbing, ‘stupid’) women, while female tourists become ‘good’. Fear of black female sexuality is also abated because white tourist women can and do command the sexual attention of local men and therefore affirm themselves as more desirable than local women.

The relationship between black and white women has not traditionally been experienced as sisterly. Black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins (1990), Hazel
Carby (2000) and bell hooks (2000) argue that white women have stood in a power relation as oppressors of black women. Black women have been excluded from political, legal and social rights and privileges which have often been extended to white women and white women have played a role in enforcing and benefiting from structural inequalities. Gendered and sexualised discourses have divided women along racialised lines and set them up as the antagonistic antithesis of one another. While white women were placed on a pedestal, they required the services of the black women to keep them there, and their status has thus long rested on unequal power relations between black and white.

Middle class white women have depended on black women’s reproductive labour in the home as domestic workers and carers to allow them to conform to social ideal of womanhood and gendered citizenship. Bridget Anderson explains how co-dependent stereotypes developed and ‘worked to maintain difference: workers proved their inferiority by their physicality and dirt, while female employers proved their superiority by their femininity, daintiness and managerial skills’ (2000: 18). In addition a whole list of negative attributes were attached to performing the dirty sexual and domestic work done by black women, while white women maintained their moral and spiritual standing. White working class women could also position themselves as superior to black women by drawing on racialised hierarchies, even if they were undertaking the same jobs, since their whiteness naturally made them superior.

These tensions between black and white women are significant for tourism in the Caribbean. Some tourist women are unashamed of their racism and feel empowered by the idea that there are black women cleaning their rooms (and/or looking after their
children). In the both Jamaica and the Dominican Republic tourist resorts are places where local women are invisible except as domestic workers during the day and sex workers at night. Other aspects of local women's lives take place outside of the tourist bubble. Just as processes of economic and social exclusion turn tourist resorts into spaces where white racist fantasies about the black male appear to be real and embodied, so too, black females appear to tourists as embodiments of the racist fantasy that all black women are either 'mammies' or 'whores'. It is therefore very easy for tourist women to continue to perceive local women as inferior Others.

'The Opposite of Racism'

Not all WSLs accept white supremacist ideologies. White liberal women and young white women who value blackness as a 'cool' commodity in the way that many young white men do, are also included amongst their ranks. Black bodies are increasingly used as props in advertising and media and younger white Europeans and North Americans, are constantly exposed to exoticizing racisms through the Western film, music and fashion industries (hooks, 1992). These industries retain the old-school racist emphasis on blackness as physicality, but repackage and commoditize this 'animalism', so that black men and women become the ultimate icons of sporting prowess, 'untamed' rebelliousness, 'raw' musical talent, sexual power and so on. As a consequence, many young (and some not so young) white Westerners view blackness as a marker of something both 'cool' and 'hot'. In certain contexts the black body is no longer feared but fetishised. Thus some WSLs want black boyfriends but do not wish to indulge in an overtly hostile racialised sexual fantasy. However, they do want to live out other fantasies, whether they be 'educating and helping the noble savage', or being the focus of 'cool' black men's adoring gaze.
Many of the white women in this group consider that having sexual relations with black men is a sign of anti-racism, and yet because they do not think very deeply about racism, they also continue to espouse ordinary, 'everyday' forms of racism even as they denounce overtly white supremacist politics. For example, Sarah was a thirty-two year old from Devon, who had travelled all over the world to 'experience other cultures' and 'find herself'. She had visited Negril several times and had a number of sexual relationships with local men, and she saw herself as a great liberal on questions of race. She told me that she was 'colourblind', as colour did not matter to her. But she complained bitterly about how Jamaicans were racist towards white people. She told me that some had been 'hostile and aggressive' to her and called her 'whitey'. She considered this to be 'reverse racism', but even having experienced for herself something of what it is like to be reduced to a racial category, she did not question the negative effects of racism in England or consider of the mechanics of her own racisms. She was quite unselfconscious when she told me that 'all Jamaican men are lying, two faced bastards'. She had at one point imagined that a white Jamaican man
would be ‘different’ and have different attitudes, and so sought out a white Jamaican boyfriend. She was surprised to find that he ‘was no different from the black Jamaicans’ she had dated. A number of women told me how surprised they were about the racism they had suffered from the local black population and wanted to tell me about their experience of racism. This lead them to argue that ‘we are all racist’, and they could not see any distinction between personal prejudice and institutionalised racist patterns of oppression and exclusion.

Patricia Williams (1997) argues that ‘the very notion of blindness about colour constitutes an ideological confusion at best, and denial at its very worst’ (1997: 2). Most WSLs interviewed were very confused, naïve or ignorant about what constitutes racism. Many have no concept of racism (outside of their own experience of racism in Jamaica as white women) or any notion of how racism operates. Carol, an American woman, who claimed to be anti-racist, complained that Jamaica is a racist country because it operated a ‘white tax’, a tax which over charges white people, but then went on to explain how the difference was ‘culture not colour, culture is the important divide’. This belief influenced how she interpreted local poverty. She told me that ‘kids are very well cared for until they are three and then out like animals and have to fend for themselves’. She insisted that education and work was available to all in Jamaica if they wanted it. She had finally ended up moving to Jamaica and enjoyed the life style that she found herself in, ‘all my friends here are expats or foreign women, there’s quite a close expat community here. We have parties with sixty people. All intelligent people you can communicate with. We are the middle class’. Despite struggling to make a living from her aerobic classes, her whiteness in Jamaica had given her access to social status and an illusion of a jet set life style that eluded
her in the United States, while her relationship with a black men had given her that added ‘radical’ and liberal identity.

‘Everyday’ racism of the type that asserts there are natural differences between ‘races’ and ‘cultures’ is widespread and common in the tourist industry, which uses notions of ‘difference’ to market long haul holiday destinations. People who promote tourism and run tourist business in the West use such understandings to construct Others and to interpret their own relation to them. Most of these people would also label themselves anti-racist but they continue to reproduce the ideas about ‘difference’ upon which racism rests. Consuming ‘difference’ is presented as an acceptable, even desirable, aspect of tourism. Thus, Jennifer Cox, a contributor to the Lonely Planet Guidebook series, could appear on a recent radio program to defend the phenomenon of ‘female sex tourism’:

I think that all the social cues are different. For example, a white woman may not get involved with a black guy in this country so it’s a matter of not having an opportunity but it’s also the sense that travel, that anything is possible, and that’s one of the reasons why people travel. You want to go out and feel open to experiences and you want more than life at home and one of those experiences might be to get involved with a sexual partner that is very different from the one that you normally chose at home. It isn’t necessarily racism, it might actually be the opposite to racism, a sense of real openness (Jennifer Cox, Lonely Planet, Woman’s Hour, BBC Radio 4, 1999).

Getting Their Groove Back

As well as white women who travel for inter-racial sex, there are a small number of black American and British WSLs (mainly to Jamaica). They too perceive the
Caribbean as different and exotic. These women are referred to as ‘Stellas’ by local Jamaicans, after the central character in Terry Macmillan's (1996) novel How Stella Got her Groove Back. Like their black American and British male counterparts who practice sex tourism, these women reaffirm their own Westernness and access to economic and social power and control through the sexual relationships they form on holiday. Macmillan's novel has glamourised Jamaica for many African American women, who now arrive alone or in small groups with the dream of finding what Stella did - namely 'love and romance' with a Jamaican boy almost half her age and half her economic means. They also often hold the same kinds of attitudes that Stella does. In the novel, Stella differentiates her own behaviour from that of white male sex tourists by disparaging an older 'vulgar' white male tourist as 'a dirty old man who probably has to pay for all the pussy he gets' (1996: 83). It is also interesting to note the ways in which Macmillan 'Otherises' local men: the Jamaican boy smells 'primitive', he is 'exotic and goes with the Island' (1996: 142), he is 'Mr Expresso in shorts' (1996: 154).

Like white WSLs interviewed in the course of research, Macmillan further explains the young Jamaican man's disinterest in Jamaican women and so his sexual interest in an older American woman by Otherising local women through the use of derogatory stereotypes. Thus, Jamaican women are assumed to be rapacious, materialistic and sexually instrumental as they only want a man who owns a big car and house and money. As American women already have these things it is understandable that Jamaican men prefer them. One interviewee, 'Serena', provides a good example of how ideas about ‘difference’ and gender intersect. She is a middle class, married forty seven year old, who considers herself attractive and runs a successful business. She travelled alone regularly from California to Jamaica to ‘party’. She enjoyed the
company of young Rasta guys, who would fetch what ever she desired and pamper her in public, (i.e. run to the bar across the road for a slice of lemon for her drink or go down on one knee to adjust her shoe for her). She interpreted Jamaica as being a more ‘natural’ place than the US. In Jamaica, ‘you just have to go with the flow’. She also felt like an honorary man, buddying up with male tourists who would openly discuss with her their experiences with Jamaican prostitutes. Although Serena referred to Jamaican men as ‘brothers’, she did not appear to feel that Jamaican women on the beach were her ‘sisters’. She was happy to sit by and watch her male African-American friend, a wealthy attorney, as he attempted to bargain down the price asked by a female Jamaican sex worker from $50 to the paltry sum of $20. Serena did not challenge him but smiled and joked with him about the situation.

Because Jamaica is constructed as a culturally Other space, it also becomes a liminal space for African American women in the sense that they can enact a sexuality that cannot be acknowledged back home. Because of racist discourses in the West, many black women draw away from expressing their sexuality for fear of being perceived as controlled by their sexuality and labelled ‘whores’ (Carby, 1987; Marshall, 1995). Back home, they feel they have to carefully manage themselves as sexual beings, and that they are policed by their own communities and expect to be ‘respectable’. On the whole, however, black tourist women are given the same ‘rights’ and freedoms as white tourist women. They can behave as they wish without being policed and because they are away from home, they can have sexual relations with as many men as they like without their reputation being tarnished. A young black woman from Florida told me she felt free to do ‘things’ in Jamaica she would never do at home, like visit Hedonism and flirt on the beach as well as enter into sexual relationships.
with several different local men. She felt it was acceptable to do this in Negril - 'When you're in Jamaica, you have to experience what is on offer'.

A Contained Bubble

For black and white female tourists alike, the idea that no one back home is likely to find out what they get up to on holiday is often experienced as very liberating. As one Jamaican MST commented about both black and white tourist women:

While they are here they feel free. Free to do what they never do at home. No one looking at them. Get a black guy who are unavailable at home. No one judge them. Get the man to make they feel good then they go home clean and pure.

Tourism allows women, as much as men, to safely transgress the normal codes and conventions that govern their sexual behaviour. For white women, this may mean feeling free to consume the black male. For black and white women, it can mean freedom from the conventions that dictate the number of sexual partners a woman can 'decently' have, or from the codes which govern the age of their partners. Any or all the rules can be broken, but their honour and reputation back home is untouched. Certainly many of the white women who have multiple sexual relationships with black men in Jamaica or the Dominican Republic would also be able to find black sexual partners back in their own country, but there would often be a price to pay for breaking racist taboos against interracial sex. White women who have relationships with black men in the US and Britain are often still stigmatised and made Other by their sexual contact with the Other. Ruth Frankenburg’s (1993) research on how white American women subjectively experience race explains, ‘images of white women in relationships with men of colour frequently reduce them entirely to sexual beings’.
(1993:87). She goes on to say that it is not uncommon in the West for white women who have sexual relationships with black men to be labelled ‘slut’, ‘slag’ or ‘whore’.

Many of my white female tourist interviewees were conscious of such stigma, and did not want to deal with their own community’s response to interracial sexual relationships. However, they did want to experience the novelty of transgressing sexual/racial norms and to experience themselves as a powerful, sexual woman. One woman in the Dominican Republic complained, ‘men come over here and can fuck who they like, when women do it they call them prostitutes’. However, she had found that in Sosua, white men had no control over her sexual behaviour – she did not have to worry whether strangers considered her to be a ‘prostitute’ or ‘slag’, and when she went home, no-one whose opinion she cared about would be any the wiser.

No matter what specific fantasy they pursue, WSLs use their economic power to initiate and terminate sexual relations with local men at whim, and within those relationships, they use their economic power to control these men in ways they could never command a Western man. These are unaccustomed powers, and even the WSLs who live up to Western ideals of beauty and would be easily able to secure sexual access to equally appealing male bodies at home enjoy the sense of power and control over themselves and others as engendered, sexual beings. Travelling to ‘third world’ countries means that not only is their economic power assured so that they are on a par with their male peers, but also their racialised identity (or in the case of black WSLs national identity) offers them additional power and status over local ‘Other’ men and women. One Jamaican MST in his twenties told me about one relationship he had had with an older, attractive white American divorcée in her forties:
Well, she tells me straight up front she starts that she has three kids and she
don’t want to get involved. We could do this, we could do that. She don’t want
no personal relationship. One day you don’t hear from me, things happen, you
must take it just like that because it’s not a long term relationship, ya know.

Such control means these women can limit the risk of being rejected or humiliated.
Women can also control the terms of their sexual encounters with local men and the
terms they choose are dictated by the type of affirmation they seek. However most
women use indirect forms of control over their relationships as they take place within
established heterosexual framework where the men offer to show women around or
ask them for dates. Therefore women can simultaneously exercise control and yet
deny their agency. As one young woman from London stated:

It all happened so quickly, we met and talked and stuff and I liked him, but I
was with my friend and we were hanging out together. But he insisted on
taking me out one night and I went, and he was so nice so I said I’d see him
again. Then my friend found a friend for her so we all went out together. It’s
been fantastic.

This woman left her friend behind alone in order to go with her ‘new friend’ and ‘just
let things happen’. She did not see herself as an agent or acknowledge any asymmetry
of power or control within the relationship. This is another of the illusions created by
the tourist bubble. Here it is possible for a woman to exercise masculine powers
without feeling herself, or being seen as, degraded or ‘unfeminine’. It is the ultimate
heterosexual experience, one within which gender difference is celebrated, erotised,
and emphasized and yet the woman remains subject and agent.
For both MSTs and WSLs, then, the tourist bubble represents a space within which they can momentarily reposition themselves on social hierarchies of race, gender, class and age, and affirm certain aspects of their own social identity. For some commentators, this makes their encounters ‘a fine romance’, within which each party pursues and advances their own interests. But this is to ignore certain key facts. MSTs and WSLs are present in the tourist bubble for very different reasons. Global economic and political inequalities mean that for WSLs, the Caribbean tourist resort can be treated and enjoyed as a fantasy. It is ‘time out’, leisure and a space in which to affirm the self through acts of consumption. MSTs by contrast turn to the tourist bubble to meet material needs that cannot be met elsewhere. This is not a space which offers ‘time out’ from racial and class oppressions, and the opportunities it offers MSTs for personal affirmation actually reify the very ideas which have marginalized them.

Certainly both MSTs and WSLs are agents, actively contributing to the gendered, racialised and sexualized productions in which they participate. But the structural constraints operating on the two parties are not the same. They do not meet as equals, or give sexual consent on the same basis. This is not a fine romance, nor a form of resistance, but a form of sexual practice which rests upon and reproduces racism and economic inequalities. The following and concluding chapter briefly considers its implications for theoretical understandings of gendered power, sexuality and sexual exploitation.
Photograph 9: Holiday Romance?
Chapter 9

A FINE ROMANCE?

This thesis began by noting that the terms ‘prostitution’, ‘sex tourism’ and ‘sexual exploitation’ present definitional problems which have often been ignored or glossed over by feminist as well as by more orthodox sociological theorists. The stereotypical image of the ‘sex tourist’ is that of the Western man who travels to Thailand or the Philippines in order to engage in brief, highly commodified exchanges of sex for cash or kind with prostitute women or children (Enloe 1989, Jeffreys 1998). Because ‘sex tourism’ is taken to imply prostitute-use, and because prostitute-use is assumed to be a male practice, it is difficult to conceive of ‘female sex tourism’. Though researchers often acknowledge that sexual relationships between local men and tourist women are based on an exchange of money or goods and gifts, they are generally unwilling to apply the terms ‘prostitution’ or ‘sex tourism’ to this phenomenon. This is not simply because the actors themselves describe their relationships through reference to the concept of romance rather than prostitution, but also because essentialist models of gender and sexuality, and dominant understandings of the term ‘sexual exploitation’, preclude the possibility that a woman can sexually exploit man. So, for example, in her 1997 book Gender and Nation, Nira Yuval-Davis briefly comments on the globalisation of sexual exploitation. In the paragraph on male sex tourism, she refers to ‘male orientalist dreams of inexhaustible pools of sexual pleasure and ‘exotic’ sexual objects’, and in relation to ‘Mail-order brides’, she speaks of the ‘incredible hardship’ from which women who enter into such marriages seek to escape (1997:...
The next paragraph deals with female tourists’ sexual behaviour and paints a very different picture:

The ‘Shirley Valentine’ phenomenon where women are the tourists is somewhat similar to that of men, although here formal prostitution, in the form of male gigoloism, is less common than just consenting casual or not so casual sex. The exchange here is more on the basis of mutual pleasure than on money for pleasure. The western women tourists are in search of sexual adventures and experimentation while away from home, and the local men get free sex not available to them the local women who are under strict social control (1997: 52).

Here, as in many journalistic accounts, female tourists’ sexual encounters with local men in ‘Third World’ countries appear to involve an unproblematic and mutual exchange. The behaviour of female tourists who enter into sexual-economic relationships with local men in economically underdeveloped countries is therefore interpreted in a very different way from that of male tourists who enter into sexual relationships with local women. One of the main contributions that this thesis makes to the existing literature on sex tourism is to show that the ‘double-standard’ applied to male and female tourists’ sexual behaviour reflects and reproduces weaknesses in existing theoretical and commonsense understandings of gendered power, sexual exploitation, prostitution and sex tourism.

The thesis has shown that WSLs and MSTs are able to interpret their sexual encounters as ‘romances’ rather than as straightforward forms of sexual-economic exchange (and so as a form of sexual exploitation) for two main reasons. First they are able to overlook the economic basis of their relationships because, like many theorists
in the field, they understand their sexual encounters through the lens of gender essentialist models of sexuality that preclude the possibility that a man could be sexually used by a woman. Second they are able to interpret their relationships as ‘romances’ because they draw upon discourses about racial and cultural difference to naturalise the behaviour of MSTs. Local men are not prostituting themselves, they are ‘just doing what comes naturally’ to them. This latter is particularly important, given that many feminist commentators have allowed questions about patriarchal power to take precedence over questions about racialised, economic and social power in analyses of global sexual exploitation. Unpacking the layers of power within sexual-exchanges between MTSs and WSLs helps us to see that gender and economic power are raced, just as racialised power is gendered and economic.

This thesis concludes by spelling out the theoretical and political challenges posed by the phenomenon of WSLs and MSTs sexual economic relationships in the Caribbean and advances recommendations for possible further research in this area.

Sexual Exploitation

Feminist debate on prostitution largely centres on the question of whether the female prostitute is a victim of male sexual violence or whether there can be ‘free choice’ prostitution within which the prostitute woman is an autonomous agent choosing to sell her sexual labour (for example, Jeffreys, 1997; Chapkis, 1997). Radical feminists tend to use the terms ‘prostitution’, ‘sexual victimisation’ and ‘sexual exploitation’ interchangeably, whereas liberal feminists tend to talk about ‘sex work’, emphasise choice and contractual consent, and rarely discuss how such work might be exploitative. The term ‘exploitation’ is not usually clearly defined by the radical feminist writers who use it, but sexual exploitation is presented as synonymous with
sexual victimization. Because victimization is a highly gendered concept (see Chapter 6), it becomes almost impossible to discuss ways in which men might be sexually exploited by women.

The Longman English Dictionary defines ‘exploit’ as ‘to use or develop fully, especially for profit or advantage… to take unfair advantage of for financial or other gain’. Julia O’Connell Davidson (2001: 2) observes that this emphasis on unfair advantage ‘points to the existence of some imbalance of social, political, economic and/or physical, psychological or emotional power between the exploiter and the exploited’. Applied to the concept of sexual exploitation, this would imply that one party to a sexual interaction took advantage of an imbalance of power to obtain a sexual advantage that would otherwise have been denied them. It does not necessarily imply that the exploiter used violence, nor that the exploited would necessarily subjectively feel victimized, violated or exploited.

Using the term ‘exploitation’ in this way, we could argue that WSLs do exploit MSTs in the sense that they wittingly or unwittingly take advantage of unequal global and local power structures in order to pursue their own sexual pleasure. MSTs are also agents, and seek certain forms of affirmation as well as material benefits through their sexual relationships with WSLs. However, they act within a set of constraints that limit their choices and their ability to realise their ambitions, and cannot properly be described as exploiting WSLs, since there is no imbalance of power in the men’s favour for them to take advantage of.

Since existing analyses of sexual exploitation tend to be informed by a radical feminist perspective which conflates the terms sexual exploitation and sexual victimisation, it is hard to speak of any individual as sexually exploited without also
implying that they are downtrodden, pathetic and suffering. The term ‘victim’ not only feminises the person who exchanges sex for some economic benefit, but also implies a total lack of agency on that person’s part, as though she is simply the passive puppet of her circumstances. The language of ‘victims’ and ‘victimisers’ makes it seem that the power relations within sexual economic exchanges are always the same as those which exist in cases of rape or incest (see Barry 1995), and so also constructs the prostitute user as an active abuser and therefore necessarily a man. One of the conclusions to be drawn from the material presented in this thesis is that there is a need for a more complex theoretical model of sexual exploitation, such that it would be possible to speak of MSTs (and others who are involved in the immense range of types of sexual economic exchange in the contemporary world) as sexually exploited without necessarily also having to think in terms of passive and pathetic victims and violent and malicious abusers. This suggests that we also need a more complex model of gender power and sexuality than that offered by radical feminist writers.

Heterosexuality, Gender and Power

Radical feminist theory suggests that sexuality is a key site of male power. In ‘the sex act’, women submit to men, and men affirm their masculinity and patriarchal power by penetrating the female body (Pateman, 1988; Dworkin, 1979). This is a model of gender power as domination which constructs relations between men and women as a master-slave relation, and therefore treats both men and women as undifferentiated groups (see Brace and O’Connell Davidson, 2000). As well as obscuring the significance of class, race, and age for individual’s social power and life chances, this model conceals the fact that women too can feel empowered by certain aspects of heterosexuality.
Sexual mores at the turn of the millennium are, as Sue Scott and Stevi Jackson observe, ‘confused, contradictory and contested’ (2000: 176). Nevertheless, most societies remain deeply committed to the idea of gender difference and idealised forms of femininity and masculinity continue to be promoted and valued. Thus we find that although women’s economic, political and social status underwent many changes in Western countries during the twentieth century, most Western women still wish to be seen as ‘feminine’ and would find it insulting to be described as ‘masculine’. This is partly because gender identity and social honour are powerfully linked. Sandra Lee Bartky (1990) has observed how women collude to maintain femininity because social honour is bound up in accepting the confines of their gender.

Women’s gender identity, and so their gender honour, is also strongly linked to sexuality. Most discussions of women’s gender honour have focused on its traditional links to sexual purity and passivity (a woman has traditionally de-gendered, and so dishonoured, herself by taking a ‘promiscuous’, active or instrumental approach to sexual life). However, women are nonetheless required to have a heterosexual sexual identity in order to attain gender honour, so that investing in social ideals of ‘femininity’ means investing in social ideals of female heterosexuality. Since social honour is awarded to those who uphold the idealised attributes of their perceived gender roles, heterosexual women who are considered undesirable to men, or who are unattached, as well as lesbians, are often at risk of losing honour within their community in just the same way that men who are unable to command access to female bodies of value lose part of their ‘right to pride’ (Pitt-Rivers, 1977).
In contemporary Western societies, social ideals of ‘femininity’ still seem ‘to reside in the female body and the female heterosexual response’ (Sonnet and Whelehan 1995:83). The women who are celebrated in advertisements, magazines, film and fiction are mostly, young, sexy and able to command the gaze of men. In Europe and the United States of America, large numbers of women pay surgeons and cosmetic companies for treatments and products that will give them a more youthful and feminine look. It seems that the more women achieve a measure of economic, social and political independence from men, the greater the pressure upon them to prove that they are still ‘real’ women and to view femininity as a source of power. Heterosexual sexual imagery is also everywhere in popular culture and used both to sell and to entertain. Although story lines of television shows like ‘Ally McBeal’, ‘Sex in the City’ and novels like Bridget Jones's Diary (Helen Fielding, 1999) seem to reflect a concern with changing gender roles, they are also entirely preoccupied by the neurotic search for heterosexual love and relationships. Meanwhile, gossip magazines continue to provide a constant parade of stories about the marriages and real life romantic relationships of the stars, and their experiences of childbirth and motherhood, so that all can collude and celebrate in their heterosexuality.

Woman are simultaneously encouraged to be economically independent (a number of recent hit songs explicitly call on women to take pride in making their own money, paying their own bills, etc.), and yet to continue to value traditional ideals of gender difference. In other words, they are encouraged to buy into a contradiction. There is little concern to challenge the patriarchal power structures and the traditional emphasis on gender difference is re-worked and reinscribed in contemporary Western popular culture (for example, in best selling books like Women are from Venus, Men are from Mars, and films like What Women Want).
Against this backdrop, heterosexual sex remains a medium for social affirmation for women as well as men. Unless a woman is publicly known to be being 'sexed' by a man or men, there is a question mark over her 'femininity'. Because ideals of heterosexual sex are still powerfully linked to the social taboo against the sameness of men and women, 'real' sex is still taken to imply penetrative sex involving male ‘activity’ and female ‘receptivity’ and the act of penetration is still taken to simultaneously engender both parties (Jackson, 1999; Kitzinger and Wilson, 1993).

At the same time, however, discourses about gender difference turn sexual relationships between the supposedly ‘opposite’ sexes into difficult and painful emotional terrain. Because individuals are expected to become ‘men’ and ‘women’ through sexual intimacy with someone who is imagined as their opposite, someone different, an alien from another planet, heterosexual relationships are often constructed as inherently conflictual, an arena within which ‘the battle of the sexes’ is fought out. And yet ‘sex difference’, and the tensions it creates, is eroticised and romanticised.

Janice Radway’s (1985) deconstruction of the romantic novel notes that ‘each romance is, in fact a mythic account of how women must achieve fulfillment in a patriarchal society’ (1985: 17, italics in original). Conventional gender roles may be contested but they nonetheless still fuel sexual desire and romantic longing. A classic example of this is provided by Margaret Michells’s (1972) 1936 Gone with the Wind, where the main characters, Rhett Butler and Scarlett O’Hara, are at ‘war’ yet in love. Helen Taylor (1989) explains that the continued appeal of the story lies in the fact that whilst it is set in the Old South, it is driven by tensions surrounding gender and race that continue to resonate with many white US and British women’s lives. Rhett Butler is attractive because he is associated with ‘the forces of evil, mystery and male
sexuality, with his black eyes, hair, face and clothes, and his wild stallion... attractive but sinister, sexually irresistible but possibly morally repulsive’ (Taylor 1989: 115).

Rhett is desirable but difficult to control, two elements which epitomise the ideal romantic male. Furthermore, as Taylor points out, Rhett draws our attention to an ambiguity in the ideal ‘real man’ that women long for. Though he is quintessentially male (powerful, strong, hard-drinking and skilled in all masculine pursuits), there are other senses in which Rhett is like a woman. He is intuitive, he knows about women’s fashion, he knows what women enjoy sexually, he understands and knows Scarlett better than she knows herself.

In romantic novels, the ideal lover is a man who is simultaneously different and the same, tough but gentle, violent but tender, independent but devoted, uncontrollable but trustworthy. The ideal man prizes and embodies a masculine identity that is constructed as above all not-womanly, and yet somehow also manages to value woman above all else. He is, in other words, a contradiction, and it is not surprising that in real life, few women manage to find him.

These contradictory discourses about gender, sexuality, romance, love and heterosexuality interlock with ideas about racial difference, and are of great significance for the tourist women who enter into sexual-economic relationships with local men in the Caribbean. WSLs are looking for ‘real men’, rather than a ‘New Man’, and black men are perceived as being hypermasculine. Homophobic sex laws and attitudes in Jamaica and homophobia in the Dominican Republic bolster this fantasy of black men as ‘real’ men, while at the same time, racism also constructs Caribbean men as being closer to women, in the sense of being supposedly closer to
nature, more intuitive, irrational and emotional than white men. Through the lens of
racism, then, Caribbean men take on a Rhett Butler-type quality – they are more like
women, even as their ‘animalistic’ attributes make them more like men than white
men.

Upon entering the tourist bubble, WSLs find themselves presented with opportunities
to ‘attract’ these ‘real men’, and so to personify the ideals of femininity and
heterosexuality that they are taught to aspire to. Equally, if not more importantly, they
can find a ‘real man’ to sex them (thereby publicly affirming their ‘femininity’)
without losing control and becoming a real woman in the sense of being a social and
political subordinate. One US interviewee was explicit about this:

   Women who come [to Jamaica] like control. They don’t need a man in their
   lives except for sex, don’t need them for money - just sex – because they can’t
   do that for themselves. Better to have someone uneducated that acts like a
   lackey and in your control, so you can say when it starts and when it stops.

Though few WSLs would be so direct about it, they nonetheless all do exercise
greater control over ‘when it starts and when it stops’ than do their local sexual
partners. This is the case even with women who return regularly to visit the same
MST, for it is they who book the flights and determine the length of time they will
spend with their boyfriend, while their boyfriend is unable to pay for flights to visit
them in Europe or North America and cannot get a visa to enter their country unless
they vouch for him.

Exploring the motivations and attitudes of WSLs in Jamaica and the Dominican
Republic suggests that gender power within heterosexual unions is more complicated
and variable than radical feminist theorists suggest. It is important to recognise that
gender power is cut across by class, race and age, such that in some circumstances, women can pursue a social ideal of heterosexuality without automatically placing themselves in a subordinate position. This also has implications for theoretical models of sexual exploitation. If women are not necessarily subordinated by the heterosexual sex act, then it becomes possible to recognise that they too can, in certain circumstances, sexually exploit men.

**Race and Sexual Exploitation**

In Chapter 1, it was noted that Western feminists' analyses of sex tourism generally start from the assumption that sex tourism represents a form of prostitute use, and can therefore be primarily explained in terms of patriarchal power relations. Then, because sex tourism normally takes place in poor and developing countries, these analysts tag notions of racial or North-South inequality on to their explanatory framework. The fact that women tourists also engage in sexual relationships with local men in sites of sex tourism poses immediate problems for any theoretical model which gives primacy to patriarchal power, hence female sex tourism is generally dismissed as being qualitatively different from male sex tourism. If it is seen as involving exploitation, then the tourist women and local men are deemed to be mutually exploitative.

Western commentaries on female sex tourism have thus tended to overlook questions about racism and neo-colonial relations of power. Some Caribbean theorists, by contrast, have attempted to address notions of cultural difference in explaining sexual economic exchanges in the Caribbean. They criticise Western radical feminists for essentialising gender, constructing women as natural victims and producing a patronising and Eurocentric vision of 'Third World' prostitutes as victims to be
‘saved’ by white feminists. They reject feminist theories which universalise women’s experience, and instead present sex work in the Caribbean as a form of resistance against poverty and lack of economic opportunities.

Kamala Kempadoo (1998), for instance, argues that very often in Western feminist theories of prostitution are too Eurocentric and narrow and cannot account for the wide range of sexual economic exchanges that take place in Caribbean societies. Other Caribbean scholars agree that sexual economic exchanges in the Caribbean are varied and include a range of different types of conjugal and extra-marital sexual relationships (de Zaldvondo and Maxius Bernard, 1995) as well as straightforward prostitution. The same researchers have further pointed out that some Caribbean men also use sex to obtain economic benefits in various ways from women, and their analyses might therefore support a view of MSTs as engaging in a fairly unproblematic form of entrepreneurship (see, for example, Phillips, 1999). However, if questions about tourist women’s motives for entering into sexual relationships with local men, and questions about what is ‘sold’ by the local man, are examined in more detail, then sexual economic exchanges between WSLs and MSTs look much more problematic than either Western or Caribbean feminists’ accounts suggest.

Petrine Archer-Straw’s (2000) analysis of the exoticism and racism inherent in the avant-garde’s ‘negrophile’ fantasies of the 1920s in Paris is relevant here. Archer-Straw describes how black culture was stereotyped and exploited by white people to transform and radicalise their own identities. She notes that through white eyes, blackness was conflated with Africanness, such that all black people (whether American or British or African) were viewed as exotic bearers of African culture. She argues that although black people may have believed that they entered into sexual and
intellectual relationships with Europeans as equals, the relationships they formed were superficial and firmly grounded in existing economic and racialised inequalities. Then, as today in the Caribbean, ‘blacks and whites shared the same dance floor, but little else’ (Archer-Straw 2000: 179). Though commentators like Jennifer Cox of the Lonely Planet Guides imagines that black and white coming together in tourist settings in the Caribbean is ‘the opposite of racism’ (see Chapter 8), it could also be argued to be nothing more than a modern expression of ‘negrophilia’. Here, as in Paris in the 1920s, the bodies of black people are erotically valued for their blackness/Otherness, while the structures and ideas which lead to black people’s social, economic and political marginalisation are left unchallenged.

A third conclusion to be drawn from the material presented in this thesis is that analyses of sexual exploitation and sex tourism need to pay far greater attention to the links between sexuality and racism. Frantz Fanon’s (1952) important discussion of ‘negrophobia’ drew attention to this link, and as Jonathan Dollimore (1991: 345) observes, Fanon ‘is surely right to stress the sexual component of racism, especially its destructive effects on (hetero)sexual relations across race’. He was also correct to stress ‘the white person’s fear of and fascination with the imagined sexual potency of the Negro’ (Dollimore, 1991: 345). And yet because Fanon was so heavily invested in the idea of gender difference, and failed to critique gender hierarchies in the same way he critiqued hierarchies of race, he identified masculinity as a source of resistance, and thereby perpetuated ‘in terms of sexual and gender relations, the very oppression being resisted at other levels’ (Dollimore, 1991: 347).

The contradiction in Fanon’s work is also found in much contemporary black nationalist discourse about race and masculinity in the US and Europe, as well as in
the Caribbean. Rather than questioning the way in which beliefs about gender, sexual and racial difference intersect to produce the myth of the powerful black phallus, the focus is on being a ‘real’ black man, i.e., being a patriarchal, heterosexual male.

Malcolm X wrote that:

the true nature of a man is to be strong, and a woman’s true nature is to be weak, and while a man must at all times respect his woman, at the same time he needs to understand that he must control her if he expects to get her respect (cited in hooks, 1994: 187).

As Stuart Hall notes ‘black radical politics has frequently been stabilized around particular conceptions of black masculinity’ (1996:445-6). These discourses very easily translate into a celebration of the black phallus, because the penis is the essence of masculinity and sex difference. This is particularly so for black men, who because of race and class oppression have little opportunity to economically support a ‘weak’ and dependent woman. The paradox is that in celebrating the power and strength of the black phallus, black men play into rather than resist white racist stereotypes about the black male as hyper-sexual. Thus, the MST who acts up to the stereotype of the ‘black stud’ may find he is rewarded with kudos amongst his peers as well as material benefits, but he also reinforces and perpetuates the racist stereotype. Since his economic and social marginalisation is inextricably linked to racism (both contemporary and historical), there is a sense in which, in order to survive economically, the MST has to contribute to his own continued oppression.

Yuval Davis is right to insist that we link the phenomenon of male sex tourism to ‘male orientalist dreams of inexhaustible pools of sexual pleasure and ‘exotic’ sexual objects’ (1997: 52), but it is equally important to trace connections between colonial
racist constructions of black/Other male sexuality and the sexual practices of female tourists in poor and developing countries.

**Inequality, Tourism and Sex Tourism**

Armin Gunther (1998) argues that researchers should look carefully at the fuzzy line between commercial and non-commercial sex that is continually drawn and redrawn by tourist and local people who enter into sexual relationships. He warns us that ‘by idealizing sex tourists as romanticists who travel in pursuit of emotional relationships, one may easily overlook the fact that these romanticists use and reproduce sex tourism as a social institution’ (1998: 80). Thinking about the relationship between sex tourism, tourism and inequality may also help theorists to better understand questions about sexual exploitation.

When North Americans and Europeans take holidays in poor and developing countries, they benefit from a particular and highly unequal world political and economic order which shapes their relationships with local people. Because so many poor and uneducated local people are denied the privilege of entering into the formal tourist economy, they are forced to survive on the margins of the informal sector. The tourist industry sells long haul holidays as ‘an experience’, and as such, it relies on local people to provide a face and character to what would otherwise be a standardized hotel, beach and holiday for Western tourists. It therefore depends on the informal tourist sector, which operates along side the formal industry, to provide the ‘local colour’ that cannot be supplied by hotel employees and tour representatives.

Local people’s informal economic activity is therefore very important to the tourism economy, for though not all tourists want to step outside of the staged tourist experience provided by large hotels and all-inclusive resorts, those who do rely on
informal sector workers to supply them with a taste of the 'authentic' Caribbean. Dean MacCannell (1976) notes that in tourism, there is a continuum from front stage to back stage reality, rather than a clear and sharp divide. Often, the back regions that tourists are allowed to enter into are fake, a stage behind the stage, one step along the continuum. This fake back region of tourism in the Caribbean is where much informal economic activity takes place. It provides earning opportunities to those who are excluded from the formal sector by lack of connections, education, or gender or race discriminatory policies. The back stage (which tourists believe holds the secrets and truth of real, authentic Caribbean life) is largely controlled by local people who are excluded from the formal tourism economy.

The hustler's role in particular is to provide access to this region, and tourists generally believe that that they enter into more 'genuine' relationships with hustlers, who are assumed to be off stage, than with hotel employees who are assumed to be on a public stage. In reality, however, hustlers as much as workers in the formal tourism economy are engaged in an economic (and so an instrumental) relationship with the tourists they befriend, and not pursuing intimacy for personal reasons. Tourists may want to believe that their relations with workers in the formal and informal tourism economy are different, but in reality, the relations of power that exist on the front stage are also 'woven into the fabric' of the in the back regions (MacCannell, 1976: 91).

In the Caribbean, these relations of power are both economic and racialised. The WSL enters the back region from a position of privilege, and to satisfy personal desires rather than to meet economic needs. She is free to exit that region at any point. For the MST, the back region is part of the economy of makeshifts which he relies upon for
economic survival, and he cannot freely move out of it. Furthermore, because tourists
turn to the back region in pursuit of some ‘authentic’ and ‘genuine’ experience, those
who work in the informal sector often have to trade in things that are not usually
considered saleable, namely friendship, intimacy, and/or sex. Although MSTs and
WSLs are often equally concerned to ignore or downplay the material inequalities that
divide them, and to construct their relationships as if they were based simply and
solely on mutual desire and/or romance and/or friendship, their motives for
constructing a fiction are different, and have different consequences. Like minstrels,
MSTs’ economic activity involves performing their ‘Otherness’ in ways which are
desired by tourists. As noted above, this means reproducing and perpetuating racist
stereotypes about the Other. The WSLs’ economic survival does not depend on them
performing any particular version of ‘femininity’, and tourist resorts in the Caribbean
actually provide them with a stage on which to perform their femininity in any way
they choose.

Nor should it be assumed that MSTs always subjectively experience their
participation in the back region as affirming their own vision of masculinity. Because
the back region rests on the creation of a range of fictions, fantasies and illusions, it
can be an emotionally dangerous place for MSTs. There is a tension between
providing a convincing performance, and coming to believe that the performance is
real, and the case of James in Chapter 5 shows how MSTs can experience a sense of
personal rejection when the fact that WSLs are merely using them as objects is made
explicit.

All of this suggests that to understand sexual economic exchanges between tourists
and locals in tourist areas in the poor and developing world, we must move away from
gender essentialist understandings of sexuality and exploitation and focus instead on power in its multiple configurations.

**Future Directions**

Those feminists who are unwilling to engage with debates about the intersection of race and gender inequalities might assume that in calling for a move away from gender essentialist understandings of sexuality and exploitation, I am arguing that we should no longer concern ourselves with gender. I am not. Indeed, although this thesis is keen to emphasise the role of race and economic inequalities in shaping relationships between WSLs and MSTs, it also remains very much concerned with gender. In particular, it has paid attention to the significance of ideas about masculinity, and the ways in which these ideas are raced, for both MSTs and WSLs. It has also explored the meanings that WSLs attach to their own gender identity, and how their subjective understandings of femininity are mediated by ideas about race, class, nationality, age and heterosexuality. Because this thesis was primarily concerned to explore the power relations involved in sexual economic exchanges between tourist women and local men in the Caribbean, and to consider them in relation to existing theoretical and empirical accounts of prostitution and sex tourism, these were the questions about gender that were important for me to address.

However, the research for this thesis raised many other interesting questions about the intersection of gender, race and class that researchers may wish to explore in future. In particular, we should note that just as it would be wrong to treat gender as a unitary category undifferentiated by class or race, so it would be mistaken to claim that whiteness is undifferentiated by gender and class. Some WSLs chose to migrate to Jamaica or the Dominican Republic on a permanent basis in order to live with or marry their local boyfriends, and it is important to recognise that expatriate white
women's experience in the Caribbean is often very different from expatriate white men's experience. I spent International Day Against Violence Against Women in November 1999 in a bar in a tourist resort in Jamaica with a group of six or seven expatriate women all of whom had migrated from some of the world's richest countries to a poor country in order not simply to experience extreme forms of domestic violence from their local sexual partners, but also to live in a country where the state and police provide women with absolutely minimal protection from abusive partners. Equally, in the Dominican Republic, I found many cases of American European women in abusive relationships who said that when they reported being raped, beaten or robbed by boyfriends or husbands, the police simply laughed in their faces. For a woman, white privilege can be jeopardised by entry into permanent or semi-permanent sexual relationships with black men, whereas white men's whiteness is never called into question by their sexual contact with black women.

The precariousness of the white expatriate woman's white privilege is also linked to class. Those (few) women who occupy senior managerial positions in the tourism industry or who run successful businesses enjoy greater civil freedoms than those who migrate to enter into relationships with poor and working class local men, and 'get by' by working in the informal economy or undertaking relatively low-paid, low-status work.

The data gathered during the course of the research has implications for questions about sexual health issues. In the literature on safer sex practices, it is widely recognized that women who feel they hold some control within their heterosexual relationships are more likely to use condoms, but very little attention has been paid to questions about race in this literature. My survey data is interesting in this regard, in that it suggests that tourist women on the whole did feel more able to insist on condom use with MSTs than do tourist women who have sex with tourist men who
are their economic and race equals. How perceptions of racialised, economic and social power influence decisions about condom use is an area that could be usefully investigated. Equally, is the case that a large number of women travelling to the Caribbean in search of sex are over forty, and as such represent a group of women who have not traditionally been targeted by information campaigns on safer sex, since the fact that older women are also sexually active is often ignored. Addressing this gap in the agendas of policy makers and researchers would raise awareness and help develop prevention strategies aimed at older women.

A number of feminist theorists have begun to formulate various ways to address the multiplicity of subject positions that women, as bearers of classed, 'racialized', national, ethnic, sexual and aged as well as gendered identities, occupy in relation both to men and to each other. They may disagree as to how, precisely, the articulation of these multiple subject positions should be addressed, but at the level of general theory a consensus is emerging around the need for a more complex, nuanced and relational vision of gendered power. Such attention to complexity is almost entirely missing from contemporary feminist analyses of substantive issues such as prostitution and sex tourism, however, which have tended to start from a concern with women as a homogeneous group defined in relation to patriarchal power that is assumed to be universally exercised by men. My research on tourist-local sexual-economic exchanges in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic highlights the indivisibility of gender, race and class as factors shaping experience, and also draws attention to the significance of age, immigration status and nationality. The challenge is to develop an analysis which recognises the multiplicity of subject positions and the variability it implies for local, expatriate and migrant people's experience, and yet still
relate that experience to broader structural factors, including patriarchal political and social structures.
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APPENDIX

A copy of the questionnaire given to women in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic
Please tick or circle the appropriate responses.

**About you...**

1. Your age: 
   - 15 - 20
   - 21 - 30
   - 31 - 40
   - 41 - 50
   - 51 - 60
   - 61 - 70
   - 71 +

2. Are you: 
   - Male
   - Female

3. Would you describe yourself as: 
   - White
   - Black
   - Asian
   - Other (please specify) ________

4. Are you: 
   - single
   - married/co-habiting
   - divorced/separated
   - widowed

5. Your occupation: ____________________________

6. Your nationality: ___________________________

**About your holiday/Stay in Jamaica**

7. How long are you staying in Jamaica? ______

If you are an expatriate working in Jamaica, please go to question 15.

8. Who, if anyone, are you travelling with?
   - Alone
   - Partner/spouse
   - Male friend/s
   - Female friend/s
   - Other (please specify) ____________________

9. Are you taking a package holiday, or did you arrange your travel independently?
   - Package holiday
   - Independent traveller
   - Other (please specify) ____________________

10. What type of accommodation are you staying in?
    - Hotel
    - Apartment/condominium
    - Private rooms
    - Other (please specify) ____________________

11. Is this your first trip to Jamaica? 
    - Yes
    - No

12. If no, how many times have you visited Jamaica before? _____
13. Which, if any, of the following factors affected your decision to take a holiday in Jamaica?

Low cost of flights
Cheap Package deal
Friend's recommendation
Travel agents' advertising
Other (Please specify)_____________________

14. Did any other factors affect your decision to take a holiday in Jamaica?

15. Have you ever visited any of the following holiday destinations?

Cuba       Philippines
Venezuela   Indonesia
Mexico      Sri Lanka
Brazil      India
Dominican Republic   Gambia
Thailand     Kenya

16. Have you visited any of these destinations more than once, if so, which ones?

17. Do you have friends or family of Jamaican heritage back home? Yes No

About Romance & Sexual Encounters in Jamaica

18. In general, do you think that Jamaican people's attitudes towards sex are different from British / European/ North American people's?

Yes
No
Don't know

If yes, can you say what kind of differences you noticed? __________________________

19. Based on your own observations, at what age would you say it is normal/acceptable for Jamaican girls and boys to enter into sexual relationships?

12 or under Girls Boys
13-15       ____    ____
16-18       ____    ____
18+         ____    ____
Don’t know ___    ___
20. In general, would you say that Jamaica people’s attitudes towards teenage sexuality, casual sex, prostitution, mixed Black/white relationships and homosexuality are stricter, more relaxed, or the same as British/European/North American people’s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jamaican people’s attitudes are stricter</th>
<th>Jamaican people’s attitudes are same</th>
<th>Jamaican people’s attitudes are more relaxed</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teenage Sexuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casual Sex</td>
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<td>Prostitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Black/white relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Have you been romantically and/or sexually involved with Jamaican women/men during your holiday?

Yes
No

If no, please go straight to question 28.

If yes, please specify how many such relationships you have formed with Jamaican women/men during your holiday ____________

22. Would you describe this/these relationship/s as:

purely physical
holiday romance
real love
other (please specify) ______________

23. In your own words, how would you describe your girlfriend(s)/boyfriend(s)? (e.g. age, looks, personality)

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

24. Would you say that the women/men you have dated on your holiday are different from the kind of women/men you normally date at home, and if so, in what ways are they different?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
25. Have you helped your Jamaican girlfriends/boyfriends out financially?

Yes, by buying meals, drinks etc.
Yes, by buying gifts
Yes, by giving cash
No, never at all

26. Do you take any precautions to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases?

Yes
No
If yes, what precautions do you take? _______________________________________

27. If you use condoms, who is it that supplied them?

You
Your partner
Sometimes you, sometimes your partner

28. Have you ever been approached by a prostitute/gigolo during your stay in Jamaica?

Yes
No

29. If you have been approached by a prostitute/gigolo, did you take up the offer?

Yes
No

30. In the past, have you ever used a prostitute?

Yes, at home
Yes, while on holiday
Yes, while stationed/working abroad
No, never

31. If you are a regular prostitute user, how, if at all, would you say that prostitutes in the Jamaica differ from those in Europe/ North America?


Thank you very much for your help with this survey. If you have any further comments about your holiday or about Jamaica or about any of the other issues covered by this questionnaire, please write them below or overleaf.