

Sex and the sexual have for far too long been consigned to the dark corners by social scientists in general and tourism and leisure scholars in particular. *Sex and the Sexual During People's Leisure and Tourism Experiences* seeks to begin to rectify this situation by bringing the position and nature of sex and the sexual into the light of academic debate. As such, this book is designed to highlight cross-disciplinary emerging work on sex and the sexual in leisure and tourism and provide the readers with insights into this social realm. It encompasses a broad array of sex-related issues and tourism and leisure environments from across a variety of countries. The book should appeal to researchers and students across the humanities and social sciences both for the value of the research in its own right and the ability of it to be used as a lens through which to view the position of sex and the sexual as well as tourism and leisure in today's world. Overall, it is argued that sex and the sexual should play a part in the academic discourse, especially if we wish to describe what is actually happening out there as far as tourism and leisure are concerned.

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Neil Carr and Yaniv Poria

SEX AND THE SEXUAL DURING PEOPLE'S LEISURE  
AND TOURISM EXPERIENCES

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Edited by

**Neil Carr and Yaniv Poria**

CSP

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Leisure and Tourism Experiences

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**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**  

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Edited by Neil Carr and Yaniv Poria

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CHAPTER FOUR

FLYING TIGERS IN A DOMINICAN  
TOURIST TOWN

DEIRDRE GUTHRIE

Derrida (2000) has observed that receiving someone in your home always rests awkwardly on the border between hospitality and hostility and thus is a fraught situation in which a hostage crisis is always imminent and mitigated by constant negotiation. The (post)colonial encounter is one in which the guest takes the host hostage and tourism is born of such an encounter in which hosts often act as servants in their own homeland, speaking the language of guests, performing various roles that meet guest expectations, but also creating “backstages” of resistance and counter-narratives to challenge guest representations.

This chapter focuses on Euro-American men (French, German, Italian and more recently, North American and Eastern European) and Dominican women engaged in a range of intimate relations in *Las Ballenas* (a pseudonym), a pueblo on the north-eastern coast of the Dominican Republic. “(Re)discovered” by bohemian Europeans in the 1970’s, the (formerly) pristine area has recently undergone tremendous development at a furious pace, and Dominican elites, in partnership with foreigners, are now seeking to capitalize on its increased real estate value. For the rest of this chapter I will refer to non-Dominican (or non Dominican-Haitian or non-Haitian) foreigners as “guests” and to Dominican and Dominican-Haitian migrants as “hosts.” Both hosts and guests form commodified, symbiotic, contingent relationships in tourist space, in which coercive practices are often disguised through performances and practices based on fantasy and desire. I will highlight the class anxiety that undergirds this emerging dialectic of coercion and desire, and describe its clashing narratives and contentious views, such as those that surround host/guest price negotiations and the use of concubine law.

My findings are based on 24 months of anthropological fieldwork and research conducted between 2005-2009 using the ethnographic methods of

participant observation, extended, open-ended interviews, and discourse/content analysis. In theorizing intersecting identities, I build on post-structural feminist theories that acknowledge difference and have revealed how subjects negotiate multiple roles and positions, though not all carry the same privileges and risks (Butler, 1990; hooks, 1981; Rich, 1986). My analysis also builds on the broader tenets of symbolic interactionism in which the self is reproduced through interactions with others and through staged practices (Bourdieu, 1990; Goffman, 1959). My focus on identity construction in tourist markets through what is termed “sex work” in academia, that is, the engagement of sexual acts for money, also builds on similar work conducted in the Caribbean (Brennan 2004, Kempadoo 2004, Ryan & Hall 2001, Sheller 2003).

Young, resource-poor, uneducated Dominican, Haitian, and Dominican-Haitian men and women who migrate to Las Ballenas and engage in a full spectrum of labour offered within the informal economy (not just sex work) occupy unique social roles in tourist space, challenging middle class values of “respectability” while simultaneously, for those who succeed in social advancement, arousing envy among other hosts for their modern, mobile lifestyles. Hardly passive, they are strategically positioned as cultural brokers to translate and distort local mundane reality into the stuff that gringo’s desire. *Buscones* (*buscar* means literally to “look for”), for example, often seamlessly combine positions such as sex worker, motorcycle taxi driver, handyman, etc., and connect foreigners to their subjects/objects of fantasy, whatever their incarnation (drug, child, male, female, beachfront property with a view of Jurassic park). These individuals also prove adept at absorbing and indigenizing a deluge of foreign images, ideas, and consumer items and, as consumers, refashion themselves as part of a dynamic process of becoming that is continually being rediscovered and defined relationally. However, for the majority of youth who have lost access to land and its provisions of subsistence agriculture, and find themselves trapped in insecure cycles of debt and dependency on foreign capital and remittances, informal labour operates on the level of survival strategy rather than as a viable means of securing socio-economic advancement.

Because of this context, a useful method to confront Dominican subjectivity in tourist space is to locate the strategies people use to create continuity in the face of disruption, such as “*tigueraje*” (tiger) tactics which often involve cultivating strategic, sexual relationships with gringos as a vehicle towards attaining power. The term *tiguere* has been historically used in the DR with admiration when associated with men who, using their bodily assets, virility and charm, excel in their role as

trickster or con-man. The Dictator Trujillo was described as the consummate *tiguere*, infamous for his seductions and violence (though he powdered his face to lighten his skin and allegedly had a squeaky voice (Derby, 2000). But the more recent usage, in reference to mobile, moneyed women in an increasingly competitive environment dependent on foreign currency, is more ambivalent. Dominican men now complain that women are more *tiguere* than they are; that is, empowered by their cleverness.

Because of its flexible nature, sex work can evolve into domains that defy clear categorization such as long-term relationships in which one party provides domestic labour and/or companionship as well as sexual services in exchange for a range of benefits that can be hard to distinguish from conventional legal marriage contracts. In the DR, red light districts, pimps, and cash payment upfront for sex work is rare. Host women may be “pimped” by their boyfriends or even family members who receive some kind of “finder’s fee” but they are not pimps in the sense of offering protection in exchange for brokering sexual transactions for profit. In the DR, delayed payment is the norm in all commodified transactions and sexual relations are not stigmatized, but rather, when initiated by men, sexual overtures signify robust health. So sometimes it is hard to isolate an act as prostitution, per se. Daniella, 17, who found that she could not work formally in Las Ballenas, being underage and without a *cedula* (ID card), described sexual relationships with senior, foreign “friends” who ranged from those who never asked her name to those who became like surrogate fathers. Women do not identify as prostitutes even as they readily admit accepting monetary gifts for sex, for they may fluctuate in and out of a variety of service sector jobs, and may only occasionally have to go “to the street,” or hold a variety of positions simultaneously: hostess, animation director, dancer, waitress, maid, cook, nanny, secretary. In any case there is no social shame attached to sex work practices among a rural-based society which has for centuries been functioning under polygamous social contracts and concubinage designed to reap benefits in terms of material gain and survival.

Instead moral judgment and condemnation comes from members of host and guest middle and upper class society seeking to reify their class position, particularly women (and not men, given the widespread custom among Dominican men to maintain mistresses or *queridas*) and, at least rhetorically, from Evangelicals. In Las Ballenas the protest against prostitution, discussed among the upper classes and in newspaper columns or on local radio, is ideologically defined and discussed in terms of protecting public health and morality. Foreigners or Haitian rather than

Dominican sex workers, who occupy the most marginal position within the social hierarchy, are accused of spreading AIDS in the pueblo. Academic writing (e.g., Brennan, 2004) as well as local newspaper editorials ("La Columna de Raquel" LT-7.com) representing the upper, educated classes in the DR, tend to frame the prostitution debate within the subjective experience of the social actors involved and the bureaucratic need for law and reform; a shift that reflects the broader move from industrial society to the world information economy that values individualization. Yet both lenses (the more conventionally ideological and the apparently more sympathetic subjective critique) can distort our understanding of social practices based on communal networks and structures. Long before postmodernism, working class Caribbean creole society maintained a fluid relationship to sexuality, personhood (the "I" is not autonomous but collective), and spirit (during possession the line blurs between life and death when subjects are mounted by the *lwa* spirits.)

However, while guests tend to project their repressed desire upon host sexuality and read it as emancipatory, hosts recognize how sexual desire can flare into greed and guests can "*come demasiado*" (eat too much). The concept *comer* (to eat) is regarded by Dominicans as a positive, masculine attribute of satisfying one's lustful appetites. Seafood, tonics, and powders are sold locally to ensure the maintenance of this vital function of stoking the male fire. But they also ensure its incessant anxiety in needing to be proven or displayed. Gringos have their own potions, readily sold at the pharmacy in bulk: Viagra and Cialis, known locally as *La Pela*. The translation of "*dar una pela*" (to give a beating) reveals the link between guest masculinity and violence. (NGOS estimate rates of domestic violence are as high as 40% in the DR). One sign along the dusty road to the pueblo reads: *Viagra con pollo* (Viagra with chicken) as if one might sprinkle such potency over ones' lunch. But eating can go awry. A fishermen vendor describes one of his gringo clients (a sex tourist) as sometimes "eating" two or three women in one day. "It is good to eat," he says, "but this is too much." When I ask a New York expat what circumstances keep him in the pueblo he rolls up his sleeve and shows me his tattoo of the Hungry Ghost with its swollen belly and tiny mouth, a Buddhist metaphor for those addicted to satiating their bottomless physical desires. Peddling fantasy and managing desire is a risky business, because of the combustibility of lust, and the ever-present threat of violence which undergirds the post-colonial encounter.

### Guests desire "heat" and hosts desire the "freedom to choose"

At 3pm, Peter, my neighbour, a retired 65 year old German architect, pulls Nanci, his 37 year old live-in Dominican girlfriend, into the hammock. You could set a clock to his daily rituals. Espresso at 7:30am, breakfast at eight, Lia, Nanci's granddaughter, is taken to school by 9am, then Nanci tends to household chores; pruning the palms and cutting fresh orchids from the sculpted, tropical garden, amidst aggressive, honking geese and screeching peacocks, followed by lunch at noon, a steaming *sancocho* or *habichuela con pollo*, with Mozart or Wagner playing in the background. *Comida* (lunch) is the most significant meal of the day, digested slowly as the day's heat thickens. And inevitably, after the coffee and dessert, around 3pm, the pair retire to the large hammock. Their bodies entwine, two pairs of light and dark bare feet lolling playfully over the edge, and voices soften into murmurs, babbles of laughter, and Nanci's sweet, tone-deaf lullaby, then eventually Peter's rolling snore.

Nanci and Peter are a remarkable couple in Las Ballenas in that they recognized and respected their vast differences and corresponding needs and yet still found a way to establish intimate connection in a hostile environment teeming with fantasy. "Yes, for this place, we are fortunate to have found something that works," says Peter, who originally came to Las Ballenas with a German companion who decided to return to Europe alone. "She missed the museums, the libraries," he shrugs. "So I found myself, alone in paradise." And he had his share of (mis)adventures before he met Nanci.

When Peter leaves on errands, Nanci puts away Peter's gifts for Lia, the motorized pink car and white dolls with long-lashed blue eyes. She then begins to transition into her own world, playing *reggaeton*, *bachata*, and *merengue*. She wraps her head in a white scarf, spreads cornmeal on the floor under the sink, where it won't offend Peter's atheism, sprinkles it with rum, and lights the candles to call in the voodoo spirits or *lwa* (loa). Nanci is from *San Francisco de Macoris*, a town flourishing from drug money known as the Dominican Republic's "Little Sicily." She acknowledges plainly that she came to this town full of aging European foreigners to look for a gringo to secure her future. Like many women from outside pueblos who live with gringos, Nanci says she has no friends here. The women are envious, and the men who now complement her on her new weave and boutique clothes "just smell money." One day I see her scolding a group of Dominican men, who are laughing nervously as she revs her Quad closer to them, pulling a wide-eyed Lia in behind her. She is

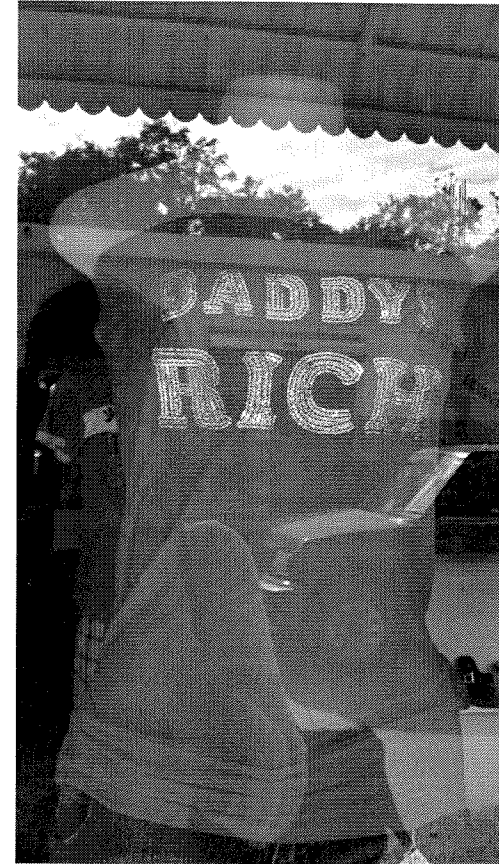
a force to behold, her braids dancing around her ears, as she flings curses at them. “*Cabrone*, don’t speak to me of my daughter!”

Her daughter (22), Nanci complains, conspicuously within earshot of Peter, does not want to work. She only cares to *disfruta la vida dulce* (enjoy the sweet life) and goes every night to the disco, looking for *una bola* (a free ride) from a gringo. But when Peter goes inside, her expression softens and she describes with a smile how her daughter has successfully seduced a Swiss man who says he will send her money each month.

“La Bola” is a coveted concept among Dominicans. A Dominican professor recounted how a maid lost her job in a free trade zone just to pick up *una bola* from a campaigning politician, which consisted of merely a 200 peso (\$6) bag of rice and beans. “It’s a holdover mentality from era of dictators and patrons,” she explained. Nanci heard Peter complain more than once about the Dominican tendency to “milk the gringo cow.” But, she says, although she may have migrated to Las Ballenas to find a gringo, she has always worked, in free trade zone factories (where she made \$150/month), as a maid and cook in a hotel (\$100/month), and now she tends to Peter and his house. She attributes no moral value to participating in such menial labour. Given the options, sex work or what locals call *buscando para un gringo* (looking for a gringo) is a viable alternative under limited options.

Naturally, Nanci says, her daughters are seduced by the life of leisure the gringos enjoy. They see an easier path in selling themselves at the disco, making in one hour what would take one week in a factory. Enjoying, if only for the evening, the lifestyle of the gringo, dressed in flashy clothes and heels, eating in an ocean-side restaurant or café, kite-surfing, salsa dancing, perhaps even attaining the upper class markers of mobility: a Quad, a jeep, a passport. And they know what the gringo seeks in return. Slogans bearing messages like those in Figure 4.1 speak to the overt nature of host/guest relations in town. Gringos can purchase T-shirts bearing the words: “Kiss me, I’m a pirate”

Figure 4.1: Messages and host/guest relations



“They want our heat,” Nanci says. “They know the Dominican is *caliente* (sexually hot but can also refer to warm qualities such as a personable manner or open generosity (*amable*) associated with uncorrupted peoples who are perceived as having escaped the jaws of modernity), and life, where they are, their people, are cold.” But she also understands the risks and costs of fostering intimate relations with guests. She mentions Juanita, who wandered the pueblo dishevelled and half-mad after her husband sent her home from a German suburb without a peso, having replaced her with another Dominican woman. Juanita’s experience demonstrates the fragility of *progressando* (social advancement). Given

the high probability of such rejection and the resilience most Dominican women demonstrate, Juanita would have recovered. It was only after her former husband came to visit their son and take him to the States on holiday where both were killed in a car crash that she became undone. "What we want from you gringos is your freedom to choose," she says.

### **Economic Uncertainty and the Dominican Dream: Aspiring to be Another**

In a recent National Human Development Report (Ceara-Hatton, ed., et al 2005) promoting the "human development model" of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), an organization that emphasizes developing human resources over "the neo-liberal notion according to which economic growth is the sole source of welfare in our societies," Dominican national identity is described as forming through and against foreign processes ("externality"). The authors of the report suggest that the,

*...solution to the dilemmas of externality is to aspire to be 'another' or at least to 'seem to be another,' [italics mine]. Certain currents of globalization contribute to these aspirations by generalizing consumption patterns and lifestyles around the notion of 'being developed.'*

Aspiring to be another is serious business. The pressure to project success, to live como *Dios manda* (as God intends) is intense, and contributes to aggressive borrowing/debt-incurring practices and competitive strategies. Appearing as developed, which means appearing as consumers, wearing fake name-brand clothing, for example, Izod logos blown up ten times on a polo shirt, is not just symbolic of social position but constitutes identity. When Nanci takes her twilight promenade in her four wheel drive vehicle dressed in her white linen dress and two-tone weave, with her grand-daughter similarly coiffed at her side, this is a display of genuine "cargo" and ritual status derived from the social gaze and the marketplace, and hence a source of her power and status. The practice of subjectivity-making, or becoming who you identify as, occurs through the accumulation of signs of otherness. Those migrants (both male and female) who come to tourist zones *buscando para un gringo* and fail in this unprecedented dream of accumulating the other's signs and thereby transcending class barriers, often disappear beyond this critical social gaze: abandoned sex workers return to their mother's houses in the countryside; Haitian labourers are deported across the border; and those suffering with SIDA (AIDS) return to the capital's slums to die.

Nanci's work history is representative of the opportunities available for uneducated migrants in the DR in free trade zone manufacturing and tourism. Over 171,000 workers are employed in *zona francas* (free trade zones), 70% in textile manufacturing (Human Rights Watch, 2004). These zones, combined with tourism, make up the fastest growing export sector in the Dominican economy bringing in \$1.3 billion in annual earnings. Travel and tourism alone employ 14.4% of the population providing 550,000 jobs, roughly 1 in every 7 job (World Travel & Tourism Council 2010). However, formal jobs (e.g., animation director, hotel reception, management) in tourism go to educated Dominicans, from the larger cities of Santiago and the state capital of Santo Domingo. Uneducated migrants access lower tier jobs such as maid, bartender, janitor, and handyman.

Migrants who cannot access the formal economy or only qualify for lower-paying positions perceived as exploitive, diversify their sources of income, a historical pattern that is a common risk-aversion strategy stemming from peasant practices under precarious conditions, and pursue opportunities within the informal sector, such as those found in construction, narcotic distribution, prostitution, out-of-home micro enterprise, vending, taxi service, and security. In addition to an official unemployment rate of 16.4%, over 50% of Dominicans are employed in the informal sector (Jimenez & Santaolalla, 2008) which provides half of the household income for two-thirds of Dominican households (Deere, et al, 1990; Espinal, 1997). The recent economic shift from goods to services production in the DR economy has been cited as negatively affecting Dominican *identity*, in the recent National Human Development Report (Ceara-Hatton, 2005). The authors of the report describe how national identity before 1990 formed around agriculture. But with the shift to a service economy based on goods manufactured in free trade zones, tourist demand, and remittances, two forces emerged to challenge modern Dominican identity: externalization and forced cosmopolitanism. This shift...

"has strengthened the perception that Dominican society has of itself and which is marked by uncertainty, instability and externality (the perception that the behavior of the people, and the events that occur to them, are determined by external elements)" (Ceara-Hatton, 2005: 6-7).

The report says that despite the growth of free zones and tourism, the collective perception remains that these are risky sectors and remittances are unreliable. In fact, this is an accurate perception. With regard to remittances, in the current global recession the amount of money sent home by Latin/Caribbean expatriates is expected to decline 11% in 2009,

according to a recent study by the Inter-American Development Bank (Jordan, 2009). Also, a recent report noted that tourist arrivals have fallen 8.6% (from 304,747 in 2008 to 278,620 in 2009) and exports to the US have fallen 20.8% (from US\$585 million in 2008 to US\$464 million in 2009) (Anonymous, 2009).

Javier, 27, who was born in the pueblo, thinks one of the persistent corrupting effects of the tourist economy is the breaking down of *confianza*, the trust and unity among the people, particularly between men and women, in Las Ballenas. He explains how, as subsistence farmers and fishermen became more dependent on foreign exchange, migrants poured in from other areas or across the border from Haiti, and women began to dominate the local economy—in both its formal and informal sectors.

Javier: There exists a problem in this country with the women who work...First the man and the woman are together, and they are poor. Then the man finds work and everything is good. He brings money to the house. Later the woman finds good work and possibly earns the same as the man or even more, because always women earn more money than the man here, always they have better jobs, in offices, in houses, while the man has to work with his hands or on the mountain, [clearing fields, doing hard labour, agricultural work]. ...then starts the difficulties because she can do with the money what she wants, go to the beauty salon, spend it...because already she is taking money for herself...this is different...before only the man brought money into the house.

Author: It's not possible to earn money together?

Javier: Well, it's the best thing to be united, but it's the money that comes between people in a couple. Look, if he [points to Luis, a successful fish vendor] is earning money, and I'm not, he is going to separate from me because I am poor. He is not going to want to speak with me because he thinks I'm going to always ask him for money. The money comes between friends, the people. And this is the reason men don't like women to work...because the women always buy the cellular, the car. The man leaves for here, the woman leaves for there ...the best is to work and save together, united, but this is not how it is anymore.

Indeed the DR is experiencing the global effects of the feminization of labour across the island and in the Dominican diaspora, though researchers differ in their assessment of how this is effecting gender relations on the island. Women make up 70% of the labourers in free trade zones (FTZ) which did not exist 30 years ago. In the late 1980's the rate of employment for women in FTZs more than doubled that of males. This gender shift accompanied the displacement of male dominated agricultural labour which had employed 73% of the Dominican labour pool in 1950 and only 35% by the end of the 1980's, replaced by Industry (20%) and Services

(45%) (Malik, 1989). In 1950 women in the labour force represented 17.9% of the population. By 2000 women represented 27.5% of the labour force. However, women are often chosen because of their second class status and perceived gendered qualities (dexterity, patience, docility) and are paid inferior wages because it is assumed they supplement a male "breadwinner," so these patterns do not necessarily translate into less patriarchal gender relations (Fernandez-Kelly, 2005; Grasmuck & Espinal, 2000; Safa, 1995). In fact, machismo can be reinforced in these exploitive patterns of feminized labour. For example, within sex work in Las Ballenas, I was struck by how often host women gave a substantial percentage of their earnings to their boyfriends.

Even so, as women have invaded the male spaces of the streets and become mobile with cell phones and jeeps, they are described by both hosts and guests as ruthless in securing their futures. Lacking pimps and not confined to red light districts, female sex workers are particularly visible and quite free to structure their time and movements among Las Ballenas' open-air cafes, disco, and the local Codatel office. The offices of Codatel, a subsidiary of the American company GTE, are a key site where women eagerly await faxes, phone calls, or money wires from their overseas "boyfriends" in the hopes that an island encounter might extend to a long-term financially viable relationship. Uncontrolled, the needs of young host women become, as one older Dominican woman, critical of the *tiguere* women in the pueblo, put it, "like the river in a flood, it never stops." Like an airplane (*avion* literally means airplane but also can refer to a sexy woman) she will fly higher and higher, super-mobile, uncontained. *La tiguere* as *avion* is therefore a troubling subject who must be disciplined by many sectors of society, including local machos, state police, "respectable" upper class Dominican families from the capital buying up vacation property, and newly converted Evangelists.

### **The Mirage of Las Ballenas as a Space of Transgression: Desire masking coercion**

"What do these men see in them" says Lucille, a French woman in her late 50's. Lucille's husband, like many married, foreign men in town, left her for the maid after Lucille had already given up her flat in Paris to join him in Las Ballenas. The position of maid is often used to gain intimate access to foreign men and women. Veteran expat women and men know this and only hire domestic help who are old or unattractive. Otherwise they learn the hard way. For example, a missionary's wife was shocked to come home early and find her maid wrapped in a bath towel standing

outside the bathroom door where her alleged oblivious husband was taking a shower.

For Lucille, the insult of being cast aside was a shock and she reacted by asserting her class privilege and emphasizing host vulgarity. "They have a sense of fashion, it's true. But have you seen them eat?" Lucille protests, "...hunched over, their hands dripping with meat. *That's* when the charade falls." Lucille could accept adultery, but in the French context. She described how famous French royal mistresses, noted for their beauty and sophistication, highly educated in both arts and sciences, acted as muses, political advisors, and confidantes to their powerful kings. "In France, we understand mistresses can contribute to a secure marriage," she assured me. "But you don't leave your wife." Lucille's second husband was an artist and had been vacationing in Las Ballenas for some time before she decided to join him and discovered signs of impropriety. At first he appeared to be helping women perpetually in need of milk for the baby or medicine for an ailing grandparent. But eventually he declared he was in love and wanted out. "Democracy and women's liberation," Lucille sighed. "I suppose this place represents the backlash. At least when there were rules, there was some pleasure to be had in breaking them. But this?" What disturbs Lucille and many other expats who found themselves initially seduced by the tropical beauty of Las Ballenas and its "natives" as presented through the tourist scrim, and then shocked by the social transgressions, was the "crude vulgarity" of the host-guest transaction, and the way it undermines a basic level of decorum, or class consciousness. The exploitation by the guests is so overtly obvious; the manipulations by the hosts so crude, the exchange of sex for the possibility of attaining a passport so overt, that it offends members used to a society in which power dynamics are more obscured by mystifying and often contradictory discourses, forms of subjectivity, and social practices.

Expat men are not always so bothered by the lack of romantic ritual in the encounter. Giorgio, an Italian felon (he claimed he tried to work "legitimately" as a salesman before he robbed a bank but could not sustain such a career which he sums up by making the gesture of putting on a tie and then pulls it up as if it were a noose, sticking his tongue out, and rolling up his eyes). "I told you before, it is very simple here. *Basico, basico, basico*. And this is why we can achieve a certain level of happiness ...like dogs." Giorgio, like many other expat men in Las Ballenas, revelled in the kind of "outlaw" life available in a state-less zone like Las Ballenas which many compared to the "wild west," a kind of mythic frontier playground. He described his dealings with women as "basic" or "primitive" and therefore authentic. One day I found a dog-

eared copy of Phillip Roth's novel, *The Dying Animal*, on the beach, with this passage underlined, that echoed this common sentiment expressed by guest men.

"The French art of flirtatiousness if of no interest to me. The savage urge is. No this is not seduction. This is comedy. It is the comedy of creating a connection that is not the connection... created un-artificially by lust...don't confuse the veiling with the business at hand" (2001: 16).

What is the "business at hand" in Las Ballenas? What fuels guest desire? It is not French artifice, or a Greek idealized beauty, that is evoked by expats in their descriptions of attraction to Dominican and Haitian men and women. Do "we" become "savage" through "them," that is, is it the lack of "complication" in the encounter—the removal of the anxiety that "empowered" women represent with their access to education, mobility, and resources—that sparks a primitive "lust" and is read as "more authentic" because it affirms an uncompromised masculinity? Meanwhile "they" are assumed to be "naturally" lustful, rather than performing a prescribed role which holds the (oftentimes only) possibility for social advancement? "These people—it's their culture—they have sex on the brain 24-7!" said one married Spaniard computer programmer on holiday, grinning widely. "It's we, the Puritans, that have the hang-ups. We are so repressed that we've forgotten to enjoy sensual pleasure!" This attitude was also expressed by homosexual guests, who tended to emphasize host sexuality in terms of embodying a kind of bisexual freedom. "What is the difference between a gay Dominican and a straight Dominican?" a Canadian guest quipped. "About three beers."

Jeffrey, a former Peace Corps worker turned real-estate agent from New Jersey, used an evolutionary biological explanation to explain his desire. "It's all about gaining access to as many fertile females as possible—how many eggs do *you* have left?" Another American, rumoured to be a drug trafficker but also a popular English teacher to many teenage girls, explained that compared to their Western counterparts, host women were grateful and satisfied for the efforts and attentions of Euro-American men.

"These girls are happy if you buy them a little plastic jewellery, you don't need to put diamonds on their fingers. And they have an expression I like, that describes relationships. You say 'he or she is my *media de naranja* (half of orange). I can handle that, being someone's half-piece of fruit. But back home they want a soul-mate; that's asking for a lot."

The pattern that emerged in the backstories of guest males was a feeling of compromised masculinity. Their sense of emasculation was associated with present-day global socioeconomic conditions, such as divorce, feeling placed in exploitive work environments in which they had little control, or among Western women whom they saw as in a powerful position to limit or deny a vital resource (their bodies). One French man claimed he felt that rising homosexuality in Euro-America was directly connected to the castrating woman's liberation movement in these countries (that is, men turn gay through socioeconomic competition with females). Aging was another reason cited for a sense of compromised masculine identity, untenable in its inability to deal with vulnerability. "In Europe," Peter remarks, "the people are all old. And when I walked the streets of Germany, those who were young, did not see me. I felt invisible. Here, dozens of young, pretty ladies smile and call out to me every day."

Yet Peter also tells me how his new visibility made him susceptible to the *tiguere* tactics of host women. "We are all fools when we first come here," he says, shrugging, and reciting a long list of names of others who felt the sting of Cupid's arrow. He explains how before he moved in with Nanci, he fell in love with the queen of tigers, Estonia, and supported her four children while she was cheating on him with other gringos, in addition to her Dominican boyfriend (introduced as a "cousin" when he slept over). When Peter finally broke things off with her, Estonia flew into a rage and smashed all the windows of his truck. "*El amor 'ta ciego*" (Love is blind), he shrugs.

### Flying Tigers

Lucille shows me a painting her husband made of the woman he left her for. "She was in her 30's but he painted her as if she were a girl, in school uniform." She rolls her eyes. "The *picture* of innocence." When her husband informed Lucille that he was in love she thought this woman must have put "crack" in his beer at the local disco, which might explain his "bulging eyes." The belief that various kinds of "date rape" drugs were put into gringos' drinks at bars to seduce them was not uncommon (and in some cases, perhaps plausible, through the various sedatives and/or stimulants used in magical herbal tinctures concocted to bewitch, stimulate, or "zombify" guests, or even through drugs trafficked through motorcycle taxi drivers who were often the relatives or boyfriends of sex workers). But even sober, the disco-bar scene in Las Ballenas is a stimulating, heady experience, for even the most grounded of individuals. In this performance arena, scantily clad, young male/female migrants engage in fierce

competition, positioning themselves within arm's reach of seated, world-weary gringos, gyrating and swivelling their hips in rapid-fire figure eights, pumping their buttocks, or simulating fellatio with male friends, dancing *peera* or "doggie style" to the aggressive rap beat of *reggaeton*.

Its visceral appeal to those existential exiles from a bureaucratized, alienating, cold Euro-America is significant. As Lingis writes, "In the embrace of a stranger one is no longer... a virile and self-determined agent...the craving to lose oneself in orgasmic exultation is a repetition compulsion" (2004: 198). As the night wears on, and the bartender pours an endless fountain of *cuba libres*, the disco ball sprays rainbows upon exposed, glistening male and female bodies, moving together, dressed in shimmering beads of metallic-gold and orange fabric hugging every curve and voluptuous bulge, revealing faces with smiling, open lips and glimpses of smoky eyes accented by electric eye shadow. What aging Swiss banker, German computer technician, or American manager would not react to the bold gesture of the unabashed girl who grabs his fingers and inserts them in her mouth, or the Haitian siren who squirms and giggles on his lap, steaming up their bifocals? Or what French divorcee would not feel slightly flush as her dance partner presses his hand against the small of her back and gyrates his groin into her pelvis? But one of my informants, Enrique, 25, who accompanies me to the disco one night, is quick to explain the sexual performance and display before him as *tigueraje*, not as an essentialized, sexual primitivism. "These girls have the snake eyes," he laughs, "Look at that one, [he motions to a girl who is edging her way over to an obese Italian with bifocals] she has found her next victim!"

"Watch this," says Daniella, adjusting her tasselled brassiere as she strides toward a gringo with her long legs in a tight skirt, a counterfeit thousand peso bill in her hand. She asks for change, which the gringo gives her promptly, appearing slightly stunned by her presence and attention. Five minutes later she turns with a wink and strides back toward our table. Lari laughs as she accepts Daniella's repayment of a debt using the gringo's cash, and continues to shell the *gandules* (lentils) spilled out on the table before them. She shares her latest scam: how she enjoyed a nice meal of beer and grilled shrimp on a beachfront chaise lounge next to a sleeping German. When the waiter arrived with the check, she explained that the sleeping German was her *novio* (boyfriend). The German, awakened and puzzled, protested. Then, on cue, a policeman (and Clari's lover) arrived to demand that the feckless gringo pay his due or else risk dishonouring both this woman and the *Republica Dominicana* itself, of which, need he be reminded, he was only a temporary guest.

## Fraught Negotiations

Figure 4.2: The Beach as meeting place



Many host women complained to me of the amount of time that guests desired to spend with them at the beach, which they shunned because of the drying effects of the sea water on their hair, and the sun's darkening of their skin.

Recognizing the fragility of guest masculinity, sex workers acknowledge the trickiness of the negotiation, the need to mask its commercial motivation in order to preserve male fantasy. But the need to disguise a request for payment for services rendered underscores the irony embedded in sex work in which "women are allowed to give free sex but not to negotiate for payment without breaking the law" (Zelizer, 2005: 107). Lari explains,

"Sometimes it's best not to say it (the price) ...but others ask you and I don't like it because the reality is I don't know how much money they have in their pocket. If you ask too much they say forget it, or if you ask too little, they say 'Ah, so easy!' and take your number but don't call. Or there are others—Dominicans too—who say 'if you had not asked I would have given you double or more!' Sometimes I think about that...because it's so stupid that they don't give it to you. But if you ask you are 'of the street' and hateful. So I don't ask. I spend the night and what they give me, they give me from the heart."

Hosts contextualize their intimate relations within their cultural economy which traditionally relies on informal networks and barter, practices that tend to blur lines between commodity and gift. Once a connection is made "there are gringos that give you something because you explain to them your life situation, that your parents work, that you are not rich, and then they pay for your house and they say they want to help you...it's like a little gift," not merely remuneration for sex. And indeed the kinds of intimate economies being brokered involve a range of exchanges, so "gifting" (pampers for the baby, cement for the house) makes the transaction more palatable. "It's awkward and demeaning to ask 'how much?'" says one guest. "So after awhile you say, 'what do you need this week?' and they tell you. And we both feel better about it." But other men are fully conscious of the commodified, *tigueraje* nature of the transaction, as well as the staged nature of the performance. On internet forums guest men also inform each other of how to best manipulate the situation and avoid being conned.

Like I say, half of them aren't going to work. But the other half will. The trick is knowing who's who before you shut the hotel room door. It's not easy. They will often do a 180--flirt, dance, touch, sweet talk you beforehand and then totally bitch out on you behind closed doors: complain, rush you, try to get more money, tell you that you can't do this or that. Take your time. See how far you can get before you have to pay them (I often pay after the fact). Ask them if they like to go to the beach? Which one? Are they free tomorrow? They think they're practically married at that point. Tell 'em all about yourself. Make friends with them. That goes a long way. Take them out of one club and bring them to another--like a date. Totally throw them off.

As this man's post reveals, the adversarial goal is to "see how far you can get before you have to pay them," in other words, exploit the performance (flirting, dancing, touching, sweet talk) and deny a woman compensation for as long as possible.

### Concubine Law

*I know I am too mean to be your queen  
And yet too good to be your concubine.*  
(Shakespeare 2001 - Lady Grey to King Edward IV, Part III, Act III, Scene II of *King Henry VI*)

In the DR, the majority of resource-poor women who perform all the duties of wives live as concubines in a kind of common law marriage.

Most men across class are polygamous and if they can afford it have mistresses (“kept women” or *amantes, queridas*) who live elsewhere, in separate households. Within the distorted bubble of tourist space, migrating women seek to reproduce this familiar structure and attain the role of concubine or mistress, which is more secure than living short-term as a prostitute in a cheap hotel with a tourist on holiday. While *tigueraje* tactics allow for individual modes of resistance and class mobility, sex work in the DR usually involves little recourse in terms of legal, contractual, or institutional definitions of protection. But recently state concubine laws have been enforced, albeit unevenly, to host women’s advantage.

Penelope complains to her neighbours that a host she is temporarily living with has the nerve to think he “maintains her” because he has bought everything in their shared apartment. She rolls her eyes. “He doesn’t understand that here, when the woman lives with the man, everything goes to the woman,” she says. “The woman takes the bed, TV... and the man is left with nothing but the radio.” The possibility that host women might be attaining some leverage in these unequal transactions instils a great deal of anxiety among guest males. On a newspaper internet forum (Guzman, 2008) one expat asks for specific legal advice around this issue of concubine entitlement to household property.

I have heard horror stories, he writes, of guys that live with a girl for a 6 months to a year, and then they split up and when the girl leaves, up comes the truck and they take almost everything, including many assets that were purchased long before they were together, like computers, TVs, stereos, and most of the furniture, etc.

Dominican attorney Fabio Guzman assures him that the host woman has no legal rights over the gringo’s property but underscores, “you cannot guarantee that courts will not adopt in the future a doctrine allowing division of “companionship” assets...or that Congress will not pass new legislation providing for division of assets.” Until 2001 even legal Dominican wives were not allowed to dispose of even their own property, let alone communal assets, without the husband’s consent. This situation changed with the passing of Law 189-01 of 22 November 2001, which amended several articles of the Civil Code, granting both spouses the joint administration of common property (Pellerano & Herrera, 2005). Concubines or live-in girlfriends are now well aware of ways to gain materially by living with foreigner. Several guests admitted arriving to Las Ballenas naïve, not speaking the language and enamoured by some

*figuere*-hustler who, after the “break-up,” garnered witnesses to testify they were living with said guest male as a legitimate concubine and therefore were accorded property rights (the wooden house and its furnishings and appliances). A similar process works, depending on one’s alliances and clout, with regard to land title around squatter’s rights.

Guzman (2008) clarifies that the law is currently ambiguous:

“Living together with a woman is never equivalent to a normal marriage. However, certain provisions in the Labor Code, the Minors Code and the Criminal Code acknowledge that living together has legal consequences. For example, a worker has the right to a few days off work if his concubine gives birth to his child; domestic violence to a concubine is treated the same as domestic violence to a wife. Recently, on October 17, 2001 a Supreme Court decision gave a surviving concubine the right to sue for the wrongful death of her companion in an automobile accident under very restricted conditions: a) the couple must have lived as if they were husband and wife, in a public relationship, not hidden or secret; b) the relationship must be stable and long-lasting; c) the relationship must be monogamous and non-adulterous since its origins; and d) the couple should be of different sexes. The ruling goes on to say expressly that ‘marriage and extra matrimonial companionship are not...equivalent realities’.”

Attaining communal witness testimony requires substantial local contacts and often the promise of compensation, which many female migrants, particularly Haitians, lack. Also, guest men are becoming more savvy. As one concerned expat writes on a public newspaper forum in response to Guzman’s legal advice above.

Although our resident lawyer is right, I would recommend to our junkies to be wary of long term concubine relationships, specially longer than 3 years. Although it isn’t a law, the recent case by the Supreme court raised many eyebrows and with the legal profession beginning to get smart about presenting new challenging cases to the Supreme Court, no one is safe anymore. Yours could be the next test case. With the feminists getting a foothold in politics and government I predict the concubine law is not very far away and in my opinion they will put a three year limit. That means that if you were not married with another woman and you live happily ever after for 3 years or more with a live-in girlfriend in a monogamous relationship and in addition commit the mortal sin of having children, be prepared. Might as well get married. (TW, 2002)

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have listed some of the constraints which limit the reality of Las Ballenas as a place of celebratory transgression. I have demonstrated how negotiation tactics around pricing sexual transactions are disguised to make the mutually symbiotic and exploitive encounter more palatable, as well as how hosts resist being “eaten as the other” (hooks, 1991) through asserting rights to property through concubine law. I have thus sought to highlight power dynamics embedded within this *tigueraje* game of intimate relations, rather than critique the commodified nature of host/guest relations through a social justice lens. The field of anthropology itself was born through the reaction to industrialization where “pure” society was defined against commodities. In the West we tend to assume commodification will be resisted by intimate relations that can be defined against it such as love and marriage. But in the DR these areas adapt rather easily to commodification. Hosts contextualize their intimate relations within their cultural economy which traditionally relies on informal networks and barter, practices that tend to blur lines between commodity and gift.

But even though the Dominican historical/cultural context allows for a broad range of commodified sexual relations, this current moment of globalised democracy, is unique and places the transgressive strategies of both upward-mobility seeking hosts and masculinity reaffirming guests at odds. Hosts strive to enter development and modernity as consumers while guests are seeking an imagined authenticity (a “roots” woman who has not been corrupted by feminism) to reaffirm their own compromised masculine privileges. Due to the gap in expectations, both parties revel in the performance of *tigueraje*, displaying a good deal of self-consciousness. In the spirit of Serbian philosopher Slavoj Žižek’s observation of modern “cynical reason,” “[hosts/guests] know very well how things are, but still they are doing it as if they don’t know” (1994: 316). Žižek continues, “For example, they know that their idea of freedom is masking a particular kind of exploitation, but they still continue to follow this idea of freedom” (1994: 316).

Guests in tourist space still dream of abandoning their repressed, bureaucratized “first world” selves and responsibilities, inspired by what they perceive as a naturally sexually open and permissive Caribbean culture. “We long to be a beach bum,” writes ecstatic philosopher, Alphonso Lingis. “...an animal making love with them on the night sands” (2000: 154). It is this promise of transgression that marks the tourist zone as special, and assigns young host migrants the role of performing this

fantasized other who will guide foreign subjects into their hedonistic dream. Yet because intimacy also involves unsettling exposure of “interpersonal rituals, bodily information, awareness of personal vulnerability, shared memory of embarrassing situations and attentions such as terms of endearment, bodily services, or emotional support” (Zelizer, 2005: 14), the travel encounter can just as easily degenerate into a narcissistic drive to render the strange familiar.

When narratives inevitably clash during intimate relations (i.e., when male guests see that host women do not see them as essential men, but as vehicles from which to gain upward mobility through their pension or passport) the destabilization to masculine identity that such intimacy fosters may provoke a kind of defensive, retracted response, especially since the travel encounter is motivated by a kind of colonial nostalgia, a desire to reassert a fading, imperial privilege. This desire to reaffirm a threatened identity can result in violence. Denise Brennan (2004) has documented the rise in violence in *Sosua*, another Dominican tourist town that has accompanied its reputation as an “international sex destination.”

In Las Ballenas the attempt to freeze representation of the other is evidenced in the fairly recent development of internet sex tourism whose explorers have introduced a particularly disassociated kind of intimacy confined to the deterritorialized world of cyberspace. This new type of tourist and his (he is male) strategies/practices represents a research area that deserves more attention. Dominican women who routinely post provocative photos of themselves online for an unknown foreign, male audience speak, mystified, of these recent arrivals who remark that host women compare unfavourably in real life to their cyber counterparts. One afternoon as I pass an internet café (these cafes mushroomed in 2008-9) I note a curious sight: a German tourist is staring at a woman’s body on a computer screen, placing his mouse upon her throat to magnify her image. *Hours later* upon my return I see he is still inside, moving his mouse over *the same image*, now enlarging her thigh. What are the implications of this new fragmented subject, the cyborg prostitute and this new form of the male gaze? In what ways is his control of digitized fragments onscreen more satisfying than the prospect of relating with live, whole-bodied women outside the café doors? And what are its implications? Cultural, feminist theorist Margrit Shildrick writes on how we might conceptualize a new “mode of intercorporeality” within intimate relations, beyond this kind of regressive defence that fears the dissolution of personal autonomy. “In place of... the masculinist economy that reduces difference to a property relationship, our selves could form in the dynamic contact with others, not according to a fixed ideal but in a transformatory encounter in

which neither self nor other is a predictable, calculable identity with inviolable boundaries” (2002: 118).

In the meantime, however, a different kind of borderwork is at play. The Dominican state in Las Ballenas, with its new police force, now seeks to clean tourist space for national elite consumption, and rid it of both socioculturally transgressive (lawbreaking) hosts *and* guests. In this light, we may look tentatively at the concubine law in its recent evolution to define rights (on a ad-hoc basis) and transfer assets to sex workers and away from foreigners as providing rationale for state intervention to re-establish order, moral purity, and the viability of the nation. As one Dominican hotel developer from the capital said, “Tell the French, the Germans, the Spanish and their Haitian (not Dominican) whores, we Dominicans are coming back to reclaim our land,” (parenthesis mine).

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### REGULATORY SPACE AND CHILD SEX TOURISM: THE CASE OF CANADA AND MEXICO

LINDA M. AMBROSIE

In 2002 three Canadian and nine American men on vacation in Acapulco were arrested for enticing young male street boys to their house. For several years over the winter months, these men had rented a house overlooking the bay where they held adolescent boys hostage while they took turns having sex with them and filming their activities. The pornographic material served not only to record their exploits but also to finance the trip through the sale of the images over the Internet. In 2007 in two separate incidents two Canadians were charged in Thailand. The Canadian, Christopher Paul Neil, now in prison in Thailand, was sentenced for sexually molesting at least three boys whereas a separate Canadian offender, Orville Mader, slipped across the border to Cambodia and flew back to Canada in order to be prosecuted under softer Canadian laws. Between 1993 and 2008 there were at least 156 Canadians charged overseas for offences relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation (Perrin, 2008), yet to date only one man has ever been successfully prosecuted in Canada under the Child Sex Tourism (CST) laws introduced in 1997.

An increase in the number of victims of trafficking suggests there are a growing number of tourists that engage in CST (ICE, 2008; UNHCR, 2008). It is estimated that in Mexico the number of children that are victims of prostitution, pornography and human trafficking increased from 16,000 to 20,000 between 2000 and 2008 (UNHCR, 2008). Most of the exploitation occurs in Mexican tourist resorts such as Cancun and Acapulco, and in border cities such as Tijuana (near San Diego) and Ciudad Juarez, near Tucson, Arizona (ICE, 2008; UNHCR, 2008). Among those who pay for sex with boys and girls are American, Canadian and European tourists (Mattar, 2007; UNHCR, 2008). Often they contact “sex tour operators” to assist their travel arrangements to American cities such