

## Intimate Encounters: Affective Economies in Cuba and the Dominican Republic

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*Abstract:* Drawing on research in Cuba and the Dominican Republic this paper explores the uses of intimacy in both the corporate sector and in romantic relationships. I use research with hotel workers and with people involved in sexual-affective exchanges connected to tourism to link intimacy to the political economic structures of transnational tourism. These are new spaces of analysis that present practices of transnational corporate-generated intimacy that combine love – or the exploitation of worker’s emotions – and labor. The central aim is to intertwine the intimate with the global, from the formal customer service policies of transnational hotels with the informal, on-the-ground, intimate encounters between tourists and hospitality workers. The commercialization of intimacy, including sexual-affective relations in the delivery of hospitality services, is linked to political and economic processes that are part of transnational tourism practices. This paper challenges the notion that sex tourism and sex work are individualistic practices that exist outside of the spaces of corporate global profit. It further posits that relationships where money is exchanged are not necessarily devoid of care and intimacy. *Keywords:* intimate labour, sex tourism, hospitality industry, Cuba, Dominican Republic.

During recent travel to the Dominican Republic I booked an online trip that included airfare and lodging. My aim was to get an inexpensive hotel for my stay during a research trip. I chose to book over the internet because the rapid consolidation of travel services through online search engines such as Orbitz or Travelocity bundles airfare, car rentals, and lodging, offering some of the most inexpensive deals available to mass travel consumers. This limits consumers to multinational suppliers in accommodations, since the rapid monopolization of travel services is now controlled by only a handful of transnational corporations (ILO 2001, Dunning and McQueen 1982).<sup>1</sup>

When I arrived in my hotel room I found it was not as appealing in real life as in cyberspace. The salmon-coloured drapes with matching bedspread looked a bit tattered and faded. There was a strange chemical smell, the furniture looked battered, and the forest-green-coloured carpet was torn in a few places. A lopsided lamp stood sadly in the corner of an otherwise dark room. I felt disappointed. This was not the bright, colourful, well-lit, and spacious room advertised on the internet. Getting ready to settle into this gloomy room, I was shocked to find cucarachas, or cockroaches, dead in the corners of the room and the hallway leading to the bathroom. Equally scared of the chemicals that killed the cucarachas as the sight of those horrible bugs, I walked back to the front desk to complain to the reception staff. Efficiently and with grace they offered me a room in a different part of the hotel, but for an additional cost. Frustrated at having to pay more money than I had expected, and feeling duped by the bait-and-switch promotional tactic, I went to my new room and consoled myself with a much nicer view and no cucarachas.

Upon my return to the United States I was pleased to find that the hotel chain had sent me an online customer service survey. Thinking that this was my opportunity to discuss the condition of the facilities and truth in advertisement, I was

amused to find that the survey sought to solicit answers to questions about my affective experience at their hotel. In fact, the attention to the emotional experience of the hotel guest was as important, if not more, than the cleanliness of the accommodations. There was no room to discuss cucarachas. For instance, the questionnaire asked if the staff made me feel special: 'Were they warm and hospitable?'; were they 'responsive to my needs?'; were they 'genuinely caring?'; did the staff make 'eye contact and address me by my first name?' In other words, was the hotel personnel able to convey the manufactured sentiments required of them in the delivery of hospitality services? I could not help but think that the 'customer satisfaction' survey – an instrument that betrays the major concerns of management and marketers – was designed to act as a form of surveillance of the workers' customer service interaction. My subjective experience appeared central to the evaluation of the hospitality product, as the customer satisfaction survey revealed. Finally, when inquiring about the actual facility, the survey asked if the hotel was 'engaging, sophisticated, and stylish.' Thus, in the process of evaluating the service, the transnational hotel chain was branding its product.

It is not surprising that demonstrations of servility are an important component in the sale of tourism services. Generally, service occupations require that their workers strive to make the consumer feel valued. The management of emotions – both of the hotel staff and guests – is crucial to understanding the consumer decision process (Simon 2009). Thus, part of the training of workers includes the fabrication, management and manipulation of emotions in host and guest to produce the desired interaction. The orchestration of workers' emotions for corporate profit has been termed 'emotional labour;' it is an aspect of service economies that sociologists argue impinges on private parts of the self that should not be commercialized (Leidner 1999, Hochschild 1983). Guerrier and Abid (2000) suggest that hospitality workers are both providing a service and part of the product being sold. Commercial hospitality firms instruct workers on delivering the appropriate pleasing attitude, friendliness, and regard for the guest as an individual (Johanson and Woods 2008, Crick 2002, Lashley 2000). Training in the handling of customer interaction produces opportunities for workers and tourists to straddle the complexities of a market-driven relationship with private emotions. It also causes tensions in establishing boundaries around sexual behaviour (Yagil 2008).

Transnational hotels provide an ideal space to investigate the changing practices of multinational corporations with regards to intimacy, sexuality and love. The sexualized language used in the marketing of hotels signals possibilities for transgressive behaviour and sexual adventure (Pritchard and Morgan 2006) in a context where hotel guests and staff are in close contact twenty-four hours a day (Adler and Adler 2004). Management demands that workers attend to the bodily needs of their guests in an environment committed to friendliness and subservient behaviour. Therefore, organizations are anxious 'to control every detail of the behaviour and attitude of their staff' (Guerrier and Abid 2000, 262), scripting conduct and encouraging workers to interact with guests in an intimate and at times sexually suggestive manner (Pritchard and Morgan 2006, Filby 1992). While close scrutiny of the interaction between the host and guest is analysed in hospitality and tourism management, only recently have scholars considered the 'hidden and barely discussed' (Guerrier and Abid 2000, 274) connections between hospitality

services and sexuality. Studies have examined the workplace aggression and sexual harassment exhibited by customers (Guerrier and Abid 2000a) but less attention has been paid to the consensual sexual-affective interactions between hotel workers and guests (Cabezas 2009, Guerrier and Abid 2003).

Drawing on research in Cuba and the Dominican Republic in this article I analyse the organization of intimate labour in hotels and the sexual-affective encounters that take place between tourists and locals. My first objective is to examine the multinationalization of intimacy in transnational hotels. Secondly, I analyse intimate encounters that take place outside hotels in tourist-oriented venues as a way to challenge some of the understandings and categorizations that describe these contacts. The intimate is idealized in Western culture and connected to home, bourgeois domesticity, and sexuality is amply for sale in hospitality enterprises. By intertwining the intimate with the global, the formal with the informal, new spaces emerge of transnational corporate-generated intimacy that combines love – or the exploitation of affect – within the tourism process.

Feminists have begun to uncover social relations marked by intimacy as central to the structures involved in the neoliberal processes of the global economy (Parreñas and Boris 2010). Not only has the organization of emotional labour become a key component to the profits of many service-oriented industries, but care and affective labour have also been identified as significant dimensions of childcare, eldercare, nursing, and domestic services – all women-dominated occupations. Regarded as part of the gender division of labour, the various forms of care or intimate work are functions of an international division of affect that parallel the international division of labour with racialized and minoritized workers from the global South performing affective services for those in the global North. Noting the mining of affect from third world populations for the benefit of those in the first, sociologist Arlie Hochschild refers to care work as the ‘new gold’ (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). This gold is exploited in hospitality services by multinational corporations and mined by local people directly. Yet when speaking of sex work connected to tourism the affective dimension is often undermined as the focus is placed on the monetary-sexual exchange and unequal power relations. The scholarship dichotomizes sex tourism from hospitality work even when commonalities underscore these practices. The affective dimension is suspect in sex tourism, even while some studies reveal it is an important feature of sex work (Weitzer 2010). Nevertheless, new and bold approaches show the multidimensional qualities of ‘care work’ and intimacy as a significant dynamic in sex tourism (Frohlick 2007, Piscitelli 2007, Hoang 2010, Padilla 2007, Padilla et al. 2007).

Scholars writing about affect, money, power and sex have developed innovative ways of understanding the circulation of money in intimate encounters (Folbre and Nelson 2000). For example, Viviana Zelizer’s scholarship proposes that we rethink the widespread conviction that monetary exchange corrupts intimacy (2005). Rather, her research into the varying practices of monetary and intimate exchange reveals the modes in which money and care are intertwined in various spheres where people negotiate delicate, interpersonal relations (Zelizer 2006, 2005). This approach is effective in explaining how financial support is incorporated into intimate encounters and how people are able to demarcate the mingling of money and sex.

In the following sections I highlight characteristics in the history of tourism development followed by a discussion of labour practices in hotel resorts. The economy of intimate exchange that operates in the landscape of tourism speaks to the incorporation of love and sexuality in the structures of the transnational tourism industry. It is a new economy that has shifted sexual-affective relations into ambiguous terrain, one that combines intimate labour without inscribing a sex-worker identity.

## **Background**

My research began in the mid-nineties when Cuba was undergoing rapid transformations following the fall of the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc economies, and the Dominican Republic was reeling from neoliberal reforms that combined the expansion of free-trade zones with tourism development. The encounters between tourists and locals were garnering the attention of the international media, as increasing numbers of women and men became involved in affairs with foreign travellers for financial gain.

As with Southeast Asia, it was the U.S. military occupation in Cuba and the Dominican Republic during the twentieth century that established and developed red light districts, underscoring the importance of race and sex to the building of empire (Skwiot 2010, Céspedes 2007). The development of the North American tourism industry in Cuba during the early part of the twentieth century helped to secure it as a destination for leisure and all kinds of bodily pleasures. As Karina Céspedes asserts, 'The romance with Cuba was but a desire to re-enact a context where bodies were unequally exchanged, and where sexual, as well as moral, boundaries crossed in 're-enactments' of unadulterated freedom, it also collapsed all Cuban women as being, whether they were conscious of it or not, for sale' (2007, 6). Cuba became a favourite destination for 'military boys,' U.S. recreational travellers, and organized crime (Schwartz 1997). U.S. corporations controlled every aspect of the tourism industry, from hotels and night clubs to gambling casinos (Céspedes 2007, Pérez 1999, Schwartz 1997).

While the Cuban tourism and sex economies practically vanished after the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the international tourism sector in the Dominican Republic grew in the late sixties to fill its place. By the end of the seventies, reports were circulating about the growth of tourist-related sex work in the Dominican Republic. Similar manifestations were taking place in other islands of the Caribbean that were undergoing structural adjustment programmes under the tutelage of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Kempadoo 1999, Farmer 1992)<sup>2</sup> Gay and heterosexual paid sex became an important part of the tourist economy and created opportunities for otherwise impoverished young people to earn cash (Padilla 2007, Kempadoo 1999).

In less than twenty years, Cuba and the Dominican Republic shifted from sugar production to tourist development and today they are two of the largest tourist-receiving countries in the region.<sup>3</sup> Managed by U.S., Canadian, Spanish, French, Dutch and Jamaican multinational corporations, hotel chain resorts now dot some of the best beaches. Air, hotel, packages and tours, and cruise ship ownership remains under the control of transnational corporations based in the global North.

Work in tourist enclaves is often low-paid and considered a low-skilled job, even while it is emotionally exhausting, monotonous, and physically demanding. However, workers strive to exploit opportunities that lead them out of resort compounds and into transnational relationships and lives.

### **Suspect intimacies**

The close contact between workers and guests permits the cultivation of relations that involve varying levels of intimate work in a hospitality setting. Maira, a hotel housekeeper and a single mother in her mid-twenties working at a beachfront resort in Cuba, explained that the management staff of the Spanish hotel chain where she worked instructed workers to leave written, personal notes in each guest's room and to create individual contact with the guests. She added a personal touch by placing a fresh flower on the pillow and creating towel art – in this case, designs of swans. Maira often asked for e-mail addresses of the guests she looked after and sent them messages after they left. Many guests responded by leaving her gratuities, clothes, toiletries, and other gifts. Indeed, relationships that create long-term obligations and commitment are, for many workers like Maira, advantageous, producing connections to cosmopolitan lifestyles. These associations mingle the performance of work duties with opportunities for personal gain.

Jorge, a waiter at a Cuban beachfront resort, explained that what made jobs in hotel resorts so desirable was not so much the earning potential or the conditions of work but the prospect for romance, marriage, and travel abroad. Jorge described that what mattered most was to befriend the tourist by spending time alone with them, to show them his home or to take them dancing. The intent is to nurture a warm bond of friendship or a love affair as an extension of their job. Likewise, a hospitality worker in Santo Domingo, Berenicio, befriends many businessmen during their hotel stay. He tries to accommodate all their needs often suggesting places where they can have the best Dominican food, get a massage (cheaper than at the hotel's spa), and enjoy the music and nightlife of the capital city. Gratuities are not the main motivation, he says, rather, it is the interpersonal connection that might benefit him in the future. 'You never know when you help someone when they will help you back. I have many friends all over the United States that I have met here. When they come here they look for me. If they return here again, I know that it's because of my services. And one day if I need them, I can count on them.' Berenicio is less explicitly strategic in his approach than many workers yet he sustains a nexus between generosity in the job performance and attaching his actions to networks and social security. As hospitality workers Jorge and Berenicio can exploit their emotional labour for personal gain. But as Jorge reflects, the intimacy of their jobs can also be extended for the cultivation of sexual affective relations.

Hospitality enterprises structure sexuality into the organization of jobs. Thus, they indirectly promote sexual-affective exchange through the description and requirements of occupations. This eroticization of labour blurs the boundaries between work and play, especially for *animadoras*, or activity directors and entertainment workers, whose job descriptions require that workers perform leisure activities. Hired primarily for their youth and good looks, animadoras round up guests to join conga lines, teach dancing, play beach volleyball and fraternize with

tourists as part of their jobs. The racialization of sexuality also figures prominently with *mulatos* and *mulatas*, or mixed-race people, hired for many entertainment positions but kept out of front desk and management jobs.

Animadores and animadoras, and certainly all hospitality workers, *must* learn to navigate a thin line between encouraged behaviour such as ‘safe flirting’ socializing with hotel guests, and more sexually explicit relations. In these latter cases, the worker risks being fired for crossing into unambiguous territory; sexual behaviour between hosts and guests is frowned upon and is ground for dismissal. Therefore, they must cautiously exploit the liminality of their positions for personal gain. Nevertheless, my research with hotel workers in Cuba and the Dominican Republic revealed that many actors participate in the sexual economy. Employees complement low wages by participating in the sexual-affective economy directly, through the provision of sexual services, or indirectly, by orchestrating interactions. Front-desk workers coordinate meetings or allow tourists to take an unregistered guest into their rooms. These practices implicate many different types of workers. Since the affairs that result between tourists and locals are similar to other heteronormative liaisons, many do not identify as participants in the sexual economy. Such complicated terrain means that people involved in sexual affective relations do not identify their actions as sex work or see themselves as brokers or paying clients.

John’s relationship blends into an area that I call suspect intimacies. John, an African-American man in his late fifties, claimed to have suffered through two divorces before meeting the woman of his dreams in a Dominican hotel. When talking about his relationship with a Dominican woman that he met three years ago, he started out by saying that he had failed at love until he went to Santo Domingo. ‘Now I know where the best women in the world can be found,’ he said. It all started one night when he was having a drink with his business partner at the hotel’s restaurant. The cocktail waitress said something that initially caught him off-guard. ‘She looked at me and said, “You have such big sad eyes. You look sad and need to take better care of yourself.”’ John assumed that she was simply seeking to increase her gratuity. He left her a big tip and went back to his room. A few hours later he heard a knock on the door of his room. Standing at the door was the cocktail waitress, holding a tray with dinner. She had finished her shift and came by to see if he needed looking after. He enjoyed a nice meal complete with fried *platanos* and a beer, and he fell asleep afterwards. The next morning he woke up in a panic. ‘Oh, no, I’ve been robbed. She must have stolen my wallet.’ He looked around the room and noticed that she had organized everything. Hanging in the closet were all the slacks that had previously been thrown about on the furniture and floor. Not only did she place his pants and shirts on hangers, but his undergarments were neatly folded in the drawer, and even his shoes found their way to the closet where they were nicely lined up. When he checked his pants, his wallet was intact. Nothing was missing. That same morning he went looking to thank her but was told that it was her day off from work. He got directions to her home but got lost. The next day, however, she showed up at work and he was so happy to see her that he invited her to go out after work. She took him home to meet her mother and son, instead. After that first stay in the Dominican Republic, John visited her every three months, staying as long as two or three weeks every time. He bought her a house and eventually they got married. John continues travelling and his Domini-

can wife remains in the Dominican Republic, saying that she does not want to live abroad.

Associating reciprocity and hospitableness in a context of poverty fuelled by global inequality is problematic. Yet, if we do not see the complexities of people's lives and the meanings that they strive for we run the risk of essentializing identities. Or we miss the many points of resistance. In the next section I turn to encounters that take place outside of hotels, in tourist-oriented geographies where sexual relationships between foreigners and locals are labelled as sex tourism. These interviews indicate that people understand their actions in a more productive fashion. An approach that stresses reciprocity, solidarity and affect, and that can ultimately offer a less stigmatizing concept of their identities and actions.

Affective relations that mingle sex and money are distrusted or derided in the scholarship on sex tourism (Sánchez Taylor 2001, 2006). Love is treated as an aberration, the misguided and delusional idea of the participants, a fantasy that needs a dose of analysis provided by the outside observers. For instance, encounters that take place between tourists and locals have been portrayed as inherently racist and exploitative (Sánchez Taylor 2001, Hernández 2005; O'Connell Davidson 1996). Gerry, an African-American doctor in his early fifties was aware of the misgivings connected to his relationship with a Cuban woman. A lover of jazz and all things connected to music, Gerry went to a few Cuban music festivals before meeting his current girlfriend. During his third trip to the island, he met a mixed-race woman in her mid-thirties who was visiting relatives in Havana. They struck up a conversation and friendship tied to their love of music. Subsequently he visited the island to be with her exclusively.

Gerry was well-informed about the research I was conducting when we sat down to talk in the office of his medical practice near Los Angeles, California. By this time he had been visiting his Cuban girlfriend for over three years. He felt that there was some disdain for his relationship and anticipated the conversation by saying:

I don't think this is sex tourism. I mean, yes, I'm a tourist, yes, we have sex. But I don't go there just to have sex with her. We have things in common; she's a beautiful person inside and out. She has a young son and I give her money to help her out. I pay for all our expenses because I make more money in America than she'll see in her lifetime. Is that exploitation? I'm not an exploitative person.

Gerry was correct in defending himself. Narrow definitions, distrust and repulsion of relationships that cross boundaries of race, ethnicity, class, and generation, and that involve the blending of money and sex, have eclipsed a more nuanced understanding of intimate encounters. It has certainly obscured the affective dimension of the encounter, portraying these as highly suspect performances of the heteronormative ideal of 'pure' love devoid of economic interest. Ignored are the meanings that people give to their interactions and the complex negotiations taking place.

Nick, an African-American man in his late sixties, also presents a case that puzzles easy descriptions of money in exchange for sex. Nick met a Cuban woman at a music festival in Santiago de Cuba, becoming romantically involved for two

years. She was at least thirty years younger than Nick. As he explained, her mother was closer to his age.

I know that she is poor and needs the money. I need the companionship and support she gives me. Last time when I left, I found out that my sister was ill. She was in the hospital dying, and I was crying and feeling so desperate all the time. I sent her an e-mail and started calling her, and she called me too. She was my only emotional support during this time. I don't know how to tell you this because my Spanish is so bad and she doesn't speak that much English, but she gave me a lot of love. When my sister passed away I collected all her jewels: all the rings and necklaces she had and I brought them with me to Cuba to give to her. I am not going to marry her, and I'm not going to move to Cuba, but I'm going to be her friend.

Instead of a clear-cut sexual exploitation or commercial exchange, Nick and John's sexual encounters called upon reciprocity and elements of social solidarity. The money in this case indicated support and consideration. Neither Nick, John, nor Gerry were involved in romantic liaisons free from unequal exchanges, but it is clear that these encounters developed mutual advantages for the parties concerned. The circulation of affect allowed the participants the opportunity to negotiate the meaning of the exchange, to build identities and practices that stressed social solidarity. As African-American men, how do their travels and encounter with the African Diaspora of the Caribbean inform their experiences? Are there elements of social solidarity present that get obscured by labels such as sex tourist?

I raise these questions because the experience of the African Diaspora in Cuba also complicates the way in which Cuban women give meaning to their involvements with tourists. Consider the following account by Nelty, a young mother of two. Nelty's story is emblematic of women that I interviewed in Cuba who defined and connected their encounters with foreign men, not as simple sex-for-cash arrangements, but as spiritual deliverance. During the harsh period of Cuba's transition from Soviet subsidies to a mixed market economy, Nelty and her family experienced some of the worst financial vulnerabilities of her life. When asked about encounters with tourists, Nelty narrated her actions as guided by the divine and sacred mother, Yemayá, who understood her suffering as a mother and answered her prayers. Nelty's account reveals how Yemayá's divine intervention aligned the spiritual with the exigencies of daily living. She explained that during the early years of the Cuban crisis she was getting desperate. 'To tell you the truth,' she said, 'I did not have anything, and I was going hungry 'like someone who is doing thirty years in prison' and with two children.'

Nelty's friend told her about the possibility of travelling to a tourist area to meet up with foreign men. They knew of women marrying foreigners, travelling, and supporting their families. She trekked to a tourist resort area with her friend.

We hitchhiked and got there in the afternoon, but I think that God granted us good luck because I prayed so much for my children. When we got to the terminal, my friend and I were so hungry that we ate pizza from the trash bin. The next day, we washed up in the bathroom of the terminal and went to the beach because they told us that it was easier to find tourists there. Four hours later,

when I thought I would die, I prayed to Yemayá, the virgin of the sea. A tourist passed by and said, 'What beautiful green eyes you have. Why are they so sad?' Maybe it was so much hunger. Everything started like that. It was my salvation. I went to stay with him, and he was crazy about me.

Yemaya is part of the divinities or orishas brought to Cuba by African slaves. Santería, or the Regla de Ocha, embodies the life strategies that African slaves improvised to resist dehumanization and survive. In Yoruba cosmology Yemayá is characterized as the goddess of 'universal motherhood,' the 'great mother' who not only raises her own children but also the children of others (Clark 2005, 18). She is the force or energy that protects mothers, and her elements are the oceans and salt waters (Brandon 1993).

Many of the women that I interviewed declared that they were aided by Yemayá. Before there was an experience with a foreign man there was a divine intervention, part of a primary relationship that served to eclipse other ways of understanding interactions with tourists. Their encounters with tourists were described not as sexual exchanges or commercialized sexual services but as a form of spiritual deliverance. Mothers, in particular, conceptualized their contact with tourists as part of an answered prayer. The sexual component, when there was one, was not the most important aspect of the meeting.

For single mothers without connections to the tourist economy and without overseas relatives that send remittances, affiliations with foreigners, whether they include sex or not, often provide unmatched economic returns. While monetary considerations are important the cases presented here indicate that so are affective and spiritual ones.

## Conclusion

The above cases indicate that liaisons between travellers and locals detail the heterogeneous, and fungible nature of intimate encounters and the degrees of intimacy that bring complexity to these arrangements. As feminist scholars and activists, have we not been treating love and care in sex tourism as if they were dead *cucarachas* in hotel rooms? As aberrations that should not exist? Just as we expect to find sterile hotel rooms, we want transcultural encounters to fulfil certain clear-cut notions of oppression or of love untainted by money. I am not suggesting that transcultural sexual encounters challenge the social order, but that they share some of the fundamental structures present in most romantic heterosexual arrangements and in the hospitality practices of hotels.

As the cases presented above indicate, by enacting and stressing the affective component of intimate encounters, people resist being reduced to sexual objects; they insist on their subjectivity, agency, and integrity. I propose that the meaning of sexual-affective exchanges is often incomplete for participants and that this allows for spaces where they can define and reevaluate intimacy to negotiate identity and mobility connected to affective ties.

Instead of maligning all sex tourism as inherently exploitative more awareness needs to be raised about the labour practices of transnational hospitality ventures as also sites of sex tourism and abuse. Activist attention needs to be paid to the emo-

tional labour extracted from hotel staff, and the lack of effective worker collective organizations, job security, and decent wages in these positions. That the labour process is organized along racial and gender divides, privileging lighter-skin males for the best positions, has gone unnoticed. The fact that workers are typecast based on age and goodlooks is also overlooked.

Activists and scholars are not calling for the abolition of hotel work for its unfair and inequitable labour practices, or for the sexist, racist, and ageist practices of transnational tourism. Furthermore, other forms of labour that are structured in unjust ways are not being challenged. It is difficult to imagine feminist scholars calling for the end of intimate forms of labour, such as that of childcare workers and nurses, even though these also involve asymmetrical relationships. Rather, a more flexible approach is present, one that clamours for more awareness, better working conditions, and more rights for workers employing emotional labour. This is a helpful approach that does not stigmatize people who find themselves in coercive labour regimes.

Travelling for sex, whether paid or not, can be a good thing. Depending on circumstances, it can potentially affirm our humanity and generate new opportunities for solidarity, love, and companionship. It may enhance the well-being of both parties. A feminist sex-positive approach to sex tourism calls for challenging the violent global structures of poverty and inequality that limit and distort life-enhancing possibilities for most people at the receiving end of tourism. This might shift our focus of representation away from evil men, and deluded women, to more pressing concerns. Thus far, the single-minded focus on formulaic interpretations of transracial, cross-generational intimacy, and paid sex as morally suspect, is limiting and does not capture the heterogeneity of arrangements and the ways that people negotiate love with money and pleasure.

While the scholarship on sex tourism has thus far maligned transcultural sexual encounters, mainly those that are visibly marked by differences, they have obscured and ignored economies of affective exchange that take place in the structures of transnational hospitality corporations. The management practices of resort hotels underscore the importance of affect, intimacy, and the promotion and enhancement of their guests' well-being in the delivery of services. This concern for affective relations, or customer care, within the performance of the tourism product signals the extraction of affect and passion as crucial components to the enterprise of travel and hospitality services. For transnational corporations, love clearly enhances global capital. Therefore, as researchers, activists and scholars, we need to be as attentive to love as corporations, and not as dismissive of its uses as we have been thus far.

## Notes

1. The new technologies such as the Global Distribution System, a computer reservations system used to purchase travel products, significantly reduces the participation of small suppliers (ILO 2001, Dunning and McQueen 1982).
2. The edited volume by Kempadoo (1997) contains sex work and sex tourism research on the Dutch

- and English-speaking Caribbean. For the French speaking Caribbean see Farmer (1992).
3. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (2010) indicates that for 2010 the Dominican Republic had the most tourist arrivals for the region, with 4,124,543 overnight stays. This figure is followed by Cuba with 2,531,745 tourist arrivals.

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