Hustling for a Good Story: The Narrative Crafting of Cuban Sexworkers During the Tourism Boom of the 1990s

Karina Lissette Céspedes

As a storyteller opens her heart to a story listener, recounting hurts that cut deep and raw into the gullies of the self, do you, the observer, stay behind the lens of the camera, switch on the tape recorder, keep pen in hand? Are there limits of respect, piety, pathos that should not be crossed?
Ruth Behar

During the decade of the 1990s traveling to, and studying, Cuba was *en vogue*. As part of the Cuba craze of the 1990s there emerged an unprecedented interest in the phenomena of Cubans selling sex. Such was the personal, intellectual and commercial interest in the emerging social categories of *jineteras* and *pingueros* that these became one of the most sought after experiences on the part of sex tourists, as well as one of the hottest topics for Cuba watchers to cover. The mediums through which coverage of these two emerging social identities (*jineteras* and *pingueros*) were reported ranged from on-line sex tourism travel guides, which openly referred to Cuba as "the final fucktier" and a "pussy paradise" (www.worldsexarchives.com; Fusco), to academic texts focused on "Sex and Revolution" (Smith and Padula), video documentaries asking "Who the Hell is Yuliet," and a myriad of articles in newspapers, magazines, and academic journals, all dedicated to the phenomena of Cubans "Hustling for Dollars" (Coco Fusco). There were novels set in post-Soviet Cuba showcasing "Dirty Havana Trilogies" as well as coffee table books featuring "Popular" Cuban life and culture with glossy pictures of hustlers and scenes of drunken sexual excesses standing in for "Cuban life and culture."

Additionally during the 1990s online sex tourism guides on Cuba flourished as a body of literature structured much like conventional non sexwork specific tourism guidebooks or websites. Both types of tourism guides detailed the best places to visit, the historical sites not to miss, and both provided advice on currency exchange rates and described the cultural peculiarities of various cities and towns. One significant difference however was that when Lonely Planet's guide to Cuba covered the Tropicana Night Club in Havana it did not mention, along with the cost of the entrance, the cost of sex acts offered by sex workers within the club. On-line sex tourism guides emerging out of the U.S. and Europe however detailed specific strategies sex tourists could put into practice in order to procure sex. These sex tourism guides ranked "must see" historical sites based on locations being "good pick up places." They meticulously detailed the method of identifying sex workers based on racial markers, and similar to conventional tourism guide books these websites often gave advice on foreign to local currency exchange rates based on the exchange of sex for goods or cash, all the while providing tips on how to "negotiate a better deal," or how to get more for less. The "tourist on a budget" tips offered by on-line sex tourism guides also described Cuba's cultural life, but as with all other matters, by specifically

addressing the island's culture of sexual freedom and the lack of police intervention sex tourists particularly interested in sexual encounters with minors were sure to enjoy.

The following on-line posting, which circulated during the mid-1990s, was just one example of the information sex tourists were sharing on the web as they mapped out the island; and similar to colonial forces before them looking for gold, sex tourists arriving to Cuba during the Economic Special Period were looking for unique experiences through which they could obtain the social superiority typically reserved for "first class citizens." This particular on-line posting stated:

> In Havana the girls that are the easiest to find are usually black and from Oriente. There are also white girls, but they may be a little bit harder to find and there are fewer of them, but actually just about any Cuban girl is available, many of them just don't know it until they make friends with a tourist ... You can pick a different girl each night but chances are that these girls will not want to leave you. Tourists in Cuba are a commodity ... The Cuban girls seem to need an incredible amount of clothes, and they hardly ever have any clothes on when they meet you. It is easy to find girls, or rather, the girls will find you easily, they are cheap ... but if stopped by the police don't worry you as a tourist face no risk of reprisal. You the tourist are the first class citizen (Atta & M 1996).

As part of such postings not only were the Cuban police commonly portrayed as being open to bribery, and sex tourists assured that within Cuba's cash starved economy tourists would be treated as "first class citizens," but within these "guides" it was common to encounter statements of disdain referring to Cubans as "lowlifes" and as "monkeys" (www.worldsexarchives.com).[1]

Yet the on-line guides produced by and for sex tourists were not the only accounts commenting on the availability of sex at discounted prices. Cuba watchers, emerging from various political and intellectual backgrounds, were also interested in the opening up of the island to tourists and in the subsequent "return" of prostitution. However, unlike the enthusiastic tone and promotional intent of sex tourism guides the reportings crafted by Cuba watchers treated the return of sex work within Cuba's socialist context as a great polemic, and barring a few exceptions, this analysis tended to fall within one of the following three categories of interpretation. The first, and the most popular interpretation among the anti-Castro press in Miami argued, to the exclusion of other factors,[2] that sex for sale in Cuba demonstrated the failure of socialism, and that the Cuban government was pimping its citizens. The second interpretation, often appearing in direct response to the first, emphasized that it was not the Cuban government that was taking advantage of Cuban citizens, but instead Cuban citizens had

turned their backs on the revolution and as such were prostituting in order to obtain luxury goods (Espin; Smith and Padula). This interpretation declared those who engaged in prostitution to be social deviants who had turned their backs on the revolution. By the mid-1990s this interpretation became the explanation embraced by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) (Vilma Espin 1995; Fusco 1998, 161). In retaliation to the first and second approach a third explanation of the "*jinetera* problem" placed the U.S. embargo at the center of analysis. This third interpretation stood in opposition to the two extremes mentioned above insisting that sex workers were "heroic providers" (Fusco 1998, 161) surviving a horrific economic crisis which was exacerbated by a combination of factors including the U.S. embargo, the desperation of the Cuban government to stay afloat, and foreign opportunism. Foreign opportunism in particular was argued to be evident in multinational corporations extracting enormous profits from Cuba and in the European sex tourists flocking to the island.

Independently of the individual political positioning of the analyst, the "explanations" crafted by Cuba watchers were ultimately driven by a curiosity and a desire to understand who exactly were these people entering the global economy: were they the sad victims of Castro's dictatorship, as anti-Castro reportings stated, or were they social deviants, as the FMC and others defending the Cuban government proposed? Or could they be the "heroic providers" that cultural critic Coco Fusco (1998) had described as enjoying great popular support evident in the songs of "salsa singers, the cab drivers' quips, and the bawdy folk art renderings of *jineteras*" (154). In the end, such approaches and explanations obfuscate a complete assessment of what was going on in Cuba, and with Cuban sex work. The limits of these narratives signal that a method was/is missing; a method that would bring forth the possibility for a different story, a different "diagnosis," a different understanding of what it means to exist in an era of globalization and to survive an economic crisis.

The interpretations of Cuba watchers ultimately held much in common with the on-line travel accounts and narratives of sex tourists. In spite of the more obvious differences between the sex tourism narratives circulating on the internet (such as the intent of the "genre" to promote sex tourism) the similarities between the accounts crafted by Cuba watchers and sex tourists could be found in how both made extensive and deliberate references to the racial markers that distinguished sex workers; both detailed with great precision the locations where sex workers could be found; both commented on, and listed, the pricing of sex acts, and both included an assessment of the innate and cultural sexual freedom of Cubans, and of sex workers in particular. Additionally, both literatures, in their own distinct ways, mapped for their respective audiences the "character" of Cubans by focusing on one of three possibilities; sex workers as victims, as social deviants, or as heroic providers in the midst of economic chaos.

An example of the shared attention within both types of narratives to racial types, location, pricing, and a culture of sexual permissiveness was found

in Andrei Codrescu's book *Ay Cuba!: A Socio-Erotic Journey* (1999). In this particular account, segments of which were reprinted in The New York Times and read on National Public Radio, Codrescu not only chronicled his personal "socio-erotic journey" through Cuba, but commented on the racial diversity of Cuban sex workers, described the best locations in which *jineteras* were to be found, made mention of the pricing and exchange rate for sexual services, and took note of the cultural acceptability of "free sex." Throughout the book, and subsequent NPR readings and interviews Codrescu remained critical of the U.S. embargo, but was also indecisive as to whether sex workers were heroic providers or deviant opportunists. As part of mapping his 'socio-erotic' journey Codrescu stated,

> The *jineteros* and *jineteras* jammed in front of the hotel entrance swarmed… like a happy flock of hummingbirds. The women were barelegged, dressed in short skirts or body-hugging Lycra, and spanned the color spectrum from Mediterranean white to lustrous ebony. The sounds of salsa from the disco next door had them on the move, hips wiggling, torsos shimmying, hands playing invisible maracas. The boys gave off the same signals, though they were not as overtly sexual as the girls, and offered themselves as tour guides. The girls offered—well everything. Most of them were young, barely sixteen, but they were unmistakably women, self possessed and most aware of the effect their surging bodies had on men … They were not averse to having a meal bought for them, and for a small present, they would gladly go to bed with their date… A tourist confined to this area would get an image of joyous, sensual Afro-Cubans, an image as clichéd as "happy pickaninnies" (Codrescu, 58).

Codrescu proceeded to describe Havana hotels as "awash in adolescent desire and cheap perfume," and Cuban girls as being naturally "sexually experienced from a very young age … [and for whom] … sex was some sort of initiation" (59). Here, the effortlessness with which Cubans engaged in sexual encounters was explained as being influenced by the revolution's impact on gender equity, but more so due to the "innate promiscuity" of Cubans.[3]

Similar to the on-line accounts claiming that "Cuba was a pussy-paradise," and in which Cubans were referred to as "monkeys," accounts by Cuba watchers highlighting how the hotels "were awash in adolescent desire," were also peppered with derogatory descriptions such as how " the Copacabana was packed with balding German men in shorts … with two girls on their lap ... Every nationality of middle-aged man was smothered in café-au-lait bounty at low tables laden with drinks … like pigs in shit" (Codrescu, 110). Codrescu's reference to the "café-au-lait bounty," and its sharp contrast to the image of

Germen male tourists surrounded by dark Cuban girls like "pigs in shit," was exemplary of the subtle, yet none the less demeaning tone used to describe Afro-Cubans that also made its way into the accounts of Cuba watchers.[4] Such comments found in accounts produced by sex tourists and Cuba watchers alike were paradoxically placed near musings on the inexplicable sensual allure of Afro-Cubans.

Such complex tales and descriptions detailing the ability to locate, interview, and/or purchase the services of a *jinetera* and/or a *pinguero,* and which also attempted to capture the character of the population under surveillance, emerged as a powerful commodity. This commodity became the centerpiece of a form of sociality which brought together otherwise unrelated individuals; sex tourists and Cuba watchers. This form of "sociality," revolved around the descriptions of objectified bodies and the sampling of culture, it transformed marginal and abject beings into focal points worthy of being both experienced and analyzed. Furthermore this form of sociality depended on experiencing these abject populations via "simultaneous disgust and fascination" (Maria Milagros Lopez 1993). In fact it is this very trope of the fascination with the sexual allure of Afro-Cubans, yet the inability to hide a powerful disgust and mistrust, that became part and parcel of a type of sociality joining Cuba watchers, sex tourists, and aficionados of "all things Cuban." This fascination and disgust became a fundamental part of the tourist's, as well as the analyst's gaze, if not the driving force that mapped a topography and a people. Ultimately it is the simultaneous fascination and disgust with Cuba as a site that can be studied and consumed which marked Codrescu's stay in Havana, and which is at the center of the mapping of his "socio-erotic" journey through the provinces of Oriente.[5]

Since it would not have been much of an erotic "journey" had Codrescu merely stayed in Havana the author details his trip to the provinces of Oriente. Once in Oriente, fascinated by the city of Santiago de Cuba, Codrescu maps the land and the inhabitants of the city by describing it as "the heart of Afro-Cuba: [where] the sun is hotter; the people are darker, and, everyone believes more passionate" (21). Here the author comments on the sexual arrangements occurring away from the noisy discos and red light districts that predominated his mapping of sex work in Havana. Preoccupied with the arrangements that occurred discretely in private home settings between foreign men and Cuban girls Codrescu recounts one particular visit to the house of a fifteen year old girl who, as he described her, was the "fiancé" of a forty-year-old U.S. citizen and close friend of the author. Here the reader learns from Codrescu that the adolescent girl named Yasmina received from her "fiancé" $100 every month (which although not addressed as such by Codrescu was the equivalent of receiving on a monthly basis a sum representing half a year's salary for a Cuban professional). Codrescu comments upon the sensuality of the young black women in this Santiago de Cuba household while conveniently missing the opportunity to critique the relationship between his American friend and Yasmina

as an example of the remittance dependent relations that emerged at the height of the 1990s "Cuba craze" between older foreign men and adolescent Cuban girls (and their families). He did however manage to capture what these arrangements represented for the sex tourists that become "enamored" with Cuban girls.

Codrescu reveals that these arrangements are at times the equivalent of having "a second family." The phrase "second family" under closer scrutiny translates into affordable vacations with access to sexual encounters with minors. However, as some Cubans I encountered during the 1990s interpreted such arrangements, under the guise of being a "fiancé" sex tourists who entered into formal arrangements with Cuban girls and their families were securing what some Cubans referred to as the "three C's"—*culo, casa, y comida* (sex, lodging, and affordable home cooked meals). Yet Codrescu merely focused on his friend's, as well as other tourists', attraction to young Cuban girls and in dissecting what it was about this population that he and others found so attractive. As such, the author proceeded to describe the allure of Yasmina's female kin by focusing on how the women in Yasmina's family possessed great beauty, and how "their legs were smooth, black and long, [how] the grandmother, in her fifties, could still turn a head or two, [how] Yasmina's older sister breast fed a plump baby, with her legs crossed," and how "one bare foot with long flexible toes swung back and forth" (141). Then, after dissecting the fascinating bodies of Yasmina and her female kin, Codrescu turned his attention to the "problematic" male members of Yasmina's family.

The author initially mistrusted the male members of Yasmina's family. They were described by Codrescu as being "silent during the entire exchange, and though they smiled, I thought that they were angry and that there was trouble ahead" (141). Once he has departed from the house, and once the sentiment of threat had subsided, Codrescu muses in his account about what these young men thought about "their little sister's "affair" with a much older man" (142), and asked, "what was going to come of the wounded pride of young Cuban men who watched their women go off with foreigners for clothes and food?"

This concern over Cuban masculinity also appeared in the accounts reported back from the field by anthropologists and cultural critics. This concern over Cuban masculinity became yet another point of sociality between and among sex tourists and analysts. As such, years later anthropologist G. Derrick Hodge (2003) in his ethnographic study of *pingueros* (gay male sex workers) in Havana responded to Codrescu's question of "what will happen to the wounded pride of Cuban men," by arguing that Cuban men will also go off with foreigners in order to obtain clothes and food. Hodge goes on to propose that the onslaught of capitalism had produced a shift in Cuban masculinity.[6] This shift in "macho" and hetero-normative masculinity which was evident in the openly queer identities Cuban men were claiming was due to a "commodification of identity"[7] which emerged as *pingueros* became highly sought after by gay male tourists.

This "commodification of identity" in turn subsidized what Hodge argued to be an "addiction to commodities" (630).[8] According to Hodge this addiction was evident in the addictive obsession many *pingueros* developed for brand-name clothing (such as Tommy Hilfiger and Nike), and in the ability of these brand-name commodities to provide an illusion of prosperity. To prove this hypothesis Hodge comments that for *pingueros* "the Nike obsession is beyond what we might call idolatry, one *pinguero* has a Nike swoosh tattoo on his right outer biceps. Every time he flexes he promotes the values of consumption and proclaims the pending capitalist onslaught" (630).[9]

Coco Fusco, who was also writing on Cuban sex work during the 1990s similarly concluded that "everything appeared to be upside down … the men are at home with aprons cooking, and taking care of the kids while their wives are on the street working" (1998, 154).[10] However unlike Hodge's hypothesis Fusco interpreted the shift in masculinity/femininity as not influenced by an addiction to commodities but by the extreme hunger Cubans were facing. For Fusco the destitution Cubans were enduring was the primary factor influencing families and committed couples to enter into arrangements in which sex tourists were taken into their homes and into their families. Fusco illustrated shifts in gender roles, the likes of which had not been seen since before the revolution (and under entirely different circumstances) by citing one of her informants' responses to her inquiries into what Cuban men thought about Cuban women bringing tourists home. Here Fusco's informant responded, "the men they didn't see a tourist, they only saw a chicken, beans, rice—a full fridge" (153). Using sex work to obtain basic necessities such as food, a much needed refrigerator, or even such luxury goods as a pair of Nike shoes, all of which would be otherwise unobtainable without foreign currency, was reported by Fusco as simply being part of a series of complex survival strategies which no one had the right to judge as these were the "private choices of adults" (155).

Yet neither Fusco's conclusion that the "women on the street" were "heroic providers" dismantling traditional gender roles, nor the interpretation that the shifts in masculinity were connected to an "addiction to commodities" proved to be complete or precise. These observations ignored the critique available within women of color feminist theory in the U.S. (Lorde, Anzaldúa, Hill-Collins) which has asserted for decades that not only have most poor and racialized women historically worked outside of their own homes, and have in many cases been the primary earners within their households, as well as in several instances not been exclusively monogamous or even heterosexual, but in addition the very guidelines for measuring just how "addicted" people became to commodities, or even just how "upside down" everything was, confirmed instead of shifts within Cuban masculinity/femininity that gender roles within the population under investigation have always been in flux. For this racialized population gender roles have historically been placed at the service of capital. Gender roles have been provoked and defined by constant adaptation to colonial, imperial,

nationalist, socialist,[11] and more contemporary flows of global capital. Moreover, while analysts were preoccupied outlining possible shifts in gender roles, or detailing voyeuristically, and with almost too much narrative pleasure, what types of sex acts sold, and in some instances unfortunately misreading the bravado of a destitute population as "self-possession" (Codrescu), what was being overlooked was the fact that these "private choices of adults" (Fusco) where in many instances acts undertaken by adolescents in order to secure both individual and collective survival. But also that descriptions of this sort maintained unchallenged the uses of this population as cheap labor, as sources of entertainment, and as easily available sexual partners.

The ways in which at the time of the analysis[12] journalists and scholars tragically ignored the fact that among the very "men" and "women" being interviewed, studied and described were a substantial number of adolescents became intensely clear after conducting my own interview during the winter of 1996 with a Cuban school teacher working in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Havana. This school teacher worked with adolescent girls who had been detained by the Cuban police for engaging in prostitution, while the tourists that had been "accompanying" these girls had either not been questioned at all, or had bribed their way out of trouble. This teacher, who was reluctantly involved in the FMC's *jinetera* rehabilitation program (which required that teachers report on, and monitor, school age *jineteras)*[13] during our interview described how she had not only tried her best to work around the penalizing structure set up between the FMC and the authorities regarding *jineteras,* but to this she added the following;

> It is worrisome because they are so young. For example, in the school where I teach we usually begin to notice absences. Recently we noticed the absence of a twelve-year-old girl [the girl was identified as being Afro-Cuban by the teacher]. As part of my duties [with the FMC] I went to visit her, and the mother didn't know where she was. When the police caught her she was with a group of girls and claimed to be merely "talking" with tourists. The girls had hickeys and they were carrying a few dollars. I asked the girl I was responsible for why she had done this and she told me that she was bored, that she wanted nice things like some of her friends. This girl kept having problems. We would pick her up and take her to school but she would leave. But, what is more worrisome is that I have (*compañeras*) colleagues of (*alto nivel cultural*) well educated and enjoying a relatively high social status who for economic reasons are sending their daughters of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen to look for what we vulgarly call '*el waniquiqui*' (Cuban slang for dollars). They tell their daughters, 'find yourself a "john" because we need someone to support us.' I have had words and confrontations

> with friends, I tell them, 'you want to have nice things then offer yourself, risk yourself, hustle and work the streets yourself for your daughter!' Yet, they rather expose their daughters to illnesses. Poor girl doesn't know any better. I know of cases where young girls after being with three or four men have breakdowns. Do you think that a fourteen-year-old body, which is not physically ready for what is required, can hustle? Impossible, they are girls and it is a crime to see them risk their lives for a few rags and a couple of dollars. On this issue I also blame the state for allowing musicians to sing songs which promote this lifestyle of getting *waniquiqui*.[14]

The *jineteras* described by this Havana school teacher were a far cry from either the social deviants the FMC was intent on "rehabilitating," or the self-possessed barely sixteen year olds who had sex with tourists as part of an "initiation" (whom Codrescu found to be "unmistakably women"), or even the "addicted to commodities" subjects being reported by Cuba watchers who turned a blind eye to the available research connecting the national development projects of poor underdeveloped nations with the global rise in adolescent and pre-pubescent children engaging in sex work (and other servile occupations) in order to ensure collective survival (Black 1995; Kempadoo 1998; Doezema 1998; Murry 1998). These popular types of explanations regarding the "phenomena" of Cuban sex work ultimately obstructed a full assessment of the strategies deployed by the Cuban state to save face and to "save socialism," these also ignored the economic, social, and psychological impact of the economic crisis, a minor's entitlement to a non-exploitative childhood, and overlooked the violations endured by an entire population in favor of the demands of capital and the desires of those with power (including those trying to get a "good story").

Yet such a body of work, blind spots and all, provides extremely useful insights into the logic that propelled this particular fascination/disgust with the "phenomena" of Cuban sex work. Moreover, for those committed to analyzing these "explanations," and interested in understanding why these approaches "made sense," questioning the logic behind these interpretations can provide a way out of a series of interpretive binds. However, an inquiry into the logic that produced such interpretations necessitates a detour of sorts into the ways in which within Western thought "the prostitute," as a social identity, has been constructed as both an object to be experienced and a problem to be solved (Clift and Simon 2000).[15] It requires a detour into the early scholarship on prostitution which emerged out of the rise of sociobiology and Eugenics during the nineteenth century and where under the scrutiny of the doctor, the social scientist and law enforcement, the brains, the genitals, the facial features, hair texture, the shape of limbs, and the hands of prostitutes were studied for signs of racial differences, for evidence of deviance, and to prove that prostitution was both a

genetically transmitted disease and a racial predisposition (Cabezas 1998, 80). As such racialized populations, were considered to be somatically different from "normal" white heterosexuals and this early "scholarship" claimed that prostitutes were nymphomaniacs and vectors of disease, lacked moral standards, and were above all pathological, unintelligent, emotionally immature, lazy, vain, and childlike (81).

This earlier approach to the "scholarship" on prostitution had been for the most part abandoned by the late twentieth century. The study of prostitution had shifted away from an accounting of deviancy and had instead turned toward a critique of patriarchy, capitalism, and the social construction of race, gender and sexuality. This late twentieth century shift led many analysts to conduct research that moved away from gauging prostitution as a genetic predisposition, and instead led scholars to focusing their studies on the economic and social factors that created a need to commodify and exchange sex. In spite of the fact that contemporary scholarship on sex work may no longer attempt to prove pathological traits within a population when it came to the analysis of Cuban sex work there were significant instances in which the subjects under investigation were unable to escape a sort of surveillance that repeated the field's early preoccupation with racial and behavior markers of social deviancy. Within these late twentieth century descriptions the inability to move away from the field's earlier preoccupation was evident in the attention given to racial markers, and to hair texture, to facial features, skin shading, the shape of limbs, and the absence or presence of gestures, including the flexibility of toes, as part of the analyst's assessment of the mystique or allure of Afro-Cubans and mulattos, the popularity of the Cuban phallus, or even the gauging of deviancy under the guise of diagnosing an "addiction to commodities." Such descriptions confirmed connections established early in the history of the field between prostitution and deviancy via the diagnosis of addictions, but they also repeated an easy exchange between the terms "women" and "girls," as well as "men" and "boys," that has historically been used to deny full humanity and consideration to racialized populations.[16]

An example of such preoccupations, and the field's legacy of tracking pathological behavior and then correlating these with biological/racial predisposition, can be found within contemporary reportings on Cuban sex work in anthropologist G. Derrick Hodge's diagnosis of *pingueros* as facing an "addiction to commodities" which is further supported by a listing, on the part of Hodge, of all of the ways in which he had found one of his informants to be ignorant, emotionally immature, lazy, vain, and childlike. Hodge described one of his informants by stating that,

> Of course he could not understand the role that his work—and his body—had for the new Cuban economy … he did not understand that the collapse of the Soviet Union had brought as

> well the collapse of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the socialist states' trading alliance, and the extremely lucrative trade relations it facilitated. He didn't know about Fidel's Decree Law 50, which… [created]… the legal base for normalizing and organizing the process of foreign investment… nor about the Fourth Party Congress of 1991 that codif[ied] capitalism ... What he did know was that there were foreigners … who would pay top dollar for a chance to sample the famous Cuban phallus, renowned both in gay travel networks and in literary representations of Cubanidad (Hodge, 630).

Here, not only did Hodge describe his informant as ignorant of the shifts in national economic policies but he also portrayed his informant as unable to understand the role that his body had in sustaining the "new" economy. Moreover, by highlighting the knowledge *pingueros* did have as limited to the mere fact that there were "foreigners who would pay top dollars for a chance to sample the famous Cuban phallus," Hodge not only obscures the fact that, like most Cubans, sex workers were extremely aware of economic, political and legal shifts effecting their lives, (although depending on the individual perhaps not by exact names, acronym or Decree Law numerations), but Hodge's staging of the "knowledge" *pingueros* did have, which included their awareness of gay travel networks and of literary representations of "Cubanidad" outside of the island is ultimately improbable because it is highly unlikely that an individual within a context like that of Cuba would be more aware of foreign "networks" and literary representations of "Cubanidad," operating outside of their own context then they would be of the internal economic and political shifts which completely altered their lives.

Additionally, Hodge's reference to the literary representations of "Cubanidad" becomes exemplary of Kamala Visweswaren and Renato Rosaldo's contention that ethnography draws much from fiction in order to "get the reality right." Within a format that is theoretically dedicated to telling sociological truths, and in a world where the "social fact" promised to be exposed may be more properly understood to be an artifact such an approach toward telling the "truth" about Cuban sex workers is not unique to Hodge, or any one particular analyst. More than simply falling back on these "tried and true" themes, or pornotropes (Spillers) of hyper-sensuality and ignorance, vanity, and laziness Hodge's centering of the "renowned" Cuban phallus "in gay travel networks and in literary representations of "Cubanidad" is an interesting example of how literary tropes are deployed by anthropologists, journalists, and other cultural critics as part of their analysis[17] and is useful toward understanding the place of fictive literary narrative strategies within accounts otherwise dedicated to telling sociological truths.

But, most interesting within Hodge's assessment of what *pingueros* did or did not know is his claim that the Cuban phallus would be central to the knowledge *pingueros* did possess. The description, as such, was reminiscent of claims established during the nineteenth century which argued that prostitutes, and racialized populations, were at their core dangerously hyper-sexual, ignorant, vain, and lazy. Moreover, the crafting of a population at the mercy of what Hodge termed to be a "commodification of desire," (a condition which according to Hodge made it impossible for *pingueros* to perform sexually without payment), served as a way for Hodge to conclude that "here, there is no love without money" (634).[18] Hodge illustrated this dilemma (of a commodification of desire and an inability to love without money) by way of quoting a sex worker he described to be the "father of the *pingueros,"* as stating the following,

> I like sex with young guys, but as much as I like it or want to fuck, if you don't pay me, I won't go with him, you understand? So if you don't pay me, I would rather jerk off with a magazine alone at home, because having sex for money is my profession… I would like to, but I can't have sex without money… My heart won't let me (633)."

Yet this "commodification of desire," and this "diagnosis" which scrutinizes a population for signs of difference and settles upon a supposed inability to "love" (love being one of the most fundamental markers of humanity) transforms the diagnosis of a population's inability to love as "proof" of its distance from full humanity. The diagnosis that "here, there is no love without money," maintains that this very population is a problem which needs to be solved. Moreover this "diagnosis" becomes a method of describing just how different "they" are from "us," and becomes a part of a larger response to a question which drives many of the investigations into Cuban sex work. It is a question that appeared as the title of the award winning documentary on Cuban sex work "Who the Hell is Yuliet?"; it is a question that fundamentally asks "who are these people entering the global economy?'

The project of scripting a narrative that will explain "who are these people?" is a preoccupation within the West that has influenced the very methods used to tell a story about the "Other." Ultimately, answering the question of "who are these people" requires the fusion and incorporation of specific narrative strategies that have proven themselves to be effective. As already mentioned one of the narrative strategies utilized in crafting accounts of Cuban sexwork shares much with the nineteenth century genetic and sociobiology literature which utilized the dissection of bodies as a basis for establishing believable "scientific" definitions on the character of a racialized population.

In addition to the nineteenth century sociobiological narrative template yet another narrative template, with its own tropes and tactics, was utilized within

the crafting of late twentieth century explanations of Cuban sex work. This other template was developed as part of the nineteenth century abolitionist narrative. When looking at the similarities between the accounts crafted around Cuban sex work and the nineteenth century abolitionist genre the following points of connection are most noticeable. Much like the nineteenth century abolitionist narrative accounts recorded by Cuba watchers during the 1990s were seldom, if ever, exclusively written by those which the narrative aimed to represent.[19] Instead accounts where typically written by someone other then the sex worker and then passed on at an even greater remove. Stories tended to highlight for the reader the difficulties endured by the author in acquiring their "unique" Cuban sex work story. Here the author typically detailed the trials and tribulations endured in order to reach Cuba, to get the stories "while there," and then to get these "unique" stories "out of Cuba" and eventually to the reader. Such tales simultaneously served as a validation of the account's accuracy. Moreover, similar to the abolitionist narrative, the tales of Cuban sex work combined the biographical and autobiographical (in how it served as a personal account for the one who authored the tale while offering snippets of the voices of the population under investigation), the ethnographic (in how it spoke of someone else and delivered both interpretive conclusions and diagnosis), the literary (not only in its ability to draw upon literary references such as the "renowned" Cuban phallus in literary representations of "Cubanidad," or included references to Cuban literary figures (Reinaldo Arenas, José Martí) but also included the very literal and specific attention to the acquisition of literacy by Cubans),[20] the political was also included in how the narratives produced accounts of power (by using as a trope references to the Cuban leadership and to Castro in particular), and last but not least, the accounts were concerned with the historical in their present tense coverage of the onslaught of capitalism, the lack of love without money, the "pigs in shit," the run away attempts of *jineteras*, the addiction to commodities of *pingueros*, the swaying back and forth of long flexible toes by young black women nursing babies, all of which referenced the past, while capturing the present moment and suggesting racial as well as other differences between "them" and "us").[21]

Yet somewhat paradoxically, within the same text and alongside references to the differences between "them" and "us" (i.e. "here there is no love without money") appeared references that connected Cubans with the culture conducting the investigation via traditional as well as contemporary definitions of what it means to be 'literate.' Within nineteenth century abolitionist texts scenes depicting the acquisition of literacy were 'literally' used to convey 'humanity.' Within late twentieth century accounts of Cuban sex workers references to the high literacy rate of the Cuban population when compared with other Latin American or 'Third-World' countries were commonly used to draw a connection between "them" and "us." Also, the literacy of Cubans was addressed not only via the inclusion of statistical literacy rates, but these were also accompanied by

more contemporary markers of literacy which focused not only on the ability to read but the educational or professional potential of the population which further marked the intellectual and professional value of the subjects under investigation. This attention to the literacy of Cubans, and particularly to the potential of Cubans to be "like us," (via education, or profession) were found in comments such as, 'Paco, was an incredibly bright fourteen year old *jinetero* who spoke at least three languages and dreamed of someday having his own business, and in the U.S. he would have gone far' (Hodge).

Attention to literacy and professional potential were also accompanied by assessments of the possible success of the sex worker if they were only able to "run away."[22] Scenes of runaway attempts marked abolitionist tales and these also underscored the assessment of Special Period sex workers. Exemplary of this interest in run away attempts was cultural critic Coco Fusco's account in which she detailed how one of her informants had indeed "run away" from sex work by marrying a Spaniard only to then find herself having to "run away" from Spain in order to escape a bad marriage and run back to Cuba, and back to sex work. Here Fusco reported that,

> When I asked her about getting out of the business, Helen told me, "I got married once … I thought I'd go to Spain and start a new life. I thought I would work, and that we would live together. But he wanted to keep me at home all day. He would not let me work or go out. It lasted two months, and then I realized that I had to get out … I had no money, and no place to go, so I had to come back here … Helen knew that some *jineteras* triumphed in Europe, but that others were stuck in awful situations, and forced by pimps to work long hours seven days a week. At least in Cuba, she could survive working a few times a month (Fusco, 152).

Alongside the tracking of "run away" attempts there were also accounts that included stories detailing acts of sexual violence and defilement at the hands of pimps and exploitative sex tourists. The pervasiveness of 'scenes of defilement' as a method of gaining both sympathy and even producing an erotic charge was a successful strategy within realist texts of the nineteenth century and in the case of contemporary Cuba the deployment of sensationalized account of violation and rape were also utilized strategically. These contemporary scenes of defilement tended to go no further than the retelling itself and offered little beyond the sense that "that's the way things are in Cuba." The sense of powerlessness such descriptions communicated may have fed the appetites of some for violence and misery, and may have fueled erotic fantasies for some, or may have sentimentally moved others, but these account did so at the expense of not being able to one, move beyond the scope of the narrative

strategy being deployed, and two, grapple with the complexities of Cuban sex work beyond assessments insisting in the ultimate triumph of capitalism.

Differing from the premises under which the geneticist literature of the nineteenth century proliferated, the abolitionist genre was specifically structured to prove a definition of "humanity" but a definition which white liberal audiences could feel comfortable with, which required a definition that championed freedom but also did not threaten their sense of superiority. The usage of discursive strategies developed within nineteenth century abolitionist narratives is not new to the telling of stories about 'the Cuban.' Initially the tactics I am describing were made popular among literate white liberal audiences in the U.S, Europe and Cuba[23] during the nineteenth century. This narrative template was a strategy developed during the nineteenth century to characterize an enslaved population and as such was designed to answer "who are these people" and are they worthy of total "equality," "humanity," and freedom.

The genre crafted a narrative template through which to answer for white liberal audiences "who were those people" caught in the grips of slavery and could "they" truly be "like us?" Yet proving the "humanity" of the enslaved required more then a critique of the objectification of fellow human beings, it required drawing on a range of conventions, styles, creative designs and tropes with which to forge a relationship between a white liberal reading audience and the population in question.

The analysis of such narrative strategies developed to assure "believability" permits a different assessment of the late twentieth century narratives on Cuban sex work. What is critical is that these interpretations, and these narrative approaches (both during the nineteenth and late twentieth century), "made sense" to an entire network of writers, editors and readers precisely because as realist texts, [24] these accounts utilized just those "tried and true" narrative strategies able to reproduce "what we already seem to know" (Belsey 1980; Visweswaren 1994) about the commodified and commodifiable "Other."

The world that realistic narratives evoke, with their patterns of cause and effect (i.e. prostitution is always connected to addiction and prostitutes are social deviants), their attention to social relationships and moral values (i.e. the *pingueros* have a "father," in a place where there is "no love without money") and their ability to make the strange familiar by establishing order and function out of disorder and disharmony, and the tendency to craft fictions in which everything holds together and groups are eventually divided along traditional categories of social, economic, religious, and other so-called organizations (i.e. *pingueros* being categorized as an organized group that can be physically, ideologically and morally gauged), largely confirms the pattern of the world "we" (the reader and the analyst) seek to know (Belsey). Such strategies neither serve the population which the narrative attempts to represent, nor the reading public. It does not redefine the "sense of superiority" that might be held by the reader, nor what

was/is already "known," and/or assumed about the character of the population under surveillance. Instead the strategies deployed to secure "sounding truthful" confine the account to merely those aspects of commodification which audiences anticipate and thereby leading to a greater fictionalization of the personal, collective and national tragedy produced by the very existence of economies dependent upon sexual commodification. Since the deployment of specific strategies that liberal audiences would find convincing, and compelling, results in accounts accommodating to the prejudices held by the readership, what is revealed about a population can not venture too far from the belief that racialized populations were/are prone to lying, cheating, and stealing.[25] This also means that narratives must combine a series of scenes and tropes that facilitate a sense of simultaneous fascination and disgust; as they paradoxically created a sense of empathy while also affirming sentiments of doubt. This commodifiable format that structures the telling, and the (re)telling, of what is real transforms "the real" itself into fictions where pornotropes (Spillers)[26] and themes "we already seem to know" fill the gaps for what is not known. As such, within the recounting of Cuban sex work part of what was intelligible for both analyst and audience were familiar themes such as the allure of the mulatta, the endearing caricature of the prostitute with the heart of gold, and the criminality and "addiction" of a racialized population. Moreover, just as there was a limit to the strategies used within the abolitionist genre to create a sympathetic character there were also limits to the portrayal of sex workers as "heroic providers" (Fusco) or victims of defilement. These "limits" were evident in the accounts reporting back how sex workers were dangerously mimicking 'First-World' codes and modes of behavior in order to cross into tourism zones with the purpose of stealing from, and mercilessly hustling, unsuspecting tourists which in such accounts were innocents instead of sexual predators.

The use of these narrative strategies signals that what is missing is a method with which to analyze the impact of Cuba's post-Soviet restructuration and the "addiction to commodification" which afflicts the West. The fact that there is a "missing method" puts those interested in understanding the economic and political complexities of Cuban social identities beyond the realm of "what we already seem to know" in an awkward position because to write on Cuban sex work under these circumstances requires that one traverse a mine-field of Cuban social identities under multiple commodification and necessitates addressing not only the complexities of what is happening "over-there" but also demands engaging in an interpretive debate over the scripting of Cubanness within and across political and intellectual landscapes. Finding a way out of such a conundrum requires that narrative strategies be investigated as sited where even the attempt to "tell the raw truth" is transformed into a commodity. In fact questioning the story-telling strategies which theoretically and politically support "freedom," but which also hold in place the fear of what the liberation of the racialized other really means, is crucial if the goal is to go beyond the demand of

qualifying subjecthood and quantifying conditions of oppression (Spivak, 1992; Behar 1993; Visweswaren 1994; Fernandes 2000). Admitting that indeed a "method is missing" and that despite years of reportings, intensive surveillance, and interpretations, the lives of Cuban sex workers remain for the most part unknown reveals the limits of these reportings and permits questioning how, and why, the details of social identities are gathered up for public consumption. This is important if the goal is to confront the assumption that cultures can be read as straightforward texts or even as performances. Such an approach, detailing how in fact we know less than we could/should/must know about how Cubans have survived the violence of modernity, [27] and admitting that what we think we know is neither transparent or innocent (Spivak, [28] Visweswaren[29]) can result in the accounts "we" produce being much more capable of reflecting back to the readers the problems of inquiry—at the same moment an inquiry is being conducted.

Moreover, analyzing the ways in which Cuban sex work was being scripted, the ways in which tropes/pornotropes were deployed, how pictures were displayed,[30] and symbolisms concocted, also permits questioning the role of a lucrative publishing economy (which flourished during the 1990s) that sought out the stories of a literate, yet problematic population of color made up of addicted to commodities barely sixteen year old "adults" exchanging sex as either a "part of an initiation," or as a result of not being able to "run away."

An approach that questions the interpretations mentioned here and that quite simply asks, 'how do we move beyond the dichotomies of— victims or heroes, addicts or self-possessed agents?' ultimately is an attempt to move beyond "getting right the reality, we already seem to know." This however is a massive project, and very fragile, but it does not mean that we can never know anything. It does however presume that to confront the subaltern is not to represent them, but to represent "ourselves." In fact, the recognition that real representations are fictions too and that such a recognition exposes the imaginary zone the investigating culture has for what is personally, historically, and sociologically excluded, unspeakable or unimaginable, disrupts the illusion that the "real" *jinetera* or *pinguero* can be found precisely where (s)he will not be—in the "description." Such an approach returns us to the lives of Cubans facing economic chaos and commodification in a way that is relevant for studies on Cuban post-Soviet social identities not only because, despite extensive analysis, what is clear is the angst of the observer, but more so because it reveals that there is nothing stranger than humans observing other humans in order to write about them.[31]

End Notes

1. Within accounts promoting sex tourism in Cuba there were often found references to Afro-Cubans as "monkeys."
2. To support this claim that the Cuban government was pimping Cuban women critics of the Cuban leadership point to the fact that the magazine *Playboy* had been allowed to publish an issue featuring

"The Girls of Cuba" (1990) in, alongside the speech by Fidel Castro's in 1992 in which the Cuban leader commented that Cuban women were *jineteras* because they liked sex, and that they were among the healthiest and best educated hookers in the business.

3. Within Codrescu's accounts, and the accounts of others, there is a distinction between "sex loving Cuban girls" and hardcore prostitutes. This distinction is most apparent when the subject of violence and exploitation at the hands of sex tourists was eventually addressed. Within these brief comments regarding violence the "free" and almost innocent sexual encounters between tourists and locals were excluded. Moreover in instances reported of physical abuse suffered by tourists these violent encounters were not relegated to being the experience of the average sex loving Cuban girl simply out to have some fun, but were instead experiences assigned to hardened "professional hookers" whom were scripted as being much more likely to experience acts of violence at the hands of tourists, 'johns' and pimps.

4. In some instances comments such as these were placed in the voice of someone other than the author, and "reported" as being the opinion of another witness.

5. The same province referenced by sex tourist's as providing much of the sex workers detailed in the online sex tourism guides by type, location, price, and sexual availability.

6. Hodge argues that although Cuban men were unaccustomed, and un-allowed by the state, to declare themselves as members of a category other than *hombre* (men) he had found that as identities mutated to fit the logic of the market gay male sex workers had to distinguish themselves from both female sex workers (*jineteras*), and con artists calling themselves *jineteros* by establishing a term that would easily identify them as gay sex workers.

7. Such self naming as that of "pingueros," Hodge argued, became a marketing tool that lets the traveler know what to ask for, where to get it, and what to expect (629). This term was quickly disseminated among privileged capitalist gay males engaging in sex tourism.

8. The diagnosis of "addiction" is misleading because as such Cubans are no more "addicted to commodities" and consumption as are most U.S. citizens.

9. Yet if the fact that Cubans indeed admire such brand names as Tommy Hilfiger or Nike, (as do many people living in the U.S.) is set aside, it is quite possible that the swoosh which brands Hodge's informant instead of merely signaling that capitalism has ravaged the body of this particular *pinguero*, as Hodge argues, additionally can be read as signaling that his body is in the service of capital in no way different then it would have been under socialism's method of securing capital which also required a "branding" of identity such as "revolutionary" or the "New Man," and which might have also included a tattoo of Che Guevara or a Soviet hammer and sickle. In short, this tattoo may say less about the onslaught of capitalism then it does about the historical uses of racialized bodies.

10. Unlike other analysts which focused on how gender shifts were the product of capitalism, Fusco argues that for women such shifts in gender roles were the result of decades of free birth control, sex education, co-ed boarding schools and a social system that reduced parental control and laid the groundwork for increased permissiveness all of which had also removed the stigma of women having an active sex life, before or outside of marriage. In addition, Fusco pointed out that Cuban intellectuals, attempting to evaluate the meaning of the increasing openness about extra-marital sex—including gay, lesbian and bisexual activity, were interpreting the sexual freedom of Cubans as an unspoken revolt against both the socialist emphasis on productive labor and the Cuban state's authority to intervene in the private choices of adult women (Fusco, 156).

11. The ideological campaigns engendering the "New Man" (after the triumph of the Revolution) set a series of parameters of appropriate revolutionary masculinity. Moreover, the revolution focused just as much attention on creating guidelines for appropriate womanhood in order to counter the image of poor Cuban women as prostitutes, as it did in establishing parameters for masculinity. The *Revolucionaria*, the formerly oppressed and illiterate woman who emerged as a worker and fighter, this "New Woman" of the revolution overwhelmingly represented as young and fertile, can be found in revolutionary era mass propaganda and during the economic Special Period of the 1990s she was found in tourism zones on post-cards and other forms of souvenirs, smiling and marching, working in fields or in factories, with an aura of liberation around her. If the revolution's stance on homosexuality which stated that "… no homosexual represents the Revolution, which is a matter for men, of fists and not feathers, of courage and not trembling…" (El Mundo, 1965. Havana Cuba) can be combined with

one of the early articulations of the revolution's main purpose, which was to rescue the feminized island and by extension poor Cuba women from the corruption of capitalist exploitation, then the revolutionary nationalist project, which many thought had merely consolidated a definition of appropriate masculinity (by promoting the ideal of the "New Man" or revolutionary womanhood), had instead (with the crisis of the Special Period) lost any semblance of organizing what was deemed within the revolutionary project itself was a problematic populations.

12. In some instances the fact that the informant was a minor merely appeared as a lamentable reality that became part of a larger pornotrope (Spillers) where sex work was linked to youthful rebellion or fit a quota for sensational defilement.

13. However many school age jineteras, which maintained consistent attendance were not identified and fell below the radar of FMC monitoring.

14. The Havana school teacher believed that the lyrics of a very popular song during the late 1990s in Cuba by the band David Calsado *y Su Charanga Habanera*, had played a part in glamorizing sex-work for young women. These lyrics told young women to find a 'papiriqui con mucho waniquiqui"—a sugar daddy and declared that they were on their own and support would only be provided by those with access to dollars.

15. The increase in travel and displacement during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the colonizer's preoccupation with pleasure and servitude, also increased the concerns for illness, contamination and death. The site of contamination most feared was that of the racialized "primitive" and that of the prostitute (Cabezas 1998, 59).

16. This facile exchange was evident in reportings by Cuba watcher, and sex tourists alike.

17. Regarding how literature influences social inquiry Renato Rosaldo's work detailed how the documentary ethnography of Evans-Prichard and Le Roy Ladurie borrowed their narrative strategy from the literary genre of pastorals. Here Renato Rosaldo looks at the work of Evans-Pritchard and historian Le Roy Ladurie and as part of his analysis states that in using ethnography they have created fictions about power. Rosaldo states that curiously enough, the ethnographer and the historian come together in asserting that transhuman pastorism engenders democratic values, rugged individualism, fierce pride, and a warrior spirit: Not unlike cowboys and other self-sufficient male heroes, the Nuer appear to embody idealized characteristics of a certain masculine imagination. Although militarily "pacified"… as initially suggested by their resistance to ethnographic inquiry, they represent an ideal of human liberty (Rosaldo, 86).

18. But such a conclusion is made without Hodge stating in this piece how he is defining "love" or how definitions of "love" and survival fit into his analysis.

19. By the mid-nineteenth century biographers of slavery openly recognized that one of the biggest challenges they faced was not merely "getting the story right," or "telling the raw truth," but instead their challenge was sounding truthful doing it (Gordon). In fact "sounding truthful," ultimately proved to be just as important to the abolitionist narrative's success as a political document, as any "real" truth about the conditions of slavery the genre passed on to the reader and if the genre was to succeed at all it had to apprehend just those aspects of slavery, and the slave experience, which would be believable by an audience who may, or may not have believed in the institution of slavery, but whose parameters of "knowing," and of reality itself, were established within the larger confines of the existence of racial slavery. Therefore, telling the "raw truth" in a manner that sounded truthful, and in a manner in which the reader would be moved to empathize with the conditions of slavery, proved itself to be a complicated task. In essence the pressure to meet the specific expectations of their audience meant that the abolitionist narrative had to resolve the problem of believability by utilizing a series of tactics that would successfully forge a sense of empathy (Gordon). Moreover, as Avery Gordon has argued, the lives recorded by the abolitionist text were seldom, if ever, exclusively written by those which the genre aimed to empower. Instead in an effort to "get the story right" accounts were written for the enslaved, by someone else, and passed on at an even greater remove, and this was primarily done in a style of writing that purposefully sought to be perceived as a truthful sociological account by insisting upon the deliberate and self-conscious utilizing of an unembellished style of writing which would meet the reading public's expectations of the voice and abilities of the enslaved and which diligently avoiding having the reader suspect that they were in fact encountering a work of fiction (Gordon, 151). As such narrative strategies included adding to the text a validation

of the account's authenticity from a white abolitionist to not only affirm the contents of the text as "true," but also by including scenes within this authentication detailing the difficulties endured in order to bring the story "back" for the reader. This validation strategy within the genre secured that the account would be received not only as truthful but most importantly as a "unique" tale which fed the desires of readers for adventure without real risk (Gordon, 126).

20. In order to convey a thrilling and compelling story a series of tropes were developed which included the ability of the enslaved to read. Literacy in particular was "literally" used to measure humanity and as such the genre dedicated much attention to scenes demonstrating the ways in which the enslaved had gained literacy and through these scenes attempted to prove the slave's shared 'humanity' with Europeans (Gordon 1997; Gates 1985; Davis 1985). These scenes of literacy included the vivid recounting of instruction in which the enslaved learned to read and then to write, they provided scenes that underscored the severe punishments endured by slaves reading and the general prohibition of literacy. Such scenes were followed by commentary that denounced a system such as slavery which limited the development of these capabilities (Davis 1985, xxviiii).

21. As a literary form based on an elaborate combination of narrative strategies, the abolitionist narrative was able to bridge realism and sympathy by combining the biographical and autobiographical, (in how it contained the traces of the one who scripted the tale), it included the ethnographic (in how it spoke in the third person or of someone else), the historical (in its present tense), the literary (in its ability to create a narrative within an available grammar with special attention to voice), and the political in how it produced accounts of power (Gordon, 143). At its core the genre was expected to represent those who had no publicly sanctioned right to represent themselves by bearing witness and telling the "raw truth" about what life was really like for the enslaved. Yet these intentions did not save the genre from being itself a commodity influenced by the demands placed on it from a well established network of politicians, writers, editors, printers and a predominantly white liberal audience which produced, distributed, received, and consumed these accounts (Gordon).

22. Along with scenes of literacy there were also scenes in which significant attention was placed on run away attempts. The retelling of run away attempts along with literacy became part of a political message which argued that the slave who was the first to read and write was also the first to run (Gates 1987, 108). Additionally, to these scenes detailing literacy and run away attempts were also added scenes of defilement which as a strategy had been successful in producing in the reader a sense of sympathy.

23. Cuba shared in the tradition of the abolitionist narrative and the abolitionist movement. The first Cuban abolitionist novel *Francisco* (1839) was written by Anselmo Suarez-Romero.

24. The presence of suspicion within modern realist narratives can be traced to the abolitionist genre and has been replicated within contemporary tales of Cuban sex work attempting to define and describe the character of the Cuban population. During the crafting of abolitionist narratives there abounded references from noted leaders of the American Anti-Slavery Society stating that the slave "as a general thing is a liar" (Gordon, 145; Andrews 1988). Such "understandings" allowed for a comfortable degree of mistrust regarding the trustworthiness of the enslaved to remain ever present within the very fabric of a narrative designed to promote the liberation of the same population. Such a combination proved that despite the fact that the genre politically supported "freedom," it was in fact sadly unable to grant full "humanity" to the population it claimed to represent because both its promoters, and its readers, ultimately feared what the liberation of the racialized "other" would really mean (Gordon).

25. Marcus and Cushman (1982) have identified different conventions that work to establish the transparency of the normative realist text, among them are: one, the non-intrusive presence of the writer (as the direct intrusion of the author into the realist text is seen as an impropriety); two, statements of typicality and generalizations, and three, a focus on everyday life situations. As Marcus and Cushman explain, the transparency of the realist text is produced by severing relations between what the author knows, and how (s)he came to know it.

26. Tropes are words or names that are representative of people, a culture, a way of life and are therefore significant within the narratives told about a place and about a people, and pornotropes are representative words, images and ideas that carry an erotic charge or currency.

27. Drawing on Foucault, my contention is that modernity is more than merely a set of features of an epoch situated on a calendar but rather modernity is an attitude a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; a ways of thinking and feeling of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks belonging—and presents itself as a task This attitude makes it possible to heroize the present by promising freedom from the tyranny of the past. It is imagined to be preceded by a more or less naïve or archaic premodernity, and followed by an enigmatic and troubling "postmodernity." Modernity is characterized in terms of a consciousness that marks the discontinuity of time; a break with tradition, or a feeling of novelty. Such tasks as securing nationalism in the name of "freedom" require the present to be the moment of heroes and of heroics. And it is this promise of modernity, to make of ordinary and abject populations heroes, which motivates both the revolution and the project of rectification that created the social identities of the 1990s which drew on the heroic but could only do so by marking a segment of the population as deviant.

28. Gayatri Spivak argues that one responsibility of the critic is to write (and read) so that the impossibility of "interested individualistic refusals of the institutional privileges of powers bestowed on the subject" is taken seriously (Visweswaren 1997, 103).

29. Kamala Visweswaran in *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (1997) unveils the narrative construct of feminist ethnography and presents her ethnographic account of women's involvement in India's nationalist movement and acts of betrayal between and among "women," friends, researcher and "participant."

30. As a part of creating a convincing narrative many accounts included pictures which would validate the authenticity both of the story and the subject or "type" under surveillance.

31. Ruth Behar, 2.

Works Cited

Andrews, William L. 1988. "Dialogue in Antebellum Afro-American autobiography." In *Studies in Autobioography*, ed. James Olney, 89-99. New York: Oxford University Press.

Atta & M. *The World Sex Guide* at http://www.paranoia.com. C.1994-96 last update 12-29-96. Access date. February 1996.

Behar, Ruth. 1997. *Vulnerable Observer*. University of Michigan Press.

Belsey, Catherine. 1980. *Critical Practice*. London: Methuen.

Black, Maggie. 1995. *In the Twilight Zone: Child Workers in the Hotel, Tourism and Catering Industry*. Geneva: International Labor Office and NSWP.

Cabezas, Amalia Lucia.1998. Discourses of Prostitution: The Case of Cuba. *Global Sex Work: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. Ed. by Kempadoo and Doezema. New York: Routledge.

Codrescu, Andrei. 1999. *Ay Cuba!: A Socio-Erotic Journey*. St. Martin's Press: New York.

Davis, Angela. 1983. *Women, Race and Class*. New York: Vintage.

Davis, Charles T., and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds. 1985. *The Slave's Narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Doezema, Jo. 1998. "Forced to Choose: Beyond the Voluntary. Forced Prostitution Dichotomy." In *Global Sex Work: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. Ed. by Kempadoo and Doezema. New York: Routledge.

Espin, Vilma. 1995. "Realities and Challenges." *Cuban Women Toward the End of the Century*. Havana, Cuban Women's Federation.

Fernandes, Leela (1999). "Reading 'India's Bandit Queen': A Transnational Feminist Perspective on the Discrepancies of Representation.' Journal: *Signs*, V. 25, No.1 (Autumn, 1999):123.

Fusco, Coco. 1998. "Hustling for Dollars: Jineterismo in Cuba." In *Global Sex Work: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. Ed. by Kempadoo and Doelezema. New York: Routledge.

Gates, J. Henry Louis. 1986. *"Race," Writing, and Difference*., Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilman, Sander. 1986. "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature." In *"Race," Writing, and Difference*. Edited by J. Henry Louis Gates. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gordon, Avery F. 1997. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination.* Minnesota Press.

Hodge. G. Derrick. 2003. "Colonizing the Cuban Body." In *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Aviva Chomsky, et al. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Kempadoo, Kamala. Spring 2001. "Women of Color and the Global Sex trade: Transnational Feminist Perspectives." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*. 1 (2):28-51.

Lopez, Maria Milagros. Fall 1993. "Post-Work Selves and Peripheral Societies." *Social Text*.

Marcus. George E. and Dick Cushman. 1982. "Ethnographies as Text." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 29.

Padula, Alfred and Smith, Lois M. 1996. *Sex and Revolution: Women in Socialist Cuba*. Oxford University Press.