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Cynthia Enloe. Baranas, Beaches, & Bases
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ON THE BEACH: SEXISM AND TOURISM

The Portuguese woman perched on the ladder seems to be enjoying her work. Wearing a colorful dress under several layers of aprons, she is not too busy picking olives to smile at the photographer.

Selecting postcards is one of those seemingly innocent acts that has become fraught with ideological risks. Imagine for a minute that you are a British woman travelling in Portugal. You have saved for this holiday and are thoroughly enjoying the time away from stress and drizzle. But you haven't left your feminist consciousness at home. You think about the lives of the Portuguese women you see. That is one of the reasons you search the postcard racks to find pictures of Portuguese women engaged in relatively ordinary occupations – weaving, making pottery, pulling in heavy fishing nets, hoeing fields or harvesting olives. These are the images of Portuguese women you want to send your friends back home.

Still, you are a bit uneasy when you realize that in the eyes of those Portuguese women you are probably just another northern tourist able to afford leisurely travel outside her own country. They know you don't search for those less picturesque but no less real images of Portuguese women's lives today: women working in the new plastics factories around Porto, marking Portugal's entrance into the European Common Market; women working as chambermaids in hotels, representing the country's dependence on tourism. Such pictures wouldn't mesh with the holiday image you want to share with friends back in damp, chilly Britain.

No matter how good the feminist tourist's intention, the relationship between the British woman on holiday and the working women of Portugal seems to fall short of international sisterhood. But is it

exploitation? As uncomfortable as we are when we look at women smiling out from foreign postcards, we might pause before leaping to the conclusion that they are merely one more group of victims under the heel of international capital. Women in many countries are being drawn into unequal relationships with each other as a result of governments' sponsorship of the international tourist industry, some because they have no choice, but others because they are making their own decisions about how to improve their lives. Many women are playing active roles in expanding and shaping the tourist industry – as travel agents, travel writers, flight attendants, craftswomen, chambermaids – even if they don't control it.

Similarly, women who travel are not merely creatures of privilege; nor today are they only from Western societies. They – or their mothers – have often had to fight against confining presumptions of feminine respectability to travel away from home on their own.

The hushed and serious tones typically reserved for discussions of nuclear escalation or spiraling international debt are rarely used in discussions of tourism. Tourism doesn't fit neatly into public preoccupations with military conflict and high finance. Although it is infused with masculine ideas about adventure, pleasure and the exotic, those are deemed 'private' and thus kept off stage in debates about international politics. Yet since World War II, planners, investors and workers in the tourist industry, and tourists themselves, have been weaving unequal patterns that are restructuring international politics. And they depend on women for their success.

By the mid-1980s, the global tourism business employed more people than the oil industry. These employees were servicing an estimated 200 million people who each year pack their bags and pocket their Berlitz phrase books to become international tourists.¹ The numbers continue to rise steadily. The United Nations World Tourism Organization forecasts that by the year 2000, tourism will have become the single most important global economic activity.²

The British woman's dilemma in trying to find a postcard expressing sisterhood rather than exploitation suggests that the galloping tourist industry is not necessarily making the world a more equal or harmonious place. Charter flights, time-share beach condominiums, and Himalayan trekking parties each carry with them power as well as pleasure. While tourism's supporters cite increased government revenues and modernizing influences, its critics ask whether tourism's remarkable growth is narrowing or widening the gap between the affluent and the poor. They question whether the foreign currency, new airstrips and hotels that come with the tourist industry really are adequate compensations

for the exacerbation of racial tensions and other problems that so often accompany tourism.³ ✓

FOOT-LOOSE AND GENDERED

Tourism has its own political history, reaching back to the Roman empire. It overlaps with other forms of travel that appear to be less dedicated to pleasure. Government missions, military tours of duty, business trips, scientific explorations, forced migrations – women and men have experienced them differently, in ways that have helped construct today's global tourism industry and the international political system it sustains.

In many societies being feminine has been defined as sticking close to home. Masculinity, by contrast, has been the passport for travel. Feminist geographers and ethnographers have been amassing evidence revealing that a principal difference between women and men in countless societies has been the licence to travel away from a place thought of as 'home'.

A woman who travels away from the ideological protection of 'home' and without the protection of an acceptable male escort is likely to be tarred with the brush of 'unrespectability'. She risks losing her honor or being blamed for any harm that befalls her on her travels. One need only think of the lack of sympathy accorded a woman who has been assaulted when trying to hitchhike on her own: 'What does she expect, after all?' Some women may unwittingly reinforce the patriarchal link between respectable womanhood and geographical confinement with their own gestures of defiance. A bumper sticker has begun to appear on women's well-travelled vans: 'Good girls go to Heaven. Bad girls go everywhere.'

By contrast a man is deemed less than manly until he breaks away from home and strikes out on his own. Some men leave the farm and travel to the city or mining town looking for work. Other men set off hitchhiking with only a knapsack and a good pair of boots. Still others answer the call to 'Join the Navy and see the world'.

'I cut off my hair and dressed me in a suit of my husband's having had the precaution to quilt the waistcoat to preserve my breasts from hurt which were not large enough to betray my sex and putting on the wig and hat I had prepared I went out and brought me a silver hilted sword and some Holland shirts.'⁴ So Christian Davies set off in the 1690s to enlist in the British army. If she couldn't travel as a woman, she would disguise herself as a man. The stories of Christian and women like her are not unmixed tales of feminist rebellion, however. While some of the women ran away to sea or enlisted as drummer boys to escape suffocating village life, others claimed they were simply acting as a loyal wife or sweetheart, following their man.

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If a woman was exposed – while being treated for a battle wound or giving birth – the punishment she received frequently depended on which of these two interpretations was believed by the men who pulled away her disguise.

Vita Sackville-West came from a privileged background but she emulated her working-class sisters and resorted to male disguise. After World War I demobilized veterans were a common sight in Europe. In 1920 Vita dressed as a man and ran away to Paris impulsively with her woman lover. In this masculine camouflage she felt liberated:

the evenings were ours. I have never told a soul of what I did. I hesitate to write it here, but I must. . . I dressed as a boy. It was easy, because I could put a khaki bandage round my head, which in those days was so common that it attracted no attention at all. I browned my face and hands. It must have been successful, because no one looked at me at all curiously or suspiciously. . . I looked like a rather untidy young man, a sort of undergraduate, of about nineteen. I shall never forget the evenings when we walked back slowly to our flat through the streets of Paris. I, personally, had never felt so free in my life.⁵

More recently, women have been lured into joining the military – without a disguise – by thoughts of leaving home. Getting away from home, not killing Russians or Vietnamese, is what Peggy Perri, just out of nursing school, had in mind when she and her best friend decided to enlist in the US Army nursing corps in 1967. 'Pat and I were both living at home and we were both miserable. I was living at my mother's house. I was unhappy, really unhappy,' Peggy recalls. 'Pat and I had become nurses with the expectation that we could go anywhere and work. We wanted to go somewhere, and we wanted to do something really different.' Peggy wasn't a classic 'good girl'. She chewed gum and liked parties. But she didn't want to surrender her status as a respectable young woman. 'We needed to know that there was going to be some kind of structure to hold us up. The military sure promised that. . . I was infatuated by the idea of going to Vietnam. . . I really didn't know where I wanted to go. I wanted to go everywhere in the world.' She soon got her wish. 'I remember we got our orders; my mother took me shopping in every major department store. Pat and I both bought new sets of luggage, Pat's was hot pink!. . . It was January and we would go to all the "cruise" shops looking for light-weight clothing. I wanted everyone to think I was going on a cruise.'⁶

The most famous of the women who set out to travel further than convention allowed without disguise are now referred to as the 'Victorian lady travellers'. Most of them came from the white middle classes of North

America and Europe. They set out upon travels that were supposed to be the preserve of men. They defied the strictures of femininity by choosing parts of the world which whites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century considered 'uncharted', 'uncivilized'. Not for them the chic tourist meccas of Italy and Greece. These Victorian lady travellers wanted *adventure*. That meant going to lands just being opened up by imperial armies and capitalist traders.

In their own day these women were viewed with suspicion because they dared to travel such long distances with so little proper male protection. Even if their husbands accompanied them as missionaries or scientists, these women insisted upon the separateness of their own experiences. The fact that most of them were white and chose to travel in continents whose populations were not, added to the 'exotic' aura surrounding their journeys. Space and race, when combined, have different implications for women and men, even of the same social class.⁷

Mary Kingsley, Isabella Bird, Alexandra David-Neel, Nina Mazuchelli, Annie Bullock Workman, Nina Benson Hubbard – these women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took for themselves the identities of 'adventurer' and 'explorer'. Both labels were thoroughly masculinized. Masculinity and exploration had been as tightly woven together as masculinity and soldiering. These audacious women challenged that ideological assumption, but they have left us with a bundle of contradictions. While they defied, apparently self-consciously, the ban on far-flung travel by 'respectable' women, in some respects they seem quite conventional. Some of them rejected female suffrage. Some refused to acknowledge fully how far their own insistence on the right to adventure undermined not only Victorian notions of femininity, but the bond being forged between Western masculinity and Western imperialism.

Mary Kingsley is one of the most intriguing lady travellers. Mary's father was an explorer, her brother an adventurer. Mary was born in 1862 and grew up as the twin movements of women's domestication of women and imperial expansion were flowering in Victoria's England. She seemed destined to nurse her invalid mother and to keep the homefires burning for her globe-trotting brother. But Mary had other ideas. In 1892 she set out on the first of several expeditions to Africa. She traveled without male escort and headed for the West African interior. For it was in the continent's interior where 'real' adventures were thought to happen. In subsequent years she befriended European male traders plying their business along the coasts and up the rivers of Africa. Her detailed knowledge of African societies' ritual fetishes was even acknowledged by the men of the British Museum.⁸

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Mary Kingsley also became one of the most popular speakers on the lively lecture circuit. She drew enthusiastic audiences from all over England to hear about her travels to Africa and her descriptions of lives lived in the newly penetrated areas of Victoria's empire. Many women travellers helped finance their travels by giving public lectures. The lecture circuit may have provided a crucial setting in which the women who stayed at home could become engaged in the British empire. They could take part vicariously in British officials' debates over how best to incorporate African and Asian peoples into that empire by listening to Mary Kingsley describe colonial policies and their consequences for local peoples.

The women lecture-goers are as politically interesting as Mary Kingsley herself. Together, lecturer and audience helped to fashion a British culture of imperialism. The stay-at-home listeners would develop a sense of imperial pride as they heard another woman describe her travels among their empire's more 'exotic' peoples. And they could expand their knowledge of the world without risking loss of that feminine respectability which enabled them to feel superior to colonized women. Their imperial curiosity, in turn, helped Mary Kingsley finance her breaking of gendered convention.

A century later librarians at the American Museum of Natural History in New York mounted an exhibition honoring some of the American women who had made contributions to scientific exploration. 'Ladies of the Field: The Museum's Unsung Explorers' was designed to make visible Delia Akeley, Dina Brodsky and other women explorers whose contributions to science had been neglected because they were dismissed as amateurs or as mere wives-of-explorers. The exhibition consisted of just three small glass cases in the ante-room of the Rare Book Library. As two women visitors peered through the glass to read faded diaries and letters, they could hear the shouts of schoolchildren racing through millennia of dinosaurs not far away. But here there were no curious crowds. They were the only visitors. Something about finding themselves before this modest exhibit prompted the strangers to exchange a few words. As they looked at a photo of Delia Akeley standing proudly between giant tusks she had just collected for the museum, one woman said, 'A friend of mine had wanted to be an explorer, but she resigned herself to being a librarian.'

Some of these contributors to the museum were the first white women to travel to a particular region. That seemed to give their travels greater significance. Historians often think it worth noting when the 'first white woman' arrived, as if that profoundly transformed a place. A white woman's arrival destined it to be sucked into the international system.



2 Delia Akeley on an expedition in Africa for the American Museum of Natural History (photo: Carl Akeley/American Museum of Natural History, New York)

If a white woman traveler reached such a place, could the white wife or white tourist be far behind?⁹

FEMININITY IN A WORLD OF PROGRESS

The idea that the world is out there for the taking by ordinary citizens as well as adventurers emerged alongside the growth of tourism as an industry. World's fairs, together with museums and travel lectures, nourished this idea.

Without leaving her own country, the fair-goer could experience remote corners of the world, choosing to 'visit' the Philippines, Alaska, Japan or Hawaii. It is estimated that in the United States alone, close to

one million people visited world's fairs between 1876 and 1916.¹⁰ World's fairs were designed to be more than popular entertainments; they were intended by their planners to help the public imagine an industrializing, colonizing global enterprise.

At the hub of all the world's fairs was the idea of progress, global progress. It could be best celebrated, fair investors believed, by graphically comparing 'uncivilized' with 'civilized' cultures. Between the two extremes fair designers placed Afro-American and Native American cultures – those apparently already on the track to civilization. They constructed elaborate scenes that they imagined visitors would find exotic. They imported women and men from as far away as Samoa and the Philippines to demonstrate their point. They called on the budding profession of anthropology to order their ideas and ensure authenticity. In the end fair designers created living postcards, clichés of cultures apparently at opposite ends of the modernity scale.

The natives in their exotic environment were as crucial to the celebration of progress as were exhibits of the latest feats of technological invention. Walking between a simple Samoan village and a powerful, shiny locomotive gave fair-goers an exhilarating sense of inevitable progress. By implication, it was America – or France or Britain – which was leading the way in the march of globalized progress. For the cultures most deeply affected by the colonial experience were furthest along the fair's scale of progress. Eventually, so the fair scenario suggested, the primitive peoples of the world would be led into the light of civilization by imperial trusteeship. The world's fair expressed an elaborate international political cosmology.

It was a gendered America, a gendered Britain, however, that was leading the procession and formulating the heartening comparisons. A reporter for the *Omaha Bee* captured this spirit when describing the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition:

To see these ever formidable and hereditary enemies of the white man encamped together in a frame of architectural splendor erected by courage, manhood, and sterling integrity, will impress upon the growing sons and daughters a lesson which will bear fruit in years hence when the yet unsettled and uncultured possessions of the United States shall have become jewels upon the Star Spangled Banner.¹¹

The year was 1898. The US government was extending its imperial reach. American men were exerting their manliness in defeating Spanish, Cuban and Filipino troops. They were proving in the process that industrialization and the rise of urban middle-class lifestyles were not,

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as some had feared, weakening white American manhood. Within several decades Americans would no longer have to be satisfied with fair exhibits of Cuban dancers or Philippines villages. Those countries would have built tourist hotels, beach resorts and casinos to lure American pleasure-seekers – all due to world-wide progress generated by a civilizing sort of American masculinity.

The world's fairs of this era preached that white men's manliness fueled the civilizing imperial mission and in turn, that pursuing the imperial mission revitalized the nation's masculinity. At the same time, world's fairs were designed to show that women's domestication was proof of the manly mission's worthiness.

Thus femininity as well as masculinity structured the comparisons and the lessons visitors were to derive from the world's fairs. Women became the viewers and the viewed. White women were meant to come away from the fair feeling grateful for the benefits of civilization they enjoyed. They were not expected to measure progress from savagery to civilization in terms of voting rights or economic independence; they were to adopt a scale that had domesticated respectability at one end and hard manual labor at the other. White men were to look at 'savage' men's treatment of their over-worked women and congratulate themselves on their own civilized roles as protectors and breadwinners. Without the Samoan, Filipino and other colonized women, neither male nor female fair-goers would have been able to feel so confident about their own places in this emergent world.

Some American women saw the world's fair as a perfect venue for showing women's special contributions to the nation's progress. America's Centennial Exhibition in 1876 featured a Women's Pavilion, which celebrated the new concept of domestic science, as well as arts and crafts by women from around the world. Progress, technology and feminine domestic space were combined in a revised version of gendered civilization. In 1893 there was to be a great fair at Chicago to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America. Susan B. Anthony, the suffragist, led a drive to ensure that women wouldn't be excluded from the planning as they had been in 1876. The US Congress responded by mandating the appointment of a Board of Lady Managers to participate in the design of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. The Board commissioned a Women's Building. It was among the fair's largest and most impressive, designed by a woman architect, 23-year-old Sophia Hayden. But the Women's Building and its exhibits did not challenge the underlying message of the fair. The white women who took charge of this ambitious project still believed their mission was to demonstrate

that American women were leading the world in improving the domestic condition of women. The Women's Building was filled with exhibits of the latest household technology that would lighten women's load. Nor did they challenge the racial hierarchy that was implicitly condoned by the fair. The Board of Lady Managers, chaired by a wealthy Chicago socialite, rejected the proposal that a Black woman be appointed to any influential post.¹²

PACKAGE TOURS FOR THE RESPECTABLE WOMAN

Tourism is as much ideology as physical movement. It is a package of ideas about industrial, bureaucratic life.¹³ It is a set of presumptions about manhood, education and pleasure.¹⁴

Tourism has depended on presumptions about masculinity and femininity. Often women have been set up as the quintessence of the exotic. To many men, women are something to be experienced. Women don't have experiences of their own. If the women are of a different culture, the male tourist feels he has entered a region where he can shed civilization's constraints, where he is freed from standards of behavior imposed by respectable women back home.

Thomas Cook perhaps deserves credit for making the world safe for the respectable woman tourist. On an English summer's day in 1841, walking to a temperance meeting, Thomas Cook had the idea of chartering a train for the next meeting so that participants could board a single train, pay a reduced rate, and while traveling to their meeting be treated to 'hams, loaves and tea' interspersed with exhortations against the evils of drink. Some 570 people signed up for that first trip.¹⁵

Initially, Thomas Cook was concerned primarily with working men like himself. He wanted to provide them with a diversion that didn't involve liquor. In 1851 he urged men to join his tour to the London Exhibition:

There are a number of you who ask, 'of what use and benefit would be a visit to us?' . . . I ask, of what use was your apprenticeship? Did it make you more useful members of society? . . . Such will be the difference betwixt the man who visits the Exhibition and he that does not – the one will be blind with his eyes open, and the other will enjoy the sight, and admire the skill and labour of his fellow-workmen of different parts of the globe.¹⁶

Only later did Cook come to realize that package tours might attract working men and their wives and children and eventually women traveling without a male member of the family. By the 1850s Britain's

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more adventurous middle-class women were beginning to earn their own income and to think about traveling for pleasure, if not to West Africa, at least to Germany. They still needed to safeguard their respectability in order to stay marriageable and so were looking for a chaperoned tour led by an honorable man. Thomas Cook, temperance advocate, offered precisely such a service. He only realized the business potential of respectable travel for women in 1855, after receiving a letter from four sisters – Matilda, Elizabeth, Lucilla and Marion Lincolne of Suffolk. The Lincolne sisters came from a large middle-class temperance family. Each of them had worked for wages when they were in their twenties and had income to spend on pleasure.¹⁷ They had read about the beauties of the Rhine and the cities of the Continent, but how could they go?

How could ladies alone and unprotected, go 600 or 700 miles away from home? However, after many pros and cons, the idea gradually grew on us and we found ourselves consulting guides, hunting in guide-books, reading descriptions, making notes, and corresponding with Mr. Cook . . . Tis true, we encountered some opposition – one friend declaring that it was improper for ladies to go alone – the gentleman thinking we were far too independent . . . But somehow or other one interview with Mr. Cook removed all our hesitation, and we forthwith placed ourselves under his care . . .

Many of our friends thought us too independent and adventurous to leave the shores of old England, and thus plunge into foreign lands not beneath Victoria's sway with no protecting relative, but we can only say that we hope this will not be our last Excursion of the kind. We would venture anywhere with such a guide and guardian as Mr. Cook.¹⁸

Cook was so struck by Matilda and her sisters' letter that he began to run excerpts in his advertisements, making appeals directly to women. By 1907, the company's magazine, *Traveller's Gazette*, featured on its cover a vigorous young woman bestriding the globe.

Today the package tour holiday is a profitable commodity for some of the international economy's most successful companies. In Britain 40 per cent of the population cannot afford an annual holiday, but one third of the upper-middle class take two or more holidays a year. There are now 700 tour operators in Britain selling more than 12.5 million package holidays annually, worth £3.1 billion. While most of their customers pick

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NOTICE TO TRAVELLERS.—Send your correspondence to Messrs. Cook and Son, Limited, at the above office and parts of Europe and the East, to render assistance to all holders of Cook's Tickets.

3 Cover of one of Thomas Cook's early holiday brochures, 1907 (Thomas Cook Archives, London)

the Mediterranean, British and continental tour companies are nudging clients to travel further afield – to North Africa, North America and the Caribbean.¹⁹

Japanese government officials are predicting that foreign travel will be one of that country's major growth industries in the 1990s. Although only 5 per cent of Japanese took holidays abroad in 1987, large tourist companies like JTB and Kinki Nippon Tourist Agency have already turned foreign travel into a \$16 billion business. One third of Japanese overseas tourists today travel as part of a package tour. Most notorious are groups of businessmen traveling to South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand on sex tours. But the country's second largest tourist market is single working women: 18 per cent of all Japanese tourists. Their

avored destinations are the shops and beaches of Hong Kong, Hawaii and California.²⁰

THE TOURISM FORMULA FOR DEVELOPMENT

From its beginnings, tourism has been a powerful motor for global integration. Even more than other forms of investment, it has symbolized a country's entrance into the world community. Foreign-owned mines, military outposts and museum explorations have drawn previously 'remote' societies into the international system, usually on unequal terms. Tourism entails a more politically potent kind of intimacy. For a tourist isn't expected to be very adventurous or daring, to learn a foreign language or adapt to local custom. Making sense of the strange local currency is about all that is demanded. Perhaps it is for this reason that international technocrats express such satisfaction when a government announces that it plans to promote tourism as one of its major industries. For such a policy implies a willingness to meet the expectations of those foreigners who want political stability, safety and congeniality when they travel. A government which decides to rely on money from tourism for its development is a government which has decided to be internationally compliant enough that even a woman traveling on her own will be made to feel at home there.

When mass tourism began to overtake elite travel following World War II, most travel occurred within and between North America and Western Europe. By the mid-1970s, 8 per cent of all tourists were North Americans and Europeans traveling on holiday to Third World countries. A decade later 17 per cent were.²¹ Middle-class Canadians who a decade ago thought of going across the border to Cape Cod or Florida in search of holiday warmth are now as likely to head for the Bahamas. Their French counterparts are as apt to make Tunisia or Morocco rather than Nice their holiday destination. Scandinavians are choosing Sri Lanka or Goa instead of the Costa del Sol.

Third World officials and their European, American and Japanese bankers have become avid tourism boosters. Tourism is promoted today as an industry that can turn poor countries' very poverty into a magnet for sorely needed foreign currency. For to be a poor society in the late twentieth century is to be 'unspoiled'. Tourism is being touted as an alternative to the one-commodity dependency inherited from colonial rule. Foreign sun-seekers replace bananas. Hiltons replace sugar mills. Multinational corporations such as Gulf and Western or Castle and Cook convert their large landholdings into resorts or sell them off to developers. By the mid-1980s tourism had replaced sugar as the Dominican Republic's

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top foreign-exchange earner. In Jamaica, tourism had outstripped bauxite as the leading earner of foreign exchange. Caribbean development officials are happily reporting that, with more than 10 million visitors a year, the region is outstripping its main tourism rivals, Hawaii and Mexico. But, they add reassuringly, all the new hotel construction isn't turning Caribbean islands into concrete jungles: 'Many of the islands are mainly wild and underpopulated, with room for many more hotels and resorts before their appeal is threatened.'²²

In reality, tourism may be creating a new kind of dependency for poor nations. Today tourism represents 40,000 jobs for Tunisia and is the country's biggest foreign-currency earner. Countries such as Puerto Rico, Haiti, Nepal, Gambia and Mexico have put their development eggs in the tourism basket, spending millions of dollars from public funds to build the sorts of facilities that foreign tourists demand. Officials in these countries hope above all that tourism will get their countries out of debt. The international politics of debt and the international pursuit of pleasure have become tightly knotted together as we enter the 1990s.²³

The indebted governments that have begun to rely on tourism include those which previously were most dubious about this as a route to genuine development, especially if 'development' is to include preservation of national sovereignty. Cuba, Tanzania, North Korea, Vietnam and Nicaragua all are being governed today by officials who have adopted a friendlier attitude toward tourism. They are being complimented and called 'pragmatic' by mainstream international observers because they are putting the reduction of international debt and the earning of foreign currency on the top of their political agenda.²⁴

This belief in the logic of fueling development and economic growth with tourism underlies the full-page color advertisements in the Sunday supplements. Many of those ads luring travelers to sunny beaches and romantic ruins are designed and paid for by government tourist offices. Most of those bureaucratic agencies depend on femininity, masculinity and heterosexuality to make their appeals and achieve their goals. Local men in police or military uniforms and local women in colorful peasant dresses – or in very little dress at all – are the preferred images. The local men are militarized in their manliness; the local women are welcoming and available in their femininity. The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism ran an expensive advertisement in the *New York Times* 'Sophisticated Traveller' supplement in October 1987. It pictured a white couple on an expanse of sandy beach. Underneath were smaller snapshots of local life and tourist activities – the tourists were portrayed as white couples shopping, swimming, dining; the local people were uniformed men on parade and a single black woman smiling out at

the reader. Over her head ran the caption, 'Those who know us, love us.'

FLIGHT ATTENDANTS AND CHAMBERMAIDS

Singapore Airlines, a government company, runs a center-fold advertisement that shows an Asian woman of somewhat vague ethnicity. She could be Chinese, Indian or Malay. She stands in a misty, impressionistic setting, looking out at the reader demurely, holding a single water lily. There is no information about the airline's rates or safety record, just this message in delicate print: 'Singapore Girl . . . You're a great way to fly.'

On the oceans and in the skies: the international business travelers are men, the service workers are women. Flight attendants in the United States began organizing in the 1970s and won the right not to dress in uniforms that they believed turned them into airborne Playboy bunnies. But most women working today as flight attendants do not yet have the backing of strong trade unions. They are subject to their employers' desire for flight attendants to represent not only the airline company that employs them, but the feminine essence of their nation. For that distinctive femininity is a major attraction in the eyes of the flight attendant's employer and her government. 'When your business is business . . . our business is pleasure,' runs a Sri Lankan airline's advertisement.²⁵

The airlines have taken their cues from the longer established ocean-liner companies. It was they who first used a racial and gendered division of labor to maximize profits while constructing a notion of leisure. Initially, ocean-liner crews were male, ranked by class and race. The white officers were to exude both competence and romance for passengers. The Indonesian, Filipino and other men of color serving in the dining rooms and below deck reflected a comforting global hierarchy while permitting the company to pay lower wages. Women crew members multiplied when company executives began to realize that their women passengers preferred to be waited on by women. Elaine Lang and Evelyn Huston were among the handful of British women who signed up to work on the *Empress of Scotland* in the 1930s, a time when shore jobs were hard to find. They worked as stewardesses, rising gradually in rank, but finding it impossible to break into the ship's all-male officer corps. Their best hope was to service first-class rather than steerage-class passengers: 'work and bed, work and bed, that's all it was.' Today hundreds of women are hired to work as service personnel in the burgeoning cruise-ship industry. 'Love Boat' is still kept afloat by a sexual division of labor.²⁶

When people go on holiday they expect to be freed from humdrum domestic tasks. To be a tourist means to have someone else make your bed.

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Thus chambermaids, waitresses and cooks are as crucial to the international tourism industry – and the official hopes that underpin it – as sugar workers and miners were to colonial industries. Still, a chambermaid seems different. Even a low-paid, over-worked male employee on a banana or sugar plantation has a machete, a sense of strength, a perception of his work as manly. Many nationalist movements have rallied around the image of the exploited male plantation worker; he has represented the denial of national sovereignty.

Nationalist leaders who have become alarmed at the tourism-dependent policies imposed by foreign bankers and their own governments have been reluctant to rally around the symbol of the oppressed chambermaid. Men in nationalist movements may find it easier to be roused to anger by the vision of a machete-swinging man transformed into a tray-carrying waiter in a white resort – he is a man who has had his masculine pride stolen from him. Caribbean nationalists have complained that their government's pro-tourism policies have turned their society into a 'nation of busboys'. 'Nation of chambermaids' doesn't seem to have the same mobilizing ring in their ears. After all, a woman who has traded work as an unpaid agricultural worker for work as a hotel cleaner hasn't lost any of her femininity.

In reality, tourism is not dependent on busboys. Tourism is what economists call a 'labor-intensive' industry. It requires construction crews, airplanes, gallons of frozen orange juice, and above all a high ratio of employees to paying customers; people who come as tourists need and expect a lot of service. As in other labor-intensive industries – garments, health and childcare, food processing and electronics assembly – owners make money and governments earn tax revenues to the extent that they can keep down the cost of wages and benefits of the relatively large numbers of workers they must hire.

Since the eighteenth century, employers have tried to minimize the cost of employing workers in labor-intensive industries by defining most jobs as 'unskilled' or 'low-skilled' – jobs, in other words, that workers naturally know how to do. Women in most societies are presumed to be naturally capable at cleaning, washing, cooking, serving. Since tourism companies need precisely those jobs done, they can keep their labor costs low if they can define those jobs as women's work. In the Caribbean in the early 1980s, 75 per cent of tourism workers were women.²⁷

Hawaiians refer to the large hotels owned by Americans and Japanese as 'the new plantations': Caucasian men are the hotel managers, Hawaiian men and women the entertainers, Hawaiian men the coach drivers and Filipino women the chambermaids. In China, post-Mao officials, eager to attract foreign industry and foreign exchange, are approving the construction of new hotels within coastal zones set aside for electronics, textile and other

export factories, and are helping managers hire workers. Shenzhen's new Bamboo Garden Hotel employs 360 employees; 80 per cent are women.²⁸

In the Philippines, where tourism under both the Marcos and Aquino regimes has been relied on to earn badly needed foreign exchange, the Manila Garden Hotel employs 500 workers; 300 are women. But there is something different here. Workers are represented by an independent union, the Philippines National Union of Workers in Hotels, Restaurants and Allied Industries, and equal numbers of women and men are union representatives. In the wake of the widespread political mobilization of women that helped to bring down the Marcos regime in 1986, women in the union created a Working Women's Council. Beth Valenzuela, a single mother working in the hotel's food department, is one of the Manila Garden Hotel's active women unionists. She told a Filipino reporter that she hoped to make the Women's Council a place where issues of particular importance to women hotel workers could be studied and discussed. It would also train women union members in public speaking and decision-making, skills that in the past 'have been jealously guarded by the men as their exclusive preserve'.²⁹

In Britain, too, the Conservative government has been trumpeting tourism as a growth industry. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, tourist companies are creating 45,000 new jobs per year, especially in the depressed industrial areas of the North. A new museum is opening every two weeks: deserted steel mills are becoming part of the 'heritage industry'. But most tourism jobs are part-time, seasonal and provide little chance for advancement. This means that they are also likely to be filled by women. Nevertheless, some British critics of the tourism formula for economic revival seem less upset at the prospect of a British woman struggling on a part-time wage than at the idea of a former steel worker compromising his masculinity by taking a 'candy-floss job' at a theme park.³⁰

SEX TOURISM IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Pat Bong is a neighborhood of Bangkok that caters to foreign men. There are 400,000 more women than men living in Bangkok, but male tourists outnumber female tourists by three to one. Pat Bong's urban landscape makes the census figures come alive. Although the government passed a Prostitution Prohibition Act in 1960, six years later it undercut that ban by passing an Entertainment Places Act, which had enough loopholes to encourage coffee shops and restaurants to add prostitution to their menus. Thus today Pat Bong is crowded with discos, bars and massage parlors. In the early 1980s, it was estimated that Bangkok had 119 massage parlors, 119 barbershop-cum-massage parlors and teahouses, 97 nightclubs, 248

disguised brothels and 394 disco-restaurants, all of which sold sexual companionship to male customers. Some of the women who work here as prostitutes have migrated from the countryside where agricultural development projects have left them on the margins; other women are second, even third generation prostitutes increasingly cut off from the rest of Thai society. A woman working in a Bangkok massage parlor can earn an average of 5,000 baht per month; wages in non-entertainment jobs open to women average a paltry 840 baht per month. Marriage to a foreigner frequently appears to be the only avenue out of Pat Bong, but it too can prove illusory:

[She] had lived with an English man working as a technician on an oil rig. But he left her and went back to England. She said she was not working when she was with him, but returned to her job after some months since he failed to send her money and it was impossible for her to keep such an expensive flat. 'What else can I do? After all, these men are good business.'³¹

Sex tourism is not an anomaly; it is one strand of the gendered tourism industry. While economists in industrialized societies presume that the 'service economy', with its explosion of feminized job categories, follows a decline in manufacturing, policy-makers in many Third World countries have been encouraged by international advisers to develop service sectors *before* manufacturing industries mature. Bar hostesses before automobile workers, not after.³²

A network of local and foreign companies encourages men – especially from North America, Western Europe, Japan, the Middle East and Australia – to travel to Third World countries specifically to purchase the sexual services of local women. The countries that have been developed as the destinations for sex tourists include those which have served as 'rest and recreation' sites for the American military: Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines. Nearby Indonesia and Sri Lanka also have received sex tourists. Goa, a coastal state of India, is among the newest regions to be targeted by sex tourism's promoters. Local laws explicitly prohibiting prostitution are often ignored, not only by pimps and bar owners, but by India's police and tourism officials as well.³³

To succeed, sex tourism requires Third World women to be economically desperate enough to enter prostitution; having done so it is made difficult to leave. The other side of the equation requires men from affluent societies to imagine certain women, usually women of color, to be more available and submissive than the women in their own countries. Finally, the industry depends on an alliance between local governments in search

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of foreign currency and local and foreign businessmen willing to invest in sexualized travel.

Thailand is a world full of extremes and the possibilities are unlimited. Anything goes in this exotic country, especially when it comes to girls. Still it appears to be a problem for visitors to Thailand to find the right places where they can indulge in unknown pleasures . . . Rosie [Rosie Reisen, a West German travel company] has done something about this. For the first time in history you can book a trip to Thailand with exotic pleasures included in the price.³⁴

In 1986 Thailand earned more foreign currency from tourism – \$1.5 billion – than it did from any other economic activity including its traditional export leader, rice. The Thai government's Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan for 1978–1991 makes 'tourism and exports' its top priority. In pursuing this goal Thai officials want to increase the numbers of tourists (2.7 million came in 1986), but also to alter the mix, especially to get Japanese men, who now stay an average of only four days, to stay longer.³⁵

Sex tourism is part of the domestic and international political system. And changes are now occurring both within and between countries that could radically alter the sex tourism industry: AIDS; official nationalism; Asian and African feminist movements; and international alliances between feminist organizations.

By October 1987 Thai tourism officials had become alarmed at the sharp drop in the numbers of single male visitors to the beach resort of Pattaya. After Bangkok, Pattaya was the favored destination for foreign male tourists. The number of Middle Eastern men had declined to such an extent that Pattaya's VD clinics, which advertise in Arabic as well as English, had begun to see a fall in clients. Initially, the Thai government was reluctant to talk about AIDS. Like other governments dependent on tourism and on sex tourism in particular, public admission of AIDS was seen as damaging to the economy and national pride. Then, once acknowledged, officials set about compelling women working in bars and massage parlors in Pattaya and Bangkok to take tests for the HIV virus. Government health officials were pressed by government tourism officials to co-operate. By mid-1987 only six people, five Thais and one foreigner, had died of AIDS according to official statistics. Most of the other twenty-five people reported by the government as having been infected with the virus and developing AIDS-related symptoms were categorized by the government as homosexual men and drug addicts. Female prostitutes are the group that most worried Thai officials. Bureaucrats began

talking of building more golf courses. If foreign men began to avoid Thai women there had to be an alternative attraction. But little was said of the poor women who have taken jobs in the sex industry because they have had to leave the Thai countryside for lack of land and decently paid waged work.³⁶

Empower and Friends of Women are two of the Thai women's organizations formed in the 1980s to fill the gaps left by uninterested policy-makers and investors. Each group works directly with women in the sex-tourism industry, providing English lessons so that the women can deal on a more equal footing with their clients. They publish and distribute cartoon brochures informing women about AIDS. Most recently they have begun efforts to work with Thai women who have traveled to Europe to work as entertainers or to marry as mail-order brides.³⁷

Feminist groups in the Philippines have had a better political opening for making sex tourism a national political issue. The overthrow of the authoritarian and export-oriented regime of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 made the government's entire development formula vulnerable to popular scrutiny. Marcos and his advisors, with encouragement from foreign banks and technical consultants, had viewed tourism as a primary building block of development. The regime had used the reputed beauty and generosity of Filipino women as 'natural resources' to compete in the international tourism market. The result was that by the mid-1980s, 85 per cent of tourists visiting the country were men, and sex tourism had become crucial to the government's economic survival. While many outside observers focussed their attention on the prostitution that had grown up around the large American bases in the Philippines, some Filipino feminists noted that there were many more women working as prostitutes in Manila's tourist establishments.

Another evening is starting in the history of the international political system:

Rows of taxis, cars and minibuses pull up behind a number of Manila hotels. Long lines of women pass the guards and enter a private door, sign a book, hand over their identification cards and take a private elevator to one of the special floors designated for prostitution. . .

The woman goes to her assigned room; if the man is out she waits in the corridor . . . [A prostitute] may not be taken to any public area of the hotel, all food and drink orders must be by room service. Hotels charge a \$10 'joiners fee' for the privilege of taking a woman to a room . . .

Before breakfast the next day the women collect their IDs and leave.³⁸

When Corazon Aquino replaced Ferdinand Marcos as president, Filipino women activists pressed the new regime to give up sex tourism as a development strategy. Aquino herself was not a feminist, but she had made restoration of the nation's dignity a central theme in her political campaign. As president, she took steps to change the Tourism Ministry's leadership and policies. The new minister brought a tour of Japanese women to the Philippines in order to demonstrate that the government was making the country a more wholesome tourist destination. But when Aquino authorized police to make raids on establishments in Ermita, Manila's infamous entertainment district, feminists were alarmed. The policy was not devised in consultation with women's groups such as Gabriela. Women working in the industry were not asked about the causes or likely consequences of such a heavy-handed approach. No steps were taken by the government to provide alternative livelihoods for the women working as dancers, hostesses and masseurs. In the name of cleaning up the city, washing away the degeneracy of the Marcos years, police arrested hundreds of women. Virtually no pimps, businessmen or male clients were jailed.³⁹

Several Filipino feminist groups have created drop-in centers in those areas where prostitution is concentrated. They acknowledge that there are class barriers to be overcome in these new relationships between women in prostitution and women in political organizations. Filipino women activists, including a number of feminist nuns, have tried to avoid moralism. To provide a place to meet other prostitutes outside of the bars, to allow women to sort out together the conditions that pull Filipino women into prostitution, to provide practical information on AIDS, VD and contraception – these are feminists' first objectives. Yet the lack of the substantial resources it takes to offer prostitutes realistic job alternatives has been frustrating. Learning handicrafts may provide a woman working in Ermita or on the fringes of an American military base with a new sense of confidence or self-worth, but it doesn't pay the rent or support a child. 'When it comes to income-generating alternatives, we don't think we offer anything because we are up against so much. Economically we cannot give them anything.'⁴⁰

Filipino feminists refuse to discuss prostitution or sex tourism in a vacuum. They insist that all analyses and organizational strategies should tie sex tourism to the issues of Philippines nationalism, land reform and demilitarization. Nowadays, they argue, sex tourism must also be understood in relation to Filipinas' migration overseas.

Migration as entertainers and as brides to foreign men has been the latest step in making world travel different for men than for women. Men in Scandinavia, West Germany, Australia, Britain, the United States and Japan now want to have access to Third World women not just in Third

World tourism centers; they want to enjoy their services at home. Thus feminist organizations in Thailand, South Korea and the Philippines are having to make alliances with women in Europe, North America and Japan in order to protect women in the international tourism/entertainment/marriage industry. Thai feminist social workers go to West Germany to investigate the conditions Thai women encounter there; Filipino feminists travel to Japan to take part in meetings organized by Japanese feminists concerned about Filipinas recruited to work in discos and bars, women now referred to as 'japayukisan'; South Korean feminists fly to New York to attend a conference on international prostitution to urge American women activists to think and organize internationally.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

Tourism is not just about escaping work and drizzle; it is about power, increasingly internationalized power. That tourism is not discussed as seriously by conventional political commentators as oil or weaponry may tell us more about the ideological construction of 'seriousness' than about the politics of tourism.

Government and corporate officials have come to depend on international travel for pleasure in several ways. First, over the last forty years they have come to see tourism as an industry that can help diversify local economies suffering from reliance on one or two products for export. Tourism is embedded in the inequalities of international trade, but is often tied to the politics of particular products such as sugar, bananas, tea and copper. Second, officials have looked to tourism to provide them with foreign currency, a necessity in the ever more globalized economies of both poor and rich countries. Third, tourism development has been looked upon as a spur to more general social development; the 'trickle down' of modern skills, new technology and improved public services is imagined to follow in the wake of foreign tourists. Fourth, many government officials have used the expansion of tourism to secure the political loyalty of local élites. For instance, certain hotel licences may win a politician more strategic allies today than a mere civil-service appointment. Finally, many officials have hoped that tourism would raise their nations' international visibility and even prestige.

Many of these hopes have been dashed. Yet tourism continues to be promoted by bankers and development planners as a means of making the international system less unequal, more financially sound and more politically stable. A lot is riding on sun, surf and souvenirs.

From the Roman empire to the eighteenth century European grand tour, the rise of Cooks Tours and Club Med, travel for pleasure and

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adventure has been profoundly gendered. Without ideas about masculinity and femininity – and the enforcement of both – in the societies of departure and the societies of destination, it would be impossible to sustain the tourism industry and its political agenda in their current form. It is not simply that ideas about pleasure, travel, escape, bed-making and sexuality have affected women in rich and poor countries. The very structure of international tourism *needs* patriarchy to survive. Men's capacity to control women's sense of their security and self-worth has been central to the evolution of tourism politics. It is for this reason that actions by feminists – as airline stewardesses, hotel workers, prostitutes, wives of businessmen and organizers of alternative tours for women – should be seen as political, internationally political.

Movements which upset any of the patterns in today's international tourist industry are likely to upset one of the principal pillars of contemporary world power. Such a realization forces one to take a second look at the Portuguese woman on her ladder picking olives, smiling for the postcard photographer. She has the potential for reshaping the international political order. What is behind her smile?