Colonization of the Cuban Body

Nationalism, Economy, and Masculinity of Male Sex Work in Havana

by

G. Derrick Hodge

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The City University of New York

2005

UMI Number: 3187392

Copyright 2005 by
Hodge, G. Derrick

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 3187392
Copyright 2005 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

©2005

G. Derrick Hodge

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

19 August 2005

Shirley Lindenbaum, Chair of Examining Committee

25 August 2005

Louise Lennihan, Executive Officer

Shirley Lindenbaum
Marc Edelman
Susan Besse
Don Robotham

Supervision Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

Colonization of the Cuban Body

Nationalism, Economy, and Masculinity of Male Sex Work in Havana

G. Derrick Hodge

Adviser: Shirley Lindenbaum

Survival of the extreme economic austerity of the Special Period—both national and personal—has required a dramatic bending of social, cultural, and political norms established during the first forty years of the Revolution. The turn to capitalism and tourism has a produced new groups of street hustlers and sex workers who call themselves *pingueros*. The pingueros and their bodies are sites at which converge four potentially contradictory processes: traditional Cuban masculinity, revolutionary nationalism, the exigencies of material survival, and the global capitalist imperative to consume. Personal desire is interactive with the collective processes of economy, politics, culture, and nation-building; the pingueros' desires (both sexual and material) are being configured according to the needs of the new capitalist market, but the youth are also faithful repositories of both Cuban masculinity and revolutionary citizenship. Though the state criminalizes the pingueros, they are nonetheless faithful reproducers of revolutionary ideology in terms of gender norms and expectations of economic justice. But since the youth revere designer clothing and look to consumer capitalism as their salvation from poverty, they are global capitalist consumers as much as they are revolutionary citizens. This dual location—

as both reproducers of (socialist) revolutionary values and as criminalized youth who enthusiastically proclaim the triumph of capitalism—is a window into the social and cultural effects of both capitalism and (post)socialism. Ultimately, Cuba is being recolonized through the aggressive introduction of a new imperative to consume. The introduction of capitalism has saved the Cuban economy, but it has also had the consequence of transforming perceptions of need among the youth. This implantation of capitalist cultural forms is at end more powerful and longer-lasting than any particular regime. The Revolutionary government still enjoys considerable legitimacy, but the lure of consumption is powerful, and this may well become the ultimate triumph of a global capitalism over the Revolution. The children and grandchildren of the 1960-62 emigrants never got the military invasion for which they still so vehemently lobby, but the lure of things may well erode the values of fairness, justice, and equality for which the Revolution fought.

Acknowledgements

Eight years ago I stumbled by accident into one of the finest graduate faculties of anthropology in the world: The Graduate School University Center of the City University of New York. One of the characteristics of that extraordinary department is an intentional, active, and vigorously supportive mentoring tradition. My adviser, Shirley Lindenbaum, has been far more than a dissertation supervisor. She guided and molded me into a scholar, always in a gentle and caring way, and always attentive to my psychological needs as well as my academic ones. Her dedication to my well-being was as boundless as was her patience with my foibles, generosity with her time, and her humility (she was my advisor for more than a year before I discovered that she had solved an epidemic—she wouldn't talk much about her own brilliant career).

And so I dedicate this dissertation to her, and to the other remarkable women in my life: to my sisters Tracy and Susan and my mother Ellen, whose love has no bounds, and to an angel, Sandra Hodge, whose brilliant life was far too short.

Two men have also been a part of this dissertation, and in fact it would not have been written without them. My father Glen kept faith in me even when the process dragged on. And Marc Edelman's knowledge of Latin American anthropology—which he shared generously—boggled my mind. He displayed the patience of Job when he accepted many-a nighttime phone call at home when I was in one of the many panics that characterize graduate student life. No doctoral student could ask for better mentors than he and Shirley. And the other two members of my committee—Susan Besse and Don Robotham—gave large amounts of time and expertise in improving upon my first draft and writing countless letters of recommendations. Finally, the department could not function without the underpaid and overworked administrator, Ellen DeRiso.

And I thank the Cubans whose lives appear in these pages, young men whom socialism made poor, and capitalism has made poorer.

Short Table of Contents

PART I: SOY CUBA

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 2

CHAPTER TWO: NATION 30

CHAPTER THREE: PHALLUS 80

CHAPTER FOUR: WORK 122

PART II: SOY PINGUERO

CHAPTER FIVE: IDENTITY 178

CHAPTER SIX: YARA 218

CHAPTER SEVEN: RELATIONSHIPS 262

CHAPTER EIGHT: STATE 311

PART III: SOY CAPITALISTA

CHAPTER NINE: CONSUMPTION 359

CHAPTER TEN: REDUX 393

CONCLUSION: THE LURE OF THINGS 422

WORKS CITED 428

Long Table of Contents

PART I: SOY CUBA

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 2

I. TOURISM 2
II. PINGUEROS 7
III. RESEARCH 9
METHOD 9
DIALECTICS 15
OUTLINE 17
IV. PROBLEMATICS 24

CHAPTER TWO: NATION 30

I. METROPOLE 31
SPAIN 32
UNITED STATES 34
II. INTERVENTION 37
III. CITIZENSHIP 42
IV. IDENTITY 48
HYPHEN 48
FAILURE 52
ELITES 53
V. AFROCUBANISMO 57
ORTIZ 58
MUSIC 59
VI. EROTICS 63
SUGAR 64
SEX 68
MASCULINITY 70
VIRGIN 72
COLONIALISM 74

CHAPTER THREE: PHALLUS 80

I. APOSTLE 81
II. MACHO 86
III. WEAPON 89
CONQUEST 90

COUNTERREVOLUTION 94
IV. FETISH 96
LACK 97
CONSUMPTION 100
FETISHISM 101
V. SISSIES 103
GUERRILLAS 107
NOT-MEN 112

CHAPTER FOUR: WORK 122

I. NATIONALISM 123
BUENOS AIRES 124
MEXICO CITY 129
CHIAPAS 140
II. TOURISM 141
EXOTICISM 143
DOMINICANS 145
ROMANCE 148
JINETERAS 151
III. ECONOMY 158
SOCIALISM 160
FAILURE 164
ENTREPRENEURS 166
DIALECTIC 169
INFORMALITY 174

PART II: SOY PINGUERO

CHAPTER FIVE: IDENTITY 178

I. TRADITION 179
HOMBRE 179
BUGARRÓN 182
MARICÓN 186
II. CHANGE 189
JINETERO 189
PINGUERO 193
REGISTER 199
GAY 202
III. AMBIGUITY 205
MOTIVATION 205
ONTOLOGY 208
CONVERTIRSE 211
THINGNESS 215

CHAPTER SIX: YARA 218

I. SPACE 219
SYMBOL 219
CONTEST 221
II. INITIATION 223
PROVINCES 224
HABANA 227
III. ENCOUNTER 230
CRUISING 230
FIESTA 234
MALECÓN 239
MI CAYITO 242
SEX 244
IV. STRUGGLE 251
HOMELESSNESS 251
HUNGER 256

CHAPTER SEVEN: RELATIONSHIPS 262

I. TOURISTS 263
FRIENDS 263
FIJO 265
LOVERS 267
CLIENTS 276
PAYMENTS 280
II. FOREIGNERS 285
RATIONALIZATION 285
RECIPROCITY 296
DESIRE 300
III. CUBANS 301
COLLEAGUES 302
GIRLFRIENDS 304
DANCING 307
CONCLUSIONS 309

CHAPTER EIGHT: STATE 311

I. CRIMINALS 311
CON 312
ANDAR 316
II. POLICE 317
CONFLICT 318
CARNE 323
MULTA 326
III. PRISON 329
ROLDY 329
FRAMIG 330
OSMANI 334
VÁSQUEZ 335
GIOVI 335

IV. JINETERAS 336
EXTORTION 337
EXPLANATIONS 340
V. CITIZENS 345
MASCULINITY 345
COJONES 348
FAMILY 352

PART III: SOY CAPITALISTA

CHAPTER NINE: CONSUMPTION 359

I. STYLE 361
TIMBA 361
MODS 362
II. FASHION 364
NATIONALISM 364
MODERNITY 367
III. SHOES 370
MEANINGS 371
MOTIVATION 374
MODERN 377
PROTEST 379
ESCAPE 382
IV. PALLIATIVE 385
V. POST-SOCIALISM 387

CHAPTER TEN: REDUX 393

I. BODIES 395
II. DESIRE 399
GAY 400
PINGUEROS 405
DOMINICAN 408
III. POST-SOCIALISM 410
RUSSIA 410
CHINA 416
IV. (RE)COLONIZATION 418

CONCLUSION: THE LURE OF THINGS 422

WORKS CITED 428

Part I
Soy Cuba

Chapter One
Introduction

I. Tourism

In August 2002, a 27 year-old male sex worker from Oriente province spoke to me of the difficulties of being a well-dressed young Cuban in a context of rapidly increasing economic stratification:

> A *pinguero* [male sex worker] has a better chance of having more girlfriends than anybody else. Because girls like a cute guy, one who dresses well, according to the latest fashions. They like a guy who has "swing", who can put on the latest. And the only ones who can do that are the pingueros. Or the children of the highest leaders, the representatives of companies, and of the ministries—they dress well, according to the latest [European and North American] fashions. They, and the pingueros.

Political events eight years prior were not unrelated to his lament: on 4 September 1995, an assembly of legislators, President Fidel Castro Ruz, members of the diplomatic corps, and invited international business representatives had gathered to hear Ricardo Alarcón, the President of the National Assembly of the People's Power. He presented to them the preamble to the proposed Foreign Investment Act, Law #77:

> Decree Law 50 of 1982 was our first Revolutionary legal base for normalizing and organizing the process of foreign investment….Certain branches of the economy could be most conveniently developed by the economic association of Cuban entities with international enterprises possessing capital, technologies, access to markets, and broad experiences in the new conditions of the world economy in which Cuba has had to develop in the past

> few years….Thirteen years after Decree Law 50, we considered that a new legal instrument covering this question is needed to provide guarantees and to clarify the procedures necessary to facilitate the development and effectiveness of this process.

The Council of Ministers' Decree Law 50—promulgated well before the collapse of the Soviet Union—had created an extensive but finite list of economic sectors in which foreign capital could legally participate. The Foreign Investment Act expanded this list to include *all* sectors, the single exception being certain parts of the armed forces. The law established three categories of permissible investments:

1. Joint ventures: Usually these are owned 50 percent by the state and 50 percent by a foreign investor. Joint ventures in the tourist sector have been most common; the Ministry of Tourism operates (in partnership with foreign investors) six hotel corporations, the largest being Grupo Cubanacán, which claims to host 40 percent of the island's international tourists in its 51 hotels and 52 restaurants. Law 77 requires that the international partners in these ventures pay a 30 percent tax on its share of the income.
2. International economic association contracts: These are ventures between individual Cuban entrepreneurs and foreign investors. Oversight is by the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, though authorization must be granted by the Council of Ministers if the total investment (both foreign and domestic) exceeds an amount equivalent to ten million United States dollars.
3. Companies with "totally foreign capital": These ventures may be by an individual or a corporation. Oversight is by the Cuban Chamber of Commerce, though authorization for the investment must be made by the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. According to the text of the law itself, there appears to be less legal restriction on this category than on the other two forms of foreign investment.

The economy had not been strong even before the collapse of the socialist trading network COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). But 1989 brought the beginning of a catastrophic economic collapse: between 1990 and 1997 exports fell 66 percent and imports fell 50 percent (CIA 1999). In only three years (1990-1993) the combined contraction of the gross domestic product was 40 percent (Dilla 1999). As early as August 1990 (even before the complete dissolution of the

Soviet Union), the Revolutionary government declared a “Special Period During Peacetime”—a period of extreme austerity and concessions to foreign capital, the name of which indicates the gravity of the situation, which continues in the present. But the lowest blow to revolutionary pride was yet to come: in 1993 the state legalized the United States dollar—the symbol of capitalist domination of the globe. Such a move was deemed absolutely necessary to make tourism more feasible: a globally dominant technology of exchange would make the island far more hospitable for tourists. This move, and the invitation to capitalist investment in the tourism sector, were a truly extraordinary concession to capital from a government which had for many years fashioned itself as the antithesis to capitalism.

If measured purely in economic terms, this strategy was famously successful: tourism saved the Cuban economy from collapse and its people from starvation. The greater guarantees for foreign capital (though indemnified expropriation might still occur “for reasons of the public good or in the interests of society”), as hoped, did bring an explosion of investment, particularly in the tourist sector. In 1990, tourism’s contribution to the total foreign revenue was four percent; by 2001 it was forty-one percent (F Castro 2003). In 2002, nearly 1.7 million foreign tourists brought into Cuba two billion United States dollars (F Castro 2003). On one night alone, 21 February 2001, a new record of 50,000 tourists slept in hotel rooms on the island (Comellas 2001). And by the end of 2003, Minister of Tourism Manuel Marrero Cruz announced that a the two million tourism mark had finally been met (Aguilera 2004). The resulting economic stability and the state’s increasing business expertise has made it now able to go it alone: on 21 January 2003 Castro inaugurated a new 5-

star hotel in Holguín, constructed entirely with Cuban funds; he claims, in fact, that island-wide “The bulk of the capital invested in the [tourism] sector is Cuban” , and that the economic activity generated through the investment of domestic capital in tourism infrastructure has created 200,000 jobs (F Castro 2003).

But if measured in social terms, the salvation of Cuba through tourism and dollarization has been rather problematic, in at least three ways. First, the introduction of market relations and the new ability to accumulate wealth has produced a differential distribution of resources. This is particularly salient in tourist areas, where some Cubans have access to dollars. In the neighborhood of Vedado, for instance, occupants of houses or apartments large enough to be divided into private guest rooms and rented to tourists can become quite wealthy by Cuban standards. The owner of one such house with whom I am familiar, for example, has recently acquired two rooms of new furniture, two later model cars, one new motorcycle, a new television and a new stereo system. Such possessions represent unspeakable wealth, considering that just outside this house pingueros may go all day without eating. Such wealth and its necessarily attendant poverty have not existed at such a scale since before the triumph of the Revolution. Such wealth does not go unnoticed by the teenagers of the neighborhood, made recently homeless, in large part, by not only the economic catastrophe of the Special Period, but also by the new accumulation of wealth, the inevitable result of the capitalist fix.

The second unfortunate consequence of the capitalist fix has been that the new foreign capital has brought foreign managers, technocrats, and lawyers, in addition to the two million tourists a year (mostly from Europe, Canada, and the

United States). Both tourists and foreign managers bring with them ideas which are likely not compatible with traditional Cuban cultural forms, and certainly not with the ideologies of the Revolution. The state thus lost some of its ideological control of Cuban citizens, particularly those who now mingle with foreigners. And since the capitalists have the cash, some young Cubans—who have no memory of pre-revolutionary capitalist misery—come to believe that the foreigners' cultures and political-economic systems must be better than things Cuban. So while they do maintain some *traditional* Cuban cultural artifacts, ideas external to *revolutionary* culture are embraced unquestioningly by the young people with whom I work.

The third consequence of the capitalist fix has been a diminution of national autonomy and nationalist pride. Control over Cuban resources no longer rests entirely with the Cuban people or their state.[1] Dependence on foreign capital and managerial expertise has been especially problematic because the ventures have demanded to control even labor policy, so that the careful social engineering of the state now gives way to the needs of capital. Foreign-operated hotel management, for instance, by insisting that front-desk staff be young, attractive, white women, has refused to abide by revolutionary standards of fair labor practice.[2] Justice in labor practices, a central plank of the Revolution's claim to legitimacy, has been relinquished in service of an economic system which has for forty years been

[1]Of course Cuba has almost never had *full* national autonomy; for 25 years, from the sugar-for-petroleum agreement in 1962 until the beginning of the end of COMECON in 1987, Cuba was highly dependent on the Soviet Union. Still, the island's political self-determination was far greater during the Revolution (especially after the missile crisis and Fidel's falling-out with Khrushchev) than it was during the United States-controlled republic.

[2]That darker workers have been systematically replaced by young white women is only a "persistent rumor," says de la Fuente (2001:79), but he certainly agrees with my conclusion that foreign management teams have reduced the Revolution's control over labor practices.

declared anathema to the ideals of the socialist state. This is quite troublesome to the hyper-nationalist Revolution, whose legitimacy has been based in part in its claim to be an antidote to a long colonial history, retaining control of Cuban resources in Cuban hands. That the new colonial powers are now more dispersed and nebulous cannot mask the appearance of fundamental defeat of nationalist ideologies to global economic aggression.

This is the political-economic context which is rearranging and transforming some cultural artifacts both of Cuban tradition and of recent Revolutionary innovation. A number of young Cuban men from both the city and the provinces have responded to the exigencies of the Special Period using the resources of their bodies, their Cubanness, and their masculinity. Some have also taken advantage of the opportunity to experiment sexually, protected by the cover that economic desperation provides. They have engaged the macro forces of late global capital, mediated by the still-alive-but-weakened Cuban state.

II. Pingueros

"They are a new species."
—Interview 03.05

A *pinguero* is a new kind of male sex worker in Cuba, a result of the unfortunate co-incidence of the economic catastrophe of the Special Period and the accelerated economic processes of capitalism dubbed "globalization". He emerged in 1994, immediately after the legalization of the dollar and at the heights of the tourism infrastructure explosion. This is no coincidence. The pinguero specifically works with

tourists, and in fact largely has replaced the traditional *bugarrón*, a man who worked mainly with other Cubans and who was paid with housing or other commodities. Because the pingueros, able to earn dollars and spend them in state stores, make a far better living than did the bugarrones, the younger and more beautiful Cubans join their ranks and work in their neighborhood, Vedado. The few remaining bugarrones are left to collect what little they can from other Cubans who have little to offer.

These new sex workers needed a name. They were, both qualitatively and quantitatively, a new phenomenon, so they could not take the rather vulgar name 'bugarrón'. But neither could they simply masculinize the name of the female sex workers, jineteras; to do so would make it seem that they were simply the male version of the prostitute who is penetrated by tourists. In order to save their masculinity, they had to representationally distance themselves from the jineteras. So rather than calling themselves "jineteros"—which anyway is already a category of con artists, tourist guides, and sellers of tobacco—they invented a new name and with it a new category of man: pinguero. Starting with the slang term for the male genital they applied standard rules of Spanish word formation: to the word *pinga* they added the suffix 'ero', meaning one whose work or identity is related to the pinga, resulting in *pinguero* (the *u* has to be added to maintain the hard pronunciation of the *g*, as it is in the root word *pinga*). Other forms of the word followed the standard Spanish rule formation: the verb form is pinguiar, and the gerund is pinguiando.

The present research is a study of these young men. I am particularly interested in the ways in which they and their bodies are sites at which converge

four potentially-contradictory processes: traditional Cuban masculinity, revolutionary nationalism, the exigencies of material survival, and desire. I see the personal matter of desire interactive with the collective processes of economy, politics, culture, and nation-building. Thus will the study be particularly interested in the ways in which the pingueros' bodies and desire have been configured according to the needs of the new capitalist market, while at the same time being faithful repositories of both Cuban masculinity and revolutionary citizenship.

III. Research

Method

A few notes on method are appropriate before I begin. Field research was conducted in five short visits (3-6 weeks) from 1999-2004. In the summers of 1999 and 2000 I made preliminary trips, defining the research questions and establishing relationships with the young people who would become research participants. I did have unstructured conversations with some 30 young men in those early visits, but those conversations were preliminary and journalistic in nature. They gave me an enormous head-start, so that the formal interviews of 2003 and 2004 were clearly defined. But since these initial conversations were not approved by an Institutional Review Board, none of the content of those discussions are included herein, except those quotations which have already appeared in a journalistic publication (Hodge 2001, 2005).

A number of short periodic visits is of course not the normal methodology for an ethnographic study, but a longer visit was not feasible, for two reasons: difficulty in funding, and the impossibility of acquiring a research visa. This method presented several difficulties which might have limited the effectiveness of the research. First, with each visit some of my informants had disappeared. In some cases, other men were able to tell me what had happened to them, but even then I was not present to document a departure from the scene. Second, although I saw some men each time I visited and developed close relationships with them, I could not develop the same kind of trust as do anthropologists who spend a year living with them. Third, the illegality of their work, and the strictures of my IRB approval, prevented me from living with the men in their apartments or even visiting their homes, thus robbing me of the opportunity to observe their behavior and interactions when they were not in their work milieu. Fourth, and most importantly, my own sexuality was widely known, causing many of the men to see me as a potential client. Indeed, some men never stopped trying to manipulate me into a sexual/romantic relationship—efforts which provided data of a different sort, to be analyzed below. All of these may have colored the project and the data, not least by reinforcing my otherness.

Nevertheless, the periodic visits were exceedingly beneficial in at least one sense: After each visit, I returned to New York to analyze the data at leisure, talk about it with colleagues, and develop a plan for the next trip. This was incredibly useful. When I detected a “hole” in the data, I could simply return to fill it in. Had I been in the field only once for an extended period, I would not have been able to answer the new questions that emerge as a result of data analysis. This has allowed

me to interpret and to re-explore data more freely, according to the direction it seemed to naturally take, so that I was not confined to a closed set of data. My conclusions here are different as a result, and the work as a whole is more intellectually honest, as I have not had to force a conclusion on a limited data set. In some ways, this method was similar to “grounded theory”—the focus on process, analysis of data simultaneous with its collection, flexibility—but not nearly as rigid and schematic as is the grounded theory articulated by sociology (e.g. Corbin and Strauss 1990).

Interactions with the pingueros occurred in three contexts. Almost every evening I spent sitting with, walking with, and chatting with the sex workers in the spaces in which they congregated to recruit clients. These spaces were not only for working, but also for socializing, and indeed those two activities were often so blurred as to be indistinguishable (The implications of which will be explored below). These spaces were the cinema Yara and its environs, the café Arcada, and the oceanfront walk, the Malecón, all within 5 or 6 city blocks of each other. In each of these spaces, after it became clear to most that I was not a potential customer, I did not draw undue attention, and at times was largely ignored by most of the men. I was thus able to observe social interactions as they (probably) would have occurred without my presence. There were several workers with whom I had friendships, who would walk with me, chat with me, and introduce me to friends and girlfriends, but the sheer numbers of Cubans who worked/socialized in those spaces was so great (as many as 2,000 on a Saturday night) that for most, I was simply another unknown tourist.

The second context of interaction was the formal interviews, which I conducted in private in my apartments in Vedado. I generally declined requests to allow a friend to observe the interview, for two reasons: first, I wanted to protect the privacy of the informant even when his friend was fully aware of his participation, and second, I hoped to avoid any possible contamination of the data which a third party might produce. On two occasions in August 2003 I did conduct a joint interview with two Cubans. The first was with two informants whom I had already interviewed individually; it was a focused interview regarding the men's relationship to the police, coming hours after the release of one of them from a night in jail. I was proved correct in thinking that their contributions would feed off each other, each man's comments provoking the other to elaborate still more. The entire 45-minute interview consists of them speaking to me and responding to each other, so that hardly a word was required of me. The second such interview was also in August 2003: two women sex workers agreed to talk to me about their relationships with the police; they exploded in enthusiastic story-telling, so that very little prompting was required of me, save an occasional reminder of the main topic of discussion. In both conversations, I am confident that the decision to vary from my normal method of one-on-one interviews paid off handsomely.

In this formal interview process, consent was verbal, so that no written record of their participation would endanger them if my data were searched. The bulk of the interviews occurred in January 2003, and were tape recorded. My habit was to transcribe the interviews immediately and then erase the voice recordings, again to protect the subjects in the unlikely event that the tapes were seized and listened to

by the state. The August 2003 interviews were recorded on a hand-held device and then transferred digitally to my computer. The files were then password protected, as was the system. I later discovered that such extreme caution was unnecessary, as the danger of state intervention was not nearly as great as I had imagined.

A third context of interaction was when I functioned in a more parental/supervisory role. This included time in the colossal ice-cream palace Copelia, where I took a group almost nightly. We would wait in line for an hour or two, during which time they would converse and tease; once inside at a table, they tended to relax even more, and at times became rowdy. Older workers cruised and flirted with women and talked about music, while younger ones acted like teenagers, sometimes quite raucously. In such times, I felt compelled to intervene in a parental way to prevent undue attention from being directed towards us. In these interventions, I may have been reacting according to my own sensibilities; that is, perhaps the Cubans around us did not care about raucous teenagers, but I wished to avoid public attention. Another context in which I functioned in a clearly authoritative role was in my apartment, where I had frequent lunches for two or three of the men: I would of course pay for the food, and the others would contribute some service: one would go to the market, another would clean the rice and the beans, another would cook, another would wash dishes. During these lunches, I observed them in yet another type of interaction, but not entirely natural and unperformed: I was also aware that they were often maneuvering to manipulate or con me, to get closer to me in the hopes of some material reward. I will describe a few of these lunches in the chapters of parts II and III.

The sexual nature of much of the data make relevant my relationships with the informants. I began my relationship with them rather unexpectedly, when I was walking back to my hotel during my initial reconnaissance visit in 1999. Unaware of the significance of the area, I was solicited by a group of smiling teenagers: “Do you want to buy a Cuban? Two Cubans?” Four years later, I continue to be perceived by most of the young men as a potential customer. Since there are so many—perhaps a thousand men on any given night, or even two thousand on a weekend—the vast majority do not know that I am a researcher, and so assume that I am a sex tourist. Of course, my informants and their friends knew my role, but even some of them still attempt to create from me a reciprocal obligation by turning our relationship into a sexual one. My normal practice was to flirt a bit, since non-romantic and non-sexual interactions are customarily flirtatious in Cuba, but I also made it clear (though some of them never accepted this) that I was not a potential customer. I of course maintained a steadfast rule that I would have no sexual relations with any informant. To the best of my ability, I attempted to dissuade my informants of any idea that they might have a sexual relationship with me.

Nonetheless, it is possible that some informants edited their responses to my queries because of a hope that I might provide material assistance, the end goal of all Cuban-tourist relationships. Hence, it is possible that a young man might have, for example, minimized the extent to which he is sexually or affectionally attracted to women, since such an admission would make him less desirable to a gay man. One principal informant, for example, told me that he did not have a girlfriend, a claim which I later learned to be false. When questioned why he had denied her existence,

he stated that “I am ashamed” to admit being bisexual; he meant, I think, that he was afraid that if I knew he liked women, I might be less of a friend to him or provide less material assistance. I responded by asking to meet the girlfriend, and by including her in our friendship, which he obliged. This incident evidences that even a well-trusted informant might answer my queries with careful attention to how his answers might affect his relationship with me, a relationship which was sure to be profitable for him. Hence, the data must be interpreted cautiously, with an awareness that respondents are never unaware of the potential profit permutations in every interaction.

Dialectics

An understanding of my analytic methodology is as important in interpreting the work as is my research methodology. I embrace wholeheartedly the insights and method of dialectical analysis, particularly as articulated by David Harvey. Two characteristics of Harvey’s method are of special interest to us here. First, Harvey (following Marx) insists that every “thing” is not really a thing at all, but a process. All objects of scientific analysis—or of human gaze—are in motion, shifting to reflect current political and economic exigency. Since nothing is stable, social scientists must analyze how and why and in what way things *change*, that is, we will analyze *process* rather than *things*. The second insight of Harvey’s dialectics is that processes are not themselves stable; they are internally contradicted. Hence each process—or each “thing”—contains within it its own contradiction, even its own demise (1996:19-113).

Harvey carries the method of dialectics and the geographic concept of scales to their logical continuation: processes occur not only on the scales of local, national, and global, but also of the body. Three of Harvey's conclusions will be relevant to the Cuban data. First, the body is produced through the interaction of multiple processes. It is not stable but in flux, and not unitary but multiple and internally contradicted: "…the body is not a closed and sealed entity, but a relational 'thing' that is created, bounded, sustained, and ultimately dissolved in a spatio-temporal flux of multiple processes" (2000:98). Second, following Marx ("A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a natural being"), Harvey concludes that "no body exists outside of its external relations with other bodies and the exercise of powers and counterpowers among bodies is a central constitutive aspect of social life" (2000:120). Third, and following naturally from the first two conclusions, bodies are "porous", that is, they are not bounded entities which repel external intervention; rather, bodies are interactive with them: "The body…is itself a site of contestation for the forces that create it. The body (like the person and self) is an internal relation and therefore open and porous to the world" (2000:130).

Thus have we arrived at a method of engaging the Cuban data which is capable of grasping ambiguity and change, and which does not reduce a complex series of economic interactions to a battle between states and capital, national and global (e.g. Castells 1996). A dialectical examination of scale has the added benefit of incorporating the body into analyses of globalization, a move not easily accomplished with the more simplistic formulations of sociology a la Castells. Only

with this anthropological and geographic theory can we properly understand what is happening in the Special Period with homeless teenagers in Vedado.

Outline

In Part I, I will spend considerable time and space constructing an historical and theoretical backdrop to the contemporary events in Havana. This is for two reasons: first, I am an ardent advocate of an interdisciplinary approach, and I believe that history is a discipline most closely related to anthropology and essential for anthropological understanding. Secondly, the phenomena—or rather, the processes—which I document and describe herein are rather complex, in that multiple social, cultural, economic, and political processes have coalesced to produce and configure pinguerismo. Thus, Part One, ("I Am Cuba") contains four chapters detailing the historical and cultural background to the current moment in Havana and engaging the multiple strands of theory that will guide my interpretations. This historical review is dense: rather than interspersing my interpretations of this material with my data, I have decided to load it into Part I.

Chapter One, entitled "Colony", traces the history of Cuba from the conquest and settlement of 1511 until the Revolution. Here we watch the political context of Cuban culture develop in relation to, and in opposition to, first one colonial ruler and then another. Chapter Two, "Nation", turns to the nationalist response to this long colonial history, analyzing the construction of national identity and contemporary attempts to theorize it. This Chapter will trace Cuban nationalism for the hundred years from the beginning of the independence movement in the mid-nineteenth

century until the Revolution and beyond. I include here a review of some recent literature of the exiles who offer an alternative vision of the content of the Cuban nation. The matter of the exiles will make necessary a consideration of the nature of Cuban citizenship.

The reader will notice that there is some temporal overlap between this and the first historical chapter. This is intentional, for the chapters are arranged *thematically* rather then strictly *chronologically*. That is, my approach to history appreciates *process*, more than merely events. Of course, colonialism and nationalism operate in dialectical relation, and so it might have made sense to examine how both operate and co-determine each other in distinct periods. But to keep the focus on the process rather than on the period, I have divided the historical background chapters into time-overlapping reviews of colonialism and nationalism.

A major production of the nationalist imagination described in Chapter Two are the images of the mulata and the Virgin. The sexed bodies of both female figures contain within them structures of meaning drawing upon conflicting ideas of race, sex, and nation. Thus it will become increasingly clear that Cuban nationalism is infused with erotics. And since gender is entirely relational, the ideas of female sexuality which the mulata and the Virgin contain must co-exist with notions of masculinity. Thus, Chapter Three, entitled “Phallus”, turns to the construction of masculinity, particularly as embodied in the image of the Latin American phallus. Here, following my interdisciplinary approach, I will review historical and literary interpretations of the phallic fetish which recurs in Latin American and Cuban history and culture. I also review one cultural theorist’s ideas about the psycho-social

meaning of the phallus and the ways in which its image—and the fear of lack that it induces—conditions and constrains culture. We will see by this chapter's end that the Latin phallus was an embodiment of power very much at play at the time of the Revolution, and even today is operative in the phenomenon of pinguerismo.

Chapter Four, "Work", is a study of the ways in which Cuba's long history of gendered and sexed nationalism culminates in ideas, practices, and policies around sex work. I begin with feminist and anthropological theory around, and ethnographic treatments of, sex work, followed by an examination of the peculiar characteristics of Caribbean sex tourism. I then turn to the recent history of Cuban sex work, culminating with the Revolution's response to the traditional jineteras (female sex workers) and chulos (pimps). I conclude this chapter by questioning the function of sex work in the construction and maintenance of both the gendered nation and of the national body.

Part I ends by tying together all those strands of history and theory, and by making explicit their relevance to the study of pinguerismo. We will have arrived at four summary conclusions with which to preface and engage the ethnographic data of Parts II and III:

1. Cuba struggled for nearly 450 years against various manifestations of colonialism, the memory of which greatly conditions public policy and private behavior;
2. Nationalism has sought and nurtured exclusively Cuban cultural production such as brownness and Afrocubanismo as sources of a national identity independent of United States cultural forms; Cuban nationalism has been highly gendered from the start, being focused around the twin images of the mulata prostitute and the mulata Virgin;
3. Throughout Latin America, the phallus has been imaged and imagined as weapon and as savior, a key player in both the conquest and post-colonial struggles for independence and identity. Cuba is an inheritor of these

traditions, and homophobia and machismo are present, but the institutional revolution has worked to counter these tendencies; and

4. In Cuba, as elsewhere in Latin America, the highly-gendered nexus of post-colonial nationalism—including the feminized nation and the masculinized state, the prostitute and the virgin, the conquering phallus and the conquered vagina, the aggressive superpower and the vulnerable island state—all of these converge in the phenomenon of sex work, discourses and practices around which have long been a matter of considerable anxiety during revolutionary changes throughout the Americas. The second economy in Cuba has long functioned in dialectical and co-supportive way with the state sector, promoting a culture of informal and socially acceptable (though technically illegal) economic activity. Sex work and various kinds of hustling of tourists are economic activities in this tradition.

These conclusions emerge from my interpretation of Cuban history and identity propose, and will guide an *initial* interpretation of the ethnographic data. As a result of the ethnography of Part II, an entirely new set of questions will emerge.

Thus far, I will have relied almost entirely upon history and theory, with little original ethnographic data. This is reversed in Part II, in which the pingueros are the principal speakers, inflected of course through my interpretive lens. In Chapter Five, “Yara”, I introduce the character of the *bugarrón*, including how he functioned and why he is no longer the predominant form of male sex worker in Cuba. I will then be able to address in more detail the process-phenomenon of pinguerismo. Here I begin to rely heavily on the words of the workers themselves, as they describe their initiation into the work and the mechanics of sexual and relational transactions. Chapter Six tackles the difficult problem of identity: how the men negotiate their traditional Cuban masculinity with the requirements of their work and how the imported category of ‘gay’ has been interpreted and incorporated. Since identity conditions, and is formulated by, how the men interact with other Cubans, in Chapter Seven the men discuss their *relationships* with clients and with their girlfriends,

boyfriends, spouses, parents, and colleagues. We will hear them discuss how they imagine differently their relationships between Cubans and foreigners, and the promise and responsibilities that each type of relationship contains. From the pingueros' relationships to other Cubans, we consider in Chapter Eight their relationships to the Cuban *state*. Here we will learn about the Specialized Police, and compare how this force interacts with the male sex workers differently than with the female jineteras. In this chapter, the relevance of Part I's long journey through Cuban nationalism and erotics will be made clear. We will see the pingueros as both citizens and criminals, whose reproduction of norms of masculinity and family obligations mediates their questionable legality, giving them a rather ambiguous relationship to the revolutionary state.

The extensive ethnographic data of Part II leads to four summary observations which correspond to Chapters Five-Eight:

5. Pinguerismo is a new form of sex work that replaced, but which also draws upon, older ways of being sexual. The construction of sexual identity does not copy that of the contexts, but neither is it completely unique. The pingueros are neither 'gay', nor 'bisexual', nor 'straight'.
6. Unlike their female counterparts, pingueros are highly concentrated spatially, sharing certain spaces with other countercultural youth. In their methods of operation, they approximate somewhat the peculiarly Caribbean pattern other scholars have discerned, "romance tourism".
7. Thus, they strategically construct relationships of friendships and romance with tourists (clients and others), which also allow (and expect) the exercise of a general reciprocity which was also a constitutive element of the socialist ethic. Such reciprocity is also a survival mechanism they employ in their relationships to colleagues and girlfriends.
8. Male sex workers have a manifestly different relationship to the state than do female workers, resulting in part from male sexuality's discursive role in defensive nationalism. Further, pingueros' fulfillment of traditional gender expectations makes them less problematic to the state and to individual police officers than are the women. Machismo and homophobia do exist (though they have been dramatically reduced by the Revolution), but pingueros are

criminalized partly as a result of their embrace of conspicuous consumption, and not for (the perfectly legal) homoerotic activity.

Thus Part II consists entirely of original ethnographic data detailing several elements of the lives of the pingueros. Part III, “Soy Capitalista”, adds more ethnographic data but also reconsiders that of Part II in light of other scholars’ work on post-socialism in China and Russia. Here, I address commodification, capitalism, and globalization—in short, how the pingueros and pinguerismo are one manifestation of the incursion of the logic and culture of capital and market relations. I will further suggest that the persona, bodies, and ideologies of the pingueros are a result of, constitutive of, and indicative of the revolution’s own dramatically shifting relationship to the globe and to its own ideals. The personal and the national are inextricably intertwined.

Chapter Nine begins Part III with an account of the men’s perceptions of lack, which are determined in part by their relationships to the state and to the globe; that is, their location to processes of post-socialism and global capitalism conditions how they imagine poverty and wealth, well-being and lack. As they are increasingly confronted with the wealth of the world outside Cuba, they reevaluate their Cubanness and their sense of need, arriving at a belief in *lack*. Here I document the men’s adoration of Nike and the meaning of shoes in the young people’s symbolic systems. I then consider the place of commodities generally in their post-socialist world view. This leads to a discussion of the pinguero bodies and how the men themselves think of their bodies as commodities to be traded for Nikes. Thus have they been “commodified” in two senses: the commodification of their bodies through sex tourism, and their incorporation into commodity consumption networks through

the new inducement to buy. We will see that consumption has become a new basis of competitive identity construction, and an emerging battleground between traditional and revolutionary ideals on the one hand, and the demands of the increasingly dominant global economy on the other. The men's embrace of the symbolic system of United States materialism includes a reciprocal rejection of the revolutionary ethic which denies the value of material wealth. Thus is the pingueros' citizenship, established in Chapter Eight, called into question.

The final Chapter Ten, "Redux", reexamines many of the themes introduced in earlier chapters—nationalism, citizenship, consumption and commodification, body politics, and globalization—but now in light of post-socialist research in other contexts. After a reminder of the role of the body as a principal scale of capital accumulation, I will conclude that much of what we have thus far observed can be fruitfully analyzed as a form of neocolonialism—but operating a bit differently than I had originally posited.

These two chapters of Part III will have explicated the following theses:

9. Pingueros' attempts to imitate United States bodily culture through consumption patterns only sometimes represent opposition to the state; usually it is simply an attempt to position themselves, at least in appearance and performance, at the winning end of the new material stratification, through conspicuous consumption. This consumption reflects the triumph of global capitalism over Revolutionary ideology, and the pingueros imagine themselves as global citizens whose fortunes lie no longer with the Revolution but outside the island, with the image of things that global capital can purportedly provide. Contrary to the contemporary trend in anthropology—which triumphantly attributes hyperagency to anthropological objects who successfully confront hegemonic process with local ingenuity, thereby mitigating the effects of global dominance—the data indicate that pingueros' embracing of consumer capitalism severely limits their agency. While they reproduce the cultural logic of Revolutionary and traditional Cuba, they attempt to connect themselves— rhetorically, materially, and symbolically—to

the rest of the world, but in so doing lay a trap for themselves individually and nationally.

10. In many ways, the changing sexual and national landscape in Cuba mimics similar processes in other post-socialist contexts. What is different is the long history of colonialism with which Chapter Two begins. Pingueros' embrace of the symbols of consumer capitalism ultimately represent a colonization of their bodies and of their nation. It is not, as the research might initially suggest, the level of identity at which colonialism is most active. But the commodity fetishism does colonize on the level of culture and value, and this in turn, we will see, will mean the rearranging of indigenous sexualities. Capitalism is triumphant. Part III demonstrates that the processes of commodification and the reconnection into global networks of commodity sale and purchase are both manifestations of the incursion of global economic process into the cultural agenda of late Revolutionary Cuba.

We will have come full circle, from one colonial relation to another and back again. My goal is to explicate one consequence of capitalism; I suggest that colonialism, as an imperative of capitalism, is inscribed (seemingly) irrevocably in the bodies and souls of the pingueros, configuring their desires and practices and habitus according to the needs of the increasingly dominant global capitalist (and capital) markets.

IV. Problematics

To set the stage for these social scientific considerations, I begin with a series of images decidedly *not* intellectual. Art can communicate in an instant that which in words would require volumes. As will become clear throughout, I believe that the value of scholarship is greatly enhanced when it informs and is informed by artistic expression and political commitment. And so I conclude this introduction with a consideration of the 1964 Soviet/Cuban film *Soy Cuba*, which tells the story of the colonial past and the Revolution through the eyes of four Cubans: the mulata jinetera, whose body is colonized by "creepy" United States businessmen; the old

cane worker, whose life and land are stolen by the United Fruit Company; the university student, silenced by a Batista police bullet; and the rural peasant who lays down his hoe for a rifle and joins the guerillas fighters. Each tale represents a different aspect of Cubanness, but each is in fact the story of *all* Cuba. The film brilliantly introduces what I call the four 'problematics' of Cuban history: colonialism, citizenship, eros, and masculinity. A more fitting backdrop I could not imagine, not only because the 40-year old film so beautifully encapsulates precisely the problematics I discern, but also because it is artistic rather than scholarly. A film from 40 years ago identified the same four problematics which I see operative in the bodies of Havana teenagers in the Special Period—such a coincidence (or rather a convergence?) cannot be ignored.

The film begins with the voice of Cuba itself, for the narrator and all the characters are also Cuba, each representing a bit of its truth. A female voice, in Spanish and Russian, with English subtitles:

I am Cuba.
Once, Christopher Columbus landed here.
He wrote in his diary:
this is the most beautiful land ever seen by human eyes.

Thank you, Mr. Columbus.
When you saw me for the first time, I was singing and laughing.
I waved the fronds of my palms to greet your sails.
I thought your ships brought happiness.

I am Cuba.
Ships took my sugar, and left me tears.
Strange thing, sugar, Mr. Columbus.
It contains so many tears, and yet is sweet.

So begins *I Am Cuba*, a cooperative effort of revolutionary Cuba and the Soviet Union. In 1964, Russian director Mikhail Kalatozov, with Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese, undertook to document Cuba under attack, a revolution still fighting for its life against imperial domination. Nothing about the era encouraged nuance. It was a time of heroes and villains, of good and evil, of stark contrast between liberation, freedom, equality versus domination, oppression, poverty. The infrared film Kalatozov used created images so stark, so startling that they cannot but provoke a response. The film demands that the viewer join Cuba in its grief; a neutral response is neither possible nor permissible. Four stories display Cuba in the lives of four characters: the jinetera, the cane worker, the student activist, the peasant farmer. The pingueros, too, manifest in their bodies the entire story of their island nation.

The ideology is thick in this film, not even thinly veiled, and the symbolism intentionally unambiguous. The genius of the film is not in its subtlety, nor in the complexity of its message; indeed, its version of revolutionary history is simplistic, and its construction of good and evil are not, of course, sustainable when subjected to historical scrutiny. The genius of the film is its ability to provoke emotion, to represent truth (if not exactly fact), with its exquisite beauty. Thirty-four years after *Soy Cuba's* release, *Bright Lights Film Journal* still described it as "surely the supreme masterpiece of the poetic documentary form" (Morris 1998):

> [T]he use of infrared film to obtain jaw-dropping levels of black-and-white contrast…emphasizes the dazzling primacy of the land over those who briefly inhabit it, and reflect the filmmakers' idea that complex characterizations must be subjugated to the struggle by real people to maintain the land against corrupt influences.

As a social scientist, I am reluctant to claim, as does this film critic, that "complex characterizations must be subjugated to the struggle by real people." Perhaps only the drama of a simplistic characterization of history can adequately inspire action; nuance, particularly cloaked in dry scholarly discourse, does little to actually change the world. And so, as I begin this contribution to a social scientific understanding of Cuban history, I confess that beneath anthropological rhetoric is emotion, a conviction that "complex characterizations" and careful scholarly research are not in themselves sufficient. Science needs art—and religion and desire and experience and anything else which inflames and ignites and inspires—lest it become *impotent* in the real world of lived experience.

Artistically brilliant but blatantly propagandistic and reeking of melodramatic exceptionalism, the four episodes of *Soy Cuba* introduced what we might call the 'problematics' of Cuban history: those events and characteristics in the island's past which present obstacles to the establishment of a viable sovereign state and a stable Cuban identity. The first of these problematics is manifest in the old and beaten-down body of the cane worker, in which the consequences of *colonialism* are manifest. Since the conquest, the island has been a source of wealth for non-Cubans, its human and natural resources accorded no value outside the logic of accumulation and exportation of wealth. Domestic elite decisions and foreign intervention have betrayed the best interests of Cuba and Cubans, just as Pedro's livelihood was stolen to make room for the mechanization of cane for export by a United States corporation. The rather ugly history of entrenched colonial hegemony, both within the island and in its foreign relations and trade patterns, is one

'problematic' which has consistently interfered with Cuba's efforts to secure a place among nations and a national identity with purchase.

The story of the students' revolutionary agitation speaks to the second problematic, the 300 year-old question of *citizenship*. Just to whom Cuba belongs, and who is a legitimate participant in the life of the nation and of the state, have never been settled matters. Creoles versus peninsulares, white versus black and mulatto, local elites versus workers, United States versus Cuba: in each historical period Cubans maneuvered to define the criteria of belonging and the definitions of Cubanness. Recently, the Revolution has defined citizenship in ideological terms, requiring a commitment to socialism, egalitarianism, rejection of external values. But in the Special Period, yet another redefinition has been necessary, such that disproportionate wealth and close cooperation with foreign capitalist enterprises are no longer impediments to legitimate citizenship.

María's story represents a third problematic in Cuban history, the role of *erotics* in the political and economic life of the nation and of the state. Both racial and gendered ideologies cohere in her dark and sensuous body, harnessed for the pleasure of United States elites—a consequence of Batista's profitable regime of tourism, gambling, and prostitution. And in her body are found not only exploitation but also the resolutions of the problems of race and of citizenship in the republic. Her role as the symbol of the nation made Batista's use of her all the less palatable: the mulata was the nation, but she was also an object of value which provided pleasure to white men and profit for Havana elites. Maria's story, then, exposes not only race

and gender conflicts in post-independence Cuba, but also the nation's struggle against neocolonialism and the contest over citizenship.

If Maria's body, conquered by the "creepy" (Morris 1998) United States businessmen, displays national defeat, still the hope of victory is not lost. For the story of the guerrillas fighting in the Sierra Maestra offers the possibility of redemption through Cuban *masculinity*, the fourth problematic of Cuban history. The guerrilla is hunted, pursued by Batista's army; that is, the strength, the virility, the natural manliness of Cuban men is assaulted by the protectors of privilege who have sold the nation to foreign capital. But an ideal macho strength, adhering in both black and white male bodies, would rescue the island's resources and return them to their rightful inheritors.

Thus do the four episodes of *Soy Cuba* present the four 'problematics' of Cuban history which impact upon an understanding of the events and processes of the Special Period During Peacetime. The remaining chapters of Part I will carefully review the history of, and attempts at a reconciliation of, four processes: colonialism, nationalism, and phallocentrism, and material erotics.

Chapter Two
Nation

> A mistake in Cuba is a mistake in America, a mistake in present-day history. Whoever rebels with Cuba today, rebels for all time… The Cuban Revolutionary Party is entering its third year of life, firm and compassionate, convinced that the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico is not only the one means of assuring both islands of the decent well-being that free men ought to have in their legitimate work, but also that it is the one historic event able to save the threatened independence of a free America, and the dignity of the North American republic.
>
> —José Martí, 17 April 1894

In typically melodramatic rhetoric, Martí gave voice to Cuban "exceptionalism," the belief that Cuba has a special place in world history, that it suffers uniquely, and that its history is a paradigm for the fate of the world, or at least of the Americas. His Cuban Revolutionary Party fought (rhetorically and militarily) not only for freedom from Spain, but also to save the United States from its own abandonment of the ideals on which it claimed to have been founded. The history of Cuba—what had happened in the past—was a paradigm for the condition of the entire colonized world; but more, the history of Cuba—the consequence of the choices that Cubans

made in that same revolutionary era of the 1890s—would determine the future of "Our America".[1]

I. Metropole

Martí's first publication was an eight-stanza poem in the first and only edition of the newspaper *La Patria Libre*, which he founded at age sixteen (Allen 2002:3). The poem tells the story of Abdallah, a warrior of the ancient African kingdom of Nubia, who urges his comrades to defend against foreign invaders:

Love…for the patria
is not a foolish love for the dirt
and grass where our feet walk;
it is an invincible hatred of those who oppress her,
an eternal hostility toward those who attack her…
Oh, how sweet it is to die, when I die
fighting boldly to defend my patria!

Such patriotic fervor emerged from a history replete with frustrated longing for self-determination. Indeed, Cubans had never known life without a colonial master: from the initial Spanish settlement in 1511 until the United States invasion in 1898, Cubans had been the subjects of the crown of Spain (with only brief occupations of Havana by France and then by Britain). Though nominal independence was granted by the United States in 1902, the island was in fact a colony (or a neocolony) from 1511 until 1959.

[1]This phrase was a rhetorical invention of Martí to further his cause of pan-Americanism; he particularly sought military assistance for the Cuban Revolutionary Party and the cooperation of other Latin American states to resist United States economic aggression.

Spain

Until slaves and technical improvements made the sugar plantations profitable, the colony was valuable only because of the strategic and commercial importance of Havana, the largest metropolis in the Americas for centuries. On the verge of the invasion by the British General Abermarle in 1762, the city that would in the 1950s be called the 'brothel of the Americas' had already developed a cosmopolitanism which foreshadowed by nearly two hundred years its condition under Batista and the United States mafia:

> [C]ommercial activities had given Havana its special character. When this grand [Spanish] fleet arrived, uncontrolled gambling had been allowed, brothels sprang up, the rate of crime rose. The city [was] filled with riff-raff, deserters, escaped slaves, gamblers, escaping crooks, sailors looking for ships, prostitutes for sailors, and 'friars without fixed destinations'. [H]avana was…a military port and already [by 1762] had that unique, easy-going, brilliant but semi-criminal, maritime and cosmopolitan character that has marked it ever since. (Thomas 1998 [1971]:12)

The city's principal value for the metropole was strategic: is was a main port in Spain's fleet system, a last, safe stopover point for ships carrying American gold to Spain. This meant wealth for Havana elites, particularly ship outfitters and importers—usually *peninsulares* [born in Spain] whose interest in Cuba was based only on its profit potential. Thus much of the wealth created went to the British colonies of North America or directly back to the metropole.[2] Even minor colonial officials were by law peninsulares, as was 100 percent of military and ecclesiastical authority. Those whom we might later call "Cubans," creoles born on the island and with more loyalty to Cuba than to Spain, largely remained poor farmers.

[2]Indeed, the desire of elite North American merchants to profit even further from Cuba, free from the fetters of British colonial mercantile law, was a principle cause of the American Revolutionary War.

From the Spanish colonial period until the present, the island's resources—strategic geography, soil and sun, beaches and bodies—have been harvested or processed, channeled through Havana, and quickly exported for the enrichment or enjoyment of others. By the early eighteenth century, sugar did make some creole elites quite wealthy. But the accumulation of this wealth still followed the logic of colonialism, the lion's share leaving the island in the form of Spanish tariffs and interest, and in payment for luxury imports. Creole elites consistently saw their own well-being based not on the development of a strong and stable nation, but rather on the maintenance of the colonial relationship. After the beginning of the Haitian Revolution in 1791, Spain made full use of the 'spectre of Haiti' to ensure the continued loyalty of 'the ever-faithful isle'; only the might of the Spanish army, Cubans were told, could maintain slavery and prevent Cuba from becoming 'another Haiti', a republic of Africans. Spain's clever and insistent use of the 'spectre of Haiti' ensured that both creole and peninsular planters and merchants continued to see the metropole as the protector of elite property.

This was not true for those creoles who had little property in need of protection; those in the eastern part of the island benefited little from the colonial relationship and hence were far less wedded to its maintenance. The plantations were smaller, existing alongside subsistence agriculture, and technological advantages (such as the railway and the Derosne process, an invention which greatly increased sugar production) were not accessible to them. Further, they had far fewer slaves and could afford no new ones once abolition of the trade doubled and then tripled the price. For all these reasons and more, eastern creoles had not

much to loose from an expulsion of Spain. It is thus no coincidence that it was in the east that revolutionary sentiment festered, and there that all four military revolutionary movements began: the Ten Years War (1868-1878), the Little War (1879, more a continuation of the first), the War of Independence (1895-1898, called at the time the Revolutionary War), and finally the Revolution (1953-1959).

The creole planter elite did not doubt that a colonial army would protect its interest until 1896, when General Weyler failed to militarily defeat the Rebel Army, leaving the western planters vulnerable to the insurgency and now seeing only detriment from Spain. For two more hellish years of the War of Independence, nearly all creoles—(formerly) wealthy western planters, independent vegueros [tobacco workers], and eastern subsistence agriculturalists—imagined and hoped for a Cuba free of colonial attachment. The sentiment behind the slogan of the twentieth-century revolution, “Cuba for Cubans,” was beginning to foment. This sentiment was quickly driven underground by the United States invasion of 1898.

United States

Teddy Roosevelt’s hankering for a larger navy made the invasion all but inevitable, but the 1890s was hardly the beginning of imperial aspirations. United States interest in the island, motivated by both manifest destiny and the southern need for a support of slavery, had long been reciprocated by some Cuban elites’ desire to be directly annexed to the northern neighbor. These “annexationists” were motivated both by the need to counter the bothersome effects of those pesky British

abolitionists through an attachment to the South, and by a desire to escape Spanish tariffs and enter into direct, unhindered commercial access to the huge United States market. But if annexationist fervor (on both sides) should seem like a purely pragmatic matter, it was also mixed with the moral belief that Cuba simply *belonged* to the United States.

The United States made multiple attempts to buy Cuba, an effort thwarted consistently by first one and then another political crisis in Spain, and then by the vagaries of United States politics. And not all Cuban elites wanted annexation, since a war between Spain and the United States would almost certainly ensue, and "a war for annexation would be…a certain way of losing our slaves," since Spain would surely free them as a weapon against both the United States and the pro-annexationist planters (Thomas 1984 [1971]:209). But this was a minority analysis; most elites saw annexation as the ultimate guarantor of slavery and of wealth.

Meanwhile in the United Sates, even as the Civil War rapidly approached (and perhaps because of it), manifest destiny—a phrase invented by the United States American brother-in-law of a Cuban planter—reached a fever pitch. The Monroe Doctrine had already set the stage for intervention in the other American colonies and states. Yellow journalism in New Orleans and New York continued to agitate, producing a racist justification for an invasion: "For the bastard Latin of their nation cannot stand for any time against the conquering power of the robust and hardy English…Their political sentimentalism and anarchical tendencies follow rapidly after the language and by degrees the absorption of the people becomes complete—all due to the inevitable dominance of the American mind over an inferior

race" (*The New Orleans Delta*, 3 January 1953, in Thomas 1984 [1971]:210). If Cuba did not choose to be, then it would be forcibly annexed: "If the Cubans wish to become free and to be admitted to share our civil rights, very well. If not they must go away from Cuba, which must be ours, whether its present inhabitants desire it or not" (in Thomas 1984 [1971]:216).

Cuba was not, according to this ideology, for Cubans, but rather for United States commercial interests; indeed, Cubans might even become an inconvenience for the accumulation of wealth, and so should be eliminated. Ultimately, no decision was required by either the United States or the Cuban elites, since the civil war in the north and the subsequent ending of slavery made annexation far less attractive to both parties.

A generation later, when arguing that indeed an independent Cuban nation was not only feasible but *necessary* for the American democratic experiment, insurgent agitators had to counter North Americans' claim that Cubans were too inexperienced, even child-like, to manage their own affairs. On 23 March 1889, José Martí felt compelled to answer these charges in the *Philadelphia Manufacturer* and the *New York Evening Post*, which had claimed that Cubans were "effeminate" as well as "helpless, idle, of defective morals, and unfitted by nature and experience for discharging the obligations of citizenship" (in Allen 2002:261-262).

State discourse mirrored the yellow journalism. Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, needed to invent an enemy to justify military spending. In 1895, months before the invasion of Cuba and Puerto Rico, he wrote to his friend Henry Cabot Lodge: "Personally I rather hope the fight will come soon. The

clamor of the peace faction has convinced me that this country needs a war." And later to another friend, "It is very difficult for me not to wish a war with Spain, for such a war would result at once in getting a proper Navy" (in Thomas 1984 [1971]:325).

II. Intervention

The ideology of manifest destiny was the product of a political economy that depended for its success upon expansion of markets and access to new raw resources. Direct economic aggression from the United States had replaced one metropole with another long before the Spanish-American War; Spain had lost most of its economic significance for Cuban producers, so that by 1895 Cuba's political master and its economic master were no longer the same state. United States/Cuban economic entanglement took three principal forms. First, the technological advances in sugar production depended upon both financing and expertise from the United States, such as the railroad and the Derosne Process. Second, the United States had gradually become by far the largest market for Cuban sugar, as well as the largest supplier of food stuffs and raw materials. And third, United States capital became indispensable to the planter and merchant class. Planters in search of capital turned to United States bankers and agents who were all too happy to loan cash at high rates of interest. The vicissitudes of the new United States sugar market bankrupted many a planter and made United States corporations the owners and operators of a few very large plantations. Indeed, by the late nineteenth century United States investors owned the largest sugar

plantation in the world, the Constancia. Another group of New York investors formed the American Sugar Refinery Corporation, which by 1890 controlled between seventy and ninety percent of all sugar consumed in the United States.[3]

In these ways, the United States was so deeply invested in the economic life of Cuba that complete Cuban independence was unthinkable. Despite the yellow journalistic rhetoric about spreading democracy to the islands, *investors much preferred the stability of colonialism to the uncertainty of a free Cuba*. The ideologies which had justified intervention also proclaimed that Cuba would be unable to govern itself once freed from Spain. Ignoring all the revolutionary energies and activities in the island and its highly-principled intellectual leadership, military governor Wood wrote to President McKinley: "The people here, Mr President, know that they are not ready for self-government and those who are honest make no attempts to disguise the fact. We are going ahead as fast as we can but we are dealing with a race that has been steadily going downhill for a hundred years and into which we have got to infuse new life, new principles" (Thomas 1984 [1971]:445).

The economic entanglements that had motivated the 1898 invasion now required close monitoring; such wealth as Cuba contained could hardly be left to the frivolity and mismanagement of people with "political sentimentalism and anarchical tendencies," as the *New Orleans Delta* had claimed in 1853. A child-like and inferior-blooded 'race' could not be trusted with a task as important as nation-building; indeed, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, also won from Spain according to the Treaty of Paris, were to be maintained as colonies due to their populations' assumed

[3]The best history of Cuba is the monumental work by Thomas (1984 [1971]). See also Pérez (1993 and 1995), Pérez-Stable (1999 [1994]), and Moreno Fraginals (1964).

inability to govern themselves. And so some provision had to be made to limit the freedom of Cuba, to ensure that the United States would still be able to legally intervene when its economic interests were threatened by anticipated internal political unrest. Thus was born the infamous Platt Amendment to the new Cuban constitution. The amendment might well have been initiated by Tomás Estrada Palma, who would be named (by the United States) the first President of the new republic. As would happen several more times in the twentieth century, Cuban exiles living in the United States betrayed Cuban independence by inviting intervention.

The Platt Amendment was drafted in Washington by Secretary of War Elihu Root, of course without input from the Cubans. Adoption of the constitution, including Platt, was a condition for military withdrawal. The amendment was attached to an army appropriations bill and introduced to the Senate by Orville Platt, where it was quickly approved on 25 February 1901; the House approved it on 1 March, and President McKinley happily signed it into law. Cubans protested immediately, holding a torchlight march that very night to deliver a formal protest to the military governor of the island, General Wood, and a delegation sped to Washington to beg McKinley to reconsider. But since its adoption was a condition for military withdrawal, the Platt Amendment to the new constitution, and the “permanent treaty” which embodied it, were ratified by the Constitutional Convention of Cuba on 28 May 1901. Platt provided for, among other things, the right to military intervention anytime that the United Sates felt its economic interests threatened, the ratification of all laws passed by the military governor during the occupation, and the lease in perpetuity of military bases at Guantánamo and elsewhere.

Soon enough, between ninety and ninety-five percent of all rural property was owned by non-Cubans, most of whom were United States corporations such as United Fruit and Cuban-American Sugar. To protect these properties, the United States made full and enthusiastic use of its right to intervene in 1906 and again in 1917, the first invasion resulting in a full-scale military occupation of the island for three years, the second for five. A shorter invasion by United States Marines in 1912 was intended to crush opposition to an unpopular government and to quiet the racial tensions in the east. Using the thinly-veiled excuse of the need to "protect the lives or properties of United States citizens" (Aguilar 1993:44), the United States was determined to enforce "stability" on the island, even if it meant the delay of democracy. The goal seems to have been to maintain the flow of profits northward, the quality of life of those who produced that wealth, as well as democratic principles, being irrelevant. Throughout the nearly 30 years of the Plattist Republic, the United States Ambassador in Havana was, inarguably, the *de facto* ruler of the island.

The 100-day presidency of Grau San Martín in 1933 was the first and last government (until the Revolution) which was wholly of Cubans' own making. Grau abrogated the Platt Amendment, gave women the vote, and established a minimum wage, eight-hour work day, and workers' compensation—changes entirely unacceptable to United States capital. The last straw came when Grau sent army officers to Mexico for training, signaling the end to formal United States military control of the island. This, Welles could not stomach: "[T]his step can only be construed as a deliberate effort by the present Government to show its intention of

minimizing any form of American influence in Cuba" (Welles in Pérez 1995:270). The United States response was to create chaos, forcing Grau out of office. Diplomatic recognition of the government was withheld, and another invasion was threatened, thus robbing Grau of the now-traditional United States military support. In the following months, Welles unified the opposition, provoked division among government supporters, and even fomented a military mutiny (Pérez 1995:272).

Welles and United States corporate interests were now determined to grant authority to Batista, the "only individual in Cuba today who represented authority." Welles met with Batista and told him that he had earned the support of "the very great majority of the commercial and financial interests in Cuba who are looking for protection and who could only find such protection in himself" (Welles in Pérez 1993:71). After a few puppet presidents, Batista himself seized the presidency in 1934. All Grau regulations favoring Cuban workers over foreign capital were repealed, the only lasting heritages of his one hundred days being female suffrage and the abrogation of Platt, which, under pressure from other Latin American states, the United States had permitted. A new treaty was negotiated by the Batista administration which repealed all of Platt except the provision for the Guantánamo Naval Base. Batista, who had obtained power through the active machinations of the United States ambassador, took credit for rescuing the nation from foreign control. Though at one time allied with the Communist Party, and though he initially supported the democratic constitution of 1940 and introduced legislation which protected laborers, Batista became an increasingly autocratic, even brutal, ally of United States capital.

Wealth was now almost entirely in the hands of foreign corporations. The Cuban elite that did exist, and on which Batista relied for support (or at least obedience), was composed mostly of managers and technocrats on the payroll of these corporations, there being very few Cuban capitalists. Havana elites constructed a state which served their interests, but which largely ignored the needs of the majority, particularly the provinces—just as the peninsulares had done to the creoles one hundred years before. But now the disparity between wealth and poverty was even greater than it had been in the nineteenth century, and the metropole had shifted from Spain to the United States. The dichotomies of colony and metropole, creole and peninsular, urban and rural, east and west, wealth and poverty, Cubans and United States Americans, Havana and Washington, white, black and brown—led to considerable contest over the content of the nation and the meaning of citizenship in the new Cuban republic.[4]

III. Citizenship

Unrelenting colonialism and neocolonialism disallowed the process of nation-state formation in which other Latin American republics had engaged throughout the nineteenth century. Martí's vision had been denied: an independent nation, of racial harmony (or at least racial silence), in which all (male) Cubans participated in a democratic body politic. But even Martí's vision was neither uncontested nor entirely

[4]A good history of the republic can be found in Pérez (1993 and 1995).

internally coherent. Just who could participate in the new nation, which lives and stories would be incorporated into its founding myths, and who could determine national polity, were disputed matters at least until the Revolution.

Recall that one of Spain's strategies for containing revolutionary sentiment was a manipulation of racial fear. The Haitian Revolution was mighty convenient in this regard: it enabled an extended discrediting of the independence movement among white Cubans. The 'spectre of Haiti' was, of course, the possibility that slaves might revolt and institute a second black republic, meanwhile destroying European life and property, or at least privilege. Continual warnings of certain danger looming in the near future were effective in solidifying acquiescence to colonialism. Only the Spanish army, it was claimed, could protect privilege and property. The withdrawal of the Spanish army would surely mean a rapid deterioration into a Haiti-like chaos. The consensus which emerged, then, was that a free Cuba could not exist; an "African republic" was an impossibility. The peninsular argument was that nationhood for Cuba was simply not possible, since it was assumed that a viable nation could only be a white enterprise and required white dominance, and this in turn required the colonial relationships which would keep the Spanish army in place—thus the impossibility of a Cuban republic.

The effect of this discourse was to define citizenship in racial terms, and to undermine the rhetorical and ideological legitimacy of a free and independent Cuban republic. It was this ideological construct which the revolutionary intelligentsia of the mid to late nineteenth century confronted. From New York, José Martí (rhetorically) constructed an ideal of a raceless nation:

> In Cuba there is no fear whatsoever of a race war. “Man” means more than white, more than mulatto, more than Negro. “Cuban” means more than white, more than mulatto, more than Negro. On the battlefields, souls of whites and blacks who have died for Cuba have risen together through the air….An affinity of character is more powerful than an affinity of color… Many whites have already forgotten their color, and many blacks have, too. Together they work, black and white, for the cultivation of the mind, the dissemination of virtue, and the triumph of creative work and sublime creativity.
>
> from “My Race,” 16 April 1893 (translated Allen 2002:319-320)

The battlefield to which Martí referred was the Ten Years War during which, it is true, black and white Cubans had fought side by side. When the revolutionary leader Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, in his “Grito de Yara” of 10 October 1868, declared a new, independent Cuban republic, he also freed his slaves in recognition of the incompatibility slavery in a free republic. Yet neither he nor any leader in that war went so far as to call for an end slavery island-wide. Further, even for freedmen in rebel camps, emancipation was tempered, so as not to alienate some reluctant white insurgents. Even the celebrated Afrocuban general Máximo Gómez explained to new black recruits the “insurmountable problems that sudden abolition would create for them and the immense benefits that would come from a gradual, but prompt, abolition—an abolition ennobled by and ennobling of work, integrity, and well-being” (Ferrer 1999:29). Thus was emancipation moderated by a call for continued subservience.

Between the Little War of 1879 and the final War for Independence of 1895-8, slaves were legally emancipated in the Spanish empire. This was accomplished beginning in 1881 through a system of “apprenticeship”, which had little practical value for either slave or owner, and so was quickly abandoned in favor of full emancipation even before the established date of 1886. This allowed the matter of

the ‘race war’ to be dispensed in the final independence war; since Afrocubans were now free citizens of the Spanish empire, there was no question that they would be free citizens in the republic. Considerable obstacles remained to Afrocubans’ full integration. Nonetheless, the promises of social transformation were not hollow, and very many Afrocubans did experience genuine social advances.[5]

This does not mean of course that questions of the content of the new nation or the nature of citizenship had been solved, for the United States invasion undermined the racially-integrated nationalist ideal, in two ways. First, the United States military government in 1898 structurally reinforced colonial power relations by placing into positions of local authority loyalist creoles and peninsulares. Second, freedmen were denied full citizenship. Racist structures of the invaders complemented and reinforced those of the peninsulares and creole loyalists. Afrocubans were even less capable of self-government than were white Cubans, in the minds of North America, and so Afrocubans were denied participation in whatever civic structures were allowed to develop.

Very soon after the (partial) United States military withdrawal, Afrocubans who were frustrated by United States policies of race-based exclusion founded the Partido Independiente de Color to demand full equality as citizens, including proportional representation. An official ban of the party in 1910 provoked an armed protest in 1912, which was answered by a massacre. Following the annihilation of the party, Afrocubans had to agitate from within existing political structures. But given the myth of Cuban racial equality, an unfortunate product of the egalitarian

[5]For a history of Afrocuban participation in the independence wars, see Ferrer (1999).

ideology of the 1895 insurgents, white political structures served Afrocubans rather poorly; it became unpatriotic to introduce matters of race into the public discourse, since the nation was supposedly a raceless one. In this way, the raceless ideology of Cuba confronted the racist ideology of the United States, with the result that not only were Afrocubans denied full participation in the nation, but were then not allowed to talk about it. Thus, the public discourse around citizenship could not be organized around race, even though race had been such a significant element in the arguments of both independentistas and colonial loyalists.[6]

Another consequence of the presence of the United States in the early republic—and opposition to it—was that increasingly, inclusion and exclusion were organized not around race, but rather around *Cubanness* in opposition to *Americanness*. Given the strong nationalist opposition to United States aggression, inclusion in the national body increasingly required less a specific ethnic heritage than a commitment to the independence of Cuba. The borders of the nation were closed around all Cubans, in exclusion of things American; the public discourse on Cubanness moved now across race but along both geography and ideological commitment. Thus, another effect of United States aggression was a reorganization of ideas of citizenship and nationhood. This is not to deny that race was still a potent social organizing principle, and that the enforced silence around race facilitated the perpetuation of racist structures and ideologies. It is to say that another element was added, and that at least on the level of discourse, citizenship no longer *excluded* Afrocubans a priori. In fact, throughout the republican period, Cubanness was

[6]For a history of Afrocubans during the Plattist Republic, see Helg (1995) and Moore (1997).

redefined, to *privilege* Afrocuban cultural forms. This was a twentieth-century heritage which the nationalist Revolution of 1956-1959 has nurtured.

To racelessness, the Revolution added both ideological and geographic criteria for citizenship by appropriating from the republic its nascent anti-United States Americanism. Revolutionary citizens defend the patria against foreign invaders, and display proper ideological conformity through membership in and commitment to revolutionary civil structures. The construction of the new (post-Revolutionary) nation, and conflicting images of national citizenship, are the subjects of the remainder of the present chapter. One version of Revolutionary nationalism claims that Americans of Cuban descent are not only no longer citizens of the Cuban state, but in fact, since Cubanness requires an ideological conformity to the ideals of the Revolution, they are no longer legitimately Cuban. But the Special Period During Peacetime (1990-present) has necessitated a new definition of citizenship. Anti-capitalism is no longer promoted as dominant ideology, since the state has had to welcome capitalist investment. Neither is egalitarianism any longer an ideological requirement; capitalist 'reforms' have introduced a heretofore unknown differentiation in wealth. Thus, aside from the increased poverty, all the worse because it is unevenly distributed, an unfortunate consequence of the Special Period turn to capitalism has been a deepening of the historic problematic of citizenship. Even the distinction, between those persons of Cuban descent on and off the island, which was in the past quite clear, is now blurred as the state must welcome visits and cash infusions from family members in Miami and New York. We will see throughout the remainder of the present work that the definitions of citizenship and

of ideological conformity are of increasing significance as the island's new pourousness (both physical and ideological) makes identity a matter of no small contest.

IV. Identity

Hyphen

Some Cuban-American scholars have recently been reasserting their claim to Cubanness all the more fervently through a flourish of scholarly production (largely literary criticism). Three recent publications are particularly significant and will be analyzed here: first, Gustavo Pérez-Firmat's (1994) *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way*. As analyzed by Duany (2000), the book is an apologetic attempt to reaffirm the Cubanness of the children and grandchildren of the immigrants, despite their many years of rather successful (and publicly subsidized) integration into the cultural and economic life of the United States. Pérez-Firmat makes the claim, reflecting the pattern of "Cuban exceptionalism," that Cuban immigrants differ from other successful immigrants to the United States. While agreeing with Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz that Cuban culture (in Cuba) lacks a strong nucleus, he inexplicably claims that Cuban cultural identity (in Miami) is so strong that it has resisted assimilation. Pérez-Firmat rejects not only assimilation as a model, but even

Ortiz's idea of "transculturation," "the extremely complex transmutations of culture" when two cultures interact (Ortiz 1995 [1947]:98).[7]

American and Cuban cultures are, claims Pérez-Firmat, "appositional" rather than "oppositional," a notion which Duany (2000:30) calls "utopian". I certainly agree: Pérez-Firmat ignores the aggressive nature of United States culture, the material success of the first generation of Cuban immigrants, and the power of material status to (over)determine culture and political allegiance: "Pérez-Firmat seems to believe that Cuban émigrés continue to think and write like Cubans in America, rather than as Americans of Cuban descent, and that their physical displacement does not produce a significant cultural dislocation" (Duany 2000:31).

The next text Duany analyzes is Behar and León's *Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba*, of which he seems to approve. Its main claim is that Cuban identity is not bounded by geography, but has been historically constituted as a relational discourse between the United States and Cuba. Duany (2000:34) agrees, at least in part, with Behar and León's claim about "the need to incorporate the diaspora in any discussion of contemporary Cuba, and vice-versa….Cuba lies in the heart of Miami, just as Miami lives in the heart of Cuba." Such a formulation reflects a common diasporic ideology: not only are the children of immigrants still just as Cuban as are Cubans, but in fact Cuba *needs* the immigrants to complete its own identity, since the assimilated grandchildren of those who left the island 40 years ago are,

[7]Transculturation was introduced in Ortiz's most famous *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, published in English in 1947. Venezuelan-American anthropologist Fernando Coronil (1995:xlv) tells us that Malinowski, to whom Ortiz had naively given an early manuscript of the book for comment and who wrote the original introduction to it, plagiarized the concept in his *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (1944).

remarkably, central to the definition of *lo cubano*—even those who no longer speak Spanish.

Most of the contributors to the volume of which Duany's essay is a part make similar arguments. But to their credit, the editors also include a marvelous chapter by Max Castro who does not at all concur with the other contributors and makes a dramatically different analysis. Castro concludes that members of the Cuban-American diaspora "systematically underplay, elude, or ignore the conflict-laden and asymmetric aspect of the relation Cuba(n)/America(n)….quite often with tragic or at least disturbing results" (M Castro 2000:293). The lion's share of the essay is a criticism of *Life on the Hyphen*, which he finds highly problematic. The Miami exiles, he writes, are guilty of "systematic misrepresentations of the Cuban/American relationship…that reflect, to a substantial degree, the outlook and idealizations common to those Cubans who at the time of the revolution believed the role of the United States vis-à-vis Cuba was an essentially benevolent one and rejected the Revolution's view of the United States as a contradictor of Cuban national interests and sovereignty" (M Castro 2000:298).

Castro finds that the exiles (including their intellectual elite) argue three rather untenable notions. First, although the exile community is part of American culture, it retains its Cubanness, and in fact its members are more Cuban than Cubans on the island: "El exilio believes that it is a repository and trustee of what is most authentic in Cuban culture which, in its view, has been virtually destroyed on the island by nearly four decades of communism" (Castro 2000:306). Second, exile scholarship quite neatly divides Cuban history into two periods: "before Castro, dazzling light;

after Castro, total darkness" (2000:305). The only problem in Cuba is Fidel; once he is gone, the righteous United States will restore the wealthy and powerful exiles back to their rightful place as rulers of a capitalist Cuba. And third, despite the countless betrayals by the United States which Castro documents, emigrants' children insist that it is a benevolent power and that it will fight with them for the freedom to pursue wealth, even when confronted with quite contrary evidence: "Those who opted to leave the land of their birth, voting with their feet for the proposition that the Cuban/American relation was an essentially compatible and mutually beneficial one, acquired thereby an even greater psychological investment in such an idea" (2000:298).

In order to demonize Fidel, the emigrants' children must valorize the United States, even if that means a perversion of historical fact. Cuba culture—which has since 1898 positioned itself as the antithesis of that of the United States—must be denigrated. Nationalist cultural production must be belittled or discursively rendered away, colonialism must be rendered benevolent, and the long history of active opposition to cultural imperialism must be dismissed as "communist". To accomplish this, some exile scholars attempt to discursively empty *lo cubano*, so that it can be filled with *lo americano*. Such a discursive process requires not only a belittlement but even an erasure of autonomous cultural production. This is the Cubanidad that some exiles seem to promote: *a Cubanness from which Cuba is absent, being now only a signifier of Americanness*.

Failure

Antonio Vera-León, for example, calls Cuba the "Nation Without a Story" (2000). Discussing the liberator of the Americas, Simón Bolívar, he writes that: "Latin American subjectivity in Bolívar was primordially negative, represented in terms of nonbeing: 'ni indios ni europos'. In between these two, there opened the empty space of Latin American subjectivity" (2000:181-182). Analyzing the classic Cuban novel *Cecilia Valdez*, he argues that the Cuban nation has no "story," its narrative being either unfinished or circular: "Therefore, the story develops as an investigation or compilation of a number of narrative models within an open-ended framework of failures" (2000:194-195).

The suggestion that Cuban nationalism has been a process of never ending "failures" is also embraced by Damián Fernández (2000a), who believes that the historical frustrations of independentista energies are the fault of Cuban culture itself; barely acknowledged, imperialism and colonialism are exonerated for the failures of history. Not only are internal cultural characteristics not to be nurtured as the basis of a Cuban nationalism, but they are in fact immature and ultimately destructive of nationalist ambitions. Cultural characteristics are privileged over history, as if invading armies, corrupt leaders, and the booms and busts of the sugar market are insignificant, rendered invisible. Characteristic of the literary criticism of some of the exiles, history has no history: "Regardless of time period and regime, certain cultural traits persisted that undermined the institutional procedures of how states in modern politics should function and the civility that should characterize social relations in the public sphere, undermining the collective goals aspired to [sic]"

(2000a:82). Those “cultural traits” which have so consistently frustrated collective goals are the tendencies toward informalism in economic and political behavior, coupled with the (contradictory) tradition of strong central (authoritarian) leadership. The clash of these produces a “repetition of impossibles,” ultimately producing “sadness in paradise” (ibid 2000a:93). Here, Fernández himself reproduces both the exceptionalism and the pessimism of which he complains: Cuba is an island of exceptional sadness and consistent failure.

Though I critique some of the recent Cuban-American scholarship, it should not be dismissed summarily. With qualification, this literature might be read as an attempt to call into question a tendency towards essentialism or naturalism in nationalist discourse. The lesson of this literature might be that Cuban national identity is and has always been formulated *in relation* to other nation-states and global process, but the emigrants’ children’s claim goes much further: not only is national identity formulated in relation to other processes, but more, there is in fact *no* Cuban national identity, that it is either empty or entirely borrowed, itself having no indigenous content.

Elites

This is the premise of Cuban-American historian Louis Pérez’s (1999) encyclopedic study of United States’ cultural influences in Cuba. The study begins with an account of the huge extent to which Cuba after 1898 was “colonized” by United States corporate interests. Cubans purportedly responded with due reverence: wealthy

Cubans sent their children to school in the United States; elite Habaneros mimicked United States fashions; United States mafia turned Havana into a gambling and prostitution paradise, aided by Fulgencio Batista and other state elites; Christian denominations from the United States sent missionaries to establish churches and schools in Havana; United States cars were marketed to the Cuban wealthy; aspiring Cuban elites befriended North American businessmen and attended their clubs, ingratiating themselves with the economic victors; United States capital bought the arable farmland and beachfront resort properties, and in turn wealthy Cubans bought mansions in south Florida.

This list of examples is quite extensive, and it does appear at first glance to support Pérez's thesis: things "Cuban" were really things "American"; Cuban culture is to a great degree a pale replica of United States culture. Consider:

> [T]hese elements influenced the standards to which Cuban men and women aspired to achieve self-definition and self-worth. It is not clear that Cubans discerned the source of their own formation. What is apparent, however, is that U.S. forms penetrated so deeply through habitual usage and became so much a part of everyday life as to be indistinguishable from what passed as commonplace, but most of all for what passed as Cuban. (1999:12-13)

"The source of their own formation" was exclusively North American, Pérez claims. United States cultural forms became "indistinguishable" from what "passed" as Cuban. In such a formulation, *Cuba almost entirely disappears*, the nation being emptied of all content, or perhaps, the content being entirely imported.

The quantity of Perez's empirical evidence is impressive, but its interpretation is liable to critique. There is a class bias to the examples provided—boarding schools overseas, designer fashion, Ford automobiles, luxury hotels and casinos—which were not cultural influences on the majority of Cubans. The choice of

examples provided imply that elite culture *is* Cuban culture, there being none other. Pérez does mention baseball and vernacular linguistic borrowings, but these are only two out of dozens of examples. Further, a claim that other Cubans mimicked the cultural forms of northern elites would require an intentional forgetting of the well-documented fact that until the Revolution, the eastern two-thirds of the island was isolated from Havana, the principal site of importation of United States culture. Hence, the claim that "Cuban" culture was a mimic of imported United States culture disregards the rest of the island and to most Cubans who were not consumers of luxury imports. In Pérez's formulation, the vast majority of Cuban citizens are invisible and their cultural forms not even worthy of a footnote. This scholarly position is reminiscent of the political stance of a portion of the exile community that finds more in common with elites of the United States than with the majority of Cubans.

Here again, Max Castro diplomatically but emphatically points out that the 1959-62 immigrants were not at all representative of the vast majority of Cubans, nor can their culture claim to represent a universal Cubanness. Drawing on Ortiz's famous image of Cuba as a stew containing many diverse elements, he challenges the claims of his fellow exiles:[8]

> Rather than representing a fair sampling of the Cuban stew [ajiaco] that happened to find its way north, the diaspora is a product of self-selection and corresponds to a very unrepresentative draw from the pot, with some of the key elements in the ajiaco barely present. Only 1.5 percent of Cubans living in Miami in 1990 were black. Miami has a Little Havana rather than a Little Cuba for that reason. The economic success of Cubans in the United States

[8]Though the image of the ajiaco is attributed to Ortiz in all scholarship I have reviewed, the image in fact predates Ortiz by nearly a hundred years. Kutzinski (1993:34) discusses a 1847 popular comedy burlesque entitled "Un Ajiaco…".

> derives in no small measure from the middle-class origins and entrepreneurial orientation of many of those who chose to emigrate, particularly in the early post-1959 period. If these Cuban-Americans represent a slice of Cuba, they represent the wealthiest, most urban, most middle-class, most capitalist, and most pro-American slice. A strange ajiaco.
>
> (M Castro 2000:303)

Castro calls into question the exiles' claim to represent Cuba and cubanidad:

> If, for example, as Fernando Ortiz wrote, "sin el negro, Cuba no sería Cuba," how or what manner of Cuba is a diaspora in which blacks are a miniscule demographic presence and a microscopic political and economic force? Rather than another version of the *ajiaco*, has exile not produced that *criollo* utopia, a Cubanness nearly devoid of blacks…? What manner of cubanía is this?
>
> (ibid 2000:304)

Smith and Padula (1996:187) point out that the exile community is also unrepresentative of cubanía in terms of gender: in 1990, of sixty-eight members of the directing board of the Cuban American National Foundation, only two were women.

Pérez is correct that there was considerable cultural movement from north to south, but this was not universally celebrated. A 1939 lament:

> Our first constitution was a copy of the American constitution; our educational reforms were instigated by North Americans during the first years of the republic and later under Machado….Our electoral laws [were] created by North Americans; our journalism has always followed North American models; the fox-trot took hold throughout the island; movie theaters, cables, and radios continue to impose day after day the rhythms of commercialized North American culture; our social clubs and organizations imitated the United States and Europe, ignoring Cuba and transforming our most intimate and fecund national traditions; our architecture followed the American path, our young people chewed chicklets and smoked cigarettes; our children played with American toys; our chauffeurs drove Yankee cars; our national sport was baseball.
>
> (Arrendondo 1939, in Moore 1997:121)

Arrendondo does at first glance seem to support Pérez's position, and he did mention some elements of vernacular culture here, as did Pérez: baseball and radio.

But his is an angry denouncement of foreign domination, not a denial of Cuban cultural forms. Arrendando was a nationalist, albeit an elitist one, who rejected foreign domination and wished to rescue “our most intimate and fecund national traditions”. This is a far cry from the suggestion that Cubanness itself is but a copy of United States forms.

In fact, most nationalist thinkers, in an effort to form an autonomous national identity, have specifically rejected everything American; they have searched for cultural forms independent of external influence:

> For Cuban nationalists, both politicians and intellectuals, the United States has commonly meant the “other”; the cultural outsider against which Cuba was imagined, measured, contrasted, and protected. Regardless of their political persuasion, Cuban nationalists have sought to distinguish their identity from that of their all-too-near neighbor to the north. (Duany 2000:35)

To the non-exiles Robin Moore and Vera Kutzinski falls the task of uncovering these traditions—historical celebrations of specifically Cuban cultural forms which were upheld as the core of an autonomous national identity.

V. Afrocubanismo

> We are experiencing, in effect, as a result of the natural dictates of historical maturation and in instinctive defense against the economic vassalage that American imperialism is imposing on us, a period of intense affirmation of cubanidad.
>
> —Ambrosio Fornet (1929), in Moore 1997:114 (my translation)

Early in the twentieth-century, Fornet, Ortiz, Guillén, and other members of the intellectual and artistic leadership of the island searched for an indigenous cubanidad as a counter to United States aggression; that source of nationalism was found in the rather unique racial history of the island and in the cultural forms which

would come to be known as *Afrocubanismo*. Cuba was the second-to-last state of the Americas to abolish slavery, and African and Afrocuban cultural forms were consciously kept alive as a source of racial pride and identity.

Ortiz

Fernando Ortiz, in a roundabout way, eventually saw his intellectual task as the articulation of cubanidad, and celebrated Afrocubanismo as a site of nationalist pride. He had begun his intellectual life reflecting typical educated bourgeois attitudes; having studied Afrocuban cultural forms as an anthropologist, he initially believed that the good of the new nation would be best served by purging them from the cultural landscape, so that Cuba and Cubans could be elevated to a higher level of development, thereby earning the respect of the United States. Since he was a member of the Havana intellectual elite during the early republic, as well as the first scholar of any discipline to study Afrocubans, his arguments in favor of the prohibition of degenerate Santería practice (Moore 1997:31) had particular purchase. Afrocubans were exotic but dangerous; indeed, one of Ortiz's early works on Afrocubanism (1906) was subtitled "a study of criminal ethnology".

But as his studies continued, Ortiz experienced a dramatic interpretive shift; he came to understand the value of the rich cultural forms of the darker east, and began to champion Afrocubanismo. He participated in the first Afrocubanista scholarly research and discussion group in Havana, in 1924 founded the journal *Archivos del Folklore Cubano,* and in 1937 became president of the Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos. The goal of the afrocubanista scholars seems to have been

not the political empowerment of Afrocubans, but rather the development of a national identity free of United States influence: “The mythic Afro-Cuban underworld Ortiz and others constructed was more than a cultural origin; it was the only Cuban space seemingly beyond the reach of the United States” (Kutzinski 1993:145; see also Helg 1995). Overcoming his early ethnocentrism, Ortiz made consistently conscious efforts to place his learning at the service of social transformation and the construction of a Cubanness “beyond the reach of the United States”.

Music

A thorough account of the institutionalized Afrocubanismo movement is Robin Moore’s (1997) insightful and seminal study of popular music and dance. He reports that the artistic elite of the island (as had the intellectual elite before Ortiz) disparaged Afrocuban culture during the early republic. This was accompanied by political repression, owing perhaps to an awareness of the potentially dangerous revolutionary sentiment that popular culture can motivate.

> In 1922, only a few scant years before the onset of the Afrocubanismo movement, the administration of [President] Alfredo Zayas (1920-1924) passed comprehensive legislation that prohibited Afrocuban gatherings involving drumming and dance. Because of the affront they were believed to represent to the moral values of the white middle classes, and because of the associations between such activity and the “theft, abduction, or murder of [children of] the white race,” Zayas banned all performances of rumba, Santería, and abakuá ceremony, as well as other African-influenced expression. (Moore 1997:31)

It would require an economic and political crisis to transform this legal and intellectual rejection of Afrocuban cultural forms into a celebrated artistic movement

embraced by nationalists. Two processes in the Machadato initiated a radical change in attitudes.

First, World War I brought with it the destruction of the European sugar beet industry, causing prices to soar and the United States to rely even more heavily on Cuban cane sugar, keeping many sectors of the Cuban economy growing. But this increased reliance on the United States market would have grave consequences. When the United States economy collapsed in 1929, that of Cuba followed suit. Cubans became even more acutely aware that their own economic survival was entirely dependent upon the whim of the market and political decisions made in Washington. Elites were now not as willing to overlook obvious injustices and great injury to nationalist pride, and even those who had been silent about the Platt Amendment became convinced that a truly independent national identity needed to be produced.

The second process which promoted the desire for an autonomous national identity was the failure of the machadato. Increasing nationalist energies ensured the 1924 election of President Gerardo Machado, who had campaigned on a nationalist platform. He soon enacted tariff legislation to protect domestic producers from United States imports, as well as progressive labor legislation to protect Cuban workers from United States corporations. For a few years he was a popular president, but at the end of his four-year term, wishing not to relinquish power, he refused to call for an election (the Cuban constitution did not permit reelection). Civil coercion to maintain power soon became a military dictatorship. General strikes, civil chaos, and even Ambassador Welles finally expelled Machado from office in 1933,

an effort which provoked an enormous nationalist response. Since it was known that it was the United States which had been keeping him in clearly unconstitutional power, nationalist resentment was directed all the more toward the United States. Pro-United States elites lost credibility. Formerly propertied Cuban elites, now under the thumb of United Fruit or American Sugar Refining Corporation, started to realize what working class whites and Afrocubans had known for a hundred years: foreign domination was inhibiting the full development of the Cuban nation and robbing the island of its resources and its autonomy. This political-economic domination occurred on the cultural level as well; thus even the intellectual production of Europe and the United States was suspect, or at least was not to be embraced as the only legitimate cultural expression. Symphonic and philharmonic orchestral instrumentation and rigid dance styles lost, in part, their claim to exclusive representation of what is valuable in human expression.

This was sufficient to temporarily overcome, at least artistically and rhetorically, the aversion to Afrocuban cultural forms. In place of now-discredited Euroamerican cultural forms, Afrocubanismo was now valorized; percussion and swinging hips, formerly dismissed as lascivious and vulgar, were now embraced as products of Cuba. The Afrocuban *son* was an especially popular musical form that had long been rejected by the artistic establishment, but in this period it was increasingly recognized as a viable art form, representing the creative potential of Cuba. Dance and accompanying musical forms danzón, rumba, and conga were slowly allowed into even the finer salons. Each of these had formerly been associated with Santería and with unbridled sexuality; indeed, cabaret rumba

performers did sometimes wear fishnet stockings and bikini tops, and *sones* and accompanying dance moves, the forerunners of contemporary salsa, included highly sexually suggestive swinging of the hips (Moore 1997:184). Nonetheless, by the end of the machadato even elite critics declared that Afrocuban culture has a "special significance in Cuba":

> The physical characteristics of blacks, enriched and multiplied through intermarriage with whites and [Chinese], and their dances of a maligned and enchanting primitiveness, inspire the finest plastic arts. Their music may someday come to be that which defines our presence on the world map of new aesthetics. Progressive musical works [inspired by] Afrocuban ritual have demarcated a path toward the essentially vernacular, toward universally renowned expression.
>
> (Juan Marinello 1930, in Moore 1997:133)

Of course, Afrocuban music and dance that were performed in salons and cabarets and accepted by Cuban musicologists were not the same as Afrocuban street culture. Nationalist Afrocubanism had to be a domesticated version of that which emerged from experiences of marginalization, its sharp edge dulled for elite sensibilities. Tellingly, this process was called at the time "purify," "make sophisticated," "universalize," and "dress with elegance" (Moore 1997:135).

But while a (literally) whitewashed version of Afrocubanismo was invited into the nationalist discourse, some artistic elites—horrified by the prospects of their nation being represented by *negros*—attempted to construct two alternative sources of national identity. The first, *indigenismo* claimed that the now-popular Afrocuban music had in fact been inspired by Arawak traditions; this was far more acceptable to elite sensibility, since light-skinned indigenous persons—who anyway had been safely eliminated since the seventeenth century—could be constructed as noble savages who struggled for freedom against Spanish colonialism. This art was not

really indigenista, but rather Euroamerican art with indigenous subject matters (Moore 1997:129-131). The second proposed alternative to Afrocubanismo was *guajirismo*, an attempt to base an autonomous national identity on the traditions of the European-descended peasantry. Ethnomusicologist Argeliers Léon remarks that guajirismo served "as a refuge for whites who sought a genre that was at once distinctively Cuban and yet devoid of African-inspired elements" (in Moore 1997:131).

Despite elite resistance, the *idea* of Afrocuban cultural expressions as a source for nationalist pride quickly took hold during the machadato and has survived the Revolution. Valorization of Afrocubanismo is still a strategy of nationalist discourse in the Revolution; the state is taking full advantage of the material gain from (commercialized) Afrocuban art, and from the legitimacy that comes from scholarly research into Afrocubanismo.[9]

VI. Erotics

Tomasa the black with lascivious gesture
withdraws the hip, raises her head,
and with arms raised, folds her hands,
in them she rests her ebony nape
and boldly offers her rotund breasts
that oscillate from right to left
and dazzle...

—José Zacharías Tallet, 1938 (in Moore 1997:237)

[9]As we might expect, Afrocubanismo is also a site of youth resistance. Hernández-Reguant tells us that throughout the 1990s the Afrocuban musical form timba functioned as a way for black youth to resist the state by proclaiming that race *does* matter after all, and to connect themselves to the globe through conspicuous consumption (2004:31-32, 35). I explore this theme in detail in Chapter Nine.

Afrocubanismo is part of a nationalist discourse that emerged from, and contributed to, a larger ideology of mestizaje which had begun early in the eighteenth century, when nationalist stirrings first appeared in intellectual and artistic circles. A single figure has been central to mestizaje ideology for nearly its entire existence: the brown sensual body of the mulata, dancing lasciviously to Afrocuban rhythms.

Gender as a site of nationalist discourse in fact predated Afrocubanismo by a century; but this was a gender inflected by race, or perhaps a racial discourse inflected by gender. The mulata body was evidence of a violent confrontation between black and white, but it also contained the possibility of a nationalist reconciliation. The mulata—or rather, her brown body—is a script of Cuban history, for her very existence is testament to (and product of) inter-ethnic desire. In this way, Cuban history is *sexed*—that is, it is bound up with desire so completely that the nation would not exist, does not exist, but through its desire. If the mulata is the nation, as she is consistently represented to be throughout the nineteenth century, and if she is the product of violent desire, then Cuba itself, *does not exist outside a raced erotic discursive field.*

Sugar

The mulata emerged from sugar. Though mixed-race people have been born on Cuba since the conquest, the mulata (as symbol of the nation) was the product of a

century of sugar monoculture.[10] Since the brief British occupation of the island in 1762, sugar production consumed ever-increasing proportions of the island's resources and provided a majority of its wealth. A perennial shortage of women on the growing number of sugar plantations meant that sexual access was a privilege of race and class; many-a white man found his satisfaction with a black woman. She may have given her consent, in hopes of improving the social and economic prospects of her partly-white progeny, and white elites themselves periodically promoted the gradual "whitening" of the island through white immigration and even miscegenation (see Martínez-Alier 1989 [1974]).

The mulata is thus the "social by-product of the sugar and slave society" (Kutzinski 1993:59). She was so closely associated with the sexual economy of the sugar plantation that she became, in the realm of image and symbol, sugar itself. Consider:

I once knew a tobacco picker,
a tawny, brown-skinned woman,
as if the sun,
of her pretty graces envious,
or perhaps coming down
from his sacred sphere,
enamored of her,
had burned her face,
and she is tender and modest,
like the first shoots
of the sugarcane blossom.

[10]The extent to which sugar monoculture is the primary determinant of Cuban culture and history is not clear. Pérez-Stable (1999 [1994]) certainly believes that sugar is paramount, and a certain reading of Ortiz might lead to the same conclusion. Moreno Fraginals' important work *El Ingenio* is a materialist interpretation of nineteenth-century Cuban history, and with this I fully concur. But my own position is that it is not sugar monoculture *per se*, but rather the foreign domination and grotesquely differential power relationships that sugar represents, which are responsible for the many historical events to which monoculture has been attributed. Pérez-Stable does not bring out this distinction sufficiently, though she does seem to accept it; Ortiz entirely—and apparently unaware—conflates sugar and its foreign relations consequences. For a passionate Cuban Revolutionary interpretation of the role of sugar in Cuban underdevelopment and neocolonialism, see Carlos Franqui (1984).

(in Kutzinski 1993:87)

This association is so close that even a picker of *tobacco*—the antithesis of sugar, according to the popular imagery from which Ortiz drew—is compared to a sugarcane blossom. And the association operates in the obverse as well; not only are mulatos associated with sugar, but also sugar with the mulato. Ortiz: "Sugar was mulatto from the start, for the energies of black men and of white always went into its production" (Ortiz 1995 [1947]:58). For Ortiz, sugar was a symbol of national and international domination: "Sugar spelled slavery; tobacco, liberty" (Ortiz 1995 [1947]:60). He meant this in two ways: sugar required the importation of slaves, and sugar made Cuba a slave to external powers. "Foreign predominance in the sugar industry was always great, and now it is almost absolute" (Ortiz 1995 [1947]:61). But if sugar was a symbol of foreign domination, how could the mulata, who is a product of sugar, be a symbol of national liberation? Here is yet another of the many internal contradictions in the discursive production of Cuban nationalism. The mulata-sugar nexus is a symbol of both liberation and of slavery. As desire she is both the product of violent rape—a fact which leads Betancourt (2000:110) to conclude that she is an *illegitimate* symbol of national independence—and the promise of greater freedom. As nationalism she is the rallying point for revolution but also is entirely passive.

For nationalist apologists, the usefulness of the mulata is that she suggests the possibility that black and white have come together peacefully, that the racial conflict Spain so long threatened had not occurred, and especially that the combination of black and white had produced something *uniquely Cuban*. Kutzinski writes of the discourse of sugar in nineteenth-century Cuba, and on that discourse's

goal of legitimizing the economic and social violence of the sugar plantation in order to nourish the illusion of ideological stability that would facilitate national liberation and ultimately bring about liberation from Spain. The nonwhite female body thus became "a site—in fact *the* site—of Cubans' struggle over cultural meaning and political authority" (Kutzinski 1993:42). But this produces another problem: the highly-desirable mulata body is a threat to white privilege, the reproduction of which depends upon racial certainty produced by the carefully-contained institution of legal marriage. The very body that represents national unity is threatening precisely because of its erotic appeal; the mulata represents both the "fear of racial difference and the simultaneous attraction to it" (ibid 1993:67).

Here, eros and nation-building are inextricably co-implicated. And this is yet another way in which Cuban nationalism follows a familiar Latin American pattern. Pravaz (2003:122-123), of the mulatas' role in Brazilian nationalism:

> The bodies of women are territories upon which colonial and nation-state powers have been deployed in symbolic and concrete ways by resort to fetishized and racialized discourses. In the formation of Brazilian national identity as it developed from the 1930s onward, mulatas' bodies would become the privileged representation of the "mixed" character of the nation.

And this dark body, the nation, is also a site of erotic charge. Consider the 1993 lyrics of Carmen Miranda (in Pravaz 2003:116):

> She says she has brown skin, and a feverish body
> And inside the chest, love of Brazil
> "I am Brazilian, my body reveals
> that my flag is green and yellow".

This is precisely the discursive process that underpinned Cuban nationalism for nearly two-hundred years before the Special Period, and that conditions in part how sex work is imagined and deployed in the current nationalist crisis.

Sex

Crespo's 1847 poem "La Mulata" indicates the by-then well-established relationship between mulata bodies, slavery, sugar, and sexuality:

> But we must see her
> not as a slave,
> but walking freely and
> as she pleases.
> As one, finally,
> to whom the sidewalk
> on which she strolls
> seems too narrow,
> and whose swinging hips upset
> curtains, awnings, and shop signs.
> ……
> There is no mulata more beautiful,
> more cunning and more graceful,
> nor one who has more sugar
> in her hips than my Rosa.
>
> (in Kutzinski 1993:36-37)

Here, freedom is made manifest in her erotic gait, as if her hips and their movement "eluded the social and representational economies of slavery" (Kutzinski 1993:37). But if her body provides the opportunity for an "illusion of ideological stability" (ibid 42), her sexuality is nonetheless dangerous, for three reasons. First, because she is brown and not black, she blurred the clear racial distinctions on which white privilege were based. Secondly, her very brownness was proof that a negra had been desired by a white man, refuting the claim that black is ugly. Third, this desirability gave her a power over white men which she should not have had. Hence, her sexuality had to be represented as either dangerous or pathological or both. As a sexual object

desired by white men, she in fact threatened the stability of the nuclear family, on which both class and racial privilege was based.

The mulata was dangerous because she enticed, cajoled, and lured men to their ruin—a familiar theme in the literature of western civilization. She was sexually *rapacious* to the point of being pathological or even criminal. This discursive turn was inevitable, since female sexuality necessarily meant black or mulata sexuality: white women do not appear in the literary record of the nineteenth century, and anyway they were not supposed to be sexual at all. Thus, "nineteenth century medicine regarded all manifestations of female sexuality as pathological" (ibid 60).[11]

A pathological sexuality which cannot be appeased becomes prostitution. It was the economic process of the sugar plantation that produced the mulata, and in turn her sexuality was to be forever associated with economics. Kutzinski (1993) insightfully analyzed a series of nineteenth century *marquillas*—engraved cigar box labels—that tell the story of the mulata: she and her mother are both prostitutes; she is a schemer, plotting to improve her and her children's social position by seducing a white man ("Male dove, female hawk"); her tragic life ends in venereal disease and death ("The consequences"). The association of sex work with the mulata was so firmly established that even into the Revolution "to engage in sex work practically means to assume a mulata identity by association" (Fusco 1998:155). The

[11]The danger of female sexuality does not only emerge from the experience of American conquest and colonialism, nor from nineteenth-century European medicine. Very different contexts have produced similar male fears. Thomas Gregor (1985) reports that in Amazonia, for example, the Mehinaku myth of the "toothed vagina" (among others) communicates the danger of women's sexuality. The Sambia of New Guinea, Gilbert Herdt (1987) tells us, go to great lengths to protect themselves against the extreme danger women represent, and whom they are terrified: men plug their noses during intercourse to protect against inhalation of women's pollution, and adolescent men have to be beaten ruthlessly in initiation rituals to cleanse them of the pollution which has surrounded while in their mothers' care.

implication of the fact that a nationalist image is also a prostitute is precisely the subject of much of the present study.[12]

Masculinity

In the figure of the mulata, the violence of slavery and rape were glossed as harmonious racial blending. But she is not the actor: she is the product of male activity, and it is men who construct the nation which represents itself through her: "Nowhere in this masculinist paradigm [of nation-building] are women, especially non-white women, acknowledged as participants in and possible producers of the very culture that inscribes its identity through them" (Kutzinski 1993:167). Not only is she not a participant in the nation, but Kutzinski believes that the feminine face of the mulata is merely a mask of a hyper-masculine—even homoerotic—processes: "The mulata…is little more than a body inscribed with and subjected to male desire, sexual and political. That body may be feminine in appearance, but much more significant than its gender attributes is that it is the site of an erotic performance represented as feminine" (ibid 174). Nationalism is strictly a masculine endeavor, even when it appears in feminine "garb" (ibid 173)—a conclusion the relevance of which will become increasingly clear as the following chapters investigate the nationalist discourse of male sex work.

Kutzinski concludes that "The mulata may be the signifier of Cuba's unity-in-racial diversity, but she has no part in it. For the mestizo nation is a male homosocial

[12]These ideas and associations around the mulata are not exclusive to Cuba; they appear in the Dominican Republic and Brazil.

construct premised precisely upon the disappearance of the feminine" (1993:165). But she goes further still: discursive machinations dulled the threat of mulata sexuality by rendering it non-productive. Kutzinski sees a connection between this mythical sterility and the inherently masculine nationalist project:

> The racist belief in the mulata's supposed sterility…hides a male homosocial, indeed homoerotic, subtext….Far from being contradictory or incompatible, heterosexuality, homosociality, and homoeroticism are mutually sustaining in this scenario….The male desire for the racial Other who is also of the same gender is played out in the (dis)guise of heterosexuality. (ibid 178)

This claim is similar to one made by Stratton (2001[1996]), whose formulations we examine in Chapter Three: namely, that the feminine is merely a signifier of masculine desire, and thus reflects—or rather, deflects—a purely masculine discourse. The feminine, and desire for the feminine, is in fact desire for the masculine, says Stratton. Thus the hyper-masculine nationalist project is inextricable intertwined with eroticism. And since the symbol of the nation, the highly erotic mulata, is in fact a signifier of homoeros, then what is at base of much Cuban nationalism is a homosocial machismo teeming with erotic energy.[13]

The mulata's sexuality, though dangerously appealing to white men, must be rendered non-productive. She produces no uncategorizable offspring, who by their ambiguous brownness would disrupt privilege based on clear racial categorization. This tames her, making her body and her representation useful to a masculinist project. This explains in part the second "unproductive" element in Cuban nationalist imagination: the virgin.

[13]Though I am sure that these arguments do have a contribution to make, I am not entirely convinced either by Stratton or Kutzinski (though she is insightful in many other aspects). The erotic edge to extreme machismo might be a result of its element of domination—not only of women, but also of men.

Virgin

The discursive construction of the Cuban nation required two images, or rather one double-sided image: the mulata and the Virgin, that is, the Virgin Mary in her local manifestation, the Virgin of Charity of El Cobre. According to María Elena Díaz, the Virgin is thoroughly embedded in Cubans' self understanding: "Black or white, resident or exile, religious or secular, Cubans still identify [El Cobre] as the abode of Our Lady of Charity, patroness of the Cuban nation….The story of the Virgin of Charity has been linked in the island's cultural imagination throughout most of this last century to ideas of the nation, creolization, race, [and] syncretism" (2000:43).

Smith and Padula agree, telling us that the Virgin of El Cobre is "the divine mother to whom Cubans pray in times of trouble," whose image they wore into battle in the wars for independence and in Angola, and to whose memory the exiles have constructed a chapel in Miami (1996:8). Until the twentieth century, in fact, the Virgin's memory seems to have been nearly lost, in official discourse at least, until John Paul II re-authenticated the miracles and called the Virgin the "patroness of Cuba" (Díaz 2000:47). The recent official interest in Afrocuban folklore, rather useful in tourism promotion, has now fully revived her: on 3 May 2004, the Directorio Turístico de Cuba featured the El Cobre shrine in its weekly promotional newsletter, suggesting that tourists visit "one of the centers of Cubans' spirituality" (DTC 2004).

Díaz reports that the Virgin appeared in or about 1604 to creole Juan Moreno, a royal slave in the mines of El Cobre (2000:53-54). According to his testimony before colonial and then ecclesiastical authorities, he was in a canoe with two

indigenous brothers when they saw in the foam of the waves a statuette of the Virgin atop a piece of wood into which were carved the words “I am the Virgin of Charity”.[14] When drawn into the canoe, her clothes were dry—the first miracle, and a common one in the genre of Virgin appearances. She was given a shrine site near the Catholic church, but began disappearing from it nightly, reappearing in the morning with wet clothes—a perfect inversion of her initial condition in the sea. The inversion of the normal of order of things, Díaz tells us, is another common theme in the narratives of Marian appearances to the poor and enslaved, to whom God promises liberation. In the following months, other miracles followed, interpreted by the cobreros to mean that the Virgin was dissatisfied at the ecclesiastical (colonial) center of the town—the church—and wanted instead to reside near the mines, that is, near the slaves to whom she promised redemption. She was moved according to her instruction, whereupon she was embraced by the African and creole slaves as a symbol of their liberation from slavery, and of divine favor in their struggles against white and colonial power. As Díaz (2000) points out, the Virgin story of El Cobre follows a typical pattern of Marian narratives, the inversion of everyday relationships: the divine epiphany appeared to an Indian and a slave, and it was near the mines where the slaves worked that she preferred to rest. This in some way elevates the slaves of the mines of El Cobre above the status of the colonizers. The testimony of the slave Juan Moreno, whose voice would otherwise remain silent, was attended to and attested by representatives of the Holy See himself. Thus was the ethnic hierarchy on the island overturned.

[14]Her appearance in the foam is reminiscent of the Santería deity Yemayá, who lives in the foam.

Centuries later, the Virgin was also embraced by the nationalist movement of the Machadato republic, as a symbol of the national identity of mulata Cuba.[15] At some point in the popular telling, one of the Indian brothers became white—thus converting the story into a symbol of Cuba's blending of white, black, and Indian (nevermind that in fact precious little indigenous blood remained). Ortiz wrote that the Virgin of Charity of El Cobre was a "unitary symbol of creole syncretism" (Díaz 2000:46). Thus did the Virgin serve the same function as would Afrocubanismo a century later: it provided a symbol of the peaceful—indeed, divinely blessed—amalgamation of ethnically diverse elements to form a new and unique nation. This is reminiscent of the symbols employed to construct a three-element Puerto Rican ethnicity; the round symbol of the Instituto de la Cultura Puertorriqueña, Dávila (1997) tells us, is divided into three parts in each of which is pictured one of the constituent elements of Puerto Rican culture: African, Indigenous, and European.

Colonialism

The story of the Virgin represents not only the ethnic mixture on the island, but also the island's relationship to Spain and to North America. The ideology of mestizaje and the tripartite symbol of the Instituto de la Cultura Puertorriqueña both attempt to distance the islands from the United States. I suggest we view the story of the Virgin in similar light, in its ideological nationalist function. She is a *Cuban* virgin, a *mulata* virgin, who promises redemption from colonial domination. The normal relationships

[15]I have been unable to locate any information as to the Virgin's function in the eighteenth-century independence movement. Given her importance, it would be odd if she did not appear as a as a prominent symbol of national syncretism.

between colonizers and colonized are overturned by her apparition. And so she represents not only the slaves in their struggles against the white masters, but also the entire nation against the aggressive colonizing power of first Spain and then the United States.

The use of the Virgin in nationalist discourse illustrates the extent to which discourses of domination and resistance are encoded with phallic, sexual, erotic imagery. As we will see in the next chapter and throughout our study of pinguerismo, the rhetoric and images of phallic power and vaginal vulnerability are deeply embedded in the popular interpretations of the long colonial history of Latin America. The Mexican mythology of "La Malinche" provides a useful comparative. Malinche was an Indian woman who was given as tribute to Hernán Cortés after he defeated the indigenous forces in 1519. She acted as his guide, interpreter, and mistress. Malinche's cultural and linguistic aid facilitated Cortés' conquests; thus she is represented not as a victim of violence, but as a co-conspirator, a traitor to her own people. She also bore a son to Cortés, and in so doing—at least in the realm of national mythology—gave birth to the first mestizo, and indeed to the entire Mexican nation. Mexico itself is an illegitimate son of a traitor. But Malinche herself was more than a traitor; she was the mother of the nation, as the woman who opened her vagina to the invader and gave birth to a nation of mestizos.

> [La Malinche's] story has come to represent the quintessence of Latin American mestizo origins. Couched in terms of violence, rape, suffering, and deprivation, this origin is expressed through gender and race, articulating specific relations of power and dominance. It is the Spaniard male—the pale-faced conquistador —who overpowers the foreign land and its people. He is the victor. His victim is the Indian woman, native of the land, who is raped by a stranger and subsequently gives birth to illegitimate children. Thus the

> territorial conquest is rephrased in terms of a sexual conquest. The rape of the woman is metaphorically equated with the rape of the land.
>
> (Melhuus 1996:237)

Thus the wombs of both the mulata and of La Malinche are the site of a violent confrontation between Europe and America.

Just as the mulata whore's counterpart is the Virgin of El Cobre, Malinche's counterpart is the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Mexican manifestation of Mary. She is of course highly non-sexual, being the virginal mother of God; she is free of the sin of sexuality, and her image has been appropriated in a liberative way by Mexicans since the conquest. But she is like Malinche to the extent that she, too, facilitated the conquest by prying open indigenous culture to a "colonization of consciousness" (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1992) through religious evangelism. Nonetheless, in the Mexican cultural imagination, the two figures are quite distinct and afforded very different moral economies. This is not true in Cuba, where a long history of a highly erotic cultural imagination has produced less problematized ideas about sex. The Cuban virgin and whore are not as diametrically opposed in terms of their sexuality. In fact, as Valdéz (1989) explains, the images of the mulata and the Virgin have been fused in the Cuban cultural imagination far more than in Mexico. More than simply different sides of the same coin, the images are indistinguishable: the Virgin of El Cobre, nicknamed "La Cachita," is vivacious, brown, and sensual. La Cachita is the Santería Goddess of Pleasure, an "African hedonist masquerading as a Spanish saint" (Valdéz 1989:30).[16]

[16]Paz (1985 [1961]:85-86) agrees that neither Guadalupe nor Malinche are "lascivious", as is the Cuban mulata. I disagree with his claim that the Mexican pair are both passive, Malinche even more than the Virgin.

But despite very different ideas about women's sexuality, which produce different moral judgments of the mulata, there are two similarities between the Mexican and the Cuban whore-virgin pairing. Both Guadalupe/Malinche and Cobre/Mulata reflect the same two cultural complexes, which themselves produce still more contradiction. First, in both contexts, women determine the fate of a nation in a period of traumatic national transition. In both Mexico and Cuba, according to nationalist mythology, women have determined the fate of everyone: "What distinguishes these two women is their power to influence the outcome of the world. The myths tell us that the nations owe their fall—and rise—to women; men owe their lives—and deaths—to women. What distinguishes the dominant representations of the myths is precisely the obfuscations of this power" (ibid:239). La Malinche was blamed for facilitating the conquest of the Americas, destroying one nation and giving rise to another. The Mulata produced a nation of brown Cubans by "voluntarily" offering her purportedly insatiable sexuality for the satisfaction of Spanish men. But how does The Virgin, both of Guadalupe and of El Cobre, give rise to anything at all, her sexuality having been conquered and contained? The Virgin Mother, in Melhuus's formulation the "non-sexual-women-represented-as-mother" (1996:249), gave rise to new nations by opening them to a foreign God; though she seems to side with the indigenous and the slaves, she herself was the product of a colonizing religious system and was introduced to the Americas by the conquerors; her power lies in her ability to pry open souls for colonization, just as the mulata and Malinche voluntarily laid themselves open for both a phallic and a military invasion.[17]

[17]This discussion is not intended to minimize the extent to which the Virgin has been co-opted by first

And herein lies the second way in which the Virgin and the whore are in fact two aspects of the same figure. Ironically, although both declare that history is determined by women, they also proclaim the power of the phallus, and in fact *they organize history around images of penetration*. For both the Virgin and the whore, in Mexico and in Cuba, the act of phallic penetration is the paradigm of all of national history: the penetration of conquest, the vulnerability of invasion, the defeat of being laid bare and unprotected. Melhuus discusses Octavio Paz on La Malinche's role in Mexican history (1996:234):

> In this sexual imagery it is neither rape nor the fact of being the result of an illicit relationship which is the issue, but the meaning of penetration. To be penetrated implies laying oneself bare to the power or force of another. The result of being penetrated (both the offspring and the person penetrated) carries negative connotations. Moreover, Paz carries the metaphor of *hijos de la chingada* to mean 'the others': 'strangers, bad Mexicans, our enemies, our rivals…that is, all those who are not as we are.' He leaves no doubt as to who Malinche is—she is *la chingada par excellence*, opening Mexico to the others….Although the Virgin does not fall into the category of chingada, she nevertheless also represents a passive state.[18]

The ironic unifying features of the Virgin and the whore are that they both control history, but they simultaneously proclaim the power of the phallus. The ideological and discursive underpinning of Latin American phallocentrism are the subject of the next chapter. The present study of pinguerismo assumes that the colonial and post-

---

indigenous Americans and later Latin Americans as an ally in resistance to colonialism. Again we confront contradiction: the Virgin and the mulata both lay open their lands for phallic invasion—the first through the power of religion and the second through her accommodating vagina—thus paving the way for colonialism old and new. The Virgin turns history on its head: a symbol of the religion of the invaders and conquerors and slaveholders takes on the coppery skin tone of the slaves and then chooses to appear to them, rather than to those that hold colonial power. It should be little wonder, then, that she is a symbol both of dominance and of liberation.

[18]Melhuus's selective choice of passages from Paz is a bit misleading; in the preceding paragraph, Paz writes that in fact *all* Mexicans are *hijos de la chingada*, not only 'bad' Mexicans and 'others': "All our anxious tensions express themselves in a phrase we use when anger, joy, or enthusiasm cause us to exalt our condition as Mexicans: *'¡Viva Mexico, hijos de la chingada!*'" (1985 [1961]:74, italics his; see also 1985 [1961]:80)

colonial history and culture in Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America is organized around, and articulated via, images of phallic penetration.

Chapter Three
Phallus

"Giving the dick doesn't mean a thing."
--Interview with Cuban historican, November 1999

Race and gender have been battlegrounds of nationalist discourse in Latin America since at least the late colonial period. We saw in Chapter Two that Cuba is no exception. The discourse of race has been largely ignored both by the Revolution—which likes to believe that socialism has overcome such divisiveness—and by the Cuban-American exiles—whose claim to represent cubanidad and cubanía requires both a silencing of their skewed demography and a disparaging of earlier nationalist formulations of authentic Cuban culture. Despite these silences, a counter-hegemonic discourse valorizing Afrocuban cultural production has since the mid-nineteenth century offered an alternative vision of a national content freed from colonial influence; pride in the African elements of Cuban culture and demography has waxed and waned, moving in and out of overt nationalist discourse. In contrast, the discursive (and political) potential of gender has been consistently and self-consciously employed. In Chapter Two we saw that nationalism has called upon

ideas of female sexuality encoded in the figures of the mulata and the virgin. The reverse side of the same discursive system is the nationalist use and elaboration of ideas of masculinity, particularly as encoded in the mythico-cultural image of the phallus. One of these inheritances, a particularly virulent phallocentrism, is still relevant in the Havana of the Special Period (1990-present), and in part conditions the gender constructions of the pingueros. It will become increasingly clear that the phenomenon of pinguerismo is but a recent manifestation of traditional gendered ideas, imagery, and prescriptions which the Revolution inherited and utilized. It is to images of the invading, conquering phallus that we now turn.

I. Apostle

> It is obvious that by the 1880s the nationalist discourse defined the Cuban citizen not only in opposition to Spanish colonization, American neocolonization, the importation of European social models, the representation of the black and the mulatto, the representation of the woman, and in relation to class struggle, but also in opposition to the homosexual (and other queer bodies), perceived at that time as among the abject of the nation, among the most repudiated constructs of the national body.
>
> —Emilio Bejel 2001:8

A hundred years before the hyper-masculine and hyper-nationalist Revolution, an earlier stage of the nationalist project made similar use of gendered expectations. As the third war for Cuban independence approached, José Martí worked feverishly from New York to raise funds and consciousness for the Partido Revolucionario Cubano, founded in 1892. In preparation for the launching of this party and for the war, he issued a call for a Pan-American identity and cooperative political front, first to counter the aggression of the United States, and second, to rally support from

other newly-independent Latin American states for Cuba's own war against Spain. This call was in the form of the essay "Our America" of 20 January 1891, his "most frequently cited and anthologized work" (Allen 2002:288). With typical rhetorical flair, he called upon Latin American men to exhibit the machismo which would be necessary in the coming struggle. A comparison of the tough and noble macho men of Latin America with effeminate weaklings of Europe would surely stir the former to action; those "delicate creatures" who chose not to unite and fight the foreign aggressors were not really men at all:

> Only runts whose growth was stunted will lack the necessary valor, for those who have no faith in their land are like men born prematurely. Having no valor themselves, they deny that other men do. Their puny arms, with bracelets and painted nails, the arms of Madrid or of Paris, cannot manage the lofty tree and so they say the tree cannot be climbed. We must load up the ship with these termites who gnaw away at the core of the patria that has nurtured them; if they are Parisians or Madrileños then let them stroll to the Prado by lamplight or go to Tortini's for an ice….These delicate creatures who are men but who do not want to do men's work! (tr. Allen 2002:289)

"Our America" was Latin America, as opposed to the "Other America," the United States. In that 1891 essay, Latin American men were urged to live up to their macho reputations to resist European colonialism. But as the final war approached, Martí, still in New York and reading the yellow journalism of the New York Post and the New York Observer, perceived that the winds of imperialism were producing an enemy to Cuban independence far more powerful than Spain. He turned his rhetorical attention to the United States, and proclaimed that the duty of a real Cuban man was to resist United States imperialism. On 23 March 1894, he wrote an essay entitled "The Truth about the United States". It was another call to arms, again appealing to a sense of manly duty:

> [In the United States] instead of growing stronger and saving itself from the hated and misery of the monarchies, democracy is corrupted and diminished, and hatred and misery are menacingly reborn. And the one who silences this is not doing his duty, while the one who says it aloud is. For silence would be a failure of one's duty as a man to know the truth and disseminate it, and of one's duty as a good American, who sees that the continent's glory and peace can only be ensured by the honest and free development of its different natural entities, and of one's duty as a son of our America to keep the American peoples of Spanish descent from falling, out of ignorance, bedazzlement, or impatience, and on the advice of cowardly greed and the pompous toga, into an immoral, enfeebling servitude to a damaged and alien civilization. The truth about the United States must be made known to our America.
>
> (tr. Allen 2002:289)

And to those Cubans who envied the (apparent) wealth of the United States and who wished to emulate it, Martí warned:

> Yankeemania is the innocent fruit of some small burst of pleasure, like one who judges the essence of a house and of the souls that prey or perish within it by the smiling luxury of the parlour, or the campaign and carnations on the table set for guests. For you must suffer, do without, work, love in vain, study with all your courage and freedom, keep vigil with the poor, weep with the miserable, hate brutality of wealth…; only then can you, with some glimmering of accuracy, give an opinion on this greedy, authoritarian republic, and the growing lustfulness of the United States.[1] (tr. Allen 2002:333)

I have quoted Martí extensively here because I wish to call attention not to the already-established *fact* of his fervent opposition to the United States, but rather to the *language* with which such opposition was expressed. Martí used the rhetorical system with which his Cuban and Cuban-descended audiences would have been most familiar, and which would have readily accessed their most engrained sense of duty: that was, of course, the discourse of gender. In the first passage, he called upon Cuban men to exercise the "valor" with which they were naturally endowed;

[1]Louis Pérez (1999) believes that the fact that Martí lived in New York means that Cuban independence owes its intellectual formulations to the United States; but to make such a claim, Pérez must be conveniently unaware of these and the many other passages in which Martí called the United States a "monster" and imaged Cuban national character as being diametrically opposed to the "crude, unequal, and decadent character of the United States" (tr. Allen 2002:333).

they should shun any temptation to become like the weakened European men on whose “puny arms” are “bracelets” and “painted nails”. In the second passage, he reminded every Cuban man that his “duty as a son of our America” is to boldly resist the “cowardly greed” of the United States. And in the third passage he told the real Cuban men that they “must suffer, do without, work, love in vain, study with all your courage and freedom, keep vigil with the poor, weep with the miserable, hate brutality of wealth”. Throughout these exhortations, Martí was not only drawing upon a reservoir of gendered imagery, but at the same time reproducing and augmenting them, constructing his ideas of what real Cuban masculinity entailed.

This rhetorical-constructive activity emerged neither in a vacuum nor from Martí’s own machista agenda; rather, it was a response to a specific challenge. We saw in Chapter Two that yellow journalism in the United States had engaged in a fervent ideological preparation for the beginning of United States neocolonialism. Here I will quote more amply from the 6 March 1889 *Philadelphia Manufacturer* article previously mentioned, calling special attention to the accusations of military impotence.

> The Cubans are not much more desirable [than the Spaniards]. Added to the defects of the paternal race are effeminacy and an aversion to all effort, truly to the extent of illness. They are helpless, lazy, deficient in morals, and incapable by nature of fulfilling the obligations of citizenship in a great and free republic. Their lack of virile strength and self-respect are shown by the apathy with which they have submitted to Spanish oppression for so long, and even their attempts at rebellion have been so pitifully ineffective that they rise little above the dignity of a farce.
>
> (quoted in Bejel 2001:11)

Martí’s response was published on 25 March in the same newspaper. In it, he accepted the *Manufacturer*’s gendered notions of valor versus effeminacy; rather

than challenging those gender constructions, he merely insisted that Cuban men were not deserving of such characterizations.

> We have suffered impatiently under tyranny; we have fought like men, sometimes like giants, to be freemen….[A]re we to be considered as the Manufacturer does consider us, an "effeminate" people? These city-bred young men and poorly built half-breeds knew in one day how to rise against a cruel government…to obey as soldiers, sleep in the mud, eat roots, fight ten years without salary, conquer foes with the branch of a tree, die….They died like those other men of ours who, with the stroke of the machete, can send a head flying, or by a turn of their hands bring a bull to their feet. These "effeminate" Cubans had once courage enough, in the face of a hostile government, to carry on their left arms for a week the mourning-band for Lincoln. (in Bejel 2001:12)

Bejel's excellent analysis of Martí's masculine prescriptions can be critiqued for glossing that characteristic which Pérez ignores but which is central for my argument and for our understanding of pinguerismo: Martí's reworking of the content of machismo prescribed not only certain characteristics, but also a *political commitment*. A real Cuban man was not only brave and bold, could survive off the land, and kill with his machete, but he also hated imperialism and devoted his life to the struggle against it. This tradition would be exploited by the Revolution and becomes relevant in the lives of the pingueros. What is at stake here is the content of the image of the Cuban phallus as a (largely mythical) source and embodiment of masculine power: possession of the phallus and access to its power are demonstrated not only by macho behavior, but also by an avowed Cuban nationalism, which for both Martí and for the Revolution meant anti-Americanism.

This same phallic power is claimed by those contemporary carriers of Cuban machismo, the pingueros, who at once reproduce internalized ideas of Cuban manhood and at the same time don Nike shoes and Tommy Hilfiger clothing—yet

another contradiction in the phenomenon of pinguerismo. A resolution of this conflict will be attempted in Parts III and IV. For now we will turn to more recent considerations of Latin American phallic machismo.

II. Macho

> The Latin man and his phallus are at the center of the Hispanic universe….The Phallus remains an all-consuming image for Hispanic society whether as the absent animating presence of the repressive culture of machismo or the furtive purpose of the repressed culture of homosexuality. It is the representation of masculine desire, a fantastic projection of guilt, shame, and power. Hyperactive bravura and suppressed longing are its twin modalities.
>
> —Ilán Stavans (1996:149, 164)

Stavans, a Mexican author and critic, mused provocatively about the Latin phallus. His article is a loosely-organized collection of literary and personal anecdotes about the ways in which Latin American men experience their penises. Stavans points to a crucial connection between the personal/intimate, and the political/military—precisely the subject of much of this chapter. Consider, first, Stavans' ideas of the role of the phallus (read: penis) in the personal lives of Latin American men and women: "The phallus [is] an object of intense adoration, the symbol of absolute power and satisfaction. It is the source of the macho's self-assurance and control, sexual and psychological; it is also the envy of the Hispanic woman" (1996:149). The locus of machismo in this formulation seems to be the psychology of men and the conjugal relations between men and women. But there also is a hint of more, of a phallic function having to do with "absolute power" and not just "absolute satisfaction". This becomes more overt in the concluding paragraph: "In a continent where tyranny remains an eternal ghost and democracy an elusive dream, the

phallus is an unmerciful dictator, the totemic figure of our longing" (1996:164). Here, two aspects of the phallus are made explicit: it is an "unmerciful dictator," but also the "figure of our longing". There are two unanswered questions: first, how is the phallus a dictator, and whom does it rule? And second, whose longing does it embody and signify? Both go unanswered by Stavans, but both questions will be resolved in the present chapter and in my treatment of pinguerismo, below.

In the same collection as that in which Stavans appears, is a chapter by the Cuban exile Ricardo Pau-Llosa, who claims that he has "lived in exile since 1960, the year my family fled communist Cuba"—overlooking the fact that Cuba was not communist in 1960. Here is evidence of the effects of an exile apologetic, which attempts to justify its claim to exile status by reading history backwards and changing it according to convenience; that is, the claim that the emigrants were fleeing the ravages of communism allows them to claim the moral high ground, based on the United States' contempt for the political-economic system which Cuba was to adopt after Pau-Llosa's family emigrated.

Nevertheless, the article does make a major contribution to our study of Latin American phallic power: he self-consciously connects phallocentrism and politics, as Stavans had only hinted. In his chapter tellingly entitled "Romancing the Exiliado," poet Pau-Llosa muses on his romantic/sexual life as a Cuban exile. I appreciate very much his poetic intuition that both place and erotics must be written into the history of exile and of the Cuban revolutionary experience. Consider:

> Since everything always happens in a place, exile is with you no matter where you are and what you are experiencing. That includes sex and romance. Indeed, that exile should engulf the juicy matters of the heart and loins has come as yet another mild shock to one who has lived 34 of his forty years in

> such a state. I would have hoped that eros, at least, would have been, if not the oasis, at least the lacuna. But hope is the one distinct event that stops happening in that place called exile, if only because, whatever else happens there, hope is the substance. Hope is exile's exile, shifting in status from event to terrain, from object to environment, from caressed thigh to firm mattress. (1996:113)

That introductory insight was unfortunately not followed with much compelling analysis. Most of the rest of the article is a long complaint about Pau-Llosa's difficulties getting laid. As he suffered more and more romantic and sexual failure, he became, he reports, more desperate.

> At first, my flawless American accent got me nowhere….To my surprise, I struck them as exotic. That they considered Cubans from Castro's consular corpse equally as exotic, making no distinctions between an exile and an apparatchik, was something I was prepared to overlook at that particularly famished phase of my erotic life. Alas, there is little ideology from the waist down. (1996:114)

I quite disagree that "there is no ideology from the waist down"; indeed, sexuality is chock full of ideology.

In sexual frustration, he reached for his only remaining resource, his cubanness. Having had no success in Montreal, he exploited an erotic stereotype:

> I began advertising my exotic condition with a redolent Ricky Ricardo accent—actually, I mimicked my parents' accent and broken grammar, not the clownish Desi. I started smoking cigars. And, I vaguely recall, I even came up with a genetically flavored, jargon-laced explanation for that equine quality all males from Cuba most certainly enjoyed. (1996:115)

Here, ideology most certainly does reside below the waist. For the discourse of Cuban masculinity contained the message that the Cuban phallus—and its bodily manifestation, the penis—is powerful, large, even comparable to that of a horse. Thus have we encountered yet another point of intersection of the discourses of Cuban nationalism and erotic machismo. To confront the impotence of a seemingly

endless colonialism, Cuban nationalism beginning at least in the early republic played upon a by-then familiar image of Latin American men, somehow dropping the hint that size really does matter, both in sex and in nation-making. The reputation of Cuban penises as unusually large will certainly come into play when clever young men in Havana make use of it to construct a sex-gender identity and to attract tourist clients. We can appreciate Pau-Llosa and Stavans for boldly introducing the topic which seems bizarrely absent the social scientific analyses of both machismo and nationalism: penis size. Stavans notices the same silence as do I: “For a culture as steeped in sexuality as our own [Hispanic], it is strange that the substance of our masculine identity [the penis] remains a forbidden topic” (1996: 148).

If the phallus is the bearer of the power on which machismo is based, then does it not follow that a larger penis, thus approximating more the power of the actual phallus, would be considered more powerful, more manly, more macho than would a small one? This conclusion seems almost platitudinous, but both scholars and Cuban sex workers are loath to discuss it, as we will see in Part II.

III. Weapon

Penis size is not only about pride and sexual performance, security of a macho image, bragging rights, and reproductive success. Since neither the phallus nor the penis is primarily about sex, its size is significant extra-sexually: as an instrument of power outside the bedroom. The phallus and the penis are both instruments of domination, especially of the kind of domination wrought by invasions of all sort. Octavio Paz:

> The macho commits…unforeseen acts that produce confusion, horror, and destruction. He opens the world; in doing so, he rips and tears it, and this violence provokes a great, sinister laugh. And in its own way, it is just: it reestablished the equilibrium and puts things in their place, by reducing them to dust, to misery, to nothingness. (in Stavans 1996:148)

Here, the phallus—and the macho whom it possesses and manipulates—becomes a weapon of destruction, of a violence the acknowledgement of which provokes a "sinister laughter".

Conquest

In his excellent study of gendered violence in the conquest of the Americas, Trexler concludes that on the Iberian peninsula "state building through violent sexuality was alive and well" (1995:58). This is why the Spanish armies were not shocked with what they discovered: that the gendering of warfare, the feminization of captured enemies, and the de-masculinization of enemy corpses. "It was but one variant on an ancient theme: domination expressed itself through sexuality, which here gendered males female. It had long been so in Europe, [and] the conquerors would find it in America" (1995:62).

Trexler's volume is mostly about the American berdache (his word), in all its variants; only two chapters are devoted to warfare. Yet Trexler is quite certain that causal primacy should be afforded the military over the domestic. "Natives had developed a military order in the field as a preface to constructing their civil life at home…Military formations inspire domestic arrangements rather than vice versa.' (1995:64) I would go one step further, and reiterate what both Clausawitz and Foucault have opined: that war and peace are dual modalities of the same state, not

opposites. This is but one reason why looking at military uses of the phallus is a helpful preface to our study of the sex-gender constructions of the pingueros and their relationship to the state.

Trexler's data indicate in the Americas, common was the practice "of conceiving of and executing war as a battle, and peace as a pact, between men and women" (1995:76). Thus in North America victors in a battle "put underskirts on losers" (1995:74), who then would live out their lives as "women" captives. Trexler discovered a letter from the formerly victorious Iroquois, who had defeated and feminized the Delaware, proposing that the two nations combine efforts against France, who had been trying to make allies of the Delaware. I quote it at length because of what it can tell us about the use of the phallus in the Americas.

> Cousins, the Delaware Indians: You will remember that you are our women; our forefathers made you so, and put a petticoat on you and charged you to be true to us and lie with no other man. But of late you have suffered the string that ties your petticoat to be cut by the French, and you lay with them and so become a common bawd, in which you did wrong and deserve chastisement. (in Trexler 1995:78)

The Iroquois forefathers had made the Delaware 'women' by conquering them in battle. Not only were the defeated imaged as women, but political loyalties and betrayal is imaged as conjugal relations. As the letter continues, the presence of a penis is confirmed as the distinguishing feature:

> But notwithstanding this, we will still esteem you, and as you have thrown off the cover of your modesty and become stark naked, which is a shame for women, we now give you a little prick and put it in your private parts, and so let it grow there till you shall be compleat [sic] man. We advise you to act as women yet, but be first instructed by us, and do as we bid you, and you will become a noted man.

Did the Iroquois actually believe that if they sewed a new penis onto a feminized man and instruct him in manliness, the penis would take root and eventually produce another man? It is unclear whether this letter should be interpreted literally, or whether we should understand the implanting of the penis as a symbolic re-masculinizing. In either case, the letter matter-of-factly acknowledges—as Herdt (1981) found in New Guinea—that masculinity is largely a social construction, and even the biological elements of manhood are products of social arrangements.

Here we encounter a practice as common as was the verbal and cultural (through dress and domestic labor role) feminizing of the conquered: this was of course literal, physical castration. Trexler cited numerous examples of the ritual castration of defeated armies, upon which they might be marched triumphantly home to honor the victors through their humiliation. They would in effect, be doubly defeated, doubly feminized: first by the loss in battle, and then by the loss of the physical manifestation of manhood, perhaps this later humiliation being an embodiment of the former. But especially significant is that in numerous contexts, conquered soldiers would be castrated even after death, their genitals then displayed for the glory of the victor. This confirms that castration could not have been merely a practical way to create sex slaves; the symbolic significance of the act was a far weightier matter.

This leads us finally to the ultimate symbolic shaming: anal evisceration. Military evisceration on the American battlefield must have been more than merely practical, since it would be rather inconvenient in the heat of battle. Trexler has uncovered evidence aplenty that evisceration was often performed on defeated

bodies *after death*. Killing an enemy was not enough: he had to then be symbolically feminized as a double insult, a shaming even of a lifeless enemy. Trexler included two contemporary lithographic illustrations: first, “Penile evisceration of enemies by the soldiers of Outina” illustrates a battlefield littered with dismembered corpses in process of being anally penetrated by a spear. Another displays the reputed punishment by indigenous Americans of an especially hated missionary, Frei Diego Ortiz. The priest is illustrated with a halo, whose integrity is compromised by the tip of a pole on which his body has been thrust: according to this surely-exaggerated illustration, his anus had been invaded with such force that the shaft passed through the entirety of his torso and exited the crown of his head.

But violent feminizing was not the only symbolic effect of anal evisceration in the Americas; I posit that its symbolic importance does not lie primarily in the *orifice*, but rather in the *instrument of penetration*. That is, it is the phallic instrument which is primary, not the orifice into which it enters. Lancaster reports that the Nicaraguan slang word for penis is *verga*, which connotes force (1992:242). And a threat of violence uses sexual/genital language:

> The threat *Te voy a hacer verga*—which is used to mean ‘I’m going to punch you’—could be translated literally as ‘I’m going to do you a dick’ or ‘I’m going to dick you” or even ‘I am going to put my dick in you.’ Blurring the line between copulation and violence, *Me hizo verga* (or *Me ha hecho verga*) means ‘He punched me.’

The phallus is a personal (and national) weapon in Latin America.

Counterrevolution

Reinaldo Arenas claims to have been a supporter of the Revolution early in his life, but upon the state's refusal to publish one of his novels, he turned counterrevolutionary activist. He moved to the United States in 1980, upon which he claims to have had sex with 10,000 men, leading to the contraction of HIV, which he apparently believed would kill him sooner rather than later. These sexual encounters formed the basis of a highly graphic and voyeuristic autobiography, later made into a pop movie, in which he gave his side of his bitter argument with the Revolution.

Before his suicide in 1990, Arenas completed a series of five books intended to propagandize his virulent personal resentment against the Revolution. The last novel in this series is a tiny but artistically brilliant novel, set in a Kafka-esque Cuba. The novella follows a state torturer who totters on the brink of insanity. His obsessive personal mission is to locate his mother, whom he loathes with a burning passion that consumes his every thought. Because he is so successful at finding citizens who disobey the rules and torturing them, the state grants him some leeway to locate his mother and destroy her. She finally appears in the last scene: he sees the Castro-figure, the "Resident", about to address an assembled crowd of zombie-like citizens. He suddenly realizes that the Resident is none other than his mother whom he sought for so long.

> With my member thrillingly erect, and my hands on my hips, I stand before her, looking at her. My hatred and my revulsion and my arousal are now beyond words to describe. And then the great cow, naked and horrible, white and stinking, plays her last card; the sly bitch crossing her ragged claws over her monstrous breasts, looks at me with tears in her eyes and says *Son*. That is all I can bear to hear. All the derision, all the harassment, all the fear and frustration and blackmail and mockery and contempt that that word

> contains—it slaps me in the face, and I am stung. My erection swells to enormous proportions, and I begin to step toward her, my phallus aimed dead for its mark, that fetid, stinking hole. And I thrust. As she is penetrated, she gives a long, horrible shriek, and then she collapses. I sense my triumph—I come, and I feel the furious pleasure of discharging myself on her. Howling, she explodes in a blast of bolts, washers, screws, pieces of shrapnel-like tin, gasoline, smoke, semen, shit, and steam of motor oil. Then, at the very instant of my climax, and her final howl, a sound never heard before washes across the square below us…While the crowd goes on moving through the city, hunting down and destroying to the accompaniment of the music of its own enraged whispering, I tuck the limp mass of my phallus (at last spent and flaccid) into my overalls. Weary, I make my way unnoticed through the noise and the riot (the crowd in a frenzy of destruction, like children, crying *The Resident is dead, the beast at last is dead!),* and I come to the wall of the city. I walk down to the shore. And I lie down on the sand. (Arenas 1995)

The 'member' is a weapon used to destroy Castro: it is an instrument of "freedom", from Arenas' perspective. In this way, because it engages in political activity in the public realm and on behalf of all citizens, it is no longer a private penis, an instrument of sex, but a public phallus, an instrument of power and aggression. And it grows as the torturer's hatred grows. Thus, it becomes an embodiment of the violent emotions and intentions of the narrator, inextricably intertwined with the political-economic project of the assassination of the ruler. Ironically, Arenas has reproduced the very gender-based cultural structures which he claims oppressed him. In order to symbolically destroy Castro, the embodiment of macho oppression of gayness (Arenas believes), he first feminizes him. The character then destroys the femininized Castro using his instrument of male power, his enormous, raging, penis-turned-phallus. If indeed Cuban and revolutionary ideas about power and gender caused his imprisonment and artistic censure, Arenas himself is unable to escape those constructions. Or perhaps he used those images quite intentionally,

aware of their power, in which case Arenas is hardly the activist of freedom he claimed.[2]

Again, there are clear historical precedents to a nationalist-ideological meanings of penetration. In the very different political-economy of republican Athens, Tétreault (1998:88) tells us, the act of penetration of a citizen threatened the integrity of the entire polis. “A male citizen who became a prostitute, like a lover who would allow his body to be penetrated, also was regarded as rejecting the constitutional protection of his bodily integrity. However, the male citizen prostitute also threatened the integrity of the body politic.” Tétreault continues, quoting David Halperin: “The city as collective entity was supposedly vulnerable in the person of such a citizen—vulnerable to penetration by foreign influence or to corruption to private enterprise….Such a person threatened the coherence of democracy from within and had to be disenfranchised.” Here, the male prostitute is assumed to be the passive partner, and so the invasion of his body is an invasion of the body politic. But in Havana, as I explain in Chapter Five, the opposite is true: pingueros assure through their name that they are assumed to be the penetrative (dominant) partner, the danger to the body politic thus being represented only by the jineteras.

IV. Fetish

Cuban nationalism has long made rhetorical and discursive use of the pan-Latin American ideas of masculinity and nationhood. Before discussing how this pattern is

[2]I am aware of the several psychoanalytic implications of this passage, but these are not entirely relevant for our purpose here. I have chosen to focus only on the discursive function of phallic power.

manifest in the hyper-nationalist Revolution, we need to establish just what is phallocentrism—and indeed, what is the phallus itself. For this purpose I will draw upon the ideas of cultural theorist John Stratton.

Lack

Stratton's volume is about the phallus and its role in consumption under capitalism, through what he calls "cultural fetishism". The first stage in this analysis is to distinguish between penis and phallus, and in fact here is the source of so much hyper-machismo. Using a synthesis of Freud and Lacan (with a privileging of the latter), Stratton has outlined what he believes to be the role of the phallus at least since the foundational event of the French Revolution. For Lacan, "the phallus is associated with both maleness and power. The phallus is not the penis. Rather, it is the mythic signifier…which marks the formation of society…However, precisely because the phallus is mythic, no-one, including the male who is marked as such because of the physical presence of his penis, actually possesses the phallus" (Stratton 2001:7). Who does have a phallus? The father in a nuclear family of a capitalist nation-state *represents* a phallus, but he does not actually possess one. Discussing the "Name-of-the-Father," Stratton quotes Grosz's (1990) summary of Lacan:

> Within the confines of the nuclear family, [regulatory] order is initiated by a third family member—the father—who most easily…can represent law, order, and authority for the child. It is not, however, the real or genetic father, but rather the *imaginary father* who acts as an incarnation or delegate of the *symbolic father*.
>
> (in Stratton 2001:8, italics his)

The “symbolic father” is of course the state. Only the power of the state represents the real phallus, or rather, the state is the phallus. I discern in Stratton’s sometimes-obscure analysis three related consequences of this fact: the first of these is the psycho-cultural construction of lack. Men are fully aware of their lack, and this gives rise to occasionally “hysterical” attempts to compensate. Quoting Dyer:

> The penis can never live up to the mystique implied by the phallus. Hence the excessive, even hysterical quality of so much male imagery. The clenched fists, the bulging muscles, the hardened jaws, and the proliferation of phallic symbols—they are all straining after what can hardly ever be achieved, the embodiment of the phallic physique. (Stratton 2001:195)

Klein (1993), too, has ethnographically documented the striving for a more mythically masculine physique among modern-day bodybuilders. Though his scholarship lacks a certain analytical sophistication, Klein has collected some interesting data and makes good use of others’ scholarship. He quotes the influential researcher of masculinity R. W. Connell: “The social definition of men as holders of power is translated not only into mental body-images and fantasies, but into muscle tensions, posture, the feel and texture of the body. This is one of the main ways in which the power of men becomes naturalized” (in Klein 1993:241). This leads Mishkind et al to conclude that “The increased cultural attention given to the male body and the increasing demands placed on men to achieve the mesomorphic build push men further along the continuum of bodily concern…At the extreme, such concerns could lead to excessive attention to one’s body and to an obsessive preoccupation with body-altering behavior such as weight lifting, exercising, and dieting” (in Klein 1993:242).

Klein's own data, from interviews with competitive bodybuilders, fulfill these researchers' predictions: "I wanna be the biggest thing. I wanna walk on stage [to compete] without even posing and people would be just—[opens eyes in wonder]. I wanna be noticed. I won't even have to pose, I'll be so awesome" (1993:273). A bodybuilding magazine both feeds and reflects this obsession with size and spectacle: "When it comes to impressing the hell out of a bodybuilding audience there's nothing like beef! Big, thick, huge, dense, powerful muscles. Blow-you-away, stop-your-heart mass!" (in 1993:246). Klein believes that this "narcissistic fantasy" is a response to fears of inadequacy and powerlessness which he finds an almost universal preoccupation in the bodybuilding subculture. "In short, everything about the body is designed, acted on, depicted, and talked about in terms of a mythic power, a superhuman form of unlimited potential, all of it to be viewed by the bodybuilder and/or the public….This hyperdestructive imagery implies intense activity, not only acting on the world but altering it" (1993:248). Recourse to "mythical" hypermasculinity makes frightened men feel powerful, or at least able to defend themselves against an out-of-control world. One bodybuilder makes explicit the connection between a "freaky" musculature and defensive power. In his autobiography, Fussell remembers the moment in which he first saw Arnold Schwarzenegger's autobiography: "A glimpse of the cover told me all I needed to know. There he stood on a mountaintop in Southern California, every muscle bulging to the world as he flexed and smiled and posed…As for his body, why, here was protection, and loads of it…A perfect defense to keep the enemy host at bay" (in Klein 1993:273). The "enemy host," Stratton would say, is the men's own

subconscious recognition of their powerlessness, their castrated impotence, in the face of the real phallus, the state. It is not that men are afraid of the state per se, but rather that they are afraid of their own insignificance in the face of the state's power.

These ideas in turn lead to what Stratton calls the "fetishization" and the related but distinct "spectacularization" of the male body, in which masculine physique is made an object of a gaze. Images of a nude Arnold Schwarzenegger and Marky Mark in his underwear are examples. The function of these spectacles is to project externally that which is so terrifyingly absent in real men, providing the possibility of fulfillment of the lack, through consumption of it.

Consumption

A second consequence of the belief in lack emerges naturally from the first: that is a "supplemental circuit of male desire" which provokes a pattern of male consumption intended to provide the missing phallus. Stratton traces men's consumption habits beginning with roughly the 1950s. "The nub of this argument is that commodities become fetishes in the sense that they are experienced as phallic substitutes for the phallus that men do not have" (2001:16). Commodities are consumed in an attempt to produce a phallus, or rather, to consume a phallus, to take it into oneself. This is why, Stratton tells us, the figure he calls the ephebe—a young, underdeveloped, skinny and hairless not-quite-man—is a better advertiser for men's consumer products than is the figure he calls the "blond god"—a muscled, fully-developed, powerful and in-charge man. The ephebe is in need of the product in order to be fully

a man; he is an obvious embodiment of lack. The blond god, however, needs nothing; he manifests the phallus already, and needs no product in order to exercise phallic power.

This is what Stratton calls, using Marx's formulation of commodity fetishism, "active commodity fetishism". By adding the descriptive "passive", Stratton wishes to stress that in such fetish, commodities are *emptied* of meaning. That is, they are rendered origin-less, so that the social meaning behind them is hidden. But "active commodity fetishism" then *re-fills* the commodity with new content, new meaning. And this meaning is, of course, that the *products will provide the phallus and thus satisfy the lack, of which men are constantly and terrifyingly aware*. "It has become a Freudian platitude to say that men experience fast cars or machine tools as phallic…consumed as a fantastic attempt to acquire the phallus which the man feels he lacks" (ibid 185), but starting in the 1960s even formerly-feminine products could satisfy the phallic lack: personal care products (shave tonic followed by musk cologne, and eventually underwear (Marky Mark in Calvin Klein). And it is not only a manufactured product which must be consumed; other men, possessors of the phallus, must also be consumed. This is the substance of phallic fetishism.

Fetishism

These thoughts lead to the third consequence of the belief in lack, the principal social phenomenon that Stratton names and analyzes: this is what he calls "cultural fetishism".

> I have explained that the key experience of cultural fetishism is a male preoccupation with his perceived phallic lack. This produces a circuit of male

> desire which is supplementary to the male sex drive. The desire for the women becomes secondary in this supplementary circuit in the sense that they are desired not for what they are but for what they are constructed as—namely, the phallus which men lack. (2001:117)

This is the personal-psychological effect of phallocentrism: the terror upon a recognition of lack is so great that it constructs sexual desire around a search not for women, but for the phallus, of which women become a signifier. Stratton relies upon Judith Butler for this insight (2001:16-17): "To 'be' the phallus is to be the 'signifier' of the desire of the Other and to appear as this signifier…For women to 'be' the phallus means, then, to reflect the power of the Phallus, to signify that power, to embody the Phallus, to supply the site to which it penetrates, and to signify the Phallus through 'being' its Other, its absence, its lack, the dialectical confirmation of its identity." Stratton continues his summation of cultural fetishism (2001:117):

> The desire for the phallus translates into a complex form of male-male desire which excludes women as women, their bodies marked by the 'lack', even, of the penis…As we shall see, this male-male desire takes two forms. One is a scheme of narcissistic identification of a man perceived to have the phallic, patriarchal quality. The other constructs certain males as phallic substitutes which may, then, be 'consumed' in the hope that they will provide the missing phallus.

I have already discussed the causes and implications of the latter of these dual tendencies. It was in the middle of the nineteenth century, Stratton tells us, that citizens began to experience the intensified ability of the state to reach into their private lives and exercise control, experienced and represented as phallic, which is a qualitatively and quantitatively far greater control than could be exercised by any real father. Around the same time capitalism gave birth to the new imperative to consume. The Great Exhibition in 1851, the Crystal palace of London in 1851, the opening of Bon Marché department store in Paris in 1852—these events made

display and consumption, rather than genital sexuality, the focal points of desire (Stratton 2001:25-30)

The second and related form of supplemental male-male desire is the "narcissistic identification" with a man who appears to contain the true phallic power. On the level of spectacular image, phallic power is manifest in what Stratton calls the 'blond god'. "The blond-god male is the man men want to be, and because his body is so perfect—so much the phallus—he needs nothing more" (2001:192). Quoting Dyer. "The hardened, muscled male body is phallic 'not in the direct sense of being like an erect penis, but rather of being symbolic of all that the phallus represents of abstract paternal power" (2001:195). But this paternal power is not the power of a father, or really of any man, but rather of the state: "In this fantasy the blond-god can, literally, embody the phallic state. This spectacle is something for men to desire to identity with, not to consume" (2001:194). It is here that ideas of phallic masculinity and Cuban nationalism merge still further; the Revolutionary state has benefited from, and in turn nurtured, its reputation as a phallus. Not only the state, but also, some claim, Fidel himself possesses the mythic phallus.

V. Sissies

> In humankind's long haul through colonial, anticolonial, and postcolonial history we have all taken turns playing a wide range of roles that define our identity and our nationality against someone else's.…Colonialism could be described as a colonizing agent's systematic bullying and 'sissification' of a colonial's target.…Describing colonial exchanges in terms of bullies and sissies…adds disturbing perspectives on gender and sex to the

> uneven circumstances that bring together the colonial and the colonized.
>
> (Piedra 1995:370)

We have seen the ways in which both colonial powers and Cuban nationalism have drawn upon Latin American and Cuban gender imagery. This chapter began with a review of constructions of phallocentric masculinity in literary and historic accounts, including traditional Latin American ideas of warrior masculinity and Mesoamerican uses of the phallus as a weapon. I then examined a theoretical argument regarding the psycho-social effects of belief in phallic lack, effects which culminate in a drive to consume the phallus through a narcissistic identification with a male perceived to possess it. This final section will see the convergence of these threads at the moment of the hypermasculine Revolution.

Using the language of penile penetration, Cuban-American exile José Piedra argues that colonial process is "libidinally" encoded; that is, not only does sexuality provide images and rhetoric to describe colonialism and imperialism, but more, political/military processes are in fact workings-out of libidinal energies and neuroses. The political becomes little more than a projection/manifestation of internal process. The "top" in Piedra's rhetorical system is a "bully", who in his sexual conquest uses the "sissy"; the sissy can be either female or male, more often in political matters the latter. Reminiscent of Trexler's excellent documentation of gender coding in warfare: "Ultimately, not just any given individual, but even an entire nation can become a sissy, if 'fucked over' by another in the most symbolic or real of ways" (Piedra 1995:374). For Piedra, the bully is a colonial power, also imaged as a father, who libidinally conquers a sissy, or sissified men, also imaged

as a mother. The product of this union is a colonial, a creole, who is by default a sissy: “I could even venture to say that the product of the inter-personal/inter-national coupling is invariably born a sissy, that is, the tacit result of an exchange in which the emerging nation(al)s have to survive and build, or bully, a personal/national/international identity of their own” (Piedra 995: 381).

I fully concur that both the colonial and nationalist projects are “libidinally encoded” to the extent that sex-gender ideas, images, and energies become inextricably intertwined with political contests; indeed, this is precisely the topic of this study. But there is a problem with Piedra’s essay. He continues the sexual rhetorical device unceasingly, even to the point of calling colonialism an exercise of sadomasochism. Is this just a rhetorical device, or does Piedra really think that sexual sadism is what drives colonial powers? (It is not clear in this essay.) The problems with this image are manifest, not least of which is calling colonized peoples “masochist”. This word suggests that the colonized “sissy” actually participates in and receives pleasure from the exchange. But this is more than a suggestion; Piedra spells it out: the sissy nation may be acting out its own natural impulses, it enjoys being dominated, and in fact it derives a power of its own through its ability to seduce the bully. In this regard, Piedra indulges still more the ambivalence of his sex/politics argument; he throws into doubt who really has controlling power—the colonizer or the colonized. Consider:

> From the sissy’s perspective, sissy behavior is not necessarily forced, imposed on him from the outside, or, for that matter, of unquestionably passive character. It is more likely a matter of preference, style, taste, or “nature”, some of it unavoidable, inherent, highly skilled, and successful—in short, positive qualities likely to become passionate markers of identity. Can

> the sissy be the real powermonger in the bully's colonial takeover? (Piedra 1995: 372)

The sissy can become empowered by the desire of the colonizer, either by seducing him or by manipulating his need to be wanted: "The Self wants the other to want Him/Her; and that, to my mind, can be interpreted as a position of both weakness and power. The interpretation of a libidinal want can range from a compelling need to seduce, desire to be seduced, seducing someone into seducing you, or a willful mutual seduction" (Piedra 1995:380). As if colonialism is really sadomasochism, in which both parties provoke the other to do exactly what he/she wants. An odd way to imagine the violence of colonialism. Such historical twisting is reminiscent of the early twentieth-century "Marriage Manual" of Britain, which instructed husbands to conquer their wives even if they loudly protested. It was in the nature of women, the experts wrote, that they really wanted to be dominated, even raped. Violence is natural, and opposition to it is only superficial. This is what "revolutionary feminist" Margaret Jackson has called the "eroticization of oppression" (1987:58). She quoted a 1928 manual entitled *Ideal Marriage: Physiology and Technique*:

> What both man and woman, driven by obscure primitive urges, wish to feel in the sexual act, is the essential force of maleness, which expresses itself in a sort-of violent and absolute possession of the woman. And so both of them can and do exult in a certain degree of male aggression and dominance—whether actual or apparent—which proclaims this essential force. (in Jackson 1987:63)

Unlike the marriage manuals and the exile Piedra, the present study and this author assume that violence is not in fact mutually desired, that oppression is not erotic and its victims not aroused by it, and that the "sissies" of the world are not naturally inclined to passivity, making colonialism an ideal political option. The value

in this fanciful if troublesome essay is that it does state, in another way, what we have seen throughout this and the last chapter: that both nationalist and imperial projects are gendered and sexed, and that both military and economic invasions are imaged as sexual conquests. Cuban nationalism's search for redemption from the feminizing effects of constant cultural and military invasions has—as we might expect—taken a gendered character. If Stratton is correct that recognition of phallic lack is a source of intense masculine anxiety, and that the solution to this crisis is recourse to hypermasculinity coupled with the real and figurative consumption of a man perceived to hold phallic power—if this is true, then we should be able to locate in the hyper-nationalist Revolution a claim to phallic power drawing on the national and personal hypermasculinist anxieties.

Guerrillas

The Revolution's symbolic and discursive self-construction as a holder of the phallus has been vigorous and overt. The Revolution fashioned itself as the (masculine) rescuer of the (feminine) nation, a nation that had been continually raped and whose honor had been abused. Only a hyper-man could effect such a dramatic liberation, and revolutionary fighters assumed that role. Cuba had smarted under nearly constant political and military turmoil from 1868-1959—not least the wars and struggles against three military dictatorships—a fact which led researcher of Cuban (homo)sexuality Ian Lumsden to opine that

> It is no wonder that violence figured so prominently in the machista culture Cuba inherited after the triumph of the revolution. It also goes without saying that the Cuban revolution probably would not have occurred, at least not as a

> radical transformation, without the reckless bravery of a handful of men. Nor would the revolution have survived without constant military mobilization as a top priority because of the long-standing U.S. determination to overthrow it. (Lumsden 1996:54)

This tradition of macho militarism was strong enough to persevere even after the efforts—which nearly all scholars agree were genuine and largely successful—to radically challenge machismo and to alter gender relationships in favor of the liberation of women after the Revolution. Castro himself threw his weight behind what he called the "revolution within the Revolution". Nonetheless, "it was Fidel Castro, Cuba's leading "feminist", who continually beat the militaristic drum. For more than 30 years Castro marched through the public arena dressed in the uniform of the perpetual warrior…thirty-five years of revolution have proven the great tenacity of traditional culture, of machismo—or of machismo-leninismo, as some wags have called it" (Smith and Padula 1996:185).

This macho prescription for military bravado is somewhat unlike the machista figures of the *tigre* in the Dominican Republic which required dancing and oratory skill (Krohn-Hansen 1996), or the macho Mexican who had to consume large amounts of alcohol (Gutmann 1996: Chapter 7): in Cuba, a claim to masculinity required valor; conversely, cowardice was a sign of femininity. Lumsden again: "The exaltation of physical bravado, so evident in Cuban machismo, is striking in comparison to its relative absence in Costa Rica, a country that has been involved in far fewer military struggles. In fact, a central plan of Cuba's revolutionary strategy, the role of guerrilla warfare in the countryside, was firmly planted in these beliefs (1996:53). When I studied in Costa Rica in 1994, I was told a joke which linked the country's (relatively) conflict-free history to its (relatively) benign treatment of sexual

minorities, which had made San José a Mecca to which flocked 'gay' men from all over Central America: 'Why haven't there been any wars in Costa Rica? Because all the men are fags!'

Real manhood requires military bravado, and this was demonstrated in abundance by the Revolutionary guerrillas in the jungles of the Sierra Maestra: daring courage, long beards, ability to survive in the wildest natural environments, and a rifle—or machete—alongside. The machete as a phallus/weapon has a long history; Lumsden (1996:52) tells us that "Before 1959…only young boys were initiated in the ritual of using a machete, the symbol of masculinity in rural Cuba, and allowed to sling it from their belts." The image of the machete-as-phallus indicates that the Cuban version of machismo was not only a product of constant militarization, but also of the island's economic history. The sugar economy, symbolized by the machete, resulted in an imbalance of men to women and the weeks in which men were in the company only of other men in the cane fields. This produced what Lumsden (1996:52) calls the "eroticization of male companionship".

The homosocial—and even homoerotic—character of the guerrilla revolution has been oft remarked upon. In an essay subtitled "The Erotics of Power," Ruth Behar (2000) touches briefly on matters of erotics, though the essay is vulnerable to critique. Her discussion of the hyper-masculine image of Castro, and the erotic adoration heaped upon him by Cuban women, is valuable. But she makes a mistake when she writes of the "gay male bodies" (2000:142) of male sex workers. The problem is that almost none of those men could really be called "gay" according to the meaning and implications of that word in the context which produced it. Behar

seems to assume that all men who have sex with men must be “gay”. She calls even the jineteros—an older category of tourist workers with which she is more likely to be familiar, but who generally do not have sex with tourists—“gay,” a displacement which distorts the reality of their lives and their work. Behar’s use of the word ‘gay’ indicates how very easy it is for scholars to misinterpret data because of the problem of the translation of social scientific categories across national (and class) borders. Scholars may be so trapped in their own context that they are unable (or unwilling) to acknowledge that the meaning of a concept is likely to change when removed from the context which created it and exported. We will see below that ‘gay’, especially, has been interpreted differently in the Cuban economy of sex gender. Social scientists must be especially rigorous in interrogating meanings of categories with which they are personally familiar in their own cultural context.

Behar’s article is suggestive of one of the assumptions beneath my own work: the revolutionary war, and revolutionary culture since, have been highly erotically charged. She reports one interesting piece of data, leaving its analysis to others; this is the ideological and rhetorical gymnastics of Wilma Espín, Raul Castro’s (now-estranged) wife and the one and only head of the Federation of Cuban Women. How Espín boldly challenges the Revolution (and Castro personally) on feminist issues, but then uses misogynist and machista imagery to support the Revolution, is a potentially rich area of investigation:

> As for the affection our people have for Fidel, it is something intimate. And the women know how to express it so well! They greet him with so much emotion anywhere amongst the thousands of places he visits in his daily activities…What excited happiness there is when Fidel arrives! Each one wants to kiss him, hold his hand, tell him how much the revolution means to

> her, what her children are doing, her grandchildren…How many write to us at the Federation asking for a photo of Fidel!
>
> (Espín 1991, in Behar 2000:141-142)

What the women respond to is likely not his physical beauty, but rather his power as a representative—indeed, as an embodiment—of the phallus. He represents in himself the totalizing power of the state (recall Lacan as analyzed by Stratton). This makes both women and men adore him, indeed want to consume him through their adoration. Fidel is the embodiment of Cuban masculinity: having demonstrated reckless military daring in his dashing youth, he emerged from the jungle with a long beard, wearing combat clothing for many years, atop a captured tank. The rumor that he has fathered many children feeds into this belief. Fidel as phallus protects the vulnerable (feminine) Cuban nation from the imminent invasion from the north. Thus, anyone who opposes Castro is not really a man, and so must be a feminized traitor, like Malinche, “la chingada”.

This conflation of masculinity with loyalty to a particular political project—articulated by José Martí one hundred years earlier (see section I above)—found brilliant expression in the political use of the 1980 Mariel exodus. Of the thousands of Cubans who left for Miami to escape poverty, some of them were “homosexuals”. In popular demonstrations, those who wished to leave were called “scum”, not because of any perceived sexual deviance per se, but because they were disloyal to the Revolution. But since, as we have just seen, a real man is loyal to the nationalist political project, those who chose to leave were not real men. The homosexuality of some of them was rather convenient, since their betrayal to the Revolution and their sexuality neatly converged to brand them “escoria”, “maricones”. Both the state

(through the publication *Granma*) and the anti-revolutionary forces in Miami took full advantage of the sexual deviance of some of those who left: the state claimed that those who left were not really men, and the opposition claimed that "gays" had fled because of state-sponsored oppression (Lumsden 1996:78-79). The result has been a conflation of those that left at Mariel with homosexuality.[3]

Not-Men

Understanding the incident at Mariel requires a consideration of the condition of sexual deviants, particularly men who have sex with men, in the hypermasculine Revolution. Based on the gender traditions we have reviewed, and on the Revolution's reliance on images of phallic power, we would expect that sex-gender deviants have fared rather poorly in the Revolution. And indeed, for some years after 1959 they were abused both officially and unofficially. But at some point this began to change, so that the pingueros emerged in a context of gender relationships already in flux. Having examined tradition, I turn now to contemporary uncertainty.

Sex-gender deviants, at least those men whose effeminacy could not be hidden, relinquish their male privilege, placing themselves with women in the gender category that Kulick (1998) calls "not-men". The presence of not-men with penises thereby reveals that masculinity is, in part at least, a construction. This would call into question the Revolution's claim that 'real' men are the 'natural' protectors of the feminized Cuban nation; it might even evidence that the hypermasculinity of the

[3]But this is not the only reason that the Miami Americans-of-Cuban-descent are reputed to have received them so coolly, even cruelly; the Mariel Cubans were also primarily working-class, many of them Afrocuban, and many of them had positive feelings toward some aspects of the Revolution.

guerrillas was in fact little more than spectacle. Further, homosexuality was seen as a product of the sex/gambling/prostitution/drug nexus which was a principal source of Batista's wealth. The cultural residue of a brutal political economy and of the colonial behavior of the United States and its mafia had to be destroyed so that a new, egalitarian, and morally solid "man" and nation could be produced. Because it had emerged as an element of the urban license of Havana, homosexuality was perceived to be contrary to the revolutionary project. Nearly every commentator on sex and sexuality in the Revolution includes a rather infamous published statement of Samuel Feijoó, a widely published and respected scholar even before the Revolution, and an ardent revolutionary:

> No homosexual represents the revolution, which is a matter for men, of fists and not feathers, of courage and not trembling, of certainty and not intrigue, of creative valor and not of sweet surprises.
>
> Samuel Feijoó, "Revolución y vicios", El Mundo, 15 April 1965
> (in Smith and Padula1996:172-173; in Lumsden 1996:54; in Leiner 1994:25)

This 'expert' opinion was published in 1965, the year of the institution of the notorious Military Units to Aid Production (UMAP). These were work camps, mostly in the cane fields of Camagüey, in which were interned all manner of young men who were seen as not contributing to the building of the new nation: men who refused to work or study, Jehovah's Witnesses who refused military service, delinquents, counterrevolutionaries, and "effeminate" men. Lumsden (1996:65-66) explains that the camps were instituted to "take care of young men of military age whose incorporation into the Army for military training was considered unfeasible. Young men known to avoid work and study were candidates; so were known counter-revolutionaries; and also immoralists, a category that includes

homosexuals." Effeminacy was the crime, not really homosexuality, for plenty of revolutionaries were known to be (or suspected of being) 'practicing' homosexuals, but were not bothered as long as they did not "flaunt" their gender nonconformity. The intention was to "re-educate" them, to inculcate in them, through labor, a sense of community and a desire to contribute to its well-being—in short, a revolutionary 'new man', of whom Che Guevara had written (1987 [1965]:246-261). Juan Escalona, Cuban Minister of Justice, reflected in 1984 about those early days and the UMAP solution: "We intended to make these people productive….We had to get rid of the bums and among them were homosexuals who were vagrants. You must consider that homosexuality is not a crime in Cuba. So we decided that homosexuals should work on floriculture. Thus (laughs) these special units were really cute and neat because every day you would see people sowing seeds and picking flowers…" (in Leiner 1994:29)

Unfortunately, the UMAP camps, administered by the military, soon degenerated into centers of brutal punishment rather than of ideological education. The brutality of the army was so extreme that the inmates sometimes attempted suicide in desperation (Leiner 1994:30-31). And, strikingly reminiscent of the Revolution's willful blindness to any racial tension which would disrupt its claim to have institutionalized egalitarianism, this violence was denied. Escalona again: "What is important to note here is that homosexuals are neither constrained nor persecuted. Anyone who says otherwise is not only lying, but is an enemy of the Revolution" (in Leiner 1994:29). But it is also true that some of the UMAP military commanders were even executed for their criminal brutality (Bejel 2001:100). Leiner

(1994:28-29), on whose research both Bejel and Lumsden rely extensively, reports only that those officers were court-martialed, with no mention of the punishment.) Whether the officers were executed or only court-martialed, the Revolution's institutional and brutal oppression of sexual minorities was short-lived. The UMAP camps only lasted two years; after some internal and international protest, Fidel himself opposed the army by demanding the closure of the camps and the release of their residents (Leiner 1994:231). Several personal friends and associates of Fidel apparently lobbied for their immediate termination, and it is also widely rumored that Raúl Castro, Fidel's brother and head of the army, was and is 'gay'. These factors, plus the Revolution's generally humanitarian character, doomed the camps from the start.

Of course, institutionalized homophobia did not end straight away; after all, "the very notion of an effeminate man offended the heroic sensibilities of the revolutionary leadership" (Smith and Padula 1996:172). Thus the First National Congress on Education and Culture passed "Resolution Number Three," which defined homosexuality as a transmissible moral illness, and declared therefore that known gender deviants were not to be employed in any position which placed them in position of influence over children. But like the UMAP camps, this too was short-lived: the Supreme Court overturned that resolution in 1975, and even provided for financial compensation for those who had lost employment as a result (Lumsden 1996:77). That same year the Family Code was completed, radically altering gender norms: it required that women be facilitated in their pursuit of a career outside the home, and that men even assume 50 percent responsibility for washing the dishes

and changing diapers, on penalty of imprisonment (Smith and Padula 1996:104-105). Of course, many men were none too happy with this new arrangement, and enforcement of the law was virtually impossible, since it would likely lead to an all-out abandonment of a woman who took her husband to court. Further, we might question whether the regime was genuinely interested in the liberation of women from housework, or whether the motivation was the need to mobilize women in support of the Revolution. But whatever the motivation and whatever the limitations, the legal reforms of 1975 must be understood as a part of a trend toward changing gender roles and expectations.

The second half of that decade also saw a major overhaul of sex education resulting in a re-writing of curricula, declaring now that women were fully sexual beings with the right to enjoy their sexual activities, that men should work to please women, and that women had a full right to control of their bodies in every way (Smith and Padula 1996: Chapter 14; Leiner 1994: Chapter 3; Lumsden 1996: Chapter 5). A second national conference of 1986 that again re-vamped the sex education curriculum brought another truly revolutionary shift: schools would now teach that homosexuality is a healthy and viable sexual orientation which should not be the subject of ridicule, violence, or discrimination (DeVries 1995). Just when the Reagan administration in the United States was declaring that AIDS was a just punishment from God, the Cuban Revolution declared that differing sexual orientations were all reasonable and appropriate variations in a healthy human sexuality.

That same year the Revolution responded to AIDS with the highly-criticized sanatoriums where infected Cubans were involuntarily hospitalized and their mobility

restricted. Yet as Lumsden documents (1996: Chapter 8), these hospital complexes were not deserving of the international condemnation they received. He writes that the hospitals in fact were quite comfortable, the patients received better nutrition and medical treatment than they could have received at home, they had more privacy in which to engage in sexual/romantic relationships, their rooms were comfortable, they were allowed visits by family and lovers and to leave on weekend passes, their salaries were maintained, and when new regulations allowed infected Cubans to leave, many of them chose to stay. Even the film “Azucar Amarga” (Ichaso 1996), generally critical of the Revolution, contains a scene in which a newly infected young man is visited by his family; the sanatorium is a quite beautiful campus of grass and trees, and he reports to his family that life there is “a vacation” in which the patients play music and goof-off in the river. The sanatorium experiment (1986-1993) was enormously successful in minimizing the spread of HIV; as of 1995, less than 1200 Cubans (out of a population of 11 million) had been infected, and less than 250 had died (DeVries 1995).

None of this is meant to minimize the real oppression experienced by sex-gender deviants in the sanatoriums, or discrimination from within the PCC (Cuban Communist Party) apparatus. Still, the stunning changes of the Family Code, the new sexual freedom for women, and the remarkably progressive national sex education curriculum do not indicate a regime which rigidly defends machismo, as Behar claims. Further, it is difficult to sustain the claim that the Revolution has been brutal toward sexual minorities, when the Supreme Court of the country demands that financial compensation be given to those unfairly terminated from teaching

positions. Indeed, Lumsden, Leiner, and Bejel all conclude that the Revolution's record compares rather favorably to most governmental jurisdictions of Cuba's supposedly more socially-liberal neighbor to the north. This does not mean that the Revolution is any less rooted in the traditional gender expectations of Cuban society, nor that there is no gender-based oppression. But it does present a radically more complex and humane picture than that presented by Behar and the Cuban American National Foundation, who whip up contempt for Castro by claiming that gays are brutally repressed and that Fidel is just another macho caudillo. Even in the worst period of 1965-1975, Leiner (1996:31) tells us, "the major concern, as it had always been, was with the public display of homosexuality. Gay people did not fear punishment or other government interference with their private lives."

This rather bold claim is supported by the work of Sonia DeVries in her 1995 documentary film "Gay Cuba". The film gives an honest and critical account of the UMAPs and the sanatoriums, of police harassment and discrimination. But this criticism is balanced with extensive data indicating a progressive movement from within the Revolution; this includes a discussion of the film "Fresa y Chocolate" (directed Alea and Tabio) through which the Revolution engaged in self-critique and wrestled with place of sex-gender minorities in the nationalist revolution. Interviews with moviegoers outside the Yara cinema—about which we hear quite a bit in Part III—indicated a wide sympathy with the characters and the subject matter. Much of the film consists of interviews with both lesbians and gay men, telling stories of their coming-out, their relationship with the state and with their families, and their opinions of life in Cuba. One lesbian hosts a gay radio program, one man became an AIDS

doctor after he himself was infected, another lesbian tells the story of her teenage visit to a psychiatrist, who told her “Look love, I see that you are happy as you are. Don’t try to change. It’s nothing out of this world, nothing bad.” The narrator then explains that the Revolutionary government has not shied away from critical self-examination. She explains the process called the “Rectification of Negative Tendencies,” a systematic critical reexamination which emerged as a result of the Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1986:

> In 1986, a reevaluation process began. Economic and ideological policies were critically reexamined. It was recognized that economic equality and legislation had not overcome discrimination on the basis of gender and race, and that a deeper transformation was needed on a cultural and social level. Also in 1986, Cuba’s national commission on sex education declared that homosexuality was a sexual orientation, and that one of their goals was to counter homophobia through sex education.

The film includes an interview with Lourdes Flores, the director of the National Center for Sex Education, who commented on these changes:

> As a center we see homosexuality as a sexual orientation, just like heterosexuality or bisexuality. We consider it to be a sexual orientation equal to any other, with the possibility of experiencing it freely, in a healthy, pleasurable way, to give and receive love. We have led workshops on the topic of homosexuality; sexuality in general, homosexuality in particular. The workshops are very interesting, because we have workshops with teachers, doctors, the general population, community activists, and youth.

The next interview is with the director of the International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission, who declared that “Cuba isn’t a focus of ILGHRC. ILGHRC focuses, by virtue of our limited resources, to [sic] where the emergencies are. And Cuba right now isn’t a lesbian and gay human rights emergency.” The film’s finale is the backstage scene of a number of drag queens putting on their makeup in preparation for a performance: they had been invited to perform by the

neighborhood CDR (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) at a celebration of José Martí's birthday. The organ of the state which formerly was responsible for weeding out deviance and sending gay men to the UMAPs, now incorporates gender deviants in the celebration of the "Apostle" of Cuban independence, who was himself, we saw above, invested in traditional ideas of recklessly courageous macho men.

How is this possible? How does a hyper-masculine, hyper-nationalist political regime, empowered by a tradition of phallic power and violent patriarchy, arrive at a decision to teach an acceptance of homosexuality in high schools, to invite drag queens to perform, and to question its own problematic history through film? DeVries believes that such an attitude is the result of the genuine desire of the Revolution to liberate itself from repressive gender norms, to challenge the roots of gender oppression, and to create a truly egalitarian society. Both Leiner and Lumsden agree, though the exile Bejel is slightly more circumspect. Even if this is only partly true, the task before us is to determine how and to what extent the Revolution has been able to mitigate its own machista bases with an impulse toward gender equality. That is, how do tradition and innovation coexist in the chaotic situation of Cuba in the Special Period During Peacetime? To what extent has Cuba's new ideological porousness introduced external sex-gender norms? And how does this new tolerance and openness about sex deviants square with my own data which indicate constant police harassment of the pingueros? Sex work is a site at which coalesce these contradictory ideas, and hence it is to the history of sex work in Cuba

and the Caribbean, and the place of the sex industry in the island's economic survival, that we now turn.

Chapter Four
Work

> [T]here is something inherent in the activity of revolution—the warfare, the utopian rejection of the past, the idealization of the future, and the reconstruction and state-building—that contributes to the politicization of such issues as sexuality, morality, and reformism.
>
> —Katherine Bliss (2001:17)

In both Bliss's analysis of the Mexican Revolution and in my analysis of the Cuban Revolution, sex work—both male and female—is a site at which coalesce the at-times contradictory processes of gendered political nationalism and eroticized utopian revolution. One of the principal theses of the present research is that pinguerismo must be understood as a site of contestation in the struggle to maintain national autonomy in the face of capitalist incursion in the Special Period. The present chapter will, firstly, make explicit the connections between anti-colonial struggles and sex work elsewhere in Latin America. Consistently absent from much scholarly production on sex work is a consideration of its *political* function. National contexts seem to be considered as a conditioning factor on the lives of the workers, but the obverse is rarely considered: that the lives and cultural constructions of the workers discursively impact upon the national context. History, as a discipline, has

been especially cognizant of the role of gender and sexuality in post-colonial nation-building. Particularly useful in this regard will be a comparison of the uses of sex work in processes of nation-building in the revolutionary eras in Mexico City and Buenos Aires. I then turn to a consideration of the characteristics of sex tourism in the Caribbean, concluding with an examination of the Cuban jineteras as an example of the peculiarly Caribbean phenomenon of "romance tourism".

Thus far in the chapter, I will have had much to say of the ideological function of sex work. This is intended to balance the "abolitionist" and the right-wing arguments that paint sex work merely as a function of individual moral or psychological pathology. But neither collective ideology nor individual pathology is a sufficient explanatory factor; consistent with most contemporary anthropological studies of sex work, I insist that sex work in Special Period Havana is primarily an *economic* phenomenon, and so I close Part I with a consideration of the first and second economies of Cuba which have given rise and form to pinguerismo. As in the introduction and throughout the ethnography of Part II, the argument will move frequently between—and weave together—ideology and economy.

I. Nationalism

Two opposing interpretations of sex work are those of certain right-wing feminists who stress patriarchy and abuse (e.g. Jeffreys 1997), and of sex workers themselves (e.g. Nagle 1997), who focus on the agentive and economic aspects of

their sexual labor. Both of these ideas, though apparently widely differing, view sex work as a function of the individual workers. Missing is the nationalist-ideological function of sexed and gendered bodies. My claim is that, at least in Latin America, sex work is bound up with a nexus of processes and discourses emerging from the nationalist struggles against colonialism and post-colonial economic incursion. I now review two historians' research on sex work in two Latin American cities during tumultuous times: Donna Guy on Buenos Aires in the confusing years of state-building between unification and the military coups, and Katherine Bliss on revolutionary Mexico City. This is followed by Kelly's anthropological study of contemporary state-sponsored sex work in Chiapas.

Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires of the early twentieth century provides a marvelous case study of the ways in which sexuality and sex work become intertwined with patriotism and nationalism. Argentina won independence from Spain in 1816, finally being unified in 1880 (Ferradás 2001:82). The next 50 years or so saw a consolidation of centralized authority through a process which partly replaced landed aristocracy with a new urban bourgeoisie. Massive urban migration, industrialization, and state-building all required new regimes of class stratification and of control of urban workers. One such regime was the regulation of sex work, a matter of both civil order and public health, which included the licensing of brothels and registration of workers to enable regular medical monitoring.

As a bourgeois project, construction of the national body—as it does nearly everywhere—located citizenship and social reproduction in the family. Thus, to be faithful to new liberal ideas, public policy had to focus its regulatory attention on the maintenance of the patriarchal family unit. But as our dialectical methodology tells us is true for all social processes, a contradiction emerged: migration, industrialization, and the bourgeois focus on "rights" brought women *en mass* to the cities to compete with men for industrial jobs. The fact that they earned lower wages and thus could take jobs from men produced no small anxiety. Many of the women of course could not find factory work, and in desperate poverty turned to sex work—an occupation producing its own anxiety for the bourgeois order. Both as factory workers threatening the livelihood of working class men or as sex workers threatening the national body with syphilis and gonorrhea, women became dangerous.

As Donna Guy describes it, the state had the same objection to both female factory workers and sex workers. Women who were not economically dependent on men, of whichever occupation, were dangerous, and fear of them was encoded into the emerging medical discourse of public health. Women's bodies outside the house became diseased bodies, and so the medical regulation of sex workers was expanded to include a regular testing of even women factory workers (Guy 1995:132) The apex of regulatory expansion came in 1936 with the Law of Social Prophylaxis, which closed the brothels altogether, a move which Guy tells us only served to make clandestine prostitution more troublingly visible. It also lowered even further the standard of living of the workers, since they now had to individually maintain households and they were now more susceptible to exploitation by pimps.

The movement from the brothels to the streets also lowered public revenue, since individual street walkers could not afford heavy fines, but established madams could and did pay property taxes and licensing fees.

An important aside: in an odd twist of public hygiene and moral regulation, Guy reports (though she does not seem terribly interested in the matter, scattering only a few random sentences) that male sex workers were not seen as a public problem either for morality, order, or hygiene. In fact, the men were entirely ignored over several decades; even as ideas about the dangerousness of women sex workers were debated, male sex workers were casually acknowledged and then ignored—even though male prostitutes obviously engaged in homosex with (exclusively) male clients. Neither legislators nor hygienists were interested in the male workers: “They saw no medical or moral threat in male prostitutes and thus never contemplated the medical examination or legal restrictions of men” (Guy 1995:89). Only women’s bodies were diseased, and only women’s sexuality could be immoral. Hygienists and reformers “viewed male prostitution from a class perspective while linking female prostitution more to morality than to economic need” (Guy 1995:89). The relative tolerance of male sex work as opposed to female work is a theme addressed thoroughly in Chapter Eight.

The dramatic (revolutionary?) social upheavals of the first Perón administration produced great social anxiety leading to a dramatic rethinking of the regulatory regime around female sex work. Several processes converged. First, when the brothels closed in 1936, the state attempted to rechannel masculine energies into sports, primarily soccer.

> Rather than frequenting bars and whorehouses, men started to go to the *cancha* (soccer stadium)….[C]hanting songs to support a team became an explicit process of constructing male sexual identity. In many ways the identification of the fan with a particular team became as important to Argentine men as their first sexual experience in a bordello: both implied and reinforced their sense of maleness. (Guy 1995:191)

But the strategy of redirecting male attention to sports produced two problems. First, large concentrations of excited men became a political liability and threatened social order: "The last thing authoritarian politicians of the 1930s and 1940s wanted was uncontrolled emotions fomenting political anarchy" (Guy 1995:192). The second problem with soccer was that its homosociality "seemed to accentuate homophobic anxieties" (ibid 190).

The other process that converged with the problematic turn to sports after 1936 was, ironically, in the person of Juan Perón himself. He was childless, perhaps even impotent. Eva was independent, perhaps even dominant. And if this were not enough, she was rumored to have been a prostitute, and prostitutes were dangerous. Guy (1995:173) reports that

> Much of the class anger directed at Evita and Juan Perón in the 1940s and 1950s derived from the same value system that had generated the lively debates about prostitution and popular culture before 1936. That same fear of female independence, or lower-class and dubious women's taking control over [men's] lives, of their joining with society's most dangerous men in a social revolution, all came true within the context of the Peronist years…

Independent women were dangerous, but when Eva died in 1952, Guy believes, Perón in fact became even more dangerous himself, because he was "disunited" (ibid 173) from a woman. Thus, the strong independent woman in the *Casa Rosada*, followed by a president with no woman to channel his erotic energies, just at the

time of a homosocial soccer craze: all this meant that men spent less time with women than ever before, exacerbating sexual anxieties even more.

Little wonder, then, that there emerged at this time a homophobic panic, according to which the Law of Social Prophylaxis had had unintended consequence: “Without the bordello, men rather than women became sources of social danger. Deprived of sexual commerce, men found other amusements, potentially more damaging than sex [with female prostitutes] and tango dancing” (ibid 182). The danger of unentertained men with undirected (or misdirected) sexual energy was no small concern for Perón. Not only were such men politically volatile, but they were as well morally suspect to the extent that they neglected their reproductive responsibility as patriotic citizens. Two homosexual scandals happened to erupt from within the military at just that time. To reduce the danger that men now embodied, Perón attempted to re-open the brothels. Public health officials supported the move, because the invention of penicillin meant that syphilis and gonorrhea could be cured very quickly, and licensed brothels would enable physicians access to the now-scattered and inaccessible streetwalkers. Neither did Perón encounter resistance from the military to a decree of 1944 placing bordellos outside bases (ibid 193). But when he reintroduced them to the city, the Catholic Church and the more secular moralists protested vehemently.

Guy (1995:181) tells us, however, that the reopening decree was not directed against the church: “Despite the public’s perception that Perón was using legalized prostitution to attack the church, his goals and motives were quite the opposite. The goal of the decree was to defend family, society, and nation through medically

supervised municipal bordellos." Perón's goal was to "rescue" the nation from homosexuality by coaxing men out of the stadium and into the bordellos. Thus, a complete reversal: female prostitutes were warriors for Argentina, serving the well being of both the nation and the family, because they rescued men from homosexuality. They relieved the excess sexual energy which wives could not satisfy, thus, ironically, strengthening the family. *The prostitutes became patriots, and the men dangerous.*

Of course, this is precisely *not* what has happened in Havana of the Special Period. Female sex workers are not patriots, nor is male sexuality dangerously out of control and in need of state regulation. But the Argentine data do demonstrate how intricately intertwined are the dual processes of state power and sexuality, that is, how powerful is desire and how fertile a field to mine. In both Peronista Argentina and revolutionary Cuba, bodies are deployed in the service of (discursive) nationalism and (pragmatic) regulatory power. We now turn to Mexico City, where the connections to the processes of the Special Period will be even more clear.

Mexico City

Katherine Bliss begins her fine study of politics and prostitution in revolutionary Mexico City with an account of a letter from six destitute prostitutes to the President of Mexico in the late 1920s.[1] Calling themselves the "daughters of disgrace," they complained about the 1926 regulative apparatus which required them to register with

[1]The word "disgrace" might be a translation of the Spanish word *desgracia*, which in fact is a bit of a false cognate; it means "misfortune", which would put a slightly different spin on the story of these activist women.

the city, consent to regular medical examinations, and restrict their labor to the newly established zonas de tolerancia. The “daughters” justified their complaint with recourse to revolutionary ideology which proclaimed that the state had responsibility for the well-being of all citizens, even those engaged in scandalous occupations.

They also complained that foreign pimps and foreign prostitutes were infiltrating the sex trade in the city, introducing foreign exploitation and cheap foreign competition for clients. They defined themselves as nationalists, and called upon the revolution’s promises to rid Mexico of foreign economic control (Bliss 2001:1-2). What is extraordinary is that these sex workers were emboldened to write to the President himself and request protection based on the promises of the Revolution. They saw themselves as citizens entitled to legal protection, and the Revolution as a set of promises for dramatic structural fairness which would grant even prostitutes the right to petition the president for protection against foreign competition and exploitation. That revolutionary ideology could promote the well being, health, and freedom of destitute and fallen women is no small matter. A comparison of the data from Mexico City with that from Havana indicates that the relationship of revolutionary nationalism to sex work is not straightforward, but ambiguous and shifting according to national context, colonial history, neocolonial aggressions, internal gender relationships, and economic exigency.

As in Havana under Batista, Mexico City under its dictator “had acquired a magnificent veneer that attracted foreign investors but which barely disguised the violence, corruption, and human exploitation that characterized the lives of men and women who were not the direct beneficiaries of Díaz’s favor” (Bliss 2001:16). By the

time of the revolution it had become a center of “poverty, vice, ignorance, immorality, and corruption” (Bliss 2001:4), a giant brothel for both Mexicans and foreign businessmen and tourists. Since the Conquest had been accomplished partly through the treasonous machinations of a whore, Mexican women being used by foreign men was a slap in the face of both Mexican pride and moral sensibilities. The Revolution was the hope of a transformation, both a protection of Mexican resources against foreign exploitation and a reintroduction of morality—in terms labor reform, political integrity, public health, and sexuality.

Prostitution was a problem for several reasons. First, the state accepted responsibility for the physical well-being of Mexicans. A team of hygienists took on the task of healing the public body of the syphilis outbreak of the Porfiriato. It was clear that sex work was a primary promoter of disease, so to maintain the health of the nation, sex work had to be curbed if not eliminated. But this ran counter to the Revolution’s commitment to the full and unfettered employment of women who wished it. To eliminate prostitution would rob very poor women of the opportunity to survive materially. As we have seen, one response of revolutionary reformers was to regulate prostitution by containing it in demarcated zonas de tolerancia, requiring workers to register and to submit to regular medical examinations. This was to be a temporary public health solution: the hope of the most enthusiastic reformers was that prostitution would eventually be eliminated entirely. The Revolution’s second problem with prostitution was that it was a “slap in the face to the Revolution’s commitment to promote social equality and enhance the status of marginal groups” (Bliss 2001:17), and for this reason the health measures could not be a permanent

solution. The battle against prostitution was not merely a public health measure, but an ideological imperative: “the Revolution, in its program to redeem the popular classes, is obliged to combat this ‘necessary evil’ left over from the dictatorship. For the Porfirians, the popular classes were despised by Society, and it mattered little or not at all that their children, fodder for the cannon of the brothel, suffered” (Mota 1930 in Bliss 2001:6).

Since it was widely recognized that most women entered sex work because of extreme poverty, reformers hoped that the revolution’s goal of social equity would make prostitution unnecessary. In the meantime, they were to be retrained—just as in Havana 50 years later. Revolutionary reform “idealized, instead, a future of radically altered gender relations when women would no longer work in sexual commerce, when men would no longer visit prostitutes, and when all citizens would be held equally responsible for disease transmission” (Bliss 2001:3). From our perspective, this may seem like utopian idealism, and it was. But in the heady days of revolution, utopian idealism is reasonable and appropriate. Bliss (2001:16) tells us that revolutionary reformers did attempt to turn these ideals into pragmatic realities:

> The published agendas, speeches, petitions, and protests of the reformers show that they perceived the Revolution and sexual commerce to be ideologically and practically joined. It was in the name of the Revolution that officials prosecuted the mobility of prostitutes by restricting them to *zonas de tolerancia* and limiting the work of women in cabarets; it was also in the name of the Revolution that they established schools to reform prostitutes, organized free venereal disease clinics, worked to attract men to afternoon sports leagues instead of brothels, outlawed pimping and procuring….

Some critics of the Cuban Revolution declare that the persistence of prostitution and of the marginalization of women in general after the Revolution proves that efforts at social redemption were half-hearted. Failure to suddenly make

dramatic transformation in cultural norms means that the reformers were disingenuous, critics say, and that ideological commitment to social equality was merely manipulation to rally women's support around a new patriarchal regime. An example is Julie Bunck (1994: Chapter Three), who argues that, since efforts to improve the status of women in Revolutionary Cuba have partially succeeded, they also have partially failed. Since they have partially failed, the impetus behind them must have been disingenuous. And since the state benefited from women's professional labor, "Castro" (by which she seems to mean the entire governmental apparatus) must have had a selfish motivation in promoting gender equity. If Castro was self-interested, the value of the change would be undermined. Apparently, women's increased participation in civil and professional society can only benefit them if it has no value for the society as a whole.

It is true that, as in Cuba, gender ideas are deeply rooted in cultural logic, and so even a radical transformation of political and economic structures does not easily ameliorate them. Cubans reared in Cuba with Cuban ideas of gender, both male and female revolutionaries' assumptions in some ways mitigated against their own declared intentions. But this does not mean that reform efforts were for naught, nor that revolutionary ideology was a patriarchal sham, nor that socialism as an ideological system is no better than other systems in promoting the well-being of women.

Bliss arrives at a similar conclusion with regards to the Mexican Revolution. Of course motives were mixed (as they always are), and of course traditional gender norms worked against the best impulses of the reformers, and of course men were

not anxious to relinquish their familial and social power. But this does not mean that the efforts were for naught nor that the reformers' ideological commitment was disingenuous:

> To be sure, official efforts to remove women from prostitution and to encourage men to quit visiting brothels were inspired by the purest of revolutionary and humanitarian intentions, for syphilis was a degenerative and debilitating disease that was difficult to treat, and all available information suggests that female prostitutes worked in deplorable conditions that could be likened to 'sexual slavery'. (Bliss 2001:6)

Both male and female revolutionary reformers were genuine in their desire to improve the conditions of women—both those working in sexual commerce and others. And toward this end, they were willing to experiment with dramatic changes in the way they contemplated sexual behavior and sexual hierarchies. They launched thoroughgoing challenges to traditional gender construction, insisting not only that men were also vectors of disease, but also that responsibility for disease, sex work, and women's oppression generally lay less with dangerous and diseased women than with insatiable and irresponsible men. A moral-medical campaign of the early revolutionary government illustrates that revolutionary nationalism saw men's sexuality as being equally problematic and dangerous. This campaign had two phases: the re-imagining of promiscuity as the "disease" that was responsible for the poor living conditions of prostitutes and for the outbreaks of syphilis, followed by a challenge to the cult of masculinity which produced irresponsible men.

The first stage of this process was a shift from moral discourse to a scientific one, a change facilitated by the erosion of the Catholic church's authority after the Revolution. The state designed policies intended to cement its new role, confirming that

> …the revolution's commitment to a redeemed, scientific, and progressive society. In the clinics, prisons, and vocational schools that served as the reformers' theater of operation, hygienists, teachers, social workers, and criminologists became the new foot soldiers of the state's cultural revolution, constructing revolutionary institutions as places in which to sanitize and modernize social, sexual, and family relations in the new moral order.
>
> (Bliss 2001:98)

Rather than as immoral, sinful, fallen women, beginning in the late 1920s prostitutes were increasingly seen as patients in need of medical and educational intervention. The state instigated an unprecedented intervention into the private and family lives of citizens. One consequence of this new self-understanding was that the state, armed with professional bearers of the latest scientific knowledge, "could be a better parent and authority figure that the nontraditional family" (ibid 111). The state increasingly intervened in the lives of young women whom it believed were in danger of falling into prostitution. This was accomplished through group homes intended to teach the women about cooperation, responsibility to community, and restrained use of sexual power. Especially targeted were women who were being reared by single mothers or those abandoned entirely by their families of origin. The zeal of some reformers claimed that the scientific state would be an improvement to some families of origin: "For social workers and criminologists, the Mexican home, in particular, was an untrustworthy social and political unit that exposed the nation's young citizens to the very behavior the Revolution promised to extirpate. It was the state's duty, therefore, to develop a prescription to redeem not just delinquents, but also the authority figures and social landscapes that had shaped them" (ibid 113-114).

Though they rejected the religious argument that prostitutes were wicked, reformers nonetheless based their initial prescriptions on the cultural ideas they had

inherited. They imagined that bad parenting could produce the "disease" of promiscuity only in women; they acknowledged and rued that men were promiscuous, but that was natural and thus not subject to state intervention. Women's promiscuity was either socially constructed and thus could be prevented or reversed, or was medical and in need of curing, such as in "hyper-ovarian" function (Bliss 2001:115). But even though reformers were somewhat trapped in pre-revolutionary ideas around sex and gender, the medicalization of (feminine) promiscuity was only the first stage in a process which was to be, in fact, rather progressive for its time. Already social workers and revolutionaries had broadened their vision to include factors other than sex workers themselves in their etiology of diseased sexuality. Part of this movement was a nascent economic analysis of sex work: "The understanding that poverty and poor education were correlated with precocious sexual activity and led to prostitution shaped reform efforts for women both over and under eighteen" (ibid 116).

This led to the second phase of the Revolution's transformation of discourses and practices around sex work: from moral ideas focused on fallen women, to the medical-social discourse focusing on men. Ideas of the culpability of men—or rather, of the Mexican social construction of manhood and male sexuality—began to take center stage in the Revolution's quest to improve the conditions not only of sex workers but of all women. In 1933, the (male) head of venereal disease prevention wrote that "we men have been taught that our vitality must be converted into a career of violence, in which feminine purity is trampled" (Bliss 2001:124). We could critique this physician's allegiance to the protection of "feminine purity," but still,

placing the blame on machismo was a remarkably progressive idea for its time., In 1933 another writer went further by demonizing not the Mexican construction of masculinity but men themselves; he called the Mexican male "the beast-like man who is dominated by his instincts without thinking of his social responsibilities….[H]e obeys his zoological instincts" (ibid 124).

Revolutionary reformers were especially concerned with male sexuality because of its relevance to the integrity of the family. Just as Guy told us with regard to Buenos Aires, the bourgeois institution of the family was the juncture between the citizen and the state. Men who visited prostitutes—whether acting out their 'natural' sexual excess, their "zoological instincts," or socially constructed machismo—were failing their responsibilities to the nation, because they were failing to be responsible fathers. When they wasted sexuality on prostitutes, they were not saving it for procreative purposes. And worse, money spent on prostitutes was denied to its rightful recipient, wives and (legitimate) children. Further, clients of prostitutes themselves threatened the health of the entire community, for at last men too were seen as vectors of disease. It was another Revolutionary (and revolutionary) idea in public health was that men could transmit syphilis; it had formerly been assumed that only women were dangerous and diseased, and that the men who used them were disease-free. This idea was not widely accepted, as gender norms do not disappear overnight when a dictator is overthrown; but changing how people thought of danger and disease was a part of the revolutionary agenda.

Thus, state education efforts told men that if they visited prostitutes, they would be infecting their children present and future with syphilis. Criminologist

Alfredo Quiróz attempted to codify such thinking by constructing a pseudo biological-social theory, claiming that men's natural instinct was to work, and in fact this was also their sexuality. Hence, if they wasted their sexuality, they were depriving their life force from its righteous uses in work and procreation. An ideal Mexican man was one who "with good behavior and instincts…works first, because fighting and working are sexuality, but sublimated sexuality" (in Bliss 2001:132). The state tried to convince men to contain their sexuality and use it for patriotic purposes (family and work). One educational pamphlet aimed at men claimed that "the abuse of sex causes many nervous system disorders and quickly leads to impotence" (in Bliss 2001:132). This revolutionary problematizing of male sexuality in Mexico, as in Argentina, is an essential complement to the academy's nearly-exclusive focus on female sex work, and will help us analyze the revolutionary politics of pinguerismo.

Not surprisingly, these efforts were not terribly successful; Bliss (2001:128) wrote that:

> Popular responses to administrative efforts to diminish the attractiveness of the cult of masculinity, in conjunction with social workers' and doctors' observations of juvenile prostitution cases, only confirmed reformers' worst fears: Mexican men were not only unwilling to give up pursuing sexually available women, but it was military officers, policemen, and government employees themselves who could be blamed for the participation of so many young *capitalinas* in the metropolitan sex trade.

When it became clear that they would not be able to radically change men's sexual habits, reformers turned their attention to pimping and procuring, in which they had considerably more success. If clients—especially unmarried ones—escaped popular rebuke, pimps were targets of even more energetic and universal condemnation. They benefited from the desperate condition of women, and this was so counter to

Revolutionary ideology that it could not be tolerated. Especially galling to revolutionary sensibilities was the presence of foreign pimps in the Mexican capital, as the "Daughters of Disgrace" complained. Even *matronas*, still legal intermediaries between sex workers and the state, became increasingly demonized in the popular imagination; Bliss (2001:141) summarized a story in the popular crime tabloid *Detectives* in which a North American madam named Mrs. Froncholis abuses a hapless Mexican virgin and turns her into a sex slave for "an old guy with an ugly face and a body like a fat pig." As opposed to some of the depictions of caring, maternal Mexican madams, the ruthless North American Mrs. Froncholis was in league with equally vicious foreign procurers. The nationality of this madam was no accident:

> That North American women exploited young Mexicans was no doubt vexing to *Detectives* readers, who still smarted over repeated U.S. invasions of their country over the course of the Revolution. Even more damning, however, were reports that there were also foreign men violating and exploiting Mexican women. (Bliss 2001:141)

An extrapolation: more than the troublesome persistence of irresponsible men, more than ruthless men who seduced virgins and then left them to the streets, more than the depravity of substance abuse and the dangers of syphilis—even more troublesome to the sensibilities of a Revolution which had promised the redemption of the nation from external intervention was the fact that foreign bodies were invading Mexican women, and worse still, that foreign entrepreneurs were benefiting from the exploitation of Mexican (vaginal) resources. This was surely a great offense to nationalist revolutionary ideology, precisely the insult that the Cuban revolution would face, too.

Chiapas

The many years of Priista rule since those heady days of the Mexican Revolution have taken their toll on revolutionary ideologies of gender parity and protection of women against exploitation. Regulated prostitution continues, but its nature seems intended to reproduce not the progressive impulses of those early years, but the defensive reactions against loss of male privilege. Kelly (2002) studied the municipally-sponsored brothel complex Galáctica in the southeastern state of Chiapas; she demonstrates that the function of sexual regulation seems not to be the protection of women nor even of public health, but rather the control of deviant sexualities and even more the buttressing of the power of the state:

> In Tuxtla, city officials wish to remove prostitution from public view, making invisible men and women who are "pre-modern" symbols of social decay and disorder while making visible the power of the state through a well publicized campaign against prostitution. Just as the illusion of intimacy is created in commercial sexual relations, the state, in its effort to control those relations, builds an illusion of stability, progress, and order to counteract the disorder of growing poverty and the visible manifestations of poverty: prostitution, street vending, homelessness, the growth of shantytowns, and so on.
>
> (2002:71)

Kelly also believes that constant raids on independent street walkers represent "an attempt to spatially control the activities of commercial sex workers" (2002:70), a matter addressed in Chapters Six and Eight. Finally, and most importantly, she observed that the male sex workers were not as oppressed and abused by the police as were the women. This is precisely what I have observed in Havana.

A brothel built by state authority and maintained with public monies, in which the workers are given mother's day presents by the mayor (Kelly 2002:113-117), is a

very far cry indeed from the constantly harassed street workers in Havana. Nevertheless, sex work in Chiapas, as in Mexico City and Buenos Aires, introduces several themes which will reappear when we engage the ethnographic data from Havana: the state's complicity in some sex work alongside its criminalization of other sex work, the spatial arrangement of sex work and the regulation of space as a mechanism of state control, the different treatment accorded to men and to women, revolutionary movements' problematizing of male sexuality as much as female, the incompatibility of prostitution with revolutionary ideologies of gender parity, and the nationalist concern with foreign pimps and other profiteers. I take up each of these themes in Part II and III below.

II. Tourism

> Although foreign men arrive every day to be with Cuban women, the practice has little to do with Cuba's pre-Revolutionary institutionalized sex shows and brothels. Nor does the market begin to compare in scope or intent with the chartered flights of men who buy tickets for "sex without guilt" in Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, purchased sex is troublesome for a government that has spent decades inculcating the values of nonexploitation of fellow humans and gender parity.
>
> (Schwartz 1999:211)

The national and a nationalist functions of sex work coincide with the personal survival strategy of sex tourism. Indeed, the dialectical methodology would insist that the personal and the national are not only related, not only co-determinate processes, but more: they are in fact the same process viewed at different scales.

The social scientific literature on sex tourism is extensive, but most of it focuses on the scale of the female body, or at best of female bodies, paying scant attention to masculinity or nationalism. An approach which is closer to mine is the work of Manderson and Jolly in their (1997) edited collection. The editors and contributors analyze sex work, especially sex tourism in southeast Asia and the Asian Pacific, through the lens of colonialism and post-colonialism. They focus on the colonial and the imperial 'gaze', which simultaneously eroticizes and exoticizes difference. Colonialism as an interpretive lens is a useful way to analyze sex tourism, and I will use it myself to the extent that post-colonial Caribbean nationalism is one side of the colonial relation. The Manderson and Jolly contributors—and I—view sex work not only a *product* of global domination, but as a *constitutive element* in it; the direction of causality goes both ways. That is, not only does inequality produce the conditions under which sex work becomes a survival strategy, but sex work itself becomes a part of the logic of inequality, thus reproducing it. I wonder, though, if the obverse is not also true: that sex work functions as a nationalist *response* to globalism, that sex work can be a strategy to oppose inequality.

The Manderson and Jolly essays are firmly rooted in their contexts (Asia), as all sound social science must be. Useful as those essays are, as we approach the ethnography we need to begin to focus specifically on how sex work—especially sex tourism—manifests uniquely in the Caribbean.

Exoticism

One theme that appears in consistently in scholarly accounts of sex tourism in both Asia and in the Caribbean—and indeed in nearly all post-colonial studies—is the eroticization of the Other. Asian women are constructed in the colonial imagination as being more docile and willing to please than are Western women. This image, like many stereotypes, is not without some basis, but it is exaggerated by sex tourism operators and local entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia (as well as some scholars). The construction of Caribbean women similarly plays upon established stereotypes to attract sex tourists, but with a decidedly tropical twist: Caribbean women—particularly mulatas—are imaged and imagined as more sexually adventurous, energetic, passionate. Tropical women (and men) are more sexually free, closer to nature, so that sex comes more naturally for them and with fewer cultural restrictions. This idea, along with the construction of a "romance," allows clients to misrecognize the relationships.

But more than an alleviation of guilt, images of animalistic tropical sexuality are titillating to tourists who come in search of a sexual freedom they do not enjoy in Europe or in the United States. Caribbean sex tourist men report that Western women are too uptight sexually, too controlling, and too independent. And Caribbean sex tourist women report that Western men are too wimpy, too reserved in bed, and do not adequately fulfill their ideal of powerful masculinity. In both cases, Caribbean men and women are seen as the antidote to whiteness.[2]

[2]The same is true for much of Latin America. Rebhun (1999:88) wrote of Brazil that "The ideology of hot-bloodedness contains racialized notions of greater sensuality among dark-skinned populations living where the heat and humidity of the tropics encourages nudity, indolence, and passion." This is a

The theme of the eroticized and exoticized Caribbean Other is a constant in scholarly accounts of Caribbean sex tourism; I have encountered not a single study which does not make this its principal claim. Kempadoo, for example: "That sex tourist industries today depend upon the eroticization of the ethnic and cultural Other suggests we are witnessing a contemporary form of exoticism which sustains post-colonial and post-cold war relations of power and dominance" (in O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999:37). This claim *always* revolves around race. Joan Phillips on male workers in Barbados (1999:192): "Liaisons between the hustler and the female tourist are based on mutual racial stereotypes of sexual fantasy…These encounters are based on such stereotypes as 'black men can go all night' and 'white women are easy, and give you head, no problem.' Both actors mutually realize some racial stereotypes."

Rather than using the vague phrases of racial exoticism, I have been explicit about the real substance of Cubanos' appeal, the reputation of penile enormity enjoyed by dark Cubans. Phillips (1999), Pruitt and LaFont (1995), and other studies of male sex work contain phrases which seem to hint at the appeal of size: tropical men's ability to satisfy, their animalism, aggressiveness, and the like; but not once does any account make explicit that what is really being spoken of is size. (I discussed this at length in Chapter Three and will have more to say about it below.) I agree that sexual relations and sex-gender ideas can be fruitfully analyzed through the lens of post-colonialism, and in fact post-colonial Caribbean nationalism is one of the primary lenses through which I analyze pinguerismo. It is also true that raced

---

highly class-inflected process; a dark-skinned woman of working class is so highly sexualized that her "chastity [is] inconceivable" (1999:103).

exoticism is part of the pingueros' international appeal. Nonetheless, the claim that most sex tourism is based on racial fantasy is exaggerated. The ethnographic data below indicate that racial stereotypes are only relevant for a small number of sex work relationships.

Dominicans

Cabezas, a widely published and solid researcher of Caribbean sex tourism, also writes that racial fantasies are behind sex work in the resort town of Sosúa on the northern coast of the Dominican Republic. She concurs with others regarding the nexus of race and class difference in erotic appeal (1999:111): sex tourists believe that Dominican women are the opposite of European women, who are cold and distant, non-sexual, and controlling. And Cabezas' fine analysis of sex tourism in Sosúa predicts and confirms themes we will encounter in our study of pinguerismo: women workers are often coerced by police who demand sexual service in exchange for protection from arrest (ibid 120); clients are called "amigos"; and relationships develop which involve more than the sex-for-cash exchange (ibid 99), a particularly Caribbean pattern which we will examine later in this section and in detail in Part II. Cabezas also hints at a connection between nationalism and sex work (ibid 110):

> The images [travel posters] that suggest wildly sexual Dominican women betray more than a few national anxieties. It is more profitable for the state, in conjunction with transnational corporations, to sell a tourism destination by appealing to sexual desire. Such images stimulate desire for an exotic "other" constituted in racial, sexual, and national differences. Dominican women are commodities to be sold to Western consumers.

This is perhaps the reason that some Dominican women are trafficked to the Netherlands (Kempadoo 1998:261), though it seems that periodic panics in Europe and the United States have hugely exaggerated the real volume of trafficking. Kamala Kempadoo's focus, in her introductory essays to both his edited volumes (1998 and 1999) and in her chapter on the Dominican Republic, is (refreshingly) *not* a discourse of race and colonialism; she is more interested in the nuts-and-bolts matters of struggles for daily survival, particularly through the sex workers rights movement. She gives a brief history of two sex worker organizations. The first is the Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN), which, as with so many other self-empowerment organizations of sex workers around the world, was founded in response to AIDS. COIN trains peer workers named "Messengers of Health," of whom there were nearly 400 in 1999. COIN also publishes a monthly newsletter, "Newspaper of the Night" and organized a national conference in 1995 to encourage a national debate about 'sex work' (Kempadoo 1998:264). That title, which we saw above had been coined in the United States by Mistress Formika, is embraced by COIN, one representative of which wrote

> If sex workers had not begun publishing a newspaper in which they do not call themselves "prostitutes" and do not think of themselves as victims, it would probably be true that the media would have continued to call them "prostitutes" or "cueros" [whores]…Trabajadores sexuales is a term that gets rid of the false morality and as a consequence reflects reality. (Lucy Placencia 1995, in Kempadoo 1998:261).

Kempadoo acknowledges that the abolitionists (discussed earlier in this chapter) do not care for prostitutes who think of themselves in this way.

Kempadoo believes that it was COIN's organizing and empowerment work that enabled the founding of a second, truly autonomous (i.e., not depending on

external funding) sex worker organization, MODEMU (The Movement of United Women). Its function is to “create mechanisms of solidarity and mutual support, to fight against violence, to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, to promote the creation of health services, to provide legal and psychological assistance to victimized members, to train women to find other jobs, and to protect children against stigmatization” (Kempadoo 1998:266).

In her study of sex tourism in a northern resort town in the Dominican Republic, Denise Brennan (1998) adds to Kempadoo’s and Cabezas’s fine work with an account of the hopes of many sex tourism workers to meet a tourist who will fall in love with them and assist them in emigration. Brennan is a bit skeptical, probably rightfully so, about the women’s real prospects; she reports that most workers’ dreams of romance and emigration are unfulfilled, causing them to return to the interior of the island single and empty handed. In this scenario, it is the Dominicans who have fantasies of romance. But most sex tourism is the Caribbean is rather the other way round: the tourists come in search of romance, and the workers benefit from supporting such fantasies, even manipulating them. Brennan does not mention in her text nor include in her bibliography the foundational study published three years earlier which might have helped her conceptualize the tourist-Dominican relationships; this is Pruitt and LaFont’s (1985) foundational article on Caribbean sex tourism which articulated the phenomenon of “romance tourism”.

Romance

Pruitt's and LaFont's article has informed studies of Caribbean sex tourism since it first appeared. In it, they coin the term "romance tourism," an important distinguisher from the common "sex tourism," to describe the relationships of female European tourists with male Jamaican "rent-a-dreads". The tourists come in search not only of a quick sex-for-money exchange, but rather for a more in-depth relatedness. Jamaican men give not only the fantasy of romance; they are also the gatekeepers to an exotic culture, an experience of which gives the women a sense of rebellion against their own (racist) culture. These relationships might last the entirety of the visit, or far longer when the women take the Jamaican men to their home countries. The men are skilled at intuiting the desires of the women and meeting them. They play on the tourists' notions of passionate dark masculinity, intentionally distinguishing themselves from the cool, timid, or self-interested men of the home countries.

Pruitt and LaFont make much of the opportunity tourism provides for a reinvention of gender identities by both parties: "The challenge to the authority of forms of male and female behavior is enhanced through contact between members of different cultures. Tourism is a primary agent of that contact and in its very nature involves breaking the continuity of social and cultural norms" (1995:424). Thus do the women not only want to experience the mythical virile masculinity of Rastafarian men, but they conversely want to indulge the power which their economic power has over the men: "…[T]ravel has become part of the gendering activity of women as they seek to expand their gender repertories to incorporate practices traditionally

reserved for men and thereby integrate the conventionally masculine with the feminine" (ibid 423). The tourists are aware of their class privilege, and enjoy having power over men whose strong "natural" masculinity they seek. These are, of course, contradictory expectations, which is but one of the many reasons why these relationships have great difficulties when they are removed from the fantasy-world of a Caribbean vacation.

Jamaican men use the relationships to strengthen their ability to perform their masculinity with Jamaican women through increased financial power—required for courtship in Jamaica, since women expect that their men will economically provide for them and for their children. The men's access to local culture makes them cultural "brokers", and counteracts the women's economic power over them—a relation which could potentially embarrass the men if and when it is made explicit. In short, Pruitt and LaFont tell us, the men draw upon—in fact, depend upon—the gender scripts with which they have been reared. Their masculinity is the resource they use to strengthen their position vis-à-vis other Jamaican men. But while they fulfill their gender expectations, they also have to adjust them to enable the relationship/transaction to occur at all, that is, to consent to being financially supported by a woman.

As reported by Joan Phillips (1999), male sex work in Barbados is strikingly similar. The white European women come in search of an aggressive and dominant man, a reprieve from what they perceive to be passive and timid European men. One informant (tourist) complained that European men "make love," but Barbadian men "fuck"; it was the latter experience that she sought (ibid 193). A female tourist

supports him while on vacation, returns periodically, and might even marry him. Unlike the Jamaican rent-a-dreads, the beach boys do not mind being financially dependent, and in fact welcome the reprieve from Barbadian women, who demand to be supported. The men are able to strengthen their masculinity locally by sporting material possessions and by practicing their skills in "sweet talk," a masculine skill also valued in Jamaica. The remarkable similarities are many. There is a difference, though, in the authors' attitudes; Phillips places more faith in the genuine love professed by the beach boys than do Pruitt and LaFont in that professed by the rent-a-dreads. The "romance" component of tourist-native relationships enables a misrecognition on the part of the tourist; (though unlike Brennan's Dominican women, the men seem to be infrequently fooled). This misrecognition is what enables what one of Opperman's contributors calls "sex tourism without sex tourists" (Günther 1998). In his introduction to this volume Opperman (1998) discusses Cohen and several others since who, before Pruitt and LaFont, analyzed sex and romance tourism as a continuum of relationships ranging from the long-term romance to the quick sex-for-cash exchange.

The relationship based on a vacation fantasy of romance, the potential for misrecognition, the ability for local men to fulfill gender expectations while forcing them to adjust to the requirements of the market—these themes in the lives of the Rent-a-Dreads in Jamaica and the Beach Boys in Barbados are strikingly similar in the lives of the pingueros in Havana, as we will see in the following chapters. I turn now to the specifically Cuban context, where I will remain for the entirety of the dissertation.

Jineteras

As I explained in the Chapter One, a *jinetero* is a male hustler who provides non-sexual services to tourists. The origin of the word jinetero is not entirely clear (Berg 2004:49), but according to Jorge Pérez-López a "jinete" is "an individual whose strength is an ability to develop social relationships that will lead to being able to obtain goods and services in short supply" (in Fernández 2000b:115). Fernández summarizes this as "hustler, mediator, and facilitator" (ibid). This does seem to accurately describe the make jinetero as I experienced him in Havana. But a female *jinetera* is something else altogether; she provides nothing but sex, and almost exclusively to tourists.

Schwartz (1999) tells us that there have been three periods in which the Cuban state has turned to tourism as a solution to an economic and/or political crisis: the late 1920s, the late 1950s, and the late 1980s. In each period, images of hyper-sexual young brown women have been used to attract tourists (though this is clearly unintentional in the current moment). In each period, the leadership of the state has been faced with a lack of both capital and technical-managerial experience, the solution to which problem has been to invite foreign investment to participate in the tourist sector, bringing capital and expertise. And in each period, Cubans with national pride, who prefer Cuban control over Cuba, have been alarmed at the growing influence of foreign business over internal decisions, and the growing ownership of resources which formerly had been, and should be, Cuban.

Batista, far more than Machado, had especially close ties to United States organized crime, which invested heavily in gambling halls, hotels, and brothels of Havana (Schwartz 1997). Thus under the *batistiano* there was an especially close connection in the public mind between Batista, foreign domination, crime, and prostitution. Little wonder, then, that upon the triumph of the Revolution, sex work was an early target of reform. A similar effort had been made in the *machadato* [the period of Machado's rule, 1925-1933], but this was a "repressive" effort based on the prosecution of prostitutes and pimps. Venezuelan sociologist Rosa del Olmo reports that these earlier efforts viewed prostitution as an "incurable" and "ahistorical social phenomenon (1979:35). Thus the problem was located in the moral or moral-medical character of the workers themselves.

But the early Revolutionary intervention was very different: sex work was historicized. Del Olmo tells us that the early Revolutionary reformers "held a radically different view of prostitution. Above all, it was not considered a moral problem, not "innate criminality". Nor did they feel that certain women had "degenerate" characteristics which had caused them to be prostitutes. Prostitution was simply considered to be an economic problem, closely tied to the idea of the woman as a commodity" (1979:35). The real cause of prostitution was capitalism and the exploitation which necessarily accompanied it. She explained in a footnote that prostitution was a "social injury": "The Revolution considered that the main examples of organized crime were 'social injuries,' inherited from capitalism. This term was used as a textual response to the feeling at the time. That is, 'relics or symptoms of a disease'. In a metaphor, it was 'the sickness of capitalism'" (1979:39n). Ironically,

the revolutionary rhetoric here is rather similar to that of right-wing feminists 30 years later: prostitution was one manifestation of the objectification of women.

The difference is that the Revolution understood that this "objectification" had a cause; it was not an ahistorical function of a timeless oppression of women by evil men. Thus did the revolution seek to eradicate its root cause by interrupting all forms of exploitation under capitalism. Another difference was that the right-wing feminists seem to be less concerned with prostitutes than they are with prostitution; this is what allows them to demonize sex workers who disagree with them by defending their own agency. The Revolution "did not want to take drastic measures against [prostitutes] because it was aware that the great majority had been victimized by uncontrollable circumstances" (del Olmo 1979:36). For this reason, the "Code of Social Defense" was enacted in December 1961 to protect women from the coercion of pimps (del Olmo 1979:37), whom it energetically prosecuted. (To this day, the pingueros tell me, "Fidel hates pimps".[3]) Since the revolution saw prostitution as a "solvable social historical phenomenon," its goal was to "give them the opportunity to incorporate themselves into everyday life under equal conditions" (del Olmo 1979:38). Contemporary researchers confirm del Olmo's work; prostitutes were given vocational training, those with families to support were given stipends, and volunteers from the FMC (Cuban Federation of Women) took care of prostitutes' children while they attended school (Smith and Padula 1996:40-41). These policies were intended not only to rid Cuban society of the negative influences of capitalism, but also to transform traditional Cuban machismo so that sexually active women not

[3]Interestingly, the Cuban word for 'pimp' is *chulo*—which in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic means 'macho man' or 'womanizer'.

be demonized nor that women be relegated to housework. Mona Rosendahl's (1997) unique ethnography of a rural town indicates that the campaign was partly successful, but that men were not anxious to relinquish their privilege.[4] And a generally cautious Smith and Padula (1996:179) write that Fidel Castro himself "risked considerable enmity among the population, particularly the men," by instituting a program of sexual democracy which not only gave women control over their bodies, but also declared that they were sexual beings with the right to experience pleasure and to expect that their partners provide it.

Perhaps it is for just this reason that the state is loath to admit the obvious resurgence of jineterismo in the Special Period. Pérez-Stable (1999 [1994]:194) reports that even in the extreme austerity and ideological retrenchment of the Special Period, the state has still made a public priority of matters important to women: "divorce rates and deadbeat fathers, female-headed households, teenage pregnancy, machismo and gender discrimination, domestic violence". But jineterismo has not been on the agenda. Despite the fact that the new jineterismo is a blow to Revolutionary pride—or perhaps because of it—the state is loath to confirm what even the casual observer can see quite clearly. This still seems to be the case: the internet version of the FMC newsletter addresses in astonishing frankness, and even encourages discussion of, matters such as female orgasms, female masturbation, and the pleasures of sex after 50—but there is not a word about prostitution. Jineterismo was addressed in an article of *Granma Internacional*, a state news publication, on 8 March 2000. It admitted that women's tremendous

[4]Lancaster (1992) found the same reluctance from post-revolutionary men in Nicaragua, and even credits the fall of the Sandinistas in part to their overly-ambitious program of gender reform.

gains since the Revolution in the public sphere of employment and education had not translated entirely to the realm of the home and spousal relations. In frankness typical of the Revolution at least since the 1986 “Rectification or Errors and Negative Tendencies,” the article admitted that the austerity of the Special Period had caused extreme hardship, and that women suffered more than men because of their still-unequal share of family responsibility. Some women had turned to prostitution, the article acknowledges, but in an odd disjuncture, their sex work was said to be the result not of economic need but rather of laziness and material greed:

> Economic motives cannot be dismissed, but analysis must also encompass the gender perspective, on account of the discriminatory perception and self-perception of the woman as a sex object, as well as the distortion of values arising out of an overemphasis on material possessions. Experts in this area agree that behind the return of prostitution in Cuba is the search for easy earnings by young people avoiding work, social and family responsibilities. At the start of the special period the activities of the so-called "jineteras" were more open and had a certain degree of impunity. (Pages 2000)

Jan Strout (in Cabezas 1998:82-83), working from outside the island, reproduces the official rhetoric almost exactly:

> Today’s young women practice jineterismo for the ‘freedom’ to go out dancing, dining, going to concerts, visiting Varadero Beach or other resorts, and shopping in dollar stores….[They] reject work as a way to earn a living; they don’t study for career preparation; they don’t link love with sexual relations;….and they are not aware of the risks associated with prostitution such as violence, drugs, AIDS, pornography, and crime.

In a similar vein, Cuban journalist Andrés Garcia Suárez writes that “Our prostitution is unique; it is probably the only prostitution in the word exercised only for the satisfaction of luxurious tastes” (in Berg 2004). While I reject the simplistic, apologetic, and misleading generalization, it is true that some jineteras—Fusco’s (1998) informants as well as my own—report that they do indeed “andar con

turistas" so that they can buy Nike shoes and go to clubs (Part III will examine carefully the move toward consumerism among Cuban youth). Such an admission should not, of course, minimize the doubtless fact that the vast majority of sex work is motivated by extreme financial need.

It is politically convenient for Castro to claim that young women become jineteras because they like sex (Fusco 1998:161), and for the Federation of Cuban Women to blame jineterismo on materialism and laziness. But the conclusions of 'abolitionist' feminists in the United States are not terribly different; though the demon is reversed (male clients instead of the female workers), the focus is still on individual behavior and not structural constraint or structural agency, that is, the political economic structures which constrain poor women and men's choices, or the structures produced by them—including sex work itself—to resist marginalization. In her article about Cuban jineterismo, O'Connell Davidson (1996) simply imports the standard analysis which claims to be universal: individual acts of exploitation of women by despicable male sex tourists. And agency is ignored; characteristically, the women themselves become invisible so that focus can remain on predatory men who "use" and "exploit" the hapless jineteras.

Two examples of O'Connell Davidson's scholarship serve this purpose. First, although she admits that there does not seem to be any child prostitution in Cuba, the emotional weight of the word "pedophile" is enlisted to demonize the tourists: "We met 14-and 15-year old prostitutes working in Varadero who reported that a number of their Italian, Canadian, and German clients make between three and five trips to Cuba per year (a good indication that they find it easy, cheap, and safe to

satisfy their pedophile tendencies here.)" (1996:42) Although "pedophilia" is sexual desire or sexual activity with pre-pubescent children, tourists who "use" post-pubescent Cubans are still "pedophiles". The second example of manipulative rhetoric appears when Davidson is supporting her claim that tourists wish to engage in racial fantasies in Cuba. Since racism has been so effectively challenged in Europe and Canada, she claims, racists have to go overseas to explore their urges: "Many racists therefore feel under attack in their own countries, where their opportunities for satisfying a sexual appetite for the Others they both despise and desire are generally quite limited" (1996:46). Sex tourists are labeled "racist" without evidence, after which Davidson declares that she knows how sex tourists think and feel: they both despise and desire darkness.

Yet in this and in other treatments of sex tourism in Cuba, no fact is offered to prove the authors' assumption that sex tourists seek an exotic fantasy nor that they are racist because they desire them. The idea that sex tourists are overwhelmed by racialized fantasies is such canon in the literature that authors don't feel the need to demonstrate it. Coco Fusco believes she knows the reason for the dogged faith given to this assumption, at least for Cuba (though this does not explain this insistence in so many other Caribbean contexts) (1998:155):

> Throughout Cuba's history the mulata has stood for illicit sex…According to the old adage of the Caribbean plantation, white women were for marrying, black women were for work, and mulatas were for sex. That legacy, told and retold through scores of songs, poems, and novels, made the mulata a national symbol that the country's tourism campaigns simply take advantage of. Even though not all of today's jineteras are actually mulata…, the stereotype still carries enormous power, so much so that to engage in sex work practically means to assume a mulata identity by association.

This is one reason that I devoted so much space in Chapter Two detailing the development of the mulata as a national symbol. This discourse operates in two ways: the mulata represents the nation because she is both white and black, and because she provides an alternative to the United States; but she also "has stood for illicit sex". Does this mean that the nation is defined by illicit female sexuality? How does contemporary revolutionary nationalism confront, interpret, and contain "illicit sex"? And is male sexuality problematized similarly, as it was in revolutionary Mexico? These are some of the questions I address in Part II, the ethnography. But a nationalist-ideological analysis of sex work must be accompanied by a consideration of the economic context which gives rise to it, and of which sex work is, in turn, a constitutive element.

III. Economy

If there's money up front, *anything* could happen.
(03.05.06)

When pingueros told me that with cash up front "anything could happen," they were making a claim about economic well-being in the Special Period. The men's lives cannot be understood outside of the context of Special Period economic strategy—both individual and collective—and the history of changing revolutionary policies that preceded the crisis.

The Cuban revolutionaries were not economists. They attempted to institutionalize their ideals, naively unaware of the pragmatic difficulties of massive economic transformation. Mistakes have been many and serious in consequence,

but the revolutionary government has continued a regular and rigorous self-appraisal and realignment. Economic policy has vacillated in its attempts to reconcile a fundamental tension in socialism: the goal of increased production is fundamentally opposed to the goal of equality. That is, as one policy shift has sought to increase output or efficiency, it has resulted in the emergence of material difference. Further, when markets are enabled—as in Cuba they periodically have been—to provide the population with some consumer goods that central planning often cannot, the effect is a horizontal distribution of power and loyalty, as opposed to the vertical power of a centrally-planned system. With its highly centripetal polity, the Cuban Revolution has not been willing to disburse authority or loyalty. Thus, revolutionary policy has been a tug-or-war between measures aimed at production and those at redistribution.

Most relevant for our purposes is the Revolution's shifting and uncertain attitudes and policies toward markets as mechanisms of both production and distribution. Here I diverge from those scholars of post-socialism whose condemnation of socialism—both as an ideal system and as it actually existed in Eastern Europe and in Cuba—leads to the construction of two related and equally-untenable absolutes: a radical distinction between markets and state socialism such that they cannot coexist in any formulation, and an opposition of the first and second economies, such that the latter emerges only as a result of the failure of the former and leads to its destruction. The back-and-forth of the Cuban economy, and the ways in which second-economic and market activities work in concert to provide for the material survival of Habaneros in the Special Period. The dialectical

methodology which I have stressed throughout can contain seemingly contradictory processes in a way that not all social scientists have recognized.

Socialism

The Revolution initially proclaimed four principal economic goals. First among these was the amelioration of extreme disparities of wealth, both geographically and socially. The "provinces" were in a different world than was Havana[5]. The city was the site of enormous wealth, education, and cosmopolitanism, while proper nutrition, medical care, electricity and plumbing, and even basic literacy were rare in the provinces. Second, as a nationalist Revolution, economic independence and political autonomy vis-á-vis the United States were imperatives. Third, the Revolution wanted to raise levels of consumer goods, including food, for the entire island—this was to be the most elusive of the goals, still only partly accomplished. Fourth, properties which had been accumulated through illegal or immoral activities under Batista were to be seized and redistributed. This goal was the quickest and easiest to accomplish, particularly since so many of the pre-revolutionary ruling elite obliged by abandoning the island. Particularly, the mansions of Miramar and Vedado were quickly reoccupied by leaders and friends of the Revolution and by homeless workers.

The first two goals— material leveling and economic autonomy—were accomplished in concert. Two legal initiatives early in the Revolution were intended to both raise the standard of living of the peasantry and return control of the Cuban

[4]Even though Habana is a province, young Cubans today distinguish between the city of La Habana and what they call "the provinces," by which they mean (primarily) the rural eastern two-thirds of the island and the western province of Pinar del Rio.

economy to Cuba (that is, to the new revolutionary regime). The first Agrarian Reform law of 17 May 1959—just over four months after the triumph of the revolution—redistributed land to the peasants who worked it. One hundred thousand formerly-landless peasants now became property holders, though the state did itself take public ownerships of the largest and most fertile sugar and coffee plantations. As a result of this first agrarian reform, the Revolutionary state now held forty percent of arable land. The second Agrarian Reform Law went much further: whereas the first reform had established an upper limit of 30 caballerías (about 400 hectares) for private ownership, the state now nationalized all holdings exceeding five cabellerías, or 67 hectares. The state's share of arable land now reached seventy percent. [6]

Meanwhile, United States-owned oil refineries' refusal to process Soviet crude sparked the conflict that enabled the Revolution to seize and nationalize, between July and October 1960, all properties owned by United States citizens and corporations. By October, the state was in firm control of nearly all economic activity on the island, save subsistence farming and retail trade. This latter sector, it was claimed, allowed too many private citizens to accumulate wealth to the detriment of the public; thus, the March 1968 "Revolutionary Offensive" nationalized a great deal of the remaining retail businesses. The state was now in complete control. Indeed, data from the socialist bloc trading network, called the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON or CMEC), indicate that by 1970 the Cuban state had socialized as much of the economic activity of the island as had the Soviet Union,

[6]Pérez-López (1995) is a good source of raw data, which he has ably collected from diverse sources.

and even more than had other socialist bloc states. To manage all this property and economic activity, the Revolutionary state (uncritically) copied the Soviet model, establishing in 1961 a central planning board (Junta Central de Planificación, or JUCEPLAN).[7]

JUCEPLAN's strict central planning and social control were maintained until the mid 1970s, when a more relaxed model, called the Sistema de Dirección y Planificación de la Economía (SDPE) was introduced. As part of this liberalizing experiment, the state acknowledged the difficulties with the *libreta* food distribution managed by the neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution; in April 1980 a new form of private economic activity was legalized: the free farmer's markets (Mercados Libres de Campesinos, MLCs). Decree Law 66 allowed small farmers to sell on a free market—without price controls—their excess agricultural produce, that is, the produce beyond the quota which they were required to sell to the state for libreta allotment. The ability to take legal private initiative greatly increased agricultural production and made distribution far more efficient. But apparently a number of farmers began to divert produce from the state distribution system to the markets, where the price they could demand was much higher. Further, some intermediary dealers began to buy produce at the MLCs and re-sell it in the cities for a profit. The private wealth that the MLCs—and other of the

[7]The concentration of arable land and other sources of productive capacity in the hands of the state is *not* a characteristic of socialism per se or of the Cuban Revolutionary government. Before the Revolution, such resources has been accumulated into a small number of extremely large landholdings owned largely by United States capital. Thus, when the state seized United States holdings, it became overnight the owner of the bulk or arable land. This is a subtle but important distinction: the accumulation upon which Pérez-López comments was a product of pre-Revolutionary capitalism and foreign ownership, not of early state socialism. Nonetheless, accumulation of resources was a trend that the Revolution continued vigorously, particularly after the Revolutionary Offensive.

liberalizing initiatives of the 1970s—created was ideologically unacceptable to the Revolution, causing the SDPE model to be largely abandoned during the 1986 "Rectification of Errors and Negative Tendencies".[8]

In short, in its design and execution of the first economy, the Cuban Revolution reproduced the principal characteristics of the Soviet model—which have now proven to have been quite unworkable.[9] To its credit, the revolutionary government has been willing to examine its mistakes and make adjustments. But the tension between efficiency and equality has never been reconciled. The decision to close the MLCs, particularly, decreased productivity and caused exacerbated material hardship to many-a Cuban. A cynic might view their re-opening in the Special Period as indicative of the Revolution's failure, but I would argue that such a reversal is consistent with the historical practice of reexamination and adjustment every five years. This is not to say that such adjustments indicate that the Revolution has been "flexible", since it has doggedly clung to some old ideological positions even when proven untenable. But neither would it be accurate to declare the Cuban economic experiment to be a failure to which the changes are a corrective; the

[8]The Rectification, the reader will recall, was the same critical reexamination of Revolutionary policy which resulted in the abandonment of the ban against 'gay' teachers and doctors, and the initiation of sex education and tolerance campaigns.

[9]Katherine Verdery has been an insightful elaborator of the problematic characteristics of the Eastern Bloc economies. She is vulnerable to three related critiques, however: first, her rhetoric claims that those economies *are* 'socialism'; she makes no distinction between the model of socialism and the political mechanisms of certain totalitarian regimes. The result is to obscure the real problems with the socialist model by conflating them with the problems of Soviet bloc *political* regimes. She names some problems with the Eastern Bloc regimes and suggests that these are a result of socialism; but in fact, all nation-states—both socialist and capitalist—have similar characteristics and similar problems. For instance, she writes that socialist regimes rely upon the manipulation of language more than do capitalist ones, and that "…any political regimes as fragile as these [of these Eastern Bloc], where discourse has a disproportionately productive role…must incorporate the producers of discourse [the intellectuals] into itself" (1991:430). This seems to suggest that capitalist regimes are not weak and do not rely on intellectual production to legitimate themselves (see also 1996).

adjustments of the Special Period are a part of the Revolution's ongoing economic strategy, not external to it.

Failure

Other scholars are more cynical than am I. Pérez-López (1995), for instance, reports and analyzes the 'failures' of the Revolution's economic planning as a prelude to his discussion of the "second economy". Though he is careful to dispassionately report the facts, his thesis seems to be that the second economy developed out of the shortcomings of the first: the high level of nationalization and central planning of the Cuban economy failed as an economic model, and thus the state was unable to supply its citizens with sufficient levels of food and other consumption requirements (like shoes). The emergence of the second economy is, in this analysis, evidence of the failure of state socialism, that is, an external response to a failed and oppressive government.

Following other scholars of post-socialism, he distinguishes the second economy in Cuba from 'informal' economies, which he says are "typically associated with subsistence activities in developing countries, particularly those in Latin America," and from 'underground' economies, which are "the set of unrecorded, under-the-table economic activities that occur in developed market economies" (Pérez-López 1995:8). The second economy, on the other hand, consists of "economic activities outside the state, or socialist, sector in centrally planned economies" (ibid). Verdery (1991) also distinguishes sharply between first and second economic activity, and she, too, constructs an oppositional relationship. In

her view, the two economies are antagonistic, so much so that it was second economy activities in the Eastern Europe which in fact precipitated the collapse of the first.

Much has been made of the failure of the state sector and survival necessity of obtaining dollars in Special Period Cuba—a bit exaggerated in my opinion. Miami Herald columnist Mary Speck, with an anti-Castro spin, paints a picture of social disintegration, near starvation, rampant corruption, and desperation. In the first article of a trilogy (1993a), she explains that the bustling, energetic neighborhoods which used to house "elegant boutiques" are now like ghost towns of despair. "Most Cubans" have to break the law by selling pilfered goods on the black market in order to survive, she claims. The miserable failure of Fidel's government forces them to use their ingenuity to work outside of the first economy. In the second article (1993b), Speck describes depressing urban decay, "dreary" and "empty" squares which used to house opulent wealth. In addition to illegal black marketeering, teenage Cubans make friends with tourists to obtain the luxury goods for which they pine. Young Cubanas on the Malecón ignore the catcalls of Cuban men, she claims (contrary to my own observations). In the third article (1993c), Speck tells a tale of Cubans "dreaming of handouts," and "scheming" to "beat the system". Her message is clear: second economic activity is testament to the failure of the first economy—not only the failure to provide certain consumer goods, but failure in general. The "black market"—a term neither defended nor defined—operates entirely outside "the economy" and is independent from it. Such a formulation is not in keeping with some

other social scientific thinking on the relationship between the first and second economies in Marxist states.

Entrepreneurs

Jorge Dominguez differs from Speck and Pérez López, by demonstrating that the "black markets" not only do not operate in opposition to the first economy, but that in fact they buttress the first. He does personalize the entire state apparatus in the person of Fidel, but his conclusions are valid if we change the frequently-used "Castro" to "the Revolutionary government," "the current regime," "the Cuban state," or any other phrase that indicates that the state is not homogeneous and certainly is larger than one individual.[10] Dominguez writes: "Although many abroad expected that economic hardship would increase support for opposition groups, the short-term effects of this hardship have weakened and disorganized them, making it easier for the regime to endure" (1993:101). In fact, Dominguez concludes, "the regime's survival has come to rest on [illegal markets]" (1993:102), such that they are in fact one of the "secrets of Castro's staying power". This is not an uncommon argument, but it requires a qualification. It is not merely the disorganization caused by economic hardship that has weakened potential opposition. An addition deterrent to opposition has been one of the solutions to economic crisis, an individualist scrambling for dollars. That is, market activity—be it black, gray, or perfectly legal—

[10]Interestingly, though Dominguez seems to repeat this error common to the opponents of the regime, he twice mentions Cubans' "freedom to criticize specific, malperforming services" (1993:98). "Heir to an authentic social revolution, ordinary Cubans remain free enough to voice complaints wile they distinguish carefully between what they do and do not like, and whom they do and do not respect" (1993:106).

does not encourage the kind of collaboration which might nurture a collective resistance to the regime. And indeed, as some individuals are increasingly able to find the dollars they desire through certain kinds of market activities, that is, as individual responses do prove efficacious, then collective responses will become less likely.

Undergraduate student Samuel Taylor has provided an up-to-date accounting of many of the same practices documented by Dominguez and Pérez-López: restaurant cooks skimping on and pinching ingredients for resale off-the-books, stealing soap and construction materials from state warehouses or factories, bribing guards and supervisors. These are obviously illegal secondary economic activities, what other call black market activities, but recall that not every second economic activity is illegal. Taylor discusses as well the legal private entrepreneurs, the owners of casas particulares (also called habitaciones autorizadas or arrendadores inscriptos) that I mentioned in the Introduction. These are the rooms or suites carved out of a residence that are renovated and used as tourist housing, the going rate throughout my research (1999-2004) being $25-30 per night; Taylor calls the owners cuentapropistas, since they work on their “own account” (“propia cuenta”)—a word I never heard but which I do not doubt. He tells us that in 2005 130,000 cuentapropistas were licensed to engage one of the thousands of private economic activity authorized by Decree Law 141. Kaplowitz (1995) tells us that by 1994 the number was 160,000 legally registered self-employed Cubans, suggesting that by 2005 the number is in fact far higher than Taylor’s estimate. (Neither Kaplowitz nor Taylor give a source for their numbers.) Since very many Cubans either engage in

activity which is not entirely legal or do not wish to pay income tax and licensing fees, the number of self-employed Cubans is surely dramatically larger than either estimate. Taylor describes one of these illegal cuentapropistas: “Miguel”, who pirates cheap copies of compact discs and sells them on the sidewalk. And some cuentapropistas, perhaps most, are legally licensed but stretch or break the rules, such as the owners of paladares who hire more than one non-family employee. I would add to the list of quasi-illegal entrepreneurs the organizers and promoters of the nightly ‘gay fiestas’ (an account of which occurs below in Chapter Six).

Though others have made these observations before, Taylor adds an additional insight when he described why the neighborhood Committees for Defense of the Revolution (CDR), which had in an earlier time been an effective method of social control, were not able or willing to interrupt the illegal or semi-legal economic activity:

> In practice, the CDR in most neighborhoods cannot work as a mechanism of state control because of one important characteristic: the organization is social. It’s made up of neighbors and friends, and neighbors and friends are malleable, adaptable, and flexible. Even the most dedicated patriot does not want to rat on a neighbor who is selling CDs to make a couple of bucks or stealing some milk from the impersonal state in order to feed her kids. Social bonds prevent the enforcement of strict rules. (Taylor 2005:19)

I would only make a mild corrective to Taylor’s analysis: it is not exactly or exclusively *affective* ties that protect neighbors; we must also see an element of self-interest. Both generalized and balanced reciprocity often include elements of both affection and mutual self-interest[11]. And in fact, one of the conclusions of the present research is that the distinction between material interest and emotional

[11]For a fine recent work which demonstrates that gift exchange and commodity exchange are not distinct phenomenon, see Parry 1989.

attachment/sexual attraction is often a rather fuzzy line if not an altogether false one (This theme will be explored in detail in Chapter Seven). Thus: it may be that neighbors are reluctant to inform on each other not only because they have affective ties, but also because they themselves are involved in some manner of illegal trade. To inform on a neighbor would invite a response in kind. For this reason, the CDRs are no longer effective instruments of state control.

This pragmatic explanation for the apparent weakening of the CDRs predicts a theoretical conclusion at which I arrive in Chapter Eight: the state is not opposed to civil society, either theoretically or in practice. Taylor's discussion of the CDRs suggest that they formerly operated as an instrument of state control, in opposition to the movement of the population. But the CDRs operate in both realms of state and civil society, and in fact I would argue that a sharp distinction between those realms cannot be drawn. Similarly, it is not helpful to discuss the state economic sector as if it operates independently or in opposition to second economic activity. What I suggest here is that we apply to our study of the economy the same analytical tool that I proposed in the introduction for the study of pinguerismo as a social and cultural phenomenon: dialectics.

Dialectic

Recall that Pérez-López has defined second economic activity as being *external* to the state. Los (1990) and her contributors had arrived at a similar conclusion, but with an important ideological proviso dropped by Pérez-López. To her, the second economy "includes all areas of economic activity which are officially viewed as being

inconsistent with the ideologically sanctioned dominant mode of economic organization" (1990:2). Thus, "the ideology-based definition of 'second economy' seems to be particularly appropriate for countries where the ruling party's ideology determines policies of discrimination against unorthodox or ideologically alien economic activities" (1990:4). But while second economy activities are ideologically "alien" or "inconsistent", they are not always illegal: "In addition to the illegal and semi-legal economic activities, the second economy also includes those types of activity that are formally legal but ideologically suspicious and therefore officially discriminated against and assigned a clearly inferior status" (1990:2).

This distinction is subtle but crucial for understanding Special Period survival activities in Cuba, and it is a mild corrective to the suggestion that second economic activity lies outside the formal economy and emerges as a result of its failures. To say that second economy activities are ideologically suspect but still legal calls into question the distinction between the first and the second. That is, other scholars have demonstrated that second economic activities interact with the first economy in mutually supportive ways. Writing on the Cuban economy, Michalowski and Zatz write that "'second economy' does not reference a radical separation between 'first' and 'second' economies. A nation's economy is the sum total of economic transactions that take place within, or which have a bearing on, a nation-state" (1990:102). The first and second economies are not only not mutually exclusive, but in fact are mutually dependent.

While some scholars see second economic activity as a product of failure, others (i.e., Michalowski and Zatz 1990) see it as integral to the system as

formulated: more flexible pseudo-market exchange, entrepreneurship, and reciprocity compensate and respond to the periodic and shifting lapses in centrally-planned consumer-good production and distribution. And a great deal of such activity relies upon diverted inputs from state enterprises. Thus, the state's focus on production and the central plan (as opposed to efficiency) creates opportunities for illegal and semi-legal use of public resources which in turn buttress the state by distributing goods and minimizing discontent. The inflexible socialist system—whose 'failure' forced the development of the second economy, in Pérez-López's view, or whose collapse was caused by it, in Verdery's view, in fact provided for all manner of quasi-legal activity and in turn benefited from it.[12]

Further, Michalowski and Zatz demonstrate convincingly that those same second economy activities in fact *preceded* centralized planning in Cuba, having emerged from the very great failures of market mechanisms in the 1950s: "Thus, second economy activities such as hoarding and black-marketeering were not simply *responses* to the problems or inefficiencies of a centrally-planned economy. The socialist consumer economy in Cuba arose and took its particular shape in

[12]Here I have been discussing the production side of the second economy, but in Chapter Nine I will have much to say about the consumption end. Only a brief mention is appropriate here. According to Verdery (1991; 1996), Pérez-López (1995), and Dominguez (1993), consumption acts as a social palliative, easing tensions and anxieties which emerge from shortages, and—in the words of Kevin Latham (2002:221)—from the demise of utopian hope, thus adding to the legitimacy of the state. But Latham wants to nuance Verdery's analysis: according to Latham, the social palliative argument is not wrong, but it overlooks the fact that some consumption practices actually work against state legitimacy. He finds that in post-socialist China, the rhetoric of transition—rather than the increased consumption which sometimes accompanies it—is most responsible for the continued legitimacy of the state. The ideologies of transition enable the party to project the utopia, yet again, into the future. This is also a slight shift from Verdery's position: in China at least, it is not that consumption through second economic activity quiets the masses, thus preventing a revolution, for the state in China is not entirely illegitimate in the eyes of the people. Verdery sees only completely delegitimized political ideologies, paying little attention to the continued viability of some eastern Europe socialist and communist parties. I will have much recourse to the China examples in Chapter Nine.

dialectical relationship with the subterranean economic activities that were operating *before* central planning was instituted" (1990:109, italics theirs).

In fact, one interpretation might claim that it has been the *success* of the first economy during the Revolution—rather than its failure—that has given rise to the second. Pérez-López was a pioneer in drawing scholarly attention to the excessive monetary liquidity. Michalowski and Zatz add the insight that excessive liquidity in fact resulted from the *success* of revolutionary redistributive efforts. In the early years of the revolution the income share of the poorest forty percent of the population doubled, accomplished by both a leveling of incomes and by the Revolution's commitment to full employment. The free or low-cost provision of housing and nutrition, free health care, and price controls on food staples meant that citizens now had to spend a far smaller portion of their incomes on basic subsistence. This in turn produced a greater demand for non-food consumer goods. But since internal investment has been focused on what we might call social reproduction (i.e., health, education, and food), and external investment is concentrated on export-oriented development (i.e., tourism), little investment funds have been available for increases in consumer-goods production capacity. Thus, the population has had cash to purchase consumer goods, but this ability has far outpaced supply:

> The effects of these policies was that Cubans could obtain basic or improved levels of subsistence while spending smaller proportions of their rising incomes. This growth in discretionary income quickly pushed demands for food and other commodities beyond available supplies….Expanding non-monetary, non-competitive rights to a share of the social product increases the availability of money for discretionary consumer purchases. This, however, rapidly pushes demand beyond supply, resulting in a decline of the purchasing power of money. (Michalowski and Zatz 1990:117-118)

This is one more way in which Michalowski and Zatz argue that the second economy is not an external supplement to the first, but that it emerges as part of the logic of redistributive and centrally-planned economies. “In part, Cuba’s black and grey markets thus result, in a fundamentally dialectical sense, from the success of the revolution in achieving many of its goals of social justice through redistribution” (1990:118). Thus is seems clear that the second economy cannot be understood *merely* as a result in failures of the first, nor as a precipitator of the collapse of the first, though both are surely true in part. Rather, second economic activity contributes to the sum of economic activity on the island, and is in constant (and even mutually constitutive) interaction with the formal state economy.

The basic debate here is the role of markets in socialist economies. Verdery—based on the work of Kornai—sees failure in the market-socialism experiments in Eastern Europe in the period preceding the “transition”, with considerable justification, and antagonism between different forms of production and redistribution.[13] But the data the Cuban situation suggests a slightly different situation in which informal and even second-economic activity was not so antagonistic. The Cuban state itself, in fact, long before the collapse of COMECON, had established supplemental markets for consumer goods; here, goods would be sold at prices much higher than the regulated prices through the libreta system; these markets were intended to absorb excess liquidity and to distribute more goods than the central plan could provide. In the Havana of the Special Period,

[13]It may be that Verdery’s views are perfectly appropriate to the Hungarian context, but that Hungary is an extreme case. In Bulgaria, a state that had more legitimacy, Gerald Creed sees more interaction between the first and second economies (1998).

entrepreneurs, as well as jineteros, jineteras, pingueros, and all manner of quasi-legal *cuentapropistas* find ways that market activities are perfectly compatible with state-sector economic activity—and in some cases such activity is even encouraged by the state.

Informality

Recall that Taylor documented the diminishing usefulness of the CDRs as instruments of state control; one reason for this was that so many other people in a neighborhood benefit from some extra-legal economic activity. Thus, to force an end to the activity might disrupt the economic balance of the entire neighborhood. This may be why second economic activity—such as pinguerismo and jineterismo—is socially sanctioned, even when it is illegal or contrary to prescribed Revolutionary morality.

In fact, the survival exigencies of the Special Period have rendered illegal activity quite normative. Damián Fernández identifies a Cuban cultural trait which he calls "lo informal", Cuban informalism (2000a:96): "Informality depends on the possibility—and necessity—of bending the rules and bypassing legal norms…It has a seemingly infinite capacity to excuse and rationalize any and all actions on the basis that what is most important is to satisfy the needs oneself and one's loved ones [sic]." This cultural trait, says Fernández, predates the Special Period; even more now, when survival depends upon finding new and creative ways to generate dollar income, "bending the rules and bypassing legal norms" is not socially censured.

It is in this context that the turn to sex work does not carry with it as much social censure as it once may have—particularly by those who directly benefit from it; we will see below, for instance, that girlfriends sometimes participate in the marketing of their men since both partners will benefit from an infusion of cash into the relationship. This consideration of "lo informal" might also help to explain the state's ambivalent and shifting posture vis-à-vis the pingueros, a matter taken up in Chapter Eight.): "[I]nformal practices are functional for those who engage in them (they provide satisfaction of needs, material and otherwise) as well as for the government (reduction of bottlenecks, less overt opposition or demand on the state)…" (Fernández (2000a:97). With Dominguez (1993), Fernández believes that this informalism supports the state by minimizing dissent (see also 2000b), but he also believes that its "noxious effect" is that it forever prevents Cubans from reaching their collective aspirations (2000a:97). "Informality" prevents full citizenship, he believes, causing people to disengage from formal process. This image does not contain the nuance of Michalowski and Zatz (1990); for the oppositional relationship described by Dominguez, Fernández, and Pérez-López suggests closed economic and social systems, obscuring the dialectical interactions that Michalowski and Zatz stress.[14]

Thus, I propose that pinguerismo is but one manifestation of the new survival mechanisms in the Special Period, which draw upon a long-standing public ethic which enables some flexibility in bending rules and law in favor of neighborhood economic health. And as a second economy activity, it is intimately related to the

[14]L.A. Rebhun (1999:86) also found that in the changing economy of Brazil, "legal and illegal are not distinct…A disorganized economy leads to moral murk and conflicting emotional pressures."

first economy in the many ways outlines by post-socialist scholars. But pinguerismo is far more than just one more second economic activity, and more than an instance of the "informality" that (Fernández 2000:93) believes is socially dysfunctional. Ideologically, pinguerismo both draws upon the phallocentric tradition of Latin American nationalism, and looks forward to the cultural triumph of consumerism. And this is where the ideological-economic-behavioral cycle comes full circle. We turn now to the ethnography of Part II, in which street youth of Havana describe their lives and relationships.

Part II
Soy Pinguero

Chapter Five
Identity

"The pinguero killed the bugarrón"
--Interview with Cuban historican, November 1999

We have seen that sex work was an integral part of the character of pre-Revolutionary Havana, a vacation fantasy land for businessmen and elites in search of pleasures unavailable or illegal in the United States. Havana's atmosphere of excitement, danger, forbidden pleasures—and its international reputation as a den of iniquity—increased enormously during the batistiano [the rule of Batista, roughly, 1934-1959], but it did not begin with it; we saw in Chapter Two that as early as 1762, "uncontrolled gambling had been allowed, brothels sprang up, the rate of crime rose. The city [was] filled with riff-raff, deserters, escaped slaves, gamblers, escaping crooks, sailors looking for ships, prostitutes for sailors, and 'friars without fixed destinations'…[Havana] had that unique, easy-going, brilliant but semi-criminal, maritime and cosmopolitan character that has marked it ever since" (Thomas 1998 [1971]:12). The Revolution set about to change all that, to cleanse Havana of the stain which foreign colonialism and capitalism had brought; the hyper-masculine

revolutionary state set about the rescue of the dishonored feminine nation. Sex work in Havana today cannot be understood apart from this highly gendered nationalist struggle against colonialism.

But crime and danger were not the only by-products of Batista's tourism strategy; a city of unhindered sexuality also allowed considerable space for erotic experimentation. Pleasure made itself known in ways unheard of in the eastern Santiago or Bayamo. Havana's cosmopolitanism had introduced it to new ideas of sex and gender and pleasure. Still, more traditional ideas of appropriate comportment must be the starting point for deviant experimentation. The present chapter reviews the pre-revolutionary categories of (male) sexuality, followed by post-revolutionary but pre-Special Period ideas, and finally the new category *pinguero*.

I. Tradition

Hombre

Cuban males strive through their behavior to convince their peers that they are "hombre hombres", or manly-men, who reproduce stereotypical macho comportment and macho desires. When asked to describe a masculine man, one 24-year-old white pinguero from the eastern countryside responded that "Real masculine guys like sports a lot. He has an aggressive personality. Almost all guys like doing a lot of exercise. Regular stuff. He likes to be with one girl now, and with another girl later, with different girls like that, even if he is married or something" (03.11). Far more significant is that an hombre hombre not allow anyone to touch his butt (03.12);

protection of the butt, itself a first defense against invasion of the anal orifice, is what in fact defines a man. The characteristics of representation and performance are only indicators which announce that the body has been successfully defended. I will examine masculine performance more in due course. For now suffice it to note that these characteristics are matters of *behavior* and not of what we might call *ontology*, or being. This is perfectly consistent with sex-gender identities in Cuba and throughout Latin America, which define males not by what they *are*, but rather by what they *do*.

Thus, again in keeping with other Latin American contexts, an hombre hombre is one who never allows himself to be penetrated; his desire is to penetrate any female, as often as possible. And this female does not even have to be human: one pinguero from the far western province of Oriente told me that country boys in early adolescence sometimes have sex with female farm animals, a normal practice he said, though sex with other boys is out of the question and merits social censure (03.12). That female animals are less proscribed sexual partners than are male human beings suggests that Cuban masculinity is a *relational* construct, requiring femininity to define it. But though masculinity is relational, it is not an entirely *negative* identity; it requires positive content: an hombre hombre must use his penis as often as possible, continually reaffirming his manhood. An hombre who allows himself to be penetrated [singar] *even once* is no longer an *hombre hombre*. But even if he is the active partner with another man, he is highly suspect: “To be a real man, he has to be with a woman, not another man like him. Otherwise, he is already not a man” (03.07). Importantly, this latter comment was made by a younger

pinguero, whose ideas have been heavily influenced by the introduction of a northern sex-gender system through sex tourism. Tradition is under extreme pressure to cede ground to economic exigency.

Even masculine presentation, while perhaps a *marker*, is not an adequate *determinant* of masculinity, if that presentation is not accompanied by the proper sexual behavior. That is, sexual behavior does not primarily *indicate* masculinity; *it creates it*. Consider this conversation (03.08):

> *Is it possible that a guy be muscular, really macho, with a big dick, a boxer or something, but he likes to get fucked [le gusta que le singue]?*
> He's a fag [maricón], even though he's big and strong.
> *Even though he has a real macho appearance and behavior?*
> That doesn't have anything to do with it. He's a fag because he likes to get fucked [le gusta que le singuen].
> *So the only important thing is what he does in bed?*
> Of course.
> *His manner of presentation doesn't matter.*
> Of course not, it doesn't matter.

Behavior as a determinant is thus more significant than representation as a marker in the social attribution of masculinity. Neither are physical attributes, like muscularity or large penis size, as important as sexual role. Considering the history traced in Part I in which the hypermasculine, phallicized state represented an idealized masculinity which was to be unleashed on the foreign invaders, I wondered if the size of a penis had social import. I asked another pinguero about this matter specifically (03.05):

> *And what happens if someone [a pinguero] has a small dick?*
> Nothing. There are tourists that like small ones. Nothing. And if the tourist likes big dicks, why didn't he ask [before getting to bed]? If the tourist doesn't ask beforehand if it's small, well, he would have to pay anyway.
> *So if a man has a big dick, is he treated like more of a man?*
> No, no, no, no. What happens. It's that he who has a very small one has to give his ass, has to be passive, since he couldn't satisfy anyone [with his

> dick], he has to satisfy with his ass. For that reason, most of them [with small dicks] are passive.

In this dialogue we can discern a tension; I was asking about discourse, representation, and cognitive categories, but the pinguero was focused on the very practical matter of how to satisfy tourists so as to earn money. Despite this dissonance some translation is possible. I wanted to know if the physical attributes of muscularity or genital size functioned as either a marker or a determinant of masculinity. In his own way, he answered: representationally, sexual role is all that matters. But practically, according to this pinguero, a man with a small dick has to be passive—which would render him a *maricón* [faggot], and therefore not really a man, in a roundabout way. Thus, it would seem that according to this understanding, dick size *does* make one more or less of a man. But what if the passive sexual behavior was not chosen but engaged merely in order to make money? The significance in terms of gender attribution of the difference between sex for pleasure and sex for money is addressed later in this chapter.

Bugarrón

There is some disagreement as to whether a *bugarrón* is or is not an hombre hombre, but the consensus seems to be that he is, or rather that he was. The bugarrón is a not-uncommon figure in the Hispanic Caribbean, though it is unclear as to why that term and the associated category took root in Santo Domingo and Havana but not in other parts of Latin America. The word probably emerges from the British “buggery”, which of course refers to sodomy. Thus is the bugarrón the

sodomizer, that is, the penetrative partner in anal intercourse with another man. He is, then, the traditional partner of a maricón, who is exclusively receptive. Traditionally throughout Latin America, these two roles are assumed to be complementary and mutually exclusive; the North American notion that a man could be versatile, or that both partners are equally 'queer', makes no sense in the Cuban sex-gender imagination.

The bugarrón, for at least a hundred years, was a manner of sex worker whose clients were maricones. Consistent with male-male sex both in Latin America and in the United States, a penetrative partner is rare and prized, making his body profitable. We might conclude, then, that "bugarrón" was an *economic* category, as opposed to a *behavioral* one like "maricón". But did all bugarrones charge for their services, and were there none who penetrated other men for pleasure? Apparently not, at least in the Cuban imagination. I have no evidence that there were never men who penetrated for pleasure, but such men have been mentioned in neither conversations nor interviews. Here we need introduce a distinction which will recur throughout, that between the realm of representation and that of practice. What happened in practice we cannot know, but we can access memories of the ways that Cuban imagined and represented that practice. It seems then, though it is not certain, that *the social and cognitive category of bugarrón did not exist outside material relations*. This fact will become increasingly important as we continue, since the bugarrón is the pre-revolutionary category which most closely resembles the contemporary pinguero.

Our Cuban professor seems to confirm this conclusion, while himself reproducing the sex-gender stereotype regarding the connection between sexuality and material comfort: [1]

> The bugarrón was a person who lived in a neighborhood, or someplace, and was married. Well, the bugarrón was really the active man of the relationship, the one who fucked. Bugarrón signifies a man who did nothing more but use his dick, to fuck an ass or to get sucked. And yes, the bugarrón did charge for that. Well, before the Revolution. But after the Revolution the bugarrón was a person who for example went to the house of a gay—a lot of times he was a person maybe a little more marginalized economically, and gay people all over the world always are more likely to be in better shape economically, for not having a family and for having a better life. (interview November 1999)

Note that the professor makes distinction between pre- and post-revolutionary time, and it could not be otherwise. For it seems that Marx was correct yet again in his base-superstructure model: dramatic changes in economic base cannot but transform cultural structure and ideological superstructure, certainly including sex and gender. On the more pragmatic level the Revolution did indeed transform the bugarrón, since he could not be paid in cash; Cuban citizenship became the asset that accessed resources, and most economic activity did not involve a cash exchange transaction. When the professor said that "the pinguero killed the bugarrón," he meant that the emergence of pinguerismo in the new cash economy had rendered obsolete the older category and its mode of operation.

There are still a few bugarrones, who continue to operate out of Habana Vieja and service Cuban clients as they always have. But the pingueros—who tend to be younger and/or more attractive—can command far more money from a tourist than can a bugarrón from a Cuban client. A bugarrón might earn $5 from a Cuban client,

[1]Although there is considerable scholarly freedom in Cuba, speaking to a United States scholar about prostitution in the Special Period would be at least embarrassing, if not detrimental to the professor's career. For that reason, he will remain anonymous.

compared to $25-50 that a sexier pinguero might earn from a tourist. I met a bugarrón in 2002, and wrote about him in my field book:

> Last night Roberto took me to the Paire, after having walked about Habana Vieja and bought cigars. The Paire is much smaller that the Yara; it is more like a typical cinema with a small hooded porch, box office on the left, and only about 15 feet from the curb. This is quite unlike Yara, which has a large cinema archive to the left of the box office, a very large porch perhaps 50 feet from the curb, and a pizzeria on the right. The inside of Yara is also very large, consisting of several tiers. The crowd in front of Paire was also different. While at Yara, too, there are non-gay and non-pingueros, plenty of women and couples and children, the percentage of them at Paire at this hour was even greater (at about 7 on a Saturday night). There were plenty of fags about, but not so many tourists. And the Cuban sex workers were not as pretty as the boys at Yara. This is consistent with what I had been told, that the Paire was peopled by bugarrones, not as young or good-looking as the Yara pingueros, and more frequented by a Cuban clientele. This, Roberto tells me, is not exclusively the case, but there are more tourists in Vedado than in Habana Vieja.
>
> At Paire, Roberto found the friend of his whom he had anticipated meeting. This was a white, 27ish, hairy man, friendly but without a spark in his eye to save his life. He has experience at both Yara and Paire, he told me, so I asked him if I could speak to him more. He agreed readily, and will be here shortly, tomorrow afternoon to have lunch and to be interviewed. On the walk back home, after taking the cab from Habana Vieja, Roberto told me that he has AIDS. The reason for this, Roberto proffered, was that he had been with a hell of a lot of transvestites, both for pleasure and for work. Why would travestis have a greater concentration of AIDS than anyone else, I wondered, though I did not ask. Upon reflection I suspect that it is because the travestis, unlike the pingueros, are anal receptive, thus being at far greater risk even then jineteras, since vaginal insertion is not nearly as traumatic and less likely to lead to infection. (Field Book 19 January 2002)

The emergence of pinguerismo after the legalization of the dollar spelled the demise of bugarronismo as the dominant model of male sex work in Havana, as the amount of money that could be made by pingueros at Yara dwarfed that of bugarrones at Paire.

Maricón

The bugarrón's partner was the maricón, a "faggot", another category which is not specific to Cuba. Until recently, it seems that there has been a belief that most maricones are also pajaritas ("fairies"), that their manner of presentation was extreme effeminacy. Traditionally the maricón was therefore anti-nationalist, in the sense that his manner of presentation did not reproduce the prescription of strong manhood. Nonetheless, as we saw in the documentary *Gay Cuba*, Revolutionary attitudes about maricones are generally progressive, and in all my visits to the island I never heard a single instance of "faggot" used as an insult, as it is in the United States.

Not only are attitudes changing, but so are sex-gender categories. The Special Period has sped the rearrangement which began with the Revolution. Like hombre hombre and bugarrón, maricón has been a category of behavior, not of ontology or identity. But under the influence of tourism, new ideas have been imported and are taking hold. Sexuality is increasingly not what people do but what they are. We will see in the next section that the behavioral maricón is transformed when he becomes the identity "gay". Even ideas about desire are changing: before, at least in the realm of representation, the categories were clear and unambiguous. But now there is uncertainty and slippage, and sexual behavior is not imagined to be as rigid. Consider critically the words of the professor as he described the bugarrón/maricón relationship:

> For me, all this nomenclature is what justifies attitudes—anyway, homophobic attitudes within homosexuality itself. For me they're just attitudes because really they're all subdivisions that people establish so they don't have to feel

> so bad or guilty. 'I'm a bugarrón, not a fag! I'll fuck you, but I won't give you a kiss—we are not going to kiss'. But when you're all heated up, when you are hot and fucking somebody, you'd have to be a robot to say that you won't touch—it's a lie. Usually all relationships, even though I say when we are fucking that I won't kiss you, when I'm hot to say so is absurd! [Sexual] relations can't be so rigid. (November 1999)

The professor doubts that in the realm of behavior the bugarrón was as much hombre as he was represented to be. But I suggest that the import of this quotation is less what it tells us about the bugarrón and more what it tells us about the speaker. In his recounting of the traditional bugarrón's sexual relationship with the maricón, the professor used images and ideas which I believe are more appropriate to post-Special Period. That he grouped both parties together in the category "homosexuality" reflect *his* understanding of the new category "gay" and all that it represents. Perhaps he now views sex-gender identity through the lens of contemporary sexual politics in the west, to which he has been thoroughly exposed, with the associated categories of "gay" and "straight". This would explain his apparent desire to claim the bugarrón as a part of the new category "gay" by suggesting that he would kiss once he got "hot".

My suspicion in this regard stems from the professor's use of the kiss as a marker of sex-gender identity. He states that the bugarrón would claim to have no interest in kissing, since to do so would make him a maricón. This is an understanding which is prevalent, and to some degree correct, in the understandings of "gay" and "straight" in the United States and in those cultures in Latin America which have been heavily influenced by it. Thus, a "straight" hustler in the United States is loath to kiss a client, since to do so would represent intimacy and would therefore interrupt the distinction which the hustler is keen to maintain. But it is not at

all clear in that this logic pertains in Cuba. One of my more surprising findings is that *nearly all pingueros kiss,* making them different from other anthropologically studied male sex workers. And they do not imagine that this in any way calls into question the clarity of their claim to manhood. So when the professor suggested that a bugarrón might actually kiss his maricón in the heat of passion, and that this kiss indicates that the categories are not as rigid as represented, he was drawing upon more contemporary ideas of gayness rather than an accurate understanding of Cuban sex work before or after the Special Period. The pingueros would likely be surprised that the professor believes that their kissing of their clients represents passion; for them, kissing is a service provided for a fee, a part of the normal transaction, and often a part of the pragmatic and profitable construction of the relationship as romance. In other words, *kissing does not occur outside the phenomenon of pinguerismo, and thus does not call into question the boundaries of that category*. Like pinguerismo, kissing is a behavior based on economy and not on desire or ontological identity. There surely is quite a bit of ambiguity and slippage in pinguerismo, as we shall see; the professor was not wrong to differentiate between representation and practice. But his use of kissing as a marker of ambiguity suggests that he views male sex work through the lens of a *new* sex-gender system which he himself has embraced. We turn now to an examination of those changes and of the new social persons they have produced.

II. Change

Jinetero

Unlike the hombre hombre, bugarrón, and maricón, the jinetero is not a part of the traditional sex-gender system; he is non-sexual, and he emerged only with the Special Period and its turn to the tourism fix. As an informal sector worker with tourists, his identity is bound up with tourism, and he does not exist outside of it. He searches for and approaches unaccompanied tourists in Vedado, making an overture of friendship. He may begin by asking the origin of the tourist and expressing an interest in his or her culture. He offers his friendship, an element of which is his services as a tour guide, most likely of Habana Vieja (the old city) which is near the tourist neighborhood of Vedado and which can be seen entirely in one afternoon of walking. The jinetero assumes that along the way the tourist will buy him lunch, and also perhaps the gift that he desperately needs for some family member's birthday, a fact which emerges when the jinetero happens to spot exactly what he needs in a store window.

If the tourist is not in need of a guide, the jinetero will offer to sell him or her cigars. Most tourists, they know, want at least a souvenir of the famous Habaneros, and the jinetero acts as a broker. He is able to do this because there is an enormous black market in stolen cigars. To supplement their very low income, workers smuggle cigars out of the factory and hide them at home. They have relationships with jineteros who will bring tourists to them and then conduct the transaction. For this the jinetero will earn a commission of as much as 30 percent of the purchase price, which is about 10 percent of the price of the cigars in a state store. An excerpt

from my field book describes a trip to the black market in Habana Vieja with a key informant jinetero on 19 January 2003:

> In search of tobacco, before we went to the Paire, we had occasion to walk into several apartment complexes. In each a small entryway opened onto a courtyard or twisting hallway containing within it many apartments. The one into which we went, and the several into which I peered, were humble at best, though most contained stereos and televisions—perhaps wealth earned from the underground cigar trade, enabled by the systematic stealing of cigars from the factories. While I waited in the hallway, Roberto went in search of the seller, finding him after about ten minutes. Roberto had instructed me to remain silent, so he did all the negotiation. I requested (through Roberto) a box of Cohiba Esplendidos, the very finest Cuban cigars that cost over five hundred dollars a box in a state store. The seller quoted a price of $30, but that was more than I had. I offered $20, prompting the seller to offer a box of Monte Cristos for $25. The slick talk of Roberto managed to procure the box for only $20, and for him a commission of $6, which he promptly returned to me. It is possible, of course, that the seller and Roberto has planned a strategy to make me think I was getting a good deal; they did whisper to each other for a few moments before the negotiation began. The return of the commission to me is in keeping with the general strategy of cementing a friendship, assuming that the $6 would be returned several fold when I leave, in the form of clothing.

As common as selling tobacco is procuring customers for paladares and habitaciones autorizadas. These are private businesses which the liberalization of the Special Period has allowed. They naturally thrive in Vedado, since their target market is tourists. A paladar is a restaurant, often quite good, which has been created out of a part of a Cuban family's apartment. They accept only dollars, and charge as much as $10 for a full meal, quite a premium since a meal in a state restaurant is only 60-100 pesos ($3-5). Jineteros will roam about the streets of Vedado asking passer-by tourists if they need a paladar. The jinetero will then accompany the tourists to the restaurant (which is seldom marked, though it is not secret and is fully legal), a service for which he is paid a commission of a few dollars.

The other service for which jineteros act as brokers are private apartments, called *habitaciones privadas* or *casas particulares*. These are parts of an apartment which have been converted into tourist rooms, many with a kitchenette and (importantly) a private entrance. These are mighty useful for sex tourists, since Cubans are not allowed into hotel rooms. There are also rooms within an apartment, but these are not as useful since the owner closely watches anyone entering, and often will not allow Cubans to spend the night. A jinetero will form a relationship with an owner by which the latter agrees to provide a commission for each tourist steered in his or her direction. If a tourist arrives alone, the price might be quoted as $25 for a fully independent apartment or $20 for a room inside another apartment. But if the tourist arrives with a jinetero, the price will be five dollars more, the jinetero's commission. So if a tourist stays in an apartment for a week, the jinetero will earn $35.

As we have seen, 'Jinetero' is specifically a non-sexual category, though most pingueros will also jinetear if the opportunity for income arises. It is quite clear through interviews not only with the pingueros but also with our professor that jineteros are, at least in the realm of representation, non-sexual. In practice, of course, there is a possibility of slippage between and even within categories, so that a jinetero might engage in sex if dollars can be had. During my first visit to Havana I was approached by a jinetero who offered to be my guide. When I refused, he offered cigars. When I refused that, he hinted that his body might also be for sale; sex was his last resort after his offers of the traditional jinetero services were not fruitful. And some pingueros, when asked to categorize their behavior, say that

pinguerismo is a form of jineterismo or a variant of it. One even claimed that they are the same, not that jineteros also have sex, but in the sense that "they dedicate themselves to the same thing: looking for foreigners to live, to get money". (03.07.01) Nonetheless, *jinetero* and *pinguero* are clearly distinct categories; mild uncertainty about the boundaries of the categories is hardly sufficient to call their analytical validity into question.

Upon arrival in Havana in 1999, I immediately perceived that there was something new afoot in Vedado; it was clear to me that the older category bugarrón was no longer prevalent, and that the jineteros I met were not sex workers. The professor confirmed these initial findings.

> The first to start [after the Special Period] was prostitution of women, and so these were jineteras. Later, boys who started to hang out at tourism places were called jineteros, but this implied that the jinetero was a man who…sold tobacco. When the jinetero began he was not a prostitute, he wasn't sexual, the masculine jinetero. But at the beginning it was obvious that there was also male prostitution; it was necessary, because of the power of andocentric culture, of patriarchal culture, to differentiate the male prostitute from the female.

One of the original pingueros, a 21-year old Afrocuban whom another worker called "the father of the pingueros," agrees entirely:

> Before there was talk about the pinguero, there was the jinetero. With the new wave of young guys making love to, having sex with tourists, they started to call themselves 'pingueros'. Because jineteros are actually guys who sell cigars to tourists, drugs, cocaine, those who look for paladares, those that find you a room so the owner will pay him his commission. At times they also have sex with men, but nobody knows it. The pinguero does it publicly, openly… (00.20)

I have used so much space demonstrating that the jinetero is not necessarily a sex worker because it is precisely this that is such a point of confusion even among scholars of Cuba, and a point of equal import to the pingueros themselves. Sex

tourist workers strive to discursively separate themselves from both jineteros and jineteras.

Pinguero

The new category 'pinguero' was created by the sex workers to differentiate themselves from the non-sexual jineteros and from the female jineteras. This was no minor agenda: jineteras are invaded, conquered, the objects of male dominance. If the male sex workers were to call themselves by the masculine form of the term for female workers, they might be imagined to also be penetrated by tourists. They could not permit such a representational loss of masculine integrity—literally, integrity of the body for not being penetrated, and integrity of masculine reputation. And anyway it needed to be clear that they were not (primarily) sellers of tobacco or tour guides. The word 'pinguero'—based on the Spanish slang for the male genital—solved these problems. It not only gave them an identity which could salvage their masculinity within Cuba by declaring to all that they worked with their dicks, as real men are supposed to do. But more, as I will argue in detail in Part III, the title gave them a marketable identity, a product label, as it were. I have written elsewhere that "For sex workers, identity functions like a packaging label on a product: it informs potential consumers of what they can expect if they purchase that product" (2001:26). The label 'pinguero' attracts clients by playing upon Cuban men's reputation for having larges penises.

Pinguerismo only emerged after the legalization of the dollar for internal exchange in 1994. This makes sense, since possession of dollars was formerly

illegal, and thus a sex worker could only benefit by payments in-kind, that is, he could only be paid with clothing and meals. The “father of the pingueros,” a man who began working before pinguerismo and continues today, agrees that 1994 was a watershed year precisely because of the legalization made it far easier to pinguiar (00.20): “When the dollar was legalized, it was a lot easier for everyone that gets easy money, that is, who sell their bodies. Before, Cubans couldn’t have dollars.” And when the dollar was legalized, the state naturally opened retail stores which sold in dollars, so Cubans who had managed to acquire them could now spend them. It was the dollar as a new technology of exchange, and the enormous increase in tourists who brought them, that made pinguerismo possible.

Since pinguerismo is a new phenomenon, it is still in rapid flux. Thus there are various opinions about just who is a pinguero and who is not, what a pinguero is and what he does, and how to evaluate a claim to the identity. There are, however, six characteristics which seem to be universally agreed upon. First, pingueros operate from the neighborhood of Vedado around the tourist hotels, far from the working space of the old bugarrón around the cinema Paire in Habana Vieja. This is the subject of the next chapter and will be treated in detail there and again in Chapter Thirteen. Second, pingueros work with tourists and not with Cubans. This is not only a pragmatic difference or a result of the different geography; it has ideological import as well, as will become increasingly clear throughout. Third, pingueros are able to attract tourists because they are younger and better-looking

than are bugarrones, who work for less money for Cubans: recall my description of the slightly older, hairy bugarrón with AIDS whom I met at Paire. [2]

Fourth, "real" pingueros, at least in the realm of representation, only engage in three activities: getting sucked, penetrating, and kissing. Many of the men declare that others would do just about anything for the right amount of money, but they also insist universally that they themselves would not. Consider this dialogue with an 18-year old pinguero from Habana province (questions are in italics):

> A pinguero never allows himself to get fucked, but a gay does.
> *Never, a pinguero never?*
> No, at least not me.
> *If a tourist says, 'I'll give you a hundred dollars'…*
> No. I'm a pinguero, not a gay. Gay [gets it from] behind. But not me.
> *But tell me if there are some pingueros who would do anything for money, for having so much need that they do anything with a tourist.*
> Oh yeah, that's true. For money he would do anything.
> *Would he still be a pinguero? If a tourist fucks him, is he still a pinguero, or is he gay?*
> If a tourist fucks him, he's gay. Pingueros fuck tourists, not the other way around.
> *Explain more to me about men and fags.*
> They don't have women. They only have a man by their side. Understand? He is his lover. A fag, in place of a women.
> *Is he [the maricón] still a man?*
> No, fag. He is a man because he has a dick, but he doesn't use it.

Here we encounter three themes which will recur throughout. First, a pinguero only penetrates, he never gets penetrated. Second, in order to be a real man, as we saw in the previous section, a man has not only to have a dick but to use it, and as often as possible. Third, the categories 'pinguero' and 'gay' are constructed as mutually exclusive, but the meaning of 'gay' here is different than it is in other interviews;

[2]Sex tourists bring with them the aesthetic from their place of origin. In much of the gay world of the north, 'smooth' (hairless) men are preferred, whether as tops or bottoms. Thus would hairiness make a Cuban slightly less attractive to sex tourists.

here, it is an activity that makes one gay, not a desire. We will shortly see that this is not universally accepted.

Another pinguero service is kissing. This may seem odd from a North American perspective, since kissing here is a symbol of intimacy, and thus "straight" sex workers (though not gay "escorts") might use the avoidance of kissing during a working encounter to affirm their heterosexuality. But for the pingueros, kissing another man—even with tongue—does not seem to disturb their sense of masculine propriety any more than do the other pinguero activities. It might also be that kissing a (male) client is indeed unpleasant (one man called it "disgusting" (03.08)), but the Cubans recognize that clients want it, so it is offered anyway. In either case, kissing does not seem to carry the same ideological significance in the traditional Cuban sex-gender system as it does in the newly-introduced system, which includes the identity 'gay' and its ideas of intimacy between men. This is one reason why, as I discussed above, I disagree with the Cuban professor who used kissing as a symbol of the passion that he believes sex workers must feel, despite their protestations to the contrary. Perhaps the professor, gay himself, was seeking to attribute gay identity to more Cubans than those who claim it, to swell the ranks of gayness by claiming that sex work is a cover for real passion. This is surely true in part, though the extent of such motivation is not clear, and anyway kissing cannot be used as an indication of secret desire.

The fifth generally agreed-upon characteristic is that pingueros work regularly, not just on occasion, and they actively pursue tourist clients. An only-occasional worker is not a "true" pinguero, though he might adopt that title instrumentally when

he goes to Yara weekly or monthly to supplement his family's libreta allotment. A real pinguero is one who "dedicates himself to it" (03.03), that is, who regularly hangs-out at Yara and aggressively searches for clients. Pingueros say that are working at a job, and thus they must pursue their work actively rather than wait passively for clients. One worker claims that "I'm not a pinguero because I never crowd around tourists; tourists crowd around me. I never approach tourists or bother them…Gay tourists come up to me, call over to me, and ask me questions to get to know me" (03.05). This might act as a mechanism of misrecognition, allowing some men to misrepresent their work as chance encounters. But I think it more likely that the definitional wrangling, which attempts to separate "true" pingueros from occasional or casual workers, is an effort to define the boundaries of the phenomenon. We will see in the next two sections that pinguerismo is so ill-defined and all-encompassing that the "real" pingueros feel a great need to contain, define it, and defend it from it from the mass of newcomers whose sexual identity is uncertain even to themselves.

This leads to a sixth commonly agreed-upon characteristic, that pingueros only engage in sex with men "por la necesidad" or "por la economía," as opposed to those who do so, even in part, "por gusto". *This is why I claim that 'pinguero' is ultimately an economic category, and not a category of sexuality or certainly of desire.* This distinction is central to my analysis of pinguerismo. Studies of male sex work seem to be frequently treated along with homosexuality, as if one is a variant of the other. And, as we saw in Chapter Five, it is true that hustlers have historically been a part of the development of gay identity than female prostitutes have been a

part of straight feminist development. We must consider the economic function of pinguerismo more than the identity function, though of course those are co-determinate in part.

The pingueros themselves do make the distinction, again and again, and even attempt to make it a clear and unquestionable one when in fact it should be considered more malleable.

> Gay is he who likes men, not women. But the pinguero, he does like women. Pingueros only do it—it's a job, period…If you hang out with a tourist, you're not gay. Now. If a pinguero hooks up with a tourist, if he fucks a tourist, he is not considered gay. If he does it with another Cuban, he is considered gay, because supposedly the other Cubano doesn't pay him. If he has sex for money, he's a pinguero. If he doesn't [do it for money], he's gay. (03.05)

In practice, there are multiple motivations, as we will see in the next section, and many men have mixed motivations for engaging in the work or are not sure themselves. But representationally, it is clear that most pingueros do not enjoy the work. This distinction was extremely important to the men when I visited in 1999 and 2000. The phrases "por la necesidad" and "por gusto" were important instruments for the categorization and identification of the many men who might be hanging around Yara for various reasons. But in my later visits of 2003 and 2004, those phrases were heard far less often. Was this because the distinction was less important to the men? I don't think so. I suspect that it is because by then, just a few years later, making such distinctions with certainty became too unwieldy. The reasons for this shift will become apparent when we encounter the new category gay in a following subsection. First we need consider the men's linguistic production and how this might help us understand pinguerismo.

Register

Language tells us something about the workers' world view. I have mentioned the etymology and the ideological importance of the word 'pinguero' and its variants, which follow standard rules of Spanish word formation: pinguiar and pinguiando. We have also seen that 'Yara' is a code for sex work with tourists, as in "I go to Yara every weekend" or "Life at Yara is a little painful, real painful" (03.04). To any other Habanero, Yara is just the name of a cinema and of a town at the foot of the Sierra Maestra. But to a gay tourist, Yara means camaraderie, sex, and revelry; to a pinguero Yara means struggle but also earning potential.

As with many Cubans in the Special Period (see, for example, Berg 2004:48), pingueros use the word "struggle" or "fight" (luchar) to refer to what they do on the street to survive. Much of the "struggle"' consists of searching for work, that is, searching for tourists, trying to woo a potential boyfriend, negotiating a deal, catching the eye of passersby. When explaining his initiation into the work, "struggle" becomes a code for the entirety of the pingueros' difficulty: "I came with a buddy, with a friend of mine, to Havana. I went out with him to Yara, and that is when I started to *struggle*" (03.12). I asked the same pinguero about the effects of the Special Period, and he answered "What has it caused? It makes people go to the street to *struggle*" (03.12). Ultimately the struggle is a search for funds, as in "If the mother is unable to buy something, [the pingueros] will try to *fight* for it in their own way" (03.07).

The word "andar" is difficult to translate. It means literally to walk or go, but pingueros use it to describe what they do at Yara and what they do with tourists. If I

ask a pinguero what he is doing he might respond, "*cruising* around" (andando una vuelta). But andar also refers to 'hanging-out', as in "I've been issued a summons for a thousand pesos for *hanging-out* with tourists." When a pinguero meets and spends any time at all with a tourist he is called 'amigo'. This is incredibly common, not only in Havana but with male sex workers elsewhere in the Latin Caribbean (e.g. Padilla 2002). Use of the word 'amigo', I posit, is a way of constructing a relationship which would involve reciprocal obligation. If a tourist falls in love with a pinguero and sends monthly money wires, he is a boyfriend. But if he is a casual encounter, even if he returns to Havana regularly to see the same pinguero, he is a *friend*.

The goal of the *struggle* is to earn money first to survive and then to dress well. When a pinguero struggles to set up an encounter, he is "looking for his luck," and when has been successful, he has "found his luck" or "had his luck" (tener su suerte). For instance, "A lot of people *have the luck* of a person who falls in love with them, writes to them, sends them money, and even takes them out of the country" (03.07) Pingueros do not really mean luck, but rather success as a pinguero, as in "I *have the luck* that they pursue me…" (01.01), or "I *have luck* with Spanish men" (01.01). The word is used also to describe the success as a pinguero that comes with stunning good looks, as when a pinguero pointed to another and said that "He has more possibilities of *finding his luck*" than do others. Not finding a tourist is bad luck: "There are some months in which you *put on bad luck* and don't fuck anybody" (03.12). Again, the meaning here is not same as "luck"; it is used as a code for "success"; perhaps the choice of that work communicates the pingueros recognition of the precariousness of their well-being.

Other words that the pingueros use often are not specific to them, but are standard Cuban usages: to provide a Cuban with some material good is to “help” him, so the pingueros frequently say that “friends” “help” “friends”. And “civilizada” refers to a Cubana who is enlightened in that she does not object to homoerotic activity. We will hear more about these words in what follows. Finally, the slang word for United States American is *Yuma*; I never have heard a pinguero use the words *norteamericano*, *estadounidense*, or even *yanqui*. When I first heard *yuma* I assumed that it was a derogatory term, but this is really dependent upon the politics of the speaker: a counter revolutionary, who looks forward to the day that the United States invades and saves Cuba with its marvelous capitalism, would use the word derogatorily; a fidelista or party cadre would use the word with quite a bit more ambiguity. One informant told me that use of the word used to bring scolding from a school teacher, who would consider it dirty street slang with dangerous ideological implications. But now, he tells me, it is in common use and no one would have a problem with it. This change is surely a result of the rapprochement with capitalism and the presence in Havana of so many of the 1960-1962 emigrants now living in Miami, whose dollars are desperately needed. In short, though I have neither the space nor the expertise to explore this matter, the current ideological struggle between worn revolutionary ideas and the shiny new capitalist appearances is surely visible in pingueros’ linguistic patterns.

Gay

We have already encountered the category ‘gay’ several times, but the men disagree as to its meaning. For some pingueros the category labels those who enjoy sex with men (who do it ‘por gusto’), but for others it refers only to those who are penetrated; recall that we just heard from a pinguero who believes that any worker who is penetrated, whether or not he likes it, is ‘gay’. To these I add a third interpretation of the word: some pingueros say that they themselves are ‘gay’ simply because they have sex with men, regardless of whether they like it, and regardless of the role they play during intercourse. Thus in the pinguero sex-gender universe, ‘gay’ refers variously to desire, role, or object.

This does not meant that it is a flexible term that the men agree can be used for various purposes, but rather that there is disagreement from one pinguero to the next as to its meaning. This could be due to the length of time that a pinguero has been exposed to tourists at Yara, the region of the country from which he comes (rural versus urban, tourist area or not), and the age of the pinguero. In all cases, what is really at issue is the extent to which traditional sex-gender system has been influenced by external ideas. Pinguerismo is that it is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which has been occasioned by the newly-porous borders of the Special Period; it reflects a shifting of sex-gender ideology occasioned by the rapid influx of new ideas introduced by the hugely-increased numbers of tourists.

‘Gay’ is obviously not a category indigenous to the Latin Caribbean. This is not to say that there are not, and long have been, Cubans who do identity with the category and who express many of the characteristics which we in North America

have come to associate with gayness. Rather, to state that gay is not indigenous to Cuba is to confirm what D'Emilio (1982) and Weeks (1981) so convincingly argued a generation ago, that the identity 'gay' and its associations emerged out of one particular political-economic context of late-industrial capitalism. 'Gay' assumes a sex-gender system based on desire for object, and this does not obtain for a context in which behavior rather than desire and object determines sexual identity. 'Gay' also requires, as both D'Emilio and Weeks showed, a radical individualism which in no way reflects the social or moral reality of post-revolutionary Cuba. Only in the Batista era did anything resembling a gay identity begin to emerge in Havana, but even then it was inextricably intertwined with bohemian debauchery of Havana and the servicing of wealthy tourists; it was not and is not indigenous to Cuba.

(Re)introduced by tourists who seek to connect with 'gay' Cubans and experience tropical gayness, the category is new and in extreme flux. As I argued above and elsewhere (2001), 'gay' was, for the pingueros, less of an identity category and more of a pragmatically assumed marketing label. That is, pingueros call themselves 'gay' not because of any desire, or not even because they understand what tourists mean by the term, but rather because they have learned that tourists are more likely to become attached to attach to a 'gay' Cuban than to an hombre hombre. This is probably true, owing to a sense of solidarity, of brotherhood, that gay tourists from North America and Europe seek when they travel. A 'gay' pinguero is far more likely to be able to construct a fantasy of romance which will ultimately earn him more money than would a fee-for-service transaction. And pingueros' claim to gayness might be yet another explanation for why pingueros kiss

their clients; were they to refuse, the client tourist would have difficulty believing that the pinguero really is 'gay', since willingness to kiss is such a marker of desire where the gay identity does exist. One result of this pragmatic claim to a non-indigenous identity is that when the pinguero calls himself 'gay', he means something very different than does the tourist client. He might, for instance, call himself 'gay' because he has sex with other men, but in no way intend to claim that he desires that sex. The tourist, on the other hand, likely believes that the Cuban likes the sex, else whey would he call himself 'gay'? Such a fundamental misunderstanding allows the client to construct the relationship according to his imagination, a theme to which I return in Chapter Seven.

The survival need for former hombre hombres to engage in homosex, the introduction of the new category 'gay', and the presence of tourist maricones who do not present themselves effeminately—this produces great uncertainty not only for the researcher but also for the Cubans. Thus they have invented yet another distinguisher, the even newer term 'gay activo', entirely a Cuban creation. The older maricón-bugarrón or maricón-hombre dichotomy is giving way to a growing recognition that a man who has sex other men *por gusto* can no longer be considered *hombre hombre*. And if both partners are 'gay', there is a need to indicate which man is active and which is passive, hence 'gay activo'. The passive partner is not called 'gay pasivo', but merely 'gay', which is assumed to indicate passivity unless otherwise indicated.

Along with 'pinguero', the new category 'gay' is the site at which we can most clearly observe change. The incorporation of gay into the traditional Cuban sex-

gender universe indicates change in the other categories as well. This is not an orderly process: it is messy and confusing, resisting analysis. It is to the ambiguity of this change that I now turn.

III. Ambiguity

> [Scholars construct] a ghostly effigy of an important subject and then…wrestle their readers into believing that they have gotten to the heart of things.
>
> Arthur Danto in Rubhun (1999:91)

Thus far I have been discussing sex-gender categories as if they were *things* which exist independently of both the people who make use of them and of the epochal changes occurring in Cuba today. Unacknowledged, this of course would be both an analytical and methodological error. To be true to the dialectical methodology described in Chapter One, I conclude this chapter by calling into question any hint of certainty or stability so far suggested. I must, in fact, confess that it is not even clear that something called “pinguerismo” actually exists.

Motivation

There is great variety in the forms of pinguero-tourist relationships, from the hourly trick to the loving and long-lasting relationship; all of these will be addressed in Chapter Eight. The workers come from all the provinces and represent all ethnicities and ages ranging from 16-30. Equally diverse are their reasons for coming to Yara. Most pingueros will declare the money is the principal motivating factor, and this is

surely the case. But some of the workers have greater financial need than others. While some work to buy food for their families, others do so to buy the latest fashions, about which more in Chapter Nine. Some are homeless and need to earn the $1 per day that a room costs a Cuban, but those from Havana usually go home to their own beds. And many of the men who might be hanging about Yara or the Malecón do so for social reasons: the scene is lively and celebratory, and provides far more social interaction than other neighborhoods in the city; the search for friends and lovers is one motivation for entering into "life at Yara": "I haven't earned as much money as I would like, but I have had a lot of experiences, both good and bad…, [experiences] with friendships in the gay world" (99.30.01).

One complicating factor in discerning motivation is that the pingueros operate in the same two geographic spaces which are also gathering grounds for Cubans with homoerotic desire. We have seen that the pingueros use their name to differentiate themselves from female sex workers, and they use the phrase "por gusto" and "por la necesidad" to distinguish themselves from seekers of recreational homosex. But defining the boundaries of pinguerismo has become far more difficult in the last few years, as recreational men-who-have-sex-with-men (hereinafter "MSM") have learned that they too can earn the money they desperately need while they enjoy themselves. Thus, even if a sexual or romantic encounter is not a financial transaction, the Cuban assumes that his partner will 'help' with cash and/or clothing. If a Cuban and a tourist meet and spend a night or a week together "por gusto," how can the tourist depart without gifting at least some of his clothing, knowing how much the Cuban is in need? And of course the tourist will pay for

dinner and club entrance. The effect of this is that, when the financial differential between the two parties is as vast as it is between Cuban and tourist, there is no clear boundary between sex work and recreational sex. Since, as Cubans say, *all* men have need, wherever they fall on the spectrum of desire, and thus all men need to receive gifts or cash from tourists, which ones are pingueros? Only those who are not gay? If so, this would make pinguerismo a category of *negative desire*, that is, a pinguero is he who does not desire men. But I have argued throughout rather that it is an *economic* category with little to do with desire. This is by far not a settled or certain matter, and even my own data could be interpreted and analyzed differently.

A few 'true pingueros', those with hyper masculine presentation, who claim to be only active, and to only pinguiar 'por la necesidad', rue the arrival on the scene of so many who also claim to be pingueros but who seem to represent a different identity category:

> There are too many kids now. The true pingueros are those who started before me and those who are contemporaneous with me. There are too many boys now. And before, we were paid better. The tourists had more class. They were, how do you say, more refined, and they paid better, no? They also were more likely to take you out of Cuba to their own country…There are more fairies now, kids who are 13, 14, 15, 16 years old. The 16 year old kids now aren't as big and muscular as they used to be. The guys back then were bigger and stronger. They were more like little men, and more serious [as opposed to giggly and effeminate]. (00.20)

This 'father of the pingueros' reflects the older belief that presentation and muscularity indicated manliness and heterosexuality. He rues the changes in the phenomenon he helped create which have blurred the boundaries between hombre hombre and maricón. Another older (27 years) pinguero has a similar complaint (03.05):

So, what is the difference between gays and pingueros?
The difference is that gays like it, men and pingueros don't. But there's another thing. There is gay and pinguero, but there's another group that call themselves 'pinguero', but they aren't pingueros. A Pinguero never gives his ass, they like women, and they won't suck you or give their ass—that's a real pinguero, men who don't give their ass or suck, you understand? They only kiss and fuck another person. That's a real pinguero. But that's only ten percent, understand? There is only ten percent really. That kind of person, ten percent no more. The other ninety percent that call themselves pingueros in reality are not pingueros.
What are they?
They are a new species.

The presence at Yara of an enormously wide range of sexual subjectivity makes it difficult if not fruitless to attempt to catalogue them. The Cuban youth at Yara, as much as this social scientist, find it confusing. These pingueros' annoyance reflects their frustration with the emergence of new subjectivities that do not fit into the traditional Cuban sex-gender universe, and whose very ambiguity calls into question the claims to unambiguous masculinity.

Thus, all Cuban men who have sex with tourists potentially do so 'por la necesidad', even if they also do it 'por gusto'. Since that distinction no longer holds, it becomes difficult for 'true' pingueros to differentiate themselves from the maricones, which they are keen to do. It becomes difficult, in fact, to even talk about a thing called pinguerismo when its boundaries are so ill-defined and so constantly in danger of rupture.

Ontology

When I first encountered pinguerismo in 1999, the term 'gay' was beginning to be used, but its meaning was wildly variant; there was even more disagreement then

than I have reported here.[3] But the various understandings of the concept all followed the same pattern as did other concepts in the traditional sex-gender system of Cuba: location in the spectrum was based on *behavior*, not on *identity* in the ontological sense. Thus, an *hombre hombre* is such because of his sexual behavior; he has to perform (with a woman) in order to be a real man. Rather than his presentation or physical attributes, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, an hombre hombre was defined by his ability to protect his body from invasion, and by an active use of his penis. Similarly, a maricón was one not because he was born that way, as we tend to imagine in North America, nor because of any innate desire, but rather because he allowed himself to be penetrated.

I noted above that I have discerned three ways to understand the category 'gay' as interpreted by the pingueros: according either to role, object, or desire. That is, a man is hombre or gay because of either what he does (penetrate or be penetrated), who he does (woman or man), or why he does it (gusto or necesidad). To understand how the categories are changing, these differences must now be *temporalized*. Traditionally, an hombre hombre was one who only penetrated, regardless of the object. Thus, sexual activity with other men, particularly in youth, was acceptable as long as the active role was assumed. But the introduction through tourism of the new category 'gay' introduced the idea that both the active and the passive partners are 'gay'. We saw that the pingueros interpreted this to mean that 'gay' simply indicates that one has sex between persons of the same gender; desire was irrelevant. Thus, pingueros and maricones were both 'gay'. This

[3]I am unable to reproduce here quotes from those early interviews, because the preliminary research was not approved by an institutional review board.

necessitated the distinction ‘por gusto’ or ‘por la necesidad’. But I propose that now there has been a third stage in the development of the category: since all men of whatever desire must accept ‘gifts’ from their tourist sexual partners, ‘por gusto’ and ‘por la necesidad’ have less salience. To reflect this reality, and under pressure to conform to the tourists’ definition of ‘gay’, those who do receive pleasure from male-male sex are increasingly called either ‘gay’ (passive) or ‘gay activo’ (active), while those who insist that they have sex only ‘por la necesidad’ defend the category ‘pinguero’.

My point here is that I discern a change in the Special Period from a system based on behavior to one based on being, or ontology. The one determining factor in sex-gender assignment is whether one penetrates or gets penetrated. And this behavior traditionally was not imagined to be a part of what a person *is*, in the ontological sense, as identity in North America is assumed to be innate. But it is that northern understanding that is aggressively introduced through the demands of sex tourism. I believe that traditional understandings are under great pressure to change. Increasingly, sex-gender identity is being seen as an ontological category and not merely or even primarily a behavioral one. This is visible in several ways. First, in comparison to the discourse of 1999 and 2000, the men don’t talk about ‘gay’ as a category to which they themselves belong merely because they have sex with men, but rather only those who enjoy it are gay. Thus are they accommodating to the understanding of ‘gay’ introduced by the tourists. Second, masculine presentation—mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—is becoming less important in defining masculinity. Instead there is a growing sense—again reflecting the definition of the

tourists—that people are either active or passive because of who they *are* innately, indicated by what they desire—obviously a somewhat inflected replication of a northern sex-gender system.

Convertirse

Another way in which this shift from a behavior- to an ontology-based identity system is visible is through pingueros' beliefs about 'converting'. A number of men used this word to describe their concern that crossing a behavioral line might result in an unhappy ontological shift. This is, I believe, an anxiety in most pingueros, occasioned by the new uncertainty over sex-gender identity: no longer safe from stigma merely by claiming to be exclusively active during intercourse, many pingueros fear that they may become maricones or at least 'gay activo', indeed that their manhood has already been compromised by their economic behavior. This anxiety is voiced through the belief in converting (*convertirse*) from *hombre* to *maricón*, active to passive, por necesidad to por gusto. Again following the ideas of invasion and defense of the motherland which emerged from the American experience of conquest, the symbolic barrier of the anus becomes the physical barrier whose puncture means loss of autonomy, loss of manhood. This belief was well articulated by a 20 year-old pinguero from the central province of Camagüey. We began by talking about men who are both active and passive (in their behavior, though this does not necessarily indicate desire), which pingueros call "complete" (03.11.06):

Would that guy be bisexual, or would he be called bisexual, even though he always has the active role with a fag?
Yeah, but already, when a person does the "complete" role with a gay—an example: someone is complete with a gay, he likes doing everything, that he fucks them and they fuck him. Everything. Then he already likes gays more than women. So, one day he wants to be with a girl, but it's all over: he doesn't like girls anymore. He turns gay. But when someone is bisexual because he is active, he likes to fuck a fag, and he likes to fuck a girl.
Are you saying that if a guy allows himself to be fucked, little by little he will turn into a gay?
Yes.
But if a guy always takes the active role, he also will, little by little, become gay?
Yes.
Even though he has…
Some of them, some. Because if you are bisexual, I am a bisexual, and I am with some girls, and I was with a gay sometimes too, I stay that way. I don't have economic need. But a lot of guys have a lot of serious need, so they look for foreigners. If he [the foreigner] is active and complete, and also likes to fuck the butt of a guy, and penetrate him too. And the foreigner is active. So, the foreigner says to him [the pinguero], 'Well, see ya. Bye. I don't want to be with you because you are active, and I am active also, complete. I'll look for another guy.' So, the [pinguero] says to himself, 'I am going to lose my money. He is gonna give me 30, 40, 50 dollars. And because I don't do that, I am going to lose money.' They say that he will give his ass and go with the foreigner so they he can have his money. With another foreigner, he says 'I am complete also'.
After someone allows himself to be fucked, afterwards he will start to like it?
Well, after he stays with lots of tourists that are complete also. A lot come here, and he keeps going with those tourists. He does a lot of things, and so, little by little, he is going to like it.
He is going to like it?
Yes, and so, after a while, they go with someone that likes young guys, go to a bed, drink a beer, and do everything in bed. Well, up to now I have not had that experience. But a lot of friends of mine…have told me what this life is like.
Some friends of yours have had the experience of starting to like it little by little?
Yeah…

An older jinetero (29) was more clear (03.13):

Those who like to fuck fags will, in the end, get fucked themselves. Maybe not a lot, but some. There are some that convert. It's that they discover, or they realize, 'Hey, I like this!' They try it, and if they like it, they are complete.
If they like it, they are complete?

Complete.

Several pingueros indicated to me that they don't want to be penetrated, not because they don't like it, but because they are afraid that they will, and if they like it, they won't be men anymore. Their work would be 'por gusto' and no longer 'por la necesidad'. For example, a 17 year old from Havana (00.10):

> The first time I let a tourist fuck me it hurt a lot. He told me that he would pay me $40 to fuck me. And it hurt a lot. I screamed. After the sex, it hurt a lot to walk. 'Look what I have done!' I did it 9 more times after that! And every time I liked it more. It's been a while since I have found a tourist that wants to do it to me. After that, I haven't done it again because I haven't found anyone who likes to [fuck].[4]

I suggest that this anxiety is a response to two processes: first, the uncertainties of the current era, the disruption of the traditional sex-gender identity system occasioned by the exigencies of the Special Period, and the introduction of new ideas through sex tourism. The belief in conversion belies not only identity anxiety and new ideas, but also a shift from an identity system based on behavior to one based on being. To "convert" means from one thing to another; it presupposes an identity of essence (what I have called ontology). The earlier understanding based on behavior would not occasion a conversion.

Even some of those who remain activo only communicate a change in their desire under the influence of economic exchange. Consider: "In the beginning it disgusted me, because I generally had to have sex with persons whom I did not desire. But after a while, it turned into a sport and I could get hard even with the ugliest old men. And anyway, those are the ones that pay the most!" (99.29). Such

[4]Here is another evidence of my claim that very few sex tourists are the active partners in anal intercourse; most men who pay for sex, in Cuba and elsewhere, prefer to be passive. A quick perusal of any sex workers' ads in any city in the United States will also indicate that the vast majority advertise themselves as active, since the vast majority of clients, and most gay men, are passive.

accounts of a growing liking of sex with men are common. Based on a North American understanding of immutable essence and desire based on ontological identity, we might claim that those men were simply 'gay' all along, but needed pinguerismo to provide them with the opportunity to experiment; once they tried sex with men, their true desire emerged. But I think this would be a facile interpretation, even if it is true in part for a few of the men. More significant is the role of material exchange in formulating Cuban desire. This is the second social process which may be behind the anxiety about converting. To explore this possibility, I propose another thesis: desire is not exclusively (or even primarily?) a function of biological ontology, but rather it is a cultural phenomenon which is at least in large part a result of economic process. Research since 1981 has convincingly demonstrated that sexual identity in a number of contexts is a product of economy and of the hegemony which both supports it and emerges from it (Weeks 1981; D'Emilio 1982; Matthae 1997; Pellegrini 2002; and many others). My proposal goes further: desire itself—not only the identity which formulates and conditions it—is conditioned by political-economy and must serve its logic.[5]

Thus, it is not only that economic exigency causes pingueros to engage in sex which they do not like; more, *it causes them to like it*. A few of the younger pingueros—even those whom in our context we might call completely heterosexual—explained to me that they 'enjoy' sex with tourists better if the amount of pay is higher. I initially thought that this meant that the men enjoyed the higher

[5]Of course I cannot claim that these ideas are universally valid. Gilbert Herdt, for instance, has extensively documented the formulation of desire, and its temporal specificity, according to the logic of intergenerational power relationship; among the peoples he named the "Sambia", desire is not formulated according to the logic of material exchange.

income, and thus promise of a higher income afterwards made the men better able to tolerate the sex. But after an interview with an 18-year old pinguero from the eastern city of Trinidad, I realized that it is not only that the men tolerate unpleasant sex because of the pleasure which the money would bring, but that the *sex itself became more pleasurable* because of its association with money. I would call to mind Freud's theory of "polymorphous perversity," which a hundred years ago made a bold claim which we now take for granted: sexuality is shapeless and formless until it is molded by social forces. First among those forces, I would argue, is economy. The Havana data indicate that the Freudian theory can be taken even further: material conditions not only constitute discourses around sex and gender, but also *of desire itself*. That is, not only the socially constructed categories of sexuality in which the men operate are inextricably intertwined with economic exigency and logic, but in fact what the men desire is economically determined. The role of economy in the configuration of desire is a major finding of the present research.[6]

Thingness

The disagreements about the meanings of the term 'gay', sex workers' varying degrees of liking or disgust of male-male sex, differential locations along the hombre-maricón spectrum, beliefs (among some) of the threat of converting—all this reinforces what we have already learned about the extreme variability even within pinguerismo: it appears to consist of nothing more than a confusing

[6]Again, I cannot make claims regarding desire in pre-capitalist or non-capitalist contexts. My provisional findings emerge from the Cuban context, though I would venture to say they are valid for contexts influenced by the hegemonic logic of consumerism.

amalgamation of very different behaviors, desires, and discourses. This it is. We have seen that pinguero desire and identity seem to be in great flux, as if it ever had solidity. It responds to the needs of the market by providing the desired service, complete with a title that announces itself. It has incorporated the new category 'gay', though there are differing ideas as to its meaning: those who have sex with men for whatever reason are gay, those who only have sex with men por gusto are gay, or those who allows themselves to be penetrated, for whatever reason, are gay. This is hardly a settled matter. We have also seen that the economic need of the majority of young Cuban men has led many, who otherwise have sex with men por gusto, to either charge money or accept (or encourage) "gifts" from their partners, a matter examined in detail in Chapter Eight.

In order to make sense of all this confusion we must recall the introduction in which I stated that only a methodology of dialectics can make sense of pinguerismo. Recall that one of the claims of dialectics is that there is no such thing as a thing, that nothing stable exists. Since all social "things" are in a constant state of flux, it is impossible to speak of a thing at all. Rather, we must understand that all social phenomena which appear to be things are in reality a nexus of processes which have temporarily converged to create the appearance of thingness. A second assumption in dialectics is that all processes are internally contradicted and thus inherently unstable. That is, every process contains within it multiple discourses and behaviors which are not compatible with others within it or even with its own logic. Hence, a constant tension threatens to disrupt the process. If we apply this analytical method to pinguerismo, we would not attempt to force a cohesion on this series of

contradictory processes which I have just documented. Nor would we attempt to resolve conflicting testimony. Pinguerismo, as an analytical category, can accommodate the multiple variations about which the "real" pingueros complain, it can accommodate experimentation and the messy mixture of desire and economic need that make it difficult to define—it can accommodate this only if we admit that *there is no such thing as pinguerismo*. Nonetheless, I will continue to discuss it and the pingueros as if it were more solid and stable. I will continue to use the title "pinguero" to refer to all the men who work and recreate with tourists at Yara and the Malecón, even though many of them would not meet the strictest definitions of the word.

Although pinguerismo does not exist as a thing, I have been analyzing it as such, and will continue to do so, because of the need to grasp something solid just long enough to look at it, even if its solidity is in part an invention of its being studied. Unfortunately, with each glance, this 'thing' thwarts efforts to contain it. Anthropology is able to contain such ambiguity and not need to force upon it a false "solution". In the chapters that follow, it will seem at times that pinguerismo has indeed coalesced, but this certainty will quickly dissolve in the face of yet another exception, yet another variation, yet another ungraspable process of life in the Havana of the Special Period.

Chapter Six
Yara

> Well, life at Yara is kind of painful, really painful. Because there are people that, without being gay, without being anything, without being bisexual or anything, without liking this life, do it for money. They sell their bodies for twenty, thirty dollars, forty. So these people worry that life is being gay; they live only for money.
>
> Pinguero (03.04)

On my first visit to Havana in July 1999 I walked unknowingly along 23rd Street between Avenues L and K in the neighborhood of Vedado—the site of the enormous family cinema, Yara. It was there that I discovered pinguerismo, when four happy Cuban teenage men with huge smiles asked if I wanted to buy a Cuban or two. I later discovered that I had been at the Yara, the mythically-named cinema around which gender-deviant Cubans had gathered for years. This is where I would stay for every visit thereafter, and it is here that I know I will see some of the young men I met that very first time. Pinguerismo cannot be separated from its geography around Yara. This chapter examines the basics of pinguerismo: its setting, initiation into it, and the mechanics of sexual and romantic transactions.

I. Space

Symbol

From his eastern plantation on 10 October 1868, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes declared that Cuba was now an independent republic. He freed his slaves, decried colonialism, and spoke of the rights of men to determine their own fate. This came to be known as the "Grito de Yara," the cry from Yara. Yara is a small village 35 kilometers from the rural town of Bayamo. As the site of the beginning of the revolutionary wars and the symbol of rural integrity and purity of the motherland, the area is the spiritual heartland of the nation. Bayamo is the source of strong, brave, and moral men who are called in the national anthem to take up arms to fight for Cuba: "Run to the battlefield, people of Bayamo, so that the fatherland will think about you with pride." Yara and Bayamo were thus symbols of revolutionary struggle for freedom even before the batistiano. Its historical significance greatly increased when the small ship *Granma* arrived from Mexico on 2 December 1956, landing on a swampy beach at the foot of the Sierra Maestra. It was in these mountains around Bayamo that the final revolutionary struggle began.

Upon the triumph of the Revolution this corner of the province of Oriente was renamed Granma in honor of the M26J (26th of July Movement) ship. The city of Bayamo and its environs, including Yara, were now elevated all the more as the birthplace of Cuban independence. When the Havana Hilton was renamed Habana Libre, the cinema across the street from it was renamed "Yara". Ironically, it is here that hundreds of (mostly male) Cuban teenagers gather nightly to converse, plan, plot, trade, and cruise. It is here that 'gay' tourists come in search of a tropical

communion, here that drag queens display their skill, from here that dozens of private taxis leave for the nightly disco fiesta, and here that bored and hungry Specialized Police stalk their prey. Yara is ground zero of pinguerismo.

Yara is only one site in the neighborhood which has symbolic importance. In the nearby Plaza of the Revolution is the museum and phallic monument to José Martí, the hero intellectual of Cuban independence. Across the street from Yara is the family ice cream palace Coppelia, which serves several thousand Cubans a day. Five blocks from Coppelia is the University of Havana, where the student revolutionary movement began and thrived. And the opposite corner of Copelia, across La Rampa from Yara, is Habana Libre. The famous Habana Hilton was a symbol of United States colonization; in it the leadership of the triumphant guerrillas briefly stayed when they marched into Havana at the end of December 1958; the hotel still proudly displays in its lobby photos of the fidelista leadership celebrating victory in its halls, rooms, and lounges. Accordingly the hotel was renamed “Free Havana,” and from its southern face hangs a colossal Cuban flag. Habana Libre and the dozen of so smaller hotels in its immediate environs are the entry point for a great many tourists. The Hotel Nacional is also nearby. This was the playground of the extreme elite, those who could afford better even than the Hilton. It is still one of the finest hotels in the country, with certainly the most exquisite grounds: through the several acres of gardens facing the ocean, enormous peacocks roam casually inspecting tourists to the latter’s delight. The garden ends in a waterfall which drops several stories down to the street level, at the Malecón.

Contest

The Malecón is the second site of pinguerismo, an oceanfront promenade built by the United States military before the Revolution, made of concrete and bordered by a three-foot wall which guards pedestrians from splashing waves; it begins in Habana Vieja and ends in Nuevo Vedado, some miles away. This wall provides a seat for the hundreds of lounging singles and kissing couples during the day, and thousands of countercultural revelers at night. Nightly on the Malecón, at the base of the Hotel Nacional waterfall and at the end of that portion of 23rd Street called La Rampa, is where every night multiple deviant subject-positions congregate gay tourists and pingueros, straight couples who seek the sexual freedom of the neighborhood, groups of troubadours playing and singing for dollars, friends getting drunk, drag queens and gay Cubans enjoying the freedom that the night and the Revolution's generally progressive gender policies allow.

Another remarkable irony: on the Malecón a few hundred yards from La Rampa, just within the limits of Habana Vieja, is a Fiat car dealership, where prohibitively expensive cars are sold to foreign diplomats and capitalist functionaries. Fiat is a monument to capitalist wealth and another site of gathering for 'gay' and other countercultural Cubans and gay tourists; a part of the Fiat building is an all-night café, perfect for late-night recreations. Fiat has become a well-known site in gay travel circles for those seeking homoerotic liaisons.

Thus, the context of pinguerismo is the outdoor porch of a family cinema in a neighborhood of symbolic and historical significance to the Revolution. These ironies of the spatial arrangement of pinguerismo do not go unnoticed by the state,

producing a contest over the spatial arrangement of youth deviance. When I first arrived on the scene in 1999, the Malecón was completely devoid of police, as if the space had been relegated to rebellious youth to exorcise their deviant energies. In 2000 there were a few officers posted, but they did not intervene; state presence was limited to several officers who stood at a distance and observed. The large group of (mostly) gay tourists and gay and pinguero Cubans sat at the tables of the Fiat café and on the wall of the Malecón across the highway. But By 2003 the Fiat café had closed and the group had been moved by the police to a spot just below the waterfall of the Hotel. This location is more brightly lit and considerably closer to the tourist center of Vedado; thus were the youth scrutinized under a closer gaze. Accompanying the move was an increase in direct police intervention, again through the checking of the ID cards of suspicious-looking young men.

But if police could more easily monitor them closer to the waterfall, then foreign tourists and dignitaries could see them as well, and this presents a different problem to the state. Thus, later that same year (2003), I was present when the police swept the Malecón just below the waterfall and made the youth move two blocks toward the now-closed Fiat. When I asked a low-level officer why we were being moved, he responded that he did not know—probably the truth. I suspect that there was some important event at the Hotel Nacional, and the state did not want the rowdy youth to be visible or audible from the hotel garden overlooking the Malecón. By 2004 the youth were back near the waterfall, and though there were occasional police sweeps, these were not serious encumbrances, and even the gaze of the officers ended at the waterfall, not crossing La Linea to the Malecón. The shifting

and uncertain policies reflected perhaps the state's own ambiguous relationship to the youth. But perhaps the state has reached a compromise of sorts: the Fiat has closed and the crowd must remain in the well-lit area of the Malecón at the end of La Rampa, but while in that space they may be relatively free of intervention. While walking to and from the Malecón on La Rampa the men are highly vulnerable to the police, but once arrived they are left alone. Well-contained, their activities are not dangerous and perhaps even helpful to tourism. It is as if that nighttime space had been assigned the task of relieving social tensions, of permitting an acceptable level of dissent and cursing of the government, so as to provide a more conflict-free operation of the city during the day. The Malecón and Yara offer a marvelous study of the role of space in state control.

II. Initiation

The economic activity of pinguerismo and the social lives of so many young gender-deviant Cubans is so focused around Yara that its name is a shorthand for the activity; men might talk about going to Yara or hanging out at Yara as insider code for sex-working. Thus, I began many interviews with the question "Tell me about life at Yara" or "Tell me how you arrived at Yara." The workers respond with a common narrative which describes what brought them to Yara, which is to say how (and why) they began to pinguiar. Differences in the narrative seem to lie along three axes: place of origin, sexual proclivity, and intentionality. But even these differences do not

mask certain universal themes. I quote these stories at length rather than summarize them because I feel the men deserve to be heard and not merely interpreted, and because paraphrase cannot communicate the emotion with which the men shared their struggle.

Provinces

The economic situation in the countryside is, by all accounts, worse than in the city, for two reasons. First, I am told that the libreta allotment—the minimal weekly food staples distributed free to all Cuban citizens—in the countryside is significantly less than it is in the city, because the state assumes that people in an emergency can grow their own food. Second, rural Cubans do not have access to as many dollars as do Habaneros. For this reason the early Special Period saw a mass migration to Havana, which the state now attempts to halt through regulation that restricts movement from provinces to the city (see Chapter Ten). The pingueros declare that a majority of them are from the provinces. There are those who began to pinguiar without deliberate design, who stumble upon the opportunity to make money once they arrive in Havana, but most of my informants came to Havana specifically to pinguiar:

> My friend came first. He was here [at] Fiat where he made a lot of money, came [back] to Camagüey and told me, 'Come to Havana so you can make money, have good clothes, and have a little money so people in your house here can live better.' So I came here. He said, 'Come to Vedado', so I went to Vedado. And little by little I started to learn about how it is here. (03.06)

Another worker from Camagüey:

> I came to Havana because of a friend of mine. He had talked to me a lot about Havana. He had come to pinguiar on various occasions, and he talked

> to me a lot about it. I was a little older, 16 years old. He told me that he was going to teach me what it's like in Havana. We left and came to Havana. When we got to Havana, I was scared, afraid, because it was a long way [from home]. …. I like Havana a lot, but I was afraid of being killed by a car! [My friend] showed me Fiat, but then he left without telling me. I had to sleep in the park. (00.08)

A few men came to Havana for other reasons, and there discovered an opportunity to earn dollars. I asked why they came to Vedado:

> Why did I decide? I didn't decide to come to Vedado. I came for work. I'm a butcher and cook, and an expert in fish, but I came to be a butcher. (03.04)

> Well, you know that I came [to Havana province] 4 or 5 years ago to study electronics. So, one summer during vacation I came to spend a month in the house of an aunt who lives in Havana [the city, as opposed to the province]. So I had a friend who's gay and he told me 'Hey, here there are places where a lot of gays go, a lot of tourists. And if you go to bed with one, he'll give you money, and you can buy clothes and everything.' I said, 'yeah but I still don't like [sex with men]'. Well, another summer I came and I needed shoes and clothes. And I told my friend, 'Alright, let's go cruise around over there, at this place you told me about, where you told me the gays hang out.' When we finally got to the Malecón, there were a lot of people, [so] we sat down. My friend told me, 'Look—that foreigner over there likes you.' (03.11)

There are several commonalities in these and other stories. First, all the men begin to pinguiar in the mid to late teens. This is surely because, at least in part, sexual experimentation is at its peak at that age in Cuba (experimentation normally begins at 12 or 13). But more, it is at 16 that Cubans reach the age of legal and cultural majority, and thus begin to take responsibility for providing family income. It is also true that migration from the provinces to the city often occurs upon the transition from adolescence to early manhood, and sex work begins upon arrival in the city. This pattern is not of course uncommon in the United States, where many young men and women leave their parents' houses when they turn 18, and go into the world to seek their fortune. The only difference here is that the age of majority is 16

instead of 18, and Cuban men do begin to assume responsibility for the family at that age. Thus many of them leave for Havana not for their own careers, but to make money to send home to the provinces, as do so many Latin American migrants. A second common theme is that the men know where to come in the city; without exception, they knew to come to Yara and Fiat, the two sites of both tourist and Cuban 'gay' social life, and accordingly also of pinguero activity. This geographic concentration and specialization is quite different than the scattered sites of female sex work and has ideological import which we will explore in Chapter Thirteen.

A third common theme in these initiation stories is the role of a 'friend'. Almost without exception my informants were introduced to pinguerismo through others who had tried it and profited from it. This does not mean that the friends are 'pimps', but rather that they were sharing a survival strategy they had employed. It is remarkable that neighborhood teenagers talk on the street corner about how to pinguiar, and returning internal migrants share the secrets of the city with their country friends and relatives. This relative openness suggests an absence of shame, or rather a social acceptance of sexual labor as an emergency measure. We can be sure that such sharing of information was not haphazard, that returning workers were careful about with whom they shared their survival secret. Still, the fact that so many pingueros' friends return to the provinces and suggest that they too explore the opportunity, indicates a social reality quite different than that of most contexts in which sex worker migrants are often not welcomed back to their towns of origin (for one of

many examples, see Sleightholme and Sinha 1996). I have even met two "cousins" who came to Vedado together specifically to try out pinguerismo[1]:

> I came to Havana because of the [economic] need that I had and have. Over there in Oriente, a lot of guys tell me that here in Havana you can have sex with guys, and with that money you make can resolve your economic need. They have sex with a lot of tourists for the money and they let me know that they do it for money. My cousin agrees with [my decision] because of the economic situation that we are facing. …. I arrived 6 days ago. I arrived and sat down on the corner of Yara to figure out what I should do to make money. My cousin has had more luck than me. They notice him more because they find him more handsome or something. We have met three tourists. The first day he went with one and I stayed [at Yara], so I don't know what happened between them. I only know what he told me the tourist had given him in exchange for having sex—sex in the sense of kisses, hugs, but he didn't go to bed with him. …. I was with my cousin on the corner of Yara when all of a sudden a guy came up to me and said, 'I have a tourist for you two. Come with me to see him.' We left, got there, and met him. He invited us to have a beer and a cigarette. This time, he settled on me and not on my cousin. He told me to accompany him to his room. He took me to the bathroom and told me to wash my penis. I washed it and he kissed me, we kissed each other. He sucked me and beat me off, and then told me to put my pants on, after which he paid me $30 for me and my cousin. And since then nothing has happened. (00.17)

The two cousins, too, heard of pinguerismo through other young men who had returned to their eastern provinces after having had experience in the city. And even though neither of them are what we might call 'gay', they were not ashamed to go together to meet a client or to tell each other of their respective sexual experience.

Habana

Habaneros—men whose family homes are in Havana Province—are even more likely to know Vedado and specifically Yara. Though they have a far easier time than do internal migrants for several reasons which will become clear in the following

[1]Close friends call themselves cousins, and interact accordingly, even if there is no blood relation.

chapters, initiation stories of Habaneros repeat many of the same themes as do those from the provinces.

> Someone showed me the way. A gay, a friend, showed me the way. So I went [to Yara], went to bed with a tourist, and he paid me $40. I was 19 years old. I started to do it a couple of times, a lot of times. Because in Cuba financial need is one of the worst problems. Hunger, lack of clothing…In my house there wasn't a TV or a fan, there were two beds for five people, and I felt like I was obligated to enter into this life of prostitution. Because in my country it isn't easy to get things without a lot of sacrifice. (03.02)

Notice that a television seems to have been assigned the same importance as living space and a fan; ideas about commodities are discussed in Chapter Nine.

> Well, one day I left my house and passed by Vedado, by Yara. And a tourist called me over and talked to me. He said that he would give me $40. I said OK. And ever since…
> *Did you know beforehand about pinguerismo at Yara?*
> Sure, I knew. On the corner near my house there are different guys. And they tell me, 'Over there at Yara there are a lot of tourists, fags, gays. And we go to bed with them, and they pay us.' That's how I knew that at Yara there are pingueros. (03.08)

Why did he happen to walk by Yara that day? There are not many residences from Yara to the Malecón, so it is not likely that he was just passing by on the way to or from home. More likely Yara was his intentional destination. It is also unlikely that he was just walking by and a tourist called over to him; hundreds of non-pinguero men might walk by Yara during any hour of any day, and a tourist would not be so brazen unless the Cuban had signaled receptivity. This pinguero was probably sitting on the half wall alongside the Yara building, signaling his availability.

In the case of this 'gay' pinguero, it was a lesbian who explained what he should do. There is considerably less segregation between gay women and men in Cuba than there is in the United States, so it is not unusual that a lesbian friend would understand the workings of MSM sex and cruising:

> Well, a lesbian friend of mine told me that at Fiat there are tourists who look for guys to offer them money or clothes to make love [to them]. So I went, and I saw. [A tourist] looked at me and I looked at him. I sat down next to him and started a conversation. He was 43 years old, neither fat nor skinny, with light eyes. I went with him to a cafeteria, where we bought a bottle of rum and two colas. I told him. 'I will come home with you.' We went [to his room], and he invited me in. We sat down and started to talk about sex. (00.10)

I have highlighted the similarities in the stories, but not all the stories follow the same script in part, differences are *temporal*. Some older sex workers, those who began early in the Special Period, perhaps even before the legalization of the dollar, began their work in the hotels.

> Other people, Cubans, told me that on the corner of Yara the gays and pingueros hang out looking for tourists. They say that they can earn money. So I started to go to—well, where I first went was not the corner of Yara. I went to hotels: Hotel Riviera, Habana Libre, Capri, to the hotels. And so it was later that I started to go to Yara. But I started in the hotels, and I would meet tourists in the lobby. (03.05)

> The first time was when I started to ask for change in front of the Hotel Inglaterra.[2] … [I met a tourist], and he invited me to eat. No one had ever taken me out to eat before! We went and ate, and he told me that he was going to pay me $25. It was the first time I had ever even seen $25. I said OK, and we went to bed. He sucked me while he beat off, and that's it.
> *What did you do after that?*
> I kept asking for change, like normal.
> *So why did you decide to come to Vedado?*
> Because I figured that that's where the gays are. All Cubans know that the gays hang out at Yara.
> *You knew that you could pinguiar there?*
> Of course. (03.10)

In the early-mid 1990s, tourism had only recently become the principal economic activity of the neighborhood, and, it seems, formal policies were not yet devised and in place. Soon enough, to 'protect' the tourists from scheming or robbing Cubans and to prevent prostitution, Cubans were not to be allowed in the main lobbies of any

[2]The Inglaterra is a very old, very grand hotel with a rich history. It is in Habana Vieja, which is bugarrón territory. This man is young and very attractive, so it makes sense that, when he decided to begin sex work, he moved from Habana Vieja to Vedado.

of the hotels, and certainly not in the rooms. It is true that in the beginning, I am told, some security guards at certain hotels could be bribed to permit a Cuban visitor, but funds for this purpose would have to come from the tourist; thus after Cubans were excluded from the lobbies, it would not be possible for a pinguero or jinetero to hang about inside in search of clients. The two stories we just heard were from slightly older pingueros (in their late 20s) who began in the hotels and then were obliged to move to Yara; hotel cruising would not longer be a feasible strategy.

III. Encounter

Thus far we have been discussing pinguerismo without a clear sense of just how it works. In this section I outline the *mechanics* of pinguero-tourist interactions and transactions. Despite the extreme variability that we noticed in the last chapter, clear patterns of speech and behavior are easily discernable. Here I examine the scripts for meeting tourists and the sites of initial meetings.

Cruising

I have mentioned that I was introduced to pinguerismo with the brazen questions, “Do you want to buy a Cuban? Two Cubans?” But in fact the group of three teenagers who approached me in this way were likely not pingueros at all, but representatives of a sexual identity which more closely resembles that which we might call ‘gay’. They were a bit too giggly and silly to be pingueros according to the strictest understanding; I suspect it was precisely these types of men to whom the

older, “real” pingueros referred when they complained to me about the degeneration of pinguerismo as a result of the constant influx of new men into Yara. Recall that one of the original pingueros complained that “There are too many kids now…[T]here are more fairies now, kids who are 13, 14, 15, 16 years old. The 16 year old kids now aren’t as big and muscular as they used to be. The guys back then were bigger and stronger. They were more like little men, and more serious [as opposed to effeminate]” (00.20). And a newer pinguero complained that: “There’s another group that call themselves ‘pinguero’, but they aren’t pingueros. A Pinguero never gives his ass, they like women, and they won’t suck you or give their ass—that’s a real pinguero, men who don’t give their ass or suck, you understand?…That’s a real pinguero. But that’s only ten percent, understand? There is only ten percent really.…The other ninety percent that call themselves pingueros in reality are not pingueros….They are a new species” (03.05).

But if those three young men who initially approached me did not represent the presentational style of a “true” (verdadero) pinguero, there is one pinguero characteristic that they do reproduce: aggressiveness in securing a client. They are bold in their approach and persistent even when initially rebuffed. This could be for two reasons. First, pingueros might be acting upon a masculine expectation: men are aggressive in pursuing women, so should they be in pursuing men. A second possibility is that their aggressiveness emerges from desperation: a man who hasn’t eaten since yesterday or is facing a night on the streets will do just about anything to secure income or housing. The third possibility is that the aggressiveness is a response to intense competition: even in the high tourist season, pingueros now

outnumber tourists by—according to my estimate—ten to one. Every Cuban must make himself stand out from the others in order to be noticed. Aggressive behavior might either draw a tourist's attention, amuse him, or impress him that the pinguero has accurately reproduced masculine performance.

Initial pinguero-tourist interactions are highly scripted, and are very similar whether they occur at Yara or on the Malecón (either at Fiat or La Rampa). On any weekend and on most week nights, large numbers of Cubans of various identities congregate, perhaps as many as 300 at Yara or 1-2,000 on the Malecón. These Cubans are usually clustered in small groups, having conversations, making plans, or comparing shoes; unlike the traditional image of lonely female prostitutes who wait alone or at most in pairs waiting for clients, pingueros do their best to enjoy their time waiting and to engage in relationships with each other. As a foreigner passes by a cluster of pingueros, one or more of them will call out, "From what country are you?" or sometimes, "From where are you?" If the tourist responds by pausing to answer, two or three pingueros will gather around to engage in conversation, each competing with the others for his attention. They will explain what a close connection they have to the tourist's country by declaring that this relative or that lives there, or by speaking (badly) a few words in his native language. If the tourist does not immediately respond to the initial question, the script provides a second attempt: the pinguero attempts to guess the native country, hoping that if he guesses correctly, the tourist will be impressed and return for a chat. As a third level attempt, the pinguero will call after the tourists "Come here!", repeated two or even three times

with increasing urgency as the tourist walks away. Getting the tourist to stop for a conversation is half the battle.

In the conversation that ensues, pingueros will express enormous interest in the tourist's life in his native country, his plans for his vacation in Cuba, his impressions of the country thus far. The goal is to begin to form relationships with the tourists, which would entail reciprocal obligations (the subject of the next chapter). The two, three, or four pingueros who might participate in such a conversation will attempt to discern which of them is more appealing to the tourist, and they might jockey for position. This is not to say that every conversation is scripted, nor that all the Cubans who might engage a tourist are pingueros, nor that competition between pingueros is bitter. Indeed, when a tourist begins to demonstrate a preference for one Cuban, the others appear to withdraw graciously and without rancor; I have observed no serious tension within the social scene. Once a relationship has been formed, a pinguero might begin to suggest that he could be a good tour guide or that he can initiate the tourist into the secret and exotic city, granting an insider's access to the outsider. Almost always the Cubans will ask if the tourist plans to go to the 'fiesta' and offer to accompany him; an answer in the affirmative obligates the tourist to pay for the taxi and entrance fee for the Cuban and his companions. Eventually the pinguero might carefully make the tourist aware, perhaps through hints or a canned dialogue with a friend, that he has no place to spend that night. If the tourist demonstrates a willingness to engage a friendship but does not respond to sexual innuendo, a brazen pinguero might boldly offer to penetrate him, and might either quote a price or ask how much the tourist pays.

Such direct propositions are not unusual, but more common is a more subtle effort to win the tourists' confidence.

Fiesta

In addition to Yara, another context for meeting tourists is the "fiesta". Dance clubs are legal, and a number of them do exist; the Cuban Communist Party itself has even opened one right in Vedado, as a youth recreation opportunity. But there are no regular, licensed clubs for 'gay' men and lesbians. Instead, entrepreneurial individuals produce these fiestas. These events occur almost nightly, beginning at about 11 and ending around 4. The word 'fiesta' is not an entirely accurate descriptor for these enormous (usually) outdoor disco events, attracting several thousand Cubans and tourists nightly. There is (nearly) always a live DJ who plays an assortment of Cuban and Puerto Rican salsa and contemporary United States house music. The bar sells water, cola, lemon-lime drink, and beer (In keeping with the pattern I have noticed throughout the research, pingueros do not drink much alcohol and usually request a cola). The entry fee is always the same, no matter where or how large the fiesta: a foreigner must pay $2, and Cubans $1. This amount is the same as the taxi fare. Private cars quasi-illegally carry men from Yara to the fiestas and back again; drivers seem always to know the location of the fiestas, even though most are quite a distance from Yara. In 1999 and 2000 the cars lined up along the side of Yara on 23rd, but by 2004 they had moved a few feet away to L alongside Coppelia to avoid police harassment; neither the fiestas nor the private taxis are forbidden by law, but neither are they licensed. This places them in a

questionable legal status, subject to police intervention only during the nightly sweeps in which young men are instructed to 'move along': "You can't sit here".

The fiestas are an important element in the meeting and courting of pingueros and tourists. The men tend to leave for the fiestas between 11 and 12, as soon as they can secure a ride. Men who have met a tourist—either as a non-sexual 'friend' or as a potential client—will suggest that they go to the fiesta; if by about midnight a Cuban has not secured a ride to the fiesta, since he is not likely to be able to pay himself, he will walk the four blocks from Yara to the Malecón, where he will socialize with friends while hoping that a tourist who did not go to the fiesta will take a fancy to him. Those who arrive at the fiesta with a date will remain with him throughout, and later retire to his room or apartment. Those who came with a non-sexual tourist friend use the fiesta as an opportunity to search for a client for the night.

Oftentimes the fiestas will be held in large outdoor fields around which an aluminum fence has been erected. I have also attended fiestas in private homes and once in a castle whose spectacular architecture appeared to be middle-eastern; no one was able to explain to me how the (unfurnished) castle became available for the event. The locations move regularly which, I am told, is because they are not entirely legal. Yet the events last for several hours, and the music is incredibly loud. It thus seems to me unlikely that the state is unaware of them; it seems to tolerate them, as it does so much behavior which is technically still illegal.

I reproduce here field book accounts of two different fiestas. The first was on 6 January 2003:

Every night at Yara, a line of private cabs line up on L. These are mostly the older cars from the 1950s and the tiny Russian imports from the 1970s. The drivers are usually young (all males, of course). They constantly ask passersby, "¿Taxi? ¿Taxi?" Meanwhile the boys are all abuzz about the 'fiesta'. They ask tourists, "¿Vas a la fiesta?" Or, "¿Que haces hoy? ¿A la fiesta?" I never understood why these "fiestas" were so important to them, except perhaps as a relief to boredom. Then the other day one of the men told me that it was at the fiestas that they are more likely to meet a turista. The 'fiestas', then, which are really like little dance parties in private homes or a field, serve several functions: they provide what gay tourists are accustomed to, which is dance music club where fags congregate and meet, and they provide an opportunity for pingueros to meet their clients. They also provide a social outlet for gay Cubans free of the threat of police harassment.

So Saturday night, I consented to go to one of the fiestas with my informant Alexander, who was going to help me look for a particular jinetero to whom I wished to speak. The usual financial arrangement applied: the "taxi" cost 2 dollars for me, and one dollar for each Cubano who has managed to attach himself to me. Usually four or five Cubanos and their tourist host pile into the old junker, providing the taxista with a revenue of five or six dollars each trip. The entrance price is the same, two for me and one for each Cuban. The return taxi was the same. Cubanos expect that the turista to whom they have attached themselves will pay both the taxi and the entrance fee.

This Saturday night, the fiesta was rather far away. Alexander and I found a driver. I had told Fran that I would pay no more than 3 for the two of us. But, characteristically, Fran did not negotiate the price with the driver ahead of time, but assumed that I would be able to pay whatever the river asked. So just as we were getting around the corner of Yara, I confirmed out loud that the ride would cost two and one, no? The driver stopped, saying that since it was far he would need five dollars total. Since there were no other people in the car with us, we would be responsible for the entire revenue for the ride. I refused to pay five, so then he came down to four. But that was too much, so Fran instructed the driver to return to the corner of Yara, where we could look for other passengers. Fran got out to do so, and not wanting to wait, I got out with him. No sooner had we ascended the few steps to the new pizza place, than the taxi has acquired another car full of passengers, and left. But no matter, taxis are abundant, so we soon enough located another. We got in, the driver encouraging us to sit in back, so that I would not have to get up again when the other passengers arrived (since the car was only two door). But I explained that I need to sit in front, or else I might get sick. He consented, then going in search of other passengers. He returned within two minutes with three other passengers, making five in all. Since there were enough passengers to provide a full revenue to the car, I only had to pay the two for me and the one for Fran.

We traveled about twenty minutes on a highway, traveling at about 50 mph. We finally arrived at a dirt road, which within a few hundred yards brought us to a large open field, enclosed by corrugated iron walls (no roof, floor or formal structure). As we approached the entryway, I gave Fran five dollars, expecting to get two back. He told the doorman, one foreigner and one Cubano, then gave him the five, and received two back in return, as expected. The field we entered was about two hundred yards in area, in circular form. On the right was a DJ table, in the rear and to the right was a refreshment table serving beer and sot drinks. Despite what Alexander had said about the pingueros having to drink rum before having sex with a tourist, I did not notice much alcohol consumption. I only noticed a few refrescos [juice with water and sugar] being consumed.

When we walked toward the rear, I noticed several people urinating against the inside of the wall; the surface of the ground in the rear third was grass, the front sections being concrete. I wondered if perhaps this spot used to be a parking lot. I soon availed myself of the freedom of an outdoor party, and joined the others in relieving myself against the wall, onto the steel and the grass. We walked around a couple of times, looking for the wanted jinetero. I estimate that there were about 1500-2000 people there; most of them were Cubans, partly fags and partly pingueros (and of course it is impossible to know which is which, even if the two categories were mutually exclusive), perhaps five percent straight couples, and (Fran tells me) maybe five percent lesbians. The straight couples made a display of themselves. The lesbians were fun. A lot of pingueros standing about looking for clients, and a lot of what appeared to be regular fags at their weekend party.

Alexander tells me that this space is a regular site for the fiestas. But what about the police, I asked? They are paid off in order to allow the semi-illegal parties to happen, he believes. They are not entirely illegal, but neither are they authorized by the state. The effect is that just like at Yara, the police could allow the gatherings or raid them depending on the current mood about fags, who has been paid off, if there is a moral panic, etc.

He saw a number of people he knew, so we stopped and chatted, then continued on our search. At one point he left me just next to the dance floor, then he got involved in a chat with a friend and must have forgotten about me, for it was over an hour later that he returned to the spot. We moved around a bit more, then finally gave up the search when I said I was tired and wanted to go home. It was now nearly 3, and the boy in search of whom we had gone had not arrived at the fiesta. The return taxi this time costs us 4, since there were few people in the cab.

Eight months later I accompanied another informant to another fiesta. My field book dated 25 August 2004:

The cars which take men to the fiestas no longer operate on 23rd alongside the Yara building; perhaps to avoid the constant presence of police and to produce an easier excuse for their presence, they have now moved to L alongside Coppelia. It was there that Giovanni went to procure us a car for the night. As expected, I paid two dollars for me and one dollar for him. We rode in the front, the smallness of the space requiring that I place my right arm around his shoulder; he encouraged this, though the physical closeness was more than that with which I was comfortable, since he is an informant.

We arrived at the fiesta, a typical setting, after about a 30 minute ride, it being very far from Vedado. It was a small field, not as far away from other buildings as other fiestas to which I have been. There was a short line to get in. I paid 75 pesos, the usual one dollar for Osmani and two for me. I was surprised to be able to pay in pesos; before I had always paid in dollars. We entered into a bar area which was covered with corrugated aluminum. To its right was a gateway into the main field, perhaps only 20 x 20 yards. It was already crowded, being about midnight. Very annoying mindless house 'music' thumped endlessly. Later, at about 2, there were one or two salsa songs, followed by a few rock/dance songs in Spanish. This was followed by a delightful playing of "¿A Quién Le Importa?", by Alaska and Alaska, to which I sang along with everyone else.

In the car, knowing that Osmani was in desperate need of a tourist in order to pay his rent, I told him that I understood that he needed to go in search of work, so he was not obligated to hang around me as the appropriate protocol would normally demand. He assured me that he would stay with me throughout the night, an expected courtesy since I had paid his transport and entrance. As we were in line, I told him to advise me if he needed to go in search of a tourist. He agreed forcefully. But later in the night, as the two of us were chatting with an odd couple, he took off. About twenty minutes later we saw him with a very well-dressed, 35ish small man with bushy long hair, whom our friends told me was Saudi Arabian. Another 20 minutes passed, and I went in search of Osmani. I found him embracing and caressing this man. I cringed knowing how horrible this must be for him. I informed Osmani that I was leaving, and walked toward the door. Once at the door, I discovered that there were no other people waiting to go to Vedado, so the trip would cost me $5, more than I was willing to pay. I returned to look for Osmani, as I felt guilty about leaving him without a dollar to get back. This was not rational, since I had no responsibility towards him at that time, since he had gone in search of a tourist. I had already paid more than my fair share, having bought him a beer in addition to the transport and admission. Still, I worried a bit about him.

So I returned in search, but did not find him. I did, however, find the two friends with whom we had chatted before he found the Saudi. This is an odd

> couple: the large (both muscular and pudgy) black man, 27ish, with whom I had been friendly, a national athlete, and a small, older, slightly weasely man, late 40s, some sort of academic. They told me that Osmani was no longer with the Arab, but my second search was in vain. The two friends, now embracing passionately (was this some kind of bugarrón arrangement?), concurred that I had no responsibility for Osmani's return, and they urged me to leave whenever I wished.
>
> So I walked back to the door, and there I found a man whom I had met earlier that night, a Chilean tourist. He had been cruising me all night, and the two lovers and Osmani had encouraged me to pursue, Osmani being especially interested in matchmaking. We joked that, since I was short of money, maybe I should take up a vocation as a pinguero with this man as my first client. (I should say here that 'client' is my word, the word we would use in the United States, though I have never, not once, heard a Cuban use it. The pingueros call them 'tourists' or occasionally 'foreigners'.) I had run into this guy earlier at the bar and chatted with him, thinking perhaps that I could interview him as a sex tourist. Now later, I found him with some other tourists in the doorway, waiting to go back to the Hotel Nacional. We agreed to carpool. When we arrived at 23 and L we parted, agreeing to meet the next night at Yara. I will pursue an interview with him. If it turns out that he is not a sex tourist, then it will be interesting to find out why. He was an older (40ish) tourist, hanging out at Yara and going to the gay fiestas—so why doesn't he hire the boys? Or does he (foolishly) think that he will find a Cuban who does not charge him or ask for a present?

Thus, the fiestas provide a relaxed and permissive environment for all manner of Cubans and tourists. As such, they are important contexts for pingueros and others to meet tourists and for cementing nascent flirtations. They also are the a venue which most closely resembles that in which most tourists are accustomed to meeting other men-who-have-sex-with-men: bars and dance clubs.

Malecón

A third context for meeting tourists has been mentioned but not examined in detail. This is the seawall Malecón, a three-mile promenade which hosts during the day fishermen and swimming children, and at night an extraordinary mixture of deviant

subjectivities: in addition to pingueros and (gay) tourists, it is host to drag queens and 'gay' Cubans. Male-female couples making-out are casually interspersed among them, as are small groups of (straight) friends drinking rum. Groups of three or four troubadours take requests for a dollar, while single guitarists play for free for their groups of friends who sing traditional Guantanameras.[3] Bicycle taxis offer rides back home or short trips for lovers. Venders with pushcarts sell homemade "refresco" (juice with water and sugar) and "bread with ham," while old women sell sweet rolls or candies for one or two pesos ($.04-.08).

The Malecón at night offers romantic couples a bit of privacy, a rare asset in Cuba. For pingueros too (at least until very recently), the Malecón has offered some reprieve from constant police harassment. They can laugh, shout, flirt, and cut deals at liberty, or at least with less police intervention than at the Yara. It is here that we can see most clearly the contest over space discussed in the previous section. Using a voice recorder, I made detailed field notes of a Friday night on the Malecón, beginning with the nightly Yara police sweep:

> 13 August 2003. After the police chased us away from Yara at about 10:30, I walked down to the Malecón alone. I had arranged with Domingo to accompany him all night, but had not seen him yet. I finally saw him at midnight. He had already agreed that I could accompany him all night, but he had not formally consented, so I gave him a verbal consent, remembering as best I could what the document says; reading him the formal verbal consent statement would not have been feasible on the Malecón. I did carry with me my tiny digital voice recorder; here begins a transcript of my on-site recorded notes:

[3]A Guantanamera is a traditional and incredibly elastic musical form. It consists of a standard refrain which repeats the words "Guantanamera, guajira Guantanamera" (girl from Guantánamo, country girl from Guantánamo). The verses are created anew by the singer for each occasion on which it is sung. Thus the verses are a form of rhythmic commentary about the problems of the day: political, economic, social, romantic, etc. The possibilities for innovation are, literally, limitless.

It's about midnight when we begin. He's wearing the same shirt he was wearing for the past three days. He has not eaten today, but (characteristically) says he's not hungry. We're on the Malecón. We walk back and forth, and back and forth, greeting people on the way. Domingo doesn't want to sit down. We run into mariachi bands, see people that I know and that he knows, I take pictures on request. He is wearing ear phones, which lead to a small cassette player is in his pocket. It has no batteries and probably would not work anyway, and anyway he doesn't have any tapes, but yet he wears the ear pieces nonetheless. It is a status symbol to have a walkman, and so he is showing that he has one, even though it doesn't work. I suspect that no one thinks that it actually works. I bought seven pieces of pan con jamón from a vender walking along, and distributed them. The men jumped at the chance; lots of people are hungry. There are five hundred people here: an odd mixture of bohemian youth, straight couples, locas, travestis, pingueros, and gays, a few tourists. Domingo wants to just keep walking back and forth; I don't know for how long.

It's now about three o'clock. We've been wandering back and forth for three hours. I'm exhausted and my feet are exhausted. Domingo has asked me a couple of times: am I bored, do I want to stop. I encouraged him to do exactly what he would normally do, though of course an my prescence cannot but alter his behavior. There have been a couple of arguments, one of which led to blows. Apparently one man told another that his watch was of one value, the other disagreed; this was the only argument we witnessed all night. After we walked away, we were later informed, it came to blows. Domingo tells me that this kind of argument is not uncommon, that it happens here all the time. My observation is not that there is much social tension, however; my observation is that this atmosphere is in fact enormously relieving of social tensions, with much revelry, relaxation, conversation, meeting of friends, and much, much flirtation. And yet there do seem to be these periodic arguments. God only knows how many more hours we're going to do this!

It's now about 4 o'clock. We have been continuing to walk back and forth, back and forth. At one point in the last hour we borrowed one of the bicycle taxis. Apparently Domingo is a friend of the bicycle taxi driver, so we borrowed one of them and rode up and down the street. He became exhausted really easily, quickly, and couldn't pedal us anymore, surely a result of his not having had any food that day. But he says he's still not hungry. He tells me that at about this time, he might go to sleep, either on the Malecón, lying down on the wall, or he might go to the benches at the large bus stop next to Yara. He said that he doesn't feel sleepy now because I am with him, and that is exhilarating him some.

I forgot to mention that people all night have been drinking. They drink mostly rum, and they drink it straight, out of plastic cups, sometimes out of the bottle. Some folks are drunk. I've been accosted twice by different drunken people,

one a friend of mine who insisted on telling me many, many, many times in English that he is 'my friend'.

A few minutes ago, we witnessed another argument, this time between two drag queens. It was very animated, immediately drawing a huge circle around the two. They pushed each other around a bit, but it seemed to me to be all a show. The crowd was so large around them, in the middle of the street, that I was concerned the police would come. Of course if the police did come, that would give more excuse to oppress and repress and harass the folks here. But there has been all night a very notable absence of police: not a single car, not a single patrolman, all night, as if this space had been relegated to the men without restriction. But still the police normally stay around the Malecón and watch closely, occasionally harassing; today they are completely absent. So the police did not come to the cat fight, though it went on for some time, perhaps ten minutes. Eventually a man got involved in defense of one of the travestis, causing another circle-group to form around him as he hollered. The new cluster then went down the street, about 50 yards, one friend trying to drag him away from the fight with the drag queens, with him ranting and raving on, waving his arms about. The two drag queens were mulatas, and the man involved was a negro.

Mi Cayito

The fourth geographic context for pinguero-tourist interactions is the 'gay' beach, "Mi Cayito". This is one section of the very large and very popular beach (for Cubans) called Guanabo. Mi Cayito was mentioned in one of the interviews in the documentary "Gay Cuba" (see Chapter Four) as a "space we carved out for ourselves". Covered trucks leave all morning from Habana Vieja carrying passengers along the eastern coastal highway Via Blanca, making periodic stops at the favorite beaches. The great majority of the passengers are Cubans, tourists usually preferring to pay $10 for a far more convenient and comfortable private taxi. These trucks are jam packed with Cubans who pay $1 each way, providing a

fantastic profit to the owner of the vehicle.[4] If a tourist happens upon on of these trucks, he is charged $2-5, depending on the negotiating ability of the Cubans who accompany him. On each of my trips, the pingueros have instructed me to look down and not speak, in an attempt to pass me off as a Cuban as they negotiate.

Once arrived at Guanabo, passengers dismount the truck at the side of the road and walk toward the small coastal village between the towns of Santa María del Mar and Guanabo. This consists of perhaps 20 or 30 small houses and a few businesses offering food and drink to beachgoers. Invariably the Cubans who accompany me decide they are hungry and thirsty just as we pass these venues, requiring us to pause and consume. The walk through the village and along the inlet takes about 15 minutes, and passes over the mini lagoon in which children too small for the open ocean romp under the watchful eyes of parents. Mi Cayito is at the far western end of Guanabo, bordered from the walkway by high dunes. There is far more space than there is at the 'straight' section of the beach, but despite the room between blankets, there is much conversation, visiting, and familiar faces.

At the beach pingueros display to potential clients both their lean and/or muscled torsos and their famously large genitals. And the ocean provides a cover for groping and embracing which would be too dangerous at Yara or Malecón. In this way potential clients can physically flirt with a pinguero enough to establish interest before committing to a transaction. This is why Mi Cayito is a good place for initial meetings, which might continue in the city with dinner, the fiesta, and sex. Pingueros tell me that it is possible for a couple to have sex in the water, but I have not

[4]I am unaware of the licensing regulations for these truck services nor of the profit-sharing arrangement with the state. I would be surprised if the owners were not heavily taxed, as are the owners of the hacitaciones privadas, discussed in the next section.

observed any couples close enough for long enough to make such a determination. Fellatio would be difficult at best, and in fact could only occur long enough for the fellator to hold his breath. Intercourse could occur, but the lack of lubrication would make this, too, difficult and uncomfortable. Further, condoms would not be feasible in the water, and anyway the beach might be a good place to meet and flirt but it is not an ideal place for sex.

Sex

Once a pinguero manages to secure a tourist client, the interaction can process in two different directions, depending on the pinguero's goals and the tourist's romantic proclivities. Either the two men engage in a fee-for-sex transaction which lasts about an hour, or they choose to construct a more extended interaction, perhaps lasting the entirety of the vacation. This latter relational pattern will be described and analyzed thoroughly in the next chapter; the current section will only address the actual sexual transaction.

Private interactions between a tourist and a Cuban are possible only because of the post-Special Period relaxation of the former prohibition of private enterprise, as described in the Introduction. Those residents of Vedado who happen to have enough room in their houses or apartments are permitted to convert that room into an independent apartment to rent to tourists. The owner has only to pay the state, I am told, a $200 monthly fee plus ten percent of the total annual income in excess of the monthly fee. The going rate for these spaces is $25 per night for a fully "independent" room with a bath and a private entrance, or $20 per night for only a

room in a family's apartment. These latter are clearly not preferred by sex tourists, since they provide no escape from the watchful eye of the owner-manager, usually the matriarch of the house. But an apartment with a private entrance is ideal for a tourist who knows he might bring home a Cubano or Cubana. Hotel rooms are not possible sites of sex with Cubans since, as I have mentioned, Cubans are not permitted into the rooms nor often enough even into the lobbies.

Once in a "casa particular" (private house) the tourist usually asks the Cuban to bathe, since sweat from the tropical heat and some pingueros' lack of access to shower facilities makes the penis' foreskin unpleasant for fellatio. Once bathed, the pinguero might be offered a beer or might be invited straight to bed. I have already mentioned an oddity with pinguerismo which does not occur in other male sex work contexts: the pingueros expect to kiss and even tongue their clients. In interviews they do not single out kissing as an especially odious activity for them. After kissing, the tourist normally will fellate the pinguero, and then ask to be penetrated. This will continue until the pinguero has orgasm. (Recall that very few tourists wish to penetrate the Cubans, the vast majority of sex work clients in Havana and elsewhere being 'bottoms'.) The tourist will then pay the agreed upon amount or, if money has not been discussed, will volunteer whatever he thinks the pinguero is worth; the current price is $30-50 per encounter. A tourist might also add some article of clothing to the cash paid, and some will pay entirely with clothing and/or shoes.

As I described in an earlier work (2001), many pingueros do not quote a price in advance of the encounter, but prefer to accept whatever the tourist chooses to offer. This pattern of course leaves the Cuban open to the abuse of dishonest

tourists who will then refuse to pay, or pay a very small amount. “There are a lot of tourists who con/take advantage of [engañar] the guys. They say, ‘I’m going to give you a certain thing’. After the sex with the guy, they give him something less than what they said. Understand? You promise me a t-shirt, and after we have sex, you don’t give me the t-shirt. You are conning/taking advantage of [engañar] me” (03.01). Unfortunately, pingueros have no recourse in such a situation. They cannot, of course, go to the police, nor could they physically attack the tourist, since if he denounces the Cuban, the latter would go to jail immediately; tourists are always believed over Cubans, since there is a general presumption among the Cuban police that tourists are always the victims of dishonest street youth. The state’s great suspicion of the youth, their numeric disadvantage because there are so many Cubans per tourist, and their general reluctance to negotiate a price ahead of the transaction—all these conspire to place the pingueros in a highly vulnerable position in relation to both the state and their clients.

But increasingly, pingueros are becoming more sophisticated in terms of negotiating an equitable price for their services. Quite a few of the pingueros I interviewed in 2003 had a price they would quote up front, and tourists were becoming accustomed to asking how much the pinguero charges. This is quite different from my earlier interviews, in which pingueros reported that they accept whatever ‘gift’ a tourist ‘friend’ chooses to give. In my earlier work (2000) I argued that the reluctance to discuss price indicated that the pingueros imagined the interaction more in relational terms and not as transactions; they were operating more an ethic based on generalized reciprocity rather than balanced reciprocity. This

is only partially true. I was entirely wrong to argue further that the tendency to create relational patterns, rather than transactional ones, was a product of a socialist ethic in which the young men had been reared. Rather, the tendency, to the extent that it does exist, to construct sex transactions as relationship of 'friends' in which both parties have obligations follows the familiar Caribbean pattern of "romance tourism" (Pruitt and LaFont 1995) which has been widely documented in the Caribbean; what I witnessed was not the product of socialism, as I once claimed, but rather a characteristic of Caribbean sex work and its special set of mutual fantasies (see Chapter Five).

Most pingueros are now perfectly willing to discuss their fee, indeed even to have a set fee, which is a clear change from the pattern I observed in 1999 and 2000. Pinguerismo is a new phenomenon, and so we can expect rapid development as it becomes increasingly efficient in molding itself according to the new economic exigency. The pingueros' decision to begin to quote prices gives them slightly more control in relation to the clients. I suspect that they are learning how to conduct a business transaction and how to protect their interests; they are leaning to operate in the new post-socialist economy. I will elaborate this shift later in this chapter.

I reproduce here a few typical experiences, as told by the pingueros. I asked this pinguero, a 19 years old mulato from Oriente, about the most recent time that a tourist paid him:

> It was a month ago. I was walking by 23 and L, and a man passed by in a red Audi. He parked and called me over and said 'Do you want to cruise around?' He said, 'get in'. We left, and went cruising around. He liked cocaine, so I took him to buy a gram for $50. We went to his house. He dumped it on the table, on a little piece of cardboard, and used a phone card to make lines. Then he

> [snorted] it with a bill. So then he put on music, and told me to take a beer if I wanted one. He went to shower, and then told me to do the same. Then we ate, and afterwards slept for 4 or five hours. When we got up, he asked for sex. We finished sex and then got dressed. I had a pair of shoes that weren't so good, they weren't a name brand. So he asked me 'Do you like those Nikes over there?' I said 'yes'. I didn't think that he was going to give them to me; I thought it was a joke. [But] he said, 'Take them, they're yours'. He asked me, 'Don't you have clothes?' I said 'Yeah, but not much, and it's a little old.' And he gave me his wardrobe. And he gave me $30.

This account doesn't tell us much about the specifics of the sex act, but it does indicate something about the non-sexual interactions of pinguero and client. Two elements of this story are atypical: first, the client requested cocaine and the pinguero knew where to get it; my observation and interviews indicate to me that very few pingueros use drugs, and in fact most do not even drink much alcohol. The second unusual element here is that both the pinguero and the tourist interacted flirtatiously with women:

> On another day he invited me to a discotheque called La Discotheque Boheme, an Italian discotheque, where a lot of people go because it's good. In costs ten dollars to get in. We spent three or four hours dancing. He liked dancing with a girl, who kissed him on the mouth. I was dancing with another girl, which did not annoy him. The girl asked me for my phone number, so I wrote it on a dollar bill. She knew that I was with him, understand? So he asked me 'What did you say to that girl?' I said 'Well, I gave her a dollar for a beer and my phone number.' We left and went to his house, where we ended up having sex. Then I went home. I haven't seen him since.

This women understood and accepted pinguerismo, and was not dissuaded from pursuing my informant. "There's a tendency now for Cuban girls to like pingueros" (03.05), for reasons which will become clear in Part III.

Another pinguero, Framig, provides more sexual (but less relational) details; this interaction seems to be more a fee-for-service transaction:

> [The last time] was an American, 22 years old. I was on the corner of Yara. He came over and looked at me. I looked at him and saw that he was young and cute. He looked at me. He invited me to have a beer, and invited me to his place. It was last Tuesday—today is Friday—last Tuesday. We went to his house….We had sexual relations, I slept until the next day, and then I got up [and left]. What did we do? Well, we kissed, bathed, talked a little, went to bed, kissed, normal stuff. He sucked my dick—can I say 'dick'? so we did that for a while, and then he asked me to fuck him. I put on a condom fucked him for a long time, and then I came. We stayed in bed for a while, and then showered, laid back down for a while, talked, and then slept until the next day. [He gave me] $50 plus $5 for the taxi.

Framig was fortunate in that he found a client to whom he was attracted; he admits to being 'bisexual', which is somewhat unusual. The next account is from a pinguero who is not at all attracted to male clients, and thus imagines sexual interactions a bit more like business transactions. I asked him to tell me about his normal pattern starting from the time that he arrives at Yara.

> What time do I get there? It depends. Because there are people that get there at 9, others get there during the day, others arrive at ten at night. If you have a date with somebody, a foreigner or something, they would go there and hang out. Later, if there is a fiesta, they go to the fiesta. I get there at about 9 or 9:30. I sit at the corner of Yara, and then start to walk; from Arcada to Yara, from Yara to Arcada….There, I ask people from other countries, foreigners—I invite them somewhere, maybe to the fiesta. And if they want to be, for example, with me, I say 'let's go.' And they say, "How much do you charge?' I tell them how much, and then we go…I go up to them and introduce myself, and ask them their name. And that way I start to interact with them, and that's it, now we know each other, and there's more confidence….

He continues, making the extraordinary claim that he discusses sex bluntly with a tourist before sealing the deal. This was unheard of just a few years ago.

> I go up to him and ask his name. He asks if I am passive or active or complete. In my case, since I am active, I tell him 'I'm active', and if he is passive, and if he likes me, if I look good to him, I am with him….At Yara, when a tourist gets there, the guys go up to him and ask, 'What are you looking for, a guy? A girl?' And if he is looking for a guy, I ask him, 'How much do you pay for a guy?'…. So then he says, 'Well, I am going to give 20, $20, for you to fuck me, for you to screw me.' And I say 'Let's go'. And we go to a room, and that's it.

There are a few possibilities for how to interpret differences between a transactional approach in which the pinguero quotes a price, specifies the sex act, and leaves immediately thereafter, and a relational one in which the pinguero attempts to extend the interaction or even form a relationship with the tourist, does not discuss price beforehand, and may accept "gifts" of clothing in lieu of cash (this kind of relational interaction is the subject of the next chapter). Of course there is such wide diversity among the men who might engage in sex work—whether they call themselves pinguero or not—that we could interpret the difference as indicating preference and different subjectivity/identity of the individual pingueros. This is surely true, but it is equally clear that there are patterns to behavior, a script for the interactions, and that *this script has changed over time*; thus are the differences *temporal* as much as *subjective*. I have already mentioned that a few years of experience with capitalism has surely made some men more shrewd negotiators. In addition, as word got around the island of the possibility of pinguerismo, the numbers of sex workers has exploded. The resulting imbalance in the tourist/pinguero ratio has reduced both the price and the average number of encounters per week. For some men, hanging out at Yara and the Malecón is just weekend fun. But for many others, it's a matter of life and death. Perhaps they are increasingly brazen about discussing terms on the street because they need to know that a certain amount of money will be forthcoming, and they need to ensure that there will be sexual compatibility. I explore this matter more in the next chapter, turning now to the serious struggles of some of the men, those for whom pinguerismo is truly 'survival sex'.

IV. Struggle

As we have seen, pingueros use the word “struggle” to describe their work; thus they speak of going to Yara to ‘struggle’ or of how long they have been ‘struggling’. They also very frequently complain about life and how terrible it is. This propensity to loudly complain could be partly explained as a standard method for securing the sympathy of tourists. It is also true that negativity and complaining are simply parts of Cuban culture, as Edelman (1998) also describes. Still, certain elements of the life of a pinguero are truly objectively tragic. Here I will mention the two most serious struggles, for housing and for food. I close this chapter with a brief account of the heart of the pinguero transaction, sex.

Homelessness

Pingueros from Havana Province have a huge advantage over those “de la provincia,” by which they mean from the rural areas of the island. When they don’t have a date for the night, they can always take a ‘gypsy’ cab to the house of their parents (a gypsy taxi costs $1 for Cubans to go anywhere in the city). Some pingueros from the provinces also might have distant family with space in Havana, who might be willing to be even more cramped than normal, in order to host a young man who can help with household expenses.

But those “from the provinces” with no local family still need a base from which to operate: a place to store clothes, to shower, and a place to sleep when not in a tourist’s room. Housing is one of the colossal failures of the Revolution, and very

few Cuban houses or apartments have enough room for everyone registered to live there. But some older Cubans might be living alone in two bedroom apartments due to absent or dead family members, and the desperate search for dollars has motivated some families to double- and triple-up in already small spaces. Thus have bedrooms been made available to Cubans from other provinces who would otherwise be homeless. These rooms cost a Cuban $1 per night; if a pinguero has been successful, he might pay for a week or two in advance, in anticipation of lean months in which not a single client appears.

It does occur, particularly in the off-season of summer and for the more average-looking or older pingueros, that on some nights no dollar is available for a room. This means homelessness, which can quickly snowball: a pinguero who has not been able to shower, change clothes, and brush his teeth is not likely to appeal to a tourist. At such times the networks of generalized reciprocity do kick in, so that sometimes a worker can sleep on a friend's floor, and even more importantly, he may be allowed to store his things in a friend's apartment so that they remain safe. But even these networks are not always available, and so a pinguero without a dollar ends up sleeping—literally—on the street.

One of my informants recruited in January 2003 was in just such a predicament. In August of that year, I returned to Havana and asked him if I could share his experience of homelessness. I accompanied him from early evening until the next morning, and slept with him on the concrete half-wall of the Malecón. It was the field notes of that experience which were partly reproduced in Section II above,

in my description of Malecón night life. I continue the story of my night on the Malecón with Domingo:

> At about 6, Domingo has been asleep now for maybe an hour and a half or so; I have hardly slept at all. Shortly after we first lay down on the Malecón, a young man came and tried to wake up Domingo, because he said that we would be robbed. But I said, 'no, let him sleep'.
>
> It's 6:10, I just found out. A second guy tried to wake him, but again I said, 'no, let him sleep', so he said, 'well, if he gets robbed, then it will be your responsibility.' I dozed a little, then I was awakened by still-drunken groups of people all around, one of which was singing. They shortly tore into an interesting Guajira Guantanamera: the verses were a rap, in Spanish of course, and I couldn't make-out but scattered words; I think it was about urban life in Havana. A very interesting mixing of contemporary musical style grafted into a very old, traditional Cuban form. Next time I should try to record the Guantanamera being performed.
>
> At about 6:30: the folks behind us are very loud and raucous. They are only just now calming down. One of our friends who was walking with us, it turns out, has been sleeping next to us, to help keep guard over Domingo. (He seems to be well-liked. I need to theorize later about how much these boys take care of each other, despite occasional eruptions of tension. One acquaintance told me earlier that there is competition among the many pingueros for the few turistas; they even speak poorly about each other. I will interview that negro later.) But he eventually went home, telling me to guard him. Then another acquaintance came over and tried to wake us because, he said, the police were coming, but it turned out to be a false alarm, so we were able to let him asleep. Domingo is an incredibly sound sleeper. I remember in January, after he was robbed and wandered the streets for two days; I let him sleep in my place that night because Justo brought him over. I remember that night too, he slept incredibly soundly.
>
> I never really did sleep, but at about 8 o'clock, no, 7 o'clock in the morning, another pinguero I knew stopped by, someone I'd known for three yeas or so, a black guy, who really likes me and wants to sleep with me. While Domingo slept and I kept guard, we chatted, and this guy says he really does want to sleep with me, out of desire. He's not going to ask for any payment, and will not ask me for anything, he just really wants to. He always has, he says. A very familiar pattern in the seduction of tourists.
>
> Around 8 o'clock, we tried to wake up Domingo, who is always difficult to wake. We finally managed to awaken him and got him upright. We sat for about another hour in the sun, the three of us chatting. The he lay back down and I lay back down, and we stayed there for about another half hour. The

> black guy finally left, and Domingo and I left shortly thereafter at about 9:30. I asked him what he would normally do at this time, and he said 'nothing', just walk and then sit, walk and then sit, maybe go to a movie to wait until the night time when it was time to go back to Yara (because the state heavily subsidizes recreation as well as food and housing, it only costs about $.04 to sit in the theater all day). What an incredibly boring and awful and hot and sweaty and hungry way to live. I decided at that point not just to follow him walking and walking for twelve hours, but to do him and me a favor: I sent him to the market to get jamón viking and some piñas, while I went to the dollar grocery Focsa to get some other stuff; we met up at Yara and I brought him back home. We both bathed and showered, he washed his clothes in the sink, we had some piña, slept for about six hours, and now we're awake and fixing some lunch.
>
> I forgot to say that during one of our many back and forth walks, he said to me: 'what you're doing is incredible.' He said that by accompanying him, I made him feel less lonely. I have no way of knowing if this is true or if this is simply another attempt to create a relationship strong enough to entail reciprocal obligations. In fact, it is possible, though I do not think likely, that Domingo is not homeless at all but has pretended to be so in order to win my sympathy which might motivate me to give him my clothes when I return to New York. Then again, perhaps my multiple experiences of being conned have made me jaded: Domingo does seem malnourished, and he stays in the same orange shirt for days at a time, a shameful state for young people preoccupied with fashionable clothing. It seems unlikely that he would take on this shame just to fool me.

After this experience I analyzed homelessness more carefully. After considering a few pingueros whom I knew to have housing problems, I determined that homelessness is not a singular phenomenon, any more than is hunger. I have constructed a typology of homelessness.

Domingo's condition is what we might call *extreme homelessness*. He has had a rupture with family structure, through which most housing is allocated in revolutionary Cuba. His grandmother rather cruelly rejects him, and his mother migrated to the United States when he was two. His father is absent, as is so often the case in Cuba. When he meets a tourist, or when one of his 'friends' is in town, he can sleep with him in his room. When he has not "had his luck," he sleeps on the

Malecón or in a doorway in case of rain. He goes days sometimes without bathing or washing that same orange shirt.

A slightly less urgent form of homelessness is what we might call *periodic homelessness*, represented by my informant Giovanni. He came from Oriente (Santiago) specifically to work at Yara. Having no family in La Havana, he rents a room, which costs one dollar per night, normally payable a month in advance. When the prepaid days are over, if he does not have any more dollars, the landlord might extend him credit for a few days. When he still does not earn enough, he has to leave, but the landlord still might store his things for him, since they have a good relationship. Hence, when he meets a tourist, he might spend the night with him, and then at least for a few weeks would have enough money to pay the rent. But if between clients he runs out of money, he might have to sleep on the Malecón or street, or he stays with a friend who has paid his rent.

A third type is what we might call *semi-voluntary homelessness*, represented by my informant Vicente. He is from Havana and does have an intact family structure with whom he used to live, but Vicente is rabidly counterrevolutionary; he seems to assume that all problems of all people in Cuba and elsewhere are the result of Fidel, whom he insists—contrary to the norm—on calling “Castro”, a name he spits out with exaggerated disgust. His problem is that his family are ‘communists’. They would welcome him back, but he is so viciously anti-Revolution that he does not even want to be around them. He sometimes stays on the floor of the apartment of a friend who has a wife and child. He is very aware that they have very little room even for themselves, so he is concerned that his presence is an

inconvenience. For this reason he doesn't like to stay with them nightly. He may choose to sleep on the street, in which case he returns to his friend's apartment in order to shower and change clothes.

Housing was already a crisis even before the Special Period. But now, when all Cuban social structures have been strained to the breaking point, it is not surprising that some newly materially marginal citizens should find themselves on the street. At the same time, I would caution against what I perceive to be a general tendency to exaggerate the crisis—by Cubans who like to complain and by the United States 'exile' scholars who want us all to believe that Castro has led the island to ruin. A more nuanced analysis of homelessness indicates that it is not a homogeneous phenomenon, and it is not entirely the fault of failed Revolutionary policy. Even most street youth do not spend their nights on the Malecón.

Hunger

From my first exposure to pinguerismo in 1999 I was struck by the way the men perceive and represent their generally inadequate diet. It was and is clear to me that many of the men do not have access to an adequate caloric intake. This makes sense, since food in Cuba is distributed (largely) through family structure: a libreta allotment is assigned to a family, so that each household has one libreta. Those Cubans who have suffered a rupture in their families of origin, or who live in a province other than the one in which they are officially registered, do not have access to even the minimum that the libreta provides. Further, there are almost no 'fast food' outlets in Cuba, and anyway they are prohibitively expensive for most

Cubans. Rather, food is distributed as unprocessed staples; thus a kitchen with the appropriate cookware is required, even if a pinguero does manage to get rice or beans. For this reason, the normal food distribution system in Cuba overlooks those who either live away from their home provinces or who have strained relationships with their families of origin.

This problem had been alleviated slightly as of late, because it is now legal for Cubans to sell food out of their homes; thus there are currently two houses in Vedado in which the family will produce a large amount of food and distribute it in small boxes for 25-30 pesos ($1-1.20), depending on its content. This is a manageable cost for some pingueros. These “cajitas” (little boxes) consist of rice, bean, ‘salad’ (which usually is a few slices of cucumber), and a meat: pork is cheapest, followed by lamb, and chicken the most expensive. Those who eat outside the door of the house are also given a metal fork and a glass of water; those who take the cajitas to go might use a part of the cahita itself to scoop the food. In addition to these new cajitas, for 5 pesos ($.20) each street venders with push carts sell ‘pan con jamón’: a piece of bread that resembles a hamburger bun, a thin piece of very low quality ham called ‘jamón viking’, with a cucumber slice and mustard (cucumber is the most commonly eaten vegetable in Havana, probably because it can be transported and stored, at least for a time, without refrigeration).

I became immediately aware of the food deprivation when I began the field work, so I found two ways to facilitate the work while at the same time providing a few men with a few calories. One of these was the daily lunches I hosted, in which each young man who arrived that day would participate in the shopping, preparation,

and clean-up. In exchange, I would pay for the food and provide the kitchen. The second way to observe the men while providing them calories was my nearly-nightly ice cream. Throughout the field work I made it a habit to take group of pingueros (or other men who hang around Yara—it is impossible to distinguish, as we have seen) to Coppelia, the enormous ice cream palace immediately across the street from Yara. Coppelia manufactures its own ice cream, which Cubans are convinced—and I agree—is the best in the world. I found that there were always young men who were willing to wait in line with me nearly two-hours to be seated inside. A 'salad', a dish of five small scoops, normally costs 7 pesos ($.28), so I could afford to buy one or two salads for three-six young men. Both the time in line and sitting at the table provided a glimpse into the men's social behavior when with colleagues. I discovered that street youth behave much like youth anywhere: competitive roughhousing, bragging about sexual exploits, comparing of recent acquisitions. Consider this entry in my field book on 1 January 2003:

> I took a group to Coppelia tonight. They were all new boys whom I had not met, and this is why I wanted them. One was 28, good-looking and very dark with Caucasian features. Another was 18ish and white from the provinces, and the other claimed to be 18, though he looked 16 at most. That latter was showing the other a bag of new clothes a tourist client has just bought for him. They really were beautiful clothes: new jeans, a jersey, and Polo socks (he was sure to display the label). The older one was quite rambunctious, and enjoyed showing off for the other two. The two younger ones, in turn, enjoyed laughing at adolescent jokes. They were typical adolescents, I thought, except that they had claimed to be older. They absolutely delight in trying to fool me, or make a fool of me, efforts which I detected and consistently deflected. This deflection, in turn, gave them another source of glee.
>
> Both in the line and after we were seated, I had to occasionally ask that they settle down and behave themselves. They were bragging about cock size in easy earshot of groups of families in line. And at the table they were beside themselves with giggling and loud remarks and roughhousing. I had to remind them again. I think that one of the most difficult parts of this field work is

> navigating an appropriate relationship with these young men. The relationship is always necessarily an ambiguous one. I am of course a researcher, and should maintain a certain posture in that role. But when they roughhouse at Coppelia and thereby draw attention to us, I feel as though I act as a parent figure, controlling and scolding them. And let's not forget that many of them think of me as a potential client. I wonder if they are confused about my role; I certainly am.

Despite these frustration, I found that these trips to Coppelia provided an inexpensive opportunity to formulate relationships. Further, it was a way for me to help the men a bit, as a way to pay them back for their help (even though those who help me are often not the same men as those who accompany me to Coppelia), at least with a few calories. I quickly learned that the ice cream at night was, for some, the only calories they had consumed that day. Not only did they scarf the food, which might be explained away, but when asked in interviews what they had eaten that week, several of them would report that the Coppelia trip was their only source of calories for the day.

Indeed, though housing has been a forty-year failure of the Revolution, food supply has been a recent failure.[5] Their claim to not have eaten all day might be yet another way in which pingueros attempt to induce sympathy, but I don't think so. An admission to not having eaten all day is not a light matter to the young men of Yara. *I have learned that being hungry is a very shameful thing indeed; Cubans will not admit that they are hungry no matter how long it has been since their last meal.* This revulsion cannot be overstated, yet like many social phenomena, it is irrational: the men will admit loudly that they have great financial need; they will admit—and even brag about—a lack of clothing; they will readily admit to being nearly homeless or

[5]Marc Edelman tell me of a bitter joke he heard in Havana: "What have been the Revolution's greatest successes? Education, health, and sports. And what have been its greatest failures? Breakfast, lunch, and dinner" (personal communication, 17 February 2005).

sleeping two brothers to a bed; but they will not admit to hunger. An experience at Yara will illustrate further. On 15 January 2003 I wrote:

> There really is quite a bit of shame about hunger. Today at Yara, I waited to get a table at the pizza place. I ordered a familiar con jamón [large with ham]. When it arrived, I looked about for guys who wanted to share it. I gave what I thought was a clear signal to several boys that they should join me; they looked interested, but stopped short of coming in. So I sat there while the pizza was getting cold. Finally I went outside to Yara, and announced that anybody who was hungry could come get some pizza. They all looked at me like I was wacko; no one came to get pizza. This, even though I knew (they had told me a few minutes before) that a few of them were very hungry. Finally, in frustration I carried it down to the Arcada. No takers there, so I returned to Yara. Finally I found a friend, who was able to offer it in an appropriate way to several boys who immediately came to get a piece. What I had forgotten was that being hungry is a shameful thing for Cubans. By announcing so loudly and publicly that anyone who was hungry should come get pizza, I ensured that no one would come, since to come would mean an admission before the entire assembled crowd that he was hungry.

The fact that the men did not mind talking to me about food problems during interviews, despite this shame, indicates that they were being fairly frank with me. My standard opening questions were “Tell me what life is like at Yara” or “Tell me about life at Yara”. Characteristically, the informants would respond to these questions with unreserved complaining about how “there is a lot of need in Cuba today”. This was customarily followed by a list of the problems, all of which related to money. And as obsessed as the men are with designer clothing, food often came first in the formulaic list. For instance: “A job here doesn’t pay enough to support me or my family. It’s not enough money to be able to eat, to be able to buy food, to be able to dress. You have to look for money in other ways” (03.05); “Here in Cuba, its not like in other countries, I don’t know, the same money, you have to work hard for everything: to buy food, to live, to dress, for everything” (03.06); and “At Yara, life is

real bad. Bad because, out of need, someone has to go to bed with a tourist to be able to buy food, to be able to put on clothes, to be able to dress well" (03.10).

I conclude from these comments and from my observation of pingueros' behavior around food that for many, hunger is a real and constant presence; I am certain, in fact, that hunger is a greater threat to well-being than is homelessness, because it affects many more men, young and old. Many of the men at Yara do have a place to sleep, since they continue to live with their families. Because most housing is still partly distributed via socialism, most Cubans do not have to pay cash for housing; thus even a destitute family has a place to live. But if there is no infusion of cash, the family's food supply is limited to the woefully inadequate libreta allotment, diminished even further during the Special Period. This is why I can say that for the young men of Yara, food is even more scarce than housing.

Not all pingueros struggle in this way; we will see in Part III that an obsession with United States consumer goods is the motivation for some of the youth. The extent of the need determines in part the aggressiveness of the pitch, as well as the type of relationship the men form with foreigners. The "struggle" to survive and to enjoy life in the Special Period—both materially and sexually—motivates some young men to seek 'friends' at Yara. This is a struggle that requires them to create new forms of relationships, with both Cubans and foreigners—or rather, to elaborate on established Cuban relational norms. It is to the matter of relationships that we now turn.

Chapter Seven
Relationships

> Self-interest and loving generosity are a tense pair anywhere, and often startlingly inextricable…..Material and affective motives, rather than opposites, are indistinguishably intertwined.
>
> Rebhun (1999:59, 61)

> All Cubans have lovers in Europe. They have lovers in the United States, in Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, in Switzerland. And the clothes that they bring is in-fashion. I have a lover in Switzerland. In Switzerland, in Germany, in France. Everywhere.…From there they send me money every two or three months.
>
> Pinguero (03.05)

Of course it is not true that "all Cubans have lovers in Europe," as this pinguero claims, nor even that most do. But this claim gives insight into this pinguero's universe. Pingueros operate in a world in which they are in constant contact with tourists, and hence they define their social world in a binary way: Cubans and foreigners, which is another way of saying 'pingueros and tourists'. So, when he stated that "all Cubans have lovers," we must understand this to mean all *pingueros* have lovers in Europe. But even this is obviously not true. I suggest, therefore, that this statement and others like it reveal a way of speaking which is concerned less

with fact than with ideal, image, expectation. Thus, this statement might be interpreted as 'all pingueros strive to find lovers…' who will send them money.

Still, even this much is not true. Some pingueros do attempt to formulate such relationships with tourists, but just as the phenomenon of pinguerismo contains much internal contradiction and variation, the pingueros themselves engage in widely differing forms of relationships with tourists. These will be explored in the present chapter, as will the way in which these relationships with tourists condition pingueros' relationships with each other and with other Cubans.

I. Tourists

> Ruthless self-seeking [has replaced] the solidarity and inter-dependence of those who are party to the transaction.
>
> Parry (1989:88)

Friends

The youth who hang around Yara use the word 'amigo' liberally and strategically. If, using the strategies described in Chapter Seven, a pinguero was able to engage a tourist in conversation, he is thereafter an amigo. In this sense, an amigo is nothing more than a 'conocido', or acquaintance. But rather than call them 'acquaintances' or the more distancing 'socio', pingueros find it beneficial to call almost all tourists 'amigos'. This is the first stage in a strategy of bringing as many tourists as possible into the orbit of relationship, consciously consents. Having a large numbers of "friends" is potentially more beneficial than having a large number of fee-for-service clients, because with friendship comes the obligation to "help" in a pinch, a nearly constant condition. Various mechanisms of manipulation are engaged in order to

bring reluctant tourists into a relationship of obligation. Thus, even tourists who do not engage in sexual relationships may find themselves being called upon to fulfill the obligations of friendship. Several pingueros are clearly conscious of this method of augmenting earnings: “A Cuban wants friends. We figure that we can earn more from a friendship than if we charge for sex” (03.05). Throughout this chapter we will observe pingueros’ methods for creating these friendships.

Even when fee-for-service sex does occur, most pingueros are not willing to merely accept the payment and move on to the next tourist. Even if the tourist decides to choose a different pinguero the next night, his previous pinguero will claim him as a ‘friend’ for the remainder of his stay and in future visits. Pingueros are pleased with this characteristic of Cuban sex work; in a typical expression of Cuban “exceptionalism” pingueros declare that in other countries, sex work is purely fee-for-service. But not in Cuba:

> I think in other countries this [type of sex work] doesn’t exist, does it? The whole world goes for a certain amount, and that’s it. Because in other countries, the person has his price and that’s it, and afterwards nothing. There is no kind of relation. In Cuba there is. In Cuba, you have sex with a tourist today, and from that moment, they begin a friendship. They greet each other whenever they see each other, [and] invite each other for a drink. (03.05)

This pinguero’s claim that sex work in Cuba is different than everywhere else in the world is an instance of “Cuban exceptionalism,” first examined in Chapter Three. Of course it is not quite accurate that nowhere else in the world follows the Cuban pattern; we saw in Chapter Five that this is a Caribbean-wide pattern which Pruitt and LaFont (1995) called “romance tourism”. A great deal of pinguero-tourist relationships is a variation on this theme of ‘friendship’. But we should not cynically

dismiss pingueros' attempts to formulate friendships as a purely self-interested con. Lancaster (1992:56) also found a "subeconomy based on mutual reciprocity":

> I would not say that these are really entirely utilitarian exchanges—naked self-interest "masked" or "disguised" by the theme of friendship. Rather, I would say that the concept of amity—of friendship, of kinship, of neighborliness, and of compadrazgo—has a material dimension. And what better measure of friendship and affection than mutual assistance?

Lancaster was not writing about sex workers, but about a general economy of reciprocity. We will see in this chapter that networks of reciprocity operate in Cuba as much as in Nicaragua. My claim is not merely this platitude, but that reciprocity is changing in the Special Period, from generalized to balanced.

Fijo

Pingueros' goal is to create an obligation of reciprocity through the construction of relationships with tourists by remaining with them for far longer than a single sex act would require. Thus, as in Barbados (Phillips 1999) and Jamaica (Pruitt and LaFont 1995), the youth at Yara hope to remain with a tourist for the duration of his or her vacation.[1] On the contrary, romance tourism in the Caribbean has been analyzed as a relation of male natives and female tourists. To my knowledge, the present research in Havana is the first application of Pruitt and LaFont's analyses to male tourists. In other words, research on sex tourism to date seems to suggest that female tourists seek romance, while male tourists want fee-for-service sex. While I have no doubt that this image is a largely accurate depiction of a great deal of tourism today, it is not entirely adequate. Perhaps researchers, who mainly emerge

[1]Female tourists do occasionally arrive at Yara, or meet a male sex worker by chance elsewhere in Vedado, but as ideal as such an event would be for most pingueros, it occurs very rarely.

from cultural contexts in which women are constructed as relational and men as sexual, have imprinted their preconceptions onto their research objects. I submit that a nuanced understanding of male sex work, and particularly pinguerismo, requires a relinquishment of the unquestioned discursive binary linkages man-sex and woman-romance.

Indeed, male tourists who come to Yara and the Malecón often do desire more involved and longer-lasting 'friendships' with Cuban youth, as opposed to a merely sexual ones, possibly even leading to a romantic experience. To facilitate the formation of such relationships, most pingueros (though certainly not all) attempt to spend every day (and every night) with a tourist, from the time of meeting until his departure from the island. The men have a phrase for this: *"hasta el punto fijo"*. It is difficult to translate this phrase literally; the word 'fijo' means fixed, firm, steady, secure. But in this phrase it is best translated as 'final'. Thus, the pinguero phrase "hasta el punto fijo" means 'until the final point'. One of the "real pingueros"—that is, a man with hyper-masculine presentation, exclusively heterosexual, who has sex with men only por la necesidad and exclusively as the active partner—explained, using the language of exceptionalism:

> If I meet you today, and you [have] come to Cuba for a week, and you want to spend the week with me, well then, we won't talk about money. *Punto fijo*. 'Punto fijo' means that you're with a person who doesn't pay you for sex, but helps you economically. He brings you clothes, he brings you shoes, he brings you personal things, he sends you some money every two months, and when he leaves Cuba he gives you money for the other months—that is called 'punto fijo'. I think this doesn't exist [elsewhere] in the world, right? Everyone else in the world goes for a certain amount and that's it. (03.05)

Lest we think that this strategy is utilized only by those on the extreme 'hombre hombre' end of the pinguero spectrum, an effeminate, self-identified "gay" Afrocuban

explains this approach using very similar language: “There are tourists who go to bed with a pinguero or a gay one night, and they like him, so they don’t pay him but spend the time they are going to be in Cuba, with that person, until they leave. And at the end, they give the present that [the pinguero] wants.” The goal of staying with the same tourist ‘hasta el punto fijo’ is to augment the amount of money and/or material goods received by creating a fantasy of romantic love, of making the tourist believes that he has a Cuban ‘boyfriend’.

Lovers

Most pingueros, though certainly not all, seek to convert several of their tourist ‘friends’ into ‘boyfriends’ (novios). But here again, we need be cautious about the translation of concepts and categories, for ‘boyfriend’ does not carry with it the same connotation in Havana as it does in the United States. For the youth of Yara, to call a man a ‘boyfriend’ does not necessarily mean that the Cuban feels affection for him, that they are monogamously committed, or that there is an expectation of future marriage. These characteristics might be present in a Cuban-tourist relationship, but this is hardly universal, and anyway in such cases the pingueros would more likely use the term ‘lover’ (pareja). A tourist involved in a long-distance relationship with a Cuban might believe that he is indeed his ‘lover’, but to the Cuban the tourist is only his ‘novio’; the Cuban considers the relationship only instrumental and probably has several ‘boyfriends’ who visit at different times of the year, thus providing a consistent income. Such differential expectations, which we might call a “relational

dissonance," is common and is the source of considerable angst, nearly always on the part of the tourist.

In fact, Cuban male sex workers engage in systematic and conscious efforts to manipulate tourists' sexual desires and romantic needs, in order to earn as much as possible. Cubans work to create a fantasy of romance which is likely to be quite profitable for them, even though it can be hurtful to the hapless tourist. This is but one of the several ways in which studies of pingueros' lives do not support the image of the powerless prostitute who is a victim of abusive, insatiable men benefiting from their patriarchal (or even economic) privilege. This is not to say that some Cubans are not indeed in love with their tourist boyfriends, but it is very uncommon in practice, and representationally such emotional attachment is not possible for an hombre hombre pinguero. Consider, for instance, this account of a pinguero who fed a tourist's fantasies of romance in order to leave Cuba. When the undocumented immigration to Spain failed, the 'romance' was exposed as a sham.

> Well, the guy I was with was 42 years old. It was good and he gave me a lot of affection. He was good to me, and we had a relationship. [He had had an experience in which] he was going to take a Cuban guy to live with him in Spain. He had taken care of all the papers, and from Spain he got a ticket to Russia, and from Russia someone was going to get him a ticket to Madrid, or to France, and from France to Madrid. But at the border of France, they checked his suitcase and found a Cuban passport, so he was deported back to Cuba. This upset [my friend] a lot because he had spent a lot of money. I met him here because this [Cuban] guy decided that he didn't like gays, that he liked only girls, so he was going to look for a girl and take her home. So [my Spanish friend] cried a lot. When we met he told me all about what had happened. He told me that he was in love with him, that he wanted to try again to take him to Spain. Eventually what happened is that the [Cuban] guy left and forgot all about [the Spaniard]. (03.11)

I reproduce here several stories of Cuban-tourist relationships, as related to me verbatim by the Cubans themselves; I have chosen not to paraphrase these

accounts so as to minimize interpretive slippage, and also because while talking about their relationships, the pingueros reveal a plethora of ethnographic details about life at Yara. Every detail tells its own story which is partly independent of the story the pinguero wishes to relate. For instance, the account we just heard of the failed emigration tells us not only of the relationship of the Spaniard and the Cuban, but also something of the strategies of undocumented immigration to Spain. Also note that the Cuban who related this story defined a "good" relationship as one in which he received *affection*. This is a remarkable admission from a sex worker, since affective interaction is specifically absent in sex work, according to the popular imagination. But we will hear several pingueros casually mention affection, as if it is assumed to be a positive feature of some sexual transactions. This is true even of some pingueros who say that they are completely hombre hombre, that they have no interest in men outside their financial power; even some of those "real" pingueros appreciate affection given them by their clients. In other words, desire for affection is not necessarily evidence of sexual desire or sexual identity.

Even a relatively 'successful' Cuban-tourist relationship exposes relational dissonances, ambiguities of identity, and the Cuban's recognition of the fundamental impossibility of the relationship despite his genuine affection for the tourist. I reproduce in detail the story of a relationship between my informant Osmani and his Chilean 'boyfriend'.

> Well, I was sitting over at Yara when I saw in front of the hotel Habana Libre—no, excuse me. The day before that happened, I was walking by the Habana Libre and he passed by me. I looked back, and so did he. I opened my arms as if to say 'gay', and he did too….The next day, I was sitting at Yara, and he [came up to me] and said, 'Hey, don't you remember me?' 'Of course I do! You are the guy that walked by me and opened his arms.' I told

him my name and who I was. So he took me to his place, where there were his friends who had accompanied him; they asked him 'Who is this guy? Can you trust him?' or like, 'Who is this guy you've brought here?' They called me over to talk: about who I was, what I did for a living, what's my name, my address, what I like—and I didn't want to answer some things, because they were personal things, things I wanted to say to him and not to three people…So I told him that I didn't want them to ask me so many questions. If he likes me, or if my personality is appealing to him, well, great. He should spend a few days with me to find out all about me. So we both bathed, and then he said that he wanted to rest, so he lay down. I started to listen to music. And the other lovers in the bedroom, I don't know what they did, if they had sex or slept. But I was just listening to music, I don't know if they wanted to test me, because they left me alone. I could have taken anything, like a lot of things they had in the house; I could have robbed them. But not me. I knew it was a test, I figured it out. And anyway, I am not a thief, because a thief is a nobody. So after he slept, he called me in and we started to have sex. He wanted to give to me, to screw me. I said no, I was active. So he said, 'That's OK, I am both.' After we finished, he told me that he liked it. It was his first time. So we spend the next day at his place; I didn't go home. Then we went to the disco. I didn't ask him for money. He used to give me his wallet and say, whatever it is, you pay for everything.' It was me that paid for everything because here in Cuba, it's normal that tourists are charged more for things since they don't know. People charge them more than the bill, so like if the entrance to a disco costs $10, they charge him $15. And if I am Cuban and I hang around with a tourist, and I am paying for everything, they don't charge 15, they charge 10. So I earned his trust; he would give me the money to pay for everything. And we went to a lot of discos. Every time we were going to have sex, he really wanted me to fuck him. And I liked it too. So eventually, before he left, he had a cassette tape, a tape I used to listen to a lot, it was Christian gospel. When I saw it, it made me sad. So before he left Cuba he said that he would give it to me. And he asked me if I wanted to leave my country. I said yeah, that if some day I could travel to whatever country, I [guess I] would. So he told me 'I am going to do something for you.' And I told him, 'What I like is you, not something that you are going to do for me.' So he left. When it was almost time for him to leave [Cuba] we walked he entire Malecón…We got out of bed really early [that day] so we could go walking on the Malecón to talk. I cried and cried, and he did too. One day before leaving he told me, 'Guard this money for me', $200. But when he left I told him, 'Remember that I have your money here, the $200 that you told me to guard for you.' But he said 'No, that's your present.' Its nothing to me; to me, you are more valuable than anything I have up to now.' So he told me 'that, that, that, that, that, that, that, that, that, that, that, and that and that are yours. That, that, and that are yours.' It was clothes, shoes, and a cellular. Understand? I went with him as far as Habana Libre [where taxis to the airport are stationed] and he told me that it would be enough if I could get him a taxi to the airport. I could go, but I couldn't, because I felt really sad, and he did too. I cried. And

then he left. Until today we haven't seen each other but we have communicated by phone on Saturdays and Sundays. He told me that he would send me money every four months. He will be here in February.

How much does he send you?
$100, $150.
Are you in love?
I love him, but I'm not in love. I don't know, because it was only a few days.
What's going to happen with him? Is he going to take you out of the country? Is that your plan?
It's his plan, but not mine. It's his. That wasn't planned out by me. It was him that wanted me to leave and go to his country. He asked me once, but I didn't answer. He proposed it when we met, and by phone he has proposed it. And I never respond, because I don't want him to think I have an agenda. So I told him that if some day I could leave, if he gives me the opportunity, I would leave.

Here again we encounter numerous ethnographic details: the brazen male-male cruising which occurs in Vedado, the power of the pinguero to control initial interactions, the tourists' concern that the pinguero might rob them (quite justifiable, as we will see in Chapter Nine), pingueros' love of English music of any type, the standard practice of Havana businesses to charge tourists more than Cubans for the same service, eventual payment in the form of clothing and shoes, and monthly or quarterly wiring of money.

In terms of the present study of relational patterns, two characteristics of this Chilean relationship are worthy of special note. First, the Cuban did seem to feel genuine affection for the Chilean, and he claims to have cried when he left; was this merely a produced demonstration of his attachment so as to feed the romance fantasy? We cannot know. Second, whether the affection is real or not, there clearly is what I have called relational dissonance, in that the two partners have different expectations from the relationship. Third, this pinguero is one of the majority of Cubans who do not wish to leave even if they could, contrary to the image produced

by certain Cuban-Americans in Miami. When I saw him again eight months later, he told me that the Chilean had not arrived, but he was rather glad anyway that he would not have to confront the expectation of emigration.

Similar themes emerge as another pinguero tells the story of his relationship: flexible use of a term of endearment ("compromiso") which seems to have a different meaning for the pingueros than for the tourists, a pinguero conning or robbing a tourist, the uselessness of a hotel room for those who wish to be alone with a Cuban:

> I met a Spaniard who was gonna be like a compromiso [fiancé, or committed partner] of mine….When I met him on the Malecón, he didn't have a house or any money, and he still had two days before going back to Spain. He didn't have a place to stay or any money because he had given a lot of money and clothes to a guy, and this guy then asked for more money so he could go to the province where there was a problem with his family. So he told me that he didn't have any money to get a place for us. But I said, 'No problem, we'll just talk as friends.' So we got to know each other, kissed some, drank some rum...and we were together two days; we got to know each other even though we couldn't have sex, because he was in a hotel; he didn't have a 'casa particular'…. we didn't have a casa particular to have sex in. We got to know each other like friends. And so, later he called me on the phone, and we got to know each other more and more. So he started to help me, to send me money. And now that he comes every year, we have a relationship. (03.11)

As his story continues, differential understandings of the relationship come into focus as the pinguero demonstrates a reluctance to emigrate even though his tourist 'compromiso' continued to encourage it:

> So he told me, 'I am coming next year in September. We should come to an agreement; I want to take you out of Cuba so you can come live here with me.' He used to ask me how I could leave, and I told him that there would have to be a work contract or marriage.[2] I had to marry a girl to leave. So he

[2]This is not true, but it is commonly believed among the youth (and among United States citizens) who believe that 'Fidel' forces them to stay. Cubans are free to leave anytime they wish; the impediments are the money to travel and to acquiring an expensive Cuban exit visa and a foreign entry visa. This young man for example would have to marry a Spaniard to satisfy not Cuban but

> told me, 'OK, when I come to Cuba we can talk about it, and I'll start the process here in Spain. The inquiries were the same, how I could leave my country.

The pinguero made no other mention of the encouragement to emigrate; it seems clear that the idea went nowhere, and the matter was quickly dropped in his recounting. In these interviews I did not ask specific questions, but encouraged the pingueros to simply tell the story, allowing them to decide what subjects they considered important. This pinguero, after cursory attention to his compromiso's desire to move him to Spain, spent more time discussing the dishonest behavior of another Cuban which threatened his relationship, his source of income:

> So when he came in September, I brought him a friend of mine from [Yara] who had never been to Havana but wanted to start in this life [of a pinguero]. I brought him with me to the house, to the apartment of my [Spanish] friend, so there we were, the three of us. Because one day my friend had brought me a lot of things: contact lenses, chain necklace [cadena], clothes, stuff that I had not asked for, because he loved me a lot, and he knew who I was, that I was not a person—since the first moment we met, I had not asked him for money or anything. It's only that I liked him and he knew how much need I had, too. He knew that its not possible to live without money here in Cuba. So when [the Spaniard] came [to Havana] in September, I brought a friend from the interior [eastern provinces] who wanted to come. I brought him because he didn't have a place to stay, so he slept in the other room. But one day we [the Spaniard and I] annoyed each other and had an argument. That day I didn't want to go out, so I stayed at home and he went out with my friend. So they got to liking each other [had good luck, tuvieron una aventura]. When they came home, they went to bed in the other room and had sex. When I saw what was happening I got mad, and I told him, but he said he didn't care. So I took my suitcase and left. Then the other guy robbed him of money and clothes and took off. So he cried a lot because he realized that he had lost me, that I knew where his money was and he had a lot, a lot of money, but I

Spanish law, though he seems to believe the opposite. Similar problems accrue with emigration to the United States: the problem lies with the host country, not Cuba. Every morning a line of Cubans forms outside the United States Interest Section of the Swiss Embassy (the closest thing there is to a United States consulate), awaiting interviews in hopes of achieving a United States tourist or immigration Visa. I asked an acquaintance from New York how, after falling in love with a Cuban, he managed to move him from Havana to New York. He explained an arduous process of achieving United States approval; numerous interviews, long waiting lists, an HIV test, a promise to support, and fees aplenty. He also had to pay fees to the Cuban state, but after all this there was no reason that he would not be allowed to leave Cuba.

> had never taken even a single dollar. So he cried a lot and sent me a lot of letters, [but] I didn't want to answer any of them. So then it was two or three years before I saw him, and now he is coming to spend three months here. (03.11.03)

It seems clear in this telling that this Cuban does feel some connection to the Spaniard, but his goal is not to emigrate as the Spaniard wants; rather it is to formulate a relationship of 'friendship' which would encourage continuing communication, money wires, and return visits. This same pinguero told me about another tourist whom he had met, a United States American; in addition to demonstrating the important of the fiestas for Cuban-tourist interaction, this account includes another very familiar theme in the data, the exchange of contact information to allow the continuation of the relationship after the tourist leaves:

> I met an 'amigo' that lives in New York and Minneapolis, have you been there? He's a doctor who works in AIDS and cancer. I met him one day before he left Cuba. He was with a group of Americans with a tour guide who was showing them different parts of Cuba: the Capitol Building, the Cathedral, and stuff like that. But he had never been to a gay fiesta. So I invited him to a gay fiesta; he went with me, and we had a great time. He gave me his address, email, and telephone so I could call him, but I couldn't because where I am renting there is no phone. (03.11.03)

A number of the pingueros report that their foreign 'boyfriends' gave them their email addresses and telephone numbers. In so doing, the foreigners evidence a shocking ignorance of life in Cuba. Email access is so out of the question for homeless or indigent men that to suggest an email correspondence is absurd. Telephone calls are equally silly, since a telephone call to the United States costs $2 per minute, and to Europe (where most of the 'boyfriends' live) costs $3. Tourists seem unable (or unwilling) to conceive that their ethnocentric assumptions about how to communicate are simply not feasible in the Cuban context. Pingueros accept phone

numbers and email addresses, but without imagining that they would ever use them; perhaps accepting the information is a way of signaling to the tourists that they wish to maintain the relationship. The only practical way for pingueros to communicate by receiving calls on a neighborhood phone, letters received, and money wires. This is, in fact, the principal reason that pingueros work to turn tourists into 'friends', 'compromisos', and 'lovers'.

Imaging an interaction as romance rather than as sex work serves more than to augment the pingueros' income. Some Cubans, those who occupy a location closer to the 'por gusto' end of the spectrum, wish to construct the image not only to manipulate the desire of the tourist but also to free themselves from any possible shame or guilt associated with sex work. That is, to engage in a romance is perfectly acceptable to those who already acknowledge that they do have desire for other men, but being a pinguero might be shame-producing. Consider this dialogue with a 26-year old Afrocuban from Habana Province:

> *You just used the work 'prostitute'. Tell me more about that word.*
> Because here in Cuba, everyone—prostitution is one of the ways to make our dreams come true. For example, to know the world: you can go to the United States, Italy. Understand? Wherever in the world. A lot of us have been able to get out of Cuba thanks to a tourist. Whether through prostitution, modeling, pinguero, worker—the questions is that we always need the help of a foreigner.
> *You are a prostitute?*
> Of course. Some people, whether they are pingueros or gays, say that what they do is not prostitution. Yes, it's prostitution. They say that it isn't because they would be demoralized. It's shameful for someone to say that he goes to bed for money. Mostly because of the disgrace, we don't say that we are pingueros, prostitutes, for shame.
> *Do you feel shame?*
> Of course. But it's our sadness and our reality.

He does not speak for most pingueros, who proudly proclaim that they are pingueros because that explains their presence at Yara and Malecón, rescuing them from suspicions of being a maricón. Being a pinguero is also a clear benefit in attracting young Cuban women, as we will see in Part III.

As with all elements of pinguerismo, relationships between Cubans and tourists display a confusing variation of experiences and approaches to survival in the Special Period. Several common themes can be discerned in the stories of those who choose to pursue long-term interaction with a tourist. First, the goal is usually not to emigrate but to receive regular payments from abroad; second, Cubans very often interpret their relationships differently than do the tourists; third, the newly-legal private rooms and apartments, and the semi-illegal fiestas, are crucial sites of pinguero-tourist interaction; fourth, there is some suspicion of street youth on the part of tourists, with good reason; and fifth, pingueros admit in their stories that robbing and conning tourists is a central element of pinguerismo, but they never admit to doing so themselves.

Clients

In the last subsection I analyzed the problem of differential expectations for relationships, which I have called 'relational dissonance'. This is a generous estimation which cannot hold for many pingueros, who actively encourage misinterpretations, to the point of conning tourists into believing that they are more than clients. Many pingueros keenly recognize both the profit value of the fantasy and the impossibility of real romantic relationships; most wouldn't want one anyway.

Even those who are more toward the “por gusto” end of the spectrum admit the foolishness of believing in a possibility: “Maybe someday I’ll go with a foreign guy for love, but it’s not something that happens every day. Because if I meet one foreigner today, one tomorrow, one yesterday—it would be a lie to say that I feel love” (03.02).

Not only would it be a lie to claim to feel love, but most pingueros do not want to desire to love another man. This is not to say that there is no same-gender desire among them, but rather that their cultural context has not produced an alternative identity location which would provide social supports to a long term male-male relationship. The idea that a passing or even moderate desire could or should coalesce into an ontological identity simply does not occur, and anyway would not be a social benefit. Also foreign to them is the idea that romantic or affectional attachment is or should be firmly linked to desire. Professions of love for tourists, whose value to them is largely economic and only minimally—and in only a few cases—erotic, is nearly always a manufacture. In short, many pingueros think of their tourist friends not as lovers, boyfriends, or even friends, but merely as clients, though this attitude must be masked in order to enable the fantasy of real attraction.

A crucial element of this artifice is the construction of a sexual identity which mimics that of the client. We saw in Chapter Six that pingueros instrumentally adopt the identity ‘gay’ to make themselves more appealing and marketable to tourist-clients. The meanings of that identity are not the same for the Cubans and for the clients, but this does not mean that the Cubans are unaware of the clients’ definition; many pingueros understand that when tourists call themselves ‘gay’ they mean that they are exclusively homoaffectional, homosocial, and homosexual. Tourists from

the United States, Europe, Canada, or Australia assume that real gays don't like women; there is an extreme suspicion and even a contempt of bisexuality among many gay communities in the north. The result is that, to add to the illusion of romantic love, pingueros claim to not like women. Thus do many pingueros deny the existence of girlfriends, since that would make them less appealing to 'gay' clients. To each other they are simply hombre hombres, at the most 'bisexual' (another imported category), but to their tourist friends they are 'gay'.

An example of this denial is the claim of my key informant Osmani, who explained this strategy in an interview of January 2003. Pingueros claim to be gay

> because that helps them gain your friendship and your confidence, or gets you to like them. There are some who like women, [but] say they don't, so that the tourist—if you like him, or think about a future [with him], or you think about the possibilities, you think that you could have a normal relationship, understand? A stable relationship. The gays say that they don't like women, so what he [the pinguero] thinks is, 'Well, if we end up having sex, and if he likes me, and he [thinks] that I don't like women, he will see me as a guy [like him]. So, they [the pingueros] think 'it's possible that he take me out of the country [if I claim to not like women]', and most people want to leave Cuba.

The irony is that Osmani himself turns out to have employed with me the same strategy. He had told me that he is 'bisexual', though since that category is not indigenous and thus its meaning is not uniform across subjects, it was not clear to me what he meant by it. He told me that he once had had a girlfriend in his home province of Granma, but that he did not have one anymore now that he lives in Havana. All the time that I spent walking with him, talking with him, eating with him, and observing him at Yara, he never mentioned a girlfriend, nor did I see her on the Malecón where some pingueros display girlfriends to their colleagues. Eight months later, I was back in Havana and immediately found him at Yara with a lovely young

woman, perhaps 20, whom he introduced as his girlfriend. She had been living with him in his small room in Habana Vieja for over a year, and of course—as is common—she understands and accepts his work as a jinetero and as a pinguero. Over the next few weeks, the three of us chatted occasionally. Then one day when Osmani and I were alone I asked him why he hadn't told me about her in January and why, in fact, he had told me specifically that he did not have a girlfriend. His answer, looking at the ground, was "I was ashamed" (me daba pena). I asked him to explain why he would be ashamed to be loved by such a lovely young woman. He mumbled something that didn't make sense, avoiding the question. Reflecting upon this later, I remembered the strategy he had explained to me eight months prior. He knows that I am 'gay', and believes that I will like him less as a friend if I know that he likes women. He and I did not of course have a sexual relationship, but it seems that pingueros generally believe that gay men will not want friendships of any kind with completely heterosexual Cubans.

Claiming to not like women is but one instance in which pingueros lie to tourists, the ultimate being 'I love you'. A 29-year old self-styled jinetero spoke about the pingueros: "Mostly, none of the guys who are pingueros like it. Its all for the economic need that each pinguero…. Everyone says, 'I love you, I love you!', but its all a lie" (03.13). Some of them claim that they have to lie in order to survive, and knowing the extreme economic crisis in which some of them live, this seems not so far fetched. A 27-year old pinguero from the far east of the island explained:

> There are people who say that pingueros or jineteros are lying thugs—there are people who think like that, right? Of course. It's because we are seen as being obligated to lie in order to make money. As if [the pingueros] have to invent stories to be able to make money. Because they try with lies to get

> people to feel sorry for them, to have compassion…But the Cuban prostitute is different than all those in the world. (03.05)

In Section II I will explain how I have personally experienced this scheming and have fallen for numerous stories intended to elicit sympathy. In Chapter Eight I examine the more sinister manifestations of this "obligation" to lie, robbing tourists. For now suffice it to note that pingueros' elaborate lies and manipulations of tourists indicate, first, that they are hardly powerless in the interactions, and second, that many sex workers see their clients not as friends or lovers but merely as instrumental sources of income.

Payments

We have already seen that some pingueros work to create either a romantic relationship or the image of one, while others are clear with themselves and with their clients that the interactions are strictly business. Clearly this is a difference across subjects, that is, from one pinguero to the next. Equally clear is that there is a temporal element at work, as noted above; I notice a shift in both the discursive and the pragmatic processes of pinguerismo as it develops. It began very soon after the legalization of the dollar; it seems to have been noticed as early as 1995. Thus by the time the present research began it was barely five years old, if that. Now pinguerismo is nearly ten years old, and change is happening rapidly.

When I first documented the phenomenon in 2001 I noted that most sex workers at Yara did not negotiate price with their tourist clients. In fact, to talk about money in relation to sex seemed vulgar to them. They preferred to call clients

'friends' who gave them presents instead of paying them. A few quotes from my article will demonstrate (2001:22):

> A 21-year-old medical student described his relationship with a Spanish tourist: 'He offered me material incentives. But not as payment, right? More like a gift. I accepted it because I knew that it wasn't in the spirit of payment. He kept insisting....[and] he always helps my mother.' Most sex workers refuse to even discuss money, accepting whatever the tourist chooses to give them as a 'gift': 'I will never ask you for anything, I will not ask for money. If your heart dictates to you that you give me something—like, for example, money—it will come from your heart, you understand? But I will never ask you for anything.'

Even in 1999 this was not a universal experience; there were pingueros who did quote a definite price:

> To me, it's a business; being a pinguero is a business. A business in which I get the money I need to dress, eat, and help my family, to enjoy myself. I don't do it for pleasure; I do it simply for money. For that reason, always before I leave with a tourist I tell him that he has to pay me $50. If he agrees, we have sex, he gives me the money, and we remain good friends.

Even though this pinguero finishes his transactions with a 'friendship', a common pattern as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, he nonetheless takes a cool, businesslike approach to his work. In this regard he was unusual in 1999 and 2000, as most of the men simply accepted whatever "gift" that the "friend" wanted to give.[3] But by the time of my interviews in 2003, nearly every single pinguero to whom I spoke told me that he had a definite price. "I don't go [with a tourist] for—like a lot of pingueros go for ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five—not me. I get between forty and fifty dollars. For twenty, no" (03.05). when I asked how much he charges, another pinguero declares that his body "doesn't have a price" (03.12), in the sense that it is

[3]I was wrong in the article to analyze this as a product of a socialist ethic. More likely, it was simply a result of the newness of cash-based balanced reciprocity and the men's relative inexperience negotiating 'business' transactions.

priceless. Seeing their bodies as “priceless”, but yet demanding a certain pay from a client, is a new practice in pinguerismo.

Most pingueros now insist on coming to an agreement with the tourist before they leave Yara, the Malecón, or the fiesta. At least one, though, thinks it is best to wait. Consider this disagreement:

> *Are there times when a tourist doesn’t want to talk about price beforehand?*
> Yes, there are times—but you know, it’s better to say because, for example, a tourist pays five dollars, and I don’t go for five dollars. Because my body is not worth [only] five dollars, not in this country or anywhere! So I have to take from him—I have to take a pair of shoes or some clothes. So it’s best to speak of the price beforehand. (03.10)

But a different pinguero:

> There are people, there are tourists who ask you, ‘How much do you charge?’ There are others who don’t ask. It is better if they don’t ask, because then there is the possibility of earning more. Because after it’s been consummated, after having had sex, the tourist feels more obligated to pay whatever [the pinguero] asks. If [the tourist] doesn’t ask before, there are problems. If he wants everything to go all right, he has to ask before. If he asks me before, I can say I am worth forty, thirty-five. Thirty-five, forty dollars. But if he asks me after sex, well, then I tell him fifty. Everyone has his tricks. (03.05)

This difference in approach is minor. The point is that both of these pingueros are increasingly empowered to set the terms of their sexual transactions. Nearly all now say that they do have a minimum less than which they will not accept, but within that limit most are willing to negotiate. I reproduce here several different attitudes and ways of negotiating.

> If he wants to be with me, for example with me, I tell him ‘let’s go’. And he says to me, ‘How much do you charge?’ I say how much, and then we leave for a room, and that’s it.
> *How much do you charge?*
> It depends. Because there are foreigners who say, ‘No, I pay thirty, I pay twenty, I pay forty.’ They themselves say that. When they go there to Yara, they already know that the guys exploit their bodies, right? And they say

> ‘Well, how much do you charge?’ And you say, ‘Not much.’ And he says, ‘Well, what I will give you is this much.’
> ….
> A tourist arrives [at Yara]. And you interact with him. After you say your name, you tell him, or he asks you, ‘How much do you pay?’ and he says, Well, for you what I will pay is twenty.’ Then he says, ‘I am going to give you twenty dollars for you to fuck me.’ And that’s it, you go to a room, to a house. You are there a while, you fuck him, and then you go.
>
> *When a tourist asks you ‘How much do you charge’, what do you say?*
> What do I say? Well, they have always told me how much they give. In my case, they have always told me, ‘Well, I give twenty, thirty, twenty-five. And if I accept it, I say, ‘Well, lets go.’ And we go to a room.
> *So you don’t have a fixed price?*
> A firm price? No.
> *So its like a negotiation?*
> Like a negotiation. Like the black market.
> (03.06)

Most pingueros are now clear that they are a part of a *market*, an exchange of pleasure for cash. And when the cash is not enough, they are nearly always willing to accept merchandise, especially shoes:

> *Do you charge more for fucking than you do for getting sucked?*
> No, it’s all the same price.
> *So the tourist and the pinguero come to an agreement.*
> Of course. Tourists call over to you: ‘Hey, how much do you charge? Twenty-five, thirty, forty?’ And the [pinguero] says, ‘For me, forty. Let’s go.’ And we go to a *casa particular*, and that’s it.
> *What would happen if a tourist says, ‘No. all I have is thirty.’ What would you do?*
> I would say no. My body is worth forty, not thirty.
> *But if you were hungry, or needed shoes…*
> Well, that’s something else altogether. We can cut a deal: shoes, clothes, and money. Like that.
> (03.08)

The ability to “cut a deal,” I posit, requires experience in a market exchange environment, and this is what is new. The men had to learn this skill, but it only took them a few years. A young (19 years) pinguero from Havana agrees with my temporal analysis. After also talking about cutting a deal for shoes, he made a

definite distinction between the time before he had experience and now, when he is able to perceive when he is being cheated.

> [A few years ago] I was cold. Cold in the sense of timid. I was more timid. But after, I saw how the tourists were. In the same way, if you tell me, 'Well, I'll give you twenty dollars', [but after the sex] you give me seven dollars, I would see that as an abuse. So I have already been learning. I started to talk to [tourists] like 'Look, I charge this much, and this is what I do.' (03.10)

He goes on to tell me that the most he ever received was 97 dollars, which made him incredibly happy, and the least was five, before he knew how to protect himself with negotiating skills. With a few years of experience, pingueros have learned how to evaluate potential clients to maximize profit.

> Everyone has his tricks…[Pingueros] classify the tourists. If they find a tourist who arrived in Cuba recently, they can charge more money, because he doesn't know yet. He doesn't understand the situation. It also depends on the country. For examples, Americans pay very well here. Americans are those that pay the best. Americans, Swiss—well, first are the Americans, Germans, Swiss. They pay the best. The poorest tourists are Mexicans. The problem is that they don't have enough money even for themselves. Understand? Well, this also depends on the person. At the end of the year, I spent time with a Mexican, five days, and aside from paying for my entry into the fiestas, my drinks, my meals, and taxi, he gave me $60 daily. But that's very few [tourists]. I met him the first day he arrived, and I spend five days with him, and he bought me a shirt, he bought me a pair of shoes, he took me places, to the fiestas, and for the sex he had to pay me $60 per day. But I like American, German, and Swiss tourists better. The Italians are the most shameless. (03.05)

The general consensus is that Italians are the least pleasant tourists. They are, the pingueros say, "low class," dirty, smelly, rude, poorly dressed, less skillful in bed, and pay almost as poorly as do Mexicans.

In the years since I first encountered pinguerismo, the men have been learning and teaching each other. There is a group of five of the "real" pingueros who meet nightly to discuss which tourists are in town, which pay more or try to

cheat the men, where the fiesta is that night, if the police are planning a sweep. They are clearly becoming more professionalized, more clear about their boundaries, and more organized amongst themselves—though there is still no third party who benefits, no pimps, no international prostitution rings. They will need this cooperation in order to counter the increasingly demanding tourist-clients.

II. Foreigners

We turn now to the matter of relationships from a different perspective. Rather than scrutinizing pinguero behavior and problematizing it, I now reverse the gaze and look at relationships from the perspective of tourists. The 'orientalist' gaze at best produces fractured knowledge, and at worst reproduces existing power relationships. Thus, to truly understand pinguerismo, we need first to examine it from the perspective of the tourists, and second, to problematize the tourists—that is, view them as an object of investigation—just as we have been problematizing the pingueros.

Rationalization

Armin Günther (1998) has analyzed the research of Kleiber and Wilke on German sex tourists in Pattaya, Thailand. In his article "Sex Tourism without Sex Tourists," he documented the ways in which sex tourists "defend against a self-definition as

sex tourists" (1998:71). He has discerned five different strategies of misrecognition: the argument of lacking intent; the argument of lacking restriction; the argument of lacking amorality; the argument of lacking promiscuity; and the argument of lacking payment. Here I use these strategies to analyze my interview with a northern European (gay) sex tourist in Havana. This is a 35-year old pudgy white male from Sweden who had been to Havana on several occasions for a few weeks at a time. "Bjorn" claims not to be a sex tourist (03.80).[4]

Günther's first category of defensive misrecognition is "lack of intent". Tourists deny that they are sex tourists because they say that they did not specifically intend to have sex with "native women" before embarking on the vacation in Pattaya. This argument might also be made by a tourist who was walking along the Malecón, for instance, and happened to meet a beautiful young pinguero who seduces him. If he can claim not to have *intended* to hire a pinguero when he walked toward the Malecón, he can claim that he is not a sex tourist. This is a problematic argument for the German tourists in Pattaya because, says Günther, Thailand is such a renowned international center for sex tourism that it would be unusual for men to spend much time in the city and in the city's bars and *not* meet a Thai woman. This argument could not be attributed to Bjorn because he knew full well that he would have sex with Cuban men: when I asked him what it was like for him in Cuba, he answered that "I came here because I have been here before, and I also have some contacts here I would like to meet, some gay guys I met a year ago, when I was here last

[4]The interview was in English, his second language, and I reproduce quotes exactly here as they were spoken, including the obvious grammar mistakes. These are not typographical errors.

time." "Contact" of course is a euphemism for sexual partners; Bjorn does not report that he currently conducts any other business in Cuba.

Bjorn did, however, employ Günther's second category of argument: "The argument of lacking restriction says that he is not a sex tourist because he (unlike the "real" sex tourists) did not restrict his vacation to having sex with local women" (1998:73). Thus if a tourist can offer any other reason for coming to Cuba (or Thailand, or anywhere else), then he can believe himself to be not a sex tourist; "real" sex tourists are imagined to be those who arrive with the exclusive purpose of hiring local sex workers. Bjorn follows this pattern exactly. I asked him if he is a sex tourist: "Some would say so. But I don't say 'yes' to that question, I don't think so. Because I have more differences in my meetings, in my traveling here. I have other interests in Cuba, too, than sex. I'm dancing salsa, I like to discuss politics, I'm interest in changes in Cuban society, and that kind of stuff." According to this argument, the only sex tourists in Cuba are those who do not think about or discuss politics, who do not sightsee or visit the beach, who come to Havana and intensely focus on sex. Such a criterion would leave almost no sex tourists anywhere in the world.

Günther's next category is "the argument of lacking amorality," according to which the tourists are "committed to moral standards that would be incompatible with a self-definition as sex tourists" (1998:75-76). This justification allows tourists to distance themselves from sex tourism by making moral judgments against the most unambiguous and perhaps most exploitative forms of sex work. Günther's interview with a German tells the story of his arrival in Pattaya: "And of course among other

things he drove us to a house, where girls are sitting behind a pane. It was—it was bad, it was actually bad….You stand inside there and look at it and are completely dumbfounded…I said to my buddy, 'Let's get out of here—quickly!'….Sex tourism—you have to see it, you have to see it. You can't get it out of your head and you will not forget it." By claiming a moral high ground, the sex tourist places himself in a different category that those who do not exploit the "natives". Sex workers, too, have to be seen as fundamentally different than those "friends" whom the tourist has met. In this way Bjorn distinguished between the men he meets and the pingueros:

> It's a macho culture here, so, I think it's not special for Cuba, but I think it's different between the boys who are going, walking at cine Yara every day and who just maybe go there one, two times every month, different behavior, I think. The first one is more, what I call professional prostitute, than the other ones who are more normal or what you call it, people who call it, maybe want extra money or just want to make contact or get inspired in the gay scene, because there's no gay scene in Havana at all. So I think it's, it's a big differences between the really male prostitutes boys and those who maybe go there once a month.

What distinguishes a "professional prostitute" from a "more normal or what you call it" Cuban male? Apparently the amount of time he spends at Yara—ironically one of the criteria the Cubans themselves offer as a way to distinguish; recall that "real" pingueros are those that "dedicate themselves" to pinguerismo. But of course such a distinction does not hold in light of the extreme variability and ambiguity in sexual (and even economic) identities, and in light of the mixed social use of Yara we reviewed in Chapter Six.

Günther's next "defense against self-definition as a sex tourist" is "the argument of lacking promiscuity," according to which a tourist "says that he is not a sex tourist because he (unlike the "real" sex tourists) did not have sex with several

local women." Here we approach the romantic frame of so many tourist-native relationships in the Caribbean. Although Pruitt and LaFont seem to have invented the term "romance tourism" as a distinctively Caribbean pattern, such framing occurs in Asia as well, according to the work Günther reviews. According to the statistics on which Günther relies, 37 percent of male heterosexual German tourists in Asia had sex with only one woman during three-week vacations, the median number of sexual partners being 2. Thus, he concludes, "the 'typical' sex tourist tends towards monogamy" (1998:79). Günther argues—and the Havana data presented throughout will testify—that in fact it makes no sense to distinguish between sex tourism and romance tourisms.

Günther encourages less attention to "psychological definitions of sex tourist that refer in some way to the special meaning attached to tourist-native relations by the respective actors," in favor of a more "sociological" definition. Thus, the measure of sex tourism should not be the meanings the actors assign to their relationships, but rather the institutional settings in which those relationships occur. If the context is one of institutional sex tourism, then whatever relationships happen between native and tourist, even if elaborate misrecognition has been constructed, should be viewed as manifestations of sex tourism. "Sex tourism as a social fact can be defined as the institution of tourist-oriented prostitution using prostitution in the broader sense of exchange of money for intimate relations. The use of an institution is independent of the interpretation of the single actor who uses it but not independent of the interpretations of all actors; the social institution is superior to the individual" (1998:80).

One of the ways in which both tourists and local sex workers construct a romance framing of a sexual transaction in order to facilitate mutual misrecognition is through Günther's final category, "the argument of lacking payment," the most pervasive and insidious of the six arguments. Günther's German tourist believed that he was not a sex tourist because the women did not demand money from him. In fact, he emphatically reported, the women paid a bar check themselves one day, proving that they were not prostitutes. The $6 per day that the German had to pay the owner of the bar in which they met, in order to "release" her from work obligation, was interpreted by the tourist not as a payment to a pimp but rather as a reimbursement of her salary so as to free up the native woman to spend time with him. When she consented to sex with him, he interpreted this as gratitude for the release from work and as a sign of genuine attraction.

Bjorn, the Swede tourist in Havana, repeated a very similar rationale to me, as if it were a script for self-absolution. He was not a sex tourist because the Cuban men did not demand a fee-for-service; rather, they claimed to *want* to have sex with him out of desire. Bjorn maintains this claim even after admitting that he thinks that one of his Cuban 'friends' is really 'straight':

> [T]he first evening I was here I met a Cuban. Where did I meet him? I met him at Malecón, walking. And he, he went to my apartment after we had been drinking some beer and that kind of stuff, and then we have sex together. And he didn't want any money at all. He said so. He said so when we met. "I would like to be with you," and he said it wasn't business sex, as he called it. He was just interesting to make contact with a foreigner. And he was really good in English, too, speaking fluent English. He knows a typical here [sic] is that you have to pay for sex; everyone wants money from you, if they offer sex. So he know the gay here in Cuba. But I also get the same offer from two other guys, but we hadn't, they weren't my types. But they were saying so directly. They don't want to have money. They just want to have sex, so.

And on another occasion:

> We were out taking some beer and then we went to my apartment, and then we started to kiss and then, he liked to suck, so he sucked me really good. Yeah, he was really good—cute one. He was really nice. And then he sucked me to [sic] I come in his face. And yea. That was end of story. We went into the shower, and yea. That was it. This was the first one, I didn't pay him at all. He wasn't into business sex. So he was cool.

I knew of course that this was a very typical pinguero ploy: to claim to really be gay, to claim to not be a pinguero, to claim to have genuine desire for the tourist's body. Bjorn believed the ruse that was offered him, and it served its function beautifully. Nevertheless, he does admit that on other occasions he paid Cubans who were interested only in the cash. In this way he seems to admit that he is indeed a sex tourist, despite his later denial.

> I have had two or three boys I've paid. Um, but that would be boys from cine Yara and the Arcada, boys from the street. No, we made contact there and I'm looking for sex, and I'm taking them with me to my apartment, and everything, I know that I have to pay, they know they want money for it, so it's not—we haven't set any price or that kind of thing, we haven't make an appointment, what it cost, but I have given them 15, 20 dollars.

Note that he *spatializes* the difference between 'real' prostitutes and the Cubans whom he believes desire his body. Men at Yara want money for sex, but the man he met on the beach does not. Consider the following dialogue with Bjorn in which contradictions aplenty emerge.

> *Tell me about the last time you were with a Cuban, romantically or sexually.*
> I met one at the beach. He was a masseur, and he was with me to my apartment after the beach. And we had a good time together. He was a really professional masseur, that I would like to have more than sex, and he gave me what I want. I like to fuck and I fucked him and, yea. We had a great hour together. That was cool. He was really athletic, a nice guy.
> *Tell me more about your initial meeting.*
> We were at the beach, we were going around, and he was a diploma, he was a professional masseur. And I needed really, so I make an appointment with him. So sex at that stage, but I think it's no limit for them to make sex after

> the contact, no limit to go from the professional business to the sexual business, as we have in the western cultures. They just want to make money, that's the only thing they were thinking about. And I think they have a different view of sexual morality than we have in the more industrialized countries. Because the money are the main thing for business, for what they are doing.
> *Did you expect that there would be sex?*
> Yeah, I was little bit horny so, after three hours in the sun I want to make sure I get some sex, too. He was really a nice guy, really athletic.
> *How did the shift happen from the massage to sex?*
> I got a hard on, so then he stopped to suck me. I didn't say no, leave me please, so we just got—but I think he was, I think he was straight in a way. I'm not sure if he was really gay. But he wasn't that a good sucker, really. I don't think so. He hadn't been doing that so much, but I don't think he was so professional in that way. I'm not sure, but he was very muscularly and very straight acting, and all of that kind of stuff. The typical macho Cuban.
> *Was there any kind of material exchange?*
> After. He said one price, 20 dollars for the massage, and that's what I paid him. It wasn't any extra for the sex and that kind of stuff. He didn't ask for more.

Note here that Bjorn has reproduced the ideology which allows so many northern sex tourists to hire Caribbean sex workers without guilt: tropical heat produces men and women who are sexually liberated, who have no reservations about their bodies ("I think it's no limit for them to make sex after the contact"), and who are ready to have sex at the drop of a hat ("I think they have a different view of sexual morality than we have in the more industrialized countries"). He also stated, a bit later, that "the lifestyle here make them more sexual active, I think". Thus, renting their bodies to tourists is less loathsome and therefore less a sacrifice than it would be for northern women or men. Embedded in this image is the belief that because they are less reserved in their sexuality, tropical people are more animal-like. Recall that this is similar to the image of the mulata in Cuban independence ideology: unreserved, animalistic sexuality.

Bjorn represents an odd mixture of contradictions. He repeats much of the rhetoric so common among sex tourists globally: they really have desire for him, they didn't ask for money so therefore are not sex workers, he is not like exploitative johns who hire underage youths, he comes to Havana for more than just sex, and anyway sex is less problematic and less meaningful for tropical people. Still, he does not deny paying some men, does not deny promiscuity, and in fact admits that he benefits from the fact that there are many Cubans for each tourist. Consider carefully this exchange after he described a cash sexual transaction:

> *Do you think you will see him again?*
> No, I don't think so, one night. No not one night, one day.
> *Why don't you plan to see him again?*
> Because there are so many others, and that would make me a little more frustrated, because it's difficult to make a relation for a holiday, if you want to have the same guy or boy for the same holiday. It's too many opportunities here. And I think it's also different from last year, because there's less tourists. Because it's more, I don't want to say aggressive, they want to make more contacts than before. You get more popular as a tourist because you are, they see that they have an opportunity to make some money, and yea.

Bjorn confirms two of my observations: he recognizes changes in pinguerismo ("there's less tourists"), and he acknowledges the impossibility of romantic relationships in the midst of sexual plenty.

Bjorn also knows that he benefits from the men's desperate financial situation. My claim throughout has been that sex work is an economic phenomenon, and therefore the differing economic circumstances of the native and the tourist must be considered in the definitional determination of sex work. Günther has defined what he calls "structural prostitution":

> The blatant economic imbalance between tourists and natives creates a situation that I would like to call structural prostitution: every noneconomic definition of relationship (love, friendship, flirtation, mutual sexual attraction)

> tends to be undermined by the native's strong economic interest in a lasting personal commitment of the tourist. The local women (or men), who often do not consider themselves prostitutes (Cohen 1982, Pruitt and LaFont 1995), have an economic interest in the transformation of commercial service relations into a personal love affair. This paradoxical structure—an economic interest in the development of a noneconomic relations—explains much of the dynamics that characterize long-term relations in the context of sex tourism (Cohen 1982).

I completed the interview with Bjorn by asking specifically about the phrase 'sex tourism'.

> *What is sex tourism?*
> Oh, that's a big question. Maybe to do what you don't get at home, what you don't do at home. But I'm thinking it's more exotic, maybe it's what do you call it, its not so, not so, maybe you do things you don't do at home, or you can have a more open minded way of thinking about sex when you're are traveling. At home I'm not, I never go to prostitutes. I've never paid any time at home for sex. But I think it's, at that's more the traditional way of thinking in my mind. At home. But I think it's a different mindset here, which I give my acceptance for. Its that you pay for it, you are more maybe you can choose more precisely what you want. Yea, I've heard that they are more, they have, everyone have a lover or a lover boy. And they have also, they start early to have sex. Its common to be pregnant in their teens, which are not common anymore in Europe or the US, so I think it's a little bit different. I think there are more, I don't want to use the word open minded, but the lifestyle here make them more sexual active, I think. And of course maybe its also something about the society, what they can get or what the goal in their life are maybe different than our goals in our lives in the industrial countries. And sex is maybe something that they still have fun with.

Bjorn's answers place him in a rather unflattering light, at best arrogant and self-absorbed and at worst abusive of the Cubans. Thus, despite the pingueros' and jineteros' penchant for conning and robbing tourists, it would be simplistic to imagine that tourists are victims of ruthless Cubans. Pingueros are all too aware that tourists have the power to cheat them with impunity, since the men would not dare enlist the aid of the state in a dispute with a tourist. I asked one man to tell me about his bad experiences with a tourist, in which the tourist paid him very little, surely aware that he had no recourse (03.10).

> An old guy, a tourist, paid me five dollars. He was old, ugly, and he had terrible body odor. Horrible. It was a long time ago. He told me, 'I'll pay you $30.' I said 'OK, that's fine.'….And [afterwards]when I said 'OK pay me so I can go now', he gave me five dollars….I thought a lot of things. That the guys in Cuba, for having so much need—they don't do this so you pay them five dollars. I don't do this because I like to, but because I have to.

Another man told me a story about his 20-year old cousin who went with a 45-year-old tourist for money: "After sex he told him that he wouldn't give him anything, that he had never said he would give him anything, and that if the Cuban didn't leave his room he would call the police. The boy, who had sacrificed himself, did not get what he needed. By the time he got home he was crying" (99.14).

It is possible that this tourist was simply an abuser who took what he want and then used his privilege to escape payment (such as the Swedish tourist Bjorn: "Most important is that I get what I want"). But I think it more likely that the Cuban had not yet learned how to be assertive and to protect himself, and the tourist did not understand the script and the unspoken assumptions of pinguerismo; like Bjorn and like Günther's German tourists—from cultural contexts in which cash exchange transactions are normal and price quoting is a standard business procedure—if money is not specifically mentioned, the tourist assumes that the sex is for lust. All this data—tourists taking advantage of the desperation of Cubans; Cubans robbing, conning, and taking advantage of the material abundance of tourists; Cubans taking advantage of tourists' desire for love; false promises of endless love; misrecognition all around—indicate that pinguerismo radically disrupts the simplistic notions that sex workers are either hapless victims abused by sexually voracious and ruthless tourists, or dangerous street criminals against whom innocent tourists must be protected. Both images are false to the extent that they construe sex work as a

function of either individuals' criminality or their abusiveness. These images ignore the very real structural constraints under whose tyranny the pingueros survive as best they can, using their highly-desired bodies and their wile.

Reciprocity

I too was a foreigner in Cuba on a tourist visa. I came to Yara for a few weeks or a month at a time and returned the following year. Thus it should not be surprising that most pingueros perceived me as a potential client like any other, and therefore utilized their familiar strategies. Of course I disclosed my purpose to everyone to whom I spoke for more than a few minutes and to anyone to whom I asked any questions, and—since Cubans generally are highly educated—most pingueros well understood social scientific research. Nonetheless, they had only one script for engaging with foreigners, and I was a foreigner. Further, it was clear that I was a potential source of income, since I dressed well and had a computer and a cellular telephone—clear indicators of wealth. Naturally, the pingueros attempted to wrest wealth from me using their standard bag of tricks.

I have already mentioned that pinguerismo relies upon the reciprocity that is an inheritance of Cuban culture. According to this logic, he who has more should share with him who has less. Nearly always, of course, I was the one with more, who was expected to share with the Cubans, But on 17 July 1999 the roles were reversed; I made the following entry in my field book:

> Last night a pinguero robbed me of $18. It's not much, but in my current financial crisis, it really is. This morning I went to the street and spoke to a few

> pingueros. One of them was the guy who came to my place last night to shower and eat. He offered me sex in payment, but I of course explained that he didn't have to pay me, so he said that I am a good person. This morning, a few minutes after I went to Yara and told them that I had been robbed, he left and came back with a soft drink and a sandwich and gave them to me, to help me survive the financial loss. This man was to become my friend and informant Roldy. He is, of course, very poor and semi-homeless, having come from Guantánamo. The day before he had not eaten all day, but today he bought me a sandwich. It didn't cost much, but for a guy in his situation, it was quite a remarkable gesture of friendship.

This was my first lesson in generalized reciprocity, Cuban style. This doesn't mean that Roldy was being completely selfless, since he probably assumed that the favor would be returned to him someday when he is in crisis, an assumption in which he was quite correct. I have learned that in fact an economy of reciprocity guides a great deal of pinguero relationships, with both Cubans and foreigners. Recall that during my night on the Malecón with the homeless pinguero I noted several times that the young men seem to look out for each other. The trading of protection is of course as much indicative of reciprocity as is the trading of commodities.

Reciprocity is both generalized and balanced, though the latter is quickly replacing the former as the normal mode of operation, a change which I attribute to the introduction of capitalist market relations into formerly socialist social relations. I have observed an enormous amount of trading of commodities, much of them surely stolen. The items cannot have much value for the young men, except perhaps as status symbols: cellular phones that cannot possibly be activated, "found" travelers checks which cannot possibly be cashed, and non-functioning small electronics of all manner. And the two commodities traded in a single transaction do not have to be of a similar monetary value. On 12 August 1999 I wrote in my field book:

> There is quite a bit of trading activity. It seems to not require a value equivalence; one item is traded for another which seems to me to be of a significantly different value. Of course, the men are hardly accustomed to thinking in monetary terms; perhaps this is related to their inability to manage money or even save for next day's urgent necessities. One item will show up with several different people in a 4 day span. I am also invited into this informal trade network: a pinguero asked me for a pullover [t-shirt], but wanted to buy it, not be given it. But since he has no money, he casually offered his body as a trade, as if it were a commodity like any other.

I shall have more to say about commodification of the body below; my focus here is on reciprocity as a survival strategy. When engaging in a reciprocal relationship with foreigners, Cubans have precious little to offer; for this purpose the men bring to the trade the only asset they have: their body. One more story from my field experience will illustrate reciprocity among the pingueros. This was the young man mentioned above who had consistently attempted to offer his body to me in exchange for the food and clothing with which I had supplied him. I explained that his participation in the study would be more than adequate repayment, but he was not satisfied, wanting to repay me with his body. In a 2003 interview, I asked him to help me understand his motivation in this regard.

> *I have known you for three years, and you have been a good friend to me. You have suggested that we have sex.*
> Yes, yes.
> *Explain to me why.*
> Because you are a very good person. You are a person who has helped me a lot: when I am hungry, you give me food, when I need clothes, you help me. And how could I pay you? I can't give you money because I don't have any. [But] I could do that [offer sex], I could give you pleasure.
> *You would be giving me something in your way?*
> Of course.
> *Because I have given you other things?*
> To pay for what you have done for me. I can't pay with money.
> *It is your present to me?*
> Yes. (03.10)

I mused about this man's possible motivations in my field book dated 12 January 2003:

> The young man who befriended me three years ago, and into whom I ran last night, is here with his slightly younger brother. My cook did not show up today, but they said they knew how to cook. Unfortunately, they obviously do not. The lunch was a disaster. But now they have both removed their shirts. Are they trying to entice me? The one whom I met before knows by now that I will give what I have without requiring sex, so what is he trying to do? Perhaps it is simply natural for them to go shirtless in the house. But why? Surely both of them do not have genuine homoerotic desire, probably not even one of them.
>
> Writing about two hours later: The older brother (I actually think they are cousins) whom I knew three years ago is becoming more and more aggressive. As I do not respond to each advance, he increases the brazenness of the next advance. Finally he even took out his nearly complete erection to show me (with his brother right next to him, ignoring him). I ignored that also, and returned back to the kitchen to resume my work transcribing. Finally he came over to me and asked bluntly if we couldn't have sex. He said that I have given him much, and been a good friend to him, so he wants to "do me a favor". He has said the same thing before, but I have not accepted the sex.
>
> There are three possible explanations for this behavior. First, it could be part of a clever manipulative plot to rope me into a relationship of obligation, in which I would be obliged to return the favor with (most likely) clothing. But I have given him clothing before, and have made it known that I will give him more clothing this trip. So he has no need to entice me into such a relationship; he has already gotten what he wants.
>
> The second possibility is that he truly does feel some obligation to reciprocate my kindness in the past. If it is true that Cubans operate within an economy of generalized reciprocity, then he would not be satisfied until he had done his fair share, as it were. He would feel that the relationship is incomplete until he had given me something. Of course, this is precisely the social function of general reciprocity systems: to make sure that there is never closure, that there is never a time when everything is even, so that there is a reason for the maintenance of the relationship and all it entails. Thus, it could be that he is simply responding from the cultural context in which he was reared; namely, one in which survival in mighty lean times is dependent upon the maintenance of relationships of reciprocity.
>
> The third possibility is that he genuinely does feel some sexual attraction to me. This could be based in a few different sources of desire. First, he could

> desire me physically. Second, he could desire the exoticism which a foreigner necessarily represents. Third, he could find my financial power exciting. Fourth, he could find exciting the fact that I travel from country to country: this mobility is something denied to most Cubans because of lack of cash. This latter possible erotic attraction might include a hope that someday I might provide his exit from Cuba. A few men have befriended me and then suggested that maybe someday they could come to the United States. But the erotics of mobility could also be less concrete, and reside in simply the sexiness of someone who has a power which he does not have. Fifth, I could represent to him a father figure, since I am almost old enough to be his father, and I do have a gray hairs.

Desire

This interview data and field book discussion introduce another matter entirely: the formulation of desire. I am fairly certain that this man's attempts to seduce me were an attempt to maximize gifts from me by creating an obligation to reciprocate. But I mused that another possibility is that I was indeed erotically interesting to him, not because of my body but because of the power I represent. As I will argue more thoroughly later, the study of pinguerismo suggests that economics not only *conditions* sexual identity—as Weeks and D'Emilio showed twenty years ago—but more, *economic power formulates desire itself*. I suggest that it is not only that the men have sex which they do not desire because it will bring them income, but also that the *income itself interpolates the desire and rearranges it, such that the men do actually desire the sex with male tourists*.[5] This in part would explain the "conversion" I have already mentioned. To this I now add an additional erotic possibility, what we could call "the erotics of mobility". A lack of power to move freely across national borders is a frequently-cited complaint of the pingueros; it could be

[5]There is of course a long tradition in Freudian thought about the erotic attraction of power. I have chosen here not to engage that literature, though it offers rich cross-cultural comparative potential for another scholar.

that those who have that power which they lack become erotic in their eyes, even though they otherwise are not homoerotically oriented. I shall have considerably more to say about desire in the chapters to follow, and in fact much of the data can be fruitfully interpreted through the lens of the formulation of desire.

The body as commodity is only useful in a trade with foreigners, since pingueros do not normally imagine that their bodies are valuable items in exchanges with other Cubans (or that other Cubans are able to provide cash for trade). Aside from the services that cement relationships with colleagues (protection, client referral), the commodities most often traded among pingueros are shoes and small electronics. Reciprocity is an active social agent in pingueros' relationships with other Cubans even more than with foreigners.

III. Cubans

No, there is no competition between pingueros. (03.07.04)

Reciprocity infuses Cubans' relationships with each other. In the last chapter I wrote that, despite the drag-queen fight on the Malecón and the rumors of a fistfight, I have not observed a great deal of tension between competing pingueros. There is currently enormous competition between them simply because there are so many Cubans for every tourist, but they do not appear to develop animosities. It is possible, of course, that there is animosity which I do not perceive, either because I only observe them a month at a time or because of linguistic barriers; as fluent as I am in Spanish, there are surely plenty of subtle innuendoes to which I do not have

access. Still, I believe that a cooperative ethic persists between them, even in the face of competition.

Colleagues

The pingueros are not atomized; rather they form social networks within which they operate, with exception of course, as a group. One indication of this is their mutual assistance in procuring clients. If a tourist declines sexual innuendoes, most pingueros will likely ask the tourist about his preferences. Perhaps there is a particular type of Cuban for which he searches? The pinguero will then make every effort to introduce the tourist to a friend who meets the criteria. The favor will be returned when the occasion arises. Thus they function in a network of generalized reciprocity which ensures, at least within a social network, that the youth have a cushion against lean periods, and that a potential client will not be lost.

One level-headed pinguero admits the occasional outbursts which emerge from the scarcity of tourists, but he also insists that pingueros tend to be gracious losers, as mentioned in Chapter Seven.

> Between pingueros there is no competition. They help each other, mutually. Yes, because everyone is there for the same thing. Sure, they can have their arguments and their fights; for example, in case I were going to fuck you, and you are with someone else, and the other person doesn't wanna let me fuck with you. On the other hand, they respect each other a lot. If I am with you, no one else will come will approach. If I leave you alone, then someone else will come along and chat with you. (03.07.04)

A rather business-like pinguero agrees entirely (03.08.10): "Pingueros can be friends. I don't look on them poorly but positively, like we could be friends. I have pinguero friends; they are friends of mine, and nothing happens." Pingueros trade

information about tourists, trade material goods, support each other's masculinity, goof-off together to pass the time, and often call their close pinguero friends "cousin". They also help each other arrange clients. Thus, if a pinguero meets a pair of tourists, he will quickly locate a friend from within his social network and introduce him to his new client's friend, so that a pinguero from outside the network is not chosen instead. And if a pinguero meets a tourist who does not care for him, the Cuban will without rancor help the tourist to locate a pinguero who is more in keeping with the tourist's tastes, surely a friend from within his social network.

This kind of referral behavior does not, I would argue, make a pinguero a pimp for another. All pingueros benefit from referral networks, but no one benefits excessively, and no member of the network is exploited by any other. When both parties are men, and especially when both parties are sex workers, it is easier to see the relationship as mutually beneficial. Of course this matter is far more nebulous when a man helps a woman to find clients and thereby benefits, in which case we would likely imagine this to be an exploitative relationship. But I suggest that this is a false distinction, that just because one partner is male and the other female does not mean that the relationship is necessarily any different. That is, even when a man appears to be a pimp for a woman sex worker, it does not represent the same kind of exploitation we tend to assign to pimps in the United States. I provide one more example from my field experience to illustrate how reciprocity in the form of client referral helps sex workers in Havana, both male and female, to survive. From my field book dated 19 August 2003:

> Last night, walking home just after having seen the police, I ran into one of the men whom I had interviewed in January. He was sitting next to a young

> woman whom I assumed was a jinetera. I was correct. After some chat, he explained quite matter of factly that he was there to pose as her boyfriend, so that if any police came, they would be less likely to harass her as a jinetera. In return, she would pay him five or ten dollars for every trick she turned. This gentle young man is in no way a pimp. He was doing her a service which she, by the way, had requested of him. Fascinated by this, I suggested a follow-up interview, and one alone with her. He agreed, and after an explanation, so did she (though he generally spoke for her, as if she were entirely passive and he were her big brother).

Is my informant a 'pimp' for agreeing to protect his friend and from profiting from it? Sex work in Cuba, both male and female, disturbs many of the ideas formulated around sex work in the United States and Europe. The very least we can say is that pinguerismo and jineterismo produce ambiguity.

Girlfriends

This pattern of workers helping friends to acquire clients is repeated even within hetero relationships. That is, girlfriends might assist their boyfriends in acquiring clients. A few field experiences will illustrate. From my field book dated 3 January 2003:

> I sat on the Malecón today and read. A black woman and a young white male passed, and they paused to talk to me. He is 18, with a boyish face and a hairy chest. She was more aggressive, trying to pimp him. She suggested we fuck, to which I replied that I don't pay, to which she responded, "Not even 30 dollars?" No again. Then he finally spoke up, suggesting 20 dollars. When I refused a third time, they rather abruptly left with a 'buenas tardes'.

Pingueros are extremely skilled in seducing tourists, and their girlfriends are most helpful. Another such attempt to seduce me was unsuccessful, though I did not realize what was happening until the man was in my apartment. From my field book:

> I met a classically handsome, muscular rugged man, with a young woman on his arm, on 23rd just beneath the Chinese restaurant. He was mighty flirtatious, saying that the woman was just a friend. After flirting for a bit, he

> asked if I were going to the fiesta. I had not planned on it, but I agreed. When he arrived, I discovered that I was expected to pay for any Cubans who were with me at the time of arrival. Then I also had to pay for the entrance of both the man and the woman. Then I had to pay for them to get home. Once arrived at my apartment, 23rd and L, he suggested that he spend the night. But once inside the apartment, he suggested that I give him something. When I realized that he was a pinguero/jinetero, I decided to call off the date. He then asked for cab fare, which he said would be five dollars (a figure I now know to be way exaggerated). I gave him the five dollars nonetheless, but then had to walk out with him to unlock the door, since it cannot be unlocked even from the inside that late at night without a key (it was now around 2). He must not have been expecting this, for when we arrived at the door, lo and behold, his "friend" was sitting on the steps of the building. Apparently he had had no intention of spending the night, else why would she have been sitting waiting for him? His intention, it seems, was to have sex with me, take his pay, and then excuse himself. She and he would then spend the money together.

This was the first experience which indicated to me that women and men sometimes work together to pinguiar or jinetear. The second came when in 1999 I met a young man who told me in an interview that he had a girlfriend; in 2000 he brought her to meet me. He explained that she is "civilizada", which generally describes a Cubana who is accepting of homosexuality, but in the case of pinguerismo also means that she accepts the sexual work of her boyfriend. I interviewed her, during which she explained that

> [T]he guys today do pinguerismo in order to survive, to buy things and the food they want to eat, since they don't eat at home. They have to pinguiar to survive and solve their problems. They are appreciated and treated the same as a guy who is not a pinguero. Even though they are pingueros, I treat them the same, because they are just like anyone else. Because they try to solve their [economic] problems and I understand their need. If my boyfriend were [a pinguero], I would not feel bad because he does it to help himself and to help me.

She had previously denied knowledge of her boyfriend's economic activities, but her verb tense in this last sentence changed from the conditional ("I would not feel bad") to the declarative ("he does it to help himself and to help me"). Since most Cubans

tend to use proper grammar, I suspect that this was not an error, that she could have continued to use the conditional had she wanted to. Perhaps it was a slip of the tongue, but I don't think so. Her very next comments continued the declarative, and she seemed to give up all claim of not knowing: "He told me…he with a Cuban, no. Cubans have diseases. Most of the young guys are enrolled in programs for AIDS. He uses condoms with them in order to protect me. With me, he does not."[6] Here she not only admitted knowing that her boyfriend has sex outside the relationship, but she admits that they have talked about it. She also made a distinction between sex with Cubans and with tourists, suggesting that she knew full well with whom her boyfriend had been sexually active.

It seems that in many pinguero-girlfriend or spouse pairings, both partners benefit from the infusion of money into the relationship, so she looks the other way when he spends the night with a tourist. The girlfriend I interviewed did more than look the other way: she participated with her pinguero boyfriend in running a con. He came to me one day saying that he had been given a summons of 8,000 pesos (at that time $40)—far more than he could manage to pay. He never asked me for the money, but he assumed a pained expression and told me how worried he was that he would have to go to jail if he couldn't pay it. Knowing that I was being conned, I decided to let the con play out so as to observe their reactions (both had consented). So I chose to ignore that matter. A week later, she came to me alone, telling me that she was most worried about her boyfriend, since he would surely go to jail unless he

[6]I do not believe that it is true that most of the young men have AIDS. The state's active condom ad campaign and progressive sex education in middle school have led to a remarkable level of awareness, and all Cubans to whom I spoke claimed to carry condoms with them and to use them always with clients. That her boyfriend does not use condoms with her is an incredibly common pattern documented by all researchers of sex work I have encountered.

could find the money. She then waited for me to respond, which I failed to do. Her hints became increasingly blatant. After another week of coordinated efforts to secure my “help”, I did finally give the money. When he came back the next day to show me his summons with the word “Pagado” stamped in it, I knew that indeed I had been conned: the summons was more than a year old; he must have saved it for just such an occasion. This con is simply one of many ways in which pingueros and their girlfriends together conspire to earn money from tourists, even it sex is required. In his words, she is “civilized”.

Does this mean that women who help their men find clients are “pimps”? They might introduce their boyfriends to clients, negotiate a price, or pretend to be only a friend so as to con a tourist. But I do not believe that they are pimps according to our common understanding. They do benefit from the dollars earned, but they do not exercise power over the men nor coerce them in any way. Is it possible for a woman to be a pimp to a man? According to some right-wing feminist rhetoric, pimps are an example of the abuse of women by men. But this understanding is shown to be simplistic when we consider the examples I have described here. Again, Cuban sex work, both male and female, disturbs many standard ideas about sex work. Pinguerismo is not a *thing* with defined properties but a process full of ambiguity, instability, and internal contradiction.

Dancing

I have not conducted formal interviews with non-pinguero Cubans from the neighborhood around which the men work, nor did the Institutional Review Board

allow interviews of Cubans in the men's neighborhoods. Nonetheless, I have a general impression that the pingueros are not subject to as strong a social censure as are, for example, the jineteros or (especially) the jineteras. If this is true, one reason may be that there is a recognition—especially among the youth—that the current economic crisis compels sex work, and that the men are simply fulfilling their obligations to their families.

In fact, pingueros believe that a great many Cuban men would also take any opportunity to earn dollars through sex with tourists: "Well, I'm going to explain to you more or less what I understand. In this country the macho is 25 percent. That is, of 20 people, five are masculine like a man. And [the other 15] are bugarrones, gays, or fags….The majority of Cuban men, the great majority, enter into this life. The great majority of men in this country enter into this life" (03.07.03). This phenomenon is described by the Cuban slang phrase *por dinero, baila hasta el mono*, "for money, even the monkey dances". Another pinguero used the phrase:

> OK, I'm going to tell you something. At this moment in Cuba, 'for money, even the monkey dances'. It's a saying. It means that at this time in Cuba, almost all men, for money, have sex with other men. Almost—it's like 95 percent, because of the need in the country—well, I'm not going to say *all* Cubans have sex for money, but the youth, it's 95 percent….Even the monkey dances. That is to say that there is so much need that if there's money up front, *anything* could happen. (03.05.06)

This could be a self-defensive mechanism, according to which pingueros declare that they are no different than any other Cuban man. More likely is that when these men spoke of "all Cubans," they were not thinking beyond their own social worlds; that is, perhaps in making these universal declarations, the pingueros were speaking only of the Cuban men with whom they themselves interact.

Conclusions

From these reflections on pingueros' relational patterns, several summary conclusions emerge. First, pingueros are first and foremost Cubans, and so they operate from within the same cultural logic as does any other Cuban. This cultural logic is generally nonviolent and does not assume that one's personal well-being depends upon the misfortune of others. Thus, pingueros do not seem to cultivate animosity toward each other, even in lean times when there are not nearly enough tourists to go around. In fact they operate from a logic based on generalized reciprocity in which they share information about tourists, help each other to survive materially, and at times engage in what we might call 'pimping', but which in fact is less like exploitation and more like mutual assistance for mutual benefit.

Second, pingueros make every effort to bring tourists into their networks of relationships which entail reciprocal obligations. They attempt to seduce tourists, and if this is not successful (and sometimes even when it is) many pingueros will rob from or con them. Most pingueros attempt to form romantic friendships with tourists, with the goal of securing monthly remittances. Unlike other sex workers on other Caribbean islands, most pingueros' main goal is—with notable exception—to emigrate from the island.

Third, it appears to me that this tendency to encourage long-lasting relationships is changing somewhat under the pressures of a new economic logic which encourages Cubans to think in terms of fee-for-service transactions. Pingueros' generalized reciprocity is becoming increasingly balanced, and they are

beginning to think more in terms of market exchanges. One positive aspect of this development is that the workers are becoming more professionalized, in the sense that they are learning how to protect themselves form abusive tourists by agreeing on price before the encounter. This ‘professionalization’ is likely to lead to an increasingly sharp differentiation between those who charge for a service and those who attempt to create a romantic attachment.

Thus far, I have been discussing the street youths’ relationships with tourist and with each other. But there is another realm of interaction which is also paramount in how they experience their lives: that is their relationships to the revolutionary state apparati, including the ideological machinery and the individual police officers with whom the youth come into most frequent contact. This is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Eight
State

In the last chapter we learned that Pingueros—and other deviant men who hang about at Yara and the Malecón—reproduce the cultural logic from which they and all Cubans emerge. This is especially visible in the men's networks of reciprocity relationships and in their constructions of masculinity, a matter I take up in the present chapter. In several ways, they faithfully reproduce standard norms of masculine behavior, and thus are unremarkable citizens of the Revolutionary state and of the Cuban nation. But their relationship to the state is ambivalent at best, and at times extremely problematic. The state to some extent does allow them to operate, but at the same time makes life rather uncomfortable for them by criminalizing and harassing them. The present chapter examines these contradictions and their implications.

I. Criminals

Some of the men at Yara are street youth, in the sense that they have limited connection to family or workplace, traditional sites of social and political reproduction

during the Revolution. Instead, their material survival and the development of their identity—sexual, gender, national—occurs at and around Yara and in the context of survival sex. In terms of imported consumer goods, their access to tourist dollars usually makes them better off than most other Cubans; but since food and housing are not guaranteed from day to day, many of them do have to struggle mightily, especially in the lean summer months. To survive the Special Period, they have developed the adaptive skill of crafty manipulations of their only source of income: foreigners.

Con

Pingueros' repertoire of strategies to relieve foreigners of cash includes three types of manipulations: claiming not to be a pinguero, compelling reciprocal obligation, and conning out of money and directly robbing. In this first section I review the two types discussed in detail in the last chapter, and introduce the third.

The first type of manipulation is claiming not to be a pinguero at all, as we saw in the last chapter. This causes the tourist to let down his guard and relax his defenses against the rather aggressive sales pitches of pingueros at Yara. The pinguero might even spend several days with the tourist out of "love" and natural "desire". Eventually, the Cuban will begin to mention things he needs. A lack of response will cause the Cuban to suddenly have a family emergency which requires immediate cash. The pinguero is likely to urgently need a new pair of shoes, cash for mother, or clothes for the younger brother who was just robbed. In this way, the pinguero secures a payment for his time without the tourist ever knowing that he is

with a sex worker. The second class of manipulation is similar but not identical. Since the men have a strong sense of reciprocal obligation, one of their ploys is to lure a tourist into a relationship of obligation. Even if the tourist is reluctant to accept favors, the pinguero will insist that he accept something, so that he then must repay it. And since the tourist has a far greater financial capacity, his return favor will be considerably greater than the pinguero's initial gift. We saw a hint of this strategy in the last chapter, when I described the odd behavior of my informants as they tried to compel reciprocity using increasingly desperate attempts to seduce.

The third type of manipulation is conning out of cash or direct robbery. As a foreigner with money, I was seen by many of the men to be a prime target of all manner of con. As early as August 1999 one of the pingueros declared that I was "bobo" (naïve to the point of foolishness), an opinion he proved correct by subsequently robbing me. On 11 January 2003 I listed in my field book the cons into which I had fallen:

1. A young (19ish) man befriended me on the corner of 21 and L. He suggested that we go to a private gay disco. But he wanted to look good, so he asked to borrow a nice pair of shorts he saw in my drawer (pingueros immediately inspect a tourist's belongings, uninvited). I was skeptical, but he offered to leave his own shorts with me as collateral. They were mesh-lined Nike swim trunks, nice but not as much so as the ones he borrowed. We walked to the 'disco', a dark, skanky basement. Only three other people had yet arrived. We sat down, after he ordered himself a beer and I a refresco. After a good 15 minutes of sitting during which he deflected (in silence) my attempts to communicate, he said he needed to go speak to the manager, whom he had said was a friend of his. So he walked around the corner of this basement while at the table. After ten minutes, I wondered the reason for the tarry, so I got up and peered around the corner. He was not to be seen. I walked outside to see the doorman/manager whom he had said was a friend. He had not seen him, and does not remember seeing him before. The pinguero had taken off with my shorts, and was a full ten minutes away by the time I realized it.

2. A jinetero who came for an interview used my bathroom before leaving. A few minutes later he knocks on the door and gives me my electric razor, which I had not noticed missing. He claimed that some other jinetero had taken it (even though no other had been in my apartment that day). This was intended, I imagine, to gain my confidence, even though it was obvious that he had taken it himself. Another pinguero told me later that there were police just outside the door of the building, prompting the thief to not want to be caught with the merchandise on him.
3. Several pingueros waited in my bedroom while I conducted an interview out in the kitchen/eating area. When the interview was over and they were leaving, one of the men who had been in the bedroom whispered to me that I should check one of his colleague's pockets. As he was leaving (he had to get through me, since the gate was locked and only I had the key), I did manage to glance casually at his pocket, where something was hanging out. I pulled it out, and his face turned beet red. I found first one article and then another that he has stolen from my drawers, mostly socks and underwear. Is that all, I asked? Oh yes. But then I noticed that he was wearing a belt with which he did not enter. It was mine, so I took it off him. I sat him down, and asked if I had mistreated him? Had I not been generous? So, why did I deserve such treatment? He began to weep (I have no idea if the tears were genuine), and so I held him for a few minutes. Then we walked out together to get a fruit shake, since he had not eaten. After we finished the shakes and he was preparing to walk to the camelo [a very large *guagua*, a bus] stop, he said that his daughter was in need of an operation because of her malformed feet and ankles. But didn't the state pay for such medical care? Yes he admitted, but he did not have the money for transportation. So he asked for—and I foolishly gave—$10.
4. A pinguero came over and was in a rush to go out of town to visit his sick mother. He did not have time to wash his clothes, so he asked if he could borrow a few items of mine. As collateral, he offered to leave with me a tiny duffle of clothes, which he would then reclaim when he brought my clothes back to me. A full week after he had claimed that he would be back, I looked into the bag and saw that it contained mere scraps of clothing, items that were far surpassed in value by the clothes he had "borrowed". When I saw him a few weeks later, he admitted that he had conned me.
5. On my third visit, I lost the greatest amount of money. I invited two men over to my place late one night to converse and drink a coffee. The older pinguero was extremely flirtatious. When I did not respond to innuendoes, he increased their intensity, even outright suggesting that we have sex. When I still chose not to respond, he sat down next to me on the couch. When still no response came, he inched closer and closer to me, like a teenager on a date. When still no response, he

stated to caress my neck and leg. I inched away. Finally he got up to go the bathroom. When he tarried, I got up and saw that he had laid himself down on my bed and, he said, was awaiting me to join him (my bedroom was between the bathroom and the living room). I told him to get up, and I walked back to the living room to continue to chat with his friend. When still he tarried, I called into the room that he should rejoin us now, that he did not have permission to lay on my bed. Still he tarried, only returning to the living room after nearly ten minutes. As they were preparing to leave, he asked if I could not give them some clothing? I refused the invitation, but he persisted. He had to be told several times that I had invited them there to share a coffee and conversation with me, and that they had accepted, and so no, I did not feel any obligation to give clothing. Then he asked for cab fare, about which he was equally insistent. I refused again and again, after which he finally resigned and left. Only a few days later, when I went to my travel wallet to get more money, did I realize that he had taken my cellular phone and $400. His approaches toward me were a cover to provide a legitimate excuse for having tarried in my bedroom. And the repeated requests at the door, while he had $400 of mine in his pocket, were also a ruse to distract my attention away from what was already in his pocket.

6. A young pinguero knocked on my door told me that he had been robbed of nearly all his clothing and had only what was on his back. I happily gave him a pair of used Calvin Klein jeans, with which he appeared to be delighted. And I was delighted that I could provide a partial solution to his problem without parting with any money. But the next evening, I saw those same jeans being sold on the street (beneath the Chinese restaurant) by a different pinguero. I am sure that the pinguero to whom I gave the jeans did need the money he earned from the sale, but I am also sure that his claim to have been robbed of clothing was a ruse. It's amazing how many pingueros are robbed of their clothing every day!

I have learned to protect myself against their machinations, though I refuse—as several of my friends and informants have encouraged—to limit my contact with those youth who have a reputation for questionable behavior with tourists. Those pingueros who know me best—many of whom have seen me year after year since 1999—have at times told others to treat me well, that I am not a tourist like any other, that I "help" them (i.e., with food and clothing) without expectation of

repayment (i.e., through sex). Most tourists do not have this protection, and for this reason the police frequently warn tourists about the “malos muchachos” of Yara.

Andar

In the last chapter I translated “andar” as “to hang out”. One of the ‘crimes’ of which pingueros are accused is “andar con turistas,” or hanging-out with tourists. Even though a great many pingueros—and the police who harass them—believe that the law does exist, my queries indicate otherwise. And one of my informants, a Cuban intellectual, confirms that indeed there is no such law.

Nonetheless, I have had the experience of walking alongside a Cuban when an officer called him over and instructed him to separate from me. I have tentatively concluded that there if is no such law, there is a police practice of separating certain Cuban youth from tourists. The pingueros, too, tell me that the police do in fact ‘run them in’ or give them a summons if they are seen with a tourist outside the immediate vicinity of Yara and the Malecón. If true, this would represent an extraordinary spatializing of social regulation: that is, andar con turista is a crime only outside the zone in which pingueros are allowed to operate. I will analyze this more in Chapter Nine.

Police who see a young Cuban with a foreigner assume that the former is up to no good. They cannot imagine that the tourist wishes the company of the Cuban, nor that the tourist is capable of defending himself against the clever manipulations of the Cubans. And as we have just seen, this suspicion is partly justifiable. But as policemen everywhere tend to do, they exaggerate the threat and universalize it, so

that every tourist must surely be in immediate danger of being robbed by every Cuban youth. On 25 August 2003 I was walking to the convenience store at Habana Libre with my key informant Roldy when a carload of police stopped us. I wrote about the experience in my field book:

> Last night, Roldy and I were stopped in front of Habana Libre. This was normal for him, but it pissed me off. I told the police that this was bad for tourism, that I cannot even go one block without being molested by the police, etc. They replied that if he had his identification card, it would not be a problem. I responded that no, even when my friends have their cards, we still are stopped and delayed for 20 minutes every block. Finally, they took Roldy to central booking. Two police supervisors stayed behind to explain to me that they were doing this for my protection, etc. A familiar refrain in New York as well! I was a bit less insulting than I was a few minutes before, but I told them that I did not need that kind of protection, that it was bad for tourism, and that Roldy was a man of good character, not a thief or con artist. They were not impressed, convinced that their work was really important and for the best. They warned me about his "type".

What is this "type" which evokes police suspicion? It is not, according to my date, based on ethnicity. Selective enforcement depends in part on individual officers' personalities, the rhythm of area-wide crackdowns, and the political climate in the United States. But there must be something else as well, for most of the men know how to maneuver around it and operate anyway, while others nightly occupy the back of a police van. I suggest that it is the behavior of the men themselves must be considered as a causal factor.

II. Police

The enormous and sudden increase in tourism in the mid-1990s was the salvation of the Cuban economy but it also produced a problem for the maintenance of public

order. Initially, police completely separated tourists from Cubans, surely in a futile effort to prevent the introduction of foreign ideas into the carefully-engineered social fabric. But an additional problem emerged when so many crafty jineteros started to give Havana a reputation as a dangerous place. The solution was the creation of a new police force specifically trained to 'protect' tourists from the assumed-to-be-crooked Cuban youth who hang around them. Thus, the "Specialized Police," a force which operate mainly in the tourist zones of Havana, Varadero, and Santiago. This new force seems to assume great latitude in interpretation and enforcement of law—and even the creation of policies which are not consistent with law—in order to protect tourism. The Specialized Police are more aggressive than the National Police in confronting and arresting pingueros, jineteros, and jineteras. It is with this new force that the men of Yara come into daily contact, and about which they bitterly complain.

Conflict

All informants, without exception, report that their most serious problem is police harassment. I asked an Afrocuban man, who identifies himself as 'gay', why he thought the police harass the men at Yara, to which he had several answers: "It's because a little while ago, a homosexual killed a police. And since then, the police have treated us worse…It happened last year. The cop punched the homosexual, and the homosexual stabbed him in the heart." How does he know it was a homosexual, I asked? "Because he was dressed like a woman—a transvestite" (03.01). This is a remarkable story, particularly since there is so little violent crime in

Cuba. I cannot know if it is true, but even if not it is valuable for our purposes because it indicates that the men at Yara do acknowledge an increase in police repression, and they seek to explain it.

When I point out to pingueros that the police, though harassing, do allow them to operate, they tell me that gay men, lesbians, and other gender deviants are generally tolerated by the Cuban state because Raúl Castro—Fidel's brother and head of the army—and Wilma Espín—Raúl's ex-wife, guerrilla fighter, and the highest ranking woman since the beginning of the Revolution—are both gay. The Afrocuban man just quoted also tells me that some officers engage in homosex; he had had sex once with a cop, and it was a "bad experience":

> A police called me over and asked me some questions. And then he said he liked me, because I am cute and have a good body. And that he wanted to have sex with me. He took me behind a staircase, and we had sex…We kissed, he sucked me, and he fucked me—with a condom, of course[1]… As we left, another cop saw us. They took me to the station and fired him, for having sex with a homosexual…I was given a fine of 500 pesos ($25) for having sex behind a staircase.

It may be that the cop was fired for having sex on duty, not for having sex with a man, since homosexuality has long been legal in Cuba.

Another interesting feature is this particular Afrocuban's accusation of racism against the Specialized Police—a practice which he believes is at least partly justifiable: "It's because 90 percent of blacks are problematic. They like to fight, to punch people. And blacks are more infamous than whites, they are talked about more. Because a white person is characterized as more refined, that speaks softly; but a black is the opposite. That's why police discriminate more against the blacks

[1]Note that they used a condom, "of course"; safe sex is normal practice between men in Cuba, even the homeless sex workers, as condoms are inexpensive and heavily promoted by the Ministry of Health.

than against the whites" (03.01). My experience in Havana is that indeed racist ideas have been spreading rapidly, surely reignited by the new social stratification required by and produced by market relations and differential distribution of wealth. I have not, however, observed that the police target darker pingueros; the harassment seems fairly universal from my perspective. I would normally defer to the Afrocuban informant, assuming that his experience gives him a 'hermeneutical privilege' (if I may borrow a phrase from Latin American liberation theology). But I am not certain how to interpret this informant's commentary on race, since he himself embraces racial stereotypes that in turn oppress him. Consider this dialogue, when I asked him about his ethnicity (03.01):

> I'm black, but I seem white.
> *I don't understand; explain that to me.*
> Because I am black in color, but white in form; I'm a well educated black.
> *So an educated black is like a white?*
> White.
> *But a few minutes ago, you told me that you aren't black, that you are moreno.*
> Moreno. But…I'm moreno, but to the police and to the world, I'm black.
> *I don't understand.*
> I'm moreno, but they treat everyone like a black, by the color of their skin.
> *What color are you?*
> Moreno.
> *But they think that you are black. Why?*
> Because of the skin.
> *Your skin is moreno or black?*
> Moreno.
> *Why do they think that…*
> Because they don't recognize difference in race. They treat us all like we are the same color: black. For them, there is no difference between mulato or black or moreno.
> *If you're not white, you're black?*
> Yes.

As to whether the police and the rest of Cuba consider that any non-white Cuban is black, I cannot be certain, though due to the great number of very subtle racial

distinctions made I rather suspect that this statement is not true. My interest in this dialogue lies in the informant's self-identification as moreno, even though his skin is in fact very dark. Further, he defines blackness and whiteness as related to education and to "refinement".[2] And earlier in this interview he said that he prefers sex with lighter men because black Cubans are "brutish", sexual but not sensual. It would appear that he has contempt for his own "color", and wishes to overcome it through education and "refinement". For this reason, I cannot assume that what he reports about race and the police is objectively accurate. No other Afrocuban informant has made the distinctions he does.

In fact very many of the police are from the east, an area dominated by Afrocubans. Pingueros tell me that this is because there is more poverty in the east, and so Afrocubans become officers as a way to get to Havana and to earn at least a minimal salary (though as I have mentioned, that salary is near the bottom of the scale).[3] To augment this salary, a few pingueros have claimed that even police, at least the younger officers, will pinguiar when the opportunity arises. I asked why the police seem to allow the pingueros to operate:

> They don't do anything because there are officers who do the same thing when they are in civilian clothes. When they are in sports clothes, they do the same thing that we do.
> *They are pingueros?*
> Yes, they do the same thing. You haven't seen them? Some, not all.
> *But surely the police don't go to Yara.*
> They go wherever. Some of them have regular [clients], understand? And no one knows. They have women, children, and no one knows.
> (03.06)

[2]This is of course common throughout Latin America, particularly in Cuba and Brazil.
[3]It also seems that the state actively recruits in the east, so as to bring officers to Havana who have no local ties and thus are less easily corrupted.

This Afrocuban's ideas and attitudes toward the police are difficult to disentangle and interpret, for two reasons: his own conflicted relationship to his ethnicity, and his sexual identity; he is an effeminate "gay" man. For these reasons, it is difficult to draw conclusions from his statement; I include him here to indicate both the great variety in subjectivities and relationships to the state among the men at Yara, and the confusion and contradiction from within pinguerismo. A more typical pinguero is Domingo, whose attitude seems only to inflame the Specialized Police and guarantee him constant harassment. He is a bitter 19-year old man whose parents abandoned him in infancy by emigrating to Miami, and whose grandmother has long abused him; he is now homeless. Hours before this interview, he had been released from jail, where he had spent the night for insulting police officers, so his testimony was particularly embittered. I asked him to talk about the experience:

> Last night I was sitting at Yara with a lot of other people. An officer came up and didn't say 'good evening' or anything. He came over and said, "your ID card, please". He was rude [con mala forma], and I don't like that. Because I have the right to be spoken to politely, because I am a Cuban just like you [the officer]. And you have to address me politely, correctly, not as if I were a dog. Because if I am a dog, then you are another dog, understand? Because you are dealing with a Cuban, a human being, just like you. You should say, 'Good evening. Could you show me your ID card?' No, they don't do it like that. They do it however they want to. I said, 'if you are referring to me, I am not going to give it to you. When you speak to me politely, I will give it to you. If not, I will not give it.' So the officer says to me, 'You have to give me your ID because I feel like it. If you don't, I'm taking you in to the station.' So I said to him, 'Do whatever you want.' …. So, if you say anything that offends an officer, he says that it's a lack of respect for authority. And they give you 3, 4, 5 days in jail, and then give you a trial, as if you were a delinquent, or as if you were a prisoner. (03.20.22)

Domingo provoked the officer. Like Roldy, he seems unwilling to accede to police authority, an attitude which sixth months later would land him in prison. He is registered in Havana, his home province, and so if he had shown the officer his ID

as instructed, he probably would have been left alone. The context of most conflicts with police, including that of Domingo, is this nightly checking of identification cards, called “carné de identidad”.

Carne

I have mentioned that several factors converged in the early-mid 1990s to render access to dollars an indispensable aid to survival in the Special Period: the explosion in tourism, legalization of the dollar, and the dramatic shrinking of libreta allotments. For example, some essential items, such as cooking oil, are almost exclusively purchased with dollars. Dollars quickly became so important in the Cuban economy that in the mid 1990s Cubans flocked to those areas of the island in which dollars can be acquired: sites of tourist concentration. This caused a massive rural-to-urban migration, which threatened to strain urban infrastructure and deplete the countryside of labor. To prevent work shortages and the emergence of the shantytowns that characterize other Latin American cities, the state restricted internal migration. Cubans “from the provinces” may still come to Havana for short periods either to visit relatives, to study, or to vacation; they also may stay for an extended period for legitimate work if they have a permanent address or have a relative who has an address in Havana. In this case they must register in Havana Province and carry a new carné de identidad, the national identification card, showing the Havana address. A pinguero explained the procedure for establishing legal residence:

> Here in Havana there is a political law that says that when people from the interior of the country come here to Havana, they have to go to a family member, a relative in whose house they can stay. [With this address] they can get a 'transitoria' for three months. When this transitoria runs out, they give you another one for another three months. After that, there has to be a change of address. But since there are so many people with no family here in Havana, they don't have a way to get a transitoria. They only have friends, and they stay at their house, but when they go out on the street they don't have this transitoria, so they get a summons. (03.11.01)

All Cubans are required to carry the national identification card ['carnet'] with them at all times, and it is for this that the police check. There may be two or three sweeps per night at Yara, in which five or six Specialized Police officers will ask to see the carnet of each loitering young man whom they deem to be potentially delinquent. If the carnet indicates that the man has an address in Havana, the card is returned and he may go on his way. (This is less a problem in July and August, because students are on vacation and therefore many more people may be legitimately in Havana; pingueros tell me that police checks of carnets increase during the school year.) If the address is 'from the provinces', the officer will ask for an explanation for his presence in Havana. An inability to provide a legitimate reason will result in a fine. The carnet identification number is also likely to be called via radio into the area headquarters ('unidad') to be checked against lists of outstanding summonses or warrants. If there is any problem, the man will be taken to the unidad to be interviewed by a senior officer, issued new summons, or even kept overnight. If a man has been issued several summons for having no legitimate Havana address but has remained in Havana, he may be sent back to his home province.

Families or male-female couples are generally not the objects of these sweeps. It might be argued that the fact that pingueros and jineteros are targeted for

enforcement of this law is a result of discrimination. I think this would be a simplistic and incorrect analysis, for several reasons. First, a migrant worker is not likely to bring his or her children with her to Havana, so it is unlikely that a family walking together in Vedado would be in violation of that law. Further, families do not tend to simply hang around Yara, sitting on the half-wall and meeting foreign passersby. Second, it is more likely that the pingueros and jineteros are indeed in violation, since many of them are from the provinces and have come to Vedado in order to pinguiar and jinetear. Third, the Specialized Police force was created with the specific charge of protecting tourists. It therefore should not be surprising that it attempts to exercise more control over those who brazenly interact with tourists.

One of my informants made a calculated decision to not carry a carnet, even though to hang-out with tourists with no ID card was a sure invitation to trouble. I recorded in my fieldbook on 16 January 2003:

> Roldy and I went to Focsa together, and he was helping me carry the bags home. He decided that he wanted pizza, so we stopped at Dino's to have lunch. I ordered the pizza while he went off to the mercado to buy more rice for dinner (we still have chícharos left over from yesterday). The pizza came, but he did not return. I distributed the pizza to a few of the boys who were hungry, but still he did not return. ….Roldy finally arrived, with the rice, several hours later. As I had feared, he had had trouble with the police. He had been taken to the police station and placed in a holding tank with lots of other boys. His crime was not having his Carnet de Identidad—he was taken to the station because it was, in fact, the fourth time he had been caught by the same police. A few more times and he would have a very serious fine or jail time. So why doesn't he just go to Oriente, where he is registered, and get a damned card so this stops happening to him? In fact, he replied, he could register here in La Habana because he has an address, the friend of his mother. So why the hell, then? Because he explained, if he were to register to get the Carnet, he would then (since he is 19) be required to give his two years of military service. This unless he could pay enough to exempt him from the service, an amount equaling about 80 dollars.

Thus, having a current carnet would enable a young man to be monitored by the state. The refusal to carry one is then a strategy to avoid not only military service, but surveillance and state control generally.

Multa

As we have seen, the pingueros almost universally declare that harassment by the Specialized Police is the greatest problem they face. The combination of the constant ID checks and the inevitable fines have made most pingueros quite bitter. And as we saw above, even I have become resentful at the behavior of the Specialized Police. “The police [force] in Cuba is very bad, very bad. It doesn’t allow a guy to live, it doesn’t let a Cuban make a living in whatever way he can. They give you a fine, a warning letter. And the fines are 300 pesos, 400 pesos. So a Cuban has to do what we are doing [pinguerismo], because of the fines. And when one is not from Havana, they say he’s illegal. The police harass [us] a lot, too much” (03.06).

When a minor crime has been committed—such as not having a carnet or being in Havana illegally—police issue a summons or *multa*. These have until recently carried a fine of 300-500 pesos ($15-25), an amount which could be burdensome to a pinguero during the off season, when weeks can pass with no tourist client. If the fine is not paid within 30 days, the summons is sent to the man’s home address, automatically doubling the amount (pingueros disagree about the number of days they are permitted); the Cuban then has to travel back to his home province to pay the fine. Remarkably, two pingueros have told me that the state has

recently decided to reduce the fines: “But now, there’s some talk about—the fine is very expensive, so much that a salary is not sufficient to pay it. So, they are reducing the fine to 20, 30 pesos” (03.11). If true, this would be a dramatic decrease indeed: 92 percent. I suspect that this pinguero’s figures are not entirely accurate, but for him to have heard of such talk, and for him to acknowledge that the police he so despises wishes to reduce the burden on him, there would have to be some basis. Perhaps the state has collected very little from the multas because they are simply too high to be paid by cash-starved Cubans, causing them to default; if this is the reason, then the reduction would be a strategy to increase compliance. It might also be—as I posit below—further evidence that the state partly tolerates pinguerismo.

Repeated multas, particularly if combined with other small crimes, lead to a ‘warning letter’. One such ‘carta de advertencia’ was issued to my informant Roldy. I wrote above that he was taken by the police one night for not having an identification card and for hanging around the Habana Libre; recall that I had argued with the police attesting to his character, but to no avail. When he did not return from the unidad that evening, I knew that something unusual had happened; men usually return after about two hours. I found out the next day, and recorded the events in my field book dated 25 August 2003:

> Roldy arrived this morning, having been in the unidad until 3am. The police had written him a Carta de Advertencia for hanging around tourists. Three such cartas lead to one–two years in prison. This was a police determination, not of course a trial, but Specialized Police determination seems to be equal to a conviction. Roldy intends to inquire as to how the carta can be erased, with a bribe. Of course he had not committed a crime; I did not complain, and I was in no way injured. Nonetheless the police thought that I needed protection from him. Perhaps it is best that I not walk with him in public, that he walk alone so that the most he could get is a multa for not having a carné.

Issuing the carta de advertencia took more time than the usual issuing of multas. Three such letters, Roldy tells me, result in an automatic prison sentence, though other men tell me they have been issued as many as ten such letters; perhaps if the letters are from different jurisdictions, more than three can be accumulated without triggering an automatic arrest.

I do not know if he was able to bribe his way out of it, since he was in prison the last time I visited Havana. It is true that police officers are poorly paid and might be desperate enough to accept a bribe, but I don't know how Roldy would get enough money for a bride, and I rather doubt that this would be possible anyway. I also wonder if it is true that he would be sent to prison without a trial; this is inconsistent with what I know of the Cuban justice system. I evaluate whatever the pingueros tell me carefully and in light of their resentment toward the police, their strategy of eliciting sympathy, the human tendency to exaggerate a story to make it more interesting to the hearer, and their own lack of real understanding of the justice system; it may be that they operate only on rumor and the (surely exaggerated) tales from colleagues returning from the unidad. Then again, it is also true that the Specialized Police seem to have been given, or to assume, a wider authority in the interpretation of law than have the National Police. I've no doubt that this great authority is periodically (though probably not systematically) abused, landing some pingueros and jineteros in prison. Without access to the legal code and interviews with officers and judges, it is not possible for me to know how much to trust the pingueros' accounts of their experiences with the police and the courts.

III. Prison

Pingueros complain bitterly about the constant harassment related to the checking of carnets, but only a minority of the men actually end up in jail for more than a few hours. Most of the men who hang about at Yara and the Malecón are either residents of Havana Province or they know how to avoid the police patrols. Thus, despite the harassment, not many men end up in prison.

Roldy

I have, however, had a few experiences with pingueros in jail, which indicate something of pingueros' legal struggles. I have made much of the Specialized Police department's aggressive harassment of the men for apparently doing nothing more than loitering. But I have also suggested, and will explicate thoroughly below, that the state (through the police) does not seem to want to squash the pingueros entirely or prevent their operation. If this is true, then what is it that causes a few pingueros to be jailed while others are only harassed and annoyed? I have just observed that most young men have learned to avoid the police, and the obverse is true as well: *some men seem almost to seek out conflict*. They choose to engage in behaviors which they know are likely to lead to conflict or even imprisonment. I posit that such behavior emerges not only from adolescent bravado, but also (and especially) from cultural imperatives around masculinity, a claim whose proof will occupy the majority of the rest of this chapter.

Again my informant Roldy provides an illustration. Form my field book dated 25 August 2003:

> I now know why some men seem to be targets for police harassment. I sent Roldy to buy cajitas for dinner, but the 15 minute walk took about three hours. I naturally was quite worried, and assumed that he had been arrested again. When he finally did return—carrying the two cajitas—he confirmed that indeed he had been arrested and had spent the last few hours in unidad. Apparently he had had an argument with a Specialized Police about his opened button-down shirt. The officer told him that he could not wear it open (confirming the statement of another informant, who told me that a tourist could walk shirtless in the street, but a Cuban could not). Roldy did not agree with the officer, and surely smarted off to him. So off to unidad he went, returning with two more small multas. I have opined to him before that his manner of dress and presentation only draws police attention to him. He wears that ridiculous tennis visor upside-down, has now bleached his hair, and wears ripped-up jeans. He responded to me that no police would tell him how to dress, he would dress as he wanted and to hell with them. That is the attitude that gets him in so much trouble. This also explains why lots of pingueros and jineteros seem to avoid police trouble: they know better than Roldy how to watch out for the pigs, how to avoid them, and how to talk their way out of a situation once it emerges. Roldy seems to have no interest in learning these skills. This may be because of a need to challenge those who challenge him, in order to feel macho. If this is so, then the boys' inherited masculinity is what causes them so many problems with the police.

I explain in some detail below that *much police-pinguero interaction can be analyzed as the playing-out of a script of masculine performance*.

Framig

My informant Framig was also both jailed and imprisoned. He was at my apartment the night when the old beat-up powerbook I had brought with me finally gave up its life. Street youth collect old and broken things and try to fix them to then sell, but this was a computer—and a Macintosh no less. I tried to explain that it was hopelessly broken, and that anyway there is no way that Framig could find anyone who could fix

a Macintosh. But he insisted, so I let him take it with him. On his way home he was stopped by the National Police who wondered why a young man with a bad reputation would be carrying a computer. I wrote in my field book on 23 August 2003:

> Framig called me the next day around 1. He was in jail at the central station in Diez de Octubre, a suburb about an hour from Vedado. He had been there all night, having been arrested the night before for carrying the computer home, which the police assumed had been stolen. I called the police, and was told that I would have to come down myself and testify. So I found out how to get there, waited an hour for the bus, and then traveled another hour on a very crowded guagua to 10 de Octubre. I spoke to the front desk sergeant, who told me that the only man who could reverse the charge had just left for the day and would not return until tomorrow. I was not pleased, but I waited until I found an officer who was helpful. He allowed me to visit Framig, contrary to the usual procedure. Another wait while he was retrieved from the holding cell. He looked awful, having been in the jail for nearly 24 hours. He had slept on the normal concrete slab, and had eaten only the stale bread he was offered. The officer told me that if I paid bail, Framig could be released until the next day, when he would have to appear with me. I agreed, but asked to pay less: 300 instead of 700 pesos. He agreed, but had to get approval. This meant another long wait. Then another long wait to get the documents prepared. Then another long wait, and another. Six hours later, we finally left.
>
> Framig's girlfriend was waiting outside, along with her father, the owner of the apartment in which Guillermo and Framig were now to be ensconced. We ate cajitas from the vender next door to the unidad, and they waited with me for the bus, which took another hour. Then another 45 minutes on the bus, and I finally arrived home at 11:30. I had a few hours of tossing and turning, and then had to get up to go back to Arroyo Naranjo. Another hour wait, another 45 minute ride, and I arrived at unidad promptly at 8:05. I soon found the man to whom I was to speak, and he seemed reasonable enough. He agreed that there was no crime, and that I should give testimony to that effect. This would take another long wait, during which I pleaded for expediency—a plea ignored. Meanwhile, Framig was nowhere to be found. He did not arrive at 7 as he had promised, and in fact not even at 8 or 9. Around 9:30 he did show up, girlfriend in tow, wearing his new shoes and nice white clothing which he had 'borrowed' for his police appearance. I finally did give my testimony at about 11. Another long wait. Then my computer and my bail money were returned to me, but we were not allowed to leave. Or at least he was not; I was told I could leave, but he had to stay. Apparently the police wanted to record his "crime" and prepare to watch out for him in future, since he now lived in the neighborhood. I protested this, but to no avail.

> The helpful officer told me that he had a prior arrest record, about which of course I already knew, and that he was a 'bad boy'. All this leads to the inevitable conclusion that here in Cuba, guilt is determined by a presumed knowledge of the character of the defendant. The fact that Framig had not committed a crime seemed to matter less to the police than the fact that he was a criminal type, the kind of jinetero who hangs out with tourists. The police have an idea of which men are dangerous, and anyone who seems to fit that description is presumed guilty until proven, reluctantly and temporarily, innocent. And any young, sexy male who hangs out at Yara or Malecón must be up to no good, so the police do their duty by removing the potential threat from the innocent and vulnerable tourists. This is the context in which the men live.

This was a quite dreadful experience for me, surely far worse for Framig. I felt that I had a responsibility to help him, since I was the only one in the country who could, since the computer was mine. If I left the country, he would be assumed to be guilty and would land in prison for five years or more; stealing from a tourist is a serious crime in a state desperate to increase tourism.

At about 5am the next morning, Framig's girlfriend called my apartment (waking up the owner of the house, a nervous enough man already). She claimed that Framig had been taken to a maximum security prison. I asked if the problem had anything to do with the computer, to which she replied "I think, in part". I was suspicious to say the least: the idea that he would be taken to the prison for counterrevolutionaries and saboteurs for having a computer is ridiculous; it was even more absurd that he would have been whisked directly to the long-term prison with no trial. When the girlfriend told me what must be done, I suspected that it was a con: it would help him enormously if only I could send cash and a pair of pants. I informed her that no I could not, and told her to not call again. Uncertain that I had

done the right thing, I told this story to a non-jinetero friend from the neighborhood, who confirmed that I was being conned.

When I returned to Havana exactly a year later, I was horrified to discover that it had not been a con. Framig had indeed been taken to the high security penitentiary “1580” that night. He spent the next six months in a different prison in the western province of Pinar del Río. The crime was frequenting tourist areas, or being a jinetero, or something to that effect; he was not quite clear himself. He did have a trial, and the Cuban justice system does provide some rights for the accused, but the Specialized Police testimony, that he had been seen on multiple occasion fraternizing with tourists, was sufficient to secure a guilty verdict. I suspect, based on my knowledge of him, that he was not particularly contrite or even polite to the judge, which can only have worked against him; I know Framig to smart-off to officers and to refuse to follow their instructions unless he is asked politely. Nonetheless, I wanted to know beyond a shadow of a doubt if his involvement with the study, or his time spent with me, in any way contributed to his imprisonment. He assured me that no I had nothing to do with it, and the state had no idea that he had granted interviews. Still, I thought, the incident at the police station in Diez de Octubre, in which in order to free him I had to testify that he was a friend of mine to whom I had given a computer, must have in some small way contributed to the police surveillance of him. He assured me that he was not in danger by speaking to me. I asked him if, in the event that an officer approached us, I should separate from him, so as to avoid the appearance that he was “andando con turistas” [fraternizing with tourists]; he answered that no I should not. In the end, I had to trust that he was

more sensitive about the potential dangers than was I, so I relied on him to make the determination; he chose to continue to speak with me and walk with me quite openly, even as the police watched.

Osmani

That same week I had two more exposures to the prison life of the men at Yara. From my field book dated 25 August 2004:

> Osmani just came to see me. He had been in jail for five days. An undercover cop caught him selling candy in or around a hospital (just as in New York, street venders must be licensed by the state). He did not have his carnet with him, and then refused to give the police any information about his identity (he is rabidly anti-Revolution, enough so that he would shoot himself in the foot to avoid cooperating with any agent of the state). So he stayed in jail for five days. Today he went before the judge, accompanied by his mother, both of whom cried, he said. (I was surprised and pleased that he seems to have reconciled, at least in part, with his mother.) When he told the court that he was selling candies in order to survive, he was released with no further sentence, save an instruction to never do it again. The experience must have been traumatic for him, judging from his seriousness while recounting it, and his admission of crying.

Even in the United States street venders have to be licensed, but Osmani assumed that this requirement was a result of the evil Castro regime; he is rabidly counter-revolutionary, so much so that he left his parents because they are supports of the Revolution (he calls them “fidelistas”). I was pleased that the trauma of being jailed seems to have led to a reconciliation with his mother.

Vásquez

Vásquez [an informant whom I had met in 1999] came to see me in August 2003; I had not seen him since that January, and I had been wondering where he was. He explained that he had been in prison for two months, for getting into a street fight, first with a drunken man and then with the police officer who came to break it up. I would never survive a Cuban prison, he told me; the beds were slabs of concrete, the prisoners could do nothing during the days except remain in the dark cells, and the food was quite dreadful. He has been ordered to stay out of Havana province for one year, so he plans to leave for (his home province of) Guantánamo first thing in the morning. I gave him a few t-shirts, $20 for his trip back to Guantánamo, and let him spend the night at my place (his first night on a real bed in months). He said that his bones hurt him, especially his leg, for having slept on concrete for two months.

Giovi

A similar misfortune came to my informant Giovi from the eastern province of Granma. He had arrived in late summer 2003 with his cousin, also an informant. Both were about 20 years old, and both came to Yara specifically to pinguiar. In August 2004 I saw his cousin at Yara, who explained that Giovi was now in prison. He, too, had punched a cop, for which he had been given a sentence of six months. I sent a t-shirt via his mother who does visit; prisoners (unlike schoolchildren) in Cuban jails do not wear a uniform, so a new t-shirt would surely brighten his day.

Vasquez and Giovi are both hot-headed enough to actually punch a cop. Osmani is an unlicensed street vender who won't even give his name and address when arrested. Roldy refuses to button his shirt and smarts-off to the cop who had so instructed him. Framig refuses to follow officers' instructions unless they ask him politely. From these experiences I conclude that many of the pingueros' conflicts with the police do not stem from their work as jineteros or pingueros. In fact, it would seem that in these cases the men almost seemed to seek out conflict, or at least to intentionally exacerbate it, perhaps as a way to express dissent with the Revolution. *Most* of the youth at Yara or on the Malecón *do not* end up in jail because they know how to avoid conflict with the Specialized Police. Nonetheless, it is quite clear at least to this researcher that the Specialized Police do abuse their authority, make up rules, arrest men who simply look suspicious, and sometimes even harass sex workers for their own sexual fulfillment, a matter to which we now turn.

IV. Jineteras

Throughout, we have seen that the cultural-economic-political phenomenon of pinguerismo contains so much internal variation that it is difficult to grasp as a research object. But there is one fact of which *all* the men are in full accord. This was an observation I made immediately upon my first visit to Havana in 1999, and which I am now prepared to claim is an ethnographic fact: *despite the constant police harassment of the pingueros, they are permitted considerably more operational latitude than are female sex workers*. The Specialized Police harass

women more thoroughly (as opposed to the random harassment of the men), arrest them more often, fine them more often, and are more likely to issue Cartas de Advertencia which lead to imprisonment. This fact is all the more startling because of the absence of disagreement. This fact is not in doubt: in five years of studying pinguerismo, dozens of interviews, and hundreds of casual conversations, not a single pinguero, maricón, or jinetera has *ever* disagreed with my observation. *Every* respondent, *every* time I ask, unequivocally agrees that female jineteras are persecuted by the police far more often and more severely than are the pingueros.

Extortion

As with the pingueros, jineteras' primary interaction with the state is through the Specialized Police (though they also have interaction with the National Police, since the jineteras' operating territory is not restricted to tourist zones, as we will see below). There are four primary categories of police interaction with female sex workers: fines, extortion, sex, and protection.

My informants—both male and female—tell me that the police watch for young Cuban women getting out of rental cars or taxis. If a tourist drives a Cubana to Vedado and drops her off, it is assumed that she has been in his room. Just like drug transactions in the United States (see Sharff 1998), the consumer drives away unimpeded while the producer (or supplier) is fined or arrested. Even if she is not seen getting out of a car, any Cubana walking alone in a tourist area is assumed to be jineteando. And once they are stopped, women are more likely to be taken to the station rather than merely issued a summons with a stiff fine. This can be avoided

with a bribe; the men tell me that the police are not paid very well, and so they—like all Cubans—must find a source of dollars in order to survive. And jineteras do have dollars.

> When it's a girl, they say 'she's a jinetera'. So she's having sex with a foreigner for money, and they—there are some police, some, who are more corrupt. And when they see a jinetera getting out of a car they call her over—they figure that she's been with a foreigner in his room and he brought her back to Vedado or wherever. When she gets out of the car an officer sees her, calls her over, and asks for her ID. He tells her that she is going to jail, so the girls says to him, 'wait, I'll give you 10 or 20 dollars to resolve this situation.' So then the police says 'good, everything's OK', and they settle the matter. But there are others [police] who are strict, and they take her to the station, and if its her first time, they give her a *carta de advertencia* that says that if she goes back to having sex with foreigners, with tourists, she's going to prison; they'll give her four years, depending on the judge. (03.20.04)

Jineteras are more financially able to bribe police because, as a whole, they earn far more money than do the pingueros. This is due to price and to the higher numbers of tourists seeking women in relation to the relatively small number seeking men; the men tell me that the constant police harassment has had the (perhaps) unintended consequence of reducing the numbers of gay men who come to the island.

> There are very few tourists now, very few gay foreigners come because of the problems that we've been talking about: the police throw everyone out of the Malecón, or from the corner [of Yara], no one can sit there. And Cuba has lost a lot of tourism for that reason. Because a tourist says, Why should I go to Cuba, if I can't hang out anywhere, if the police harass everybody.' And so, the guys are really worried because they don't have any money. (03.20.06)

The women do not have this problem; there is an abundance of male tourists seeking female Cubans. The ratio of Cubans to tourists is reversed, making the market favorable to the suppliers rather than to the consumers. This increases prices somewhat. It also means that the women have a fairly steady flow of clientele, unlike the men.

> For women, it's easier to make money. Girls go out every day, and every day there are plenty of tourists who like women, so almost every day they make money…Because there are a lot of foreigners that like girls, a lot of foreigners come: Italians, Mexicans, different countries. Americans. They come looking for girls. And the police persecute a lot the girls that [the foreigners] choose. They take them away, so that there are not as many girls in the street….[So] they go to places where there aren't any police. In the discos they make a lot of money: there they can ask for 100 dollars, 120, 140 dollars. And guys, the only thing they can ask for is 30 dollars, 40 dollars, because [gay tourists] pay very little. (03.20.04)

Even if a jinetera has no dollars to offer, if she is young and beautiful she can still buy her way out of an arrest using her greatest asset, her body. Two jineteras told me in an interview that they do have sex with officers, who then agree either to protect them or at least to not arrest them. When asked if the police ever have sex with the jineteras, Framig agrees:

> Yes, there are some that even have [jinetera] girlfriends. But if [the women] are picked up off the street, they are taken to jail. A lot of girls from the provinces come here. But since the police are a little corrupt [malo]—the police dress like civilians and ride around in a car like tourists. And when the girls come up to the car, they give them a fine or take them to jail. So there are a lot of girls from Oriente, and they are afraid of going to jail, so they leave. Because girls have a Yuma [United States American] that is steady, they are lovers, and when the Yuma comes to see her, he gives her money. After, she goes back to her province to study or work… (03.20.04)[4]

In addition to not arresting her on the spot, an officer might find it profitable to provide protection to one or more jineteras. And since there is very little street violence in Havana, this protection must be from other officers.

> Because there are a lot of police who like to call over to the girls…So when a girl goes by alone, they ask for her ID, check her out, and gain her confidence. There are other [police] who say 'whenever you want, come over here [to this area] and I wont ask for your ID; I'll take care of you. But when you make money, give me some of it.' Others aren't like that. I am saying that there are good [cops] and bad [cops]. There are police who are good, others are bad, others help you out. (03.20.04)

[4]Yuma is a nickname for a United States American. It does not have a negative connotation.

A woman would have no motive to give part of her earnings to a Specialized Police officer, if she were not threatened by his power to imprison her. An officer who makes such a deal with a jinetera becomes rather like a pimp—and there is universal agreement that “Fidel hates pimps,” a symbol par excellence of capitalist exploitation. Like the men, the women report that harassment by the Specialized Police is the gravest problem they face, and the worst aspect of sex work.

Explanations

Thus we have two possible explanations as to why the police, according to all accounts, harass the women more than the men: first, they are potential sexual outlets for the officers (most of whom, though not all, are men). When I asked why women are harassed more, one pinguero explained, “because they have pussies”. Second, they earn a great deal more dollars, and hence are sources of potential profits, either through extortion or voluntary protection arrangements. But there are three other possible explanations which deserve serious consideration: resentment, nationalist ideology, and space.

With the new imperative to find dollars, young Cuban women have increasingly found themselves more attracted to foreign men. Dollar-less Cubanos, at least in the cities, find it increasingly difficult to attract potential partners, whom they watch clinging to foreigners. This causes no small resentment against both the women and their would-be foreign suitors. The more strict enforcement of anti-prostitution laws with women sex workers, and the greater harassment, might also

emerge from the (male) officers' desire to separate foreign men from Cubanas or to punish them for making this choice.

Throughout I have argued that the personal and the national are inextricably intertwined. Thus, the resentment of individual officers also has a national manifestation. In Part I, we saw that foreign control on the island and to steal the island's resources have been constant for nearly 500 years. And this has provoked no small umbrage, a resentment which the current regime finds terribly useful. By fanning this resentment, the United States has only guaranteed that the same ideological instruments would be used to resist colonial pressures as were used in the past. One of these instruments of nationalist resistance, I have posited, is masculinity and especially the national phallus. I demonstrated in detail in Chapter Three that phallic imagery has been used in Latin America to counter the effects of colonial and neocolonial attack. I now call to mind those findings and apply them to the study of pinguerismo.

I posit the following thesis: pinguerismo is more tolerable to the Revolutionary state than is female sex work because the former involves the invasion of a foreign body by both (an individual) Cuban penis and (the national) Cuban phallus. In the material realm of course, quite the opposite has repeatedly happened and is happening still: Cuba is being invaded by foreign capital, foreign functionaries, and foreign tourists, all of whom expropriate one or more of the resources of the island for export. But in the symbolic realm, the pingueros stab back, as it were, using one of the few Cuban resources that is still marginally independent, a penis and the phallus. This is quite different with female sex workers, who bodies are repeatedly

invaded by foreign capitalists, bringing to mind pre-Revolutionary Havana and exposing the impotence of Cuban manhood to protect its national body against invasion. *The personal and the national are here no longer distinguishable.* We saw in Chapter Two that the dual female figures of the Virgin and the mulata whore were the principal discursive sites of both nationalism and colonialism, using female sexuality as a symbol of national integrity. It is little wonder, then, that the ruination of so many young women's sexuality, or rather is use by non-Cubans, would be so troublesome to the hyper-nationalist Revolution. This is perhaps one reason that Vilma Espín and the Federation of Cuban Women work so hard to blame the recent explosion of sex work on the individual women themselves rather than on larger structural factors.

There is no insistence on virginity in Cuba, or at least very little that I can discern in Havana. There is less of a sexual double-standard than in other Latin American cultures, perhaps due to the extensive public discussion and legislation aimed at freeing women's sexuality. Nonetheless, the image of invaded vaginas is far less disturbing, I posit, than is the image of invading penises. The professor whom I quoted in Part I agrees entirely with my analysis:

> There began a new phenomenon in Cuba which was that men weren't as much men anymore, for being prostitutes; in the act of prostituting, a man loses part of his power if he has to give his ass, if he has to be violated corporally. I think that society uses that euphemism [of naming the men pingueros] to show that these Cuban boys are prostituting themselves but with their dick—*the phallus is ideological, phallocentrism— that is, it continues being the power of the dick. There is an implication of power*. It's not the same with a woman: when a woman prostitutes herself, she's shit, she's nobody, she's like a piece of rag. [But] a lot of [male prostitutes] say, 'Well, I'm giving my dick, but it's a soap that doesn't get spent'—there is a saying that the dick is a soap that doesn't get used up—'my dick is not a soap that gets used up, even if I use it a lot prostituting myself, it doesn't get spent.' And

> so all this ideology around the penis—for this reason they are called 'pingueros'. That is to say, [the work] does not have any implication except that I'm giving my dick. In this way there is no lessening, no cutting-down of the manhood of the Cuban. The Cuban only gives his dick, and giving the dick doesn't mean a thing.

I maintain that the "implication of power" is national as well as personal. That is, not only does pinguerismo not imply the ruination of the men's sexuality, at least not nearly as much as jineterismo does of the women's, but it also does not imply a loss of national integrity. The nation saves face, as it were, with the insistence that the men are "giving their dick," and not their well-protected anal cavities. In fact, pingueros symbolically conquer the bodies of foreign (capitalist) invaders. Thus, pinguerismo is not as ideologically problematic, and this is the third possible explanation for why the police harass the women more consistently and jail them more frequently than they do the men. We reviewed numerous historical and literary precedents for such a assignment of the meaning of penetration.

A fourth possible explanation for the leniency of Specialized Police toward pingueros as compared to jineteras has to do with space. We have already seen something of the spatial characteristics of pinguerismo in Chapter Six, and I will have still more to say in Chapter Nine. For now suffice it to say that the spatial organization of female sex work versus that of male, and the traditionally homosocial aspects of Cuban masculinity, render the women far more vulnerable to both formal (legal) and informal (social) persecution.

For these reasons—women and men walking together are more likely to be sexual partners, women earn more money and thus are more lucrative objects of police extortion, male sexuality is less problematic generally and (insertive) male sex

work is far more tolerable ideologically, men are concentrated in certain spaces where they mingle with non-pinguero men, and male homosociality on the street is a normal and expected element of Cuban culture—these are the practical reasons why police find it more expedient, profitable, and pleasurable to pressure female sex workers more than male.

In addition to these pragmatic considerations, ideological factors must be considered more fully. Again: I have posited that male sex work is less troublesome to the Revolutionary sensibility than is female sex work; this is because the historical image of the phallus as an instrument of either invasion or national self-defense is so strongly rooted in the Latin American imaginary which emerged from the Conquest. Invaded Cubana bodies are intolerable to the hyper-nationalist and hyper-masculine Revolution, but it is the pingueros who are assumed to be—and in fact are—nearly always the insertive partner, who conquer the bodies of the invaders. And anyway, in the words of our professor, “giving the dick doesn’t mean a thing”.

But the aggressive use of the phallus is not the only way in which pinguerismo intersects (complements?) the ideological agenda of the Revolutionary state and of the men themselves. In the next section continue I consider two other ideological implications of pinguerismo: the inherited masculinity which both pingueros and police share, and pingueros’ relation to family structure.

V. Citizens

Masculinity

Many pingueros have the perception that police repression has been increasing in the past five years. It is possible of course that the increase in police repression is only a perception, that there has been no real change. But my own observations from 1999-2004, though not quantifiable, certainly support the claim that the police are more aggressive than they once were. If true, this may be due to the recent shift in United States foreign policy, discussed in Chapter Nine, or it may be simply that the Specialized Police, now nearly ten years old in its current form, has become more institutionalized and has accumulated more power. I suspect, rather, that it could be that the phenomenon of sex tourism has become well-known, and the state needs to avoid the embarrassment of an international renown for sex tourism.

In support of this theory I reproduce a story I first reported in 2001. Every afternoon Fidel appeared on a Cubavisión program entitled “The Roundtable” to discuss the then-current crisis of Elián Gonzáles. Recall from Chapter Six that the Cubavisión studio is in the rear of the Yara building. To get to the studio, the presidential motorcade would have to pass directly by the pingueros, many of whom arrive at the cinema in the afternoon. About an hour before his planned arrival, the police would sweep both 23rd and M, forcing the pingueros to leave the area until about eight every night. This was likely simply a security measure, but one pinguero believed that the police sweeps were a strategy to prevent Fidel from learning about what was happening with the street youth. Another opinion is especially enlightening: “We think it might have something to do with Elián. Since November

there have been double the police…because she [Cuba] wants to show the world that she's a country without prostitution, without hunger, that everyone who lives here is equal with no social differences." If this is correct, then the police harassment is an attempt to rescue the island's reputation globally by making pinguerismo so uncomfortable that men stop doing it.

We will take up this matter of recently-increased repression in more detail in the following section; for now suffice it to say that in spite of the changes, it still appears that the state is either unwilling or unable to entirely extinguish pinguerismo. Before going forward with this claim I need to interrogate a category which I heretofore used unproblematically: the state. Of just whom does it consist? If I claim that "the state" tolerates pinguerismo more than it does jineterismo, of whom do I make such a claim? Is it "Fidel", Cubans' codeword for the entire state apparatus, or is it the Ministry of the Interior which has responsibility for the two main police forces (National and Specialized)? Is it the Ministry of Defense, whose military officers manage a great deal of the new tourist infrastructure? Is it the Council of Ministers, which monitors the foreign investment that has fueled the tourism expansion? And what of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the neighborhood organizations originally founded to defend against the Bay of Pigs invasion, and which now serve as social service agencies and gossip mills? Are the CDRs responsible for the identification and apprehension of sex workers on their blocks, and if so, is it the CDRs as enforcement mechanisms which represent "the state"? Or, rather than any of these state structures, is it individual police officers who are variously motivated to harass and arrest pingueros? I cannot answer any of these

questions definitively, but I can declare with certainty that in Cuba (as elsewhere) the state is not a monolith, despite the views of the Cuban-American Foundation. Not all instruments of state apparatus operate with the same goal or even from within the same logic. This does not mean that the Revolutionary government is in chaos, though the Special Period has caused some erosion in the state's ability to ideologically and even physically control the population. It does mean that the dialectical methodology, which I declared in the introduction would guide my analyses requires that we recognize internal contradiction within the process we call the 'state'.

Despite the policies and agendas of various instruments of the state as a whole, the pingueros are more immediately affected by the attitudes and agendas individual police officers and commanders. Thus, a clue to understanding pinguerismo, particularly the relative tolerance of it, lies in the cultural logic of police officers, a logic which they necessarily share with the pingueros. Men who eventually end up at Yara, either as pingueros, jineteros, pleasure-seekers, or curious bystanders, were born in the same neighborhoods are were the officers, attended the same schools, were subject to the same indoctrination, and have the same problems and anxieties as do the offices who are now charged with controlling them. In short, both police and pingueros are Cuban men, and act out the same scripts of masculinity.

Cojones

We have heard from Domingo, the homeless 19-year old who appears to provoke police officers by insisting that they speak to him politely. It might seem as though he brings imprisonment onto himself for his own foolishness; this is in part true, but it is important to consider what the conflict means to Domingo, how he understands the unspoken social discourse behind the simple request to check an ID. For Domingo, officers' requests are perceived as a claim of power over him, and such a claim could be no less than a challenge to his manhood. This is the key to understanding pinguero resentment against the police.

Domingo used the phrase "as if I were a dog" an incredible fifteen times within 30 minutes. And each time he spat the word 'dog' in disgust. This was how he perceived his treatment at the hands of the state: *as if he were a dog*. In the face of what he perceived to be dehumanizing treatment, his only possible response was a defense of his humanness, which is to say, his manhood. Real men do not tolerate such treatment by other men. He was required, by the code of masculinity in which he is immersed and from which he emerged, to aggressively confront the authority which emasculates him. *We must understand a great deal of pinguerismo to be a struggle to defend masculinity against emasculinizing social processes—be it sex with another man for money or harassment by a dominating state.*

Recall that the state is in fact the only true phallus, the penises of men being only pathetic imitations of its power. We saw in Chapter Three that men's recognition of this fact causes a great deal of anxiety which can be satisfied only with constant hypermasculine bravado. With this in mind we can begin to understand the

provocative behavior of Roldy and Domingo. The men themselves recognize that the power struggle between pingueros and police is at the level of masculinity, for they use the language of masculine genital power to describe that struggle. The police give orders without explanation, and when asked, Domingo believes, they respond with

> 'Because I feel like it.' or 'Because it doesn't get my balls off [no sale de mis cojones].' *So you are forced to argue with them*. And if you argue with them, they say it's a lack of respect for authority. What do you have to do? Stick your tongue in his ass and say nothing, don't talk, and let them do what they want. (03.20.22)

Symbolic use of the image of the 'balls' occurs again when Domingo explained that the police make the pingueros move from their preferred spots at Yara: "They don't have the right to tell me that *because of their balls,* they don't feel like letting me sit there. If this is my country—sometimes, I tell them that *because of my balls,* I am staying here, because this is my country. And when you do that, they hit you" (03.20.24). Here is a contest of balls against balls. The officer would have to hit him if he made such a remark, for the same reason that he has to say it: because use of the language of cojones declares that manhood itself is in question. That is, when the officer says "because of my balls [por mis cojones] I don't want you to sit here', he is saying that his masculinity is more powerful than that of Domingo. And when Domingo responds that 'because of my balls, I am staying right where I am', he is challenging the power of the officer's genitals.

Here again, just as in the wars of independence, the Revolution, and the 'exiles'' counterrevolutionary diatribe, masculine sexuality is used to describe a struggle of power and authority. In this way, I posit that the word 'pinguero', which I

explained as sex workers' strategy for defending masculine reputation in terms of sex, also has a larger discursive function: it contains within it a claim of power over and against that of the state which they feel castrates them. The 'pinga' is used to conquer other bodies in the sex act, and it is used in the struggle for state power, both when young men smart off to the police, and when Arenas's character destroys Castro with one violent fuck. This is a central thesis of the present research: struggles over masculinity are both personal and national, symbolically and discursively they are in fact the same struggle, and male bodies therefore become central players in the national struggle for autonomy.

We are again thrown into uncertainty: there is a constant conflict between some pingueros and some officers, but there also seems to be some commonality. I posit that the pingueros and the police are not really a different "species", to use a pingueros' phrase; they emerge from the same cultural-economic base and reflect the same gender logic. Indeed, both pingueros and police, in their own ways, work hard to reproduce the same construction of masculinity. It is true that some individual officers bear no animosity toward the men, and in fact some officers seem to respect some of the more macho pingueros. I was sitting with some men one day in January 2004. I saw an officer approach from behind them, so I whispered a warning. They turned and looked at him, but instead of scattering, they smiled and greeted him. There ensued a few minutes of pleasant chatter. When the officer left, I asked in amazement what had happened. One of the pingueros explained that he used to have a very bad relationship with that particular officer. One day the tension came to a boil, and a heated exchange ensued. The pinguero staunchly defended

his dignity, causing the officer to change his opinion of him. As the pinguero told the story, it seems as if the officer had assumed that the pinguero was something less than an *hombre hombre*, for his occupation. But when he demonstrated during the argument that he was ready to fight if necessary and that he could stand up to power without fear, the officer gained a new respect for him and thereafter treated him as he would any other real man. It seem that both pingueros and police operate from within the same economy of masculinity.

One more anecdote will illustrate this finding. I had occasion to file a robbery report at the central station of the Specialized Police in Vedado. The young man whom I had accused began to cry while in police custody. The next morning, an officer of that station came to my apartment, one of the newly authorized "arrendadores inscriptos"; he wanted to confirm that I was living in a legally licensed apartment, that my landlord was not trying to cheat the state out of its share of the profits. He sat at my kitchen table while writing some notes. The officer told me that he thought that the accused must be a "fag", since he had cried. (I explained that I would probably cry also if I faced a possible prison sentence, to which the officer made no reply.) The officer reproduces the same notions of masculinity which, we have seen throughout the present research, are a standard of Latin American gender norms. To the extent that (at least some of) the pingueros also reproduce these norms, they do not represent sex-gender deviance, and thus do not lose the respect of the police or of many other Cuban men. I shall have more to say of this later in this chapter.

Family

Thus, performative aspects of Cuban norms of masculinity are embraced and reproduced by the men of Yara. Another way in which they fulfill their responsibilities as Cuban men is in their relationships to their families. We have heard from several pingueros whose connections to family structures have been ruptured; such men's survival is precarious, as they do not have access to the sites of distribution of state services such as housing and libreta allotments. But generally, pinguerismo does not obey the popular image of male sex work in, say, the United States: drug addicted, homeless street youth, whose rebelliousness or sexuality forced them from the home of their families, turning tricks for survival. Rather, most men at Yara *do* maintain their family connections, and in fact the housing crisis in Cuba means that nearly all single men and women, and quite a few married couples, *have* to live in their parents' houses.

The data indicate clearly that not only do most pingueros continue to live with their families because of urgent material necessity, but that most in fact have had no rupture and continue to see themselves as contributing members of family households. In short, it doesn't occur to most pingueros that their economic activity would in any way call into question their family membership or their family responsibilities. Indeed, many men see their (sex) work as a means of fulfilling their responsibilities as male family members generating income. This is yet another way in which the pingueros reproduce established norms of masculine behavior. Pinguerismo does not support the presumed mutual exclusivity of sex work and family life. This sentiment may come as a result of being the oldest male in the

family, or perhaps merely as another adult in the household with productive capacity. Pinguerismo is a method of capitalizing on productive capacity in the form of gender expectations and transforming it into rice and beans.

The men feel responsible either as sons, spouses, or siblings to provide either food or clothing or both.

> There isn't any food in the house now. [My mama] isn't married any more, she's divorced. And I am the oldest and she can't work.
> *Why can't she work?*
> Because she's a professor, and they operated on her throat. Now she can't give classes while she recovers, because she has to talk a lot.
> *But tell me why you are the one that has the responsibility to get food.*
> Because I don't like to see my mama cry or suffer. My sister is 12 years old, so she has to go to school…[When a tourist] gives me money, I give it to my mother to buy food. (03.10)

> Right now, [my economic situation] is bad, very bad. Sometimes there is a tourist who pays me, and I have money. But the money runs out really fast, because I have to give it to my mother to buy food, to buy clothes, shoes, and it runs out fast, so then I'm broke again.
> *Tell me about your family.*
> My mama, my papa, my grandma, my cousin, and an aunt.
> *Tell me what you did with the fifty dollars [that you earned last week].*
> I bought a blouse for my mother, and some sandals. And I had to buy food for the house, because my papa isn't in the house now; he's away in Camagüey. So its just me, my mama, and my sister, and a cousin. So, I have to buy food for my mama. She can't work because she has to take care of my sister, understand? That's why I pinguiar.
> *Is there another source, another way, your family can get money?*
> Yeah, my mama sometimes; when my papa is at home, my mama works too. My papa takes care of the little girl, and I take care of my sister. But right now, my papa isn't here.
> *What does your mother do for work?*
> She works in a factory.
> *So the state pays her?*
> Yes, but it pays very little. (03.08)

This interview indicates that clothing is as urgent as is food for many a Cuban. Often times in fact, a pinguero mentions clothing before food when he lists his problems, a

matter we shall take up in more detail in Chapter Ten. Another dutiful son of a gender-traditional family:

> Right now my father can't work because he's sick. And my mama has to take care of things around the house. So, as the oldest son, I have to help them with money. And I can't work because I am still studying, and in Cuba it's not permitted to study and work at the same time. (00.18)

Some of the men assume responsibility not only as sons and big brothers, but also as fathers:

> I bring clothes home for my family: for the kids, for my mama, for my siblings. I support my family with food and clothes by jineteando, pinguiando. I support my mama, I support my sister, I support my son, I support my stepbrother, jineteando and pinguiando. I'm the one who supports my entire family, because in my family I'm the only man. I support everybody. And if I didn't, then we would starve to death. We would starve to death if I didn't pinguiar.
> *Tell me what you did with the $50 you earned two days ago.*
> With the money? Well, you know that at this time [in January] its cold. I bought a jacket for the oldest child in my house, who is six years old. I paid the phone bill, that was 141 pesos, or 7 dollars. It was twelve, twelve dollars.[5] I sent 250 pesos, 10 dollars, to my mother's son who lives in Santiago de Cuba. So that was 22. with the rest, I bought pork meat for two days, chicken for my sister, for my other sister, and I divided it among the rest of my family. And that was it, the money was done. For one house, fifty dollars is nothing. It's nothing, especially when there are five or six mouths. Because it's not only eating; I also have to know who needs underwear, who needs a pair of shoes. And now that it's cold, I have to buy sweaters, jackets. Normally in one month I make a thousand, twelve hundred dollars. (03.05)

Twelve hundred dollars a month is a fantastic sum, even for a Cuban with five mouths to feed; the final chapter will explore changing perceptions of need in post-socialism and differential definitions of poverty.

One more aspect of pingueros' relationship to family is of interest to us here: the extent of disclosure of their occupation to family members. In order to better

[5]This is some rather bad math. The peso has remained fairly steady in relation to the dollar for the five-year duration of the research: in 1999 one dollar purchased 21 pesos; at the time of this interview in 2003 the rate was 25 pesos per dollar, and at the end of the research in 2004 the rate had changed to only 26 pesos.

understand the pingueros' relationship to the state as proper family men, I was interested in the extent to which they felt shame for being sex workers versus their pride in the successful completion of masculine responsibilities. I discovered that several men are frank with their families about their source of dollars.

> She told me that she would not interfere in my life.
> *Why did you tell her that you are a pinguero?*
> So that she would know what I do, and where I get money. She felt bad, because she didn't like what I was doing. I do whatever I want. My life is mine. (99.32)
>
> *Does your family know that you are a pinguero?*
> Yes.
> *What do they think about it?*
> They don't talk about it. They know, but they don't touch the subject. (03.05)
>
> They figure that I am a pinguero, because they don't see me at home, and they must think about where I live and where I get money to eat. (99.36)

Importantly, even though many pingueros choose not to talk much about it, neither do they deny the truth. The majority simply allow their families to imagine what they will, without actively deceiving them:

> *Your mama doesn't know how you make money?*
> My papa asks me, but I tell him not to ask.
> *Where does he think you get your clothes?*
> I tell him that tourists give it to me. (03.08)
>
> They don't know that I am a pinguero; they think that I am a jinetero, that I beg for money from tourists. (99.37)

Most families seem to at least implicitly accept that their young men engage in questionable activities to generate income. To understand this we must consider them in the context of dominant cultural norms in Cuba and particularly in Vedado. To survive the Special Period, non-pinguero Vedado residents tell me, "everyone" must have a side business, something they do in addition to their formal sector

activities to earn dollars (as opposed to pesos). These side businesses might be legally authorized, such as the paladares and habitaciones privadas mentioned in Chapter Six, but only so many can survive competition. The majority must thus find another way, usually involving activity which is technically illegal but socially acceptable. A friend of mine, for example, though he is a Colonel in the army, sells boxes of cigars stolen from state factories. There are manifold varieties of such businesses. What is most significant is not that the colonel engages in such activity, but that he makes no secret of it among his neighbors and is still widely respected in the neighborhood in spite of it. This is an instance of the widely-accepted "informality" discussed at the end of Chapter Four.

This is not to say that the men of Yara are *honored* in their neighborhood, for indeed they are sometime scoffed as 'low life' (though I suspect that this is more like a nascent *class* derision than a rejection of second economic actors). Consider the lyrics of a popular song, performed in August 2003 on "Justo al Mediodia," the noontime variety program of Cubavisión:

> Yo no quiero
> tu dinero;
> no quiero que me lleve
> al extranjero.
>
> [I don't want your money;
> I don't want you to introduce me to a tourist.]

This lyric demonstrates that there is a cultural resistance to the tendency of young people finding their salvation through attachment to foreigners. Nonetheless, though not exactly honored and sometimes derided, and through they often are criminals, pingueros are also fully citizens. In their masculine sexual performance; in their

aggressive challenge of police authority; in their embrace of family obligations; in their informal “business” activity, for the informal sector thrives on the street, and the street is largely a masculine space—in all these ways, pingueros accept and fulfill the role proper to them, reproducing Cuban masculinity and (partly) deflecting public criticism.

The present chapter has addressed what I consider to be the most crucial analytical issue in the study of pinguerismo, and the most significant possibility for generalizable anthropological knowledge: the men’s relationship to the state and the nature of citizenship. Like masculinity, globalization and neocolonialism occur simultaneously at the scales of the body, nation, state, and globe. Pinguerismo is a site of connection between Cuban youth and the globe because of its consumption power. The ways in which pingueros embrace foreign cultural forms, and how those forms in turn reformulate the youth, is the subject of Part III. In Chapter Nine we explore the development of a new ethic of consumption, particularly through fashion, and how this contributes to constituting the youth in a way which is convenient for the new market relations. Chapter Ten will conclude the study of pinguerismo in the Special Period by reconsidering the data thus far presented in light of other post-socialist scholarship. We will find that much of pinguerismo can be fruitfully analyzed as a form of neo-colonialism.

Part III
Soy Capitalista

Chapter Nine
Consumption

> In fact, before long the Teddy boys seemed to have created a little world of their own: a subculture with its own laws of dress, behavior, and territory, in which they strutted about, looked challengingly at outsiders, chased girls, occasionally fought each other, and planned the occasional larceny. There were perhaps a few thousand of them in inner London, and in its peculiarly organized form the cult went on for a few years. On the whole, it was a primitive performance. The early Teddy boys were working-class youths with an itch to assert themselves against society…
>
> Fyvel (1997 [1963]: 390)

The pingueros seem to have much the same agenda as the Teddy Boys: some to express dissent from the institutional Revolution, many to embrace a modern (global) identity through conspicuous consumption and performance of style, and very many to compete with other youth for position in the new material hierarchy. To what extent are the pingueros simply another manifestation, with local inflection to be sure, of tens of thousands of other youth who rebel through style? The similarities are manifest, many of which we will examine in the present chapter. But could the specifically *working-class* character of other movements be present in a socialist context? Class distinction in terms of material wealth was dramatically minimized by the socialist Revolution, but there are still occupations which we in the West have

come to associate with working-class, namely those occupations which require skills training but no post-secondary education. The vast majority of the pingueros, at least based on the tiny representative sample I have interviewed, do seem to be from 'working-class' backgrounds. Also like the Teds, pingueros occupy (though they do not "control") a territory, reproduce a stylistic distinction through clothing and masculine performance which acts as an identity marker, and use their subject-positions as ways to make social protest. Thus, they would seem to be just like the Teddy Boys in post-war London or any other countercultural youth movement. Yet we have seen that pingueros are not entirely countercultural; they operate firmly from within an inscribed cultural (and political) universe, and they reproduce both traditional and Revolutionary masculinity.

For this reason, we must not attribute to them *hyperagency*, that is, not proclaim them subalterns valiantly fighting an authoritarian government, finding space for representational and sexual freedom. More useful would be to analyze how they respond to, and incorporate into their cultural sensibilities, the newly-dominant logic of commodity consumption and market relations. I hold that the youth's response has *not* been one of struggle for 'liberation', whatever that means; in fact, they enthusiastically embrace elements of the new cultural logic which are not likely to lead to any manner of liberation, and in fact are likely to imprison them even more than they feel they currently are. I am thinking here of the new preoccupation with fashionable clothing (especially shoes), the imperative to consume, and the (re)assignment of worth based on display of wealth.

I. Style

Timba

Fifty years after the Teddy Boys and 4663 miles from London, Afrocuban youth in Havana used erotic performance and musical style to declare an identity independent of Revolutionary ideology. We saw in Chapter Two that Afrocuban musical forms have long been a constituent element of Cuban nationalism—an instance of cultural continuity through the Batistiano, the Revolution, and the Special Period. The Afro-Cuban musical form *timba* functioned similarly throughout the 1990s, as young Afrocubans declared independence from social prescription and state ideology. They rejected the nationalist claim that race no longer exists on the island by affirming an Afrocuban identity and by singing about the difficulties of being dark in Cuba. Timba aficionados and practitioners further distanced themselves from the Revolution by attempting to connect themselves to the globe through conspicuous consumption: "For both Cubans and foreigners, timba was a symbol of change: capitalist enterprise and upward mobility beyond the constraints of revolutionary hierarchies…Timba musicians were unapologetic about their success. With their flashy looks and conspicuous spending, they became symbols of incoming capitalism" (Hernández-Reguant 2004:31-32,35). Timba did not last: its failure to achieve commercial success outside the island—and its ideological inconsistency with the Revolutionary ethic—spelled its demise. Timba was not only a musical genre but a style, an aggressive assertion into national and global politics. And this is precisely my analysis of pinguerismo: performance of material well-being and

conspicuous spending make the youth “symbols of incoming capitalism”. And through this consumption timba performers attempted, and pingueros attempt, to form a connection to other youth outside their isolated island.

Mods

Dick Hebdige has made a career studying the ways in which youth engage in subcultural production as a means of identity and dissent. He traces the beginning of European subcultural formation not to the more-commonly held post-war period, but rather to the mid nineteenth century, with the emergence of new forms of governmentality through surveillance. Andrew Tolson on Hebdige (1997 [1990]:303): “ For, as Hebdige observes, the conditions within which subcultures first appear as spectacular are themselves related to a variety of strategies for social intervention in nineteenth-century practices of philanthropy, education, and moral reform” (1997:303). To analyze the power relations in cultural (especially commodity) forms, Hebdige uses the historiography of Foucault, with whom he holds that power is not operative exclusively—or even primarily—in state apparatuses, but rather in the realm of discourse. The particular discursive content he most often analyzes is fashion.

Applying these ideas to youth subculture in London, he finds that youth “style”— primarily through fashion and a kind of bodily habitus (but without mentioning Bourdieu)—acts as boundary markers and statements of differentiation. Of the London mods (1997:401):

> By the mid-1960s, at the height of the mod craze, youth culture had become largely a matter of commodity selection, of publicly stated taste preferences: this rather than that type of music or style of dress or brand of cigarette, 'mod' not 'beat', 'mod' not 'rocker', 'mod' not 'ted'. For youths in search of an expressive medium, goods could function symbolically as 'weapons of exclusion' [Douglas and Isherwood 1979:85], as boundary markers, as means of articulating identity and difference. Converting themselves into objects, these youths, immersed in style and the culture of consumption, seek to impose systematic control over the narrow domain which is 'theirs' and within which they see their 'real' selves invested, the domain of leisure and appearance, of dress and posture. The posture is auto-erotic: the self becomes the fetish.

For Hebdige, this passage seems to indicate, style is not only *symbolic* but also *substantive*. The sense of self becomes so entangled in consumption practices that it becomes indistinguishable from them; the self becomes the fetish—a clothed self, not only in the sense that it is wearing clothing but also in that its definition is determined in part by its performance and display. Consumption and display and back again: "This is the other side of affluence—the coming of the greedy I. Henri Lefebvre calls it the Display Myth, describing its circularity thus: consuming of displays, displays of consuming, consuming of displays of consuming, consuming of signs, signs of consuming… [Lefebvre 1971:114]" (Hebdige 1997:402) One of the findings of the current research is that Havana street youth embrace the values of consumption in order to display a winning location along the new axis of material stratification. They are hardly affluent, nor have they yet achieved the perceptual pattern of the "greedy I," but they do seem to be tentatively headed in that direction. The affluence they seek is really only the *image* of affluence, based largely in performance and style through dress.

But this is not entirely an invention of the pingueros: it seems that a preoccupation with fashion is rooted in the Cuban nationalist imagination, the subject of the next section.

II. Fashion

> We could say that to be Cuban is among other things to be proud of dress, to know how to dress.
>
> (Holland 1992:151)

Nationalism

Villaverde's nineteenth-century short-story (and later novel) "Cecilia Valdéz" is inarguably the core of the Cuban literary canon. Nearly every writer who tackles Cuban national identity—most of whom, as I remarked above, are literary critics—analyzes this story of failed love between an aristocrat and a mulata. The story wrestles with the questions of mid-late century, well before emancipation: could a free Cuba exist, can the ethnicities be integrated, how could order be maintained if the slaves are free, and what is the relationship between Cuba and its colonial masters. Recall that in Chapter Two I introduced Antonio Vera-León's attempt in his "Introduction to Unhappiness" to attack the Revolution by belittling independent Cuban cultural production. An analysis of *Cecilia Valdéz* is one of his proofs that Cuba is an island of consistent failure and unhappiness, "the nation without a story": "'Cecilia Valdéz' is a story about the failure of literature to narrate Cecilia's life"

(2000:191), a problem which the text itself acknowledges: “the narrator directly announces the failure of his narrative project” (2000:194).

A different—perhaps less biased—author finds in *Cecilia Valdéz* another story entirely, a search for national identity through clothing. In his short but intriguing article “Fashioning Cuba,” Norman Holland notices a character which is largely ignored in the many other analyses of the novel—Señor Uribe, the black tailor:

> The novel celebrates the creations of this black tailor not merely to engage in *costumbrismo* but to produce a model of national unity and civic pride, a model which will have the added “benefit” of safeguarding class and racial difference in the new nation. Such attention to style will serve, moreover, to distinguish Cuba from Europe…[T]he novel’s preoccupation with fashion constructs an inclusive social contract in which all the participants are invited to dress and dance. This invitation does not mean, however, that all dresses and dances are the same. (1992:149-150)

The tailor copies European fashions, following the demands of the elite market, but with his own stylistic twist. Since he is poor and black, the products of his labor thus represent the hope of syncretism through style, just as Cecila’s body displays both the hope and the problem of miscegenation. But this amalgamation of style was not intended by Villaverde to erase difference; Señor Uribe declares that “Because I seem delighted to welcome everybody who enters this shop, (don’t think) I draw no distinction between people and that I have no pride” (1992:150). Like the mammy of early twentieth-century United States, this privileged free black man worked to reproduce class hierarchy in order to gain for himself a privileged position in relation to lower-classed Afrocubans. Thus, though the novel (through the tailor) wrestles with the nationalist problem of ethnic different and dreams of independence, the matter of class—visibly reproduced through clothing—remains. If class difference was to be maintained, then another source of identity must be found.

> Although Señor Uribe may not resolve in his character the profound racial and ethnical crises of the colonial order, he insists that to be Cuban is among other things to have pride. Paraphrasing the tailor, we could say that to be Cuban is among other things to be proud of dress, to know *how* to dress. So it should not surprise us that the novel celebrates the tailor and the sites where his creations circulate: dances. Fashion and music will mutually reinforce one another in Villaverde's construction of the Cuban national subject. (1992:150-151, italics his)

Pride in Cubanness will overcome racial and class distinction, just enough for an autonomous national character to take root and then demand its independence. But since fashion is still largely a European fancy, the stuff which demarcates and displays national pride was introduced by the colonizer. "The consumption of fashion in and by this text not only registers the protagonist's, and by extension the colony's, wealth but also the importation of the foreign ideas and aspirations embodied in the objects consumed" (1992:151).

Thus fashion, even if inflected by native sensitivity, is a problematic site of nationalist cultural production. Though Holland is a bit enigmatic in this regard, his (or Villaverde's) solution is to acknowledge that fashion is only a system of signs, not a thing of substance in itself: "Inasmuch as the fashion system depends upon the interweaving of codes concerning gender, race, and class—external signs that put into question the concept of inner identity as a coherent category—tailoring Cuba into a nation does not require the revelation of "true identities" as much as a newly stylish incorporation, the amalgamation of various minorities into an encompassing plural voice (1992:152). It is the text's task to resolve the problem of using the materials of colonialism to construct national cultural autonomy.

> This antagonism between colonial and market economies marks a tension in Villaverde's writing that issues ultimately in *lo cubano*. The novel assembles a unique system of fashion and music that differentiates Cuba not only from

> Spain, but also from the other Caribbean islands that share its colonial history….In presenting a highly elaborate system of fashion and representing it as the new order of things in Cuba, Villaverde effectively intervened in national culture. Within the powerful constraints of colonialism, he was able to devise a narrative that sought to integrate the island's voices into the fabric of an independent nation. Central to this integration is the tailor whose very marginality turns him into a central figure in the fashioning of a postcolonial subjectivity. (1992: 153-154)

But is this merely a symbolic "weaving", is the "fabric" of clothing nothing more than a convenient rhetorical device? To what extent is fashion a genuine site of contestation over the character of a nation? How is fashion used by subaltern subjects in counter-hegemonic projects? And to what extent does the pingueros' penchant for United States fashion represent an attempt to express dissent and/or to connect themselves to an (imagined) global youth culture? These would be the questions of an anthropology which attempts to valorize subaltern people by assigning them a hyperagency. But we could also ask, and with more substantive basis, how and to what extent has a certain youth culture been *re-colonized* by the logic of global capital? Do the youth really use clothing to "assert themselves against society," as Fyvel thought of the Teddy boys? Or is it the other way round entirely: do the youth use the clothing, or does the clothing use them? To answer these questions it will be helpful to examine another anthropologist's findings on fashion and female sex workers in East Asia.

Modernity

Tiantian Zheng (2003) has worked with female institutional sex workers in the Chinese city of Dalien, most of whom are migrants from the countryside who work as

bar “hostesses” (a common pattern in East Asian sex work; see, for example, Manderson and Jolly 1997). Zheng (correctly, in my opinion) argues that the quest for fashionable clothing is not exclusively (or even primarily?) a tactic for being more appealing to male clients, but rather represents a competition among the women. The women use fashion, Zheng reports, to resist the stigma attached to a rural origin; by dressing in “modern” (read, ‘western’) clothes, they attempt to show themselves to be modern, cosmopolitan, urban women: “Through their consumption, hostesses contest their image as country bumpkins who do not have the autonomous consciousness or cultural taste to consume” (2003:161). In this way they attempt to produce an image of globality which escapes the geographical and ideological confines of the current regime—particularly the People’s Republic of China’s isolation (until recently) from Western consumer culture. This is consistent with my reading of pinguero style, which is a part of a global strategy, that is, a strategy aimed at an imaginary global insertion.

Zheng also convincingly argues, against Daniel Miller (1997), that consumption patterns are a matter of public performance rather than of private identity formation, a matter of performance of a collective ethic as opposed to an expression of individuality. And this collective consumption behavior amounts to a political claim: “The public and corporate nature of hostesses’ consumption points to a new way of treating consumption behavior as a kind of claim. By “claim” I mean a publicly addressed assertion or demand directed toward other members of society” (2003:149). This is consistent with the Havana data, and I concur in part, but a problem emerges: understanding consumption patterns as a *demand* is perilously

close to a claim that consumption is a liberative practice. Zheng is right to criticize Miller for his triumphal claim that consumption practices should be interpreted as instances of liberative agency: “In his work, Miller not only celebrates the liberating nature of consumption, but also argues against the anti-consumption position that labels consumption as a decadent form of self-indulgence. For Miller, commodities are toys/tools that consumers can integrate within their personal imaginative projects, thereby achieving greater levels of personal development” (2003:149). Zheng instead finds that “hostesses consumption patterns are less a matter of sheer liberation from than of a cultural negotiation of power *through* and *within*, rather than outside of, the enabling and constraining rural-urban apartheid system. In the course of such a struggle, they assert their claims” (2003:149-150). But this is a fine line indeed: her claim is only that consumption discourses operate *within* the cultural system and not *without* it. Zheng still seems to believe that consumption is a liberating activity—even though her own data show that the consumption competition between the workers drains them of precious resources and does not necessarily lead to more success in attracting customers.

Thus, though Zheng (correctly) criticizes Miller for discovering a hyper-agency in consumption, she ultimately repeats the same error. She concludes that “contemporary conditions in China afford them a small room for maneuver in which they can struggle to forge a new identity, though their degrees of freedom are constrained” (2003:160). The constraints, we might surmise, are the conditions which limit consumption. The “liberation” of “self-expression” is nothing more than the ability to articulate a successful self in a moral economy of display. Silent in both

Zheng and Miller is the extent to which consumption in fact imprisons, in which the ethic of consumption *reduces* personal and collective freedom. Zheng's "liberation" is merely relational, occurring within a still-oppressive political-economy: to be a liberated sex worker means to be able to pretend not to be a "country bumpkin". To achieve this liberation, which is in fact no liberation at all, the women must become constrained by yet another oppressive force: the imperative to consume. I turn now to the ways in which the pingueros, too, while seeking an elusive freedom through global identification and consumption, are becoming even more imprisoned by a different form of oppression.

III. Shoes

> So, we Cubans have dreams, too: a pair of shoes from the dollar stores. One pair costs from $60 to $90. A pair of shoes for a young guy, like Nike or Adidas. (03.02)

This short quotation nicely sums my reading of pinguero consumption ideology: first, their "dreams" are expressed in terms not of accomplishments, relationships, or migration, but of commodities. Second, the commodity most highly prized as an identity marker and a symbol of well-being is shoes. Third, the attachment to shoes is specifically a youth phenomenon. And fourth, the type of shoes which is appropriate for youth in the Special Period is *foreign* shoes, shoes which represent conspicuous consumption in the United States, and thus whose price is not related to their use value but rather to their symbolic value.

Shoes even function as the ultimate medium of exchange for cash-starved street youth. The men trade shoes and sell among themselves; a man who must raise $20 or $30 to pay a multa might sell his fairly new pair of athletic shoes to another pinguero for $5-15. New shoes—particularly Nike or Adidas—would be happily accepted from a tourist-client in lieu of cash payment, and in fact as we saw in Chapter Seven such a "gift" enables a misrecognition of the nature of the relationship. But this is also true of other items of clothing, and cash is always needed to buy food for the family. Why do athletic shoes have such value for the street youth, and to what extent is this value symbolic versus pragmatic?

Meanings

It is clear that, in the pinguero cultural universe—which includes many youth who are not pingueros—shoes occupy a privileged location in the hierarchy of consumer goods. As either payment or gifts, young men at Yara are glad to receive shirts, though they prefer t-shirts ("puloveres"), or jeans, though they prefer shorts. But any young man would forgo several t-shirts, or the more scarce shorts, for even a used pair of shoes. The paramount location of shoes on the hierarchy of display is beyond doubt. What is less clear to me is why; I can only offer a few possibilities.

First, shoes are in desperate need in Cuba. The state has been unable to provide the population with an adequate supply, so that I have seen many youth at Yara walk about with hole-riddled shoes. I also observed an adolescent in the building in which I live who had simply cut off the entire toe-region of his shoes, so that his toes stuck out a few inches. And when I ask my friends, both pinguero and

non-pinguero, what I could bring them the next time I am on the island, shoes is always the first and immediate response, not requiring any thought at all. As one friend said in 2003, “Shoes are the most serious problem here in Cuba.” It is also true that the price-value of shoes—as opposed to their use value or symbolic value—is greater than any other exchange item. The price of new shoes also exceeds, sometimes by far, the amount of money a pinguero would be paid: the price of new Nikes in the store in Havana Libre might be $60, but a single encounter with a tourist who pays in dollars would only net 20 or 30. Thus, shoes are a more valuable payment for sexual services than is even cash.

A second possibility for the privileging of athletic shoes is that they are far less likely than other articles of clothing to be offered as a payment or gift from a tourist. Tourists would arrive at vacation spots with any number of shirts, and probably several pairs of shorts or jeans. Many of these items make their way into pinguero hands and do circulate to some extent. But shoes are a different story altogether: tourists are not likely to arrive with more than one pair of athletic shoes, and are not likely to give away the one pair they do have. Other kinds of shoes are far less interesting to the youth than athletic shoes, especially Nike or Adidas. I have actually been turned down when I tried to give away the work boots I characteristically bring with me. This is not because the youth to whom I offered them were any less desperate for shoes, but they do want to look good on the street, and they would look odd wearing shorts, a t-shirt, and work boots. And sandals are not practical because of the distances the youth often have to walk to and from their

rooms. Athletic shoes are more practical and fashionable, but far scarcer than other items of clothing.

But the social function of shoes is greater by far than these pragmatic considerations. A third possible explanation for the privileged location of shoes on the material hierarchy is that they are a clearer indicator of wealth than are other articles of clothing. A new pair of Nike or Adidas are brilliantly white. A pinguero sporting them is immediately recognized to have a new and valuable asset. A shirt or jeans, however, might well be used and old without being immediately recognized as such at first sight. That is, clothing holds its use-value longer than do shoes, which lose their brilliant whiteness fairly quickly; and considering the great amount of walking most of the young men do in a day, they wear out quickly. For this reason, shoes are instantly recognized on the street as either new or used, and therefore they serve as a greater social marker. Precisely because they cost so much, and because their brilliant white color announces their unquestionable newness, they are more important for a man's social reputation than are clothes.

A fourth possible reason for the primacy of athletic shoes in the material hierarchy is also related to their symbolic value. The value of all foreign commodities, I propose, is that they enable the men to perceive and represent themselves as cosmopolitan global citizens. Clothing does also serve the function of social ordering, particularly if it is of a fashionable label and the label can be displayed (Calvin Klein or Nike clothing are the favorites). But athletic shoes display their brand name more transparently and unashamedly; a giant Nike swash on the side of a shoe can't be missed. Why does the brand have to be Nike or Adidas?

Because, I propose, those brands are seen to be more in fashion in Europe and the United States. They therefore allow the men to feel a connection to the world outside Cuba. I have suggested that, absent the ability to travel, the youth seek symbolic ways to connect themselves. By following international trends and copying them when they can, the youth feel that they are a part of the wealthy, fashionable world beyond the Malecón.

Motivation

This is, I posit, one motivation for entry into sex work. Motivations are hotly contested in the discursive wrangling around the new sex work in Cuba: the state wishes to place the blame for jineterismo on the moral failures of the women workers. The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC)—the principal state organ which speaks to and for women, sometimes interceding on their behalf and at other times supporting the subordination of their needs in favor of political exigency—claims that jineteras are morally corrupt women in search of the newest and prettiest dresses, that their motivation is luxury and not survival (see Cabezas 2004:1008). This official position on the jineteras appeared well before the Special Period turn to tourism and the legalization of the dollar. Another writer on the island—the publication of whose work necessarily indicates consistence with the FMC position—wrote that “frequent contact with foreigners in Havana can promote commodity oriented and possibly

criminogenic orientation among young people" (Viera 1987 in Michalowski and Zatz 1990; see also Chapter Four, above).[1]

I cannot fully accept this claim, either regarding the motivation of the jineteras or the pingueros, since I know that many young men and women sex work for the very survival of themselves and their families. Nonetheless, contrary to anthropologists' tendency to hypervalorize subjects, I do acknowledge that some pingueros work not only—or even primarily—for food, but also to be able to dress well. Pingueros' preoccupation with brand-name clothing indicates that materialism is indeed increasingly a motivation. This is revealed by the pingueros' responses to the question, 'Why did you come to Yara?'. Indicating not conscious coordination but rather consolidation of a social script which lays bare certain value presumptions, the men consistently answer with the formulaic list: "to dress well, to buy food, and to help my family". I propose that the order of this list is neither accidental nor random, but rather is indicative of the pingueros' genuine sense of urgency around clothing. Clothing nearly always comes before food in the list of needs. Consider the following dialogue excerpts:

> It's a little tough because really, [sex with men] is not what I would like to do, because I like women. I do it for [economic] need. Because yeah, I could work [in a regular job], but young people, don't they want to dress [well]? I want to have money, to take my girlfriend out. And a job does give you money, but not enough to dress well.
> *Dressing well is the most important thing?*
> Yes, because [when] I go out on the street, I don't want to go out dressed in just anything. I want to go out in style. (03.12)

[1]This claim, that women become sex workers merely in order to afford fashionable clothing, is strikingly reminiscent of the rhetoric of Argentine hygienists in the nineteenth century (Guy 1995 [1990]:49).

Recall the prominence of clothing and shoes in the initiation story we first heard in Part II:

> So I had a friend who's gay, and he told me 'Hey there are places where a lot of gays hang out, a lot of tourists. And if you go to bed with them they will give you money so you can buy clothes. I said 'yeah but I still don't like all that [sex with men].' Well, another summer I needed shoes and some clothes. So I told my friend, 'Well, lets go cruise over there, at this place that you say the gays go.' (03.11)

Finally, another pinguero complained about the low salaries of state workers, stating only that *clothing* is inaccessible as a result, food apparently being less of a problem. Again, footwear is the dominant image of need: "With ten dollars salary a month, you can't even buy a pair of sandals. And imagine: I have a family, I have a son. And if I dress my son, then I won't be able to dress. Do you understand that? If I buy clothes for my son, then I can't buy any clothes for me."

The list "clothes, food, and to help my family" appears consistently enough that I have called it a formula: a phrase that is repeated with very little variation by multiple social actors in a group, without (apparent) conscious coordination. Still, there is some variation and even confusion in interpreting and communicating need. Consider, for example, the young man whose words began this section, articulating Cubans' dreams in terms of Nike and Adidas. But shortly thereafter his remarks became more ambivalent: "Hunger, need for clothes, low salaries. In my house, there wasn't a TV or even a fan, and two beds for five people. I felt obligated to enter a life of prostitution, because in my country it's not easy to get things without such a sacrifice."

Thus, it may well be true that many of the men have more pressing needs than for new Nike or Adidas shoes; I do not have sufficient data to adequately

measure the men's 'true' level of material need. And anyway, such an evaluation would require the imposition of a standard by which to measure, and such a standard would inevitably impose an ethic which is external to the men's context. That is, neither I nor my readers share the pingueros' experience, and thus it would be foolish (as well as ethnocentric) to claim to know what they 'really' need. A valuative judgment as to the genuineness of their need would not be enlightening or helpful. More useful would be an examination of the *meanings* of shoes for them. Despite the physical hunger which many men claim is a factor in their decision to enter pinguerismo, shoes (and other clothing) remain first in their formulaic list. To understand this we need consider the symbolic meanings of shoes: as a connection to the globe, a rejection of the austerity of the institutional Revolution, and an indicator (and vehicle) of an escape from poverty.

Modern

As I have already suggested, pingueros want to feel connected to the world outside of Cuba. This desire is manifest in several ways. First, although most do not desire to emigrate permanently, they do wish that they could travel. They seem to believe that there is a law in Cuba which prevents them from doing so; but to the best of my knowledge the only thing that keeps them island-bound is a lack of funds for airfare and exit visa, and the reticence of foreign governments to grant tourist visas to Cubans who are suspected of planning to emigrate permanently. It is therefore poverty which prevents their travel, rather than their government. But since in their eyes poverty, too, is the result of state hostility toward them, "Fidel" can be blamed

for just about everything. A second way in which their desire for global connection is evident is through their questioning of tourists. They want to know what life is like in other parts of the world, and they display more knowledge of other places and of world events than that which we would normally expect of third-world street youth, like a result of the Cuban education system as well as of their frequent interactions with tourists. Not surprisingly, the youth often ask tourists about clothing fashion. During my most recent visit in August 2004, one pinguero was keen to know about the latest “hip hop” trend. Third, pingueros feel a solidarity (or at least a commonality) with male sex workers elsewhere; thus, they want to know how much pingueros make in New York and Miami. This might seem to be an insignificant detail, but the fact that they would compare their work and compensation to that of male sex workers in New York involves quite an imaginative leap, a cognitive reaching-out to the world beyond, and the construction of an (imaginary) brotherhood. Shoes are sign and symbol of such an imagined (or rather, desired) connection.

Thus far in this chapter, I have conflated three concepts which now require some disentanglement: the United States, the globe, and “modernity”. Is it the *globe* to which the men wish to connect? Or is it to the United States, the home of the fashions they so cherish? The men do not make such a distinction in their conversations with me. It matters little to them whether the Nike shoes arrive on the feet of a Spanish, Canadian, Mexican, or United States tourist. I suspect that the

only distinction of import is that of *Cuba* versus *everywhere else*, the known and the exotic, the socialist and the capitalist, the poor and the wealthy.[2]

Protest

Does this desire to connect symbolically to youth outside the island necessarily indicate a desire to leave Cuba or a rejection of the Revolution? It is difficult to measure the extent to which the pingueros either reject or support the Revolution. I have demonstrated that they do reproduce certain Revolutionary values, at times unawares. But the institutional Revolutionary regime is another question altogether. Suffice it to say that there is no love lost between the youth and "Fidel" (which I have explained is not only the individual Fidel Castro but also a code word for the entire state apparatus, so much has the Revolution been embodied in him). But neither have I perceived a wide spread contempt for "Fidel" among the pingueros, though my own bias may have blinded me to such sentiment. It is also true that I made no secret of my own socialist proclivities, and I informed the pingueros in no uncertain terms that there is poverty aplenty in the United States, too—a fact they found hard to believe. This outspokenness was in part calculated, since I am quite sure that it

[2]This is, of course, a process that is hardly specific to Cuban youth. Post-socialist scholars have been documenting the ways in which citizens of the former Soviet bloc have enthusiastically embraced the consumption of western goods as a symbol of their rejoining the "modern" world. Sigrid Rausing (2002) has documented a somewhat similar—though of course also very different—process in post-socialist Estonia. Consumption of western (in this case Swedish) is seen as a symbol of returning to normalcy. The socialist era was a mistake, so symbolic separation from Russia, through consumption of western goods, is a return to the way that things should have been. And André Czeglédy (2002) demonstrates that in Hungary, consumption of fast-food fried Chicken at a United States-based franchise, is a symbol of connecting to the modern west. Young people, especially, see the chain as prestigious because of its connection to the West, seeing it as a way to forget the past and look outwards toward a capitalist globe and a bright capitalist future.

kept the state from classifying me as a counter Revolutionary threat. But it also may have stifled some of the youth's open criticism of the regime. Then again, criticism and complaining is not something from which Cubans shy, as Edelman (1998) found in his brief visit. This is what leads me to suspect, despite my avowed socialism, that the contempt for Fidel is not nearly as sharp and widespread as we in the north are led to believe.

An exception is Michael. He raged feverishly and incessantly in two interviews about the evils of Castro, spitting his name is disgust every time he spoke it—and refusing to call him "Fidel" as do most Cubans, an extreme insult. He articulated his desire to be a global citizen:

> I want to say that I hope some day to know the world, to be a free man, that I am not really, because of the policies of the government of Castro, of Castro himself. Not just me, but that the people of Cuba have the opportunity to travel, to know the world, to be free. Its all because of his [Castro's] policies, his ideology, his capriciousness, for his capriciousness of staying in power, or keeping his wealth to himself. And his mafia, that he controls, determines all manner of public policy.[3] (03.13)

Michael is one of the men at Yara who proudly display clothing bearing United States insignia. I asked Michael why he thought that the state tolerated such flagrant displays of protest. His answer was not at all satisfactory for understanding the state's position on the matter, but it does shed more light into his way of thinking about the state and the meanings of capitalism.

> *And you have a t-shirt that suggests that you respect the United States.*
> Yes.
> *Before, it seems to me, a few years ago, a t-shirt like that wasn't…*
> It would not be seen, it would not be seen.

[3]The accusation of having a "mafia" is reminiscent of Fidel's predecessor, Batista, whose connivance with United States mafia was and is infamous. Using the word to describe those who follow Fidel and those who are functionaries of the Revolutionary state is a way to rhetorically associate Fidel with the corruption of the batistiano.

What has happened to the Cuban state that now it allows…
Before, you couldn't pay in [United States] dollars; if you used dollars, you were penalized, put in jail. Now, the government of Cuba has legalized the dollar. It was illegal, but now it is legal.
But what is the connection between the dollar and the fact that now there is more freedom of…
Because now the Cuban government has legalized the dollar. Cuban stores before charged in Cuban pesos. But what they sold was no good: Cuban clothes, not Yankee [Yuma] clothes, capitalist clothes. Now, Cuban stores have changed; everything is in dollars…The dollar is capitalist.

The significance of this side remark cannot be underestimated: Cuban clothing is "no good". Only capitalist clothing is good. Can clothing be capitalist? Only to the extent that clothing represents another world with a different set of social and economic relations. When Michael says that only capitalist clothing is good, he is rejecting the Cuban Revolution as unable to provide the high-quality goods—brilliantly white athletic shoes and durable clothing—which only the United States can supply.[4] Was Michael avoiding my question about the reasons for the new tolerance of expression through (United States) patriotic clothing? He wouldn't answer directly, but yet he kept insisting that the answer lies in the dollar. The United States dollar represents advancement, development, a relaxation of (Revolutionary) social restrictions. The dollar—as well as the clothing it both produces and purchases—makes people more modern and global

Thus, for Michael, clothing is a symbol of nationalist (dis)identification. We have seen that the men particularly embrace any style North American, the site of concentration of the great wealth they desire. Michael believes that like him, other young men sporting United States flag clothing also do so in protest of their

[4]Clothing produced by the Cuban state is of rather low quality—the shirts I buy there begin to fall apart very soon indeed. Socialist economies in general—and certainly the Cuban Revolutionary state is no exception—have historically been unable to provide their citizens with enough quality consumer goods.

government. The Revolution has so consistently positioned itself as the anti-US, that to protest the Revolution means to embrace the United States. They assume that it is everything which Cuba is not: wealthy, full of opportunity, 'democratic'. But the United States, too, is a symbol to them; it is not the actual state to which pingueros boldly proclaim their allegiance by tattooing United States flags on their bodies and by wearing US flag t-shirts and bandanas. Rather, it is the *idea* of a world outside their small island of which they dream. They do see themselves in solidarity with sex workers around they world, and they frequently ask me about male sex work in New York. But as we have seen, this does not mean that they wish to emigrate. Rather than escape their island home, what most wish to escape is the poverty it seems to foment.

Escape

Pingueros discern a clear dichotomy: the world outside Cuba represents wealth, new shoes, capitalism, and something they believe is 'freedom'. Cuba represents poverty, sacrifice, socialism, and slavery to "Fidel". Understanding the outside world only through the interpretive lens of tourists' consumption habits, they assume that all is well in the capitalism. They even apply this belief to quality of clothing: we have seen that Michael believes that "capitalist" clothing is of a better quality than "socialist" clothing. Thus fashionable clothing is believed to be both the symbol of well-being—that is, of escape from the confines of socialist poverty—but also its vehicle. That is, acquiring new clothing is not only a way to announce well-being, but it is *the way to achieve it*.

> Don't you think that pingueros in Cuba dress well? Pingueros have nice clothing…These Levis cost 58 [USD]. I couldn't buy it—a Spanish guy bought it for me. These boots cost $120. A German guy bought them for me. This belt from Calvin Klein cost $38. A Swiss gave it to me. Pingueros dress in clothing given to us by tourists, all pingueros. And all these clothes we have, that you can see on any pinguero, like a very expensive Christian Dior or a very expensive Calvin Klein—and you can see an expensive watch on any pinguero—all pingueros have expensive clothing. (03.05)

This boastful account is difficult to believe, and it is, of course, simply not true that "all" (or even most) pingueros have expensive clothes. Especially significant is the rhetorical and symbolic value of designer fashion. The pinguero imagination holds that excessive, almost obscene, consumption—such as that represented by $200 shoes in what is still largely a third-world country—is what capitalism will bring. Thus do the grandsons of the Revolution look for material and ideological salvation from the arch-enemy of their state, a salvation which they believe triumphant global capitalism will surely effect. To escape from poverty means to wear Calvin Klein fashions—it matters little or none at all how much food has been consumed or the condition of housing. Appearance in the street is paramount in self-evaluation and public personhood. Recall: "… when I go out to the street, I don't want to go out wearing just *anything*; I want to go out *in style*" (03.12). Thus, like youth elsewhere, there is quite a bit of attention paid to public performance—this is not only of masculinity, as we saw in Chapter Eight, but also a *performance of well-being*. I posit that in a context in which a new material abundance is displayed but selectively distributed, youth announce through consumption that they are one of the few successful ones in the new dollar economy. As everywhere, capitalism must install a new economy of display, a spectacularization of clothed bodies.

Value is measured in terms of ability to maneuver IN such an economy (in the broad sense of the word). Display of financial well-being through consumption is also a key to dating success, which depends not only upon performance of *masculinity*, but also upon performance of *acquisitiveness.* Or rather, acquisitiveness becomes a constitutive element of masculine virility. Recall the bitter words of a very well-dressed pinguero with which I began this study:

> A *pinguero* has a better chance of having more girlfriends than anybody else. Because girls like a cute guy, one who dresses well, according to the latest fashions. They like a guy who has "swing", who can put on the latest. And the only ones who can do that are the pingueros. Or the children of the highest leaders, the representatives of companies, and of the ministries—they dress well, according to the latest fashions. They, and the pingueros. (03.05)

We saw in Chapter Three that masculinity under consumer capitalism is inextricably bound with a belief in phallic lack and its recompense, leading to the spectacularization of the male body. It may be that what we are witnessing is a confirmation of some of Stratton's formulations. If this is true, Stratton might argue, the men attempt to buttress their street image as macho men, threatened with diminution as a result of their homoerotic occupation. The reinforcement of masculinity is accomplished through a display of consumptive power.

To claim that the acquisition of new and fashionable clothing from the United States and Europe is one primary motivation for much pinguerismo does not mean that sex workers are greedy; rather, it indicates that the identity consciousness of Cuban youth is being rapidly colonized by the capitalist imperative to consume. Havana sex workers are neither innocent victims nor greedy criminals; they are responding to the introduction of a new economy of morality. The conflict is not only between sex workers and the state, but between two different value systems:

revolutionary austerity, sacrifice, and cooperative action versus individualism, consumerism, materialism. This struggle can be spatialized, but only with slippage: that is, both sets of values operate both within and without the island. Thus, in large part the conflict is entirely within Cuba, as youth and the state wrestle with views of the future of the revolution.

IV. Palliative

> Advertising enjoins everyone to consume, while the economy prohibits the vast majority of humanity from doing so. The command that everybody do what so many cannot becomes an invitation to crime.
>
> —Galeano (2000 [1998]:25)

Many of the men themselves recognize to some extent that the symbols of material success they employ are only symbols; unlike many capitalist citizens elsewhere, they do not confuse symbols with urgent life necessities. Thus, for example, a pinguero might be proud to wear a cellular telephone on his belt, even though the phone is not connected to a network and does not function anyway. He and everyone who sees it knows that it does not work, and no one pretends that it is functional. The telephone is a proclamation of allegiance to the economic system which produced it, the system which he believes will bring prosperity. The same is true of a Sony Walkman worn on the belt, even if its owner cannot afford batteries or cassette tapes. Recall the 13 August 2003 field notes of my night on the Malecón with Domingo: “He is wearing ear phones, which lead to a small cassette player in his pocket. It has no batteries and probably would not work anyway, and anyway he doesn’t have any tapes, yet he wears the ear pieces nonetheless. It is a status

symbol to have a walkman, and so he is showing that he has one, even though it doesn't work. I suspect that no one thinks that it actually works." This phenomenon is rather similar to what Stirrat (1989:106-107) found in Sri Lanka: "[A] house would have a car port not because they had a car, or were likely to have a car—nor was a car likely to come to a house on top of a sand dune half a mile from the road—but because no one else in the village had a car port". Or the few houses that owned televisions, "…yet they were never used. There was no electricity and no one expected it to come to the village". The point of such practices is not to claim that the items have any use value, but rather to loudly embrace the ethics of consumption and competition.

In Havana, this phenomenon could be interpreted as a resistance to socialism, or at least that form of it that exists in Cuba, but again, I seriously question anthropological formulations which claim that consumption is itself a practice of liberative agency. An embrace of luxury consumption could potentially imprison the youth far more ruthlessly and inflexibly than they are at present. Consumerism and materialism embedded in the individual and collective cultural consciousness might easily lead—as it has in the United States and elsewhere—to a belief that well-being and social acceptance are based exclusively on ability to consume. This causes youth to spend the precious few dollars they have not on food and medicine but in a quest for satisfaction by out-consuming one another. I fully concur with Zheng's (2003:149) critique of Miller's (1987) claim that "consumption constitutes the main arena in which individuals can struggle against social oppression." Pingueros do protest their state through consumption practices, but the freedom to which they

cling is illusory. They are *not* more at liberty for having new Calvin Klein jeans, particularly if the jeans were accepted in lieu of a cash payment which could have purchased food. The association of designer clothing with well-being is not a cultural discourse which is likely to lead to more freedom. I and others have argued before that—contrary to the triumphalism of so many anthropologist apologists—movements of resistance based on market forces are ultimately not liberative, because they emerge from and reproduce the logic of the market, which itself resists liberation of any sort (Hodge 2001; NACLA Editors 1998:16). The truth of consumption might not be as freeing as the youth seem to think.

V. Post-Socialism

> People often employ the metaphor of "opening" to describe these changes in sexual culture, whether they approve of them or not. What do Shanghai people mean when they say that "sex" or "society" has "opened up"? I am not arguing about the truth of these stories about "opening up". To paraphrase Michele Foucault's questioning of a western narrative of "sexual liberation," we should ask not whether sex has become more "open" in China, but why the Chinese insist that there has been a "sexual opening".
>
> (Farrer 2002:25)

Scholars of East Asia tell us that western and capitalist influence in post-socialist China is popularly imaged as a *sexual* opening, even a violent forced opening. There has indeed been a transformation of ideas of sexuality, relationships, and physical and emotional intimacy, but more: sexuality is the symbolic system used to describe political and economic changes; China has been pried open and invaded by foreign influences. This is of course strikingly similar to the images of phallocentric militarism

and conquest that we encountered in Chapter Four. And recall Paz's (1985 [1961]) interpretation of the Mexican *chingada*, the violently opened woman-as-nation. Is it merely a rhetorical coincidence that similar language was used to describe the conquest of the Americas? Is sexuality merely a symbolic system, or rather, is it a real manifestation of unequal power relations? The Havana data suggest that it is both, that sexuality is both a transmitter and reproducer of real—not merely rhetorical or discursive—power. All the configurations of the body—including but hardly limited to its sexualized identity assignment and its consumption patterns—display, manifest, and even reproduce political-economic power.

One key to understanding what is happening in Havana is in the very recent work of anthropologist Yuanxiang Yan (2003) in a rural Chinese village during the period of market reforms of the 1990s. Yan agrees with both Farquhar (2002) and Farrer (2002) that changes in marriage and intimacy in China were actually initiated by the socialist state. Through the process of collectivization, socialism reduced the role of the family as the main unit of agricultural production. And in place of family elders, the state took the role of guide, ruler, focus. Thus was the traditional Chinese system of intergenerational reciprocity eroded. Members of families became individual socialist citizens, whose primary obligation was to the socialist state via the agricultural collective rather than to other family members.

When market reforms began, it was then only a short step for these new young individuals—having already been formulated as such, independent of family connections—to simply substitute their own well being for that of the collectives. Private life has become privatized; that is, the nuclear household has increasingly

become an affective center for emotional support, rather than either the site of production or a base from which to participate in collective activity. For instance, Yan and others tell us, marriage choices have been removed from the realm of elders' control and are no longer based on practical needs relating to the well-being of the larger family unit; increasingly marriage couplings are organized around affective compatibility, emotional attachment, and sexual desire. In short, market reform in China—following on the head-start unwittingly created by the socialist state's collectivism—has produced a new individualism among Chinese youth. A principal (if unintended) consequences of this movement was a shift of power from the older to the younger generation. Youth became empowered to demand a share of family property pre-mortem through brideprices, to express their opinions boldly, and to insist on choosing their own marriage partners: "The rise of the individual, or the development of individuality, is best reflected in the greater autonomy and independence, the intensification of emotional attachment and intimacy, and the expansion of personal desires among several generations of villagers…[V]illage youth are most sensitive and receptive to social change and more individualistic than their parents" (2003:220). (Young women, with the most to gain from social change, even more enthusiastically embrace the new ideas than do young men.)

These newly-formulated individuals are no longer bound either to traditional extended family obligations, nor to the now-dissolved collectives. "[T]he social space opened up by the retreating state has not been filled by the surviving values of traditional culture alone; instead, there are also contesting forces of the market economy [and] consumerism" (Yan 2003:229). The new political and cultural

economy of a consuming individualism has filled this vacuum. The ultimate result of these changes, then, is the emergence of what Yan calls the "uncivil Individual," who "emphasizes the right to pursue personal interests yet ignores his or her moral obligations to the public and other individuals" (2003:217).

> The emphasis on conjugal love and romantic intimacy both serve the interests of the individual, not that of the family. The development of these self-centered emotions, together with the legitimacy of personal desires, is in conflict with the traditional emphasis on emotional boding with parents and self-sacrifice for the good of the extended family. Such a tendency to emphasize one's rights while downplaying one's obligations calls into question the extent to which the individual is truly autonomous and independent…[T]he development of individuality among village youth is incomplete and unbalanced. It is incomplete because most changes are confined to the sphere of private life; it is unbalanced because the emphasis on individual rights is not complemented by equal respect for other individuals and a commitment to civic duty. (2003:226)

Absent the moralizing discourses of state collectivism in China, an ethic of consumption laid claim the new egotistic individuals. Yan continues:

> The socialist morality quickly collapsed after the collectives were dismantled and the state withdrew from many aspects of social life. With neither traditional values nor socialist morality, villagers faced a moral and ideological vacuum in the post collective era. It is in that special historical context that the villagers, along with their involvement in commodity production and the market, quickly embraced the values of late capitalism characterized by a global consumerism, which emphasizes the "I deserve…" perspective and the legitimacy of personal desires. (2003:234)

The result was a "sudden increase in peasant demand for consumer goods" (2003:225). But in China—and here we may or may not have a contrast to the Cuban condition—the embrace of the ethic of consumption was not merely an accidental consequence of state passivity. Rather, Yan tells us, the state actively participated: "Consumption and lifestyle are particularly significant for the younger

villagers who grew up in the 1990s when the party-state worked hand in hand with global capitalism to promote consumerism as the new cultural ideology" (2003:225).

In this history we can view a mature version of the same process which is only now beginning in Special Period Havana. The Cuban state is not exactly promoting consumerism, and in fact it continues to work against it through (decreasingly effective) ideological imperatives and high taxation of those who are becoming wealthy. Yet the state is working hard to entice foreign capital to the island, guaranteeing it certain free to redeploy certain of the island's resources in the service of wealth extraction through market mechanisms. My argument throughout has been that such a fundamental shift necessarily requires an attendant shift in cultural values: cadres must become consumers. Thus, thought perhaps in a indirect way, the state's turn to capital investment as a way out of the Special Period has the effect of transforming collectively-invested socialist citizens into competitive individuals, inculcating in them the values of competitive consumption. We might provisionally conclude that Zheng's bar hostesses are but a more formal, institutional, and legal version of jineteros, jineteras, pingueros, and all the other young Cubans who find other ways to acquire new fashions. Yan's proposed historical trajectory of value change in post-socialist China might help to explain both the female bar hostesses of Dalien and the male pingueros of Havana.

Yan's data suggest the equally crucial conclusion that different forms of desire are not only not discreet, but even co-determinate; that is, *desire for consumer goods and sexual desire for bodies participate in the same discourse and emerge from the same impulses.* Yan did not make this connection, but he did

provide us with the data with which we might extrapolate a connection: “Once this mentality emerges, the object of the statement “I deserve…” can be anything, from a consumer durable to an ideal family…Admittedly, most desires are materialistic and ultimately lead to desire for consumption, which is more and more possible as China becomes a consumer society” (2003:224). There is no doubt that a consumerist ethic conditions desire and directs it to particular objects. What is less clear is whether *sexual* desire is of the same stuff as is *material* desire, though I would argue that *it is a single, undifferentiated psycho-social discursive process*. We do not at present have enough data to make a declarative statement regarding desire, but there has been considerable social scientific study of the matter of identity—the subject of the next and final chapter.

Chapter Ten
Redux

I am Cuba.
Once, Christopher Columbus landed here.
He wrote in his diary:
'This is the most beautiful land ever seen by human eyes.'
Thank you, Mr. Columbus.
When you saw me for the first time,
I was singing and laughing.
I waved the fronds of my palms to greet your sails.
I thought your ships brought happiness.

I am Cuba.
Ships took my sugar, and left me tears.
Strange thing, sugar, Mr. Columbus.
It contains so many tears, and yet is sweet.

I am Cuba.
Sometimes it seems to me
that the sap of my palm trees are full of blood.
Sometimes it seems to me
that the murmuring sounds around us
are not the ocean,
but choked-back tears.

—from the film *Soy Cuba*, 1963

The sadness to which this film gives voice is the tragedy of colonialism. I began the present work with an artistic (and rhetorical) representation of the consequences of colonialism: the bodies of the jinetera, the displaced cane worker, the student

revolutionary, the peasant guerrilla. The film itself is a rhetoric struggle of (post)coloniality and nationalism. The content of Cuban nationalism had in fact always been *embodied*.

The image of the nation is not an idea but a body: a dark body, a mixture of African and European, dancing and drumming, selling itself in colonial sex. Recall the mulata prostitute on the *marquillas*, the mulata jinetera of Soy Cuba, and the dark sensual dancers of the Tropicana. Recall, too, Fusco's (1998:155) remark that mulatas were so associated with sex work that "to engage in sex work practically means to assume a mulata identity by association". But how did the symbol of the nation become a prostitute? Perhaps a prostituted body somehow represents a nation still at war, still colonized, still invaded by foreign bodies both military-economic and phallic-economic. Here the many historical and literary references to the phallic symbolism of military and economic invasive power become relevant. Here too, the Revolution's hypermasculinity makes sense: the masculine state—a state comprised initially of bearded and cigar-smoking guerrillas—comes to the rescue of the feminized (militarily and phallically invaded) nation. Little wonder that one of the first act of the Revolution was to rid Havana of the blight of Cuban women prostitutes servicing United States men, and to retrain the jineteras as seamstresses. The point to this long history is that Cuban colonialism and nationalism are inexorably *embodied* in highly sexed bodies, and this is the essential background to pinguerismo of the Special Period.

This final chapter integrates the historical review of Part I with the ethnography of Part II. I begin with a reexamination of dialectics on the scale of the

body—the beginning and end of colonialism and nationalism in pinguerismo. This is followed by a review of the scholarly findings regarding the formation and formulation of sexual identities in the United States, and the imperial imposition of that identity in post-socialist Russia. I will then be equipped to posit a mild corrective to a thesis with which the research began, concluding the study with a more nuanced view of just how colonial process is active in the lives and bodies of the pingueros.

I. Bodies

> The organization, mobilization, and channeling of human desires, the active political engagement with tactics of persuasion, surveillance, and coercion, become part of the consumptuary apparatuses of capitalism, in turn producing all manner of pressures on the body as a site of and performative agent for 'rational consumption' for further accumulation.
>
> (Harvey 2000:111)

I have maintained throughout that the title "pinguero" is more than just a convenient name; it has real, practical *effect* on both the personal and national levels. But this does not, I wish to make quite clear, mean that my analysis remains on the textual level for even a moment. Even the matter of identity—a matter of bodily (or at least embodied) performance—should quickly move us to a consideration of the conditions in which such performance is engaged and the context which gives it form—that is, to the realm of political economy.

We saw in the last chapter that an inducement to consume is the cultural (economic) agent most active on the bodies of pingueros—sometimes even competing with the other bodily imperatives of food and shelter—and the agent most actively colonizing them and turning them to the service of capital accumulation. David Harvey's (2000) argument relates to the "productive consumption of the commodity labor power": his goal is to explicate how bodies are formed and configured so that their labor power can be extracted most efficiently. I will not follow the *production* line of this argument, however fruitful it may be, because my focus here is on the *consumptive* end of capital circulation rather than the productive end. I realize that this is in part a false distinction; production and consumption are but different moments in the same process of accumulation. But I am not prepared to engage questions as to how the men's bodies are being disciplined so as to be most useful for capital accumulation through the tourism site of production. I focus exclusively on the consumptive end. My claim throughout has been, and continues to be, that pinguerismo represents an "organization, mobilization, and channeling of human desires" such that they are transformed into a "part of the consumptuary apparatuses of capitalism".

Recall that in the Introduction I reviewed Harvey's basic formulations regarding the body; he concludes that the body is a *process*, as well as a *site* of the accumulation processes dubbed 'globalization'. Three formulations have been especially relevant to our purposes: First, "…the body is not a closed and sealed entity, but a relational "thing" that is created, bounded, sustained, and ultimately dissolved in a spatio-temporal flux of multiple processes" (2002:98). Second, "no

body exists outside of its external relations with other bodies, and the exercise of powers and counterpowers among bodies is a central constitutive aspect of social life" (2002:120). And third, "The body…is itself a site of contestation for the forces that create it. The body (like the person and self) is an internal relation and therefore open and porous to the world" (2002:130).

Globalism, for instance, cannot be fully understood if *all* scales are not considered—including the scale of the body. Global processes must ultimately manifest in bodies—not only in computer wires and satellites and bank accounts and national armies. Thus, pinguerismo is a function not only of economics, but also of bodies—which themselves operate on different scales—and the desires which adhere to them and in them. But attention to bodies is fraught with danger, if bodies are imagined to be the neutral base of experience, the unmarked beginning of it. Rather, these statements we have just reviewed remind us that bodies themselves are the result of productive forces.

> We here encounter a peculiar conundrum. On the one hand, to return to the human body as the fount of all experience (including that of space and time) is presently regarded as a means (now increasingly privileged) to challenge the whole network of abstractions (scientific, social, political-economic) through which social relations, power relations, institution, and material practices get defined, represented, and regulated. But on the other hand, no human body is outside of social processes of determination. To return to it is, therefore, to instantiate the social process being purportedly rebelled against….[H]ow can …bodies be a measure, sign, or receiver of anything outside the circulation of capital or of the various mechanisms that discipline them?" (Harvey 2000:100-101)

Following this logic, it would be foolish to search for some sexual identity, the codified performance of a sexed body, which is prior to the current moment, to claim—in the tradition of anthropological valorizing—that the men struggle against

the demands of capital by asserting some “traditional” sexual self. Tradition itself is of course the product of social relations; it does not exist outside them. It would thus be an error to proclaim the typical anthropological conceit of claiming that external or global forces do not operate unimpeded on indigenous culture because the latter resists with resilient traditional formulations. The resiliency of culture to resist (economic) colonial incursion is hugely exaggerated. Roseberry was correct to criticize anthropologists for valorizing their subjects, claiming that they are uniquely able to resist the homogenizing influence of United States imperialism and capitalism; he warned against “the simple and naïve form of a celebration of “our” people and “their” history….An anthropologist interested in Latin American should have something to say about Americanization, then. He or she should be able to reject the homogenizing stereotype without retreating into the equally stereotypical comfort of the distinctiveness of his or her ‘own people’” (1994 [1989]:81-82) An example of what I have consistently called the “hypervalorizing” tendency is the work of Carla Freeman, who claims that not only are sweatshop workers able to resist the domination OF capital, but that they are even able to change capitalism itself through the psycho-social manipulation of their interpretative frame. She writes: “Within the broad sweep of capitalist globalization, and the expansion of the global assembly line into new realms of work, local culture and notions of identity enact themselves in significant ways, reshaping the very contours of multinational industries and therefore, even in a small way, of global capitalism itself” (Freeman 2000:63 in Sheller 2003:34).

This is a fantastic claim which surely cannot be made for Cuban youth, whose creative reimagining of their work does not in any way "reshape the very contours of multinational [tourism industry]. Indeed, their consumption patterns only serve to further imprison them in a new form of slavery: not to a colonial master, but to an imperialist cultural imperative. Culture is not sufficient to struggle against the colonization of it because culture itself, I would argue, emerges from economic imperative. No body—or bodily habitus, or cultural configuration of the body through an identity codification—exists prior to the social processes which configure it. And, arguably, any social process is inextricably bound up with the economic logic which impels and conditions culture. Thus, we cannot claim that there is an impulse of "resistance" which enables pingueros to champion their indigenous sex-gender identity structures against the power of the market. Still, this does not mean that there is no local inflection of imported cultural forms. I was in error when I initially analyzed pinguero identity purely as a product of colonial imposition through the agency of sex-tourism (Hodge 2001). It is to a complication and nuancing of those ideas to which we now turn.

II. Desire

> The organization, mobilization, and channeling of human desires, the active political engagement with tactics of persuasion, surveillance, and coercion, become part of the consumptuary apparatuses of capitalism, in turn producing all manner of pressures on the body as a site of and performative agent for 'rational consumption' for further accumulation.
>
> (Harvey 2000:111)

In this chapter and the last I make two apparently contradictory statements: I correct my earlier simplistic formulations of identity which claimed that Cuban ideas give way unimpeded to imported categories. I acknowledge that my initial interpretation of Cuban sexuality in terms of northern identity categories was itself an imperial process; my scholarly production might be one of the instruments of the colonization I decry. But I also insist that claims to hyperagency, in which traditional culture is imagined to be an effective challenge to the power of aggressive global capital, are more a figment of a valorizing anthropological imagination than a reality. Both are true, and it is to a reconciliation of this apparent contradiction that I now turn. I begin by examining the emergence of 'gay' in the United States and Western Europe.

Gay

Every piece of scholarship (with which I am familiar) that analyzes United States and European 'gay' identity begins with reference to John D'Emilio; his 1982 essay "Capitalism and Gay Identity" was a seminal investigation of the way in which economy conditions sexual identity. It is canon in the field, and after 20 years still resists criticism: I have not encountered a single critique, even a mild one.

In the essay D'Emilio convincingly argues that gayness, as configured in the United States and Western Europe, emerged only when shifts in capitalism allowed it to do so; capitalism in fact encouraged it through a transformation of wage labor and family structures. These ideas are now standard assumptions in studies of sexuality:

> By the second half of the nineteenth century, this situation was noticeably changing as the capitalist system of free labor took hold. Only when

> individuals began to make their living through wage labor, instead of as parts of an interdependent family unit, was it possible for homosexual desire to coalesce into personal identity—an identity based on the ability to remain outside the heterosexual family and to construct a personal life based on attraction to one's own sex. By the end of the century, a class of men and women existed who recognized their erotic interest in their own sex, saw it as a trait that set them apart from the majority, and sought others like themselves.
>
> (1993 [1983]:470)

Earlier, Foucault (1990 [1978]) had demonstrated that a medicalization of the formerly-religious discourses around sexual behavior created what he called a "new species," the homosexual. His principal finding was the crucial idea that sexuality is not an object of repression, but the result of *productive* forces: "Sexuality must not be described as a stubborn drive, by nature alien and of necessity disobedient to a power which exhausts itself trying to subsume it and often fails to control it entirely. It appears rather as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power…" (1990 [1978]:103) D'Emilio might have been familiar with this work, but his essay went much further by showing how it was specifically *capitalism*—a matter avoided by Foucault—which created the conditions under which such a medicalization could occur. Without the change to individual wage labor, the corporate power structures that Foucault showed were now greatly diminished—such as that represented by the Catholic Church—would have continued to exercise productive authority in matters of sexual behavior. D'Emilio deserves enormous credit, even more than Foucault, in discovering the fact that sexuality and economy are co-determinate.

Meanwhile, Jeffrey Weeks had published the first two books in his "informal trilogy" of studies of sexuality in the British context: *Coming Out* in 1977 and *Sex, Politics, and Society* in 1981. In them, he traced the history of homosexuality in

Britain, also tying it industrial capitalism. D'Emilio cites him, though not the other way around. But despite the temporal primacy of Weeks, D'Emilio is by far more often cited in United States scholarship. Perhaps this is due to the geographic specificity of Weeks' studies, but then again the economies and sexualities of Britain and the United States are similar enough to make the scholarship perfectly relevant. It could be that the Weeks volumes are cumbersome because they attempt to do so much, treating many different topics with enormous historical detail; the brief D'Emilio essay is theoretically and historically solid but far more manageable.

Weeks' and D'Emilio's argument is that the gay identity emerged as a result of changes in industrial capitalism. But capitalism is no longer what is was 100 years ago when the gay identity first emerged; rather than industrialism, the current economic regime is based on consumption. How consumption capitalism, as opposed to industrial capitalism, effects the gay identity was first investigated by a contemporary of Weeks, historian Jonathon Katz, in his oft-cited study of gay "America". According to Julie Matthaie, Katz "notes that the view of sex as a pleasurable activity for both sexes accompanied the rise of consumerism and the decline of the work ethic that characterized advanced capitalism in the early twentieth-century United States. Pleasure was to be sought after, through sexuality as well as consumption" (1997:149). Again, we find a curious conflation of two manifestations of desire: sexual and consumptive.

Building on the work of Katz, Weeks, D'Emilio, and Foucault, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to the ways in which consumption, as the urgent imperative of late capitalism, has conditioned the codification of sexualities. Donald

Lowe's *The Body in Late-Capitalist United States* argues that sexuality is no longer largely organized around gender performance or even pleasures, but rather according to the needs of consumption capitalism. Indeed, the gay identity has become what he calls a "consumptuary phenomenon": "an urban male homosexual minority with sufficient income transforms itself into the gay lifestyle (135)…Gays display themselves as consumers of clothing, holidays, theater and cinema, restaurant meals, cosmetics, and household goods. (137)" (in Pellegrini 2002:141)

Weeks himself had configured this movement. In the final chapter of the second volume in his "trilogy", he questioned what he called the moment of "permissiveness", the 1960s. A relaxation of traditional strictures on sexual expression was the result, he convincingly argued, of consumerism:

> But perhaps most significant of all was the completion of that reorientation of the economy toward domestic consumption which had begun in the nineteenth century and had already become a significant economic factor by the 1930s…There is no doubt that the prolonged [post-war economic] boom depended in part upon a switch in moral attitudes away from the traditional bourgeois virtues of self-denial and savings ('prudence') toward a compulsion to spend. And as we have seen, these general moral characteristics—'saving', 'spending'—have for long held strong sexual connotations.
>
> (1989 [1981]:250)

Strikingly similar rhetoric emerges from the anthropological studies of post-socialist China: a reconfiguration of selfhood according to the capitalist/western model of individuality, which leads almost inevitably to a reconfiguration of ideas of well-being according to a consumerist model (see Yan 2003). Thus, we have been witnessing a vital movement in scholarship: Foucault insisted that sexuality was subject not to repression but to production, though he tended to avoid questions of the super-structural causes and mechanisms by which sexuality is configured or that motivated

the movement. Weeks, D'Emilio, and Katz made it clear that *economy*—specifically United States and British capitalism—is the prime mover in the codification of desire into identity. Each of these scholars planted a seed for what now seems to be a widely-held idea: the imperative to consume under late capitalism *configures* culture (as opposed to simply reproducing or reflecting it), of which sexuality is a central component.

But the claim that economy configures identity structure still assumed that there is something called 'desire' which is prior to the entry into culture, a pre-social urge to engage sexually. And such an urge, it is generally assumed, is specific to an object, that is, a matter of genes, or ontology. And the agenda of many 'gay' activists in the United States is to convince the rest of the country that equal rights should be granted to sexual minorities because sexuality is like race—a genetic characteristic which is not a matter of choice. Further, very many gay folks individually struggle for their families' acceptance by convincing them that they are stuck with their sexualities, that they are not a matter of choice—a hugely successful strategy since Stonewall. But the problem with this biological determinism is that it ignores the social factors—first among these is surely economy—which condition identity.

The social scientific production just reviewed enables us to overcome the extreme limitation of biological determinism, and suggests yet another theoretical leap: clearly economy produces identity—that is, the social codification and institutionalization of desire—but those established gay collectivities whose political power depends upon an essentializing or trans-historical discourse have no motivation to question desire itself. In response, I propose: economy configures not

only identity but desire. Desire itself, not only its social articulation, is a product of economic exigency. Recall that Yan, who after studying post-socialist sexuality in China concluded that "most desires are materialistic and ultimately lead to desire for consumption" (2003:224). By his third volume, Weeks seems to have arrived at a similar conclusion (1991 [1989]:170-171):

> Society does not influence an autonomous individual; on the contrary the individual is constituted in the world of language and symbols, which come to dwell in, and constitute, the individual….What this means in regard to sexuality is that there is no insistent sexual desire which pre-exists the entry into the structures of language and culture. 'Desire' is constituted in the very process of that induction, predicated upon absence or lack.

In Chapter Five we heard from Stratton, who also believes that desire emerges from lack. One primarily modality of capitalism is the creation of belief in lack, accompanied by a promise to satisfy it through consumption. Thus have we encountered various attempts to identify and understand what seems to be a real substantive unity of discourse, practice, and performance of desire—all of which is continually colonized by the imperative to consume, that is, to accumulate.

Pingueros

> [B]odies and the everyday life of which they are made up do not offer themselves directly to anthropological interpretation; they must somehow become legible through words and images. This admission is not a reduction of "real life" to the status of a textual representation (whose fixed and flattened status would then only invite a content analysis). Rather, it is an insistence on the inseparability of real human life from the life of language.
>
> (Farquhar 2002:17-18)

We have seen throughout that sexual identity is a bodily practice and performance: a matter of the configurations and use of bodies according to a cultural logic—which I

hold is largely an economic logic, and colonialism—which I insist is an economic process. Five years ago I identified two forms of a colonial insertion into Cuban national culture around sex-gender. I posited that sex tourism, and the imperative to conform to expectations and desires of the buyers, was causing a rearranging of sex gender identity system of the young men. I called this first process the 'colonization of identity':

> [For most tourists,] "gay" is a concrete category of sexual identity and preference. But Cubanos are accustomed to defining themselves sexually in terms of what they *do*, not what they *are* (i.e., bugarrón or maricón). "Gay" for a Cubano is not an identity category but a behavioral one, incorporating any man who will have sex with another man, regardless of whether it is "por gusto" or "por la necesidad"…But under the pressure of the market, even this is changing. A change in the understanding of the foreign category "gay", from a kind of sexual *behavior* to a kind of gendered *being*, will demonstrate this tendency in capitalism. (2001:27)

The pragmatic adoption of the identity 'gay' is indeed one marketing strategy of the men, and it cannot but have some effect on how young Habaneros understand sexuality. It is also surely correct to expect that an identity system based on ontology would clash with one based on behavior, a sex-gender system not based on categories at all other than hombre hombre and maricón. But it was simplistic to assume that there would be a one-for-one substitution of categories, that is, that men would simply stop calling themselves 'hombre' and start calling themselves 'gay'. Still less likely is it that those identity labels would be accepted as markers of full-time identity, as opposed to being temporary pragmatic appropriations. A more nuanced analysis would hold that the imported identity structure is incorporated into the more familiar system only situationally, something like what Quiroga (and others)

call a situational identity, a “question of position” (2000:chapter 8): an identity which is fluid and based on shifting relation to others.

A second process I initially identified reached beyond the social-constructed categories and into the very nature of erotic desire.

> A consequence of the introduction of capitalism to the island has been what we might call the *commodification of desire*: that is, pingueros’ ability to experience and explore their desires has been interrupted by their need to conform these desires to opportunities to make money, that is, to the needs of the market. (2001:26)

I concluded:

> For sex workers, identity functions like a packaging label on a product: it informs potential consumers of what they can expect if they purchase that product…. “Pinguero” is not primarily a category of sexual preference, rather it is first and foremost an economic category. The transformation of sex, body, and desire into a marketable product is precisely what I mean by “commodification of desire”, and the construction of an economic category to contain that product is what I mean by “commodification of identity”. (2001:26-27)

Here, too, my initial analytical instinct was correct: the insertion of market relations into the Cuban cultural universe cannot but cause considerable identity turmoil, particularly since pinguerismo claims young men while they are still in the process of constructing their sexual and national selfhoods. The error was not in the substance of my argument, but in the simplistic way in which I imagined that the change would occur. Colonialism is not a unilinear process, even when we correct for the valorizing hyperbole of the anthropological imagination. An accurate analysis must account for a process with multiple inputs and sites of contestation. This is precisely what Roseberry argues we must consider if we are to produce a more “fruitful” social science: “intersecting histories characterized by differentiation, heterogeneous

cultural relations and values, and relations of power that encompass contradictions and tensions" (1994[1989]:88).

Two events motivated me to reconsider my initial formulations and apply the more nuanced analysis Roseberry encourages: my own brief research of male sex work in Santo Domingo, and the work of other post-socialist scholars in Russia and China.

Dominican

Just prior to my last research visit to Havana in August 2004, I spent a few days in the Zona Colonial neighborhood of Santo Domingo. I stayed in the hotel Duque de Wellington, most guests of which are 'gay' tourists from the United States who entertain Dominican sex workers for the hour or the night. About ten blocks away is the neighborhood of El Conde, which houses several hustler bars and an outdoor promenade of young men seeking both pleasure and income. My work there consisted of four days of casual conversations with hotel staff, local "gay" men, and sex workers, observation of the promenade and the bars, and four formal taped interviews with the workers. (I did not meet or speak with the category of Dominican sex workers called "Sanky-Pankies" (see Padilla 2003; Brennan 1998), who work mostly on the beach with both male and female tourists; my work in Santo Domingo was confined to the exclusively male-male sex workers in the city center of Zona Colonial.)

Such a short visit is hardly sufficient to make any theoretical claims, but one significant lesson did come quickly and from the most casual conversations: this has

to do with the categories of sex-gender identities. The sex workers of Zona Colonial are called *bugarrones*, like the older category of workers in Cuba. Some do work with wealthy Dominicans, but others with tourists; those latter did not create a new category specifically for sex tourist workers, as in Havana. The clients of the bugarrones are called *maricones*, as are men-who-have-sex-with-men for pleasure. Especially significant is that *all* maricones are assumed to be the passive partners in intercourse, and *all* bugarrones are assumed to be active. It is further assumed that men would pay for an insertive partner, but there is no need to pay for a passive one; all maricones want to be penetrated, and the extreme imbalance caused by the paucity of willingly-active partners makes them valuable and able to earn money.[1] In other words, the traditional understandings are holding; the category "gay" had not been accepted by the bugarrones as a synonym for "maricón", nor do the bugarrones include both active and passive partners in the same identity category, as do some men in Vedado. This in spite of the fact that Santo Domingo has not only been firmly capitalist for years but has also been a center of sex tourism for both men and women. I had posited that it was the beginning of capitalist relations which had enforced the all-encompassing category "gay" in Havana; but here was a context which had been capitalist for far longer but had *not* adopted the uninflected categories of the north. I was forced to rethink the formulations of the 'commodification of identity' and the 'commodification of desire'.

[1]This is, interestingly, rather similar to the situation in New York and, I highly suspect, elsewhere: 'gay' men say that the physical pleasure in being penetrated is far greater than in penetrating. There are therefore many 'bottoms' for every 'top'. There is also a general recognition—and gay men rue the fact—that there are no 'real' tops; even those who claim to be tops really want to be penetrated and will jump at the opportunity. This is perhaps why the vast majority of sex workers in the United States are penetrative. Lancaster also finds that it is "most typically" the passive *cochón* who has to pay the active *hombre-hombre* (1992:239).

Yet another complication to my neat analysis emerges when we consider the scholarly research into youth sex and gender in other post-socialist contexts.

III. Post-Socialism

> The intersection of culture, politics, and sexuality will everywhere and always be a locus of hotly contested power struggles. Now that political and sexual dissent have come out of the closet into the public arena there as well, Russia is no exception."
>
> (Moss 1995:246)

Russia

Kevin Moss (1995) analyzes the keeping of secrets in the Soviet period, finding some similarity between political and sexual dissent. There are a number of parallels he identifies, mostly in the strategies for hiding the dissent, such as presenting a false persona, passing as compliant with social and political prescription, speaking and dressing in code. He issues a mild critique of Sedgwick, a critique I share: not all secrets, as she claimed, emerge from homosexuality. But if Moss insists that there are political secrets which are not rooted in repressed sexuality, he still claims a *rhetoric* similarity. That is, the language of sexual deviance works equally well to describe political difference. But the comparison is only symbolic and rhetorical: he claims no real intersection of politics and sexuality, though such an investigation might reveal important connections.

Anthropologist Laurie Essig (1999) spent some years studying sexual minorities in post-Soviet Russia. She provides a more substantive look into the

matter of sexual and political dissent, investigating the real intersections of political and sexual identity formation. She documents the introduction of western identity categories through 'gay' NGO efforts to empower 'sexual minorities'. Essig does not hesitate to level the charge of "imperialism" to the attempts—well intentioned though they may be—to reproduce a Stonewall-style liberation movement in Russia by "international" organizations, primarily comprised of activists from the United States, including even a "Soviet Stonewall" in July and August 1991. Such efforts met with mixed results. Some Russian activists, whom Essig named "Slavophiles", resented the imperialist pretensions of western activists who claim to know the "right" way to liberate sexual dissidents: "How dare they come here to be our so-called teachers, when they leave tomorrow and we stay and who knows what will be tomorrow—who'll be in power, anything could happen, and they encourage people to say they're lesbians. That's irresponsible, and unconscionable" (1999:129). Not only are there consequences to "coming-out" which the western seminar activists do not understand, the Slavophiles insist, but the categories of "gay" and "lesbian" do not even make sense in the Russian context. Essig explains: "As I have argued throughout this work, in Russia sexual practices have not translated into a fixed identity as much as more free-floating subjectivity" (1999:125). The imposition of western categories based on ontology, through the imperative to "come out", amounts to little more than a "cultural imperialism" which can in fact be quite violent, both culturally and physically.

Some Russian activists, whom Essig calls "westernizers", pragmatically accept the inevitability of the triumph of western cultural imperialism, coming as it

does on the wings of western economic imperialism. They concede to the new categories: “What do I care what I call myself? If the Germans and Americans will give us faxes and computers if I’m a lesbian, then I’m a lesbian” (1999:127). I wonder if such an attitude is overly optimistic about the ability of Russians to absorb, reappropriate, or defend against the imperial *effects* of the western “gay” identity. Early in her chapter “Patriots and Perverts”, Essig seems to agree: “Russians have very few resources with which to resist complete homogenization by the westernizers” (1999:125). But by chapter’s end, she seems to be repeating the very same anthropological error of which I consistently complain: hypervalorizing and exaggerating the ability of subjects to resist imperial homogenization. Consider Essig’s conversation with Masha Gessen, one of the western organizer of Soviet Stonewall:

> Gessen admitted that what the American-made Soviet Stonewall did was to import ideas about a strong and stable identity and community, but that the ideas are being used differently than the festival organizers had intended. “Even McDonald’s is transformed (in Russia).” Instead of offering cookie-cutter identities, Gessen argued that the 1991 events could never impose a “western binary model” onto Russian sexuality, since sexuality in Russia is too fluid to be “trapped”. In many ways, Gessen seems to be right…Despite the absurdly colonizing impulses of many of the western participants, Soviet Stonewall was ultimately a Russian event—if for no other reason than the Westerns were outnumbered by about three hundred to one. Like hamburgers, sexual models are consumed differently in Russia than in the United States. (1999:135)

When agency clearly is unable to resist imperialism, anthropological subjects are rhetorically rescued with the claim that agency lies in *interpretation* rather than in *action* (e.g., Miller 1997; Freeman 2000) But does the fact that Russians use different condiments on their McDonald’s hamburgers, or that they ‘interpret’ the hamburgers differently than do their United States American counterparts, really

mean that there has not been imperial homogenization? Has not the Russian diet been changed to provide for export of profit back to the United States? Does not the power of United States corporations like McDonald's erode the power of the Russian state to regulate the lives of its citizens? And are not the vast majority of Russian citizens far poorer than they were before western economic intervention began in earnest in 1991? Does the ability to "imagine" the hamburger differently in any way mediate the increasingly desperate economic condition of most Russians, or their increasing enslavement to western corporate ideals and structures?

We need to be extremely cautious about such claims to interpretive agency. The power of global capital to enforce a cultural rearrangement of colonized peoples is not reduced by their 'reinterpretation' of the instruments of that colonization—the things they are made to consume. This is not to rid anthropological subjects of agency, painting them as helpless victims. It is, rather, to insist that we take quite seriously the power of economic forces to condition cultural phenomena, and that we not allow our discouragement at the apparent structural triumph of capitalism to drive us headfirst into the quicksand of Foucauldian power relations and resistance, ignoring the possibilities (and indeed the imperative) of real structural transformation.

For our purposes, there are several lessons from Essig's work in Russia. First among these is Essig's (and her informants') insistence that sexuality in Russia is traditionally fluid, allowing for shifting situational locations and not requiring an identity determination in the ontological sense. Such fluidity is not simply another mask, an "underground closet" in Moss' (1995) words; it is *not* true that fluidity is merely a way to maintain secrets. Rather, it is a real phenomenological difference in

the way that bodies and sex are imagined. Fluidity is foreign to the West's way of imaging sexuality, but the conceptual difficulties must be grappled with. Is such sexual fluidity—present in both Russia and Cuba—a product of socialism? Commentators are fond of saying that it is a Latin American phenomenon, but this would not explain its presence in the radically different cultural context of East Europe. It would be tempting to suggest a connection to socialism, but I think it premature to do so, since there is simply not enough evidence to date; and anyway, socialism could not explain the "fluidity" in long-time capitalist contexts in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Nonetheless, it does seem clear that the capitalism encourages flexibility yet temporary fixity. That is, identities are more marketable if they at least temporary cohere, transformed only when a new cycle of accumulation so requires. If this is true, then it would suggest a connection between ontological identity structures and capitalism, and perhaps as well between fluidity and socialism—but any further conjecture must await the collection of more evidence.

A second lesson from the Russian evidence is that "western" sexual minorities tend to have some difficulty comprehending identity fluidity, and they assume that their ontological-based system is all there is, or at least the more advanced option. When Western activists arrive in a different cultural universe, they interpret the absence of "gay and lesbian" men and women as a sign of repression, of secrets, of people who have not yet been sufficiently empowered to "come out". Either actively through the seminars and the "Soviet Stonewall" festival, or 'passively' through sex tourism, they introduce their own identity notions to the

foreign context. This is what Essig rightfully calls “cultural imperialism,” and what I have called the “colonization of identity”. It is true, as Essig is at pains to demonstrate, that Russians do not simply accept foreign ideas unedited; there are “Slavophiles” aplenty, ardent nationalists and who fight to resist cultural imperialism. But it is also quite clear that they are fighting an uphill battle, and in many ways have already lost. The rage expressed by Essig’s informant (1999:126)—“I hate you Americans. You and your McDonald’s. Before you occupied us, things worked here. The streets were cleaned of snow; things weren’t like this.”—does not emerge from a successful defense of national cultural borders.

The third lesson, then, is that the cultural imperialism—represented by the imposition (or at least introduction) of a foreign sexual identity system—provokes a nationalist response by some, but is embraced by others who see it as a sign of modernity. Thus, plenty of Havana youth do welcome the coming onslaught of consumer goods from the north and, I would argue, it is those youth who will most readily adopt the foreign ontologically-based identity system associated with the clothing. Youth, of course, are generally more willing to embrace social change, and also because pingueros, jineteros, and jineteras have the greatest ability to consume—most other Cubans do not have the economic wherewithal to even enter the competition to consume.

China

Neither traditional Chinese nor PRC-era culture is especially permissive. “Fluid”, as in Russia or in Cuba, would hardly be an accurate descriptor of Chinese sexual prescription. But neither, Judith Farquhar tells us, is sexuality organized around identity as we know it in the west; rather, as in Cuba, its focus is behavior: “Most Chinese works in the field of sex education…[prefer] to talk about gender roles. Roles are easily understood as systems of socially appropriate behavior that can be studied and performed by kids who understandably need a little practice acting like men or women” (2002:238). My position—and that of Essig’s “Slavophile” informants in post-Soviet Russia—is that, given the indigenous formulation of sexual behavior in China, the imposition of a western identity system is a form of cultural imperialism. But more: for a scholar to impose such an identity by seeing it, representing that it is present and natural, *writing* the identity onto a cultural text—this, too, is an imperialist process. Farquhar agrees, though she uses the more gentle term “ethnocentric” where I see an aggressive imperialism in the guise of science:

> My own work has attempted to do without the concept of a stable core of the self altogether…Sexual identity in particular, that privileged touchstone of psychological stability and coherence, impresses me (as it did Foucault) as a highly contingent product of specific discursive developments in European and North American medicine and psychosocial sciences; it is a concept, moreover, that encourages unfortunate rigidities in thought and social practice. For an anthropologist to see the formation of sexual identity as a universal problem, discernable everywhere, would be ethnocentric. (2002:237-238)

My initial instinct which imagined the implantation of a northern (western) identity, and my social scientific production which formulated that observation, was itself an imperial procedure. Unawares, I was reproducing the same logic I claimed to resist

through my writing. This does not mean that there is no process of “colonization of identity”; indeed, I think a case could still be made that a similar process is indeed occurring. My corrective here is not to deny the process, but to complicate it and to remind that my analysis of it—whether it is true or not—was itself tainted with a colonial tendency in western science.

Even if an anthropological gaze is not infested with colonial perspective, identity as a social scientific category must be treated with extreme caution. Another scholar of sexuality in post-socialist China warns that identity is a *story* rather than a *thing*, and stories are strategic performances: “Even the most personal sexual story is usually a social event, a presentation of the self aimed at a particular audience. The “identities” thus created may be temporary, intentionally misleading, or purposefully ambiguous” (Farrer 2002:8). Even when such stories are coherent, Farquhar (2002:223) admits that her collection of stories of youth sexuality in post-socialist China are in part a product of her anthropologically constructive imagination: “What a field researcher can learn about cultural sexualities is in part imaginary. The things one tries to piece together about other people’s sex lives are speculative by their very nature even, I suspect, for those interviewers who manage to get people talking about sex in ways that go beyond the formulas of popular discourses.”

My point here is that identity is not a stable source of social scientific knowledge, nor is our ability to unpack it anything more than tenuous at best. This is not to dismiss it altogether—indeed, I devoted an entire chapter to changes in Cuban identity structure visible in pinguerismo. Rather, it is to say that identity is so

complex and obscured with misleading performative detours that conclusions about it should be made with extreme caution. Again I must therefore call into question my earlier (2001) certainty about the importation of foreign identity categories. The path of the "colonization of consciousness" through sexual identity, to expand on the Comaroffs' (1992) familiar term, is more circuitous, covert, but even more potentially damaging to national cultural integrity.

IV. (Re)Colonization

> [N]o human body is outside of social processes of determination….[H]ow can…bodies be a measure, sign, or receiver of anything outside the circulation of capital or of the various mechanisms that discipline them?"
>
> (Harvey 2000:100-101)

In the last section I acknowledged that I had been overly simplistic in my earlier formulation: it is not true that the identities, much less the desire, of the pingueros have been easily "colonized" through the unimpeded implantation of foreign ideas through the agency of sex tourism. My original determination was thrown into doubt by, first, my preliminary findings in Santo Domingo, which turned up some evidence of identity resilience, and secondly, my review of the work of an anthropologist in Russia who traced the tug-of-war between the "Westernizers" who embrace the United States sexual identity system and the "Slavophiles" who resist in the name of nationalism. Essig's data suggest that the Americanization of sexual identity will be victorious, coming as it does on the wings of international capital. The several

scholars of Chinese youth sexuality in the post-socialist era conclude that capitalist political-economy—manifest as 'market reform'—conditions how bodies are imaged, imagined, and deployed, through the reformulation of the self as an individual rather than as part of a larger unit (the extended family). The state's redirection of family loyalty toward the collectives and the state led nicely to the growing imperative to consume, as well-being was reconfigured to require conspicuous consumption.

I then reviewed recent scholarly inquiry into the historic formation of the western 'gay' identity. We saw that it began as a product of the separation of material production from social reproduction in industrial capitalism; but at least since Stonewall the post-industrial imperative to consume has been responsible for much of the content of 'gay'. Thus, the gay identity is but one manifestation of the "consumptuary apparati," to use Harvey's language. We must conclude that the formulation of contemporary sexual identity in the Unites States and Europe could not have occurred had it not been for industrial capitalism, followed by a post-industrial turn to consumption as the primary engine of capitalist growth. This explains why I found a resilient identity system among the sex workers in Santo Domingo, and why the "Slavophiles" have had limited success in their resistance to 'gay' in Moscow and Leningrad/Saint Petersburg; those contexts have not imported an integral gay identity because they have not passed through the economic context which produces it: consumer capitalism. That is: the regimes of capital in the Dominican Republic and Russia are still largely based on accumulation through production; consumption is not the *primary* economic engine. Thus, an identity system based on consumption is not likely to take hold in any integral form unless

and until the logic of consumerism has implanted itself and begun the process of (re)conditioning ideologies of self. There does not seem to be a direct implantation of a foreign identity system in Havana. But what does seem clear is that there is a new and growing ideology of consumption, visible not only in the pingueros' obsession with Nike but also with their use of non-functional cellular telephones and Sony Walkmans as symbols of material well-being and as determinants of dating success.

My claim is that the new cultural imperative to consume will provide the context in which the 'gay' identity can take hold. The "colonization of identity" is happening, but not as directly as I had thought. Colonization—a word which I use to refer to all manner of aggressive imposition of foreign economic and/or cultural logic, resulting in the export of resources or leading to the preparation of resources for export—will occur, but not directly. Indeed, I predict a double-colonization: the imposition of consumerism as a new cultural imperative, providing the context for the imposition of a sexual identity structure compatible with the demands of sex tourism.

Informants are sometimes wiser than are we anthropologists, and not only in terms of local knowledges. I was skeptical when my informant told me: "To my mind, there is nothing natural about homosexuality….There [in New York], it's different; there is a different way of life, more possibilities economically. There, you can work, earn money…There, there is the possibilities of having sex with the person you want" (03.13.12). I didn't quite understand until I wrote Chapter Nine. It is true that there is nothing "natural" about homosexuality in Cuba, because the "economic system," to use my informant's phrase, is different. Homosexuality, as we imagine it

in the West, could not emerge from the political economy of Cuban socialism. But now, under post-socialist transition, it is on its way.

Conclusion: The Lure of Things

> [T]he nation is unraveling…via bodies and ideas that leak across the official borders, under the sight line of nations' representative narratives.
>
> (Patton 2002:204)

The purpose of the present study has been to examine the ways in which the "[Cuban] nation is unraveling…via bodies and ideas that leak across the official borders." It has been my claim that the Revolutionary nation is indeed 'unraveling', in the sense that revolutionary values are rapidly disintegrating under the influence of the moral logic of consumer capitalism. It is bodies that carry ideas, clothed bodies that carry fashion, bodies that seduce both sexually and ideologically.

I began the with a review of the long colonial history of Cuba. Part I was entitled "Soy Cuba" because it attempted to define the national context in which pinguerismo has taken form. We saw that Cuba has struggled for nearly 450 years against various manifestations of colonialism, the memory of which greatly conditions both public policy and private behavior. Cuban nationalism since the eighteenth century and well into the Revolution, has sought and nurtured exclusively Cuban cultural production such as brownness and Afrocubanismo as sources of a

national identity independent of United States cultural forms; Cuban nationalism has been highly gendered from the start, being focused around the twin images of the mulata prostitute and the mulata Virgin. The highly erotic character of Cuban nationalism mimics that of other Latin American states, in which the phallus has been imaged and imagined as weapon and as savior, a key player in both the conquest and post-colonial struggles for independence and identity. Cuba is an inheritor of these traditions, and homophobia and machismo are still present, but researchers have convincingly demonstrated that the Revolution has worked to counter these tendencies. I closed Part I by showing that the highly-gendered nexus of post-colonial nationalism—including the feminized nation and the masculinized state, the prostitute and the virgin, the conquering phallus and the conquered vagina, the aggressive superpower and the vulnerable island state—all of these converge in the phenomenon of sex work, discourses and practices around which have long been a matter of considerable anxiety during revolutionary changes throughout the Americas. Finally, we saw that the second economy in Cuba has long functioned in dialectical and co-constitutive ways with the state sector, promoting a culture of informal and socially acceptable (though technically illegal) economic activity. Sex work and various kinds of hustling of tourists are economic activities in this tradition.

Chapter Five through Eight of Part II, “Soy Pinguero”, comprise the ethnography proper. Each chapter presented a different aspect of the lives of the street youth who have imagined a new form of sex work. “Pinguerismo” draws upon traditional sex-gender norms embodied in the older *bugarrón*, but the pingueros are

also in active interaction with sex-gender identity categories which arrive in the bodies of tourists. This does not mean, through, that they simply import these external ideas. Rather, they use foreign identity categories pragmatically to their profit. In their methods of operation, they approximate somewhat the peculiarly Caribbean pattern other scholars have discerned, “romance tourism”. Unlike their female counterparts, pingueros are highly concentrated spatially, sharing the contested geography of Vedado with other countercultural youth. They strategically construct relationships of friendships and romance with these other Cuban youth and with tourists (clients and others), which also allow (and expect) the exercise of a general reciprocity which was also a constitutive element of the socialist ethic. Such reciprocity is also a survival mechanism they employ in their relationships to colleagues and girlfriends. Finally in Part II we saw that male sex workers have a manifestly different relationship to the state than do female workers, resulting in part from male sexuality’s discursive role in defensive nationalism. Pingueros’ fulfillment of traditional gender expectations makes them less problematic to the state and to individual police officers than are the women. Machismo and homophobia do exist (though they have been dramatically reduced by the Revolution), but pingueros are criminalized partly as a result of their embrace of conspicuous consumption, and not for (the perfectly legal) homoerotic activity.

In Part III I placed the ethnographic data in the context of other post-socialist scholarship, Here, I reexamined pinguerismo as a post-socialist phenomenon, that is, as a process which both follows from and contributes to a re-colonization of the island’s resources by capitalism (both internal and external). Through the imperative

to consume and the introduction of an external sex-gender classification system, the cultural path is being paved for the accumulation of wealth. I posed in the Introduction two summary conclusions to these two chapters. First, Pingueros' attempts to imitate United States bodily culture through consumption does not exactly represent a conscious protest of the Cuban state, but rather such patterns reflect the triumph of global capitalism over Revolutionary ideology. The pingueros imagine themselves as global citizens whose fortunes lie no longer with the Revolution but outside the island, with the image of things that global capital can purportedly provide. But pingueros' embracing of consumer capitalism severely limits their agency. While they reproduce the cultural logic of Revolutionary and traditional Cuba, they attempt to connect themselves— rhetorically, materially, and symbolically—to the rest of the world, but in so doing lay a trap for themselves individually and nationally. Second, in many ways, the changing sexual and national landscape in Cuba mimics similar processes in other post-socialist contexts. Pingueros' embrace of the symbols of consumer capitalism ultimately represent a colonization of their bodies and of their nation. It is not, as the research might initially suggest, the level of identity at which colonialism is most active. But the commodity fetishism does colonize on the level of culture and value, and this in turn, we will see, will mean the rearranging of indigenous sexualities. Capitalism is triumphant. Part III demonstrates that the processes of commodification and the reconnection into global networks of commodity sale and purchase are both manifestations of the incursion of global economic process into the cultural agenda of late Revolutionary Cuba.

The disparate data discussed in the present work—ethnographic, historical, literary—suggest that there is both a discursive and a pragmatic unity of two sets of desires: sexual desire for bodies, and bodily desire for consumption. By 'bodies' I mean not only the flesh, but the ideological configurations embodied in them, their performances through habitus and presentation, the identities that configure them, and their display through dress and adornment (Nike shoes and cellular telephones on the belt). I add this data to the body of anthropological (and other social scientific) work which indicates that sexual desire and desire for commodities are closely related, that they emerge from the same discursive (and psychosocial?) source, that they are configured by the same processes, if by a different logic. In turn, discursive, ideological, and pragmatic processes are heavily conditioned by economic exigency. Thus, with others, I hold that the logic of capitalism aggressively insinuates itself into the souls, bodies, and ideologies of its victims. Indigenous cultural forms may provide a cushion and may insist on a local inflection, but a local inflection is still only a slightly altered perspective or manifestation; colonization of ideas proceeds apace. Ultimately, the power of capital is sufficient to crush resistance and enforce a profitable homogeneity. The pingueros' embrace of United States consumer products is a prefiguring of the coming onslaught of a new ethic of selfish individualism and insatiable consumerism.

The "nation is unraveling" indeed, not directly through the introduction of foreign sex-gender identities, but rather through the consumerist ideologies that those identities

require and in turn help to create. The pingueros have given no indication that they are bearers of a culture so strong and distinctive that it will be able to resist the enormous pressures of capital; indeed, they embrace enthusiastically of the new ethic of consumption. The prospect for their freedom—sexual, material, and political—is bleak, indeed. It may be that Louis Pérez's interpretation of Cuban history is coming to fruition in Cuba's present and future: things Cuban are being consumed, reconfigured, reevaluated so as to tame them and make them compatible with things 'American', and things American are implanting themselves into the Cuban cultural landscape. The state is no longer as strong a "cultural container," to use Trouillot's (2001) phrase, as it once was; the introduction of capitalism has saved the Cuban economy, but it has also had the consequence of transforming *perceptions of need* among the youth. This implantation of capitalist cultural forms is at end more powerful and longer-lasting than any particular political regime. The lure of things is powerful, and this may well become the ultimate triumph of global capitalism. The children and grandchildren of the 1960-62 emigrants never got the military invasion for which they still so vehemently lobby, but the lure of things may well erode the values of fairness, justice, and equality for which the Revolution fought.

Works Cited

Aguilar Luis
1993 "Cuba, c.1860-c. 1930" in Leslie Bethell (ed) *Cuba: A Short History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford)

Aguilera Alexis Rojas
2004 "Two Million Visitors" *Granma Internacional* 27 December

Alea Tomas and Juan Carlos Tabio
1994 "Fresa y Chocolate" 104 minutes, Miramax

Allen Esther
2002 *José Martí: Selected Writings* (New York: Penguin)

Arenas Reinaldo
1995 *The Assault* (New York: Penguin)

Behar Ruth
2000 "Post-Utopia: The Erotics of Power and Cuba's Revolutionary Children" in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)

Bejel Emilio
2000 "Cuban CondemNation of Queer Bodies" in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)
2001 *Gay Cuban Nation* (Chicago and London: Chicago)

Berg Mette
2004 "Tourism and the Revolutionary New Man: The Specter of Jineterismo in Late "Special Period" Cuba" *Focal—European Journal of Anthropology* 43:46-56

Betancourt Madeline
2000 "Between Myth and Stereotype: The Image of the Mulatta in Cuban Culture in the Nineteenth Century, a Truncated Symbol of Nationality" in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)

Bliss Katherine
2001 *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania)

Brennan Denise
1998 "Everything is for Sale Here: Sex Tourism in Sosúa, the Dominican Republic" unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University

Bunck Julie
1994 *Fidel Castro and the Quest for a Revolutionary Culture in Cuba* (University Park: Pennsylvania)

Cabezas Amalia
1998 "Discourses of Prostitution: The Case of Cuba" in Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (eds) *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York and London: Routledge)
1999 "Women's Work is Never Done" in Kamala Kempadoo (ed) *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (Lanham, Massachusetts: Rowman and Littlefield)
2004 "Between Love and Money: Sex, Tourism, and Citizenship in Cuba and the Dominican Republic" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (29)4

Central Intelligence Agency
1999 "Handbook of International Economic Statistics" (Washington)

Castells Manuel
1996 *The Rise of the Network Society* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell)

Castro Fidel
2003 "Key Address by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba, at the Inauguration of Playa Pesquero Five-Star Hotel and Holguín Tourism Resort", 21 January 2003 (www.embacubalebanon.com/discurso21jan2003e.htm)

Central Intelligence Agency
1999 "Handbook of International Economic Statistics" (Washington)

Castro Max
2000 "The Trouble with Collusion", in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)

Comaroff John and Jean Comaroff
1992 "The Colonization of Consciousness" in Comaroff and Comaroff *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder and New York: Westview)

Comellas Miguel
2001 "A Record of More than 50,000 Tourists in One Day", *Granma Internacional* 28 February

Corbin Juliet and Anselm Strauss
1990 "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria" *Qualitative Sociology* 13(1)

Coronil Fernando
1995 "Forward", in Fernando Ortiz [1947] *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham and London: Duke)

Creed Gerald
1998 *Domesticating Revolution: From Socialist Reform to Ambivalent Transition in a Bulgarian Village* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press)

Czeglédy André
2002 "Manufacturing the New Consumerism: Fast-Food Restaurants in Postsocialist Hungary" in Ruth Mandel and Caroline Humphrey (eds) *Markets and Moralities: Ethnographies of Postsocialism* (Oxford and New York: Berg)

Dávila Arlene
1997 *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple)

D'Emilio John
1982 "Capitalism and Gay Identity" in Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (eds) *Powers of Desire* (New York: Monthly Review)

DeVries Sonia
1995 "Gay Cuba" 57 minutes, Frameline.

Diaz María Elena
2000 "Rethinking Tradition and Identity: The Virgin of Charity of El Cobre" in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)

Dilla H
1999 "Comrades and Investors: The Uncertain Transition in Cuba" unpublished (Havana)

Directorio Turistico de Cuba
2004 *DTC News*, 3 May (https://www.dtcuba.com)

Dominguez Jorge
1993 "The Secrets of Castro's Staying Power" *Foreign Affairs* 72(2) pp97-108

Duany Jorge
2000 "Reconstructing Cubanness: Changing Discourses of National Identity on the Island and in the Diaspora during the Twentieth Century" in Damián

Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)

Edelman Marc
1998 "Waiting for Fidel: Small Hopes and Great Travails in Havana" *Dissent* 45(4): 11-17

Essig Laurie
1999 *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and Other* (Durham and London: Duke)

Farquhar Judith
2002 *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* (Durham and London: Duke)

Farrer James
2002 *Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai* (Chicago and London: Chicago)

Fernández Damián
2000a "Cuba and lo cubano, or the Story of Desire and Disenchantment" in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)
2000b *Cuba and the Politics of Passion* (Texas: Austin)

Fernández Nadine
1999 "Back to the Future? Women, Race, and Tourism in Cuba" in Kamala Kempadoo (ed) *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (Lanham, Massachusetts: Rowman and Littlefield)

Ferradás Carmen
2001 "Argentina" in Melvin Ember and Carol Ember (eds) *Countries and Cultures Vol I* (New York: MacMillan/Gale)

Ferrer Ada
1999 *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill and London: North Carolina)

Franqui Carlos
1984 *Family Portrait with Fidel* (New York: Random House)

Freeman Carla
2000 *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy* (Durham and London: Duke)

de la Fuente Alejandro
2001 "Recreating Racism: Race and Discrimination in Cuba's 'Special Period'" *Socialism and Democracy* 15(1)

Fusco Coco
1998 "Hustling for Dollars: Jineterismo in Cuba" in Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (eds) *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York and London: Routledge)

Fyvel T. R.
1997 (1963) "Fashion and Revolt" in Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (eds) *The Subcultures Reader* (London and New York: Routledge)

Galeano Eduardo
2000 (1998) *Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World* tr. Mark Fried (New York: Picador)

Gregor Thomas
1985 *Anxious Pleasures: The Sexual Lives of an Amazonian People* (Chicago: University of Chicago)

Guevara Che
1987 [1965] "Socialism and Man in Cuba" in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution: Writings and Speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara* (Sydney: Pathfinder)

Günther Armin
1998 "Sex Tourism without Sex Tourists" in Martin Opperman (ed) *Sex Tourism and Prostitution: Aspects of Leisure, Recreation, and Work* (New York: Cognizant)

Gutmann Matthew
1996 *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkely, London, Los Angeles: California)

Guy Donna
1995 (1990) *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln and London: Nebraska)

Harvey David
1996 *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell)
2000 *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California)

Hebdige Dick
1997 (1983) "Youth, Surveillance, and Display" in Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (eds) *The Subcultures Reader* (London and New York: Routledge)

Helg Aline
1995 *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill and London: North Carolina)

Herdt Gilbert
1987 *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea* (Orlando: Hartcourt)

Hernandez-Reguant Ariana
2004 "Blackness with a Cuban Beat", North American Congress on Latin America, *Report on the Americas* 38(2):31-36

Holland Norman
1992 "Fashioning Cuba" in Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger *Nationalism and Sexualities* (New York and London: Rutledge)

Hodge G. Derrick
2001 "Colonization of the Cuban Body: The Growth of Male Sex Work in Havana" in North American Congress on Latin America, *Report on the Americas* 34(1)
2005 "The Lure of Things: Sex Workers of Havana" in North American Congress on Latin America, *Report on the Americas* 38(4)

Ichaso Leon
1996 "Azucar Amarga" 102 minutes, Azucar Films and Overseas Filmgroup

Jackson Margaret
1987 "'Facts of Life' or the Eroticization of Women's Oppression: Sexology and the Social Construction of Heterosexuality" in Pat Caplan (ed) *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge)

Jeffreys Shiela
1997 *The Idea of Prostitution* (Melbourne: Spiniflex)

Kalatozov Mikheil
1964 "Soy Cuba" 102 minutes, Millstone

Kaplowitz Donna
1995 "The Cuban Market" *Columbia Journal of World Business* 30(1):6-16

Kelly Patricia
2002 "Sex Work in the "Other" Chiapas: Prostitution, Morality, and Modernity in Urban Mexico" unpublished doctoral dissertation for the City University of New York

Kempadoo Kamala
1998 "COIN and MODEMU in the Dominican Republic" in Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (eds) *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York and London: Routledge)
1999 Kamala Kempadoo (ed) *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (Lanham, Massachusetts: Rowman and Littlefield)
1998 and Jo Doezema (eds) *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York and London: Routledge)

Klein Alan
1993 *Little Big Men: Bodybuilding Subculture and Gender Construction* (Albany: State University of New York)

Krohn-Hansen C
1996 "Masculinity and the Political among Dominicans: 'The Dominican Tiger'" in Marit Melhuus and Kristi Stølen (eds) *Machos, Mistresses, Madonnas: Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery* (London and New York: Verso)

Kulick Don
1998 *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago and London: Chicago)

Kutzinski Vera
1993 *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville and London: Virginia)

Lancaster Roger
1992 *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua* (Berkeley, Los Angles, London: University of California)

Latham Kevin
2002 "Rethinking Chinese Consumption: Social Palliatives and the Rhetoric of Transition in Postsocialist China" in C. M. Hann *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia* (London and New York: Routledge)

Leiner Marvin
1994 *Sexual Politics in Cuba: Machismo, Homosexuality, and AIDS* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview)

Lumsden Ian
1996 *Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia:Temple)

Manderson Lenore and Margaret Jolly
1997 *Site of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific* (Chicago: University of Chicago)

Martí José
1977 [1794] "The Third Year of the Cuban Revolutionary Party: The Spirit of the Revolution and Cuba's Duty to America" in Philip Foner (ed) *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence* (New York and London: Monthly Review) pp359-361

Martinez-Alier Vera
1989 (1974) *Marriage Class and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (Ann Arbor: Michigan)

Matthaei Julie
1997 "The Sexual Division of Labor, Sexuality, and Lesbian/Gay Liberation: Toward a Marxist-Feminist Analysis of Sexuality in United States Capitalism" in Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life* (New York and London: Routledge)

Melhuus Marit
1996 "Power, Value, and the Ambiguous Meanings of Gender" in Marit Melhuus and Kristi Stølen *Machos, Mistresses, Madonnas: Contesting the Power of Latin American Gender Imagery* (London and New York: Verso)

Michalowski Raymond and Marjorie Zatz
1990 "The Cuban Second Economy in Perspective" in Maria Los (ed) *The Second Economy in Marxist States* (New York: Saint Martin's)

Miller Daniel
1997 *Capitalism: An Ethnographic Approach* (New York: Berg)

Moore Robin
1997 *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg)

Moreno Fraginals Manuel
1964 *El Ingenio, Tomo I, 1760-1860* (Havana)

Morris Gary
1998 "The Poetry of Revolution: I am Cuba!" *Bright Lights Film Journal* #23, December

Moss Kevin
1995 "The Underground Closet" in E Berry (ed) *Post-Communism and the Body Politic* (New York and London: New York University)

Nagle Jill (ed)
1997 *Whores and Other Feminists* (New York and London: Routledge)

North American Congress on Latin America (editors)
1998 *Report on the Americas* 31(4) p16

O'Connell Davidson Julia
1996 "Sex Tourism in Cuba", in *Race & Class* v38, July-September
1998 *Prostitution, Power, and Freedom* (Ann Arbor: Michigan)

O'Connell Davidson Julia and Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor
1999 "Fantasy Islands: Exploring the Demand for Sex Tourism" in Kamala Kempadoo (ed) *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (Lanham, Massachusetts: Rowman and Littlefield)

del Olmo Rosa
1979 "The Cuban Revolution and the Struggle Against Prostitution" *Crime and Social Justice*, winter issue

Opperman Martin (ed)
1998 *Sex Tourism and Prostitution: Aspects of Leisure, Recreation, and Work* (New York: Cognizant)

Ortiz Fernando
1995 (1947) *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham and London: Duke)

Padilla Mark
2003 "Looking for life: Male sex work, HIV/AIDS, and the political economy of gay sex tourism in the Dominican Republic" unpublished dissertation, Emory University

Pages Raisa
2000 "From Economically Dependent to Independent" Special Weekly Supplement of *Granma Internacional*, 8 March

Parry Jonathon
1989 "On the Moral Perils of Exchange" in Jonathon Parry and Maurice Bloch (eds) *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge)

Patton Cindy
2002 "Stealth Bombers of Desire: The Globalization of 'Alterity' in Emerging Democracies" in Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin Manalansan (eds) *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York and London: New York University)

Pau-Llosa R
1996 "Romancing the Exiliado" in Ray González (ed) *Muy Macho: Latino Men Confront their Manhood* (New York: Anchor Doubleday)

Paz Octavio
1985 (1961) *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York:Grove)

Pellegrini Ann
2002 "Consuming Lifestyle: Capitalism and Transformation in Gay Identity" in Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin Manalansan (eds) *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York and London: New York University)

Pérez Louis
1993 "Cuba, 1930-1959", Chapter Three in *Cuba: A Short History*, ed Bethell (Oxford and New York: Oxford)
1995 *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution* (Oxford and New York: Oxford)
1999 *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, Culture* (Chapel Hill and London: North Carolina)

Pérez-Stable Marifeli
1999 (1994) *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, Legacy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford)

Phillips Joan
1999 "Tourist-Oriented Prostitution in Barbados: the Case of the Beach Boy and the White Female Tourist" in Kamala Kempadoo (ed) *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (Lanham, Massachusetts: Rowman and Littlefield)

Piedra José
1995 "Nationalizing Sissies" in Emelie Bergmann and Paul Smith (eds) *¿Entiendes? Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings* (Durham and London: Duke)

Pravaz Natasha
2003 "Brazilian Mulatice: Performing Race, Gender, and the Nation" *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 8:1

Pruitt Deborah and Suzanne LaFont
1995 "For Love and Money: Romance Tourism in Jamaica" *Annals of Tourism Research* 22(2) pp419-440

Rausig Sigrid
2002 "Reconstructing the 'Normal': Identity and the Consumption of Western Goods in Estonia" in Ruth Mandel and Caroline Humphrey *Markets and Moralities: Ethnographies of Postsocialism* (Oxford and New York: Berg)

Rebhun Linda
1999 *The Heart Is Unknown Country: Love in the Changing Economy of Northeast Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University)

Roseberry William
1994 *Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers)

Rosendahl Mona
1997 *Inside the Revolution: Everyday Life in Socialist Cuba* (Ithaca and London: Cornell)

Schwartz Rosalie
1999 *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba* (Lincoln: Nebraska)

Sharff Jagna
1998 *King Kong on Fourth Street: Families and the Violence of Poverty* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview)

Sleightholme Carlyn and Indrani Sinha
1996 *Guilty Without Trial: Women in the Sex Trade in Calcutta* (New Brunswick: Rutgers)

Smith Lois and Alfred Padula
1996 *Sex and Revolution: Women in Socialist Cuba* (Oxford and New York: Oxford)

Speck Mary
1993a "Cuba's Underground Marketers Breaking the Law Just to Survive" *Miami Herald* 18 Oct p1A
1993b "Young Cubans Trade "Dates' for Loot: Tourists Represent Way to Get Things Only Dollars Can Buy" *Miami Herald* 21 Oct p18A
1993c "Dreaming of Handouts, Scheming to Beat the System" *Miami Herald* 25 Oct 1A

Stratton John
2001 (1996) *The Desirable Body: Cultural Fetishism and the Erotics of Consumption* (Urbana and Chicago: Illinois)

Stavans Ilan
1996 "The Latin Phallus" in Ray González (ed) *Muy Macho: Latino Men Confront their Manhood* (New York: Anchor Doubleday)

Stirrat R. L.
1989 "Money, Men, and Women" in Jonathon Parry and Maurice Bloch *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University)

Taylor Samuel
2005 "La Lucha" *Dissent* 52(1) pp14-21

Tétreault Mary Ann
1998 "Formal Politics, Meta-Space, and the Construction of Public Life" in Andrew Light and Jonathon Smith (eds) *The Production of Public Space* (Lanham and Oxford: Rowman & and Littlefield)

Thomas Hugh
1998 (1971) *Cuba, or the Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Da Capo)

Tolson Andrew
1997 (1990) "Social Surveillance and Subjectification: The Emergence of 'Subculture" in the Work of Henry Mayhew" in Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (eds) *The Subcultures Reader* (London and New York: Routledge)

Trexler Richard
1995 *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca: Cornell)

Trouillot Michel-Rolph
2001 "The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization" *Current Anthropology* 42(1)125-138

Valdéz Nelson
1989 "La Cachita y El Che: Patron Saints of Revolutionary Cuba" *Encounters* (winter)

Vera-León Antonio
2000 "A Nation without a Story" in Damián Fernández and Madeline Betancourt (eds) *Cuba, The Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity* (Gainesville: University Press)

Verdery Katherine
1991 “Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the “Transition” *American Ethnologist* 19(3) 419-439.
1996 *What was Socialism and What comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University)

Weeks Jeffrey
1981 *Sex, Politics & Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (London and New York: Longman)

Yan Yunxiang
2003 *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949-1999* (Stanford: Stanford)

Zheng Tiantian
2003 “Consumption, Body Image, and Rural-Urban Apartheid in Contemporary China” *City and Society* XV(2) pp143-16