

Selling Sex, Studying Sexuality: Voices of Costa Rican Prostitutes and Visions of Feminists

Pamela J. Downe

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the images of disembodiment and disengagement put forth in feminist representations of prostitution and prostitutes and contrasts them to the embodied and engaged experiences of fifty-three street prostitutes in San José, Costa Rica. The importance of focusing on the global as well as local context is emphasized.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet exposé explore les images de désincarnement et de désengagement présentées dans les représentations féministes de la prostitution et des prostituées et les compare aux expériences incarnées et engagées des prostituées de la cinquante-troisième rue à San José à Costa Rica. On souligne l'importance de se concentrer au contexte mondial ainsi qu'au contexte local.

VIEWS OF PROSTITUTION

I know that maybe I should not think of myself as a puta [whore], but it is hard to see myself as anything else...When you look at me, what do you see?

These words were spoken by Mariana, a twelve year old Costa Rican girl who, when we first met, had been working as a prostitute on the streets of San José for almost a year.¹ Her introduction to commercial sex work echoes the story of many young prostitutes in Central America. Abandoned by her father (her only immediate family) shortly after their move to the city, she was approached by a man who offered her relief from her homelessness and hunger. One night with him, he promised, and her problems would be solved. Six months and countless clients later, Mariana mustered the courage to leave this man with the hope that she would gain some control over the money she earned. She did not summon this courage alone, for by that time she had met Lisanna, an older, more experienced sex worker who lived in a small, two-bedroom house with eleven other prostitutes.

There is no doubt that Mariana's personal

and sexual identity is greatly affected by her work as a prostitute. In several discussions with me, she described herself in derogatory and disembodied terms, claiming to be "just flesh and hair, nothing more." She similarly claimed that she is a "bad person," but because prostitution is legal in Costa Rica she is quick to point out that her self-criticism is not the result of something she *does* but something she *is*, a seemingly false distinction that speaks directly to issues of identity and self-worth. Yet, despite these claims, her life extends beyond her work. She enjoys making others laugh with her delightful humour and she readily shares her desire for wealth, autonomy and acceptance. Answering her question - when I look at her, what do I see - is therefore difficult, for not only am I presented with contradictory images of Mariana but also the academic and advocacy literature that informs what I see is rife with similar contradictions.

It is not necessary to delve far into the existing literature on prostitution and prostitute sexuality before realizing that the images before us are many and diverse.² Sexual slavery, sexual freedom, economic marginalization, economic self-sufficiency, victimization, and vindication are among the concepts most frequently used in

competing descriptions of sex workers. Paralleling the feminist debates on pornography, there are often heated arguments between those scholars and activists who are seemingly "for" prostitution and those who are seemingly "against" it. These two positions construct contrasting pictures of prostitutes and prostitution that, while appearing to be whole and complete, are actually incomplete and fragmented because they reflect *but do not adequately address* the diversity of prostitution and prostitute sexuality. Furthermore, among both groups of feminists, there is an over-emphasis on disembodiment (meaning the dissected and reductionist views of bodies and experiences) and disengagement (referring to the representations of detachment and distance). The purpose of this paper, then, is to explore the tensions between the disembodied images produced by feminist visions of prostitute sexuality and the embodied experiences of fifty-three street prostitutes in San José, Costa Rica; experiences that are deeply rooted in specific historical and cultural contexts.

The fifty-three women who participated in my research (conducted in 1992-3) are not a random sample but an opportunistic one. However, as a group, they do not deviate from what larger survey-based research has determined to be the profile of working prostitutes in urban areas of Costa Rica (Acuna et al. 1982; Chacon et al. 1993). The women live and work in a twelve block area that is commonly called the "red district" of San José, Costa Rica's capital city; while averaging twenty years of age, they have each completed approximately five years of education. All of the women participating in this research are from Central America; forty-one are originally from Costa Rica and the other twelve are from the neighbouring countries of Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

As I discuss later in the paper, there is an important North/South dynamic that is played out in the women's daily work and lives. This dynamic is shaped by the long-standing political alliance between Costa Rica and the United States that has created an environment in which general tourism and sex tourism have flourished. The prostitutes in major urban centres are commonly approached by North American clients who have very particular

expectations of Latin women. For the most part, these clients are considered valuable because their presence serves as a reminder of Costa Rica's highly praised "Americanized" status and because they tend to pay more than Costa Rican clients do. It may well be this receptivity to North Americans that first led Lisanna to ask if she, and the women in her house, could participate in my research (which focused broadly on women's identities and experiences with disease). I eagerly pursued this opportunity. After becoming acquainted with the thirteen women in Lisanna's house, I began to meet other sex workers who resided and worked in the same neighbourhood. The women were very willing, even anxious, to participate in this study in part, I think, because they knew it would have a primarily North American audience. "The Americans here buy my sex," said one of the women in Lisanna's house, "now they might hear my words." Clearly, then, the North/South dichotomy that politically privileges the North was an influential factor from the very beginning of the fieldwork.

PROSTITUTE SEXUALITY AND DISEMBODIMENT

The other girls tell me that I must separate what I do with a man from what I do with my friends and how I feel about myself. They tell me that the parts of my body that attract a man, the parts that they pay for...are only a small part of me and I should pretend that I...[am] without breasts and legs...

- Mariana

Sexuality has long been recognized as a special area of life, "encompassing erotic desires, practices and identities" (Jackson and Scott 1996, 2). Although there have been attempts to reduce it to static sets of discrete variables related to sexual activity and desire (Davis and Whitten 1987; Fisher 1980; Orford 1978), sexuality is most commonly seen by feminists as "somewhat fluid, in part, because what is deemed erotic, and hence sexual... is not fixed" (Jackson and Scott 1996, 2). In order to consider adequately the meanings and forms of sexual identity and expression, then, we must examine how the social, political, and individual

bodies influence each other and overlap.³ There are many excellent studies from which we may take guidance in this task, but only a few of these studies discuss prostitute sexuality (Bell 1994; Roberts 1993; Shrage 1992; White 1990). Among the feminist and non-feminist literature that does focus on sexuality and sex work, essentialist images that dismiss differences and disembodied voices are still found too frequently.

Any consideration of disembodiment in this context might well begin with a brief discussion of the reductionist representations of the sex industry itself. The ways in which many prostitutes build a sense of community, give meaning to their work, and overcome challenges are often hidden from view because street prostitution or, more accurately, a stereotypical image of "the" street prostitute has become emblematic of the entire, diverse industry (for example Chacon et al., 1993). This singular portrayal of prostitution has been popularized through sensationalized news reports and other forms of media, including American movies such as *Pretty Woman* and *Leaving Las Vegas* that were as popular in Costa Rica as they were in the United States and Canada. The image before us shows a woman working usually by choice, but sometimes by force, with clients and managers but in isolation from others in the sex trade (Alexander 1988; Phoenix 1995). The woman's relations with other workers - exotic dancers, hotel prostitutes, those who traffic women, and the trafficked sex workers themselves - are obscured by this singular vision, as are the broader social processes and global contexts that undoubtedly affect each woman's experience and identity as a prostitute.

Contrary to this image, the women participating in this research did not work in isolation from other sex workers but rather in competition or co-operation with them. These women were well connected and very aware of the broader industry to which they were contributing. Disassembling this context for analysis downplays the importance of these connections and of the women's engagement with their work.

Although many feminist researchers and activists have contributed to this reductionist representation of the sex industry, these same

researchers and activists have offered very important critiques of the disembodied images of individual prostitutes. There are many examples showing that the bodies of sex workers are often reduced to those parts deemed most "erotic." Indeed, many of the feminist critiques indicate that this objectifying view of women's bodies and sexualities is fundamental to the sex trade industry's success (Bell 1994; Overall 1992; Roberts 1993; Shrage 1992). Many of the women participating in this research were frequently given nick-names by clients and former managers, such as "big breasts" or "ass-for-sale," that reduced them to sexualized body parts and thus identified them as sexually accessible and desirable. Several of the women, including Mariana, referred to themselves this way, as did many of the sex workers in Hoigard and Finstad's (1992) study in Norway.

Of course, many non-prostitute women also experience similar objectification and degradation in patriarchal societies. However, for female prostitutes, the problem may be more acute given that their bodies are *explicitly as well as metaphorically* bought and sold for the sexual pleasure of others. Furthermore, prostitutes are required to display their bodies in very particular ways in order to sell sex, the terms of which are often non-negotiable. Most feminists argue that it is generally not the entire body - its movement, agility, or grace - that is displayed and ultimately sold, but specific parts that appeal to the erotic desires of the client (Eisler 1995). However, as profound as the challenge to this objectifying and disembodied view of women may be, many existing feminist studies of prostitute sexuality still rely on distorting dichotomies, such as that between genuine and false desire, mind and body, attachment and detachment. This is most evident in the analysis of disengagement and dissociation.

Many accounts of prostitution and prostitute sexuality include descriptions of the ways in which sex workers disengage from clients. While the bodies of prostitutes are strategically disassembled into sellable parts, the women's experiences and actions are also reduced and divided into two broad categories. In the first are experiences and actions that are seen to be "real" in that they are inspired by the woman's genuine

emotions and desires. In the second category are experiences and actions that are seen to be "pretend" in that they are inspired more by external expectation than by authentic desires. These categories are presented by many feminists as discrete and dichotomous, and much greater emphasis tends to be placed on the second category of actions of experiences, the staged performances of prostitute sexuality. Indeed, it is frequently argued that disengaging from what is "real" or authentic enables prostitutes to perform their roles effectively and to pleasure others while finding little, if any, personal enjoyment in it. Kathleen Barry (1995, 32) summarizes this position by stating that "Because the sexual relations of power involve women's bodies, ...disengagement gives the [individual] woman the emotional distance to distinguish her real self from that of her self that is being used for sex as a commodity." Central to the discussions of disengagement, then, is the idea that prostitutes' actions, experiences, and selves can be divided into the real and the pretend.

Most of the women participating in my research admit that disengaging from the client is very often necessary and desired, but not always possible. "Maybe I am alone in this," said one woman, "but even if you try to set boundaries, like no kissing, the man can force you if he is stronger. It is hard to set boundaries that protect you from what is going on." In my interviews with other women, it was revealed that this woman was not alone in feeling this way. Many women had difficulty establishing emotional and psychological distance from clients and the sex acts required of them. "I hear a lot about it," said another woman, "but no one has ever told me *how* to pretend that I am not there or that it does not hurt." And yet another woman reported that she has tried everything, including various drugs, to remind herself that her encounters with clients are "not real," but she has not yet convinced herself of this. This inability to create or maintain distance appears to influence the women's sexual identities; as Mariana once said, "With all that I do, it is hard to figure out who it is I really am."

Although there is value in the feminist analyses of disengagement and disembodiment, it is equally important to recognize that these

processes are problematic and incomplete. By focusing so centrally on disengagement and disembodiment, important and fundamental questions have been left unanswered: How do sex workers disengage from clients when required to appear engaged and enthusiastic? To what extent do the disembodied images of sexuality affect prostitutes' desires and actions? How do the global, national, racial and economic dimensions of the work affect the women involved? These questions, all of which have direct bearing on understandings of prostitute sexuality, require a more extensive examination than one study can provide. In the next section, I offer observations and comments that might serve as a step towards understanding the embodied experiences of prostitutes, meaning the women's experiences as they relate to the relevant historical, cultural and individual influences.

PERFORMANCES OF EMBODIMENT AND (DIS)ENGAGEMENT

I have a client who is pretty old and is from the United States. He doesn't want me to do anything but sit on his lap and sing to him in Spanish and he gets [sexually aroused]... After he's finished, I have to say "thank you for saving me," and... then I get my money.

- Mariana

Prostitution is an industry that markets sex in various forms and, as participants in this industry, prostitutes perform their part. Certainly the very way that they display their bodies to potential customers is a performance of sexual accessibility and eagerness. However, this performance is seldom scripted with the prostitutes' interests in mind. Hoigard and Finstad (1992, 62) note that, "When a prostitute gets dressed up as a whore, it does not originate from her own fantasies and needs. She becomes the physical manifestation of men's fantasies and needs...The prostitute creeps into the mold created by and for someone else." For many of the women I interviewed for this study, this "mold" - the revealing clothes, provocative posture, competition for clients - is unpleasant and awkward. But when asked how they would prefer to dress and attract clients, only a few could envision an alternative. This may be because their

nightly performance is *not* inconsequential. It is politically and personally significant because each performance reveals more than an individual body; the social and political contexts that allow, structure and constrain the performance are also exposed. Patriarchy, nationalism and race figure prominently in these contexts, and they must be considered simultaneously.

Throughout Latin America, patriarchal manifestations of *machismo* greatly influence women's expressions and understandings of sexuality. Described as "the cult of virility" (Stevens 1973), *machismo* is embedded in notions of masculinity that are "rooted in pretensions of power and ascendancy and biased towards physical validation" (Dealy 1991, 133). Sexual aggression in male-female relationships, intransigence in male-male relationships, and personal arrogance are among those traits associated with *macho* behaviour (McKee 1992). Among the most obvious reflections of this behaviour are the physical signs of violence, the bruises and scars revealed on the women's bodies. Indeed, violence is one of the most formidable challenges with which the women participating in this research must deal. In the ten months that I spent with these women, not one day passed that I did not witness or see the results of a violent attack. Because women, and particularly prostitutes, are seen as "adversar[ies] in the game of sexual conquest" (Kutsche 1995, 114), this violence is often thought to be normal and expected. Echoing the sentiments of many women, Mariana explained that, "I have been a *puta* for almost a year now and I have come to accept that this is the way men are. Violence is a part of them, and so it must be a part of me, too." Sex workers in Costa Rica, then, are mired in a culture that valorizes *machismo* and their bodies exhibit the effects of the related behaviour.

Some authors and activists are frustrated by the attention devoted to violence against sex workers (Jaggar 1991; Roberts 1993). Others, and I am among them, believe that violence remains an important issue for prostitutes because in addition to possibly causing debilitation and physical pain, the violence to which these women are routinely subjected affects their general sense of self and their specific sexual identities. We need more

analyses that explore this further, that examine the many mediating factors that exacerbate the influences of violence on prostitute sexuality. We also need to appreciate that the patriarchal forces that condone this violence are not working in isolation from other social structures, including the global inequities that inform First World stereotypes of Third World "others."

Patricia Hill Collins (1996, 310) argues that "Certain 'races' of people have been defined as being more bodylike, more animallike [sic]... than others." Latin Americans, as a stereotyped and homogenized whole, are among those so eroticized. There are many popular portrayals of "the Latin lover" that titillate romantic visions of masculine *machismo* and feminine passion. When these images extend to and from Central and South America, however, there is another dimension at play, namely economic and cultural difference, Third World otherness (Sommer 1990; Torgovnick 1990). This romantic/sexual construction of Third World Latin otherness is very apparent to the women participating in this research. Lisanna, for example, frequently referred to the "hot Latin whore routine" that she was expected to perform for clients. She explained that, in this routine, performances of passion and desire are coupled with enactments of deference and passivity. "This," Mariana went on to discuss, "is how the world sees us, not just other *gringos* [Americans] but also the *Ticos* [Costa Ricans]." Graciela, a twenty-six year old woman with ten years experience in the sex trade, added to these comments by noting that, "The 'Latin whore' thing separates us from other women, the Chinese and Indian girls who are brought here to work. We are not just whores, but Costa Rican whores, and that is what a lot of these men are looking for."

The "Latin whore routine," then, brings together two dominant, contradictory and stereotypical views of Latin American women: insatiable, passionate "fallen women" and passive, dutiful wives. Clients regularly expect this routine to be enacted by Costa Rican prostitutes in part because many of these clients are North American and European sex tourists who find such stereotypes sexually exciting. Primitivist images of adventure abound in popular representations of

Costa Rica and tour companies have capitalized on this. The sexuality of Costa Rican women - and especially the sexuality of Costa Rican prostitutes - is therefore couched within this distorting gaze. Even those who are not tourists but are "natives" of the area are affected and caught by these powerful and persuasive myths.

The women participating in this study were quick to realize that they are not disconnected from these cultural myths of otherness. They know that they must sell their sexual services - which for many amounts to their sexuality - not with the bodies of generic women (for they do not exist), but with the bodies of stereotypically Costa Rican, Third World, passive yet passionate women. What is more, the individual bodies being marketed and sold are much like the body politic in that they are vulnerable to exploitation and violence because they are denied certain material and social resources. As the trafficking of women around the globe indicates, there is a prevailing attitude that Third World women, *and particularly prostitutes*, are there to be recklessly consumed. This exploitive attitude is undeniably connected to the global inequities that divide the First and Third Worlds.

I began this section with a quote from Mariana that speaks to this point. Her client, an older American who retired in Costa Rica (as many do), finds it sexually exciting to experience the allure of a young Costa Rican woman singing to him in Spanish and thanking him for "saving" her. Mariana's experience with this client is not unique. Clara, a nineteen-year-old woman who has worked as a prostitute for five years, is regularly hired by a Canadian man who asks her to dress as a "poor peasant girl" when she meets him in his hotel room. He then presents her with a new outfit - usually expensive lingerie - which she is to change into while he watches. After performing various sexual acts, Clara must thank him profusely for his generosity. "If I make it sound as if he has really changed my life," she notes, "he will sometimes pay me more!" These encounters poignantly reflect a prevailing First World attitude towards Third World nations and, more specifically, an attitude that characterizes the North/South divide. This attitude is characterized by an assumption of

superiority, a tone of condescension, and a romanticized, exoticized and objectified view of women and sexuality (Phillips 1995). And as noted earlier, this attitude is often shared by Central Americans themselves who find these images appealing and convincing. The bodies of women and especially sex workers are not separable from these views. Quite the opposite, they are defined by them and the sex workers know it.

In addition to engaging in the performances of erotic otherness, the women participating in this study are also fully engaged in their community. When I first began my research in this community of sex workers, I was taken by the interconnectedness of its members. Contrary to individualistic images of isolation that characterize many popular portrayals of prostitution, I found myself immersed in an integrated, collaborative, and competitive community that, although engulfed by the larger city, remains distinct. This uniqueness is partially due to the particular services, namely the sexual services, available there. However, the personal and business networks, and the street camaraderie among workers and trusted clients also contribute a great deal to the overall sense of community and belonging. All of the women participating in this research think and speak of the red district as "home," a label that connotes more than residence. The women describe their place in the community as one that offers a degree of acceptance, predictability, and understanding. "I do not always like it here," Mariana once explained, "but I know my place."

This sense of belonging stems from the women's roles in the sex trade. Who a woman works for and what specific sexual services she offers are very influential in determining how she is received and valued in the community. Mariana, outwardly struggling to develop an identity with which she is comfortable, is quick to differentiate herself from the young Asian women who are trafficked to Costa Rica to service tourists. In making this distinction, it is clear that she sees her own ethnicity, and that of others, in largely sexual terms. During one interview, for example, she claimed that, "Those girls from China [sic] are too quiet. I am Latin and so I have more *lujuria* [sensuality, passion]. I am more outspoken but I

also know when to act timid and this makes me sexy."

Because all of the women with whom I worked are fully engaged, even to the point that many cannot imagine a "self" outside of the sex trade, it follows that their recreational, non-commercialized sex lives are affected by their work. Lisanna explains, "I would go crazy if I did not try to keep things separate but I would be stupid if I thought I could. How can you go out with a man who wants [oral sex] and not think of the many times you have done it for clients. Of course my work affects how I think about sex." Clara likewise states that when she is in a relationship with a man, she does not want to have sex because that would "cheapen it," and she asks, "How can I have sex with someone I love when I have to have sex with men that I hate?" For Lisanna and Clara, as well as the majority of women interviewed, recreational and commercial sex may occur under different circumstances but they are linked through experience and identity. Professional and personal expressions of sexuality are described by the women as similarly connected. "I think that I am sort of pretty and sometimes sexy," Mariana declared, "but when a boy my age likes me, I am scared. Not because I don't know what to do but because I fear I won't like it. I cannot think of being sexy without thinking of being a Latin *puta*." This suggests that the women's sexual identities - what it means to be sexy, to have certain desires - are connected to many communities, from the global and distant to the immediate and intimate. Therefore, although disengagement is desirable in some contexts, it is never complete. Engagement and attachment are often inevitable.

ENDNOTES

1. The names of research participants used in this paper are pseudonyms, chosen by the participants themselves.
2. Prostitution may be provisionally defined as "attending to the sexual desires of a particular individual (or individuals) with bodily acts in exchange for payment of money" (Zatz 1997, 279). For the purposes of this paper, "prostitute sexuality" refers to the sexual identities, performances, desires, and duties of prostitutes. In this paper, I refer to prostitutes and sex workers interchangeably, however I realize that the repertoire of sex workers includes but extends beyond prostitution.
3. My reading of the "three bodies" - individual, social and political - is largely informed by critical-interpretive medical anthropology, outlined by Margaret Lock and Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1990).

CONCLUSIONS

Maybe one day somebody will look at me and see more than me. They might see a bit of Latin whore, a bit of Lisanna... and a bit of me, whoever that is.

- Mariana

In this paper, I have juxtaposed the dominant images of disembodiment and disengagement that inform many feminist analyses of the sex trade with the experiences of street prostitutes in San José, Costa Rica. It is clear that although disembodied images abound and processes of disengagement have a certain appeal, the experiences of the women participating in this research suggest that prostitute sexuality is an embodied phenomena. It is shaped by patriarchal forces, global inequities, an exoticizing First World gaze, a local sex trade community, and individual agendas. Prostitute sexuality - like the broader sex trade industry and the sex workers - is therefore best understood as a myriad of connections and influences. These connections are too often severed in feminist works that disembody the experiences of prostitutes and localize what should be a global focus.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Jim Waldram, Janice Ristock and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

REFERENCES

- Acuna, Olda M., Carlos Denton and Fernando Narajo. *La prostitucion en San José*. San José: Instituto de Estudios Sociales en Poblacion, 1982.
- Alexander, Priscilla. "Prostitution: A Difficult Issue for Feminists," *Sex Work: Writing by Women in the Sex Industry*, F. Delacoste and P. Alexander, eds. London: Virago Press, 1988.
- Barry, Kathleen. *The Prostitution of Sexuality: The Global Exploitation of Women*. New York: New York University Press, 1995.
- Bell, Shannon. *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Chacon Echeverria, Laura et al. *Soy una Mujer Ambiente: Un Analisis Sobre Prostitucion Femenina Prevencion y SIDA*. San José: Universidad de Costa Rica, 1993.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. "Black Women and the Sex/Gender Hierarchy," *Feminism and Sexuality*, S. Jackson and S. Scott, eds. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.
- Davis, D.L. and R.G. Whitten. "The Cross-cultural Study of Human Sexuality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987) 69-98.
- Dealy, Glen. *The Latin Americans: Spirit and Ethos*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991.
- Eisler, Rianne. *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.
- Fisher, L.E. "Relationships and Sexuality in Context and Culture," *Handbook of Sexuality*, B.B. Wolman and J. Money, eds. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980.
- Hoigard, Cecilie and Liv Finstad. *Backstreets: Prostitution, Law and Money*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Jackson, Stevi and Sue Scott. "Sexual Skirmishes and Feminist Factions," *Feminism and Sexuality*, S. Jackson and S. Scott, eds. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.
- Jaggar, Alison. "Prostitution," *The Philosophy of Sex*, A. Soble, ed. Savage: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991.
- Kutsche, Paul. "Two Truths About Costa Rica," *Latin American Male Homosexualities*, S.O. Murray, ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.
- Lock, Margaret and Nancy Scheper-Hughes. "A Critical-interpretive Approach in Medical Anthropology," *Medical Anthropology: A Handbook of Theory and Method*, T. Johnson and C. Sargent, eds. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.
- McKee, Lauris. "Men's Rights/Women's Wrongs: Domestic Violence in Ecuador," *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*, D. Counts, J. Brown and J. Campbell, eds. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.
- Orford, Jim. "Hypersexuality: Implications for a Theory of Dependence," *British Journal of Addiction* 73 (1978) 299-310.
- Overall, Christine. "What's Wrong With Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work," *Signs* 17 (1992) 705-25.
- Phillips, Lynne. "Difference, Indifference and Making a Difference: Reflexivity in the Time of Cholera," *Ethnographic Feminisms: Essays in Anthropology*, S. Cole and L. Phillips, eds. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995.
- Phoenix, Jo. "Prostitution: Problematizing the Definition," *(Hetero)sexual Politics*, M. Maynard and J. Purvis, eds. London: Taylor and Francis, 1995.
- Roberts, Nickie. *Whores in History: Prostitution in Western Society*. London: Grafton, 1993.
- Shrage, Laurie. "Is Sexual Desire Raced? The Social Meaning of Interracial Prostitution," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 23 (1992) 42-51.
- Sommer, Doris. "Irresistible Romance: The Foundational Fictions of Latin America," *Nation and Narration*, H. Bhabha, ed. London:

Routledge, 1990.

Torgovnick, Mariana. *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

White, Luise. *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Zatz, Noah. "Sex work/Sex Act: Law, Labor, and Desire in Constructions of Prostitution," *Signs* 22 (1997) 277-308.

Look For It Here

She said

Look for it here

I've got honeycomb, wolf's teeth,
a landslide
I've got a cat-flap, swing-doors
and a skylight
I've got positions as plentiful as the
eggs of a fly

You smile

Why is disinterest respected so
highly?

I can see my face carrying itself
in your eye
Don't look at me slyly
Don't wander alone for ten years
asking why

Look for it here

I *am* normally this antagonistic
And I *expect*
Happiness

M.T.C. Cronin