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# FOR LOVE AND MONEY

## Romance Tourism in Jamaica

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**Abstract:** Contesting the constraints of conventional gender identity, many Euro-American women travelers to Jamaica pursue romantic affairs with local men. By elaborating on features from their gender repertoire, men articulate the women tourists' idealizations of local culture and masculinity, transforming their identity in order to appeal to the women and capitalize on the tourism trade. The disparity in economic status between partners in these relationships creates an opportunity for women to traffic in men. This situation illuminates the links between economic status and dominance in gender relations and contradicts conventional notions of male hegemony. Power in these relationships is shifting and situational, playing off traditional gender repertoires, as well as the immediate circumstances of finance and cultural capital. **Keywords:** romance tourism, gender identity, gender and power, Jamaica.

**Résumé:** Pour amour et argent: tourisme d'idylle à la Jamaïque. En contestant les contraintes de genre conventionnelles, beaucoup d'Européennes et d'Américaines voyagent à la Jamaïque pour rechercher des idylles avec des hommes locaux. En brochant sur leur répertoire de genre, les hommes expriment les idéalizations de la culture locale et de la masculinité. Ils se transforment ainsi pour plaire aux femmes et profiter du tourisme. La différence de position économique crée l'occasion pour les femmes de faire le trafic des hommes. Ceci illustre le lien entre position économique et prédominance dans les relations de genre, contredisant les notions conventionnelles de l'hégémonie mâle. Le pouvoir dans ces relations est changeant et situationnel, et joue sur les répertoires mâles traditionnels et sur les circonstances économiques et culturelles. **Mots-clés:** tourisme d'idylle, identité de genre, genre et pouvoir, Jamaïque.

### INTRODUCTION

This study examines the negotiation of gender identity as foreign tourist women engage local men in Jamaica in emotional and intimate relationships, a process at once global and personal. While tourism research has investigated the relationships between male tourists and "host" women, commonly referred to as "sex tourism" (Bacchetta 1988; Cincone 1988; Hoblen, Horlemann and Pfafflin 1983; Lea 1988, Seager and Olsen 1986; Thitsa 1982; Thruong 1990), the relations of female tourists and local men have received decidedly less attention (Manning 1982). Yet, these relations present a rich opportunity for understanding the reproduction and transformation of gender and

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power as the women and men engaging in these relationships experiment with new identities and gender roles.

With new economic power, many Euro-American women are seeking an identity beyond the confines of the traditional gender scripts offered in their cultures. Conventional notions of gender are contested daily, challenged publicly through the media, and questioned privately as men and women struggle with negotiating new roles. With the ease and popularity offered by mass tourism, part of this negotiation is being conducted around the world as women travel independently of men. Free from their own society's constraints, female tourists have the opportunity to explore new gender behavior.

In turn, the local men who associate with tourists, in many ways, enter into a new tourism culture and distance themselves from their society's normative authority. These men are also free to explore new gender roles while they pursue social and economic mobility and the freedom to experience a new kind of intimate relationship.

The term *romance tourism* is used to distinguish these relationships from those of sex tourism. Rather than a simple role reversal, the fact that it is women rather than men traveling in pursuit of relationships is central to their nature. Gender is constitutive of the relationship, not ancillary to it. The purpose here is not to debate whether these men are prostitutes, but rather to convey the distinctive meaning these relationships hold for the partners and to acknowledge their definition of the situation. It is significant that neither actor considers their interaction to be prostitution, even while others may label it so. The actors place an emphasis on courtship rather than the exchange of sex for money.

These liaisons are constructed through a discourse of romance and long-term relationship, an emotional involvement usually not present in sex tourism. While both parties may share the ideal of a sustained relationship, the meanings this holds differ for each of them. However, the framework of romance serves both parties as they seek to maximize the benefits derived from this tourism relationship.

Whereas sex tourism serves to perpetuate gender roles and reinforce power relations of male dominance and female subordination, romance tourism in Jamaica provides an arena for change. By drawing on their respective traditional gender models as well as their imaginings and idealizations of each other and new possibilities, the partners in these relationships explore new avenues for negotiating femaleness and maleness. Each of them are engaged in manipulating and expanding their gender repertoires. This takes place within the context of the historical political relationships between their respective societies so that the couple must navigate the dual dominance hierarchies of culture and gender (Dubisch forthcoming).

Cross-cultural studies of gender have contributed to dispelling myths of biological determination and sexual universals, demonstrating that gender and sexual identity are invested with meaning by society (Leacock 1981, Mead 1935, Ortner and Whitehead 1981, Strathern 1980). Complex social and cultural processes of the construction of gender are revealed when binary views of gender roles are abandoned. Gender identities are not constant but must continually be reasserted and rede-

fined in different contexts, often involving "refusals, reinterpretations or partial acceptances of the dominant themes" (Conway 1989:23). Normative roles and identities are not merely passively accepted, rather they are often challenged and contested. The challenge to the authority of received traditions to define the scope of culturally appropriate 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. This necessarily includes gender and cultural scripts for gender specific behavior. Thus, the personal relationships established in the tourism arena allow for the analysis of gender behavioral potential and how that potential is mediated by individual reinterpretations of gender ideologies as well as global forces of race and economics.

This ethnography evolved from research by the authors on the cultural impact of tourism and gender and power in Jamaica, based on their five cumulative years of fieldwork between 1989 through 1992. The methodology included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and quantitative analysis. The observations from countless hours spent in formal and informal tourism settings while living in a small town and villages surrounded by tourism activity forms the backbone of this study. Ethnographic interviews of key informants selected on the basis of their representativeness were conducted after 18 months in the field. Moreover, the authors' own experiences as foreign women in Jamaica provide important insight into the expectations and treatment of foreign women. The significance of the dynamics of tourism and gender identity became apparent from living in the tourism shadow and observing changes over time as the government increasingly set the course of the nation's economic future on the sights of the next planeload of tourists.

Foreign women on the arms of local men in the resort areas of Jamaica is a regular part of the landscape, just as it has become common in other parts of the Caribbean (Manning 1982). Furthermore, hundreds of men have "gone foreign" with women who were vacationing in the small-scale tourism center in which one author lived for two years. Virtually all of the young men who sought their livelihood from informal tourism work during that period have gone to foreign countries with their tourist girlfriends at least once in the three years since that time. Many of them are still living in Europe and all of them have ongoing relationships with foreign women. In this small-scale society, sufficient numbers of young men are involved in this activity that it is widely discussed and has recently become an issue for the media and the government-industry complex. It has been institutionalized to the point that the label "rent-a-dread" has been coined to refer to the men who get involved with foreign women. There are t-shirts, postcards, and cartoons making jokes about them for tourist consumption. Popular songs also comment on these relationships. Romance tourism liaisons are sufficiently common to encourage at least one American tour operator to consider creating a promotional brochure complete with pictures of men available as companions so she could broker the relationships from the United States before the women leave home. Ger-

man women embark on these ventures frequently enough that an expression has developed in Germany that "The men go to Thailand and the women go to Jamaica."

## ROMANCE TOURISM

Travel has always offered a unique opportunity for self-discovery and potential transformation. Face-to-face contact with the Other and its concomitant challenges to culturally received conceptions and beliefs inevitably involves a confrontation with one's self *qua* self. While historically the purview of men and a "medium of peculiarly male fantasies of transformation and self-realization" (Leed 1991:275), travel now serves as a medium of female self-realization. However, contrary to Leed's conclusion that the increase in numbers of women traveling with the spread of mass tourism marks the end of the "genderization of mobility and of journeying as a purely masculine or masculinizing activity" (1991:275), travel has become part of the gendering activity of women as they seek to expand their gender repertoires to incorporate practices traditionally reserved for men and thereby integrate the conventionally masculine with the feminine.

Insofar as travel has historically constituted an activity primarily of men, the journeys of women have always represented an attempt to break the "boundaries of convention and traditional feminine restraints" (Robinson 1990:6). This function of travel has simply escalated as challenges to gender roles have increased and travel has become a more accessible avenue for exploring new territory of the self. The tourism industry has responded with specialized tours for women. For example, advertisements for "adventure" travel invite women to develop a "new outdoor style" through the "empowering experience" of traveling "free of traditional gender roles and expectations" (Bond 1992).

As Western women seek to construct new identities, their spirit of adventure is often expressed by more than just a new outdoor style. Continually expanding the boundaries of the feminine requires perpetually new experiences, including a new kind of romance. As a dominant theme in Western cultures, romance serves to "construct feminine subjectivity in terms of a significant other, the boyfriend" (Christian-Smith 1990:28). This has come to include women traveling in pursuit of sex and romance with local men.

Whereas women consort with local men in countless tourism destinations throughout the world, the scale of romance tourism in Jamaica is a consequence of unique features of Jamaican culture, most specifically as the roots of the international reggae counter-culture and its role in attracting tourists to Jamaica. Since the 1960s and the burgeoning of adventurous travel and the 1970s as Jamaican reggae music began spreading across the world, tourists became more closely involved with local people, including picking up local men (the particular role of reggae music is discussed later).

The women who engage local men in romantic relationships span the full range of nationalities, ages, social and economic backgrounds represented by tourists to Jamaica. The relationships are most often,

though not always, cross-racial as well as cross-cultural in that the vast majority of tourists would be classified as white while the majority of the Jamaican population is of African descent. The duration of their stay is extended, lasting anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, and many of these women are repeat visitors (Pruitt 1993). However, European women who often travel for periods of two to three months and come from countries with more relaxed immigration practices than those in North America are more likely to take local men back home with them. The women are seeking an "enriching" travel experience. They shun exclusive resorts in favor of locally owned guest houses, frequent local hang-outs and socialize with the local people.

The desire for the "cultural" experience which the tourist woman seeks, coupled with prolonged exposure to local society demonstrates a readiness to embrace, however superficially, the local culture. This contrasts with the sexual liaisons of sex tourism. The local man is not merely a sexual object, but rather the woman's personal cultural broker. He serves to ease her experience in the society and provide her with increased access to the local culture.

### *Touring Romance*

A foreign woman in Jamaica is assumed to be on vacation. If she is without a male companion, the commonly held belief is that she wants or needs a local man to increase her pleasure. This belief is due, in part, to Jamaican notions of companionship and pleasure along with generalized assumptions about what tourist women are seeking from their holidays, based largely on the frequency with which Jamaicans have observed foreign women get involved with local men. This has resulted in what one local writer has called "the sexualization of routine encounters between a female tourist and a local Jamaican male" (Henry 1980). Thus, foreign women are frequently inundated with offers from local men for companionship and a "bodyguard." One Canadian woman told the authors, "Guys at home are so confused, they don't approach women directly very much. But you come down here [Jamaica] and the men are dropping out of the trees like mangoes." The result is that many women unexpectedly find themselves accepting the flattering offers they receive from men. This might be the opportunity for the tourist to indulge in fantasies and explore a new aspect of herself by engaging in behavior that she would never allow herself at home. Adding to the allure of the vacation romance in Jamaica are Caribbean cultural ideals of attractiveness. Light skin, straight hair and caucasian facial features are highly valued, and women who are considered overweight in their own cultures are appreciated by many Jamaican men. Thus, foreign women who may not satisfy standards of beauty at home find themselves the object of amorous attention by appealing local men.

Other women travel seeking companionship. The woman might hope for the companionship of her boyfriend year after year as she returns to Jamaica, as many do. The authors became acquainted with dozens of Western women who return to Jamaica each year to visit their boyfriends. Relationships are maintained through letters, phone

calls, and gifts of money and consumer goods. Unsatisfied with relationships or the lack thereof at home, some women travel with the hope of finding their ideal mate and staying in Jamaica or returning home with a partner. These women often express a frustration with the men from their own cultures as inattentive, preoccupied with career, unemotional or confused about their role (Pruitt 1993). They are lured by the possibility of having a child and establishing a family. Their romanticized notions of the alternative available from a local man interact with their similarly romanticized notions of helping him escape poverty and fuels the intensity and rapid pace of the relationship.

Most Western tourist women in Jamaica are confronted with economic hardship that is different or absent from their daily reality at home. "Third World poverty" is often perceived as noble in contrast to the slums or ghettos with which the tourist may be familiar. Rural shacks may appear quaint, whereas ghettos are frightening. Reactions to their perceptions of poverty range from guilt and pity to ideals of helping, which often bring people together despite striking social differences. This leads many foreigners to fraternize with individuals of dramatically different social status in a way that is less threatening than at home. They develop a rapport and attempt to cross the boundaries established by social inequality.

Racial, educational and economic differences that constrain tourist women at home are often diminished or ignored as part of the necessity of having a "freeing" experience. Thus, a rural, African-Caribbean man with little education and scant livelihood is often the companion of a foreign professional woman many years his senior. When necessary, the women provide the finances for the man of their choice to accompany them to dinner, stage shows, discos or trips around the island. In the light of obvious poverty, she frequently views her financial contribution to the relationship as relatively insignificant.

These women are able to explore more dominant roles in the tourism relationship. The economic and social status the women enjoy provides them with a security and independence that translates into power and control in the relationship. Some of the women enjoy the control they have in these relationships and express a preference for keeping a man dependent on them (Pruitt 1993). This ensures that he will be fully available to meet her needs and will not become distracted or otherwise occupied like the men in her society from whom she has sought an alternative.

The Caribbean man, who highly values proficiency at "sweet talk" (Abrahams 1983, Wilson 1973), finds that his gender script for romancing women connects with her desire for romance. Ardent declarations of love, praises of beauty, and the like, which are a common part of a Jamaican man's repertoire, are seen as refreshing or passionate by the foreign woman who does not understand the culture. In the words of a Jamaican woman who runs a small guest house, the men "appeal to her emotions with flattery and compliments and do things for her to make her stay in Jamaica easier and more pleasant. They appeal to her sensual side saying . . . if you come to Jamaica and never sleep with a Rastaman, the true, natural man of Jamaica, you never really experience Jamaica and yourself."

The courtship serves those women who are seeking either a "forbidden" experience or their relationship ideal, or are struggling with expectations of propriety from their native cultures wherein sex is linked to love. She responds from her cultural script, assuming that both of them hold the same ideals for intimacy. Furthermore, the romantic theme is central to Western consumption practices based on "a complex pattern of hedonistic behavior, the majority of which occurs in the imagination of the consumer" (C. Campbell 1987:89). This pattern of consumption also lies at the heart of tourism and the relationships thereby established. The men are successful at elaborating on the tourist's imagination and thus offering the promise of realization of her dreams.

### *Love and Money*

The men hold their own ideals about the potential for emotional intimacy in relationships with foreign women. Many believe foreign women to be more tender and emotional than Jamaican women and imagine that they can experience an emotional and sexual intimacy in these relationships that is lacking in their lives, particularly as they are increasingly rejected by local women for their activities with foreigners.

Those men who desire a broader experience than that available in their immediate situation believe that a relationship with a foreign woman could also provide them with a way out of their limited circumstances. It has proven to be a successful strategy for many young men who seek opportunities and prosperity unavailable in the local society. The hope for economic benefits intertwines with emotional longing and fuels the men's romantic ideals for a relationship with a foreign woman.

Most of the men involved with female tourists can be seen as taking advantage of one of the few opportunities available to them. They generally come from that group of rural young people with little education and few social and economic prospects. The deprivation of opportunity in rural areas has led many young men to seek their livelihood directly from tourists (commonly referred to as "hustling") by taking the role of guide or informal entrepreneur in the hopes of obtaining a few of the dollars tourists often spend liberally. A steady flow of these young men who want to get out of rural areas move into the tourism developments and seek ways to make their living "hustling the tourists."

In those regions where it is concentrated, tourism dominates the economy and has been billed as "The Answer" to Jamaica's economic future (Pruitt 1993). Yet, uneducated and unskilled young men living near resort areas are effectively cut off from formal jobs in the tourism industry. The prevalence of romance tourism has meant that increasing numbers of young men routinely view a relationship with a foreign woman as a meaningful opportunity for them to capture the love and money they desire. It is not uncommon to hear young men who come into the tourism areas from deep rural villages talk about their interest in "experiencing a white woman." The following is an excerpt from field notes.

. . . It was a slow day, not many tourists were in town and none had ventured to Sunrise Beach that day. The guys were chatting about how slow things were.

"Nothing's going on. No money is flowing." Scoogie complained.

"That's right. Nothing is happening around here. I just want to get me a white-woman and get out of here. Go to America and make a real money," said Driver.

"Yeah, you have to link up with a white-woman and get her to fall in love with you if you want a break. . . ." "Yeah man, you have to hook up with a white-woman. I mean look at Decker, Jah Red, Collin, even Punkie. All gone foreign just since this year," said Scoogie. . . . " (Pruitt 1993:147).

The ability to earn a prosperous living has significance for the young Jamaican man far beyond basic needs for survival. Brodber describes the "pressure to establish one's maleness through the abilities to disperse cash" (1989:69). The Jamaican man's aspirations to the status of a "big" man (Whitehead 1992) involves money in each of the three elements—moral character, respectability and reputation—which comprise that status. Evaluations of moral character are based in part on a man's generosity. Expectations of respectability include maintaining a household, while the reputation factor central to achieving status as a "big" man is based partially on virility displayed by sexual conquests and fathering many children (Handwerker 1989, Smith 1956, Wilson 1973).

LaFont describes the expectations most Jamaican women hold of financial remuneration from men in exchange for sex and domestic duties by the woman with the result that "much of their [men's] role fulfillment is dependent on job opportunities and the economy." (1992: 196). "No money, no talk" is a common expression in Jamaica. Here, the word "talk" refers to intimate relations between a man and a woman. Women expect that a man with whom they are having an intimate relationship will contribute financial support and that he will display an ability and willingness to do so early in the courtship. Thus, the road to women and reputation that verifies a young Jamaican male's manhood, and the status that follows, is constrained for the man with uncertain income opportunities.

In contrast, while his finances are important in his native culture, relations with foreign women do not depend on his ability to provide income. Her interests in him are not predominantly financial. Thus, he is able to acquire the desirable "reputation" of being successful with women without the financial outlay necessary in his own culture. This empowers the men's relations with foreign women while at the same time changing his experience of power and dominance.

While tourism acts as a catalyst for these men to manipulate gender identity as a strategy for economic access, it also places them in a subordinate role to women, which is in conflict with their own gender ideals of male dominance. The independence and power the foreign woman enjoys from her financial means yields a control in the relationship that is inappropriate for Jamaican male aspirations. He chafes against her seemingly dominant position because despite the discus-



sions of male marginality (Smith 1956) and matrifocality (Gonzalez 1970), which refer to men's relationship within the domestic domain, his desire to be dominant in gender relations is intense. To maintain his reputation and avoid the appearance that the woman controls him, the Jamaican man without economic means continually seeks new ways to exhibit his dominion over women. During the tourist woman's holiday in Jamaica, the man has the power of local knowledge. He can control much of his female companion's circumstances in Jamaica, generally without her awareness. He actively stands as buffer between her and others who might influence her; he makes it clear that he "controls that thing" and a hands-off message is relayed to the other male hustlers. This, along with controlling the car she has rented and getting her to buy him material goods all exhibit his dominion over her.

In order to compete in his community for the status associated with a reputation for success with women, young men play off the features of masculinity available in their culture that have the greatest appeal to foreign women. For most foreign women these are associated with the male Rasta.

### *The Rasta Appeal*

The connection a Western woman develops with a Jamaican man is generally based on her idealizations of his embodiment of manhood, idealizations fueled by the discourse of hegemonic relations constructed through "race" in which the exotic and the erotic are intertwined (Said 1978). The exotic Other has been constructed as more passionate, more emotional, more natural, and sexually tempting. Stereotypes of black men and their sexuality, of nonWestern peoples, and real differences between the tourists' cultures and Jamaican culture promote the belief that Jamaican men represent the archetypal masculine. This is augmented by the men's displays of machismo drawn from their cultural gender scripts. These beliefs are held by Western women considered black as well as white, though black women may not be adhering to stereotypes of black men in general, but rather the black man who stands closer to his African heritage, in this case embodied in the Rasta identity. Though by no means exclusively, those men with dreadlocks who are assumed to be Rastafarian receive substantially more attention from foreign women than do Jamaican men without locks. Dreadlocks, "locks" or "dreads," are the result of letting hair grow naturally without cutting or combing.

In Jamaica, dreadlocks developed as a symbol of the spiritually based Rastafarian culture of resistance. Since the 1930s, they have represented "stepping out" of the dominant cultural and social system that enslaved the African and continues to denigrate that identity. Dreadlocks are symbolic of the strength of the lion, and signify pride in African heritage and represent strength, anything that is fearful. As such, dreadlocks represent a power source for the Rastafarian. They also symbolize a commitment to a natural way of life, unmediated by Western standards and vanities. Dreadlocks are but one element of a system of symbols that includes a distinctive use of the Jamaican lan-

guage, images of the lion, and displaying and wearing of the colors of red, gold, and green. Each of them are a "reflection of a form of resistance, linking these symbols to some concrete struggle among African peoples" (H. Campbell 1987:95).

Reggae music developed in this same manner as an expression of the Rastafarian spirituality and as a vehicle for spreading the message of resistance with an exhortation to the international community to "live up" to standards of interracial justice and peace. The penchant foreign women have for men with dreadlocks is fueled by the mystique associated with the dreadlock singers of the international reggae music culture who project an image of the Rastaman as a confident, naturally powerful, and especially virile man. During the late 1970s, Rastafarian musician Bob Marley was the first to achieve international recognition and subsequently succeeded in capturing the attention of counter-cultural people across the world. Reggae music, dreadlocks, and Rastafari became synonymous for much of the international community so that, following the model of Marley's success, reggae musicians increasingly grew their hair in locks and adopted the presentation of the powerful Rasta "lion." Through the years, the music has attracted millions of Westerners disaffected by their own cultures' systems of inequality and materialism, and enticed them to Jamaica. The pilgrimage to the roots of Rasta resistance climaxes each year in July with the music festival called Reggae Sunsplash.

Whether due to an agreement with the Rasta political philosophy and a desire to demonstrate lack of prejudice, or an attraction to the powerful masculinity projected by the Rastas, or both, men who assume the Rastafarian identity have proven to be particularly popular with the female European and American tourists with a lust for the exotic. Since the 70s, young men living in the tourism areas who grew their hair in dreadlocks have attracted special attention from foreigners in general and women in particular. Therefore, those men interested in trading with foreigners, whether selling handicrafts, or marijuana (associated with Rastas and an important tourism commodity), or generally acting as companions to ease the way for foreigners through the largely informal society, have increasingly styled themselves as Rastafarian. They "locks" their hair, speak in the Rasta dialect, and develop a presentation that expresses the Rastafarian emphasis on simplicity and living in harmony with nature, in effect, constructing a "staged authenticity" (MacCannell 1973). The man with locks picks up and elaborates on aspects of the stereotype of the exotic Other, enhancing the contrast between himself and Western men, thereby strengthening his appeal to the tourist women.

In turn, because these men with locks have increased contact with tourists, they become familiar with the foreign cultures, perhaps learning to speak a little German or developing an expertise for guessing what types of experiences the specific tourists are seeking. Hence, they become more accessible to the foreigner. Those foreigners in search of an authenticity associated with nonindustrialized society (Cohen 1979; MacCannell 1976) are attracted to the Rasta images and impressions of unity associated with them. The Jamaica Tourist Board has recently reinforced these impressions by using images of dreadlock musicians

singing Bob Marley's song "One Love" in the 1991 television advertisement for Jamaica.

Leed describes travel as a "stripping away of the subjectivity rooted in language and custom, allowing travelers to become acquainted with a common nature, fate, and identity that persist beneath the diversity of cultural types and ideals" (1991:218). That motivation for travel intersects in Jamaica with the philosophy of Rastafari, which has at its foundation an emphasis on that common identity and unity of spirit. The dread who approaches the tourist appears to offer travelers to Jamaica just that experience of "oneness."

A Rasta identity is attractive to the Jamaican man involved in the tourist hustle because it provides a model of masculinity that is not dependent upon disbursing cash. Rather, it developed around an articulation of the forces which prohibit the African-Jamaican man from achieving economic success. No one expects a Rastaman to be rich. He traditionally emerged from the ghettos of Kingston, and eventually took to the airwaves and concert stages to spread the Rasta message of African liberation. This is the chord Rasta has struck with thousands of men in Jamaica and throughout the African Diaspora, whether rural or urban, that is, its capacity to represent his experience and provide a definition of manhood in Afrocentric terms, thereby providing an alternative to the dominant ideology that places Eurocentric achievement of occupational success and money at the center of the status system. The political philosophy that developed out of the Rastafarian movement of the 1930s through the 1970s included in its critique of the system of oppression of Africans the manner in which the African man's identity is obscured by the Eurocentric ideology of gender and race. The Rastas went on to develop a response by articulating an identity that affirms the black man's dignity and provides a language of opposition to a social system that denies his experience and seeks to obliterate his reality.

### *Local Consequences*

While Rastafari appeals to many rural and urban young men, those who hustle tourists also see the opportunity for parlaying that identity into an opportunity to secure his fantasy of an emotional relationship and perhaps a more comfortable way of life. Furthermore, such relationships offer the young man with no economic means the avenue to the status associated with success with women, particularly among his new peer group of other hustlers.

Those men who circulate through the tourist spots—those who work with tourists and those who hope for the opportunity to talk to one—become the community that accords status and prestige to the young men whose ambitions are frustrated by a system of inequality. This peer group becomes increasingly significant for the hustler as locals shun him for dealing with foreigners and he faces the generalized and institutionalized discrimination of those with dreadlocks.

While gaining reputation for success with women, the hustler forfeits the respect of the larger community. Anyone who chooses to spend much time with foreigners is subject to criticism and censure from the

broader community for being "too much with white people." These men then become embroiled in a further opposition to cultural norms that hold that a man is not supposed to take money from a woman and are subject to persecution and shaming from others in the community. Locals ignore the nuances of the romance tourism relationship and consider the men prostitutes who are too lazy and irresponsible to work for a living. They are resented by many locals who work hard for measly wages while they watch the hustlers living luxuriously with tourist women.

The hustler's claim to be Rastafarian is viewed as superficial as he appropriates Rasta symbols for personal gain, yielding to the individualism of Eurocentric culture and failing to enter the spirituality of Rastafari, which repudiates material accumulation and participation in the system of exploitative lifestyles. His internalization of the material ethic that Rasta rejects and his willingness to achieve it by trading in his sexuality with foreign women places him in opposition to the Rastafarian critique of the political economy of Western Civilization.

Young men who sport dreadlocks while living among tourists have created ambiguity around the Rastafarian identity and the meaning of dreadlocks. As stated earlier, the term *rent-a-dread* evolved in Jamaica to refer to those men who are said to lock their hair in order to appeal to women tourists. When asked how one identifies a rent-a-dread, most locals will say something similar to, "Rasta is known by his works, his livity [manner of living]. If you see the guy around with a different white woman every week or so, then he is a rent-a-dread." The man responds from his cultural gender script for courting multiple women and, by professing his love for his companion will distinguish himself from a prostitute.

The hustler draws on the language of resistance of the Rastafarian culture to generate a response to his critics. He criticizes nonRastas for not repudiating the dominant system and ideology by becoming Rasta. The internal contradiction in this position reflects the ambivalence and multiple realities these men confront daily. Criticism from Rastas presents a more formidable challenge for the tourist hustler. His response will usually consist of an argument that Rasta means "One Love," and that Rasta does not subscribe to racial or color discriminations.

What the tourist generally does not understand is the context of origin of her particular "dread." Anyone with dreadlocks represents Rastafari for many foreigners who are unaware of its unique history and culture, or who fail to see its symbols as signifiers rather than the thing itself and who have had contact only with those who hustle tourists and claim the identity. Whereas to "locks" one's hair was formerly a dramatic declaration of opposition to the Western system of exploitation, it now can mark an intention to maximize one's position within that system. Nurturing this possibility requires making the most of the opportunities available so that some men maintain relationships with numerous women from different countries for years until one comes through with an airline ticket, or perhaps makes the decision to move to Jamaica herself and set up a household with her boyfriend.

*Beyond Romance*

Those who make a commitment to the romance tourism relationship find that romance turns the corner down the path of the hard work of getting along day after day in an intimate relationship between two people whose ideals and expectations have been formed in different cultures. If the women stay in Jamaica or take their boyfriends home with them, typecasts break down to personalities in the minutiae of everyday life. The relationship that extends beyond the casual vacation romance often loses its bloom and leads to disappointment and conflict. The fact that each partner has come to the relationship with a different agenda becomes more apparent as the economic dependency within the relationship becomes more evident.

The women, ignoring or ignorant of the conflicting purposes arising from such disparity of financial means, education, and exposure, are initially unaware of many of the dynamics underlying their relationships. Those who seek their ideal relationships eventually often feel used and disappointed by their partners who likely do not share their Western ideals of sexual equality. The following remarks by a German woman to her Jamaican boyfriend illustrates this attitude. "I came to meet you half-way to help you but you are still caught up in the resentment of the past between blacks and whites and you are not ready to meet me half-way."

Cast in the role of financial provider, the women may become enmeshed in an exchange relationship that did not define their initial impulses. These women often face insecurities about the man's commitment to her, fearing he might get involved with another woman who is in a better financial position to take care of him. Furthermore, if the woman decides to remain in Jamaica, unless she is independently wealthy, she may lose the financial advantages she brought to the relationship or grow weary of the economic demands placed on her. She will also learn that her "Rasta's" alienation within the community extends to her.

The challenges become even greater if the relationship moves to the tourist's country of origin where the man has little of the cultural capital needed to achieve the success he desires in Western society. The rural Jamaican man with little formal education is ill-prepared for the demands of making a living in the postindustrial society. With the man's role as culture-broker and tour guide no longer necessary, educational, age and racial differences which seemed inconsequential in the host country are magnified. His ability to contribute to the relationship in many ways has been diminished, and his difficulty in acculturation, learning the language and bureaucratic systems, as well as making a living, place further strains on the relationship. His "natural" persona may seem incongruous with the demands of life in the "artificial" North, and he will be judged by her family and friends without, or perhaps because of, his exotic backdrop. Furthermore, by traveling to the woman's country, the man loses what independence he had in his homeland and he leaves the peer group that verifies his exploits and provides him with reputation and status. Thus, he simultaneously loses the cultural rewards for his deeds while entering a greater dependency on the woman.

The economic relationship conjoined with an emotional one sometimes backfires on the man. While the relationship between a local man and a tourist woman may at first involve a substantial element of economic venture for the man, it also springs from his desire for his ideal emotional relationship with a "tender" woman. It is an intimate relationship involving all the inevitable issues of identity, connection, and power, compounded in this case by racial issues, cultural differences, and economic dependency. Unlike the sex/money prostitutes, the Jamaican male hustler whose own culture idealizes romantic love may be caught in his own emotional web. Emotional attachments develop; hopes and desires are at work. While the man may be seeking a way out through a foreign woman, he is also vulnerable to being a mere instrument in her search for authenticity.

Tourist women often seem fickle, turning from one man, met early in their stay in Jamaica, to another man they later meet and find more desirable. These Jamaican men must cope with the insecurity of the status of one who represents an ideal type. The premise of the initial attraction is often feigned. To the extent that he has modeled himself to match an ideal, the relationship is not based on her choice of him in particular.

Many of the men describe feeling used by foreign women, only important to them so long as the desire for an exotic liaison lasts, or merely the instrument for her to have a "brown baby" to display her liberal ideas. The instances of children from these liaisons are noticeable but not easily quantified. The men are subject to being left behind as the woman returns home or moves on to new adventures. One interviewee expresses this sentiment succinctly, "I don't like the influence of tourism and being chased by white women. I realize that I can be used by these women. They go home and after a few months you are nothing. You never hear from them again." One of the authors heard a man say to his foreign girlfriend, "You are too emancipated. You think because you have money and education you can come down here, buy everything and control man. But it can't work that way." When these resentments build, it is not uncommon for the man to resort to a common feature of his gender script for control over a woman and react with violence against the woman. This widespread use of the threat of violence by Jamaican men to maintain dominance is expressed in these lyrics of a popular song in Jamaica.

Me, me, no woman can rule me.  
 Now me is a man and me have me woman.  
 But if she try to rule me, me have contention.  
 She could get a broke foot and get a broke hand.  
 And me rule she, she no rule me.  
 If me tell her say A, she can't tell me B.  
 And if me lift up me hand you know she feel it (Shabba Ranks,  
 1990).

Relationship between the tourist and local resident is generally based on stereotypes, each having preconceived but not well formulated notions about the other and often dealing with each other not only as types, but as objects (Nash 1980). Over time, the subjectivity of the partners overwhelms the simple objectified models each hold of the

other. The disappointment from the failure of stereotypes to deliver their promise intrudes. The women often become dissatisfied with a partner with different ideas about loyalty and fidelity and who proves to aspire to the deluxe life-style that she believed him to refute as a Rastaman. The Jamaican who assumes that all tourists are wealthy may be disillusioned when he discovers that the object of his attentions is spending money freely in order to have a special vacation but is neither rich nor extravagant once the holiday is over.

## CONCLUSION

Dissatisfied with the confines of cultural norms and expectations, people are willing, even eager, to experiment with and rewrite gender scripts. The constraining and sacrificial (Gilmore 1990) nature of gender ideologies invites response and resistance. Tourism creates a social space ripe with possibilities for change through the interplay between conventional scripts and new ideas. In a unique conjunction of need, hope, and desire, the romance relationships between tourist women and local men serve to transform traditional gender roles across cultural boundaries, creating power relations distinctive from those existing in either native society.

In that gender identity is a relational construct, the Western women who seek to break from conventional roles require a different kind of relationship with men in order to realize a new gender identity. Yet, these women who seek more control in defining their relationship are simultaneously drawn to conventional notions of masculinity. Ideas about masculine power are central to the women's attraction to local men, in particular the "natural" Rasta. The women's own gender scripts include a sense of appropriateness of the dominant male from a dualistic conception of man/woman constructed on hierarchical power relations. The farther the women push the boundary of feminine conduct to incorporate qualities conventionally defined as masculine, the more they confront internalized ideas about masculine power. The need for contrast through which to construct their identity draws them to the aspect of masculinity most closely associated with dominance, partially reproducing the dichotomy of gender from their cultural scripts. The women are drawn to the strength, the potency of the masculine even as they experiment with the power they acquire through financial superiority.

Though not motivated by the search for a new gender identity *per se*, the men in these relationships manipulate their identity by expanding on features from their own cultural repertoire. However, the demands of the role they have adopted put them in contradiction with their gender ideals. Euro-American women bring economic superiority and ideas of female liberation that interact in complex ways with Jamaican men's tolerance of female economic independence, a tradition in their own culture (Mintz 1981, Roberts and Sinclair 1978, Safa 1986). Despite Jamaican women's economic independence, the predominance of female-headed households and notions of matrifocality, (Gonzalez, 1970, SES 1989) men are perceived to be dominant in Jamaican culture (Brody 1981, LaFont 1992, Moses 1981, Powell

1986). The Jamaican man's tolerance of female economic independence differs significantly from the subordinate position the man has entered into with the "affluent" tourist woman. While their cultural script includes a model for the independence of women, the Jamaican woman does not control the man's opportunities for economic success. However, the men involved in romance tourism are faced with new gendered power relations in which the women control access to the financial success the men want.

While both individuals have the capacity to exert their influence over the relationship in a given circumstance, the woman possesses the disproportionate power to define the situation and the Other himself. Such a situated, contextual analysis (Rhode 1990) as presented here verifies that "it is in these contexts of inequities of wealth and power that one finds transformations of the native self" that incorporate the "evaluation of the West" (Bruner 1991:247). The potential for that transformation and the extent of its accommodation to Western fantasies and expectations is exhibited by these men as they manipulate their identity to fit the tourist's desire for a "natural" man. The consequence of the tourists' power is the commodification of Rastafarian culture and gender itself. Thus, romance recapitulates the patriarchal structure of tourism (Enloe 1989) by reproducing the dominance relation in the encounter wherein tourism functions to fulfill desires of the tourist by subordinating local culture and interests even while the women seek to challenge patriarchal power.

This situation serves to illuminate the significance of economic status for dominance and refutes conventional notions of male hegemony. Control of economic resources provides either gender the opportunity for dominance, for holding little regard for the Other's experience, needs and feelings. Rather than the purview of men, dominance is rooted in various attributes such as economic power, physical strength, and personality characteristics that may reside with the man or the woman. Gender studies have shown that gender is not sex-linked. This study contributes to a reconception of gender (Keller 1989) by further disentangling power and dominance from sex (Ortner 1983).

The dynamics of these relationships also demonstrate that dominance and power are not static, but are shifting and situational, constantly negotiated and contested. As the partners in these relationships play off traditional social and gender repertoires, as well as the immediate circumstances of finance and cultural capital, the power in the relationship fluctuates between them "in relation to opposed sets of cultural values and established social boundaries" (Conway, Bourque and Scott 1989:29).

Travel offers new opportunities for women to liberate themselves from patriarchal authority relations and redefine "woman." People might celebrate as women break free of conventional constraints and gain power over their lives. However, the personal nature of these relationships may at first mask the social and historical dynamics of racial and economic hegemony embedded in them. Those social and economic inequities as well as beliefs and stereotypes each partner holds about the Other work to construct a relationship uncomfortably similar to the power relationship between the partners' respective socie-



ties. The agency has shifted from the characteristic nation-state and its transnational corporations to the intimately personal arena. Breaking taboos and challenging tradition open uncharted territories of social relations. The outcome is never certain and carries with it the possibility of reproducing much of what is being challenged. □ □

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