

CIRCUITS OF QUEER MOBILITY

Tourism, Travel, and Globalization

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While I was in Trinidad and Tobago in February 1998, a curious incident set off a series of conversations about the often tense relationships between the interests and effects of globalization and postcolonial gay and lesbian identities. After the Cayman Islands, a British territory, had refused docking privileges in December to a so-called gay cruise originating in the United States, several other Caribbean governments expressed the intention to refuse the same cruise ship and those that might follow. The local Caribbean media engaged in no editorial discussions or debates about the cruises but merely printed press releases from Reuters and other global wire services. Caribbean Cana-Reuters Press reported that, in the Bahamas, a ship with nine hundred gays and lesbians on a cruise arranged by the California-based Atlantis Events had become a “test for the tourist-dependent Caribbean islands after the Cayman Islands refused the ship landing rights.” Officials from the Cayman Islands said that gay vacationers could not be counted on to “uphold standards of appropriate behavior.”¹ Islanders had apparently been offended ten years earlier when a gay tour had landed and men had been seen kissing and holding hands in the streets. A U.S.-based gay rights organization now called on the British government to intervene. British prime minister Tony Blair did so and determined, in the case of the Cayman Islands (dubbed by *Out and About*, the leading gay and lesbian travel newsletter, the “Isle of Shame”), that codes outlawing gays and lesbians, many of which have descended from colonial legislation, breach the International Covenant of Human Rights and must be rescinded.² U.S. officials followed suit, insisting that human rights had been violated.³

I watched with confusion, hopeful that both former and current British possessions would tell Blair and the United States to mind their own business, but aware of my ambivalent solidarity with Caribbean activists.⁴ Some activists, rely-

ing on the profit motive to justify the presence of the cruises, commented that “anti-gay protests could be costly to the tourist economies of the Caribbean, a favorite playground for affluent gays.”⁵ However, many organizations decided not to issue an official response for fear of the local exposure and a backlash against individuals as well as against nascent gay and lesbian and AIDS-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that were barely surviving.⁶

The complexities of this incident posed for me the following questions: How is community created through and against such encounters? What are the differing constructions of global and local sexualities? How are these cruises part of the production of a global gay identity contested by postcolonial situations? Ironically, the United States and British states advocate protection for cruise ships in the Caribbean while granting no such rights when the cruise-goers return home. What are the roles of activists, human rights organizations, NGOs, national governments, multinational corporations, and ethnographers in mediating this conflict? These queries form the basis of my work on queer tourism.⁷

Paradigms of Tourism

The field of tourism studies includes only a handful of works examining gay and lesbian tourism, and most of them focus on industry and advertising trends; practices of gay and lesbian consumption remain undertheorized in queer theory.⁸ A number of articles, most of them authored by British academics, are heavily indebted to the use of space and place to understand the forces behind the market. Questions of public space and the disruption of heterosexuality through visible and mobile homosexuality are thus crucial to tracking a spatialized understanding of gay and lesbian tourism. Annette Pritchard, Nigel Morgan, and Diane Sedgely gravitate toward the concept of space and claim that gay and lesbian tourists demonstrate the potential for the disruption of public space as well as query the production of public space itself.⁹ Visibility politics supply much of the force of certain forms of gay and lesbian travel. As David Alport, coeditor of *Out and About*, has stated, “What we encourage, and what our mandate has always been, is about traveling openly as gay.”¹⁰ Thomas Roth of Community Marketing, a company whose yearly surveys provide demographic profiles to the gay and lesbian tourism industry, similarly claims that demographic research will continue to “help open more doors around the world for gay and lesbian travelers and provide a warmer, more friendly experience wherever we travel. Many are closeted, or come from repressive families, communities or societies. At least during our vacations, we should be free to be ourselves in a welcoming environment.” Pritchard,

Morgan, and Sedgely claim that “gay people have long traveled for recreation and often to escape intolerance,” and a mandate on out-of-the-closet travel would be congruent with such a claim.¹¹

Howard Hughes extends the relationship between travel and gay identity by noting that leisure activity is an important facet of the construction of individual identity, and he expands on the notion of a “holiday” by stating that “there is a great deal of congruence between homosexual identity and ‘tourism.’ The acceptance of a homosexual identity is often dependent upon the act of being ‘a tourist,’ at least in the limited sense of travel.” Describing gay venues as pull factors, while push factors include the “exclusion from ‘normal’ society,” Hughes writes:

Given that the fulfillment or achievement of gay identity often involves travel and is thus, in practice, a variation of tourism, it may be argued that the search for gay identity is itself conceptually a form of tourism. A man may live and work in what is basically a heterosexual society and visit “the resort” of gay society in his leisure time.

In sum, Hughes argues that “holidays facilitate the construction of a homosexual identity” and that “much of the search for a homosexual identity necessarily involves travel and is analogous to tourism . . . even though not involving holiday-taking.” Hughes continues to claim that “tourism and being gay are inextricably linked. . . . because of the social disapproval of homosexuality many gay men are forced to find gay space.”¹²

The popular press tends to emphasize the dangers of traveling. In an article titled “Fantasy Islands? Tropical Destinations Where We’re Welcome and Where We Are Not,” John Webb states that “beneath the surface of an ideal tropical paradise can exist less-than-ideal attitudes. . . . Recent violent incidents have turned up more trouble spots in paradise.” The *Advocate* ran cover stories in July 1999 under such headlines as “Travel Warnings: The Dangers That Gay and Lesbian Tourists Face on Vacation” and “Travel Havens: Open Arms Abroad: Where Gay Visitors Are Welcome.” The first of these articles stated that “a series of . . . rather ugly incidents involving gay tours and *hostile natives* has been reported in Central America and the Caribbean.” More recently, the *New York Blade*’s special issue “Flights of Fancy” featured articles titled “Playing It Safe: Gay Tourists Can Learn How to Avoid Danger Wherever They Go,” “Shanghai Surprise: Gay Tourists Discover a Chinese City with a Rebellious Spirit,” and “You’re Soaking in It: Centuries-Old Baths Help Travelers Absorb Budapest’s Gay Culture.”¹³

Additionally, the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association

(IGLTA) has “officially condemned Jamaica” as “the worst destination in the Caribbean,” a judgment rendered not only because of the government’s ban on homosexuality and the state-sanctioned violence toward homosexuals but because of a church protest against a Village People performance scheduled to take place in March 1997.¹⁴ Other homophobic sites commonly referenced include Afghanistan, Bavaria, Brazil, Colombia, Iran, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru.¹⁵ So, on the one hand, there is the disruption of heterosexual space and, on the other, the use of the exotic to transgress; in this case, the exotic is signaled by discourses of homophobia. Thus the gay and lesbian tourism industry is indebted to the culturally constructed homophobia of another place, one that is intrinsic to the framework of modernity and that enables, rather than deflects, tourist interest as well as fantasies of sexual transgression.¹⁶

Popular literature on queer travel focuses primarily on where to go, how to go there, and how to access gay-friendly accommodations and entertainment scenes—in other words, on the evaluating of a gay-friendly destination. Less has been written about the impact of such tourism on the sites visited. Future analyses might examine how a nation becomes a destination for gay and lesbian tourists through the industry’s marketing as well as the nation’s own; how, in the face of the nation’s marketing as a gay-friendly destination, local homo/sexual cultures are affected by queer tourism; how (global) tourism affects (local) sexualities; and how (local) sexualities are perceived by (global) tourism.

Mapping the Industry

Travel agents should position their agency as “gay-friendly.” This alone will make prospective customers feel more welcome. Simple gestures like a rainbow flag on the desk is [*sic*] a good start.
—Community Marketing, “‘A Place for Us,’ 2001: Tourism Industry Opportunities in the Gay and Lesbian Market”

Organized gay tours were started in the 1950s by Hanns Ebensten, commonly hailed as the grandfather of gay travel. In *Volleyball with the Cuna Indians* Ebensten elaborates the complexities of traveling as gay in a situation with North American gay male travelers in the Galapagos Islands who wondered about banners lettered in the Cuna language:

The illiterate Cuna boatmen could not tell us what the banners said and did not seem to understand their purpose; they welcomed us as cheerfully as always and laughed and joked and stowed our luggage and set off with

us. It was only when we reached the Island of Oro that Roy [the tour guide] explained that the banners, which we had assumed to bear expressions of welcome, said something to the effect of “PERVERTS GO HOME!” and had been lettered by the Baptist missionaries . . . who had been told about the nature of our groups.¹⁷

Today over three hundred travel providers run such trips. The early 1990s are described as the golden age of the gay and lesbian tourism industry by travel providers, who ascribe this to the so-called gay marketing moment, when “coming out” meant coming out in terms of purchasing power. Alport also claims that the genealogy of domestic, site-specific gay tourism, particularly for men, was fueled by the AIDS crisis and the subsequent popularization of gay men’s circuit parties. An estimated 5–25 million gays and lesbians (note the wide range) spend more than \$10–17 billion on travel products every year.¹⁸ Revenues for Olivia Cruises and Resorts surged from \$1.5 million in 1990 to nearly \$6.0 million in 1996, with cruises nearly always filled to capacity. Similarly, RSVP, which arranges cruises for men, has reported consistent annual increases since the early 1990s. Both of these successes came even though most cruise companies experienced major downturns in the early 1990s.¹⁹ Twelve hundred gay and gay-friendly travel agencies are affiliated with the IGLTA. *Out and About* has ten thousand subscribers, each paying \$49 a year.²⁰

In the fall of 1999 I attended the annual Gay and Lesbian World Travel Expo, a gathering of tour operators and other gay and lesbian tourism promoters, in both New York and San Francisco (figs. 1–2). Most attendees were indeed white, gay, and male, though mixed in age (interestingly, the crowd in San Francisco was much more diverse than in New York), and most tourist ventures catered either to gay male or to cogender populations. The variety of tourist offerings was immense. Every destination toured by heterosexual populations was available, in some form, to gay and lesbian consumers. Alongside the well-worn domestic hot spots and gay history walking tours in New Orleans; New York; San Francisco; Seattle; Washington, D.C.; and Savannah, Georgia, more recently concocted travel options included cruises for gay and lesbian parents and their children; an International Gay Spirit Retreat to Crete, a location that becomes “a playground for your body, a spa for your soul”; “Madiba 2000” tours for gays and lesbians of African descent to South Africa, billed as the only cultural tours following the footsteps of Nelson Mandela; and a pornography cruise for gay men called Pillage and Plunder, which left Tampa in December 2000.²¹ Mi Casa Su Casa is an international gay and lesbian home exchange service. A tour operator called “Family

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 Open to the Public 4pm to 8pm • Admission \$5 Includes a Free Raffle Ticket

MONTREAL

Fri. Oct. 8 at Hotel Des Gouverneurs
 1415 St. Hubert St. (at St. Catherine)
 Open to the Public 3pm to 8pm
 at Black & Blue registration: Free Admission

SAN FRANCISCO

Tue. Oct. 12, at the Argont Hotel
 50 Third Street (at Market)
 Open to the Public 4pm to 8pm
 Admission \$5 Includes a Free Raffle Ticket

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Figure 1. 1999 Gay and Lesbian World Travel Expo ad, gay male version. Courtesy Community Marketing, Inc.

TAG Presents the **7th International** **Gay & Lesbian World Travel Expo**

Benefitting the **AIDS/HIV Nightline**

SAN FRANCISCO
 Tue. Oct. 12 at the Argent Hotel
 50 Third Street (at Market)
 Open to the Public 4pm to 8pm
 Admission \$5 Includes Free Raffle Ticket

NEW YORK
 Thu. Sept. 16 at Metropolitan Pavilion
 110 W. 19th St. (between 6/7th Ave.)
 Open to the Public 4pm to 8pm
 Admission \$5 Includes Free Raffle Ticket

MONTRÉAL
 Fri. Oct. 8 at Hotel des Gouverneurs
 1415 St. Hubert St. (at St. Catherine)
 Open to the Public 3pm to 8pm
 Free Admission

Sponsors: AA American Airlines, Lufthansa, FRANCE, The "Fun Ships" of Carnival, Family Abroad, gaytravelnews.com, Curve, DAMRON, OUR WORLD, FULL, francisco, genre, algnny, VICE, creampuff MAGAZINE, METROSOURCE, TRAVEL WEEKLY, IGE Proud Member Since 1999

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Figure 2. 1999 Gay and Lesbian World Travel Expo ad, lesbian version. Courtesy Community Marketing, Inc.

Abroad,” voted best gay and lesbian operator by *Out and About* for its “solid gay-family travel values,” sponsors trips that not only use gay-owned and gay-friendly hotels, restaurants, bars, and other facilities but feature meetings with gay and lesbian activists and organizations in the specified destinations, including Brazil, the Caribbean, Costa Rica, Egypt, Russia, Southeast Asia, Tunisia, and Turkey. (Many of these destinations are ones from which the United States has offered asylum based on sexual orientation for queers who have left them, though this contradiction is reductive if not contextualized within complex asylum processes and through the vastly different spaces available to queer subjects, depending on their class, race, gender, and nation.)

While South Africa and Fiji are the latest “hot” destinations for gay and lesbian tourists, because they are touted as the only two countries where gays and lesbians are protected by constitutional antidiscrimination provisions, the official tourist offices of France, Germany, Great Britain, and Puerto Rico were present at the expo, as well as the tourism bureaus of the province of Quebec; Montreal; Palm Springs, California; and Berlin, all with literature addressing gays and lesbians.²² (The Netherlands was the first country to have a gay-specific marketing program.) The shift in directionality is significant: initially, gays and lesbians promoted and marketed themselves to certain venues; now more venues market themselves to gays and lesbians. A second shift is also occurring, from corporate interests in courting gay and lesbian consumers to national interests in doing so, that is, from targeted promotion on the part of airlines and hotels to promotion on the part of tourist boards. Finally, in the last three years, the gay and lesbian tourism industry has focused primarily on expanding the market from domestic to international destinations, particularly ones outside North America, Europe, and Australia.

Practices of Consumption

The gay and lesbian community has more disposable income, and has a propensity for travel. There is a trend toward more diversified travel experiences, and this—combined with discretionary income and a greater variety of options—puts the gay market in a league of its own.
—Community Marketing, “‘A Place for Us,’ 2001”

The premise of “out” travel signaled by “out” consumption has been clearly distilled since the growth of the early 1990s. Yet a crucial distinction has emerged in the niche now called “gay and lesbian tourism” between being a gay traveler and travel-

ing as gay, though the demarcation is rarely stable. Tour companies such as RSVP and Olivia Cruises and Resorts seek to offer a gay or lesbian experience—an experience, in other words, of traveling as gay—by creating a gay or lesbian community. Group and individual tours organized for gay and lesbian tourists do the same. But far and away the greatest source of revenue from gay travel is independent travel—gay and lesbian travelers who organize their own agendas and itineraries but want access to gay-friendly tour operators, hotels, and local gay and lesbian populations and haunts—in other words, nearer the gay-traveler end. The two trends that most vex the *Out and About* mandate on gay and lesbian mobility and travel are the use of the Internet and the push toward high-end, educational, international travel. The Internet is projected as the element that will continue to alter how gays and lesbians travel. Due to the relative anonymity of Internet use, travelers may access information without outing themselves, while networks of wider and wider reach enable even casual travelers to hook into gay and lesbian communities around the world. High-end, educational, global travel attempts to distinguish itself from the implicit sex tourism of cruises and circuit parties by offering “the discerning gay traveler” an opportunity to learn about gay culture overseas. As the brochure for a group tour offered by Family Abroad states: “Don’t think that all gay trips are centered around your sexual orientation. Our vacations allow you to celebrate your sexual orientation, but they also allow you the freedom to forget about it entirely.”

By being so out that they can be in, “discerning gay travelers” may well be cosmopolitan variants of Hughes’s gay tourist (and this universal cosmopolitan queer subject is then, interestingly, a closeted one). Given this range of possible visions of invisibility, visibility, and mobility, who are gay and lesbian tourists, and are new community configurations forming through emerging tourist projects? The collection of statistics on gay and lesbian consumers obviously reflects the problematics of outing, closeting, naming, and marking identities. Yet some widely held assumptions draw the tourism industry to gay and lesbian consumers as an important market. These assumptions constitute an upscale profile: according to the Simmons Market Research Bureau survey of the gay market in 1992, 40 percent hold college degrees, 7 percent hold doctoral degrees, and the median income is \$51,300, almost twice the national average. These statistics also present an interesting link between leisure time and mobility: because fewer than 5 percent of gay men have children, they are considered to have more time and thus to travel more. According to Community Marketing, gay couples travel 4.5 times a year, compared to “a straight average of one trip.” During the New York Gay Games in 1994, the average visitor was thirty-eight and male, most probably white, with an income of at least \$65,000.²³

More recent statistics from Community Marketing suggest that the gay and lesbian travel market constitutes about 10 percent of the U.S. travel industry, generating \$54.1 billion a year. Community Marketing's 2001 survey confirms the high discretionary income of gay and lesbian tourists due to their having few or no children or attendant financial responsibilities and claims that this group is about 50 percent DINKs (dual income, no kids). The survey also claims that gays and lesbians travel more frequently and spend more money per trip, compared to the national average, and that they have revitalized a flagging cruise industry (20 percent had taken cruises, compared to the national average of 2 percent).²⁴

Much more can be said about the statistical evidence generated by marketing organizations that are a part of and also shape a representational profile of gay and lesbian tourism. M. V. Lee Badgett has written how heavily these statistics are skewed toward gay magazine readers who have completed higher levels of education and earn more than most gay people, when in actuality lesbians earn less than straight counterparts and gay men may well earn less than heterosexual men. Gay male couples may have more disposable income than heterosexual couples only because of gender discrimination in the marketplace, not because gay men earn more (i.e., because of gender discrimination in the marketplace, two men together will have a higher combined income than a man and a woman).²⁵ However, as I assume bias in such materials, I am less concerned about the validity of statistical information per se. Most interesting for my purposes are the claims derived from market analysis and data, in this case the increasingly common claims to cosmopolitanism that are signaled by income, education, and desires for "more diversified travel experiences." Community Marketing states not only that 88 percent of the gay tourism market is college graduates (compared to the national average of 29 percent) but that 54 percent had taken an international vacation in 2000 (45 percent in 1999), six times the national average of 9 percent, and that 89 percent hold valid passports, more than three times the national average of 29 percent. Furthermore, the growth in international travel is expected to continue to rise (the greatest increases are projected to be in trips to South Africa [304 percent], New Zealand [262 percent], Finland [212 percent], Australia [211 percent], Brazil [172 percent], and South Pacific islands [165 percent]); visits to domestic locations will decrease. Community Marketing reinforces its conclusions about the "Recession-Resistant" gay and lesbian market by stating, "Gay travelers, who hold over three times as many passports as their mainstream counterparts, think nothing extraordinary of going to London for a weekend of theatre, or to a party for a week in Sydney."²⁶ Cosmopolitan queerness is thus indebted, in part, to its

mobility. What signals as transgressive is not just the right to sexual expression but the right to mobility through that sexual expression.

In light of these statistics about the affluent, cosmopolitan gay consumer, much of the binaried discussion on queer consumption has centralized questions of queer visibility: either visibility achieved through the marketplace is politically suspect, or visibility in the marketplace is a sign of progress in the realm of acceptability, where visibility is assumed to be generically and equally available to everyone and, as such, can be either unequivocally hailed or rejected outright.²⁷ In an extreme example in this debate Edward Ingebretsen expresses outrage that queer politics has been sold out by consumption practices:

Marketplace phenomena, such as gay window advertising, reflect the extent to which the commercialization of same-sex desire permits marginalized or stigmatized forms of sexual behavior literally to sell their way into consumer culture. This reverse accommodation, economically managed, effectively undercuts any political gain that might arguably accrue around such increasing visibility. . . . Market politics, then, dangerously reconstitutes the pre-Stonewall closet.²⁸

Contrast the selling-into–selling-out paradigm offered by Ingebretsen with the candid ideological and economic split driven by the free-floating capitalist market and expressed by representatives of Miami Beach, which hailed itself as the “gay and lesbian destination of the nineties!” “It’s not an ideological or political thing at all,” said José Lima, a spokesman for the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau. “It’s about hard dollars.” Miami Beach mayor Seymour Gelber added: “Gays pay like everyone else. We’re glad they’re here.”²⁹

Apparently, the mistake is to assume that this kind of consumption power is not a sign of queer liberation. But another crucial mistake is implicit in such an assumption. It is one thing to problematize visibility by noting that only certain queers can participate in certain moments of queer visibility through consumption as dictated by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and nation. Ingebretsen’s framework, however, renders viable only a political queer subject that narrates itself outside the privileges of consumption power and not through them; such a framework effaces other axes of identity. Consumption is read through queerness, but not vice versa.

Shifting Rubrics: Queering Tourism

What subjects are visible as tourists when one expands the rubric to encompass more than the statistical gay consumer dogged by political dubiousness? What queer tourist practices do not appear at the expos, for example, the tourist infrastructures underpinning the practices of sex reassignment surgeries, cross-dressing holidays, and women's music festivals, like the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival?³⁰ Extending the rubric of gay and lesbian tourism can redress the bias of much of the literature on consumption and queer identity that is based on U.S. and European identity politics. Furthermore, there has been little extended analysis of queer consumption in transnational contexts and no suggestive tracking of the emergence of queer consumers globally through the neoliberal globalization of consumption. In fact, Ingebretsen claims that the overdetermined use of consumption practices in political expression is what differentiates Western queerness from non-Western queerness. This claim again posits an uncontaminated pure originary and an inherently political sexual subjectivity outside consumption habits.

Discussions of gay and lesbian tourism have not yet been contextualized in terms of neocolonialism in large part because the venues focused on are still mainly in North America and Europe. However, this situation does not address the fact that gay venues in North America and Europe are still understood to be producing primarily positive, liberatory disruptions of heterosexual space, unexamined in terms of racial, class, and gender displacements. It is one thing to state that heterosexuality is assumed in space, quite another to proclaim space inherently heterosexual. While it is predictable that the claiming of queer space is lauded as the disruption of heterosexual space, rarely is this disruption seen as a disruption of racialized, gendered, and classed spaces, nor is it seen in tandem with a claiming of class, gender, and racial privilege as well. The term *gay ghetto*, for example, is an awkward, troubling appropriation of an urban metaphor most closely associated with racial communities, particularly since gay neighborhoods in no way resemble, in class or commodification practices, the impoverished, demonized spaces of ethnic enclaves. In this regard, fleshing out the distinctions between heterosexuality and heteronormativity is critical.³¹

So, what might a transnational analysis of queer consumption address? What would a mapping of the neoliberal queer consumer look like? Inderpal Grewal suggests that a combination of the liberalization of national markets and the multicultural multinational contributes to the emergence of child consumers in India (in relation to Indian Barbie), and M. Jacqui Alexander's work on tourism lays out a critical understanding of the effects of nationalism and globalization; in

some ways her analysis hints at the differences between cultural and economic globalization as crudely defined and mapped out by the state.³² A reentrenchment of reheterosexualizing cultural nationalism happens in response to globalization, yet (exploitative) tourist ventures are allowed to permeate the nation's boundaries.

In this vein, one can implicate not just gay and lesbian cruisegeers, who are then targeted as sellouts, but queer activists and queer ethnographers, whose sexual and tourist practices are often obscured by the rubric of work that is juxtaposed with the pleasure-seeking ventures of those cruisegeers.³³ The problematization of the sellout paradigm is most evident in the increasingly visible mobility of queers of color as they navigate not just sexualized but postcolonial and racialized spaces. For example, "queer diasporas" are maintained as privileged sites of sexuality through travel and tourist practices, most notably through the Queer Diasporic Return to Homeland (and vice versa).³⁴ This includes not only trips from the diaspora to the diasporic origins organized by queer groups in the United States such as Trikone, a Bay Area-based organization for South Asian gays and lesbians, but, more pointedly, returns to visit family; to rediscover and/or reinforce culture; to reacquaint oneself with tradition, especially by locating queer heritage and connection; and, most important, somehow to be queer or to negotiate a queer self in the homeland.

This rethinking is especially trenchant because queers of color are often not represented in the industry literature but, rather, are invoked through the specter of the native, the other, the "Third World"; in other words, they are the bodies most displaced by these emerging forms of queer global capital and consumption, as well as the ones most available for consumption as the fetishized queer other. A culturally defined and driven homophobia does not, after all, deflect the lure of an exotic (queer) paradise; instead, it encourages a continuity of colonial constructions of tourism as a travel adventure into uncharted territory laden with the possibility of taboo sexual encounters, illicit seductions, and dangerous liaisons—a version of what Renato Rosaldo terms "imperial nostalgia."³⁵ Thus the desire to be free of homophobia comes up against the primitive vision of the tourist imaginary of an unspoiled, undiscovered paradise, while fantasies of sexual fluidity of preidentity, precapitalist, premodern times conjoin nicely with the tourist agenda, leaving intact a queer modern-versus-primitive native binary.

In contrast, the images of queer nationals in the advertising materials generated by national tourist boards suggest how gay and lesbian "inclusion" in the nation is imagined. Brochures from the British Tourist Authority and the French Government Tourist Office are, predictably, dominated by white, middle- to upper-class males involved in consumption and cruising, their bodies juxtaposed against

national monuments, flags, and rainbow colors.³⁶ In the face of legislative and social inequality, these representations also suggest national queer identities that have the most currency overseas while still functioning as liabilities at home (in fact, I have not been able to confirm that these brochures are actually available in their respective countries). The two overlapping arenas addressed by these images are the global economy and human rights discourses (see figs. 3–10). Thus one concern to map out is the conjunction between queerness and nationalism that often seems to result from certain recuperations and rewritings of queerness into ethnic and national identity (recuperations by both the nation and the queer, and even by the queer diasporic or racialized subject). What nations promote gay and lesbian tourism? Through such promotion, what nations are constructed? Addressing the question of who promotes which national spaces—the promotion of Barcelona by the gay and lesbian tourism industry versus the promotion of Barcelona by the Spanish tourist boards—is one example of the comparative work that needs to be done.

Finally, the dearth of lesbian tourist accounts and research could be linked to differences in gendered relations to globalization and tourism. The statistics on gender are buried on page 16 of Community Marketing's report, perhaps because they are so stark, though hardly surprising: a "Snapshot of Survey Participants" suggests that 94 percent of gay and lesbian travelers are, in fact, just gay, while only 6 percent are lesbian. There are no statistics on ethnicity or race.³⁷ In gay and lesbian tourist literature in general, women are signified primarily as white consumers and also, through their absence, as colored, nativized, "Third World" service providers. Do conventional narratives of (queer) tourism reinscribe lesbian invisibility? Does queer tourism itself, as an industry, a practice, and a spatial understanding of capitalism and identity, reinscribe lesbian invisibility? In addition to the well-known Olivia Cruises and Resorts, Club Skirts's lesbian circuit parties, and Mariah Wilderness Expeditions, how do lesbians travel, and which lesbians travel? How can we gender the emerging literature on queer tourism and muddle the presumed boundaries between gay men's travel and lesbians' travel?

One way to tease out the differential mobilities of queer subjects is to foreground the relationship of tourism and travel to constructions of home. The ambivalence of the notion of home plays out in several ways. For example, home that is not a refuge for queers needs to be escaped. Alternatively, home is often recreated for diasporic queers who seek connections to more than one national space by fostering narratives of home through the homeland, that is, by reclaiming their sexuality from the past. In this instance home continues to be a place of refuge, and flight from the family is still a very Western expectation. For women, espe-

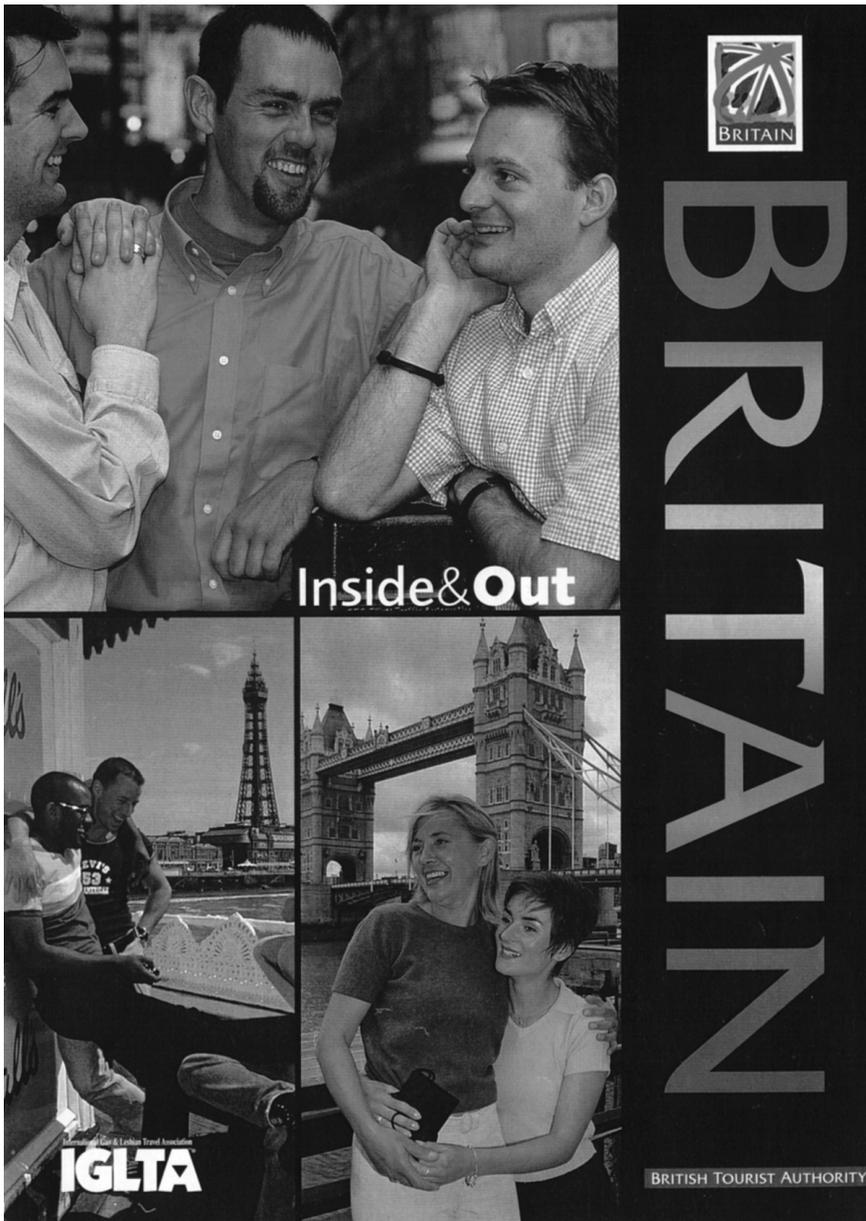


Figure 3. The cover of *Britain: Inside and Out*, produced by the British Tourist Authority. The two women appear again in the brochure, functioning as the only lesbian representations in it. Courtesy British Tourist Authority

SEE **LONDON**
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Create your own shopping trip, flying with British Airways and choosing from hundreds of special accommodations, sightseeing and car rental options. For example, stay in an elegant Town House Hotel from \$115 including continental breakfast. Shop for treasures with a tour of Sunday Morning Street Markets and Greenwich for \$67. Explore in your own rental car for just \$19 per day.
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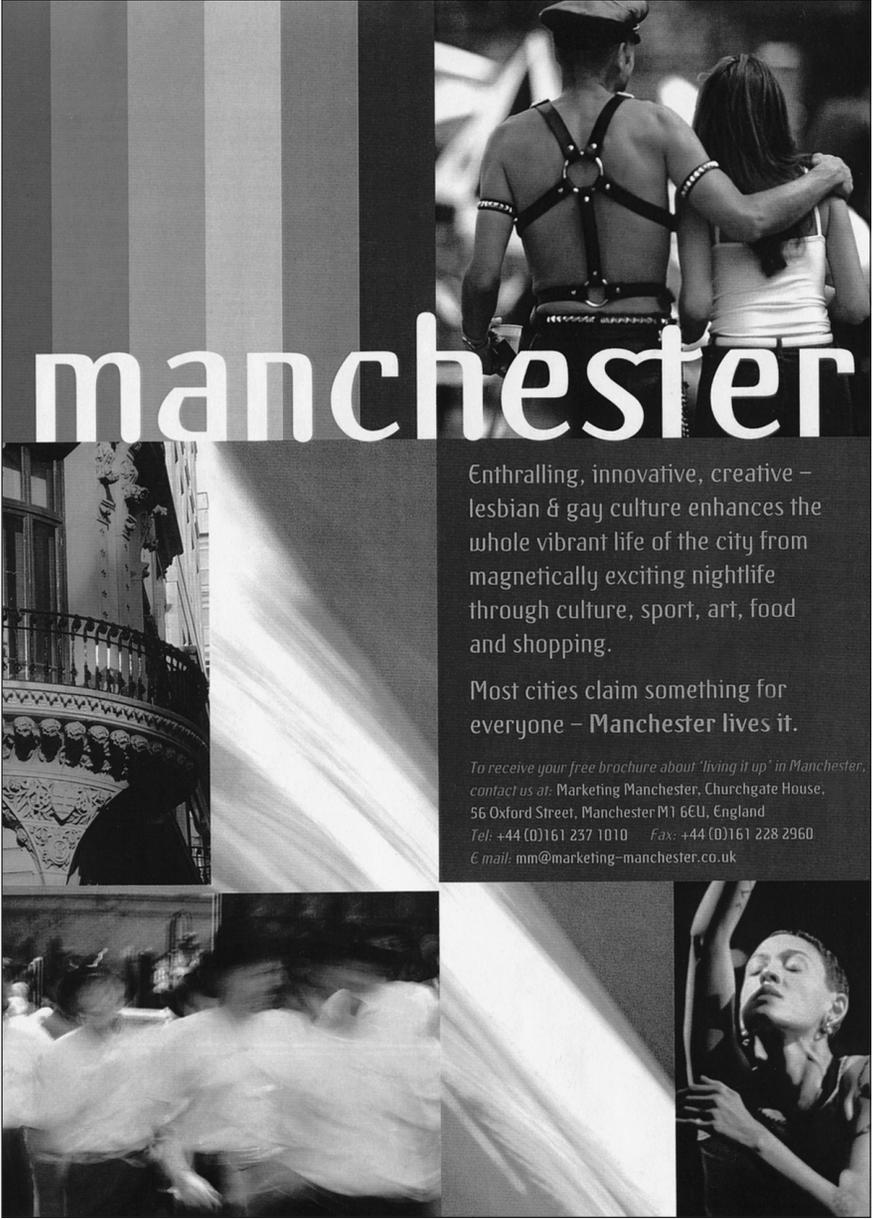
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our website at www.gaybritain.org

LONDON 

IGLTA



Figure 4. “See London Inside and Out.” British Tourist Authority ad featuring gay men shopping at a Herbie Frogg boutique. Courtesy British Tourist Authority



manchester

Enthralling, innovative, creative – lesbian & gay culture enhances the whole vibrant life of the city from magnetically exciting nightlife through culture, sport, art, food and shopping.

Most cities claim something for everyone – Manchester lives it.

*To receive your free brochure about 'living it up' in Manchester, contact us at: Marketing Manchester, Churchgate House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6EU, England
Tel: +44 (0)161 237 1010 Fax: +44 (0)161 228 2960
E mail: mm@marketing-manchester.co.uk*

Figure 5. Manchester. British Tourist Authority ad. Manchester has the most extensive gay and lesbian advertising campaign in Britain. Courtesy British Tourist Authority



BRITAIN'S the place



See insider scenes and out-of-the-ordinary sights

You're looking for a heart-stopping adventure. One with upbeat scenes set inside the gay and lesbian community. And offbeat sights staged way out of the ordinary travel plan. Britain's the place that welcomes you with open arms and open-ended diversity.

You'll meet new friends in a rainbow of bars, pubs and clubs, and during pride and cultural festivals throughout Britain. You'll kick back in comfortable accommodations, from gay guest houses and bed & breakfasts to posh flats, luxury hotels, and grand manor houses, halls and inns.

Sharpen traditional sightseeing with a new perspective, whether traveling alone, with a friend or as part of a gay and lesbian tour. Visit places like London's Soho and Mayfair

where Oscar Wilde not only wrote plays but also played a famous role in the artistic community — and Sissinghurst Castle Gardens where Vita Sackville-West entertained Virginia Woolf. Spend a day seeing Bath, with its elegant Georgian crescents, circles and avenues built above an ancient Roman spa.

Shop for style, from boutiques to antiques. Dine with pleasure, from haute cuisine to pub fare. Visit palaces and castles. Take in the theater. Go out to the country.

Feel the surge of energy. Sense the familiar and the foreign. Experience the best of the past and the best of the present. Britain's the place to plan the adventure of the millennium. You'll take home a thousand vivid memories.

Top: Buckingham Palace.
Left: Montague Hotel - London.

Figure 6. "Britain's the Place to Be Out." British Tourist Authority ad featuring Buckingham Palace superimposed with rainbow lettering. Courtesy British Tourist Authority

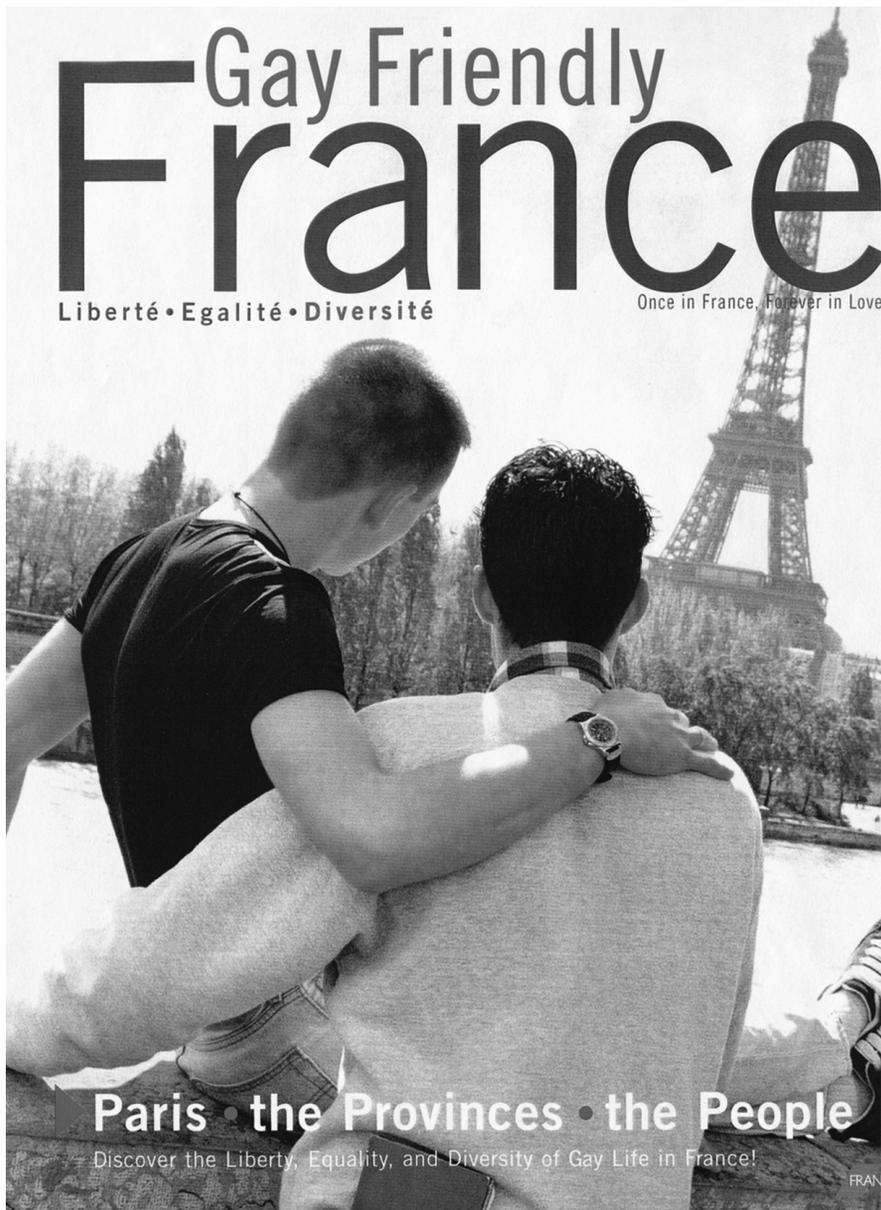


Figure 7. “Gay Friendly France: Discover the Liberty, Equality, and Diversity of Gay Life in France! Once in France, Forever in Love.” French Government Tourist Office ad featuring two men embracing in front of the Eiffel Tower. Courtesy French Government Tourist Office



Figure 8. French boy in front of the French flag—a queer national. Courtesy French Government Tourist Office



Figure 9. The queer national economy of France. French Government Tourist Office ad featuring two white men and one black man, in an inverted triangle, wearing briefs with the colors of the French flag, in front of a rainbow flag. Courtesy French Government Tourist Office

A Trick or the Real Thing?
France offers romance,
the rest is up to you.

Do you know the difference between a slow cruise on the Seine and a fast cruise in the Marais?
 Do you know how to ask for directions when you're lost, and how to ask for directions when you're not lost?
 Do you know any other country that's proud to call its capital "Gay?"
 Do you know how to speak French with your eyes and a smile?

Do you know just how warm and welcoming France really is?

For more information, and to receive *Liberté, Egalité, Diversité*, the gay-friendly France brochure, please call the French Government Tourist Office at (410) 286-8310.
 Or visit our website: www.francetourism.com
 or email: info@francetourism.com

Once in FRANCE, forever in Love.

Figure 10. "A Trick or the Real Thing? France offers romance, the rest is up to you." French Government Tourist Office ad featuring two white gay men at a bar. Courtesy French Government Tourist Office

cially emigrants, leaving home is far more vexed than for men. Lesbian creation of homes suggest how some use leisure time to domesticate sexuality and sexual practices at one extreme (which intersects uneasily with family-values rhetoric, nationalist diasporic configurations, problematic adoptions, and normative familial setups, in essence transnationalizing home and reenacting a form of problematic parochialism). However, lesbian travel and tourism may also be mapped with interesting transnational links through queer and feminist global activist networks, that is, through women's work spaces.³⁸

Activist-Tourist Collaborations

One of the most interesting options I came across at the expos was an “educational” tour titled “Ultimate India,” the first gay and lesbian trip to India. “Limited to a small, select group of gay travelers,” this twenty-one-day “odyssey” costs an exorbitant \$7,650: not only does it include “several dinners in private homes,” but the accompanying guest lecturer, Ashok Row Kavi, is billed as “an academician fluent in the culture, history and politics of his native country and the chairman of the National Gay Organization of India.”³⁹ The choice of Row Kavi as host and tour guide may represent a curious extension of the nationalist projects underpinning any tourist venture. While he has been hailed as the father of the gay and lesbian movement in India, Row Kavi has also been heavily criticized for his apparent support of Hindu nationalist politics in India. For his own part, he has informed me that he was approached by Coda International Tours, which had seen his profile on the Internet, and has stated that his interest in the venture was motivated primarily by its divergence from the sex tour genre of travel. “If this ever becomes like Thailand, that’s when I’m out of this,” he states.⁴⁰

This example is striking for several reasons, not the least of which is that the positioning of Row Kavi resonates with the practice, initiated by global NGOs, of giving awards to gay and lesbian activists prominent in the “Third World.” Increasingly, high-end gay and lesbian tourist ventures use contacts with gay and lesbian NGOs in other countries as a selling point. What new queer politics are emerging through tourism, and what tourist practices are emerging from global gay and lesbian activism? While gay and lesbian tourist projects have a long involvement with human rights and citizenship struggles, from the boycotting of Colorado’s ski industry in the early 1990s because of the state’s antigay initiatives to the call to boycott United Airlines for its refusal to provide domestic partnership benefits to employees, a more current development involves trips organized around the concept of “queer solidarity” with gays and lesbians from other countries.⁴¹ It is important to attend to the class politics of these forms of queer global organizing, and one way to do so is to situate touristic practices in the middle of such transnational efforts to achieve solidarity. Rome’s World Pride in July 2000 was an exquisite example of “selling liberation” and of the confluences between organizing and tourism. The IGLTA and the International Gay and Lesbian Association worked side by side to promote the event to activists, tourists, and activist-tourists alike by focusing on “bringing in” gay and lesbian activists from the “Third World” while “selling” World Pride to the “First World.”⁴² Other examples include activist trips such as Queers for Cuba and the National Latina/o Lesbian,

Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization's annual *encuentros*, which in 1999 took place in San Diego and Tijuana. Several programs in Mexico City and other locales allow one to live with a lesbian family while learning Spanish and participating in Mexican gay pride, as well as programs that bring gay and lesbian activists from "Third World" countries to U.S. metropolitan areas to learn about gay life and transmit this information back home.⁴³ Several diasporic activist organizations, often in conjunction with gay-friendly travel agencies, offer tours back to the homeland for the purposes of educating and engendering queer solidarity and support.⁴⁴ These tours, ostensibly promoted to encourage "queer solidarity," operate within a missionary framework of sameness and difference, assuming some rubric of queerness that is similar enough to create solidarity around but is different from and, as such, not quite on a par with metropolitan queerness. The insistence on educational exchange conveniently effaces the privileges determining which citizens can travel where to learn and transmit what information. The construction of sexual citizenship is informed by incommensurable activist strategies that foreground U.S.-based diasporic queerness over queerness in the homeland.

These examples suggest collaborative transnational tourist projects that can complicate a "pleasure tourism"—versus—"political travel" binary even as they reassert such binaries when left unexamined. The creation of a queer cosmopolitan elite that spans many geopolitical locales through such solidarity tours reanimates artificial distinctions between modern sexual identity and indigenous sexual acts, distinctions that suggest that the only queer sexual citizen is one identifiable by the state for the purpose either of liberation or expulsion. Moreover, the dichotomy between humanitarian and pleasure travel obscures the investments of both in tourism, liberal discourses of travel, capitalist interests, consumption practices, and neocolonial gestures. In comparing pleasure or leisure travel as signified by gay cruises, for example, with other activist-related genres of queer tourism that permeate popular discourse on queer travel, the mutuality of the relationship between gay and lesbian rights discourses and gay and lesbian tourism (as well as questions of travel, mobility, entitlement, and citizenship) emerges. Gay and lesbian tourism uses the rhetorics of gay and lesbian liberation, visibility, the power of the pink dollar, and the right to be "out and about" to fuel consumers' interests, as well as to promote the idea of "our world" as the vision of the new queer world that queer travel dollars can enable.

The flip side of this equation is relevant, too, as gay and lesbian NGOs, particularly those immersed in global activist agendas, both use travel and tourism actively to create solidarity networks and also rely on tourist infrastructures as part of a work praxis. Those locals who can participate in globalization can, at least

momentarily, supersede their locality through Internet chatrooms, conferences, queer Web sites, internationally distributed newsletters, e-mail listservs, diasporic organizing, and international readership and audiences of films and journals, and they generally can appropriate the products and processes of different forms of globalization, including travel, for activist work.⁴⁵ The agendas closely overlap, though the impulses might be different: one seeks “our world” to enable the modern queer subject to be “out and about”; the other seeks global queer solidarity to promote modern notions of queer human rights in order to save queers at the peripheries, who operate in a vector of sameness within difference. These examples demonstrate how queer tourism underpins and fuels a gay and lesbian rights agenda that assumes the attainment of “modern queer sexuality” as its ultimate goal.

Geographies of Globalization

Where would civilization be if we all just stayed home?

—Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*

Caren Kaplan, quoting Elizabeth Bishop’s poem “Questions of Travel” in her book of the same title, wonders, “Should we have stayed at home, wherever that may be?” In noting that cosmopolitanism is indeed ambivalent about staying at home, Kaplan argues that the experiences of location, displacement, mobility, and travel are crucial to the constitution of the modern subject. She also suggests that modernist discourses of nationalism and expansionism are more often “transmuted or reconfigured” than opposed or countered in postmodern articulations.⁴⁶ In his introduction to *Cosmopolitics*, coedited with Bruce Robbins, Pheng Cheah also criticizes a “postnational” understanding of cosmopolitanism that suggests that it and nationalism are mutually exclusive rather than reinforcing phenomena. In particular, he criticizes Arjun Appadurai, who privileges mobility through “greater frequency of travel and improved media communications.”⁴⁷ The question is, if any postmodern identity is indebted to travel and displacement, how is this different for queers? It strikes me that for Hughes to argue that the search for gay identity is analogous to tourism, even as gays are more likely to need to travel, may be the beginning of an argument that travel, in its metaphorization, history, and facticity, is more important to the development of certain queer (cosmopolitan?) identities than of other subjects, perhaps because of the mandate to disrupt heteronormative space. Yet, given the figure of the “discerning gay traveler,” queers of color returning to the homeland, and activist-tourist collaborations, the relationships

among cosmopolitanism, nationalism, and modernity, as routed through sexual politics and pleasure, are clearly not as convenient as a distinction between staying home or not.

Furthermore, in a climate of globalization that we increasingly respond to through various heightened efforts at border containment, gay tourism functions as an ironic marker of a cosmopolitan mobility available to a very few bodies, especially in relation to the growing criminalization of immigrants and restrictions on their mobility.⁴⁸ What are the links between California's Proposition 187, which placed restrictions on immigrants, for example, and the federal Immigration Act of 1990, which eliminated sexual deviancy as a cause to be denied entry to the United States? In other words, the increased mobility of gay and lesbian tourists can function ironically only if one considers distinctions between those who must travel for work and those who can travel for leisure. The state still envisions the immigrant or racialized subject and the queer subject as split.⁴⁹ The move toward liberal reform in terms of gay and lesbian civil rights as well as economic access is made in exchange for more insidious policings of those who cannot or do not fit into the "good homosexual" image. Social acceptance, signaled in this case by greater access to mobility, is contingent on "queer others" who fall outside normative parameters of consumption practices, legal recognition, and citizenship. This is made clear by the advertisements of national tourist boards.⁵⁰

Who benefits the most and the least from queer tourism? One could say that those who are already enabled and rewarded by capitalist formations can most easily harness the positive effects of increased queer tourism. As Rosemary Hennessy demonstrates in *Profit and Pleasure*, "There are signs that a transition is under way from the private patriarchy of domestic spaces where heterogender is compulsorily reiterated through the husband's appropriation of the wife's labor and person to a more public patriarchy that may rely less on marriage and heterosexuality."⁵¹ The Marxist concept of commodity fetish in this public patriarchy is reflected by the rhetoric and images produced by the gay and lesbian tourism industry. These representations suggest the necessity of unraveling the fetish—in other words, of foregrounding the relations of production beyond the producers of the tourism industry (who seek to capture the fetish of the commodity) by focusing on those toured upon, those maintaining the tourist infrastructure by working in the service sector. The concept of "commodity chains" may link the interest in the consumption practices of queer tourists with the sites of production, capturing the moments when capital is produced and redistributed, thus straining the fetish at its most vulgar level.⁵² The application of a commodity-chain analysis to underscore the tenacity of the commodity fetish seems particularly urgent when

one heeds the words of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who in 1996 warned that globalization needed to be understood first and foremost as a phenomenon driven by migrant labor, not simply as a question of cultural flows. Alexander's succinct appraisal of tourism as the way in which the state enables neocolonialism through the labor of poor women of color only adds weight to this agenda.⁵³ What, then, would a commodity-chain analysis of queer tourism look like? If activist and leisure or pleasure habits of consumption through tourist practices have more overlaps than they seem to have at first glance, what material and historical circumstances generate the production of national queers and queer nationals both abroad and at home through these traveling figures? If a transnational queer consumption framework helps us think about affiliations, where and why do market forces negotiate national legislative and cultural realms of sexuality, and what do homophobic state practices look like in the face of late capital and "inclusive" liberalized markets? Finally, in light of these negotiations, what are the implications for queer politics?

Conclusion

I want to return to the opening spectacle of the cruise ship with nine hundred gays and lesbians from the United States and Europe in order to ponder the myriad affiliations created by this scenario. Euro-American cruisegoers may well leave the Caribbean with only a surface impression of the postcolonial struggles at issue there. On the one hand, the cruise ship companies appeal to global gay and lesbian identity politics in order to mobilize an international intervention so that they may dock; their plight is made visible by the partial or different visibility of gays and lesbians in the Caribbean. On the other hand, the visibility of the ships creates the sense of needing to "lay low"—that is, of needing to be invisible or less visible—for Caribbean gay and lesbian activists; this need may be even more urgent for those not involved in identity politics.⁵⁴ Here gay and lesbian populations are caught in an oppositional conflict between postcolonial and former colonizing governments; in a sense, they are used as examples or pawns in circumstances that may or may not be about sexuality.

In these circumstances, what transnational alliances are possible or impossible? How are they fueled by national agendas? When are queers considered citizens of the state? Which queers, and which states? The irony, of course, is the presence of a mainstream or "sellout" signifier of queer consumption, namely, that of a cruise ship with "professional gays and lesbians" whose presence can be justified not only in the humanitarian terms of human rights discourse but in eco-

nomic terms (both by Caribbean activists responding to the state and by cruise operators) as elements that bolster the local economy. What is understood as a fairly conservative segment of the queer population winds up triggering the most contentious political discussions on homosexuality in the Caribbean, becoming a “radical” symbol for Caribbean gay and lesbian activists. Without dismissing these categories entirely, I want to point out that they reify a division that cannot absorb the irony of certain forms of “corporate gayness” that fuel the supposedly radical agenda of queer liberationist human rights, for example, through gay and lesbian tourism.⁵⁵ The ship is an extremely ambivalent yet fascinating signifier of location, from Paul Gilroy’s more optimistic reading of the importance of ships in the black Atlantic; to the conservative nature of the cruise, which attempts to situate “nowhere” in the middle of (going) somewhere; and, finally, to the “cruising of modernity” inherent in cruises for gays and lesbians in the queer Atlantic today.⁵⁶ Ultimately, the cruise ships were sent away without docking, despite the objections of Tony Blair, the U.S. government, and various NGOs. However, given the increasingly convergent relationships among globalization, sexuality, and tourism, it certainly will not be the last time that this conflict occurs.⁵⁷

Notes

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1. “Gay Cruise Leaves Bahamas,” *Trinidad Express*, 10 February 1998, 29. Hereafter Trinidad and Tobago is referred to simply as Trinidad.
2. *Out and About*, June 1998, 74. The editors of *Out and About*, the leading gay and lesbian tourism newsletter, called for a travel boycott of the Cayman Islands and encouraged letter-writing campaigns to American Airlines, American Express (the “official card of the Cayman Islands”), and Norwegian Cruise Lines (the cruise line chartered by Atlantis Events). “Our purpose is to send a message to the Cayman Islands that discrimination based on sexual orientation may still be legal in much of the world, but it is no longer acceptable in the tourism industry. The message will resonate throughout the Caribbean, for the Caymans are not alone in their homophobia, only in its unrepentant expression” (*Out and About*, March 1998, 27). For details about protests of

- and debates about gay and lesbian tourism in the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Belize, Jamaica, and Costa Rica, see the following articles posted at <http://PlanetOut.com>: “Caymans Reject Gay Cruise,” 7 January 1998; “Island Adventure Continues,” 8 January 1998; “Around the World in Briefs,” 20 January 1998; “Bahamians Protest Gay Cruise,” 5 February 1998; “Cruise OK in Belize, UK Confab,” 4 February 1998; “Belizeans Protest Cruise,” 27 January 1998; “Bahama Demo vs. Olivia Cruise,” 14 April 1998.
3. Earlier scenarios were less fraught. In April 1996 a cruise of eight hundred lesbians from the United States, Canada, England, Italy, and Australia that was organized by Olivia Cruises and Resorts (a California lesbian cruise company formed in 1990) “ventured to come down south” for the first time. Previous cruises had visited only northern Caribbean locations. This cruise did dock in the Cayman Islands without any problems. A representative of Olivia Cruises and Resorts stated that the women on the cruise would patronize women-owned businesses during their daily tours of the islands, and these tours would help dispel “preconceived ideas about lesbians”: “People will become aware that lesbians are normal, everyday people . . . many of whom are professionals.” Lesbians, the representative stated, tend to spend quite a bit of money during vacations, “and this is a significant contribution to the local economy” (“Eight Hundred Lesbians on Caribbean Cruise,” *Mirror*, 5 January 1996, 21).
 4. Debates, preceded by prison riots in Jamaica over the distribution of condoms and continuing pressure from Great Britain to liberalize antigay laws, continued through the spring. See “Collision Course in Church Colonies,” *Trinidad Express*, 25 February 1998, 30. In January 2001, unable to persuade the local government to repeal its sodomy laws, Great Britain enacted legislation in the Cayman Islands (as well as in Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands) that decriminalized homosexuality, setting off demonstrations by religious leaders. See “Repeal of Caymans’ Anti-Gay Laws Strains ‘Partnership’ with Britain,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 March 2001 (circulated on various listservs).
 5. “Gay Cruise Leaves Bahamas,” 29.
 6. This is not to minimize the efforts of groups that did protest the refusal of the cruise, most prominently the Jamaican Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals, and Gays. While the controversy focused predominantly on the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands, Trinidadian activists from the Caribbean Forum of Lesbians, All-Sexuals, and Gays; the Gay Enhancement Advocates of Trinidad and Tobago; and Artists against AIDS were outraged that gay and lesbian cruises could be denied docking privileges. Interestingly enough, no gay or lesbian cruises had ventured to Trinidad yet, despite its having one of the most active gay and lesbian movements in the Caribbean and the largest (and “parent”) carnival in the Caribbean. See Keith Nurse, “Globalization and Trinidad Carnival: Diaspora, Hybridity, and Identity in Global Culture,” *Cultural Studies* 13 (1999): 677. Interest in Trinidad as a gay and lesbian tourist site is rising, however,

due to the growth of carnival as a gay and lesbian tourist event, the increasing promotion of cruises and other forms of tourism by the Trinidadian government, and the expansion of the global gay and lesbian tourism market. In a “Carnival around the World” special issue, the editors of *Out and About* write that “Trinidad’s Carnival is the biggest gay event in the region” and claim that “the gay community here is relatively uncloseted. . . . gays play an important role in the social fabric of the country, especially in the arts and in Carnival. . . . The islands are at their gayest, figuratively and literally, during the weeks prior to Ash Wednesday” (*Out and About*, December 1996, 147). Many diasporic Trinidadian gays and lesbians are reluctant to go “back home” because of the dearth of gay life in Trinidad, but partying, dining, and bar spots for gay, and mostly male, travelers there are listed in *Out and About*; in Eli Angelo and Joseph H. Bain, eds., *Odysseus: The International Gay Travel Planner*, 16th ed. (Port Washington, N.Y.: Odysseus, 2001); and in Señor Cordova, *A Man’s Guide to the Caribbean 98/99* (New York: Centurion, 1999). For extended discussion of Trinidad as a gay and lesbian travel destination see Jasbir Kaur Puar, ed., “Global Circuits: Transnational Sexualities and Trinidad,” special issue of *Signs* 26, no. 4 (2001).

7. I use the term *queer* to signal a methodological approach to the subject of tourism. To be consistent with the language of the industry, I use *gay and lesbian* when writing of tourist practices. The terms *bisexual*, *transgender*, and *queer* do not appear to circulate in industry literature or rhetoric, though obviously the participation of these subjects in gay and lesbian tourist circuits is not foreclosed.
8. While the tourism industry has generated a tremendous amount of popular literature and advertising about gay and lesbian tourism, there has been minimal scholarly work on the subject. Sexuality and sex are often collapsed in tourism studies, and so, when sexuality is foregrounded, it is usually through material on sex tourism. Conversely, the literature on sex tourism has not taken into account same-sex sex tourism, with the exception of work driven by a concern with the spread of HIV/AIDS. See Cindy Patton and Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, eds., *Queer Diasporas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); and Stephen Clift and Simon Carter, eds., *Tourism and Sex: Culture, Commerce, and Coercion* (New York: Pinter, 2000). For recent work on gay male sex tourism see Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (New York: Routledge, 2001); and Matti Bunzl, “The Prague Experience: Gay Male Sex Tourism and the Neocolonial Invention of an Embodied Border,” in *Altering States: Ethnographies of Transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, ed. Daphne Berdahl, Matti Bunzl, and Martha Lampland (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 70–95. Most studies of gay and lesbian tourism emerge from British scholars through a convergence of interests in cultural geography and queer theory, and they use discussions regarding the heterosexism of public space generated by volumes such as David Bell and Gill Valentine, eds., *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1995); Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter, eds., *Queers in*

- Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (Seattle: Bay, 1997); and Nancy Duncan, ed., *Body Space: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1996). Much of the literature addresses the concern that the “touristification” of gay spaces is producing a degaying effect that reestablishes heterosexual dominance. See Annette Pritchard, Nigel Morgan, and Diane Sedgely, “Reaching Out to the Gay Tourist: Opportunities and Threats in an Emerging Market Segment,” *Tourism Management* 19 (1998): 273–82.
9. Pritchard, Morgan, and Sedgely, “Reaching Out to the Gay Tourist,” 274.
 10. Other gay and lesbian tourism publications include *gay travelnews*, *Our World*, *Circuit Noize*—“the premier guide to circuit events worldwide”—and the San Francisco-based magazine *Passport*. On-line publications include *QT Magazine.com* and *Planet-Out.com*. See also Lucy Jane Bledsoe, ed., *Lesbian Travel: A Literary Companion* (San Francisco: Whereabout, 1998); and David Alport, interview by the author, New York City, 14 December 1999.
 11. Community Marketing, *Gay and Lesbian Travel Demographic Report*, 12 March 2001, 1; Pritchard, Morgan, and Sedgely, “Reaching Out to the Gay Tourist,” 273.
 12. Howard Hughes, “Holidays and Homosexual Identity,” *Tourism Management* 18 (1997): 5, 3, 6. Constructs of mobility have been central to the construction of lesbian and gay identities; John D’Emilio’s explanation of the development of gay communities and identities is specifically linked to turn-of-the-century migration to urban areas (though it does not offer a way to think about women’s mobility). The migration of gays and lesbians to American cities in the 1970s and 1980s is a continuation of this example (see Kath Weston, “Get Thee to a Big City: Sexual Imaginary and the Great Gay Migration,” *GLQ* 2 [1995]: 253–77). Most work on migration and sexuality is still focused on internal movement in the United States; for emerging discussions see Eithne Luibheid, “Looking like a Lesbian: The Organization of Sexual Monitoring at the United States–Mexican Border,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8 (1998): 477–506; and Lionel Cantú’s and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes’s essays in this issue.
 13. John Webb, “Fantasy Islands? Tropical Destinations Where We’re Welcome and Where We Are Not,” *MetroSource*, Fall 1999, 93; *Advocate*, 20 July 1999, 25 (emphasis added); *New York Blade*, 23 February 2001, 15, 18, 16.
 14. *Advocate*, 20 July 1999, 29. Characterizing this protest as sheerly motivated by homophobia effaces questions of Americanization, postcoloniality, neocolonialization, class, race, nation, and other significant factors implicated in the campy performances of the Village People. See also Webb, “Fantasy Islands?” 93.
 15. Pritchard, Morgan, and Sedgely, “Reaching Out to the Gay Tourist,” 276. It is hardly surprising, of course, that sex with the natives is sold with the same colonial imagery that informs much conventional tourist literature. Hughes, however, claims that the “sex-holiday association is more direct than in equivalent heterosexual publications,” and, again, the desire to distance the industry as a whole from sex tourism seems to

- fuel a push toward high-end, “discreet” travel as well (“Holidays and Homosexual Identity,” 4).
16. This is not to minimize the struggles that gay and lesbian tourism providers have faced over the years, from controversies in tourist bureaus to the refusal to rent cruise ships to Olivia Cruises and Resorts. Thanks to Carole Vance for her insights regarding the “alternatives to traditional morality” that are possible in this market (American Ethnology Association conference, Montreal, 4 May 2001).
 17. Hanns Ebensten, *Volleyball with the Cuna Indians and Other Gay Travel Adventures* (New York: Penguin, 1994). Preceding the formation of an industry are numerous accounts of homosexual encounters and travel narratives. On gay and bisexual male writers who traveled through North Africa around the turn of the century see Joseph A. Boone, “Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism,” *PMLA* 110 (1995): 89–107; on Isabelle Eberhardt’s travels in men’s clothing in North Africa see Caren Kaplan, “Whiteness in a Transnational Frame: Commodity Feminism in an Era of Globalization” (paper presented at the conference “The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness,” University of California, Berkeley, 15 April 1997). See also Richard Phillips, “Travelling Sexualities: Richard Burton’s Sotadic Zone,” in *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing*, ed. James Duncan and Derek Gregory (New York: Routledge, 1999), 70–91.
 18. Briavel Holcomb and Michael Luongo, “Gay Tourism in the United States,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 23 (1996): 711.
 19. Pritchard, Morgan, and Sedgely, “Reaching Out to the Gay Tourist,” 276.
 20. Alport also believes that *Out and About*’s subscription base is predominantly white and male. This publication, along with *Our World*, which was started in 1989 and has a subscription base of fifty thousand, relies heavily on travel testimonials from subjects who are interpellated or erased solely as gay or lesbian.
 21. The brochure for the tour to Crete reads: “Like Zeus, gay men all over the world, in unprecedented numbers in history, have outwitted the efforts of a threatened and devouring patriarchal society to deny us our destiny. . . . This magical island is the perfect place to enhance the transformative experience of moving from a defensive political agenda of survival to a powerful and liberating celebration of our spiritual calling as gay men” (www.genremagazine.com).
 22. The number of national and regional tourist bureaus at subsequent expos has increased, as has the variety of locations marketed. For example, a new Lufthansa 2000–2001 planner, “Visit the Gay and Lesbian Capitals of Europe,” includes promotional material on Berlin, Budapest, Copenhagen, Helsinki, London, Paris, and Prague, as well as on Barcelona and Istanbul.
 23. Holcomb and Luongo, “Gay Tourism in the United States,” 712.
 24. Community Marketing, *Gay and Lesbian Travel Demographic Report*.
 25. M. V. Lee Badgett, “Beyond Biased Samples: Challenging the Myths on the Economic

- Status of Lesbians and Gay Men,” in *Homoconomics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life*, ed. Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (New York: Routledge, 1997), 65–72.
26. Community Marketing, “‘A Place for Us,’ 2001: Tourism Industry Opportunities in the Gay and Lesbian Market,” *Sixth Annual Gay and Lesbian Travel Survey*, 7, 15, 10.
 27. Discourses of queer visibility are increasingly in collusion with multinational consumption, producing middle-class queer cosmopolitan interests allied with corporate multinational interests. In November 1998, for example, Levi Strauss announced that it was targeting gay and lesbian consumers in its new advertising campaigns. This move was lauded by gay and lesbian “representatives,” even though a boycott of Levi Strauss was called that same month to protest its exploitative labor practices. For more on labor practices in relation to queer representations see Rosemary Hennessy, “Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture,” *Cultural Critique* 29 (1995): 31–76. For a nuanced study of consumption and queer politics see Alexandra Chasin, *Selling Out: The Gay and Lesbian Movement Goes to Market* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2000). See also Daniel L. Wardlow, ed., *Gays, Lesbians, and Consumer Behavior: Theory, Practice, and Research Issues in Marketing* (New York: Haworth, 1996). Other studies that tout the potential of the market include Grant Lukenbill and John Klenert, *Untold Millions: Secret Truths about Marketing to Gay and Lesbian Consumers* (New York: Haworth, 1999); and Steven Maxwell Kates, *Twenty Million New Customers: Understanding Gay Men’s Consumer Behavior* (New York: Haworth, 1998).
 28. Edward Ingebretsen, “Gone Shopping: The Commercialization of Same-Sex Desire,” *Journal of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Identity* 4 (1999): 132.
 29. Katia Hetter, “Globe-Trotting in the Gay 90’s,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 16 June 1997, 69. These statistics are confirmed by Rex Briggs, project manager for Yankelovich Partners, a polling firm that surveys gay and lesbian spending patterns. Gay travelers also tend to be more “loyal” than straights: surveys show that they are especially appreciative of good service; if pleased, they will return to a restaurant, hotel, or resort again and again. Other segments of the travel industry have taken note. For example, in 1993 American Airlines was widely denounced after a flight crew had a man with AIDS removed from a plane because he refused to put away his IV bottle; the airline assigned a sales manager solely to the gay and lesbian market in 1997 and within a year had booked more than \$15 million worth of business from gay tours and conventions.
 30. See Bonnie J. Morris, *Eden Built by Eves: The Culture of Women’s Music Festivals* (Los Angeles: Alyson, 1999).
 31. For an astute analysis of these distinctions see Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *GLQ* 3 (1997): 437–65.
 32. Inderpal Grewal, “Traveling Barbie,” *positions* 3 (1999): 799–826; M. Jacqui Alexan-

- der, "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization: An Anatomy of Feminist and State Practice," in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, ed. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (New York: Routledge, 1997), 63–100.
33. Susan Seizer's piece on lesbian visibility in the field of gay, lesbian, and queer ethnography notes the importance of narratives of travel, tourism, and space in the negotiating of sexual identity ("The Paradoxes of Visibility in the Field: Rites of Queer Passage in Anthropology," *Public Culture* 8 [1995]: 73–100). Pedro Bustos-Aguilar notes that ethnographic work on "non-western" gay and lesbian populations may range from invoking practices of surveillance of communities to a version of sex tourism that consolidates a circuit of exchange and affords access to a community ("Mister, Don't Touch the Banana: Notes on the Popularity of the Ethnosexed Body South of the Border," *Critique of Anthropology* 15 [1995]: 149–70). Several recastings of ethnographers as tourists do an excellent job of complicating the traveler-tourist distinction so central to anthropological knowledge production. See Ravina Aggarwal, "'Point of Departure': Feminist Locations and the Politics of Travel in India," *Feminist Studies* 26 (2000): 535–63; and Edward M. Bruner, "Tourism in the Balinese Borderzone," in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, ed. Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 157–79.
 34. Geeta Patel reflects on one such encounter, when she returned to India to visit her mother and aunt and happened upon a congregation of Metropolitan Community Church missionaries (*Gay Community News*, spring 1998, 52–57).
 35. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth* (Boston: Beacon, 1989), 85.
 36. The French Government Tourist Office has put out a brochure titled *Gay Friendly France: Once in France, Forever in Love* and has rescripted the national mantra, "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," to "Liberté, Egalité, Diversité: Discover the Diversity of Gay Life in France!" Here, "diversity" is based on sexual orientation rather than race and/or ethnicity. The brochure presents numerous photos of couples, plays on gay love and the potential for romance, and claims that France is the "gay-friendly destination par excellence. . . . France is the *in* place to be *out*." It states that French law does not prohibit gay sexuality, names notable gay figures, suggests that France has "always embraced outsiders and artists," and, finally, claims that "the culture itself has long been open to that ineffable, but recognizable, human expression: gay sensibility." An advertisement from the British Tourist Authority invites the gay traveler with a rainbow-colored logo that says "See London Inside and Out." The primary focus of this ad is consumption through shopping; clearly affluent white gay men stroll past a Herbie Frogg boutique, laden with shopping bags. The ad suggests that "London's the place to drop a few pounds" and describes shopping opportunities for the discriminating gay consumer.
 37. Community Marketing, "'A Place for Us,' 2001," 16.

38. For further discussion see Jasbir Kaur Puar, "Circuits of Mobility: A Feminist Critique of Queer Tourism," *Antipode* (forthcoming).
39. Coda International Tours runs this trip. The advertising has a bluish version of the Taj Mahal on it; features North Indian sites such as Agra and Jaipur, as well as a trip to Kathmandu, Nepal; and has no pictures of people. Jim Smith, co-owner of Coda, explains this lack as a deliberate move to distance the trip from sex tours; he claims that it leaves the category of gay travelers more open than it would be if typical photos of buff gay men were included. Coda also sponsors tours with *Out Magazine*, as well as with nonprofits. In exchange for a nonprofit's highest donor lists and mailing lists, Coda organizes high-end international travel for the donor base and the nonprofit's employees; it then donates money to the nonprofit based on how many trips have been sold to its benefactors (interview by the author, New York City, January 2000).
40. Row Kavi, pers. com., 11 January 2000.
41. These ventures perhaps mirror the solidarity tours of the 1980s to Nicaragua, for example, or tours sold by organizations like Global Exchange that promote liberal cross-cultural experiential "exchanges" based on liberal-humanist discourses.
42. See Michael Luongo, "Rome's World Pride: Making the Eternal City an International Gay Tourism Destination," in this issue.
43. CETLALIC, an alternative Spanish-language school in Cuernavaca, Mexico, runs summer programs titled "Coming Out: The Gay (Men's) Experience in Mexico" and "In/Visibility: Lesbian Lives in Mexico" (see www.giga.com/~cetlalic).
44. In 1995 TriKone attempted to set up a queer film festival and tour in India, which it then offered as an opportunity for tourists to assist in organizing as well as participating. The tour fell through for numerous logistical reasons exacerbated by ideological conflicts between TriKone and local Indian organizations. The eleven-day "Journey of Pride: Exploring Israel," sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Israel Center, both projects of the Jewish Community Federation, purports to be "a spiritual, intellectual, and social visit to the Jewish State for Gay and Lesbian Jews, their partners and friends. Delve into Lesbian and Gay life and culture. See Israel's most beautiful and meaningful sites. Make new friends from Israel and the Bay Area." This advertisement addresses Jewish gays and lesbians and their friends who have some connection to Jewish identity. It reiterates a Zionist call and invites the tourist to participate not just in Jewish queerness but in the creation of national nostalgia and citizenship in "Israel's most beautiful and meaningful sites," suggesting the possible suppression of Palestinian meaning, interests, and presence in the area. That this tour is fueled by middle-class Jewish American groups that have financially and politically supported the conservative agenda of the Jewish state is hardly a coincidence; it illuminates interesting alliances between queer politics and neoliberal as well as conservative factions.
45. For an elaboration of this dynamic see Timothy Wright, "Gay Organizations, NGOs,

- and the Globalization of Sexual Identity: The Case of Bolivia," *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 5 (2000): 89–111.
46. Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 8. On other histories of modernity and travel see Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
 47. Pheng Cheah, introduction to "Part II: The Cosmopolitical—Today," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1998), 32. See Arjun Appadurai, "Patriotism and Its Futures," *Public Culture* 5 (1993): 418.
 48. See M. Jacqui Alexander, "Not Just (Any)Body Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality, and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas," *Feminist Review*, no. 48 (1994): 5–23.
 49. Vermont's legislation on gay marriage is another example of this split. It is interesting that gay marriage is now possible only in a state with one of the highest percentages of white residents in the United States. This legislation is suggestive of a very narrow version of liberal tolerance, which will benefit mainly white, middle-class gays, lesbians, and queers.
 50. When one teases apart the registers of cosmopolitanism, binational same-sex relationships are curious indicators, too, of this mechanism, in which inclusion is symbolized by relationship recognition. What is the relationship between binational coupling and tourism? Are there more binational couples as a result of increased global travel and hence the push to legalize binational couples? This issue contrasts with that of "binationality at home": there is nothing cosmopolitan about being involved with an undocumented immigrant who is already in the United States.
 51. Rosemary Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 67.
 52. For an example of a commodity-chain analysis see Elaine Hartwick, "Geographies of Consumption: A Commodity-Chain Approach," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6 (1999): 423–37.
 53. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Diasporas Old and New: Women in the Transnational World," *Textual Practice* 10 (1996): 245–69; Alexander, "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization," 63–100. See also Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Bases, and Beaches: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
 54. In this instance, the globalization of gay and lesbian identities suggests the questionable efficacy of identity politics, especially its reliance on strategies of "queer visibility." The political rhetoric of queer visibility has been mapped out by theorists such as

Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure*; Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman, "Queer Nationality: The Political Logic of Queer Nation and Gay Activism," in *Fear of a Queer Planet*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 193–229; and José Esteban Muñoz, "'The White to Be Angry': Vaginal Davis's Terrorist Drag," *Social Text*, nos. 52–53 (1997): 80–103. This rhetoric has been used as a foundational strategy in gay and lesbian activist projects in the West (and increasingly in projects with a global scope). "Visibility" does not work, according to Muñoz and Lisa Duggan ("Queering the State," *Social Text*, no. 39 [1994]: 1–14), who both claim that, despite the increased visibility of queer subjects, antigay legislation continues to proliferate, gay bashing continues, and violence against women has not abated. In fact, Muñoz has declared that visibility leads to the erosion of civil rights for gays and lesbians.

55. Muñoz, "'The White to Be Angry,'" 98. Another irony, of course, is the very moment between remaining on the ship and disembarking, as the refusal of public, national space becomes the impetus from which to protest and desire its presence. The whole pretense of a cruise is its isolation and insularity; where one disembarks is, ironically, enabled in relation to where one would not otherwise want to be. In other words, many of these island locations would not be destinations for queer tourists from North America or Europe. Rosalind Morris, in her work on sexualities in Thailand, argues that what could be delineated as a "gay diaspora" may redefine understandings of sexual practices among gay men in ways that invite more policing of these very practices by the Thai state ("Educating Desire: Thailand, Transnationalism, and Transgression," *Social Text*, nos. 52–53 [1997]: 53–79). As such, the use of queer sexualities from postcolonial contexts in specific moments of queer liberationist agendas may well do anything but advance liberation for those they purport to describe. These cruises, in a different sense, are an example of similar transnational dynamics. Whose visibility is enabled here, at the expense of whose invisibility?
56. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).
57. An Atlantis Events gay cruise was turned away at Kusadasi, Turkey, in September 2000. See "Gay Cruise Fiasco in Turkey," 8 September 2000, <http://PlanetOut.com>.

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