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ARE WE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER? GENDER INTERSECTIONALITY AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Donna Chambers
University of Sunderland
Faculty of Business, Law & Tourism
St Peter's Campus
Sunderland, SR6 0DD
Email: donna.chambers@sunderland.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

In this paper I provide a critical discussion of gender intersectionality and its relevance for sustainability in tourism, focusing on the intersection between gender and race. I argue that Black women in tourism suffer from a double negation caused by both sexism and racism, but this has received little acknowledgement or critical discussion in studies of sustainable tourism. However, an intersectional approach to gender is vital as it rejects reductionist views of women's experiences in tourism and the attendant power relationships that such an approach (re)produces. I argue that it is through a critical understanding of the importance of an intersectional approach to gender that we can move closer to achieving equity in the development of tourism. My discussion is theoretically underpinned by critical race theory (CRT) and the related logics of Black feminism which I use to highlight the (re)presentation of Black women in tourism. Methodologically I draw on the storytelling technique popularised in CRT to analyse a fictional film – 'Heading South', to explore Black women's elision as agentic beings as well as their (re)presentation as vulnerable and submissive. I argue that such (re)presentations of Black women in tourism popular cultural narratives have material implications for sustainable development.

Keywords: critical race theory; Black feminism; intersectionality; storytelling; gender; race

INTRODUCTION

Many women of color feel obliged to make [a choice] between ethnicity and womanhood; how can they? You never have/are one without the other. The idea of two, illusory separated identities, one ethnic, the other woman (or more precisely female) again partakes in the Euro-American system of dualistic reasoning and its age-old divide-and-conquer tactics (Trinh, 1989, p. 104)

I begin this paper with the above quotation from T. Minh-ha Trinh (1989) who speaks of the impossibility of separating one's gender identity from one's ethnic identity. This pluralist approach to identity is the foundational logic of the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). In this paper I focus on the intersection between gender and race and contend that this has been neglected in studies of sustainable tourism. Gender has been extensively discussed in tourism studies (Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015; Figueroa-Domecq, Kimbu, de Jong & Williams, 2020;) and there are also several publications which focus on race ((Boukhris, 2017; Jamerson, 2016). However, there have been very limited explorations of both gender **and** race despite several tourism scholars advocating for this more pluralist approach (see Gibson 2001; Pritchard, 2014; Alarcón & Cole, 2019; Mooney, 2018, 2020). Specifically, I argue that in traditional discourses of tourism, Black women's voices have been largely elided (see Small, 2013) although a counter-narrative is slowly emerging (see for example Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Gill, 2019; Lee, 2017).

Black women in tourism are affected by a double negation – they are frequently erased from both discourses of sexism and racism. Black women in tourism have scarcely been perceived as having agency. Instead, they have primarily been the objects of research and too often (re)presented by white men and women as socio-culturally, economically and politically vulnerable and thus in need of 'empowerment' (Arnfred, 2004; Syed, 2010). Where their voices are 'heard' it is often through the interpretive lens of Western scholars and (re)producers of culture in popular media such as in film. This is particularly troubling in the context of sustainable tourism as it belies the equality and social justice agendas which underpin the very notion of sustainability. Indeed, almost 20 years ago Eric Cohen (2002) advocated for a more critical interrogation of the concept of sustainable tourism to include notions of social equity. Much later, Jamal & Camargo (2014)

spoke of the need to discuss sustainable tourism in the context of theories of justice and ethics and argued that how people are represented are important considerations in sustainable tourism. In similar vein, Forbes Bright, Foster, Joyner & Tanny et al (2021) in an article in a Special Issue of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism on Justice and Tourism, spoke of 'just representation' in reference to memorial tourist sites in Tennessee in America and contended that many of these sites occluded representations of non-white male history. It is evident therefore that issues of 'just representation' are important for sustainable tourism and in this paper, I contend that this issue is pertinent in the context of the (re)presentation of Black women.

In this paper I will therefore provide a critical discussion of gender intersectionality and its importance for sustainable tourism. Such an approach rejects reductionist views of women's experiences in tourism and attendant power relationships that are thereby (re)produced. My discussion is theoretically underpinned by critical race theory and relatedly, Black feminism. Methodologically, the discussion adapts the CRT technique of storytelling which enables me to unpack the way in which Black women are (re)presented in a film on female sex tourism in postcolonial Haiti. I begin with a discussion of critical race theory which provides the overarching theoretical foundation for this work.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

It is generally accepted that race is a powerful socio-cultural construct and important signifier (Morrison, 1992; Harris, 1995). Writing on New Zealand as a tourist state, Werry (2011) provides a cogent description of the complex nature of race:

Race is a cultural construction or formation: it is a fluid constellation of discourse, belief, affect, physical or linguistic repertoires, sensibilities and signs attributed to or performed by subjects in connection with a claim regarding biology, and in relation to specific social, political, and economic interests (2011, p. xxviii-xxiv).

Race is not an immutable, objective fact but is multifaceted, shifting, and unstable. Despite this understanding of race as a socio-cultural rather than biological (innate) phenomenon, people are nevertheless ascribed into racial categorisations involving strict binary oppositions, the most predominant being that between those racialised

as white (Western) and those racialised as Black (the 'others'), with the former assuming a superior role. The notion of blackness has historically been associated with several negative stereotypes and these are always juxtaposed against positive notions of whiteness. As such blackness, according to Morrison (1992), acts as a foil against which whiteness is defined. Understanding the ways in which blackness (and necessarily whiteness) has been socio-culturally constructed and its material effects on the ways that we experience our contemporary worlds has been an issue which has long preoccupied scholars across a variety of disciplines including in the social sciences. One way in which scholars have sought to understand the problematics associated with the construction of race is through critical race theory.

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged in the unique socio-cultural, politico-legal historical context of the United States of the 1970s and perceived racism not as an exception in American society and polity, but as a normal and natural part of it that required immediate action (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). CRT was seen as an integral ideological framework which articulated the way in which racism was a system of oppression that was deeply embedded in American society (Parker & Lynn, 2002). Those who subscribed to CRT sought to dismantle the very systems and structures of the American socio-legal framework which underpinned racial inequality and oppression. However, it is important to note that CRT is not a cohesive set of theories (Bell, 1995) but those who subscribe to this approach do share a number of principles, including but not limited to the following: racism is inherent in our societies; racism is intersectional and must be understood also in the context of other inequalities such as gender, class and sexuality; race is a social construct which is historically contingent; traditionally dominant ideologies that subscribe to objectivity and colour blindness must be challenged; there must be a commitment to social justice that is both liberating and transformational; adherence to the central role of marginalised voices and a concomitant methodological approach that draws on the notion of 'cultural intuition' which includes storytelling and counter-storytelling; and finally the embrace of trans disciplinarity (Carbado & Roithmayr, 2014; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Gloria Anzaldúa (1990) cited in Solorzano & Yosso (2001) captured CRT cogently in that for Black people:

Because we are not allowed to enter discourse, because we are often disqualified and excluded from it, because what passes for theory these days

is forbidden territory for us, it is vital that we occupy theorizing space, that we not allow white men and women solely to occupy it. By bringing in our own approaches and methodologies, we transform that theorising space (p. 488).

CRT is a product of the particular social and discursive system within which it was created. Nevertheless, it would be true to say that some of its underlying precepts can be applied in other geographical contexts and other academic disciplines where there are multiple problematics associated with race such as in sustainable tourism. So far, CRT has been extensively used in the field of education (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Parker & Lynn, 2002) and to a lesser extent in the field of sport (Burdsey, 2011; Hylton, 2011, 2018; Anderson & McCormack, 2010).

CRT in Tourism Research

CRT has received little attention in sustainable tourism studies although race is an important marker of difference in tourism. It is this difference which has stimulated Western tourism flows to countries and cultures of the Global South. Werry (2011) argues that tourism 'operates as a significant technology of racial governmentality [and also makes of its] subjects ambivalent collaborators in the racial project of the state' (p. xxviii). Undoubtedly, critical theoretical discussions of the racialised, marginalised 'other' is underserved in tourism scholarship. Indeed, in my exegesis of the mainstream and related tourism literature I have found very few explicit references to CRT as a way of understanding the racialisation of Black bodies and cultures in tourism.

There are a few exceptions - Henry (2019) argues for the use of CRT to understand 'the cultural politics of racism in the volunteer tourism encounter' (p. 326). He went on to suggest that volunteer tourism is a 'manifestation of contemporary whiteness' (Henry, 2019, p. 327); Jamerson (2016) draws on theories of racial formation and racial neoliberalism to highlight the link between culture and economics in tourism and suggests that racial difference has value and is an important asset in tourism; Dilletta, Benjamin & Carpenter (2019) use CRT explicitly to reveal the critical role that understanding the Black travel experience can play in learning about race in tourism; Bright, Foster, Joyner & Tanny (2020) also draw on the logics of CRT to examine

roadside markers in Tennessee in terms of whether they depict 'just representations' of the past. Torabian & Miller (2017), while not explicitly citing CRT are nevertheless inspired by its precepts in their discussion of the impact of race and nationality on freedom of movement in tourism. Similar influences of CRT can be found in the writings of Duffy, Pinckney, Benjamin & Mowatt (2019) who analyse how racial violence in the United States influences Black Travel and Dilletta (2020) who uses the theory of double consciousness, originally coined by early CRT scholar W.E.B DuBois to understand African Americans' experiences of roots tourism in their travels to Ghana.

There are then limited studies which apply CRT explicitly. I would suggest however that CRT is part of the canon of critical theory and there have been several publications in the history of tourism scholarship which have drawn on this broad theoretical approach (although not explicitly cited as such). For example, Mellinger (1994) examined photographic postcards of African Americans from the South between 1893-1917 and concluded that in these images Black people were 'positioned in a racist regime of representation that constructed subjectivities for those depicted, and identities for their viewers' (p. 756). More recent research in tourism has embraced postcolonial perspectives and tend to focus on tourism as neo-colonialism or as a new form of imperialism in which former colonial peoples are exploited culturally, economically, and sexually by Western tourists (Hoppe 2010; Osagie & Buzinde, 2011; Hall & Tucker, 2004; Amoamo & Thompson, 2010; Akama, Maingi & Camargo, 2011).

A distinct body of critical scholarship emerged approximately 15 years ago and has been deemed as 'critical tourism studies.' Critical tourism scholars subscribe to a values driven approach to research and action, disrupting hegemonic discourses and practices in tourism in order to achieve transformations in terms of planetary justice and sustainability (Ateljevic, Pritchard & Morgan, 2013; Boluk, Cavaliere & Duffy, 2019; Devine & Ojeda, 2017; Lyon & Hunter-Jones, 2019; Cole & Morgan, 2010; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008). Critical tourism scholars are concerned with dismantling a range of inequalities including those associated with gender and race. Many of the works in critical tourism speak of the way in which indigenous (primarily non-white) cultures are exploited in tourism but surprisingly little have provided any in-depth theorisations of the concept of race and its material effects in tourism. Jamerson suggests that:

Critical tourism scholars may benefit from an increased racial awareness in their work towards providing a counternarrative to strictly business-based tourism research. Meanwhile, race scholars might benefit from an increased understanding of ways racial difference operates within tourism, as it is a major site of negotiations of Otherness (2016, p. 1038)

There are some exceptions where tourism scholars have provided reflexive accounts of their own racial and ethnic identities and how this has been influenced by the colonial encounter (Chambers & Buzinde 2015; Wijesinghe, 2020). I suggest that CRT provides an appropriate organising framework for an examination of race and its centrality to tourism studies. Further, an important precept of CRT is that race must also be understood in relation to its intersections to other socio-cultural constructs such as gender and in the following section I will discuss Black feminism, inspired by CRT, and which highlights the intersection between gender and race.

Black feminism

Race of course has intersections with other identity categories such as class, sexuality, and gender. However, it is the intersection with gender, namely in terms of women, where the discourse on intersectionality is, arguably, most fully developed. Specifically, Black feminism is very much affiliated with CRT and Kimberlé Crenshaw, is attributed with popularising the term 'intersectionality.' Crenshaw observed the marginalisation of African American women in both the legal and the public spheres and for her, intersectionality refers to the way in which race, class and sexual subordination are intimately intertwined (Crenshaw, 1989). Within the sociology literature it is perhaps well established that 'any analysis of women that ignores race will be incomplete' and might refer only to issues that affect white women (Browne & Misra, 2003, p. 487). In similar fashion, analyses of racial inequality that elides the lives of Black women is glaringly inadequate. The issue is not simply one of adding gender to analyses of race and vice versa but understanding that both need to be integrated in such a way that a fuller and richer appreciation of the challenges and opportunities faced by all the groups involved is achieved (Hill Collins, 1990; Browne & Misra, 2003). According to Hill Collins (1990, p. 555) 'replacing additive models of oppression with interlocking ones creates possibilities for new paradigms.'

In tourism studies there is increasing recognition that an intersectional approach to gender provides a more nuanced and richer means of understanding the issues affecting women in tourism (Chambers & Rakic, 2018; Cole & Ferguson, 2015; Gao & Kerstetter, 2016; Hutchings, Moyle, Chai, Garofono & Moore, 2020; Mooney, Ryan & Harris, 2017; Mooney, 2018). However, most of these publications do not focus on the intersection between gender and race and while a few reflect on issues to do with ethnicity (Khoo-Lattimore, Ling Yang, Sanggyeong Je, 2019; Patil, 2011), they do not provide theoretical analyses drawing on insights from Black feminist literature where much of the work on gender intersectionality resides. Bott (2018) who examines 'tribal' tourism in Vietnam using critical discourse analyses does speak about the power of racialising discourses and draws on Said's Orientalism but does not make any reference to Black feminist work.

CRT and Black feminism have been critiqued due to their apparent creation of dualisms between concepts such as black/white, Western/non-Western, dominant/oppressed, man/woman. For example, Sen(2006) rejects notions of the singularity of cultures and identities as an unhelpful obsession with Western supremacy and Western domination, Suleri (1992) speaks of the rhetoric of 'us' and 'them' as being 'devastating' and as beleaguering issues of identity formation in our contemporary world while Trinh (1989) argues for the rejection of a homogenisation of categories such as 'Third World women' and 'postcolonial women' instead calling for a non-binary understanding of difference. Mohanty (1984) presents a cogent argument in speaking about the way in which some Western feminist writers have framed the 'Third World woman' as a category of analysis which objectifies them. She argues that such objectification is dangerous and needs to be challenged.

Aziz (1997, p.74) argues for a 'feminism of difference' that acknowledges the 'actual historical differences in colonialism, imperialism, racism and representation – and how these are appropriated.' Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1990) also suggest that while there are struggles that affect all postcolonial women, some struggles are specific to particular ethnic groups. Trinh (1989) goes so far as to say that such dualisms reflect the logics of domination (such as patriarchy and colonialism) and to continue to use these is to submit to these logics. This is a view shared by Black feminist Hill Collins (1990) who suggests that a simple binary between black/white represents Eurocentric

masculinist dualistic thinking which necessarily results in relationships where one side is privileged and the other denigrated.

While these are plausible arguments, it is also important to recognise the positive aspects of collective identities, their political role in advancing equality and in fostering a sense of belonging amongst people. For example, Black feminists have played a key role in exposing the multiple oppressions faced by Black women while acknowledging the heterogeneity in the very notion of 'Black women'. In fact, in Black British feminism the term is used as a political statement and a shared consciousness experienced by all those women from the British postcolonial diaspora who have been silenced and objectified in discourses of 'British whiteness' (Mirza, 1997). In this paper my reference to 'Black women' focuses on women of African descent in a particular postcolonial context as a way of making a necessarily political argument about the power of touristic representations and their material effects on equity in tourism practices. In the following section I discuss the methodological underpinnings of this study.

METHODOLOGY

Crenshaw et al (1995) argued that there is no systematic methodological or doctrinal approach adopted by all CRT scholars. For her part, Ladson-Billings (1998, p. 9) contends that CRT is:

an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power (p.9).

In CRT legitimate sources of 'data' include poetry, parables, stories, counter-stories, fiction, and historical narratives. Delgado (2000) argues that 'stories, parables, chronicles and narratives are powerful means for destroying mindsets' (p. 61). This destructive function of storytelling is a means by which those traditionally subjugated can find a 'way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion. They can help us understand when it is time to reallocate power' (Delgado, 2000, p. 61). Critiques of CRT's

methodological approach include that its arguments are too negative and leave very limited room for hope for the liberation of Black people; that it constantly draws on the 'race card' which implies an economical use of the 'truth' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000); that it is not sufficiently analytical and traditional in its approach; and that it does not produce a racially unique form of scholarship (Bell, 1995).

I suggest that many of these criticisms are consistent with the debate between scientism and interpretivism, between objectivism and subjectivism with the latter seen as being less rigorous, valid and 'truthful.' In fact, storytelling is seen by qualitative researchers as a legitimate means of knowledge production. Qualitative researchers recognise that telling stories is an integral part of the human condition. Storytelling is seen within the parameters of narrative research which is important for critical theoretical scholars as it can open up understanding to different aspects of our social world (Fraser, 2004). Narrative researchers reject the notion of researcher objectivity and do not attempt to 'sanitize research by appealing to scientific facts and linear trajectories' (Fraser, 2004, p. 183). Recognising that there are no certainties in research, what storytelling produces are tentative, often iterative and fluid ideas which represent a plausible way of interpreting social phenomena. In using CRT and Black feminism to understand the (re)presentations of Black women in tourism I am providing my own interpretation as a Black woman, from a postcolonial island in the Caribbean. My intersectional subject positions as both Black and female has provided me with invaluable insights for the analysis of a fictional film about white female sex tourism, to (re)tell a story about tourism, race, and gender so that it brings Black women to the fore.

Ladson-Billings (2009) utilised film as a 'storytelling vehicle' (p. 89) in her CRT study of the representation of Black women teachers and the way in which they had been denigrated in this media. According to Ladson-Billings (2009) what makes this use of film as storytelling credible as a CRT strategy is the way in which the central message of the filmmaker is relegated to the margins while issues of race and gender become pivotal to understandings of the film. According to Yosso (2002), who also draws on CRT, entertainment media including film can perpetuate racism as well as gender oppression and critical analyses of film can effect social change. Yosso (2002) further

suggests that an analysis of film through the lens of CRT can serve as an important 'consciousness raising' (p.54) strategy.

The film analysed in this paper is about female sex tourism. The link between sex and tourism is well established in tourism studies (Carr, 2016; Cliff & Carter, 2000; Opperman, 1999; Ryan & Hall, 2001) and in sustainable tourism in particular (Kibicho, 2005; Bandyopadhyay & Nascimento, 2010; Yan, Xu & Zhou, 2018). Sex tourism is a complex phenomenon and goes beyond the rather simplistic definition of 'tourism for commercial sex purposes' (see Oppermann, 1995 for a more extensive discussion of the various dimensions of sex tourism) This paper is not focused on sex tourism *per se* as this has already been covered extensively elsewhere as previously indicated. What is important to note here is that none of these extant studies have drawn explicitly on CRT or black feminism as theoretical framings nor have they used narrative analysis/storytelling. Most have also been focused on the sex tourist as a Western (white) male and fewer have acknowledged the centrality of Western (white) women as sex tourists (but see Herold, Garcia, & DeMoya, 2001; Jeffreys, 2003; Pruitt & LaFont, 1995; Sanchez Taylor, 2006). Jamerson (2016) has suggested that sex tourism provides a noteworthy research area which can highlight racial dynamics in tourism. Sex tourism thus provides the backdrop to the current discussion which interrogates the way in which Black women have been (re)presented in film but I do not focus on the phenomenon of sex tourism itself.

My discussion focuses on the film *Heading South (Ver le Sud)* (running time approximately 104 minutes). The film was first shown at the Venice Film Festival in 2005 and then on general release in 2006 to primarily white audiences in Europe and America. I have selected this film as it is one of only two full length fiction films (dramas) that I am aware of that have focused on the power of whiteness particularly as this relates to women (the other film is *Paradise Love* which I have discussed elsewhere – Author, xx). I have examined *Heading South* in a previous publication through the prism of CRT (see Author xxx). In this earlier work I focused on the experiences of the white female sex tourists and their Black male 'lovers'. However, in this paper I bring the Black women in the film to the fore and discuss the ways in which they have been (re)presented.

Heading South is directed by a white Frenchman Lauren Cantet and I suggest that as such, the story of the film is filtered through a white, heterosexual male gaze. The ubiquitous concept of the 'tourist gaze' coined by John Urry (1990), simply put, refers to the power and authority that Western tourists have over the people and places that they visit. Of the myriad adaptations of this concept in tourism studies, that by Pritchard & Morgan (2000) who argued that tourism representations are gendered, and that the 'language of tourism...is scripted for a male heterosexual audience' (p. 886) is pertinent for this discussion. The 'male gaze' is authoritative because men, as the 'master subject' have the power to construct the media and create the images and identities. In this scenario women are often portrayed as one-dimensional (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). It is therefore apposite to interrogate how Black women (who suffer from double jeopardy due to racism and sexism) are (re)presented in this film. The film is set in the context of the political turmoil of late 1970s postcolonial Haiti and tells the story of three middle aged North American white female tourists who visit the island for sex with local young men or beach boys - Ellen (played by Charlotte Rampling), Brenda (played by Karen Young) and Sue (played by Louise Portal). Other central characters in the film are beach boy Legba (played by Mènothy Cesar) and hotel waiter and driver, Albert (played by Lys Ambroise).

REPRESENTATIONS OF BLACK WOMEN IN 'HEADING SOUTH'

Black women are not central characters in the film and are often (re)presented as foils for the key Black male protagonists. There is little if any interaction between the Black women in the film and the white female sex tourists. Interestingly the film's director claimed that the film was more political than it might first have appeared (CineEuropa, 22 January 2006). Yet while Black women are no doubt central to an understanding of the political context of the tumultuous environment of late 1970s Haiti, their characters are underdeveloped in contrast to the white female sex tourists who are the central characters and with whom the audience are encouraged to relate. In a review of the film (Holden, 2006), it is stated that the film is 'too sophisticated to demonise these women whose relationships with their young lovers are more tender and nourishing than overtly crass'. The question is, how are the Black women who appear in the film (re)presented and what does this say about tourism practices in the postcolonial world? In examining the film, I have drawn out two main

themes which articulate the ways in Black women are (re)presented – *Black female vulnerability* and *Black female submission*.

Black Female Vulnerability

The film opens with a well-dressed Black man in an airport building (we later learn that his name is Albert) where he has arrived to collect a white female tourist. While writing the name of the tourist (Brenda) on a small chalkboard he is approached by a smartly dressed Black woman who interrupts him and asks whether she can have a word. Albert, apparently unenthused by this interruption, indicates that he does not have much time to listen to what she has to say – he is initially quite dismissive albeit respectful. The woman recounts a story seemingly symptomatic of the poverty and danger that exists for the Black women of Haiti:

Woman: *Let me tell you this. Once we had a nice life. My husband was a sanitary inspector in the Public Health Department. But one day and I don't know why, he was handcuffed in his office, I never saw him again. Now I don't have a penny. I can't pay my rent, or my daughter's tuition. Sir, I may be ugly, but my daughter is like a gift from God. She's 15. She's as beautiful as she is sweet. She wants to be a nurse.*

Albert: *I'm sure she'll manage.*

Woman: *I'd feel very relieved sir if I knew she was with you.*

Albert: *Sorry, I'm not sure I understand you.*

Woman: *I want to give you my daughter.*

The woman's eyes travel behind Albert towards her daughter who is waiting a short distance away and she implores Albert to look at her. Albert turns to look and the camera pans to a young girl in a bright yellow dress. The girl's face is downcast and surrounding her, though seemingly oblivious and engrossed in conversation, are five men, one of whom is dressed in military fatigues, the others dressed in what appear to be security uniforms, perhaps representatives of the paramilitary army. On the wall is a large photo of the dictatorial Haitian President Jean Claude Duvalier. The location of the girl amongst this group of men, while they do not appear to be immediately threatening to her, augurs what might be the girl's fate if Albert fails to accept the woman's proposition. The woman continues her story:

Woman: *Unfortunately, being beautiful and poor in this country, she doesn't stand a chance...I always take her with me, so I can watch over her. But they won't think twice about killing me to grab her. I don't mind dying but I don't want them to have her. Please sir, take her with you.*

Albert (shaking his head): *I can't do that Madame.*

Woman: *Then may God be with you. Beware Sir, it's hard to tell the good masks from the bad. But everybody wears one.*

The woman then walks away, and Albert watches her departure dispassionately and then turns back to finish writing on his chalkboard which he then holds up to welcome his new tourist arrival. It is not immediately clear what the woman means by her final cryptic statement and it is only when the film ends that we are able to deconstruct this message – but I will return to this later. What is important at this point is that the white tourist who Albert is collecting at the airport (Brenda) exists in stark juxtaposition with the Black woman that Albert has just encountered. This woman lives in fear for her teenage daughter (whose aspiration of becoming a nurse is unlikely to be realised). Through sheer desperation she is forced to 'prostitute' her teenaged daughter to an older man who is a stranger, on the basis only that he appears to be well dressed (affluent). Yet the arriving tourist, Brenda, is free from fear and is welcomed and whisked off to her hotel by Albert only encountering the poverty on the streets of the city through the windows of the vehicle, at a distance. Interestingly the name of the hotel where Brenda will reside for the duration of her holiday and where Albert is employed as a waiter cum driver is called 'Hotel Petit Anse' which in French means 'small cove'. This is a metaphor for the way in which the hotel acts as a haven or shelter for the Western tourists from the outside world, and specifically the harsh realities of the Haitian city of Port-au-Prince in which environs the hotel is located.

A technique that is used in the film is that of the monologue. The audience is drawn into the personal lives of the three North American female sex tourists (Brenda, Sue and Ellen) through the use of monologues and these women narrate their personal experiences and thoughts directly into the camera, thus establishing an intimacy with the audience. The only other person in the film who performs a monologue is Albert but what is interesting in his case is that his is delivered as a thought process rather

than a speech act. Further he does not look directly into the camera when he delivers this monologue but is instead busy working in the hotel kitchen. Albert's thoughts provide a very powerful insight into his vituperative attitude towards white American tourists which contrasts with his outwardly welcoming performances. This is one instance which supports the statement made by the woman at the airport that we all wear masks. Indeed, Ellen also wears a mask – on the one hand she is contemptuous of the city of Port-au-Prince and its people and thus never leaves the hotel compound. On the other hand she is fascinated by, and consumed with love/lust, for the beach boy, Legba. In her monologue, Ellen recounts the following:

I turned 55 last month. There's nothing in Boston for women over 40. Don't contradict me. I've checked out every bar in that goddamn, stuck up city. And there's nothing there that is even close to Legba. How was such a handsome boy born here? On this dung heap? I was always drawn to the South, but I neglected Port-au-Prince. To me it was a hick town. Nowhere city. An animal compound. Now for 6 years, I've come every year for the whole summer. I always stay in this hotel. It's quiet, clean, the beach is beautiful. The moment I get here, I feel at home.

Importantly, none of the Black women in the film deliver monologues, they never speak directly to the film's audience. We therefore have no access to their inner thoughts, their feelings or their experiences such that we can develop an intimate connection with them in similar fashion to how, through the monologues of the main white female characters the audience is made to empathise with their situations. As such the Black women are largely silenced in the film and their vulnerability is manifested in their erasure from the foreground.

The vulnerability of the Black female body is also represented by Legba's former girlfriend who has been coerced into sexual slavery by one of the Colonels in Duvalier's army, in exchange for expensive gifts. This young woman remains nameless in the film (another sign of the erasure of the Black female body) and in her conversation with Legba in the Colonel's expensive car with its blacked-out windows she tells the following story:

Woman: *One night, two months ago, I was at a wake at a friend's house. Colonel Beauvais was there, with his wife and his daughters. He looked so serious that I didn't think he would notice me. The next day Frank came to fetch me. I don't know how he found me. When these people want something they always get it. I had no choice.*

Legba: *He raped you.*

Woman: *No that's not how it happens. They give you jewels, smiles, gifts, roses. But you know that this man who's giving you gifts and smiles, just for kicks, may gun down any fool who crosses his path. So the roses and gifts are like machine gun against your neck.*

Legba: *You seem to be doing fine*

Woman: *No Legba, you're not the one to judge me. Don't' lecture me. Look at the people around us. Like my sister, Maryse, the live-in maid who has to sleep with her boss and his son!*

Her story resonates with Legba's own situation as a beach boy who sells his sexual services to white women on the beach for money, nice clothes, and jewellery. In this way beach boys like Legba are feminised and thus their experiences are indistinguishable from the Black women in the film, demonstrating the fluidity of gender categorisations. One could argue that here Legba's situation is as complex as that of his ex-girlfriend - not only is he feminised through being controlled by the female tourists (like having a 'machine gun against his neck'), but his life is also in danger in the context of the ubiquitous political violence and instability of late 1970s Haiti.

The next time we encounter this woman, her dead body, like that of Legba's, has been dumped on the beach of the hotel where he had his sexual encounters with the female sex tourists. Both had been murdered elsewhere and taken to this very beach perhaps as a kind of warning to others who might dare to challenge the order of things. Ironically, in the conversation in the car, the woman had demanded that Legba promise her that they would meet again – and they had, not in life, but this time in death. Black women, and those like Legba who are feminised as such, are therefore disposable further highlighting their vulnerability.

Black Female submission

The other dominant (re)presentation of Black women in the film is one of submission. The Black women who work at the resort are either waitresses or cooks and they are apparently managed by Albert who oversees the hotel restaurant. They are often portrayed in blurred, or distant shots in the background, or peripheral to the main characters in the film. Thus, their bodies are mostly indecipherable and have no material presence. The other Black women that we see in the film are in dance scenes at clubs (and only dancing with Black men), women who sell the fish brought in by their fishermen, women who sell their wares and vegetables/fruits in the markets in the city and two women who watch the young men and boys playing football in the streets. Some of these women speak a few lines in the film, but most of the women are generally silent. The other woman that we see is Legba's mother.

Only two of the Black women in the film have names – one is Denise, a waitress who is requested by Albert to take care of Brenda when she first arrives at the hotel and the other is Maryse, the sister of Legba's ex-girlfriend who is only referred to as part of the story that she recounts to him in the car. The audience never see Maryse. All these Black women are (re)presented as submissive, as accepting of their roles and positions in the society and in tourism. Most of them are working in servile roles and while they clearly know what is happening in the sex tourism industry and are also aware of the political situation in Haiti, they seem to accept both as normal and show no signs of resistance to either. The same cannot be said of the Black men portrayed in the film – Albert expresses his resistance to sex tourism in his monologue and in the way that he seeks to exclude Legba from eating in the restaurant; Legba shows resistance to attempts by the female sex tourists to control him. In the end he offers his last bastion of resistance -preferring to die than become a 'sex slave' for Ellen; a young boy Eddy (who frequently appears in the film and is apparently in 'training' to become a beach boy) shows his resistance when he tries to intervene in an incident with one of Duvalier's paramilitary troops who takes a drink without paying from a boy who is selling in the streets of the city. But none of the Black women show any signs of even covert resistance to the double exploitation of both the political regime in Haiti and the sex tourism industry.

There are a few instances in the film when the Black women demonstrate that they are conscious of white female sex tourism but accept it as normal. The first is when Legba is leaving Ellen's cottage after a night of sex and meets two of the waitresses as he passes the restaurant. The following is the conversation they have:

Legba: *Hi ladies*

Waitress 1: (kisses Legba on the cheek): *Had a nice night?*

Legba: *I'm wiped out*

Waitress 1: *Aahh*

Waitress 2 (Legba kisses her on the cheek): *Shall we trade places? You sweep the floor and I do the screwing.*

(Both waitresses laugh)

Legba: *Our lady guests won't agree*

Waitress 2: *Who were you with?*

Legba: *That's confidential*

(the women laugh again)

Towards the end of the film when Legba realises that he will soon be murdered by one of the Colonel's henchmen he goes to visit his mother. His mother looks tired and shows no sign of shock or surprise when he turns up after an absence of two weeks even though she says she was worried and had looked for him at the hospitals and in the prisons. His mother is aware of the danger that exists for her son as the following conversation demonstrates:

Mother: *I don't have much, but you can come back and live here. You should stay with me*

Legba: *Mum, cut it out*

Mother: *I'm afraid for you.*

Legba: *Mum!*

Mother: *You know I am afraid*

(Legba takes a wad of money out of his pocket and hands it to his mother)

Legba: *I came to give you this*

Mother: *Where did you get all that money?*

Legba: *I work*

His mother does not ask him what kind of work he does, she only gives him a long, telling look and then hugs him and thanks him for the money. Legba tells her he must go. She does not implore him to stay. Instead, she watches him from the door as he departs perhaps knowing that will be the last time that she sees her son.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Black feminist theory emerged due to the invisibility of Black women in both discourses of racism and of sexism. Black feminism argued for an intersectional approach that would recognise the way in which Black women suffered from interlocking oppressions – for Black feminists it was not about race or sexism but race **and** sexism (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins, 1990). In the film, *Heading South*, white women are racialised as privileged while Black women are largely silenced and where they do appear in the film they are portrayed as scarcely having any agency over their own lives. I argue that this erasure of Black women as agentic subjects and the way they are (re)presented as disempowered has implications for the development of tourism that seeks to be sustainable. This is because of the importance of women (Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015) and of race (Jamerson, 2016) to tourism.

In *Heading South* Black women largely exist in the background. In the context of the political instability in Haiti Black women are (re)presented as vulnerable and as submissive vis a vis the white female sex tourist whose white privilege renders her immune to the perils of the dictatorial Haitian regime. Even the main Black male protagonist in the film is portrayed as feminised and thus rendered vulnerable in so far as he is economically dependent on the female sex tourists and can only escape his dependency through the extreme measure of death. These gendered and racialised tropes contrast starkly with the portrayals of the white female sex tourists who are free to move through time and space. At the end of the film, we do not know what happens to the Black women portrayed in the film apart from Legba's ex-girlfriend who is reunited with him in death. However, after Legba's death the three white women take different paths – Sue remains in the resort, and Ellen returns to her home in America. However, Brenda, almost immediately recovers from Legba's murder, and vows to continue her travels. Her final words are instructive as we see her on a

boat headed to another Caribbean island, a slight smile on her face and her hair blowing in the wind:

Brenda; Of course, I won't go back home. Besides I don't have a house anymore, or a husband. I want nothing to do with men from the North. I want to visit other islands in the Caribbean – Cuba, Guadeloupe, Barbados, Martinique, Trinidad, Bahamas. They have such lovely names. I want to know them all.

The Black women and Legba, who is feminised and racialised, cannot escape their material realities of poverty and danger. They have submitted to their condition. They cannot and will never **know** the other Caribbean islands.

The paper has several limitations which also constitute areas for further research. First, I have not focused on other socially constructed identifications such as sexuality, class, nationality and (dis)ability. Indeed, the film promoted heteronormativity and ableism and there were clear class differences between the white female sex tourists and the Black women (albeit in a postcolonial context race and class are often intertwined). In the context of CRT, examining how race intersects with a host of other identifications is important and further research could focus on how race intersects with other key identifications such as sexuality. What this discussion perhaps illustrates is the complexity of doing intersectional work and how in reality it is extremely difficult to separate identity categories as Trinh (1989) suggested.

I have focused here on the intersection between gender and race partly due to the ways in which I position myself, partly due to the issues that emerged from the film, and partly as these are the socially constructed identifications that are of most prominence in research that subscribes to CRT and the related logics of Black feminism. CRT is an important theoretical approach which seeks to highlight racial injustice in our societies and Black feminism (which is related to CRT) focuses on injustices that exist at the intersection between race and gender. Black women, as the film demonstrates, are often (re)presented in sustainable tourism and tourism more widely as an absent presence in so far as they are rarely portrayed as having agency. As issues of equity and justice are important for sustainable tourism then it is

critical that we understand the extent to which Black women, who play a crucial role in tourism development in the Global South, are erased from the tourism landscape.

Second, I have not explored the film's reception by its audiences. Rather my focus has been on the film's (re)presentations and how this might be interpreted recognising that my interpretations have been influenced by my own positionality. There might be other interpretations that are equally plausible and that can be explored by future researchers. Third, and in a related point, as with any choice of methodology there are limitations. The use of storytelling through popular media such as film though a creative qualitative technique, is scarcely used in sustainable tourism research and is therefore subject to the usual criticisms associated with the use of qualitative methods some of which I have already enumerated. Another issue here is that there is insufficient evidence that supports a direct relationship between the discourse in films and praxis. However, it has been argued that media representations can influence perceptions of reality (Eschholz, Bufkin & Long, 2002) and it would not be farfetched to suggest that the way in which Black women are (re)presented in such fictional films can serve to reinforce racial stereotypes that have material effects. Critical sustainable tourism researchers could use this creative technique to analyse other intersectional problematics.

Despite these limitations, this film has highlighted an issue that has been largely obscured in the literature on sustainable tourism – how intersectionality particularly that between race and gender provides an important lens through which we can understand issues of equity in sustainable tourism. That is, the focus of this film on female sex tourism has illustrated the power of whiteness and the way in which it relegates Black women to the margins and (re)presents them as vulnerable and disempowered in tourism. Such (re)presentation perhaps belies the reality of their experiences and role in the tourism sector in the postcolonial world. The white women in the film are (re)presented as having much more depth as characters in contrast to the Black women who are (re)presented as one-dimensional. Such limited and limiting (re)presentations has implications for the way in which tourism is developed and experienced in postcolonial societies which strive towards more sustainable and more equitable practices. This (re)presentation of Black women in the developing

world is in stark contrast with the self-representations of Black women in the United States where there is talk of a new Black Travel Movement that is significantly powered by Black millennial women who express their travel experiences using digital and social media (see Gill, 2019).

I am cognisant of the problematics associated with establishing such binary oppositions between racialised terms such as black/white as I indicated earlier in the paper. My use of these concepts is political, mirroring that of Black British feminists (e.g., Mirza, 1997) and focused on highlighting the conditions of Black women in a postcolonial tourism context which is where I position myself. I also believe in the value of using the tenets of CRT to expose intersectional marginalisation (in this case between gender and race) with the goal of achieving social justice. In the title of this paper, I posed the question, referring to women in tourism – “are we all in this together”? Hopefully, I have demonstrated that the answer to this question, at least for postcolonial Black women in tourism, is not positive. And until the answer to this question is affirmative then global moves towards equity in sustainable tourism will remain illusory.

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