EXOTIC FEMININITY: PROSTITUTION REVIEWS AND THE SEXUAL STEREOTYPING OF ASIAN WOMEN

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Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2014

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Dougherty, Devyn T. Exotic Femininity: Prostitution Reviews and the Sexual Stereotyping of Asian Women. Master of Arts (Sociology), December 2014, 55 pp., 7 tables, references, 31 titles.

Studies on prostitution have typically focused on the experiences, problems, and histories of prostitutes, rather than examining men who seek to purchase sex. Race has also been overlooked as a central factor in shaping the sex industry and the motivations of men who seek to purchase sex. This study utilizes online reviews of prostitutes to examine the way men who purchase sex discuss Asian prostitutes in comparison to White prostitutes. This paper traces the history of colonialism and ideas of the exotic Orient to modern stereotypes of Asian women. These stereotypes are then used to frame a quantitative and qualitative analysis of online reviews of prostitutes and compare the ways in which Asian prostitutes and white prostitutes are discussed. Further, the reviews are used to examine more broadly what services, traits, and behaviors are considered desirable by men who use prostitutes. The study finds that there are significant quantitative and qualitative differences in how men discuss Asian and White prostitutes within their reviews, and that these differences appear to be shaped by racially fetishizing stereotypes of Asian women. Prostitution also appears to reinforce male dominance and patriarchy in the form of masculine control and the feminine servicing of male sexual and emotional needs.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would to thank my committee for their support, dedication, and time. I would especially like to thank Dr. Cready for her encouragement and help with improving the statistical analysis, and her endless patience for my concerns. I would like to thank Dr. Yancey for providing direction in sociological theory, which allowed me to better frame my research and tie it all together. I would also like to thank Dr. Phillips for pushing me (and all of her other women's studies students) to consider and reconsider ideas and history when undertaking an analysis. All of them have been invaluable to me as a student and the development of this project.

Thank you to my family for supporting me, and for all the home-cooked meals when I was too busy to bother with anything but the microwave. Of course, thank you to my wonderful partner for being there for me whenever the stress seemed too much, and for being an ear to bounce ideas off of. I would also like to thank my best friend, for all her immeasurable support and encouragement. Finally, thank you to my favorite band for helping me meet these wonderful people and providing the best music to work to.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES vi

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1

Research Questions 2

Significance of the Study 4

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW 7

History of the Exotic Orient 7

Stereotyping, the Perpetual Foreigner, and the Exotic 9

Contemporary Portrayals of Asian Femininities 11

Objectification and Dehumanization 12

Fetishizing Asian Women in Heterosexual Relations 15

CHAPTER 3 METHODS 18

Data Source and Sample 18

Coding 21

Variables and Operational Definitions 22

Reliability 25

Analytic Strategies 26

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS 27

Description of the Sample 27

Quantitative Analysis of Race Effects 32

Qualitative Analysis of Race Effects 34

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS 45

Review 45

Limitations 48

Future Research 49

Conclusion 50

REFERENCES 52

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 1 Description of the Sample: Race of Prostitute Reviewed 27

Table 2 Description of the Sample: Time and Price of Prostitute's Service 29

Table 3 Description of Final Sample Content Analysis 30

Table 4 Cross-Tabulation of Race and Race Mention 32

Table 5 Cross-Tabulation of Race and Race-Mention Frequency 33

Table 6 Cross-Tabulation of Race and Size Descriptions 33

Table 7 Cross-Tabulation of Race and Frequency of Words Describing Smallness in Reviews 34

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ideas and images of sexuality, especially in its commercialized forms, do not exist on neutral political grounds. Sexuality and the institutions related to it are more than simple manifestations of natural and universal biological urges: like other parts of society, they are influenced by history and social context. The forces of sexism, racism, and capitalism all take part in the construction of sexuality and its various manifestations in human relationships, whether these are romantic, sexual, or a combination of both. In the case of prostitution, the results of these forces are often taken for granted: that most prostitutes are female, and most buyers are male, is treated as a natural and inevitable fact that may go without mention. The ties of the sex industry to the history of colonialism and military expansion is taken as an inevitable outgrowth (and result of) men's "biological needs," rather than a complex process which both influences and is influenced by Western ideas of race, sexuality, and economic exchange.

When prostitution is discussed or examined by scholars and the general public, the majority of inquiries tend to focus on the "supply side" of the industry – the prostitute. Debates about choice, objectification, inequality and abuse tend to center around the women in the industry, both because this role is the most visible and because discussions of women's sexuality often serve as a titillating subject matter. What remains invisible in these debates is the "demand side" of the industry: men who purchase sex.

In recent years, some feminists have attempted to bring this side of the industry to the forefront of their activism and scholarship. Rejecting the traditional image of the "corrupted" or

"fallen" woman, they refuse to see prostitution as a manifestation of women's sexuality: instead, they argue that the industry is created and built around male demands for sexual access to women (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women [CATW], 2001; Dworkin, 1989; Farley et al., 2003; Jeffreys, 2009, MacKinnon, 1993). To understand prostitution, then, it is necessary to look at the men who purchase sex rather just at the women who sell it.

Neither prostitutes nor men who purchase their services are easily accessible to researchers. However, unlike prostitutes who may use social services in order to exit prostitution or seek help for poverty and drug addiction, the men who purchase their services do not need or obtain the same help and, thus, are even more difficult to study. As a result, the few examinations of men who purchase sex have typically been conducted by anti-trafficking organizations or by journalists, and the majority of these have focused primarily on collecting statistical data or face-to-face interviews to try and describe this previously invisible population (Eaves, 2009; Malarek, 2009; Monto & Milrod, 2013). Recently, however, online communities in which men openly describe and review their experiences with "punting" – a slang term for the hobby-like use of prostitutes – have developed. In the current study, I used reviews posted by men in one such community to investigate the "demand-side" of the sex industry.

Research Questions

In particular, I conducted a content analysis of a sample of reviews from the community's website to examine men's perceptions of race and sexuality in relation to Asian (and, for comparison) White women and to further examine their ideas about prostitution as a whole. Broadly speaking, my research question was: Do men who review Asian female prostitutes talk about them differently than men who review White female prostitutes? More

specifically, are men's descriptions of Asian women informed by racially sexualized images and stereotypes of Asian femininity?

These questions were placed within the context of colonialist history and the concept of the "exotic Orient." I linked the colonial past to predominant media images and stereotypes of Asian women and femininity today, and I used this framework and both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze men's reviews of Asian and White female prostitutes. For the quantitative analysis, I coded each of the sampled reviews on a number of characteristics, including mentions of traits typically emphasized in racially sexualized images of Asian women, and used cross-tabulations and the chi-squared test to examine whether these traits differed by race of prostitute. That is, did men mention race more frequently for Asian prostitutes than they did for White prostitutes? If race is mentioned more frequently for Asian prostitutes than for White prostitutes, it may speak to the typically invisible nature of whiteness. Further, it may suggest that men notice and use race in their decisions of which prostitutes to visit and in how they perceive their service. In addition, did men describe physical attributes and use language reflecting the racialized fetishization of Asian women more often than they did for White women? Traits considered to be features of Asian women's femininity that have been sexualized, such as small stature or submissiveness, may be indicators that men look at Asian prostitutes through a racialized and sexualized lens that they do not apply to White women. Further, if there is a racial difference in the mention of these traits in the men's reviews, it might demonstrate the continuation of colonialist images of Asian women to the present day.

For a more in-depth and nuanced examination of the racial differences revealed by the quantitative analysis, I also conducted a qualitative analysis of the reviews. This analysis was

guided by two questions. First, what qualitative differences were there in the way men described Asian prostitutes and White prostitutes? Although differences in the frequency that men mentioned race and racially fetishized traits may serve as quantitative evidence that they discuss Asian prostitutes and White prostitutes differently, this may not be sufficient for establishing the nature of these differences. Thus, a qualitative analysis was undertaken to show how language is being used within the reviews and compare it with racial stereotypes of Asian women.

Second, what did men see as positive traits for a prostitute to have, and what did they discuss negatively? And, were these preferences related to the race of prostitutes? Gathering an idea of what men seek out in prostitution may help generate an understanding of what men who seek out Asian prostitutes favor about them. Unlike in dating, in which individuals often meet through their social networks, prostitution typically involves a deliberate selection of a woman and services. Thus, if men tend to favor particular traits, services, or acts within their review, an association of these with Asian women may be part of the motivation for men who choose to buy sex from Asian prostitutes.

Significance of the Study

Throughout history, prostitution has had a conflicted and often contradictory relationship with the state. Frequently made illegal, or at least illegal in some forms, it is considered part of what the United Nations terms “the non-observed economy,” as it is an economic exchange that is forbidden by law or forbidden when carried out under unregulated circumstances (United Nations, 2008). Some feminist theorists, however, view prostitution as more than just an underground economy, and instead view it as a symptom of the broader

subjugation of women. Although there has been a push in recent years to identify prostitution as a simple economic exchange between equally free actors, anti-prostitution feminists argue that this perspective ignores the context of patriarchy, economic inequality, and the historical influence of colonialism (Jeffreys, 2009). In a study of prostitution in nine countries, Farley et al. (2003) found that: 89% of prostitutes interviewed wished to leave the industry but saw no other options; 68% met the requirements for post-traumatic stress disorder; and a majority had experienced some form of violence (such as physical assault or rape). These figures suggest that prostitution should be looked at through a critical lens which takes into account the prevalence of violence against women, and how these relate to the forces of sexism, racism, and capitalism.

Historically, the focus of prostitution regulations, studies, activism, and debates, has been on the role of the female prostitute. The desire and demand for commercialized sex are taken for granted as part of the "natural" male sex drive, and as a result, the role and perspectives of the buyers – colloquially termed "johns," or more formally as "clients" – have been made invisible (Jeffreys, 2009). The question of how men who use prostitutes view them has largely remained unanswered.

Far from being a neutral site of sexual desire, the demand for prostitution has been heavily influenced by notions of race: sexual tourism exists for Westerners seeking an "exotic" experience with prostitution abroad, and pornography often markets itself in an explicitly racialized manner (Jeffreys, 2009; O'Connell Davidson, 1998; Cowan and Campbell, 1994). In a study carried out by Eaves (2009), an anti-trafficking and prostitution exit organization located in the United Kingdom, researchers found that when men were asked why they purchased sex,

the most common answer was for entertainment or to satisfy an immediate sexual urge (32%). However, the second most common answer was “seeking variety” and “seeking certain physical, racial, and sexual stereotypes” (21%). Thus, an understanding of the role race and racial stereotyping plays within prostitution is not only important to understanding how the institution is racialized, but also to understanding the shape of the sex industry’s demand.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the Exotic Orient

The history of Asian and White interaction cannot be interrogated without a thorough examination of colonialism, particularly in relation to prostitution (Woan, 2008). Colonized countries are often feminized and juxtaposed as innocent, sensual, and primitive in contrast to the masculinized rationality of the colonizing Western nations (O'Brien, 2006). While Asian immigration has been a notable phenomenon in Western countries since the 19th century, even drawing punitive legislation in the United States, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act, ideas about Asian femininity were first shaped by early encounters taking place within Asian nations.

Historically, interracial sexual contact between the colonizer and the colonized has taken the form of heterosexual prostitution, "where white men purchased the sexual services of native women," which may explain why literature discussing Asian women in prostitution has predominantly focused on sex tourism and military prostitution (Levine, 2000). Indeed, some scholars argue that the legacy of "rest and recreation" (R&R) areas around military bases is part of what fuels the culture of prostitution in the United States, which in turn contributes to the contemporary trafficking and exploitation of Asian women (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2001).

In the context of these relationships, White men in Western nations developed ideas about Asian women which separated them from the women "back home." White femininity and Asian femininity were thus distinguished early on, as O'Brien (2006) demonstrates by pointing out the racialized story given by Charles Meiners in his *History of the Female Sex*.

Meiners argued that there were two categories of racial origin, one Caucasian, and the other Mongol. All "inferior" nations were lumped in as Mongols, including Asians, Pacific Islanders, Africans, and the Slavs; these were deemed to exist in a primitive and sensual state between animal and the full humanity of Europeans (who were Caucasian).

To demonstrate the impact colonialism had on the development of the sex trade, O'Brien (2006) examines the change in perceptions of sexuality among Pacific women. In Pacific colonies, the sexuality of the colonized women was altered to accommodate that of the colonizing men, who in their own culture had little conception or view of female sexual pleasure. Instead, female pleasure was "equated with her ability to satisfy her partner," and this was seen as a principle motivating factor for colonized women in sexual relations (O'Brien, 2006, p. 90). At the same time that Pacific women were seen and portrayed as innately erotic and passionate, frigidity and restraint were considered desirable traits for White women with class status, as sexual purity was a necessity to maintain certain patrilineal heritage. Thus, two opposing models of femininity were created: one for class-privileged white women, who were expected to maintain the boundaries of the family, and another for "exotic" women or otherwise "fallen" women, who were seen as a viable outlet for the inevitable and natural sexual desires of White men.

Although not falling under the same period of history as colonialism, the occupation of Japan by American soldiers after World War II serves as a more modern example of the form that interactions between White men and Asian women took in Asian countries. In discussing the relations between soldiers and Japanese women, Spickard (1989) says that Japanese

women became known among Western troops for their “attractiveness, grace, and sexual ingenuity” (p. 125).

According to Spickard (1989), soldiers were generally discouraged from commitment that might take the form of marriage, while prostitution was encouraged. Some viewed men who sought out Japanese women for marriage as having a failed masculinity; because Japanese women were seen as more docile and less threatening, they were considered to be a safer alternative for men found lacking in traditional masculinity. Pursuing Japanese women for sexual relationships was considered acceptable (and even encouraged) due to the perceived need for an “outlet,” while pursuing them for long-term commitments such as marriage brought questions about a soldier’s motivations and potential character flaws. These dynamics suggest a continuation of the contrast between the “respectable” White woman, who was suited for marriage, and the “sensual” Asian woman, who was suited only for temporary sexual relations.

Stereotyping, the Perpetual Foreigner, and the Exotic

Broadly defined, stereotyping refers to the “the typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a particular social group” and are “perceived to reflect the essence of a group” (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010). Stereotypes also create expectations about group members’ expected behavior; subsequently, behavior and characteristics which are consistent with this stereotype also become more noticeable, further confirming the stereotype. Stereotypes may be transmitted through media, socialization, and language, all of which are shaped by history.

Although many may argue that it is not socially acceptable to openly express racist or racially stereotyping views, or that stereotypes have largely diminished, Sniderman and Piazza (1993) suggest that this is not the case: instead, negative characterizations of races (in their specific study, of blacks) are routinely and openly expressed despite the *de jure* changes that have taken place with regards to racial discrimination. When the topic is related to attractiveness, such as a sexual preference for one race over another, opinions may be even less hidden, as these are not considered to be negative stereotypes which might lead to discrimination (Prasso, 2005).

In a review of stereotypes of Asian Americans, Lee, Wong, and Alvarez (2009) discuss the existence of two persistent stereotypes: the "model minority" stereotype and the stereotype that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners. The "model minority" stereotype is typically limited to discussions of achievement with regards to income and education; Asian Americans are seen as "models" in comparison to other minorities due to their alleged ability to achieve parity with whites with regards to income, the workforce, and education. The perpetual foreigner stereotype suggests that Asian Americans are unable to assimilate to American society, largely due to the association between Americanness and whiteness. Further, it obscures heterogeneity between among Asian Americans, lumping all into the broad category of "Asian" rather than recognizing the specific histories and circumstances of their ethnicities.

In this sense, ideas and images of the "exotic Orient" may continue to be applied to Asian individuals in Western countries even when they have fully assimilated with regards to citizenship or have become a substantially sized minority. Perpetual foreignness may thus

create a perpetual sense of “exoticism,” meaning that sexual stereotypes about Asian women originating in colonialist images of their sexuality will continue to be reflected in popular culture and beliefs about the “essence” of Asian women (O’Brien, 2006).

Contemporary Portrayals of Asian Femininities

O’Brien (2006) argues that the exotic image developed during colonialist eras persists in contemporary ideas of race, gender, and sexualities. Despite the diversity of national origins of Asian women, and the cultural and historical differences that exist between them, Western perspectives of race tend to place them all into the broad grouping of “Asian”—thus, stories and stereotypes about prostitution in Vietnam originating from R&R areas still have an effect on the perceptions of non-Vietnamese Asian women, and Occidental accounts of geishas may end up being applied to Chinese or Korean women.

Although some scholars focus on the Asian American experience within the United States, and others on that of Asian women within Europe, a consistent stereotype of Asian femininity emerges in both locations. Within popular culture, two dominant stereotypes of Asian women exist, both of which center around sexuality. On one end, there is the Dragon Lady, who is a “special Asian mix of sexual perversity, moral depravity, and drive for domination.” On the other end lies the submissive Lotus Blossom, who “projects a more welcoming image of exotic differences and exotic possibilities” (Kang, 2002, p. 72).

The Dragon Lady image represents the foreign and dangerous form sexuality may take in the “exotic.” Characters created in this image typically succeed not through physical strength but through manipulation, cunning, or other forms of underhandedness (Kang, 2002). Although they remain sexualized, this sexuality is portrayed as dangerous to the typically White male

protagonist, and serves as a contrast to the safer femininity of White women or "good" Asian women. As suggested by the connotations of power and dangerousness, if the Dragon Lady image were to be found in prostitution, it would likely take the form of fetish play, in the form of female domination.

The safer, but still sexualized, image of the Lotus Blossom predominates in art, Hollywood, and prostitution. Although she is also portrayed as exotic, unlike the Dragon Lady, she is safe for White men to pursue, as she prioritizes their interests and their pleasure above all else. In the classic example of *Madame Butterfly*, a Japanese woman has "loyal, undying love" for the White military official who left her behind (Prasso, 2005, p. 87). Prasso (2005) sums up the stereotypes of Asian women on the Hollywood screen that originated in the 1920s, noting that it is the submissive, docile, and eager-to-please characters that are considered and portrayed as sexually desirable. These portrayals of the Lotus Blossom are almost always accompanied by a depiction of an interracial relationship between a White man and an Asian woman, which serves to validate his superior masculinity and virility (Kang, 2002). Although other representations have emerged since then, such as the portrayal of Asian women as victims of war or as martial arts masters, the image of the Lotus Blossom continues to dominate within the sex industry.

Objectification and Dehumanization

Before examining the specific fetishization of Asian women within heterosexual relationships and sexual encounters, it is important to conceptualize what this "fetishization" means. By definition, the fetishization of a person or, in this case, an entire race, would mean

treating and perceiving them as a sexualized object. To make them into this object, fetishization thus requires the dehumanization of the person or persons of focus.

In an integrative review of the literature on dehumanization, Haslam (2006) proposes two different forms of dehumanization. The first, termed "animalistic dehumanization," denies the dehumanized individual or group attributes considered to be uniquely human, such as civility, refinement, logic, and moral sensibility (Haslam, 2006, p. 257). Haslam notes that this form of dehumanization is more common to relations with an out group, such as between racial or ethnic groups. Thus, the perception of colonizers that Asian women are less restrained and more sexual than White women could be seen as a form of animalistic dehumanization which creates a justification for their domination and use within prostitution. Thus, stereotypes of Asian women, such as colonialist images of Asian femininity and the more contemporary stereotypes of the Lotus Blossom and the Dragon Lady which have developed from these images, shape the form that dehumanization takes for specific racial groups.

The second form of dehumanization, "mechanistic dehumanization," may have more applicability to the specific circumstances of prostitution. Under this form of dehumanization, individuals are denied traits attributed to an intrinsic human nature, such as "emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness, agency/individuality, and depth" (Haslam, 2006, p. 257). Individuals may be used as a means to an end, and thus are objectified and treated as interchangeable. Haslam notes the similarities between feminist theorizing on the objectification of women and mechanistic dehumanization, noting that Nussbaum (1999) had previously described a similar phenomenon involved in the portrayal and use of women in pornography.

As this paper also analyzes the view of women within a sex industry, Nussbaum's (1999) conceptualization of objectification is useful in its ability to delve deeper into the specific issues that arise with sexual objectification. Going beyond the definition of objectification as simply treating a human being as an object, Nussbaum (1999) describes seven essential notions that are involved in the idea of objectification:

1. Instrumentality. The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purposes

2. Denial of autonomy. The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination

3. Inertness. The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity

4. Fungibility. The objectifier treats the object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type and/or (b) with objects of other types

5. Violability. The objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into

6. Ownership. The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc.

7. Denial of subjectivity. The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account (p. 218)

Ownership, fungibility, and instrumentality are argued by many feminists, such as Jeffreys (2009) and Dworkin (1989), to be inherent features of prostitution and pornography. By its nature as an industry, women are assigned a price and picked from among many other

prostitutes for the purpose of satisfying male sexual demand. In this way, they are considered to be buyable and sellable, and further to be interchangeable with other such "goods." The sexual stereotyping of Asian women created by the image of the Lotus Blossom may further contribute to their interchangeability by suggesting an essential and universal nature exists which is common to all Asian women. Violability also appears to be present, judging by the high rates of abuse faced by prostitutes and perhaps even by many of the sexual demands placed on prostitutes by their clients (Farley et al., 2003).

Fetishizing Asian Women in Heterosexual Relations

As Prasso (2005) notes, many do not see the stereotypes of the Dragon Lady, the Lotus Blossom, and the fetishization of Asian women as racist or dehumanizing, because they are not negative. However, the fetishization of Asian women takes on the quality of power relations, as White men may aggressively pursue Asian women, burdening them with the expectations of what an Asian girlfriend or sexual partner "should" act or look like (Prasso, 2005). These images of what Asian women "should" be are, in most cases, heavily influenced by the stereotype of the Lotus Blossom, and focus around the greater levels of femininity Asian women supposedly hold in comparison to women of other races. In one study of the perceptions of femininity and masculinity in different racial groups, Asian women were stereotyped to be the most feminine racial group, in comparison to White and Black women (Wilkins, Chan, & Kaiser, 2011). However, this study was limited by its small sample size of 32 and, for the purpose of examining heterosexual interactions between White men and Asian women, by the fact that it primarily sampled females.

Although few studies have examined portrayals of Asian women within Western sex industries, some have examined portrayals of Asian women as "mail-order" brides or dating partners (Villipando, 1989; So, 2006). In most portrayals of mail-order brides or discussions of dating Asian women, they are held up as a "model minority" of femininity in contrast to the White women of today. For example, unlike White women, Asian women are seen as "knowing their place," largely because they are seen as uninfluenced by the Western philosophy of feminism, which would lead them to focus on their own sexual pleasure and equality (Woan, 2008). Within the sex industry, escorts may also be specifically marketed based on their race. One such page of advertisements, for example, addresses the women as "Oriental flowers," "Oriental exotics," and features massage parlors named "Geisha House" or "Asian Palace" (Prasso, 2005, p. 13).

Kim (2011) interviewed White men who sought out Asian women as partners and found that they explicitly expressed interest in their "exotic" beauty (such as black hair and petite frames) and differentiated them from White women. Further, despite the fact that most of the men sampled initially denied the stereotype that Asian women are sexually submissive, they often went on to describe them in such a way. In addition, echoing the views of some of the soldiers who occupied Japan after World War II, interviewees described Asian women as a secondary option. That is, lacking what they viewed as the necessary physical attractiveness or social and economic resources to successfully date attractive White women, they "settled" for Asian women instead (Spickard, 1989; Kim, 2011).

In prostitution, however, men are able to use their economic resources to access women of all races. Thus, in this context, the choice to seek out Asian women in prostitution

may be motivated by the racial fetishism inspired by the image of the Lotus Blossom. To better understand how these images may influence the sex industry and the treatment of women within it, there is a need to examine the racial views and attitudes of men who use prostitutes. Surveying men who use prostitutes, however, is a difficult task: not only is prostitution illegal in most countries, but the discovery of participation in these activities may result in conflict with the buyer's social roles, such as in the case of married men or those who must maintain a certain image for their occupation. On the internet, however, there exist numerous websites where men freely describe their experiences with prostitutes, both in the domestic industry and in sex tourism. In this study, I analyzed men's publically posted "reviews" of prostitutes to one of these websites through both quantitative and qualitative lenses to investigate men's racial and sexual views.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Data Source and Sample

PunterNet UK describes itself as "the premier online community for Patrons and Providers of Adult Personal Services in the UK" ("Punternet," 2014). The website provides a directory for men seeking to find prostitutes, allowing them to browse through this directory or search for a woman or escort agency to pay for sexual services. (The site explicitly discusses interaction between "ladies" and directs information at male customers, presumably excluding homosexual transactions.) In addition to serving as a directory of prostitution services and agencies, PunterNet also allows its users to leave reviews of their experience. These reviews are often quite explicit, and there appears to be a sense of camaraderie between users, as demonstrated within the content of the reviews and by the site feature which asks users to mark their experience as either "recommended" or "not recommended." Thus, as such, these reviews seem to be capturing how men speak to other men about gender, sex, and race, and in this sense, they may have an advantage over data collected using more intrusive methods. Although users are required to register an account before leaving reviews, the website asks for nothing other than an email address, contributing to the anonymity of reviewers and perhaps removing the potential effects of social desirability that plague responses to interview questions and survey items about sensitive topics.

A multi-step process was used to select a sample of 300 reviews (of 150 Asian prostitutes and 150 White prostitutes) from the website. The features of the website itself, which allow for users to search for prostitutes and reviews by race, were utilized in the sample

selection process. Due to the difference in population size for reviews of Asian women compared to that of White women, and the fact that many White women were left "unmarked" regarding their race/ethnicity in the website's database, two different methods were employed to select the sample of reviews for the study.

For Asian women, the website's search feature was used to obtain all reviews in which the prostitute was identified as ethnically "Asian – Orient." A total of 97 reviews were collected this way, which were then downloaded in PDF format. To obtain further reviews, the word "Asian" was searched in order to locate all agencies and brothels advertising themselves as offering exclusively Asian women (as denoted from title and description). A total of 790 reviews were gathered this way and also downloaded.

For Asian women, random selection was used to select 75 of the 97 reviews obtained via the search method; random selection was also used to select 75 reviews from the 790 reviews gathered from escort agencies which advertised themselves as offering Asian women. These 150 cases were reviewed to ensure they were appropriate for inclusion. Two reviews were excluded because they were repeats of already-included reviews (i.e., reviewers had posted the same content twice). Thus, the final sample included 148 reviews of Asian prostitutes.

For White women, similar procedures were used. The website's search feature was used to obtain reviews in which the prostitute was marked by the website as racially/ethnically "White." All 45 reviews found in this way were downloaded in PDF format. The layout of the site, and the fact that most White prostitutes remain unmarked for race/ethnicity, makes it impossible to ascertain the total number of White prostitutes listed on the site. Thus, due to

the massive number of reviews of White (i.e., mostly "unmarked") women on the site, a different method was employed to obtain the rest of the reviews. First, a list of escort agencies was obtained by using the search option "Agency/Parlours." Next, since the agencies were listed 10 to a "page," I selected a random number *k* between 1 and 10 and used this number to select the first agency from the list whose position on the page matched this number. Using *k* as the interval, I then selected every *kth* agency on the list, going to the next "page" as necessary, and so on until I got to the end of the list. Some agencies did not have reviews. For those agencies selected that had reviews, another random number *k* was generated between 1 and 10, which was then used to select the first review and every *kth* review from the list of reviews for that agency. A total of 342 reviews of White women were gathered this way.

All 45 reviews of White women obtained through the search method were included in the final sample to serve as a counterpart to the reviews of Asian women that were obtained with this method. The rest of the White sample was drawn from the 342 reviews obtained from agencies: 105 of these reviews were randomly selected, of which three were eliminated due to either the reviewer or the agency website making note that the women were not White, leaving a total of 102 reviews which were obtained from agencies. In total, then, 147 reviews of White prostitutes were included in the final sample.

In the final sample, some reviews were identifiable as being about the same woman, due to the inclusion of name (or alias) and agency. It should also be noted that within the industry, some women may work under different agencies using different names, and some aliases may be common choices, meaning that it is possible the same woman from another review was discussed without it being known by the reviewer or readers. No two reviews were

simultaneously conducted by the same reviewer and about the same woman, however. As the reviews and the reviewer's words (rather than the women themselves) are the foci of the current study, reviews were not excluded if they were about the same woman.

In sum, of the 300 reviews randomly sampled from the website using the procedures described earlier, some were excluded due to either being repeats (2) or being inappropriate examples for their sample group (3), leaving a final sample (*N)* of 295 reviews for analysis.

Coding

Besides the body or content of the review itself, reviews contained several other pieces of information that were collected and included in the study's dataset. This information included: the date of the review, a review number (for use with looking up reviews on the website), the price paid, the length of the visit, and whether or not the reviewer would recommend this particular woman and her services to other "punters." I also added codes indicating the sampling procedure used to select the review, whether the prostitute being reviewed was employed in an agency, and the prostitute's race.

To code the content or body of the reviews, I conducted a directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), as previous research into the sexualization of Asian women had already identified central variables of interest: an emphasis on Asian women's race (in contrast to White women, where this is taken for granted); their allegedly smaller, more petite stature; and finally, a submissive nature. Reviews were read with these in mind, and an initial coding scheme was developed upon review of the data. In other words, the concept of the Lotus Blossom stereotype was used to direct the framing of the content analysis. Examples were drawn, listed, and grouped into codes according to their properties to examine the patterns in

the data. The body of each review was then systematically coded for several variables using a coding sheet, which are delineated in detail below.

Variables and Operational Definitions

Number of Women

Some reviews were listed under the name of one woman but actually included a review of two different prostitutes, as the reviewer had elected to have a threesome. Reviews of only one prostitute were coded as 0 – One Woman*,* while those containing more than one prostitute were coded as 1 – More than One Woman.

Employment

As reviews were gathered both from independent escorts and through agencies, whether or not the woman was self-employed was recorded. This was easily assessed as women who worked for agencies were listed under the agency name. Further, the website linked within the review would either direct to an independent site or to that of an escort agency. Women who worked independently were coded as 0 – Independent, while women who worked through an agency or brothel were coded as 1 – Agency.

Race Mention

Within the reviews, men would sometimes state their specific preference for Asian or "Oriental" women or simply note the woman's race within the review. To encompass this, a dichotomous variable Race Mention was created to indicate whether or not the woman's race was included within the body of the review. Reviews in which men made no mention of the woman's race where categorized as 0 – No Mention, and reviews in which the woman's race was mentioned were coded as 1 – Race Mentioned.

Race Mention Frequency

The variable Race Mention Frequency records the number of times race was mentioned within the review, either in describing the woman or in any other portion (such as general statements about a preference for Asian women or a dislike of Eastern Europeans).

Size

As small stature and a "petite" figure are among the predominant features that men who seek out Asian women describe as aspects of their desirability (i.e., Asian fetishism), I included measures of these descriptions. For example, the variable *size* includes the categories: 0 – No Mention, 1 – Short/Small, and 2 – Tall/Large. Descriptions of women such as small, short, petite, little, or "pocket rocket" would fall under the Short/Small category, while descriptions including words such as tall, Amazonian, would fall into the Tall/Large category. Those which had no mention of height or size were simply coded as No Mention.

Smallness Mention Frequency

Whereas the variable Size is intended to capture the overall description of the prostitute within the review, the variable Smallness Mention Frequency encompasses every mention of smallness. Every word related to small or petite size, or use of words relating to it, would add to this frequency.

Language

The variable Language encompasses reviewer mentions of whether or not the prostitute spoke English, and if their English ability was good or bad. There were three categories: 0 – No Mention, 1 – Good English-speaking Ability, and 2 – Bad English-speaking Ability.

BDSM

BDSM, which is an abbreviation for "bondage, discipline, sadism, and masochism," was at times included in the visits. For the purposes of this study, BDSM includes all acts that involve restraint, violence, or power exchanges. Reviews without a mention of BDSM elements were categorized as 0 – None. Reviews which included the woman as the dominant partner (also known as femdom or dominatrix) and the reviewer as the submissive were coded as 1 – Female Domination, while those in which the woman was submissive and the man was dominant were coded as 2 – Female Submissive. Reviews in which the reviewer and prostitute switched roles were coded as 3 - Switch.

Type of Visit

The "punting" community has developed several different classifications for types of visits and corresponding abbreviations. The "girlfriend experience" (abbreviated as GFE), involves the prostitute acting and behaving as if she were the punter's girlfriend, and typically includes more affection than other types of visits, including kissing, cuddling, and other forms of intimacy that might be found in a committed relationship. In contrast, the "pornstar experience" (abbreviated as PSE) aims to emulate the type of sex found within pornographic videos, and thus tends to encompass a wider range of sexual activities, "dirty talk," and "rougher" actions. Fetish services may either include dominatrices, roleplaying, or acts such as watersports (urination).

Reviews were categorized using these types: when no specific type of visit or description was mentioned, reviews were coded as 0 – No Mention; reviews which encompassed the "girlfriend experience" were coded as 1 – GFE, and those with the "pornstar experience" as 2 –

PSE. As some reviews mentioned a mixture of both, these were coded as 3 – Mix, while fetish-related visits were coded as 4 – Fetish/BDSM.

Attitude

This variable attempts to measure the reviewer's perception of the prostitute's attitude and contained three categories: 0 – No Mention of Attitude, 1 – Positive, Cooperative, or Pleasant Attitude, and 2 – Negative, Reluctant, or Other Adverse Attitude.

Hospitality

Hospitality is separate from attitude in that it encompasses the idea of being a good host, above and beyond the sexual services expected within the transactions reviewers discuss. Elements of hospitality include being a pleasant conversation partner, providing food and drink, or providing massages. Reviews could be placed into three categories: 0 – No Mention of Hospitality or Neutral, 1 – Positive Assessment of Hospitality, and 2 – Negative Assessment of Hospitality.

Reliability

To assess reliability, 100 of the reviews from the final sample of 295 were randomly selected and given to another coder. Inter-coder agreement was 75%. When examining the disagreements, the majority were about whether or not to code references to slimness or fatness as mentions of "size." When this disagreement was discussed and resolved (with references to slimness and fatness coded as "size"), inter-coder agreement rose to 79%. The second greatest source of disagreement concerned what constituted hospitality, which had an agreement rating of 64%; however, this variable was not used for any statistical tests, only to describe the sample of reviews, and thus the coding of the variable was not adjusted.

Analytic Strategies

For the quantitative analysis, the dataset constructed from the coding of the variables described above was analyzed. Percentage distributions and summary statistics were used to describe the sample of reviews/descriptions that men posted of their visits with prostitutes obtained from the PunterNet UK website. I investigated race effects using cross-tabulations and the chi-squared test in the case of the categorical variables in the dataset and means and *t* tests in the case of the continuous variables. Subsequently, to better understand the nature of the racial differences observed in the quantitative analysis, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the reviews. Specifically, I separated the reviews into the two racial groups and used open coding to identify themes within the data on each racial group separately. Themes identified were compared across racial groups, discussed, and related to existing stereotypes about Asian women. These themes and ideas were further used to examine how Asian fetishism may be expressed and to the broader issues of race, racial fetishism and their intersections with gender and sexuality.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Description of the Sample

Tables 1-4 summarize the socio-demographic and other descriptive characteristics associated with the sample of reviews. As Table 1 shows, the final sample was about evenly split between reviews of Asian prostitutes (50.2%) and reviews of White prostitutes (49.8%), as was intended by design. As described earlier, significantly more reviews of Asian prostitutes (50.7%) were obtained via the "search" method than the "selection" method than for White women (30.6%) due to a greater number of results for Asians using the website's search engine ($\chi^2 = 12.302$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

Table 1

Description of the Sample: Race of Prostitute Reviewed, Method Used to Obtain the Review, Prostitute's Employment, and Reviewer's Recommendation

	Both (*n=295)*	White (*n*=147)	Asian (*n=148)*
	%	%	%
Obtained			
Searched	40.7	30.6	50.7
Selection	59.3	69.4	49.3
Employment			
Independent	14.9	29.9	0.0
Agency	85.1	70.1	100.0
Recommended			
Yes	90.2	87.8	92.6
No	9.5	11.6	7.4
Neutral	.3	.7	-

Overall, most prostitutes reviewed worked through an escort agency or brothel; only 14.9% worked independently, while 85.1% worked for an agency. However, Asian prostitutes

who were reviewed were significantly more likely to be employed through a brothel or escort agency than White prostitutes (100.0% versus 70.1%) ($\chi^2 = 52.065$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). This finding is especially interesting in light of the sampling methodology. For instance, 44 of the 45 reviews of White women obtained via the search engine feature of the website, which allows users to search for prostitutes marked with a particular race, were independent escorts. However, none of the 75 Asian prostitutes obtained using the same search engine worked as an independent escort; all were employed by a brothel or escort agency.

The majority of reviewers (90.2%) recommended the prostitute whom they had seen to their peers. Only 9.5% would not recommend the woman they had seen, and only one reviewer expressed a neutral opinion. The likelihood that a prostitute would be recommended by a reviewer did not differ by race ($\chi^2 = 2.523$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$).

Table 2 summarizes the time the prostitute spent with the reviewer and her price for the services she provided (in 2014 British pounds [£] and United States dollars [$]). Reviewers spent around an hour ($M = 70$ minutes, $Mdn = 60$ minutes) with the prostitute they reviewed, and spent around £150 - £155 (or $242.86 - $249.12) on the visit. Both the cost of and the time spent with Asian prostitutes were higher, but only the racial difference in cost was statistically significant ($t = -2.300$, $df = 293$, $p = .022$). Interestingly, Asian prostitutes were more uniform on the two variables than White prostitutes. This may relate to the fact that all of the Asian prostitutes in the sample were employed by an agency or a brothel (albeit, different agencies and brothels). As such, the lower variance among the Asian prostitutes likely reflects greater standardization of their wages and appointment times.

Table 2

Description of the Sample: Time and Price of Prostitute's Service

	Both (*n=295)*	White (*n*=147)	Asian (*n=148)*
Time (in minutes)			
Mean (SD)	69.72 (134.54)	59.77 (77.15)	79.59 (173.48)
Median (IQR)	60 (15)	45 (30)	60 (0)
Price (in Pounds)			
Mean (SD)	156.51 (146.68)	136.94 (144.77)	175.95 (146.46)
Median (IQR)	150 (60)	90 (90)	150 (0)
Hourly Wage (in Pounds)			
Mean (SD)	154.94 (171.72)	158.71 (243.08)	151.20 (16.23)
Median (IQR)	150 (30)	120 (30)	150 (0)

Using these measures, however, it is impossible to determine if Asian prostitutes were actually paid more than White prostitutes, since both price and time spent on a visit were higher for Asian prostitutes, the racial difference in price could have been a result of fair compensation for a greater period of work. Thus, the price and time variables were used to create a new variable*,* hourly wage*,* which is also displayed in Table 2. When time worked was taken into account, Asian prostitutes actually averaged less pay for their services than White prostitutes. Asian prostitutes tended to earn about 8 fewer pounds (or 12.86 fewer dollars) per hour. However, this racial difference was not statistically significant (t [assuming unequal population variances] = .375, df = 147, $p > .05$), suggesting that the racial difference in price noted earlier was a result of compensation for a longer period of work. Consistent with the patterns observed earlier for the variables time and price, the Asian hourly wage was more consistent than the White hourly wage (e.g., SD = 16.3 versus SD = 243.08, respectively).

Men's descriptions of their visit with the prostitute differed in some respects depending on her race (Table 3). For example, although the majority (77.3%) of reviews overall contained

no specific description of the type of visit, reviews of Asian prostitutes were slightly more likely to contain such a description (72.3% compared to 82.3% for White prostitutes; $\chi^2 = 4.215$, *df* = 1, $p < .05$). The girlfriend experience (GFE) was the most common type of visit which reviewers described (13.6%), while the other types of visits were all about evenly distributed. Similarly, although the majority (88.5%) of reviews also contained no discussion of the prostitute's English-speaking ability, in reviews of Asian prostitutes, this was discussed more frequently ($\chi^2 = 18.965$, *df* = 1, $p < .001$). About 19.6% of reviews of Asian prostitutes contained mentions of either good or bad English-speaking ability, while only 3.4% of reviews of White prostitutes contained such mentions.

Table 3

Description of Final Sample Content Analysis

	Both (*n=295)*	White (*n*=147)	Asian (*n=148)*
	%	%	%
Type of Visit			
No Mention	77.3	82.3	72.3
Girlfriend Experience	13.6	12.2	14.9
Pornstar Experience	3.1	.7	5.4
Mixed GFE/PSE	3.1	1.4	4.7
Fetish/BDSM	3.1	3.4	2.7
Number of Women			
One	97.6	97.3	98.0
Two or More	2.4	2.7	2.0
Language			
No Mention	88.5	96.6	80.4
Good English Ability	7.1	2.7	11.5
Bad English Ability	4.4	.7	8.1
BDSM			
None	95.9	93.2	98.6
Female Dominant	3.1	4.8	1.4
Female Submissive	.7	1.4	0.0
Switch	.3	.7	0.0
Attitude			

No Mention	2.7	3.4	2.0
Positive	88.5	86.4	90.5
Negative	8.8	10.2	7.4
Hospitality			
No Mention/Neutral	33.9	51.0	16.9
Positive	59.0	40.1	77.7
Negative	7.1	8.8	5.4

A significant majority (97.3%) of reviews contained some mention of the prostitute's attitude. This mention was typically positive (88.5%) and no significant difference seemed to exist between the two racial groups (86.4% for White prostitutes and 90.5% for Asian prostitutes; $\chi^2 = 1.300$, $df = 2$, $p > .05$). About a third of reviews (33.9%) contained no mention of hospitality, and when hospitality was mentioned, it was typically reviewed in a positive light (59%). Between racial groups, there were significant differences in how often hospitality was mentioned ($\chi^2 = 38.336$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). About one-half (51.0%) of reviews of White women contained no reference to hospitality, while hospitality was not mentioned in only 16.9% of reviews of Asian women. In reviews of White prostitutes, 40.1% of reviews contained a positive assessment of the prostitute's hospitality while 77.7% of reviews of Asian prostitutes contained a similar assessment.

Very few (2.4%) of reviews were of more than one woman, and this appeared to vary little by racial group ($\chi^2 = .153$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). The majority of reviews across both racial groups (95.9%) contained no elements of BDSM, and the most common category for reviews which did contain BDSM was female domination (3.1%). However, white women were significantly more likely to be reviewed for BDSM-related services ($\chi^2 = 5.616$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$), and the most common category for reviews which did contain BDSM was female domination (3.1%).

Quantitative Analysis of Race Effects

Table 4 displays a cross-tabulation of the reviewed prostitute's race and the variable *Race Mention*. The race of the prostitute being reviewed had a significant relationship with whether or not race was mentioned within the review ($p < .001$). Men only mentioned race in 15.0% of reviews of White prostitutes, while they chose to mention race in 44.6% of reviews of Asian prostitutes.

Table 4

Cross-Tabulation of Race and Race Mention

Race Mentioned			
Race	No Mention	Mentioned	Total
White	85.0	15.0	100% (147)
Asian	55.4	44.6	100% (148)
χ^2 (*df* = 1)	30.929****		

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ****$p < .001$

When looking at the frequency at which race was mentioned within the review, reviews containing two or more mentions of race were collapsed into one category, as displayed in Table 5. This allowed for a better picture of how often race is brought up within the same review and more insight into the distribution of such mentions. The relationship between race and the frequency at which race was mentioned was also significant ($p < .001$). Race was more likely to be mentioned in reviews of Asian prostitutes, and was mentioned more frequently, than in reviews for White prostitutes. Further, reviews of Asian prostitutes were also more likely to contain two or more mentions of race within the text. While only 4.1% of reviews of White women mentioned race two or more times, 14.9% of reviews of Asian women contained two or more mentions of race.

Table 5

Cross-Tabulation of Race and Race-Mention Frequency

	Race-Mention Frequency			
Race	None	Once	Twice or More	Total
White	85.0	10.9	4.1	100% (147)
Asian	55.4	29.7	14.9	100% (148)
χ^2 (*df* = 2)		31.139****		

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ****$p < .001$

Men's descriptions of the prostitute's size were used as an indicator of possible racial fetishism. As Table 6 shows, these descriptions varied by race ($p < .001$). When reviewing White women, men failed to mention size at all 71.4% of the time, while for Asian women, they failed to mention size only 51.4% of the time. More White women (13.6%) were described as tall or large by reviewers, while only 4.1% of Asian women were described this way. Conversely, only 15% of White women were described as small, while 44.6% of Asian women were described in such a way. Although these differences may be the result of actual differences in the physical appearance and build of the prostitutes themselves, the fact that size goes *entirely without mention* in 20% more of reviews for White women suggests that size may be noticed more for Asian women than for White women.

Table 6

Cross-Tabulation of Race and Size Descriptions

	Size Description			
Race	No Mention	Short/Small	Tall/Large	Total
White	71.4	15.0	13.6	100% (147)
Asian	51.4	44.6	4.1	100% (148)
χ^2 (df = 2)		34.182****		

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ****$p < .001$

Men also tended to use more words describing smallness in their reviews of Asian prostitutes (Table 7) ($p < .001$). Specifically, for Asian prostitutes, 55.4% of reviews contained no use of words describing small size, while 83.7% reviews of White prostitutes contained no words describing small size. Further, Asian prostitutes had around 10.8% more reviews than White women in which their size was described or mentioned as "small" three or more times. Reviews of Asian prostitutes were thus more likely to contain mentions of small size than those of White prostitutes, and when smallness was mentioned, it was more likely to be brought up more than once.

Table 7

Cross-Tabulation of Race and Frequency of Words Describing Smallness in Reviews

	Frequency of Short/Small Words				
Race	None	Once	Twice	Three or More	Total
White	83.7	13.6	2.0	0.7	100% (147)
Asian	55.4	24.3	8.8	11.5	100% (148)
χ^2 (df = 3)		33.241****			

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$ ****$p < .001$

Qualitative Analysis of Race Effects

While the results of the statistical analysis indicate a significant difference in how reviewers talked about size and race between Asian and White prostitutes, the numbers did little to capture the quality of the words chosen. It may be possible, for example, that reviewers were simply giving observations of the prostitute's appearance, and Asian women tend to be shorter on average than White women. Thus, in order to discern the nature of the racial differences observed in the quantitative analysis, further examination in the form of qualitative analysis is necessary.

Open coding was used to identify themes within the data. This was done separately for each racial group, after which results were compared and submitted to further analysis. Categories and groupings were created for overarching ideas, which are discussed here, and compared with existing ideas about how Asian fetishism may be expressed. The categories of race and appearance are discussed first to illuminate and provide context for the quantitative data already presented. Following this, the discussion is broadened to examine the elements that were common to reviews of both racial groups. Finally, these overarching ideas are tied back into the issues of race and racial fetishism and their intersection with gender and sexuality.

Race

How was race discussed by the male reviewers? Race was treated as a consideration both in the reviewer's choice of which prostitute to hire, a personal preference, and as a consideration in their assessments of the quality of service. Reviewers appeared to create their own understandings of race based upon their previous "punting" experiences and their own sexual preferences.

Reviews of both White and Asian prostitutes contained men's analysis of different racial groups. However, race, as shown in the quantitative portion of this study, was mentioned less frequently in reviews of White prostitutes than in reviews of Asian prostitutes. The majority of racial groupings and generalizations that were made about White women were about Eastern European women. In their reviews, men drew comparisons between racial groups and noted exceptions among women of the same race. For example, one reviewer expressed his assessment of Eastern European prostitutes:

> Anyway, as regular readers will know, I'm not a fan of Eastern European girls as the quality of service is usually very low, so although P**** has had a lot of good reviews I'd avoided her as the website photos made her look, well, short and dumpy to be honest. (Review of White prostitute)

Such assessments appeared to be common enough within the online community that this group had been given its own abbreviation: EE, for Eastern European. The reviewer thus has created a general understanding of what occurs in an encounter with an Eastern European prostitute, and uses this information to inform his decisions about whether or not to visit a certain prostitute.

Comparisons within race were also common when race was discussed. For example, a reviewer might express a general dislike for women of a particular race, but note that the prostitute he was reviewing was an exception to his general experience or his normal rule against seeking out prostitutes of that race. As one reviewer commented:

> She is the only escort worth seeing among the many Asian girls I have encountered recently who are still on the roster. (Review of Asian prostitute)

This reviewer expresses his general disappointment with Asian prostitutes, and notes that the prostitute he is currently reviewing is an exception to his usual negative experiences.

The expression of racial groupings and ideas within reviews was not limited to the race of the woman under review. At times, men drew comparisons between racial groups, ruling one as more favorable than the other or expressing a personal preference. This preference might be described as temporary, or as a general trait that they view as desirable in women. For example, on one occasion, a reviewer drew comparisons between racial groups in his review of an Asian woman, stating that "after a couple of EE girls [*sic*] disappointing services tried oriental and boy she was absolutely a breath of fresh air."

These comparisons did not seem to favor one race noticeably more over the other: some who expressed a preference for Asian prostitutes complained of the quality of service with Eastern European prostitutes, while others who expressed a general preference for White women seemed surprised that they had a good experience with an Asian prostitute due to generally negative experiences with other Asian prostitutes. In each case, it appeared as if the reviewer's decision of which race was "better" in comparison came down to personal preference and their prior experiences with other prostitutes.

Size

Some reviewers of Asian prostitutes expressed their racial preference directly, while other reviewers were more subtle. When reviewers did state a preference for Asian prostitutes, they often did so in ways that reflected common ideas about Asian femininity. On the physical level, men frequently used words such as "little" or "petite," often in the middle of a graphic detailing of the prostitute's body or sexual acts. Some examples are included below, each of which was taken from a different review of an Asian prostitute:

> Petite and gorgeous young girl with a tiny waist, small natural breasts and a beautiful little arse.
> M***** is a mouth-wateringly gorgeous little Thai girl.
> I'm fond of deep anal and petite Asian girls so this little sweety looked perfect.
> Given that I'm large [*sic*] than the average and she is quite petite this was an absolute delight.

As exemplified in the quotations above, when size was mentioned, it was often mentioned in conjunction with the prostitute's race or the reviewer's preference for Asian women. In contrast, when a White prostitute's small size was mentioned, it was not linked to their race or discussed as physical preference of the reviewers. The tone of the "size" discussion as well as its placement within descriptions also seemed to be aimed at titillation, suggesting that this is part

of what made the prostitute being described desirable and sexually attractive to the reviewer. Further, these descriptions also served to contrast femininity and masculinity. For example, as illustrated in the last excerpt listed above, some reviewers contrasted their large size (often penis size) to the smallness of the woman, particularly within reviews of Asian women, expressing that it might be a "tight fit" or that they were surprised the woman could "handle them."

Submissiveness

Although the physical attributes of women were a frequent area of racial discussion, particularly in relation to Asian women and their small size, reviewers also drew on the eager-to-please and docile image of the Lotus Blossom. Some reviewers made generalizations about Asian prostitutes which reflected the images of demure subservience and devoted attention found in the archetype of the Lotus Blossom, as demonstrated in the examples below which were drawn from four different reviews:

> It was a miserable, cold day and I was glad to share a bath with L***. I had almost forgotten the degree of attention one gets with some oriental ladies - even down to the glass of beer in the tub. (Review of Asian woman)
> There are those who describe bath time fun as a distraction from "the main event". To me it is an integral part of a session, especially with an oriental lady. (Review of Asian Prostitute)
> Being a delightful Thai girl as she is, my pleasure was her primary concern …
> We parted with the delightful politeness and friendliness I've come to expect from Thai girls. There are lots of oriental girls in London, and (touch my wood, it's still a bit tender) I've never been disappointed by any of them. (Review of Asian Prostitute)
> Following a bereavement in the family, I was in the mood for some relief and thought that a nice quality Asian courtesan was just what the doctor ordered. (Review of Asian Prostitute)

The first reviewer attributes the attention he receives from the prostitute to her race. The presence of the bath appeared to be common to reviews of Asian and White prostitutes;

however, as demonstrated here in the first and second excerpts, the race of the prostitute is central, with the reviewers portraying the women as attentive to their needs and as hostesses who provide comfort on a level beyond the sexual.

The other two reviewers describe other elements of the Lotus Blossom archetype, at times drawing on more sexual imagery. In the third review, the prostitute's prioritization of male pleasure was seen as deriving from her race. This reviewer discusses Thai girls as putting the pleasure of the man first, and as polite and friendly, reflecting the image of the demure and eager-to-please Lotus Blossom found within the media and colonialist accounts of sexual encounters with Asian women. The reviewer goes on to say that he has never been disappointed in "oriental girls," portraying them as universally able to satisfy (likely due to their alleged eagerness to please). The last reviewer speaks of an "Asian courtesan," a word choice which appears to draw on ideas of the "exotic Orient." Further, his stated selection of an Asian prostitute for the purposes of relief and comfort suggests motivations that may be beyond sexual and fall into ideas of Asian women's superior femininity, and thus perhaps a superior ability to comfort.

The "submissive" nature that is a central feature of Asian fetishism was also evident in reviews. Although White women were at times described using similar words or descriptions of submissiveness, this was never attributed to their race. In the only review of a White prostitute which explicitly used the word submissive, the woman had directly advertised herself as submissive, listing it next to her name. In contrast, submissiveness was linked directly to race in the reviews of Asian prostitutes without a prompt, as demonstrated in the following excerpts which were obtained from four different reviews:

> I love petite, submissive, demure, big titted Asian girls who can handle a pounding.
> She has that combination of submissiveness and naughtiness that I'd hoped for in a Japanese girl.
> Friendly, submissive in nature, u [sic] can do what u [sic] want with her.
> Sexy, sweet, submissive, friendly, demure, great pair of tits.

These reviewers described Asian prostitutes as generally submissive and linked their submission to both their nature and their race. The first two reviewers specifically express a preference for or desire for a submissive Asian woman; in the second review, especially, it appears as if this desire was especially important in the reviewer's motivation for seeking an Asian prostitute. The reviewers' perspectives of race and the way in which it was discussed reflect the stereotype of the Lotus Blossom, which portrays Asian women as submissive, demure, and especially sexual.

Skill and Performance

The majority of reviews featured some discussion of the quality of the service experienced. Whether or not the woman was recommended to other men seemed to depend primarily on the prostitute's attitude, enthusiasm, and willingness to please. Although a focus on pleasing the reviewer was not linked back to race in reviews for White women as it was for Asian women, it was still present as a prominent feature of reviews. A prostitute's enthusiasm was discussed in reviews of both races as demonstrated in the five excerpts below:

> She clearly enjoys what she does – and she does it very well, have no doubt. (Review of White prostitute)
> Its [sic] very obvious that C******** does this because she wants to and she loves what she does. (Review of White prostitute)
> If it is an act, she should win an Oscar. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> Enjoys her work and demonstrates it. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> Performed with a lot of energy, what a horny girl. (Review of Asian prostitute)

The majority of reviewers appeared to express a genuine belief that the prostitutes they were reviewing enjoyed their work. Reviewers simultaneously discussed prostitution as something that they believe the women to enjoy, as a trade which requires skill, and as a performance. Other men appeared to have a mixed view on whether or not the prostitute's enjoyment was genuine; however, whether it was or not, the performance aspect of sex within a commercialized context was heavily emphasized.

This belief in the woman's enjoyment may tie directly back into the reviewers' self-image of their skills as a sexual partner. No reviewers discussed their own performance as lacking; many reviewers went into detail describing how they went out of their way to pleasure the prostitute and to emphasize their masculine qualities and skills:

> She revealed a few fantasies too, so I'm hoping to aid her on one or two. (Review of White prostitute)
> I don't think she came, but was certainly enjoying herself. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> She recons [sic] I have a black man cock in size. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> I licked her to a shuddering orgasm, which certainly wasn't faked. (Review of White prostitute)

The first reviewer appears to discuss himself as almost an equal partner in the relationship between him and the prostitute he is reviewing: not only does he seem to believe the fantasies she expressed to him were genuine, but also that he helped *her* achieve sexual satisfaction, seeming to forget that he paid her for a sexual service. The other reviewers demonstrate a more simple expression that they believe the prostitute enjoyed sex with them, and that this enjoyment was related to their sexual skills or physical attributes.

Hobby and Community

As reflected in the term "punter," and the fact that some reviewers refer to their frequent visiting of prostitutes as "hobbying," the posted reviews portray paying for sex as a hobby. The online community of reviewers has developed several abbreviations and slang words which represent different acts, concepts, and types of women. For example, "OWO" stands for "oral without obstruction," or unprotected oral sex; "GFE" stands for "girlfriend experience" which entails the prostitute acting as if she is the client's actual romantic partner, or at least requires her to perform more intimate and partnership related acts such as cuddling or kissing.

Entwined with this portrayal of the use of prostitutes as a hobby and, the fact that reviews of prostitutes' performance are being made, is the expression and portrayal of sexual acts as commodities. Within reviews, men often listed off different sexual acts in succession, or even discussed women in terms of "packages" and "products," portraying themselves as consumers able to "shop around" and who had insight into how the industry worked.

> Suspect more things are on the menu than I sampled. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> Rarely have I found an escort whom I thought was destined to be a star. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> I will sample quite a few of the other girls working for this agency. (Review of Asian prostitute)
> Two girl 15 min BJ [blow job] special. (Review of White prostitute)
> All on offer, owo [oral without obstruction], cim [come in mouth], rim [rimming], and anal sex. great stamina and i will give her 9/10 perfomance. [sic] (Review of Asian prostitute)
> I have now had two consecutive experiences with agencies who lie about the girl's services (see my previous FR [field report]). Bad luck. (Review of White prostitute)

As exemplified in the excerpts from the reviews quoted above, men view prostitution as a service and themselves as active and knowledgeable consumers in the market. The first reviewer discusses the prostitutes as something to "sample" to find an optimum experience,

while the third describes a very commoditized-sounding description of a sexual service. The numerous lists of acts and the presence of a common vocabulary of slang and abbreviations demonstrate the development of a community centered on discussions of the sex industry and how to get the "best deal" within it.

Service and Hospitality

Another theme common to reviews of Asian prostitutes and those of White women was the valuing of hospitality and service. Perhaps because of the intimate nature of the sex industry, friendliness, willingness and having a general "positive attitude" were emphasized within reviews as desirable qualities for prostitutes to have. In fact, departures from these expectations were typically the reason given for leaving negative reviews. Further, in some reviews, men focused (or at least devoted a large amount of space to) discussing the woman's intelligence, hostess skills, or conversational abilities, rather than simply their sexual qualities:

> A lot of the time, she would smile and even laugh as I cracked jokes. (Review of White prostitute)
> I was offered a drink of my choice and we had a chat for a while. (Review of White prostitute)
> Very intelligent and good conversation as well. (Review of White prostitute)
> Greeted me at the door with a full-on DFK [deep French kiss] – just like how husbands are greeted by their adoring wives when they arrive home in Hollywood movies! (Review of Asian prostitute)
> She really goes that extra mile to be an excellent hostess. (Review of Asian prostitute)

These reviews demonstrate that, far from being a purely sexual encounter, men often seek other forms of companionship when visiting prostitutes. As the excerpts illustrate, hospitality seemed to be a major theme. The providing of drinks was a common beginning to visits, as was a short chat to get to know each other. In this sense, it appears that for the reviewers, prostitution is about more than just sex, but also about being emotionally validated and "entertained." Indeed,

as the results of the quantitative analysis showed, a substantial number of men were looking for a “girlfriend experience.”

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Review

This study examined how men discuss race in their reviews of White and Asian prostitutes, and whether their discussions differed by racial group. Both the quantitative and qualitative methods used in the study provided evidence that there is a relationship between the race of a prostitute and how men discuss her. Overall, it appears that reviewers of prostitutes use the racial stereotype of the Lotus Blossom to inform their descriptions of their encounters and in their descriptions of their own preferences. Men mentioned race more often with Asian prostitutes than with White prostitutes, and also mentioned features which are stereotypically associated with Asian women more often. When looking at the data qualitatively, the appeal of Asian prostitutes appeared to lie in both the physical attributes that were associated with Asian women, such as petite stature, and beliefs about their allegedly submissive, demure, and eager-to-please nature. Even when reviewers discussed an attribute of the prostitute or a service common to both encounters with White prostitutes and those with Asian prostitutes, such as the offering of drinks, it was often attributed to some essential quality of Asian women or prostitutes. As noted earlier, stereotyping makes the traits and characteristics which are consistent with stereotypes more noticeable and more visible (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses, 2010). Thus, by noticing and presenting these qualities of service, submission, and eagerness-to-please as part of Asian women's essential nature, reviewers are both reflecting and perpetuating the stereotype of the Lotus Blossom. Further, the sexual nature of these descriptions and the fact that they are utilized to inform sexual

behavior suggests that this stereotyping is involved in and contributes to the fetishization of Asian women.

In light of these differences, and the sexualized context in which they occur, it appears that "Asian fetishism" may be an appropriate term to encompass the beliefs and behaviors of some men who use Asian prostitutes. The way that some men within the reviews engaged in racial stereotyping by attributing Asian women's submissiveness to part of their essential nature and fetishized their small size suggests that the implications of these findings may also extend beyond the sex industry, to other Asian women.

Considering the documented existence of racialized sexual harassment (Cho, 1997; Lindblad & Signell, 2006) it is important to understand how male desires and masculinity, particularly that of White men, are informed by cultural stereotypes that may influence their treatment of Asian women. In these instances of racialized sexual harassment, Asian women were stereotyped and subsequently harassed due to their believed submissiveness, or even due to a belief that they were more willing to exchange sex for economic benefits (whether in prostitution or a type of marriage arrangement). In this way, it appears that the same stereotype of the Lotus Blossom which informs men who use Asian prostitutes contributes to and shapes the sexual harassment of other Asian women.

In the specific context of the United Kingdom, which is where the reviews originated from, the predominance of the Lotus Blossom stereotype in reviews of Asian women suggests that the legacy of colonialism and the exotification of the "Orient" has continued to influence the dialogue surrounding race, sexuality, and gender. The stereotypes developed through colonization and encounter narratives, which portrayed Asian women as particularly libidinous

and submissive, appear to have transformed from the "primitive native" image into the different, but similarly sexualized, modern stereotype of the Lotus Blossom (O'Brien, 2006; Kang, 2002). The function of the stereotype has changed, however: while still existing to some as a more sexually adventurous femininity in contrast to the purity of White women, Asian women have also come to represent a departure from the "corrupting" forces of feminism that White men see as influential in Western countries (Woan, 2008). Thus, in the context of the modern United Kingdom, Asian prostitutes can symbolically relieve men from the conflicts and discomfort they may feel when forced to consider women as equals. Although prostitution also provides this relief in the sense that it allows men to receive sexual gratification and hold control over a sexual relationship, Asian prostitutes in particular are thought to be more feminine and submissive, and thus may be an easier way to return to what reviewers see as the "natural" heterosexual arrangement of White male dominance.

The men's assessment of prostitutes' enjoyment of their profession seemed to be mixed. Some claimed to be able to tell that the prostitute was genuinely enjoying her work, while others used language suggesting that they believed or understood that any pleasure shown was a performance. Whether or not they believed in the authenticity of it, however, it was still required for women to be receptive to their demands and to *appear* as if they enjoyed the sexual acts performed; women who failed to do so were perceived negatively, and this was often the expressed motivation for not recommending a prostitute to other men.

Although sexual companionship was not the only thing sought by the reviewers, and at times they would expand on the woman's conversational or entertaining ability, it remained a primary concern. As paying customers, men believed that they had a right to both sexual

satisfaction and emotional validation; when one of these requirements was not met, they expressed dissatisfaction with the encounter. While the desire for conversation and emotional validation on the part of reviewers might seem to suggest that dehumanization is not present, the high levels of violence experienced within the industry and general dissatisfaction of most prostitutes with their profession (Farley et al., 2003), suggests that this would be an erroneous conclusion. When conversation and emotions did arise, it was discussed in relation to the prostitute's ability to entertain or please *the client*: consideration of the prostitute's interior life or own thoughts and emotions appeared absent within the reviews. The most relevant quality of dehumanization present in these encounters thus might be Nussbaum's (1999) idea of instrumentality: in prostitution, women are to be used for sexual and emotional ends. Women's emotions and intelligence are important insofar as they contribute to the entertainment of the reviewer, as is their sexuality.

Limitations

The study may be limited by issues of the PunterNet UK website itself. As discussed in the Methods section, many of the reviews of Asian prostitutes and White prostitutes were left unmarked for race/ethnicity, making the search feature on the site a possibly biased instrument for obtaining reviews. Although steps were taken to obtain reviews in other ways, in order to try and grasp the entire population (for reviews of Asian prostitutes), it is possible that cases within the population were excluded. Further, the overwhelming number of White prostitutes on the site made it difficult to use true random selection, possibly influencing the selection of reviews used for the sample.

That the majority of reviews contained no mention of size or race may also have influenced the results. If only those who seek out Asian prostitutes due to Asian fetishism mention race within the reviews, then there may appear to be a greater amount of the phenomenon within the sampled reviews than may actually be present within the population of men who review prostitutes. Further, many of the reviews were written explicitly, to the extent that they may be considered pornographic, meaning that word choice may have been influenced more by what would sound titillating and would fit into other images of sexualized Asian women than what the reviewer themselves found sexually appealing about the encounter.

Although the anonymity of the respondents may be positive for some aspects, such as in limiting response bias due to social desirability effects and being entirely non-intrusive, it also has its limitations. It is impossible to assess the race, age, or other demographics of the reviewers. Much of the literature which examines Asian fetishism, especially that which examines it within the history of colonialism and Western occupation of Asian countries, focuses on relations between White men and Asian women. Without certainty of the reviewer's race, it is may be difficult to place this study within the broader literature on this topic.

Future Research

The fact that reviewers seemed to genuinely believe that the prostitutes they reviewed were experiencing sexual pleasure, in light of the statistics about prostitution, and that the prostitutes' income was often dependent on faking such pleasure, suggests that reviewers may have a biased perception of these interactions. Further studies thus may wish to analyze the experience of Asian women in prostitution from the perspectives of the prostitutes themselves,

as there may be (potentially racialized) interactions or violence that were not discussed by reviewers who wish to maintain a certain image, even online. Such studies could better inform us of the parallels that may exist between racialized sexual harassment and the perspectives of men who use Asian women in prostitution. More direct studies which ask about men's racial preferences (if any) may be able to be better grasp how racial fetishism may inform their decisions to use Asian prostitutes and their perceptions of the encounters. These studies might also have a greater ability to examine the potential relationship between the client's race and racial fetishism, and allow for more insight into the demographics of men who choose to purchase sex.

The similarities between how Asian prostitutes were advertised and pornography which indulges in Asian fetishism suggests that an examination of a possible relationship between these may be fruitful. In their reviews, some men noted that in the waiting rooms of brothels or flats were televisions which played pornography on a constant loop, suggesting that there may be some link between pornography consumption and prostitution. Whether or not these aspects of the sex industry influence men's choice to seek out an Asian prostitute, or prostitutes in general, might provide insight into men's ideas of prostitution and racial fetishism.

Conclusion

Although this study specifically examined sexual stereotypes within the context of the sex industry, they may reflect broader ideas of Asian women. The similarities between the sexual harassment reported by Asian women who do not work as prostitutes, the images within the media, and the reviews created by men for Asian female prostitutes suggest that the same

forces of racism and sexism may be at work in each area. On the axis of gender, the overall themes of prostitution found within the reviews, such as female eagerness to please and male control over the encounter, appear to reflect the overarching patriarchal values of femininity and masculinity and the prioritization of male pleasure. The evidence thus appears to support the view of prostitution as a racialized and gendered institution which may contribute, reinforce, and reflect the racial and gender inequalities found within society.

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