Meet me in the Islands: Sun Sand and Transactional Sex in Caribbean Discourse

Paula E. Morgan Dr, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine

Abstract

MEET ME IN THE ISLANDS: SUN, SAND AND TRANSACTIONAL SEX IN CARIBBEAN DISCOURSE

The Caribbean has been figured in literary, state, touristic and advertising discourses as a dream space getaway, in which one can shed inhibitions and social accretions for a therapeutic dose of sun and sand and transactional sex which promises to heal, restore and put the alienated back in touch with the senses. This paper reads a range of fictional, state and advertising discourses to analyse the complex and paradoxical manner in which first and third world development and power relations play themselves out on the most intimate of spatial scapes - the body. It explores the uses of fantasy, ideology, sensuality and desire in the global tourist economy. The study also poses questions on - the correlations between sites of pleasure industries and the multifaceted transactional sex encounters which these sites facilitate; connections between the contemporary scenario and the historical significance of interracial sex which was pivotal to the encounter between worlds; and the extent to which the transnational, multiethnic sex industry feeds off the contemporary flux and crises in gender norms and interactions.

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Meanwhile, sands shimmer and shine against an electric-blue sea at Orient Bay in the north, cocktail joints spill into the tide at Mullet Bay, and the footsteps of pirates still mark the untrodden and secluded smuggler's coves of Pinel Island in the east. Marigot's markets are popular too, while the fusion of Dutch and French cultures makes for a truly interesting mix. Instead, it bridges the gap where the Caribbean Sea meets the North Atlantic, giving it an altogether different character to many of the islands on this list. Take the beaches, which are hued in pink thanks to powdered corals, and lapped by waves of frothy Atlantic rollers. Exuma includes private islands owned by Johnny Depp, Tyler Perry, Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, and David Copperfield. Despite all of the local star power, the real attraction seems to be the family of feral pigs that has established Big Major Cay as their own. It's hard to say how many are there—some reports say it's a family of eight, while others say the numbers are up to 40.