



'Easy Money in Male Prostitution': an imperialist Apocalypse Now in the Philippines¹

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According to Estafania Aldaba Lim, a former minister of social welfare who has studied the Pagsanjan situation, local residents discovered the easy money in male prostitution when American filmmakers came to town to shoot scenes for *Apocalypse Now*.

'I suppose some gays with the crew fell in love with the young macho boatmen, and then it went to much younger boys, down to 9, 10, 11 years old, and the whole town got in on it,' she said ...

Group members [of the Council of Citizens for the Protection of Children] seemed a little unsure about the possible danger of AIDS and one of them said, 'we are not even sure where AIDS comes from' (Mydans, 1989, p. 3).

Introduction

Globalization as First Worldism has been taking place for much longer than current interest in the topic demonstrates: numerous examples from nineteenth-century colonialism and twentieth-century imperialism provide background for late capitalist projects by transnational corporations. This paper examines the way in which US media participate in the process of globalization on a different scale from transnational or multinational corporations. Reporting on a particular aspect of globalization—international sex tourism²—newspaper articles conflate a film crew and a film with the creation of a local economy that relies largely on tourists and ignores the history of US involvement from the 1970s to the early 1990s in Vietnam and in the Philippines.

On Sunday 5 February 1989, the *New York Times* published an article titled 'In a Philippine town, child prostitution, despite protests, is a way of life.' The Philippine town is Pagsanjan on the island Luzon, one of the locations for the filming of *Apocalypse Now*. Reporter Seth Mydans opens the article with a description of the 'local attractions': 'Drive into this green and quiet town forty miles southeast of Manila and groups of men will run alongside your car, banging on the windows, offering a choice of the local attractions: A boat ride to the scenic waterfall, or a child prostitute.' Mydans constructs a reader who is clearly not an inhabitant: he identifies (perhaps identifies *with*) and addresses an audience of tourist elites. Long before Mydans' report and before the filming of *Apocalypse Now*, Pagsanjan enjoyed and endured the status of ranking second amongst the nation's most popular tourist sites and attracted tourists with a canoe ride over the Pagsanjan Falls. The town is often mentioned in tourist literature and in Western newspapers, and occasionally the latter mentioned that canoe boatmen were sometime

sex workers.³ Mydans' story seems to be the first to link their activity to the arrival of the *Apocalypse Now* film crew.⁴

Mydans directly connects the local sex trade with Westerners: not only does his article indict the film crew, but it makes the indictment through the perspective of a 'native', former Minister of Social Welfare Estafania Aldaba Lim. Earlier reports either presented the origins of child prostitution in terms of a vague time period⁵ or declined to speculate on origins altogether.⁶ Mydans' article inaugurates a rhetoric of attribution: specifying *Apocalypse Now* crew members as initiators of child prostitution. After Mydans' carefully staged allegation appeared, a double journalistic compression ensued; some reporters reduced prostitution to 'pedophilia' and 'pederasty' and then collapsed film and the crew, assigning sole responsibility for Pagsanjan's sex industry to *Apocalypse Now*. These compressions made it easier for articles written by and for a Western audience to present 'the Pagsanjan situation'—that is, its sex industry—as a series of invasions by an active/superior force into a passive/inferior space, displacing the role of the colonized as participants and rendering them silent and passive. Instead of recognizing that their children's agency had been twice robbed—once by sexual colonization and once by the presumption that resistance was impossible—the adult inhabitants negotiate their interview with Western reporters to further both their own and the Westerners' agendas.

The sex trade in Pagsanjan—and elsewhere—is complicated by cultural and historical variations in the construction of youths—including male prostitutes. A full elaboration of the related terms—children, childhood, and minors—is beyond the scope of this paper but, clearly, very particular concepts of childhood are mobilized in the Western press representations of Pagsanjan sex workers. If childhood is perceived by the Western press as a state which depends on idleness (as opposed to recognized 'work') and sexlessness, then the Pagsanjan sex workers confound the Western economic and social differentiation between adult/worker and child/non-worker.

Sex trade is complex and shot through with numerous relations of power. However, to condemn all sexual relations between 'adults' and 'minors' as abusive and exploitative reduces potential cultural differences in work, childhood, and sexuality to a Western model. Not only does this not fully acknowledge the harm of truly coercive situations, but it is also an erasure of the sexuality of those who are designated 'minors', denying their subject status and rendering them voiceless to describe the range of dangers and pleasures they may experience. The adults in Pagsanjan collaborate with the Western media to deny 'minors' access to representations of sexuality other than those fixed by 'adults'. Prior to Mydans' piece, articles discussed the sex industry in terms of paedophilia without discussing or blaming the film. After Mydans' account, other reporters held the film responsible for 'pedophilia' and 'pederasty', and not necessarily for the sex industry. The terms 'pedophilia' and 'pederasty' are catachreses used by the US reporters for the benefit of a Western educated audience. This paper analyses paedophilia as a discursively produced category in newspaper reports on Pagsanjan. Instead of challenging the double colonialist assault by articulating the complexity of local sexualities, the Filipinas who are quoted by Mydans (a former government minister and a professional historian) use Western concepts of sexuality to promote their own local political, and especially class, privilege. Unlike the child and teenaged labourers, these speakers have, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's phrase, 'access to the culture of imperialism' and speak to that audience which readily recognizes that 'culture of imperialism' as its own (Spivak, 1993, p. 60). They participate in the Western press' normalization of its own views of sexuality. Local meanings are ignored in favour of these normalizations. In particular, importing the terms 'pedophilia' and 'pederasty'

organizes the moral debates around silent defilement rather than an active economic co-optation.⁴ Much of the US press coverage places blame as a means of avowing national guilt while deferring and erasing responsibility for neo-colonial practices. US readers can wring their hands with sexual guilt instead of recognizing their historical political responsibility for sustaining structures of imperial practices which make individual Westerner's actions possible. By addressing the situation in Pagsanjan only in terms of paedophilia and paederasty in a universalist manner, the press neatly avoids addressing specificities of colonialism in the Philippines and avoids articulating a history of frustrated US imperialism in Vietnam. It cannot be mere coincidence that press reports effortlessly ignore the content of the film *Apocalypse Now* and its ostensible critique of the US–Vietnam War, and deflect attention away from US militarism in the Philippines. To deflect attention away from the similarities between the invasion of the film crew and US militarism in Vietnam and the Philippines, the reporters sublimate their knowledge of an ongoing history of colonialist practices into panicked and accusatory discussions of paedophilia and homosexuality: the critique in and of the film is replaced by criticism of the film crew.

Unlike the reporters who blame *Apocalypse Now* and conflate the film with its conditions and location of production, this paper examines some of the ways the film, not the film crew, enacted violence by a form of Orientalism-displacement.⁵ Representing historical events of cross-cultural incursion and local responses to them, the news reports highlight the intersection of colonialism and sexuality without recognizing either. This paper examines this ellipsis—condensing yet ignoring colonialism and sexuality—in the West's self-assured indictment of selected aspects of its neo-colonial relations, in particular US engagement in the Philippines and Vietnam. The films *Apocalypse Now*, the documentary *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, and the articles base their practice of Orientalism on replacing and collapsing specific and distinct peoples, countries, and issues in order to divert attention away from the more direct interventions into Vietnam and the Philippines. The conditions of possibility for *Apocalypse Now* itself are the Orientalist practices which shaped US government involvement in Vietnam and in the Philippines.

'In the Asshole of the World': Vietnam, the Philippines, and *Apocalypse Now*

Based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Francis Ford Coppola's film produces a 'liberal American' critique of the war waged by the US on and in Vietnam.⁶ In the film, the US–Vietnam War is represented as white American male obsession with territories, disputes over the control not only of a foreign land but also of a foreign people. The film does not stop at indicting the US military command for white soldiers' bad behaviour; it blames the 'natives' too. *Hearts* documents the production of the film *Apocalypse Now* in the Philippines. The film and its maker Francis Coppola follow in a colonialist practice of overstepping boundaries. Coppola notes in a speech at the 1979 Cannes Film Festival:

My film is not a movie. My film is not about Vietnam. It is Vietnam. It's what it was really like. It was crazy. And the way we made it was very much like the way the Americans were in Vietnam. We were in the jungle. There were too many of us. We had access to too much money, too much equipment. And little by little we went insane.

Coppola's film updates the colonialism of Conrad's text. Like the novel, the main plot

of *Apocalypse Now* involves a boat journey made by Benjamin Willard (Martin Sheen) a CIA assassin in Vietnam, on a clandestine mission to assassinate Green Beret Colonel Walter E. Kurtz (Marlon Brando), who is directing his private army from his base in Cambodia.⁷

In the 1991 release *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* directors Bahr and Hickenlooper display Coppola's attitude toward Pagsanjan and the Philippines, in part through footage shot by Francis' spouse, Eleanor Coppola, in Pagsanjan.⁸ The Bahr and Hickenlooper film celebrates Coppola as a beleaguered filmmaker with a (sometimes unclear, often megalomaniac) vision. Francis Coppola repeatedly refers to his filming process as a war very similar to the US–Vietnam War, a conflation the documentary does not problematize, although it becomes clear that extensive violence is enacted through his film on the production location. For the director, the film is Vietnam.⁹ The (Filipino) jungle is Vietnam. This Orientalizing idea of a 'jungle' allows Coppola to perform this interchangeability, or relocatability of politically and culturally distinct nations.¹⁰ If the creation of the 'other' itself is an act of displacement, it is not surprising that *Apocalypse Now* was filmed in the Philippines but was meant not only to represent, but to *be* Vietnam. The assumption of sameness, the eliding of all differences, is a move the US military made repeatedly. In public discourse, US military involvement in Vietnam was intended to counter what the US perceived as the Chinese communist threat. Under the logic of the domino theory, Vietnam is China, one oriental country can stand for another. In a devastating example of eliding differences in an Orientalist fashion, the US air force bombed both Cambodia and Laos (neutral nations) in its attempt to control the Vietnamese.

Apocalypse Now depends on a series of displacements in both production process and the final product. Deeming it too risky to film in Vietnam, Francis Coppola and the film crew began working in the Philippines in March 1976. *Hearts* uses Eleanor Coppola's voiceover to explain that the US government refused to help Francis Coppola to make a film about the Vietnam War. In a meeting with then-president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, Francis Coppola arranged to pay the Philippines military for the use of its US-made helicopters. Eleanor Coppola relates the stipulation that the film director can use the helicopters, 'as long as they're not needed to fight the Communist insurgency in the South. A band of rebels has been waging a fierce war from the Southern Philippine islands.'¹¹ The narrative of the documentary notes that, as in the Vietnam War, US-manufactured helicopters are employed (by the government of the Philippines) against a perceived Communist threat in an Asian country. In this seemingly blatant acknowledgement of his directorial power, Francis Coppola collapses the Republic of the Philippines in the late 1970s with Vietnam during the US war on that nation.¹²

Questions about why the US was waging war in and on Vietnam supposedly underlie *Apocalypse Now*. At one point during *Apocalypse Now* rehearsals, Coppola directs Marlon Brando to generate a dialogue. Ostensibly Willard asks the question and Coppola is merely prompting Brando with the line, 'Why are we in Vietnam?' Marlon Brando as Colonel Kurtz answers ponderously, 'It's our time to grab this moment in history, it's our time to teach.' Kurtz turns his back to the camera, walks away, and continues, 'I can't think of any more dialogue to say.' Brando cannot say any more, he cannot engage in a dialogue. Curiously, the switch in Brando's/Kurtz's attitude of America as almighty ('It's our time') into an individual's uncertainty ('I can't think of any more dialogue to say') may epitomize the US military's tactics. In a memo written in January 1966, then-Assistant Secretary of Defense, John McNaughton, stated 'The present U.S. objective in Vietnam is to avoid humiliation', suggesting that creating and maintaining

appearances of formidability under world scrutiny was the underlying cause for the war, or at least for its continuance at that time. Avoiding humiliation as an objective suggests that it is potentially very humiliating to be in Vietnam. The US had no desire to follow in the footsteps of the spectacular defeat of the French by Vietnam. Perhaps it is humiliating for the US to acknowledge that the Vietnamese are well versed in methods of warfare which the US had begrudged them, specifically, the denigrated organization, or dis-organization, of guerrilla warfare. In addition, in the face of constructing Vietnamese men as effeminate, the humiliation of defeat would cast doubts on US masculinity. But *Apocalypse Now* is not interested in representing struggles between white US men and Vietnamese men and women. The story of Vietnamese resistance is rewritten as a struggle by two kinds of colonizing powers, represented through Willard and Kurtz. Regardless of who survives in the film, the white colonizer emerges as victor, but sexual humiliation is never far from the surface.

The US military had to create new methods of evaluating and practising warfare, since conquests of territorial spaces were so difficult and so humiliating for the US to map and report. In place of maps showing national boundaries and lines of march as in World War II reports, the new accounting method both replaced and displaced territory. Each night, US television screens flashed the 'body count'. By choosing this tactic, the US military decided it could not or need not distinguish between civilians and soldiers. Mapping via bodies, numbers could be greatly inflated. This method of proclaiming victory through the number of dead (enemy) bodies depends very much on the grounds of this war. It takes place in a land populated in the US imagination by 'teeming Asiatic hordes'. The US military represents bodies from Asia as more disposable, less valuable than white bodies.

In *Apocalypse Now* the white US military officer whose mission is to deliver final instructions to Willard, and who has been anxiously awaiting Willard's arrival at Do Long bridge, yells 'Welcome to Do Long bridge. You're in the asshole of the world, Captain.' Performing his assignment to take the 'active' role, Willard and crew have arrived by PBR (a small patrol river boat) at a particularly vulnerable border demarcating US and Viet Cong territory. Do Long Bridge is the last US outpost on the river. The transgression of entering the asshole is naturalized, weakened by an eroticized warfare which encourages aggression in the guise of penetration.¹³ According to Chief, the Vietminh are in the process of blowing up the bridge, taking advantage of the night, and justifying the proliferation of dramatic explosions and flares.¹⁴ For the film, the asshole is a space of pure hell: a night scene exploding with sudden flames and a breakdown of (military) authority. Transgressing this boundary, the asshole, means entering a space where the military hierarchy has disintegrated. The film's emblem of white masculine military order—Willard—leaves the PBR in hopes of obtaining information which he believes is only obtainable from the commanding officer of this border camp.¹⁵ He encounters one African American soldier who thinks Willard is himself the commanding officer, perhaps because he is white. He meets another African American soldier who answers his question, 'do you know who's in command here' with 'yeah' and gives no names. Frustrated, Willard leaves, telling his crew, 'there is no fucking c.o.' If no one there knows who is in command, how can anyone give Willard accurate information? The knowledge that he recognizes as such is unobtainable in 'the asshole'.

The film perfunctorily replaces US women and feminized domesticity with an imagined US male homosociality that thrives under combat conditions in Vietnam. In an early scene, the camera pans along some photographs on a table next to the bed in which lies Willard. While a voiceover states 'When I got back I hardly said a word to my wife

before I said yes to a divorce', Willard burns one of the photographs with his lit cigarette, the picture of a woman the viewer assumes to be his wife. The asshole secures a final commitment to this homosociality: the previous mission commander, Captain Richard Colby, who had joined instead of killing Kurtz, had written to his wife, 'sell the house, sell the kids, I'm never coming back'. Life in the asshole secures a final commitment to this homosociality: the film depicts Kurtz, and not hearth and home, as irresistible. Willard and his all-male crew enter an oddly feminized asshole, that is, one where race is used to feminize the space. In dominant US codes assholes are implicitly gendered masculine, something of a man's which signifies his domination of another man. Having cleared out an exclusively male space in a few strokes, in the economy of the film the asshole here is racialized, is other, the domain of the 'Viet Cong'. The film ensures that, for Willard at least, US and native women are replaced as objects of desire.¹⁶ 'Everyone gets what they want', Willard says in voiceover. 'I wanted a mission. And for my sins, they gave me one. It was a real choice mission. And when it was over, I'd never want another.' For Willard, the mission to terminate Kurtz replaces and entirely fulfils his desire. His claim that everyone gets what they want is a condemnation, a warning: they deserve whatever happens to them.

Presaging US popular moral discourse on AIDS, on risks and on knowledge, Willard provides this voiceover account just before arriving at the Cambodian temple which is Kurtz's command post: 'I knew the risks, or imagined I knew. But the thing that I felt the most, much stronger than the fear, was the desire to confront him.' This particular mission is the final one, the ultimate one, he will never want another. The PBR enters the Do Long bridge area to shouts from US soldiers waving from the muddy banks and rushing into the murky water: 'Take me home' they yell. These lost souls clamour for salvation until they notice that Willard's journey takes the boat even deeper into upstream into 'the asshole of the world'. Ominously foretelling US troops about homosexuality—especially sodomy—and AIDS, one soldier shouts 'You'll get what you deserve.' Willard chooses to travel beyond the Do Long bridge, and so, given this warning, the consequences are his just deserts, choosing to meet his destiny in the asshole of the world.

'The Code is Almighty'

Let's be honest with ourselves: AIDS information cannot be what some call 'value neutral.' After all, when it comes to preventing AIDS, don't medicine and morality teach the same lessons? ... All the vaccines and medications in the world won't change one basic truth: that prevention is better than cure, and that's particularly true for AIDS, for which right now there is no cure (US President Ronald Reagan, April 1987).

Upon arriving at the camp of Kurtz, an abandoned temple in Cambodia, Willard tells Chef, one of the remaining three white survivors, to remain on board the boat while he takes Lance to track down Kurtz. If he should fail to return by 2200 hours, Chef should call in the airstrike, technically forbidden because they are in Cambodia, not Vietnam. The airstrike would terminate many more people than the mission calls for, since the target is Colonel Kurtz, not his band of 'deluded native' followers. Revealing the script's understanding of its own structure as metaphor, Willard releases the classified information that will call down the strike, 'The code is Almighty.' In *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, the original script offers additional glimpses of the production

crew's imperialism, which they cannot escape no matter how critical of the US–Vietnam War they intend to be. At the conclusion of the original script, Kurtz asks Willard rhetorically, 'I summon fire from the sky. Do you know what it means to be a white man who can summon fire from the sky? What it means?'¹⁷ Not only do Kurtz and Willard have the 'natural' advantage of whiteness and maleness, but they have the ability to wreak havoc, to call in an airstrike of bombs and napalm, to light fires, to wipe entire villages off the face of the map. Unlike the villages and people who would simply disappear in US attacks in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, Willard has the power and the privilege to call in the apocalypse of the title, and make his own annihilation a monument, a martyrdom.

The final possibility of an airstrike, a code for US dominance and privilege is omnipresent from the beginning of the film. The opening sequence, of a lush jungle vegetation, palm trees swaying in wind, impresses upon the viewer the devastation of an airstrike unleashed by an unseen power. The agents of the napalm airstrike, the US jets, do not appear on screen and the napalm and fire bombs fall from the sky as from an unseen evil visitation. Instead, the film shows helicopter blades rotating and raising dust while the soundtrack plays the thumping regularity of blades cutting through air. Helicopters are the instruments and symbols of guerrilla warfare in jungles, particularly in 'Oriental' jungles: Korea was the first testing ground for the machine. In slow motion, a smooth line of explosive fire moves across the screen, left to right, through the palm trees. The scene is infused with dust, and the green disappears into grey. The only human figure one can see clearly is the enlarged and superimposed face of Willard, the narrator of the story of 'The End'. Lest the viewer miss the significance of the un-narrated, un-situated, napalm strike, Jim Morrison's voice singing 'The End' clarifies, 'This is the end, the end my friend ... lost in a Roman wilderness of pain, and all the children are insane.'

The airstrike is doubly problematic: technically forbidden because they are in Cambodia, an airstrike would terminate many more people than the mission calls for. Thus, the airstrike as an infallible last resort needs justification. It is not Willard's failure, not Colby's failure, not the US military's failure, but because of Kurtz's followers that the airstrike must be ordered. They made Kurtz into a false god, an illicit Almighty. The film argues that Colonel Kurtz is insane, not to be judged by the 'usual' standards. *Hearts* presents Coppola and his film crew as insane, with too much money and equipment in the 'jungles' of Vietnam [*sic*]. The followers at the camp, the 'children' are 'insane', no longer civilians whose death is a regrettable price of war, but bodies to be counted as evidence of victory.

In *Apocalypse Now*, precise information on location is valuable. Willard knows the coordinates of Kurtz's compound, knows that Kurtz is there, and this information is necessary for an airstrike. Presumably, Willard's commanders could and would order the airstrike if they knew precisely where Kurtz has located himself. They give Willard a location, Nung Hmong Ba, where Kurtz is rumoured to be encamped. That they send Willard to assassinate Kurtz indicates that they may be unwilling to kill all of his followers, and further, they may be unwilling to launch an expensive, full-scale airstrike for the sake of one man, especially given that this is one of their own ('insane') soldiers. The film presents Kurtz's followers, all 'natives' with the exception of the first assassin and a renegade US photojournalist (Dennis Hopper), as unerringly loyal to him, worshipful even.

The secrecy of an airstrike such as Almighty, which is privileged military hierarchy information and a secret kept from most of the US soldiers and the US media, is echoed

in the discussion of AIDS in the Philippines, and in the US. The Reagan and Bush administrations represented AIDS as incurable, omnipotent as the wrath of an almighty as a tactic to deny funding. It was not until 1 April 1987, six years after AIDS entered the public eye in the US, that Reagan first discussed the disease and condemned PLWAs. President Bush's solution behavioural change was equally grim, insidious, and homophobic. The implication from both Reagan and Bush was that any person with AIDS must be a homosexual or an IV drug addict and therefore deserves to die.

In a dictatorial, directorial move, Francis Coppola asked for 'the primitive' in order to represent Kurtz's worshippers and used the Ifugao, a group of people living in the Ifugao region, unfoundedly reported to have been 'headhunters' prior to World War II (Orth).¹⁸ In her journal, Eleanor Coppola notes that the Ifugao are considered more than adequate substitutes for the Vietnamese Montagnards (Coppola, *Notes*, p. 117). In *Hearts* Eleanor Coppola reads from her journal:

In the script, Kurtz's band of renegade soldiers has trained a tribe of local Montagnard Indians to be a fighting team. ... Rather than dress up Filipino extras every day, Francis asked Eva, a production assistant, to go to a northern province where the rice terraces are and recruit a real tribe of primitive people to come live on the set and be in the scenes.

The film overlooks finer distinctions. Early in the film, a general makes a passing reference to Kurtz's tribe of Montagnards, but when Willard encounters the people living with Kurtz, he does not refer to anyone specifically as Montagnard: 'The place was full with bodies: North Vietnamese, Viet Cong [*sic*], Cambodians.' As the camera takes Willard's point of view and pans across the temple carnage, focusing in particular on several severed heads scattered on the ground, it is unclear whether the bodies he refers to are those which are alive or dead. In this ethnography-run-amok, Willard's description draws on an Orientalized image of hordes of bodies while converting the 'real tribe of primitive people' into an altogether different group.

The film and its documentors collapse the referent into its actors, employing and manipulating an Ifugao ceremonial slaughter of a caribou in order to tell the story of the two white men within the temple.¹⁹ Although Francis Coppola asked the Ifugao for permission to film their ceremonies for the use of his film, he violently decontextualizes the ceremony to operate as a synecdoche for Willard's ritualistic slaughtering of Kurtz. Shots of the ceremony are interspersed with Willard's emergence from the 'primeval' swamp, his entrance into the temple, and his murder of Kurtz. In the economy of the film, the Ifugao ceremony represents Kurtz's death, losing the meaning it held for the participants. Willard is hailed after appearing at the entrance of the temple, but unlike Kurtz he rejects the adoration of the Ifugao. Somehow, the Ifugao knew what was happening inside the temple: the film posits that they were enacting an equivalent scene outside. Displaying a strange but not indiscriminate sort of loyalty, the Ifugao are ready to follow the white US soldier who killed their former white US leader.

After slaughtering Kurtz, Willard reappears outside the temple with his hands, literally, full. In his right hand he holds the murder weapon, a machete remarkably similar to the one used by the Ifugao/Montagnard who killed the caribou. In a gesture that repudiates a certain kind of violence, he drops the weapon without a second glance. In his left hand he carries a hefty bundle, the manuscript of Kurtz's report to the US military. He does not discard this other form of violence. In this document Kurtz not only advises his commanders to avoid ground combat in Vietnam (and in his specific case, in Cambodia too), but to use an airstrike to drop something other than napalm,

urging them to 'DROP THE BOMB, EXTERMINATE THEM ALL.' Recalling an earlier time when the US elected to 'exterminate them all' by dropping 'the bomb' on another Asian country—Japan—the command echoes beyond the script to include any Orientalized Other as 'all': the Vietnamese Montagnards called for by the script and the Filipino Ifugao who play them. No 'direct' contact is necessary, and the dangers of direct contact with the possibilities for insane desertion or transmission, are to be avoided. Articles on Pagsanjan imply that the consequence of 'direct contact' between boys who may be sex workers and foreign film crew members is AIDS and paedophilia. An airstrike displaces the label 'enemy soldier' onto all Orientalized bodies. This airstrike to terminate an 'insane' US military officer's command, to eradicate both his presence and his followers' presence, is a displacement of responsibility and defers attention away from the colonialist practices of the sanctioned and 'sane' commanders. Kurtz's desire—drop the bomb, exterminate them all—is very similar to the commanders' assignment to Willard to call in the airstrike. Underlying these analogous beliefs is an imperialistic speculation that if only the military command was more inclined to exterminate all of the 'natives', if only they had followed Kurtz's advice, perhaps the United States' eventual defeat would have been less humiliating. In the articles on Pagsanjan and *Apocalypse Now* the US press avoids dwelling or speculating on the war the US lost—the US–Vietnam War which is, after all, the impetus of the film—in favour of dwelling on a location where the US military continued to have a major presence—the Philippines—and subsumes the Pagsanjan boy sex workers in the process. Perhaps the *code* is almighty, the ultimate trope, and that code is military in nature. Willard follows his military code, Kurtz does not: because Willard respects the chain of command, he can kill one of his 'own'. The difference between Kurtz choosing to kill one of his own troops and Willard killing Kurtz is official sanction.

Locating, Pathologizing and Normalizing Sex in Pagsanjan

Both Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* expose the importance of locating and annihilating for a colonialist project. In the AIDS epidemic, those interests would conflict: no longer would it be a clear advantage to know where to call down the Almighty. Indeed, during the Reagan and Bush administrations, the code was to avoid the A-word, a code of silence through funding delays that officially sanctioned AIDS deaths. In the Philippines, collapsing the 'origins' of paedophilia and AIDS added to that silence the implication that homosexual practices were responsible for both.

The uncertainty about the origins of sex work and AIDS is spatialized through the confusion about where, exactly, Pagsanjan is located. Mydans in the *New York Times* situates it at 40 miles south-east of Manila. Callo (1989) in *Reuters* reports the town is 60 miles south of Manila. In 1984, *United Press International* (Redmond, 1984a) places it 57 miles south-east of Manila. In 1988 *UPI* locates it 40 miles away from the capital ('Child'), and in 1991 positions it 50 miles south of Manila ('Sports'). The European and US press is not alone in disagreeing over the coordinates. For example, *Kyodo News Service* locates the town at 60 kilometres south of Manila ('Asian'). It is a wonder Pagsanjan can be found at all.

These conflicting coordinates do not ensure the space will be safe from airstrikes: this time in the form of an AIDS-phobic, homophobic violence and a US cultural violence which, taking responsibility by finding 'the cure', opens a space for an 'invasion' by Western science and medicine. A *Seattle Times* article cites US Representative McDermott who argues 'the strains of the HIV virus [*sic*] in Asia are significantly different

from those found in the US' (Schaefer, 1991). McDermott acknowledges differences but does not discuss how closely these HIV strains—in Asia, Africa, or the West—may or may not be related. Cindy Patton (1990) addresses the ways in which Western medical discourses justify the studies of AIDS in African countries, and are themselves justified by racist, xenophobic, and homophobic attitudes. Given the situation in Africa, where people were used for testing under conditions which would not be allowed in the US, I have no interest in proposing that exact locations are necessary.

The international discussion of 'child prostitution' in Pagsanjan begins in 1977 and continues through much of 1990, and then, after a silence, resumes in 1992. A ready explanation exists for these twenty months of silence: in May 1990, under the Corazon Aquino administration, the Department of Tourism eliminated Pagsanjan from its roster of tourist sites (De Castro). This action diverted from Pagsanjan a potentially large share of tourist revenue.²⁰ At least for US reporters, the cause of this removal was paedophilia: 'The Philippines decided to stop promoting the city of Pagsanjan, one of its top tourist destinations, after a booming "sex tour" business turned it into an international center for pedophilia and child abuse' (Fineman, 1990, p. 1). Since the success of the illegal sex work business did not in its first instance rely on official publicity it seems unlikely to stop, despite the government's punitive unmapping. However, the Corazon Aquino government accomplished two other goals by erasing and dislocating Pagsanjan: it pronounced its moral stance and rid itself for a short time of unwelcome Western attention.

In order to make the battle over Pagsanjan one of resisting sexual imperialism rather than one over collecting tourist dollars, the story had to include local voices decrying the danger of AIDS. In Mydans' article it is not clear whether or not the author has actively solicited the opinion of members of the Pagsanjan Council for the Protection of Children but the issue of AIDS appears out of the blue in the final sentence: 'we are not even sure where AIDS comes from'. A simple, and perhaps most useful, answer to the question of where AIDS comes from might be, from the transmission of fluids containing HIV. But in Mydans' article the confusion over the question of 'where AIDS comes from' is conflated with the need to pinpoint 'where the child prostitution comes from'. In a circularity of transference, the question of location moves from the site from which AIDS is transferred, the transference itself, the host site. According to the newspapers, AIDS supposedly comes from the contact between the West and the East—the penetration of the Orient by the Occident. This slip, this claim to the active role, is laden with a seemingly self-reflexive Western guilt which should result in taking responsibility. Ironically, fixating on the question of translocation of AIDS actually diverts attention away from US militarism in the Philippines.

The international English-language press moratorium lasted only until a useful narrative frame could be developed. New stories continue to vacillate between and conflate a horror of AIDS and of paedophilia.²¹ In several newspaper articles, the negotiations between the Pagsanjan boys and foreign men are described in terms of paedophilia, which explicitly or implicitly carries a negative charge. A *Chicago Tribune* article entitled 'Philippine town haven for touring pedophiles', begins, '*Apocalypse Now* ... left a nasty legacy' (Schmetzer, 1992a, p. 31):

Riviera, a former teacher who now runs the Pagsanjan Council for the Protection of Children ... said many foreigners now look for child prostitutes, both boys and girls, in the belief they are less likely to be carriers of the AIDS virus [*sic*]. 'It's not just pedophiles today but ordinary men looking for sex

who feel it's safer to do their thing with a child,' she said ... By the middle of this year, four boys had died. Doctors won't say whether the four succumbed to AIDS.

Despite what the sources claim, Schmetzer insists that the film crew is entirely responsible for both the complex sexual economy of Pagsanjan or the local introduction of HIV. The reported need to distinguish between 'pedophiles' and 'ordinary men looking for sex' stands in remarkable contrast to the wilful collapse between AIDS and youth death which is viewed as the logical extension of the sex industry. Schmetzer reports Riviera noting that the difference between 'pedophiles' and 'ordinary men' is that the latter's desires are channelled according to fear of AIDS. The unspoken assumption is that 'pedophiles' are gay men, while the 'ordinary men' are heterosexual. Riviera's statement as used by Schmetzer points out one factor (AIDS) in the construction of a desire that is considered a province of 'ordinary men', yet in contrast, 'pedophilia' and its constructions are condemned and dismissed. The label 'ordinary men' pathologizes sex between adults and children unless the impetus is fear of AIDS. A shorter version of Schmetzer's article appeared in *The Calgary Herald* three days later titled 'Movie's legacy horrifying'. This version does not mention the deaths of the four boys, but leaves no uncertainty about where responsibility for 'the horror' of paedophilia lies, in *Apocalypse Now* (Schmetzer, 1992b, p. A2).

In the longer version, Schmetzer claims that it took 'five years before the town became fully aware' of the motivation of the male tourists. It is much more likely that some inhabitants of the town were aware of the tourists' purposes, and those inhabitants were likely to be the sex workers themselves. Indeed, the report seeks legitimacy by quoting local sources, citing the Pagsanjan Council for the Protection of Children survey of 300 parents which shows they are aware of their sons' activities. In the article, the Council condemns more than this awareness on the part of the parents. It becomes clear that at least some of the local residents view the boys as active members of the local economy:

Riviera and her council found not only that the parents were aware of their sons' misconduct but 'often pushed them into prostitution with the excuse, "we need the money and the foreigners pay for the boys' education, their clothing and their shoes."'

According to Riviera, the parents often encouraged what Schmetzer labels 'misconduct'. Not only are the pressures of class differences erased, but the moral idiom of the 'excuse' refuses to accept that prostitution might not be an inherently perverse, unreasonable solution to economic crisis. Riviera assumes the parents are ignorant, guilty and in need of an 'excuse' rather than approaching them as agents whose practices could be clarified with an explanation. The poor residents use foreign intervention for their own ends. The solution, as Schmetzer reports it, is to pay some of the parents a monthly sum roughly equivalent to what their sons make in two hours. (Apparently, some of this money came from UNICEF.) In exchange, the parents are asked to prevent further interactions between their sons and foreign men. Though the exchange between the parents, boys and clients is imbalanced, neither Schmetzer nor Riviera address the way the parents' and children's desires (for education or autonomy) are inflected with the foreigners' desires (for pleasure and power), nor how sexuality and colonialism has long structured the desire of both residents and foreigners.

Filtered second and third hand through the *New York Times*' interpretation of the local conflict between the Council of Citizens for the Protection of Children and others who are 'harboring' the 'pedophiles', residents voice contradictory attitudes towards the

foreigners, some of which depend on interpretations of economic benefits. Parents of the sex workers are not directly quoted, instead their words are mediated through Council members' accounts of what parents say to them. The local residents demand that they be given something in exchange for preventing their sons from having sex with foreigners: their children are a principle natural resource. 'Exchange'—of sex for money, of sex-money for UNICEF money—is not just a means of survival but also a mediator for poorer parents' relations to foreigners and to the richer members of their community, as this excerpt makes clear:

When teachers confront the parents of these children, [Zaide, 'the professional historian who lives here' and apparently a spokesperson for CCPC] said, the parents ask them, 'What can you give us in exchange? Can you pay for my child's schooling? Can you give him an allowance? Can you build a home for us?' (Mydans).

The local sex trade entailed extensive and multifaceted negotiations between certain residents and certain foreigners. In Mydans' article, when the teachers ask the parents to prevent their children from working or working in this way, the parents' answer demands their incorporation as agents in an alternative economy that places a value on and for their children. The reporters neglect to discuss the way in which the poor families' participation in the sex industry of the local economy threatens a class-structured tourism in which the government tourist board encouraged residents to earn a living by 'selling' the waterfalls to a different group of tourist elite. By foregrounding the conflict as entirely internal, the article tacitly inflates the residents' agency but ignores one of the reasons for the establishment of the Council: a conspicuous number of foreign men in Pagsanjan is bad for the *other* tourism.

These US texts present the foreign men as corrupting forces, and ignore an ongoing history, even with the 1992 removal of the US bases, of US military occupation in the Philippines.²² The moral corruption for which the West is held responsible is introducing homosexuality, or, at the least, 'homosexual behavior/acts', into the town of Pagsanjan. The reporters and certain residents use homosexuality—blame queers, or blame straight men who have sex with men and/or boys—to deflect attention from other neo-colonialist practices which resulted in the Philippines' economic dependence on the US government. Describing the foreigners as paedophiles and/or as gay, and coding both as the same and as equally immoral, displaces blame from US colonial practices. Neither reporters nor Council members examine the play of Pagsanjan residents' own desires in the negotiations with foreigners. Ignoring the impact of US military occupation, these texts present the foreign men in Pagsanjan as corrupting forces, indicting its internal Other (for example, homosexuals on the *Apocalypse Now* film crew). Some of the residents agreed to blame homosexuals in order to reorganize their piece of the tourist dollar pie. Both the national and, to a lesser extent the local, governments turned a blind eye to the boatmen and boys who capitalized on their interactions with tourists to sell sex. But once AIDS became a hot media topic, the unofficial economy was viewed as a threat to the larger moral and financial order. Local and national governmental organizations put aside their differences with the US imperial power in order to appropriate a useful rhetorical device. The 'post-colonized' and the neo-colonizer joined forces in a media campaign of mutual benefit: local officials could use international publicity to remove an offending sexuality, and sexual practices, while US Americans could vilify homosexuals at home by showing the mischief they might wreak abroad.

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Notes

- [1] I would like to thank the organizers and audience participants who witnessed earlier versions of this paper at 'Dangerous Liaisons? Literature, Film and Video', a conference held at University of Southern California, February 1991, and 'Making It Perfectly Queer: Second National Graduate Student Conference on Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Studies', held at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, April 1992. Thanks to Jessica Basseches, Jennifer Doyle, Sabine Engel, Judith Farquhar, Yukiko Hanawa, Fredric Jameson, Tomoko Masuzawa, Michael Moon. Special thanks to Cindy Patton and the editors and anonymous reviewers for *Continuum*.
- [2] International tourism and sex tourism are increasing with the growth of the service economy in late capitalism. While David Harvey's (1989) description of the 'shift away from the consumption of goods ... into the consumption of services' refers to primarily First World late capitalism, the effects are also felt in emerging and newly industrializing economies.
- [3] Kathleen Callo, for one, writes, 'Residents say years ago some of the 3,000 boatmen who take tourists up the rapids began prostituting themselves with homosexual tourists and later began providing paedophiles with children.' Another reporter, Sara Terry (1987), does not pinpoint the film or film crew.
- [4] It is not within the scope of this paper to analyse paedophilia or child sexual abuse in terms of the lived experiences of those who have first-hand experience. Indeed, the newspaper reports deny the Pagsanjan children and teenagers a voice. The criminalization of paedophilia seems to follow in a relatively similar and narrow vein by focusing on one aspect of the sexualization and exploitation of minors while denying them a voice. This paper is not arguing against the existence of child sexual abuse. A 1997 report by the International Labour Organization estimates the number of prostituted children in the Philippines to be 75,000. Since such statistics are difficult to determine and impossible to study qualitatively, the importance of this report is the attention it draws to prostituted children. Readers may wish to examine psychological studies, such as an analysis of the importance of considering comorbidity in treatment and recidivism; see Raymond *et al.* (1999). Additionally, see an article (Ring *et al.*, 1998) which declares the importance of 'value-free' definitions of child sexual abuse by studying what are termed consensual sexual relations between adults, adolescents, and children. A number of responses to this study charge the authors with ignoring abusive situations; see, for example, Jan LaRue (1999).

Some recent articles on representations of paedophilia in literature include Elizabeth Freeman (1998) and Frederick Whiting (1998).

For studies of the moral economy of twentieth-century child sexual abuse and social, political changes in mores towards sex crimes, see Philip Jenkins (1998). For a history of changing perceptions of gender and sexuality, see Harris Mirkin (1999).

For studies similar to mine in terms of investigating the construction of paedophilia and sexuality of youth, see John Hartley (1998). Hartley investigates the semiotic limit of the reading public by focusing on the limit between adult and child and the policing of 'juvenated' (youthful) sexuality. In her analysis of the sexualizing of teenagers and children, Catherine Lumby (1998) argues for analysing how these subjects are constructed as powerless and how this relates to abuse and coercion. She argues against perpetuating the powerlessness of young girls by speaking for them under the guise of protecting them.

- [5] I am drawing on one aspect of Said's analysis of Orientalism in his 1978 work *Orientalism*, specifically, the Western practice of claiming authority in representing the Orient. Said refers to that Orient viewed through French and British eyes, that is, what the US these days generally refers to as the Middle East. The Orient for the US is the arena of military incursions in East and Southeast Asia. Several theorists have criticized Said's work for presenting Orientalism as monolithic Other to the Occident and for erasing any agency and resistance on the part of the natives. See, among others, Homi K. Bhabha (1990), James Clifford (1988), Lisa Lowe (1991), and Aijaz Ahmad (1992).
- [6] Prior to 1975, Hollywood studios had refused to finance Francis Ford Coppola's project for *Apocalypse Now*. Not until Francis Coppola had made millions from *The Godfather* and *The Godfather II* was he able to personally finance his venture. In March 1976, Francis Coppola, his wife Eleanor Coppola, their children and a film crew of US and Italian nationals arrived in the Philippines to begin shooting *Apocalypse Now*, ostensibly set in Vietnam during the US-Vietnam War. The company based itself in Manila and in Pagsanjan. The production far exceeded the projected schedule of four months: United Artists finally released the movie on 19 August 1979. Critics considered it to be Francis Coppola's best and most controversial work to date. The film won three Golden Globe Awards, two Academy Awards (Best Sound and Best Cinematography), and the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Beginning with

- the August 1979 release to 1991, the world-wide distribution of the film grossed more than \$150 million for sponsoring studio United Artists.
- [7] Willard travels with four other US soldiers on a small river patrol boat called a 'PBR'. The crew who escorts him consists of a young African American soldier named Clean (Larry Fishburne), an older African American soldier named Chief (Albert Hall) who pilots the boat, a white Southerner called Chef (Frederick Forrest), and white Californian surfer Lance (Samuel Bottoms). Both Clean and Chief are killed before reaching Kurtz's compound, and Chef is killed by Kurtz. At the end of the film, aside from Willard, Lance is the only other survivor of the PBR crew.
- [8] Fax Bahr's and George Hickenlooper's documentary, *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, was produced by Zalom Mayfield Productions in association with Zoetrope Studios, a production company of which Coppola was a founding member. The documentary screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1991. The Bahr and Hickenlooper film employs Eleanor Coppola's *Notes*, her documentary footage of the filming of *Apocalypse Now*, and interviews with most of the main actors, including those on the other side of the camera.
- [9] Francis Coppola claims, 'We are up against every day a hundred problems. It's like a great war itself.' More than halfway through the film, Francis Coppola states to the camera: 'It was enough like people in the war who get set up like little tribal chieftains to, you know, stimulate the imagination along those lines. A film director is kind of one of the last truly dictatorial posts left in a world getting more and more democratic. So, you know, that plus being in a distant uh, Oriental country, the fact that pretty much it was my own money, and that I was making it on the crest of the acclaim of the Godfather films, and, you know, I was wealthy, did contribute to a state of mind that was like Kurtz.' Apparently, 'distant Oriental countr[ies]' tempt white men to play dictators to inhabitants who have experienced decades of 'despotism'.
- [10] Francis Coppola discusses the Milius script ending for the film, 'I think that very early on that I was going to take John [Milius'] script and mate it with *Heart of Darkness* and whatever happened to me in the jungle. I knew that was my concept.' When one recalls that Francis Coppola used Conrad's text of an invasion into an *African* jungle, the 'heart of darkness' so to speak, as a model to draw upon for his film, the interchangeability of 'the jungle' highlights a white male fear of 'dark' bodies and continents of all kinds, whether Africa, Vietnam, or the Philippines.
- [11] The image presented during Eleanor Coppola's explication shows men with rifles walking past the (her?) camera. In the context of the narration, the film presents these men as the 'Communist rebels' but it is not stated anywhere who they are.
- [12] Immediately following Eleanor Coppola's discussion, the filmmakers show Francis Coppola explaining to the interviewer(s): 'The real phenomenon of being in that situation and dealing with all the unfriendly elements was part of what the movie was about. That was one of the first directorial decisions—to put us in a situation that reflected what the movie was all about' *Hearts*.
- [13] Leo Bersani (1988) has argued that the desire to enter assholes is linked to the death drive, and cannot be redeemed. For a critique of Bersani's argument, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1992).
- [14] The film site for the scene is a bridge that had never been rebuilt after the Japanese destroyed it in World War II. Ironically, the foundations of the bridge form the base for the set bridge which, in Eleanor Coppola's words, 'is scheduled to be blown up, too' (p. 108). In a film that relies on boundaries, using the bridge as a border solves the question of how a river can possibly have a border.
- [15] When Chief learns about Willard's secret assassination mission he is incensed that the military hierarchy will kill one of its own. He equates Willard's mission to the futile rebuilding process, 'just like this bridge, we build it every night, Charlie blows it, just so the generals can say the road's open'. His words implicitly condemn the generals' pride, their desire to avoid humiliation, and links Willard's own pride to this futile cycle. As a result of Chief's tenacity, Willard is 'forced' to strangle him. As an African American soldier who is killed off in the film, Chief also serves as a filmic illustration of a US military command view that certain people are expendable. It is not insignificant that many of the soldiers at Do Long are African Americans. (In fact, there are more African Americans at Do Long than anywhere else in the film.) Nor is it insignificant that Willard arrives at Kurtz's base with two white men, after the film kills off both teenaged Clean and older Chief.
- [16] In an example where women are only desired objects, at Hau Phut, a supply and rest and recreation base, a spectacle is staged for the entertainment of the American male soldiers: Playboy Bunnies descending (and ascending) from a helicopter. Willard watches the chaos instilled by the women's performance, distancing himself from the other US men who are clamouring and leaping onto the stage, and even clinging to the helicopters. Apparently, Willard is not interested in the women, who are presented as the proper objects of desire. This scene is not about the white women, but about assassin Willard's alienation from the other men, his fellow soldiers. There is no reference to local female or male sex workers in the

- film. As the film later demonstrates, native women are silent assassins of American soldiers, or silent worshippers of Kurtz rather than commodities for US male sexual consumption.
- [17] This line was omitted in the released film *Apocalypse Now* and appears in the documentary. John Milius, who wrote the original screenplay, is interviewed by Bahr and Hickenlooper in *Hearts*.
- [18] In a voiceover for *Hearts*, Eleanor Coppola reports the same rumour.
- [19] According to *Hearts*, Eleanor Coppola is responsible for bringing this particular sacrifice to her husband's attention.
- [20] For an excellent overview analysis of the effects of tourism on several host countries, see Cynthia Enloe (1990).
- [21] The May 1990 article in *Inter Press Service* explaining The Philippines Department of Tourism's decision to remove Pagsanjan from a list of tourist attractions links social values to specific local situations. The problem here, according to the article, is that the cultural values are the wrong ones. Two other articles exemplify the attitude taken by the Western press concerning relations between 'adults' and 'children'. An article in *Reuters North European Service* addressing AIDS in the Philippines notes, '[Bulletin Today] said "Foreign paedophiles, adults who are sexually attracted to children, in Pagsanjan and other tourist havens in the country were reported to be potential carriers of AIDS"' ('Philippines ...', 1985). The article neglects to mention that since HIV can be transmitted by anyone, everyone is a potential carrier. A *United Press International* article defines paedophilia for readers: 'Spokeswoman Maryjo Benares said the Manila office of World Vision was going over its list of foreign sponsors following reports of pedophilia by men claiming to be members of the organization in the tourist town of Pagsanjan. ... Pedophilia is abnormal sexual desire in an adult for children' (Redmond, 1984a). De Castro writes, 'More than a simple question of breaking laws and regulations, the Pagsanjan problem was a matter of community values. [Department of Tourism] officials said. For example, "paedophilia"—the sexual preference for children—had become an accepted culture in Pagsanjan, they said' (De Castro, 1990).
- [22] For an examination of sex industries around (former) US military bases in the Philippines, see Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfuz (1992). An analysis of Filipina women in sex work, Filipina political figureheads and grassroots women's organizations appears in Niu (1999). For comparative work, there exist a number of excellent studies focusing on women sex workers in the region. See especially Ryan Bishop and Lillian S. Robinson (1998). Additionally, see Erik Cohen (1996), and Cleo Odzer (1994).

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