University of Alberta

Waitresses: An Interview-Based Study of Women in the Service Industry

by

Michael David Berry   ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Dept. of Sociology

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall 2007

Canada

Abstract

This thesis examines the workplace experiences of waitresses. Taking an expository approach, the author provides a forum to give voice to the research subjects. As such, the project utilizes an interview-based methodology. The substantive, testimonial data provided by interviewees is presented in a videographic format, highlighting interviewees' experiences and insights according to the sociological themes of economics, workplace experiences, and gendered social interaction. Interviews with ten waitresses serve as case studies, providing insight into the shared workplace experiences they face, and each waitress's unique subjectivity. A written excursus accompanies the video. After outlining the research interest, questions, methodology, and technical details, the author turns to a consideration of the literature. First, the historical literature is examined, followed by reviews of the literature on tipping and gender. Supplemental to the video, each interviewee is presented in a case study format that conveys the common experiences and individuality of each participant.

Table of Contents

Waitresses:
An Interview-Based Study of
Women in the Service Industry

Introduction

Research Interest

The ubiquity of the service industry in North American society, and the myriad social interactions that occur therein, make waitressing a compelling focus for sociological research. However, as Cobble pointed out more than a decade ago,

> research on service work, particularly personal service occupations, continues to lag despite the centrality of such work to the burgeoning post-industrial economy and the daily lives of countless individuals. Without such research, a critical sector of the work world will remain understudied (Cobble, 1991: 3).

Even now, service work continues to be a relative theoretical lacuna. Recent studies on restaurant service, for instance, have tended to concentrate primarily on the impact of server behaviors on tipping (Hubbard et. al. 2003; Rind & Strohmetz, 2001; Lynn & Mynier, 1993); this work has been almost exclusively quantitative and socio-psychological (Lynn & Bond, 1992). Although a handful of scholarly works have attempted to address the service industry from other perspectives—in particular gender analysis (Hall, 1993a, 1993b; Leidner, 1991; Loe, 1996)—many valuable research techniques have not yet been used to examine this topic. As such, research in this area is still at a preliminary stage.

My interest in formally researching service workers stems from casual observations gleaned during my experiences working in this industry. I have noticed that servers consistently are relegated to a lower status relative to customers and management. While this inequality is ever-present in server-customer interactions, it varies in quality and intensity according to other social factors. Gender is one of the most salient components of service relationships, and workplace experiences appear to differ considerably for men and women, on the basis of how gender is performed. As Hall indicates, "conflicts between customers and servers appear to center on the issue of subservience; all too often customers treat servers as servants or nonpeople"; however, these conflicts are experienced differently for men and women since, "both male and female servers [dislike] and openly [resist] such subordination, but resistance [is] easier when waiters [can] use their superior gender status" (Hall, 1993a: 465).

Because social constructions of gender create considerably different experiences for male and female servers, these groups must be addressed as theoretically distinct. Hall has

1

indicated that servers occupy subordinate status in their relationships with patrons, and managers; furthermore, she states, "holding the subordinated server status activates a woman's lower gender status; a similar dynamic does not occur for men who serve because their higher gender status mediates the effect of their lower occupational status" (Hall, 1993: 463). That is, waitresses are doubly subordinated, since gender subjugation compounds the initial subjugation of the service-provision role. Examining the case of waitresses is, therefore, most pressing and I have focused my research on waitresses' experiences. While comparatively addressing the cases of female and male servers would be ideal, the pragmatic constraints of a master's thesis would not permit such breadth.

Research Questions

Although some compelling ethnographies of the waitressing experience are available (Loe, 1996; Spradley & Mann, 1975), waitresses' voices continue to be silenced. As Owings points out, one "d[oes] not need to look hard to realize that waitresses [are] overlooked, underheard, underappreciated, and, unlike any other similarly large group of workers, understudied" (Owings, 2004: 3). It remains unclear, in scholarly research, how waitresses feel about their own experiences. My primary research question was and is: "how do waitresses, as social subjects, interpret their workplace experiences?" This initial, broadly stated, question implies more specific queries, such as: Do they feel empowered in their jobs? What role do they feel gender plays in their workplaces? Do they feel financially and/or socially exploited? What lifestyle factors have affected their job choices? My project endeavors to provide waitresses with a medium by which to vocalize their own perspectives, since I am trying to determine how they personally make meaning in their jobs. Approaching each waitress as a unique social agent is imperative in this type of project, since waitresses are a heterogeneous group, comprised of women from widely divergent demographics. One of the fundamental challenges of such a project lies in defining the essential differences between waitresses (their unique social agency), and the common experiences that they share.

Methods

I conducted videotaped interviews with ten waitresses. Each interview lasted one hour, a time allotment I thought reasonable. Methodologically, I employed an analytically inductive approach, which, Katz writes, can be "described more appropriately...as 'retroduction' than asinduction: a 'double fitting' or alternating shaping of both observation and explanation, rather an ex post facto discovery of explanatory ideas" (2001: 333-334). Using this grounded theory technique, I identified social indicators within the data, wrote theoretical notations that helped to develop inductive explanations, refined my data (especially through editorial reductions),

2

and articulated explanatory theory in the form of a critical and exegetical response to each interview that sought to comprehend my subjects' social constructions of meaning in their workplace experiences (Barbara, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Only this kind of grounded theorizing—which allows for a dynamic relationship between the "collection and analysis of data"—allowed the flexibility necessary to take full advantage of the interview format (Charmaz, 2003: 251). The explanatory notes written for each interview[1] were used as a reflective practice technique by which I consistently questioned the efficacy of my methods, the implications of interview content, and in particular, the contributions made by the interviewee. Set questions served as topical guidelines for the open-ended interviews. Generally, however, I strove to provide an overall framework in which each waitress was at liberty to discuss whatever she believed to be most pertinent.

Through my own involvement in Edmonton's service industry, I am acquainted with a considerable number of waitresses. As such, I used a snowball sampling approach, beginning with waitresses and other acquaintances I previously had met. Because this research is interview-based, my sampling method is an example of "theoretical sampling…a type of nonrandom sample in which the researcher selects specific times, locations, or events to observe in order to develop a social theory or evaluate theoretical ideas," (Neuman, 2000: 521). In conducting interviews I strove to be particularly attentive to the need for a diverse group of participants, since grounded theorizing demands expansive data. Nonetheless, my interview population was considerably slanted towards young waitresses, in part because there is a preponderance of waitresses who are in early adult demographics, and in part because sampling was based in my own acquaintanceship.

In compliance with the tenets of my ethics approval, I conducted interviews on campus, in classrooms located within the sociology department. This quiet, public locale was an advantageous and disadvantageous environment in which to conduct interviews. On one hand, this location had the stamp of scholastic legitimacy, which may have been comforting for interviewees unaccustomed to in-person interviews or videotaped interviews; on the other hand, this rather minimalist facility implies pressures-to-conformity in terms of scholastic method and proper language/protocols. Thus, while a sociology classroom has an air of scholastic merit, it does not necessarily compel the interviewee to speak her mind freely.

My use of videography is designed to reveal each waitress's uniqueness and provide the audience with a vivid depiction of each woman. Notably, since videotaping evokes

---

[1] Transcribed interview discourse is often abridged to exclude extraneous segue components, but strives to provide complete and linear accounts of interview dialogue, verbatim. At numerous junctures, conversation is transcribed directly in the hopes that tone will be conveyed most effectively, even where idiomatic speech and grammatical convention of oral communication are literally (or literarily) extraneous.

3

notions of surveillance, there are attendant dangers with the videographic medium, especially with respect to limitations of discursive space. However, Rose argues, "those orientations to social research that attempt to access individual lived experience...provide a justification and method—primarily the life story interview—for eliciting people's sense of their own lives" (2001: 8). Thus, while my research is unconventional in the use of video, the biographical and personal narrative orientation has innumerable academic precedents, some of which even focus predominantly on waitresses (Owings, 2004; Ryan, 2004).

Using video techniques allowed me to provide a multimedia exhibit for my research data. By mounting my thesis in a website format, I hoped to make it more accessible to a wider audience. The video, which I consider the substantive product of my research on, and with, waitresses, is supplemented by a thorough literature review of pertinent scholastic work on waitresses, gender and economic configurations in the service industry. All of these materials are accessible through a website, designed to empower audiences to access my research easily and dynamically. First and foremost, the use of video is optimal, since audiovisual representation helps to convey each woman's unique social agency, while editorial choices and textual exploration help to establish commonalities between their experiences.

Assessment of Harm

My proposed research falls within the range of minimal risk, as defined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement regarding ethical conduct for research involving humans. The "probability and magnitude of harms implied by participation in the research...[is] no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of...everyday life that relate to the research" (s. 1.5). Rather than viewing my research participants as victims, I endeavored to acknowledge them as autonomous social agents who have the capacity and the right to speak of their own experiences. Given the nature of my research, many of the interview questions (see Appendix 2) requested personal information; informed, voluntary consent helped to ensure that all participants were comfortable with their participation.[2]

Informed and Voluntary Consent

Participants were informed in writing and in person at the time of the interview that their participation was strictly voluntary and that they could stop the interview at any point without repercussion. To secure informed, voluntary consent, participants were asked to sign a

---

[2] I was attuned to the fact that, during the interviews, there was a risk that traumatic memories could emerge. As I am not qualified to provide counseling, I resolved not to provide personal advice should such circumstances emerge. Instead, I was prepared to provide contact information, in the form of brochures, for the Sexual Assault Crisis Line of Edmonton (S.A.C.E., 423-4121, http://www.sace.ab.ca/about.html).

4

consent form (a copy of which is viewable through the website's home page) after the interview process was explained, prior to the interview. In describing my project, I made sure to clearly articulate my research objective—to find out about each participant's waitressing experiences and the social circumstances surrounding her career choices. During the interviews, I found that waitresses provided different degrees of personal detail, with different degrees of prompting, according to a number of circumstances, in particular the nature of our acquaintanceship and their own personality traits.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The choice to use video necessitates a number of questions and dilemmas—particularly ethical and pragmatic ones.

Waitresses are shown in video. Because waitresses have been marginalized and stereotyped in so many of their work interactions, I believe that it's absolutely essential to accord them individuality and self-expression. "De-facing" them can only detract from their uniqueness, and further the reductive view of waitresses as a subservient mass. This expository technique, is part of the postmodern method of "oralysis", in which, "the traditional product of interviewing, talk, is coupled with the visual, providing, according to Ulmer (1989), a product consonant with a society that is dominated by the medium of television" (Fontana & Frey, 2003: 81). For the minority of waitresses who preferred not to be videotaped, I was equipped to audio-tape interviews; for any waitress who was uncomfortable with both audio and video recordings, I was prepared to gather data through note-taking. I found, however, that all of my interviewees accepted video recording. Nominally, I included waitresses' first names only in the final video component of this web-publication, although I was prepared to use pseudonyms if requested. Information about the use of likenesses and first names was included in the consent form and debriefing.

A certain degree of anonymity is secured by the removal of specific places of employment, coworkers, customers, family members etc. Given that this film will be limited to a small scholarly audience, I am confident that the audience will be sensitive to the identity issues involved.

During the research process, I uploaded raw video data into a password protected file on my personal computer. To back up my data, I produced hardcopies in standard DVD format of non-edited video; these backup copies, as well as the consent forms, were kept in a locked cabinet in my workspace.

5

Knowledge and training

While this research was learning experience for me, I consider myself very fortunate to have worked with Dr. Doug Aoki, my supervisor, and Dr. Rosalind Sydie, my intra-faculty committee member. My close working relationships with these experienced cultural theorists provided me with excellent guidance. Furthermore, my coursework in research design, methodologies and theory construction has given me a solid scholarly foundation upon which to base my research.

Section 1—Literature

Historical Tomes

Nominally, "waitresses" are bound to indentured servitude. As words do, the term "waitress" carries the weight of a class-biased history. Etymologically, the term "waitress" originated as a reference to personal servants, and, as Owings points out, "at the end of the nineteenth century, the term 'waitress' often referred to a woman who waited tables in a private home" (Owings, 2002: 10). Nonetheless, as Owings does in her invaluable 2002 anthology of work by women in the service industry, I use this succinct idiom throughout my work for a series of reasons: like Owings, "because it is the only word that specifically means a woman who waits tables" (Owings, 2004: 2), but also because it is less cumbersome than "female server". Most importantly, I have chosen to use this word specifically because it implies the prejudices of history, and suggests class distinctions and unequal gender constructions that are still pertinent. Even now, a hundred years after the word came into common use as a reference to domestic servants, the term "waitress" suggests social inequities built on longstanding prejudices about social class and gender roles.

Despite the continued evocations of the word "waitress," it is clear that waitresses' duties and roles have changed, at least contextually. In 1894, Anne Frances Springsteed copyrighted the first formal book on waitressing, *The Expert Waitress*. Rather than a sociological or academic assessment of waitresses' social roles, this was a comprehensive how-to manual for waitresses. Subtitled "a manual for the pantry and dining room," it helped to guide these servants in meal presentation and preparation.

In 1906, the second significant North American work on waitresses, Janet McKenzie Hill's *The Up-to-Date Waitress*, was published in Boston. Like *The Expert Waitress*, Hill's book was a work-guide, depicting how a personal table servant should carry out duties from "care of the pantry" (Hill, 1906: 19-21) to "preparing and serving butter" (Ibid. 73-77) and, of course, the minutiae of table service (Ibid. throughout). Hill had a clear vision of the waitress: a subservient servant of the gentrified upper-class, whose role was to accommodate her

6

employers by carrying out numerous domestic tasks. Hill was explicit in stating that a waitress was charged with ensuring, "that there is no creaking of the domestic machinery, and that the comfort which the home should assure is attained," since "that house is well ordered where each inmate knows what is expected of her, and lives up to these expectations" (Hill, 1906: 1). Though it is clear that while waitresses' usual workplace has shifted into public establishments, where they serve, en masse, a predominantly anonymous public, many of the workplace related duties have remained the same, and power dynamics of class, social-status and gender continue to impact their workplace experiences.

The next truly significant work on waitresses, Frances Donovan's *The Woman Who Waits*, was published in 1920. By this time, the term "waitress" had shifted to indicate women who worked in restaurants, saloons and other food and beverage service establishments. This shift in meaning resulted from a number of factors: the traditional extended family cohabitation arrangement was breaking down into the so-called "nuclear family," and domestic service occupations were becoming increasingly uncommon as a numerically prevalent "middle-class" increasingly approximated the "nuclear family" paradigm. As North American wealth consolidated in the hands of fewer and fewer people, personal servants became financially implausible for most households. Simultaneously, the increased presence of large-scale service establishments created public-sector service occupations for many women who might otherwise have served in private homes. Traditionally, food service establishments tended to be small, familial enterprises; in twentieth-century North America, however, restaurants and bars increasingly became formal (and, eventually, corporate) businesses (Whyte, 1948: 5-10). Generally, restaurant's increased volume, and consequently increased staffing needs, simply could not be accommodated by one family. Thus, by 1920, the formal restaurant paradigm was firmly entrenched in the North American system, enabling Frances Donovan to research a relatively new kind of "waitress," the gainfully employed female server, waiting tables in a restaurant, lounge or tea-room.

Although she acknowledges considerable differences between different "classes" of service establishment, Donovan asserts indiscriminately, "the occupation of the waitress will have to be classed for some time to come among the dangerous trades and the dangers are not such as might occur to men" (1920: 14). For Donovan, the "dangers" inherent to the waitressing trade stemmed from the dissolution of the status quo: the breakdown of the traditional social arrangement (in which women remained in the home as homemakers, and did not occupy the work force) would have attendant "losses" (Ibid. 14-15). These losses, and the broader social changes in which they transpired, were inevitable and would ideally "serve to change conditions so that other women coming after may be safe" (Ibid. 15). Donovan's disposition is traditionalist and reactionary: apart from the minor drudgery of waitressing, the work is

7

destructive because it reconstitutes feminine identity as inclusive of employability in waitress occupations. This inclusion is destructive in particular because it threatens to draw women into the less respectable world of "masculine" sexuality (Ibid. 80-81). Thus, "corruption" of women who chose to work as waitresses was a primary "danger" of the occupation. Presumably, then, the prospect of being integrated into waitressing occupations without having their "refinements" compromised, would be the "change[d] conditions" desirable for the women "coming after".

By classifying waitressing as a "dangerous" occupation, Donovan reveals a bias about it that has been entrenched in common prejudice since the inception of the trade: it is a disreputable occupation. Throughout *The Woman Who Waits*, Donovan assumes a position that is contradictorily condescending and sympathetic. She suggests that waitresses are conditionally disenfranchised by institutions and that this is a societal problem in which "society ought to intervene to improve conditions" (Ibid. 15). She nonetheless vilifies her subjects, casting aspersions on their moral and lifestyle decisions throughout her work.

Donovan was schooled in sociology and used the techniques of W.I. Thomas and Robert E. Park, developed at the University of Chicago in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Her interpretation of waitresses is particularly interesting, since her work is ethnographic, providing an extensive account of her own broad-ranging experiences in the newly-emerged occupational field of public-sector waitressing in Chicago between 1915 and 1920. Literarily, her style is a volubly accessible, though rather melodramatic, form of personal narrative. The value-laden quality of her work is, at times, problematic, and it is clear that from the outset of her research she viewed the waitressing experience as aversive; having been denied her first application for a waitressing job, her "relief," she states,

> was enormous. I felt that by his refusal I was absolved from the obligation to become a waitress. After all, perhaps I did not actually need to be one. Perhaps I could go around and ask people about them. There was something terrifying about the idea of life so totally new, so absolutely outside the realm of my experience (1920: 18).

Although we could readily attribute these sentiments to mere anxiety at the prospect of unfamiliar experiences, Donovan's statements on waitresses are consistently derogatory, and she retrospectively deems the experience of being a waitress as "trying" and "disagreeable" (Ibid. 15). Throughout, she depicts waitresses as lower-class women (Ibid. 133-145), shallow, greedy (Ibid. 51-54) and obsessed with clothing (Ibid. 203-210); in Donovan's esteem, waitresses are often eager players willing to use their sexuality cynically in a "game" that "borders upon prostitution" (Ibid. 211). Nonetheless, Donovan frequently lionizes her subjects. She does so, however, in a particularly condescending way, as is evident in her depiction of her coworker Lillie, whom, she says, "has always represented to me all that is most decent, all there is of domesticity in that port of homeless men and women" (Ibid. 38). Notably, Lillie is not actually

8

homeless, since Donovan conducts their interview in Lillie's rented room. Rather, Donovan is betraying a class-based prejudice (recurrent in her work), in which Lillie's accommodations are too modest to be considered truly a "home".

Despite her condescension, Donovan accurately portrays an informal waitresses' sorority, built on solidarity and interpersonal support. Though it lapses at times, particularly in disputes over money or men (Ibid. 51), the waitresses' support network provides an emotional, social and even financial buttress against an onslaught of challenges. In Donovan's depiction, her waitress coworkers worked out of financial necessity in a job that was often thankless, frustrating and exhausting.[3] This sodality, however, is a union of coarse, unrefined women, in Donovan's estimation. Given the essentialist view of sex she takes throughout her work, Donovan sees her waitressing colleagues as 'unladylike,' particularly in their back-room banter:

> The sort of jokes that are current in the kitchen of a restaurant, as, of course, might be expected, are not refined. They are broad Rabelaisian, dirty. In the easy familiar contact with men, these girls had acquired in regard to matters of sex (in which, like most women, they were mainly interested) the incredible candor of men (Donovan, 1920: 80-81).

Sexuality, Donovan claims, is an integral part of waitressing work, both in terms of behind-the-scenes humour, and service strategies.

Donovan emphasized the importance of sexuality in waitressing, stating, "Restaurants want women who are young and good looking; the advertisements announce it and most managers insist on it...for the most part the girl who is good looking has her pick of the jobs" (1920: 211). A sexual element was already inscribed on the waitress subject position, Donovan proposed, and even when interactions between customers and waitresses were "not actively sexual, there was the constant stimulation of dirty jokes and unclean conversation" (Ibid. 218). From Donovan's work, it is apparent that more "attractive" women were more likely to be hired in certain establishments, and more likely to be accorded the financial consideration of tips[4], a trend that continues even today, according to interviews. Yet, the sex-appeal basis of a waitress's employability—a theme which dominates many facets of the industry today, according to my

---

[3] Notably, while Donovan claims to be sympathetic to the challenges and tribulations the other waitresses face, she herself does not seek work out of necessity, but rather out of curiosity, her finances being secure. Furthermore, her own aptitude for waitressing is limited (she was fired from her first job after only three and a half days, from the second after two days, and from the third job after five days), perhaps because of lackluster commitment. While she can comprehend first-hand many of the waitressing tasks, she does not comprehend the financial exigency her coworkers face and one wonders at her alacrity in judging the other waitresses moralistically.

[4] It is noteworthy that despite numerous continuities (particularly these aesthetic, gendered and sexualized themes) between Donovan's era and ours, a significant difference consists in the fact that tips (or "side money") then comprised a minority of a waitress's earnings. Tips now comprise the majority of a waitress's earnings and often make a position that only pays minimum wage financially worthwhile.

interviewees and much of the literature—even predates Donovan's work.

According to a 1912 report, "The Girl Employed in Hotels and Restaurants," by Chicago's Juvenile Protective Association (cited in Owings, 2004: 12-13), the archetype for managerial exploitation of waitresses' sex appeal was already established in the early 1900s; complaints cited by waitresses included "bad treatment by the public," and the concern that "People think they can say almost anything to a waitress". One interviewer responsible for producing the report directly witnessed a restaurant patron

> put his arm 'around a waitress in a suggestive manner. She looked appealingly at the manager, but no protest was made.' That was no surprise. "The manager often regards a pretty girl in light of an attraction for his restaurant. In one place the pretty girls were put downstairs, where the men were served. The homely girls were put upstairs, in the room reserved for women customers. ("The Girl Employed in Hotels and Restaurants," quoted in Owings, 2004: 13).

Realistically, though, feminine sex appeal has probably always been deployed as an attraction in the service industry, and logically must be coextensive with the history of service establishments (starting with rudimentary taverns), perhaps even in barter systems that predated economic symbolic exchange models. The sexual and gender components of a waitress's workplace experiences are themes to which the literature returns time and again.

The next major treatise on the restaurant industry, William H. Whyte's *Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry*, was not published until 1948. Based on sociological field-study research commissioned by the National Restaurant Association, it was intended to define employment conditions faced by restaurant industry employees during war time (WWII) specifically and describe the social context of the restaurant industry in general. Whyte, a sociologist by trade, viewed the restaurant social system as inherently hierarchical, and insisted that "status" dictated one's role within a restaurant (1948: 10-16). For Whyte, though, "status" was a complex force that defined not only individuals' roles within restaurants, but also restaurants' positions relative to other establishments (Ibid. 12). A restaurant's relative status position, Whyte contended, had a direct and decisive effect on its service employees' status relative to other employees, as well as patrons. This claim echoes Donovan's assertion that the relationship between server and served differed considerably according to the formality of a given restaurant; both writers believed that the disparity between 'server' and 'served' increased with increased restaurant status—more prestigious restaurants catering to more elite patronage magnified the gap between server and patrons (Owings, 2002: 18, Whyte, 1948: 92; Donovan, 1920).

In any type of establishment, Whyte suggests, the service interaction would fall into one of

> three general types of waitress-customer relationships. In one, the waitress holds

10

the initiative from beginning to end. In another, the customer holds the initiative throughout. In the third, it is uncertain who is taking the lead and the initiative passes back and forth or remains in dispute. From the standpoint of the emotional stability of the waitress, either of the first two relationships is feasible...It is the third type of relationship that seems to be the troublesome one...the basic difficulty seems to be that the waitress does not know where she stands and does not know what to expect (1948: 111).

These relationship types defined, in Whyte's view, all interactions between waitresses and their patrons. According to a waitress's individual character, these circumstances would be more or less comfortable to negotiate (Ibid. 112). It is significant, however, that Whyte saw these archetypes as inherently defining the service relationship. Although "initiative" enabled the waitress a greater degree of immediate control in carrying out her work duties, this power could never reverse the status positions in the service-provision structure. The waitress, irrespective of her relative status in a given establishment or interaction, could never occupy the superordinate social position, and was always subordinate to the customer.

The inevitable subordination of waitresses, as Donovan had indicated decades before, relegated them to a stigmatized social position.[5] The stigma of subordinacy, Whyte claims, was much more difficult for women from higher-class backgrounds to accept. As such, waitresses often had to rely upon "downward mobility" to accept their stigmatized role; waitresses had to "learn to adjust themselves to those of higher status. They must appear to subordinate themselves to customers and at the same time learn to manipulate the people and the situation to their own advantage" (1948: 118, 120).[6] For Whyte, waitresses' social position must be considered in light of waitresses' gender status, as well as their work role. Whyte's perspectives on sex and gender are reactionary, although likely consistent with the dominant perspectives during his era.

Whyte's work is simultaneously enlightening and problematic in its exploration of waitresses' gendered work experiences. Although he provides insightful observations about the waitresses he studies, his views on sex and gender are—again, much like Donovan's—essentialist and, at times, condescending. Whyte proposes "that the pressures upon the waitress cannot simply be absorbed. In one way or another, they must come out, and crying is a common outlet" (1948: 107). This statement seems to imply that waitresses are, as women (Whyte at no point suggests that waiters would find catharsis in crying), emotionally fragile, and prone

[5] Notably, waiters—who, as men, were accustomed to higher social standing in general—tended to find their workplace subordination more objectionable than did their female counterparts, in Whyte's view (1948: 93, 94, 97).

[6] Whyte's work provides an insight that resonates even today. College girls, generally from middle-class backgrounds, he asserts, were accorded higher status than their less-educated counterparts. If a waitress was known to be supplementing her income as she pursued a college education, she was accorded more respect/status from patrons, coworkers and supervisors alike than were her counterparts who were perceived as career waitresses (Whyte, 1948: 120-125).

11

to weeping. He does caution that "some cry fairly frequently, some seldom cry, and there are many who never cry" (Ibid. 108). Although this assessment likely is basically accurate, it does not acknowledge that waitresses probably would have other outlets—such as vocalizing their concerns with coworkers or managers, or even to patrons—for venting their work-related frustrations.[7] Throughout his work, in fact, Whyte proposes crying (i.e. whether a waitress is or is not crying at any given time) as an appropriate and reliable gauge for waitresses' relative workplace satisfaction; he is "interested in crying," he claims "as an index for the general problem of waitress adjustment" (Ibid. 126). Whyte proceeds to outline three vital factors in "waitress adjustment": "the waitress," he writes,

> requires some leadership experience...She needs to be integrated into some group where she works and also in her life outside of work, so that she has some social support and some outlet for the tensions that arise in her job. And finally, the waitress needs security in her social position (1948: 126).

The waitressing experience, then, is a microcosm of the social system in which it is a part; rather than being isolated, or unique, Whyte reveals, the issues that obtain for waitresses are the same universal "human elements" that apply in every "evolving system of human relations" (Ibid. 30). The primary factor with which any theorist (Whyte, for example, envisions a praxis that will be applicable for restaurant managers and supervisors) must concern her/himself is status. For Whyte, though, since "status problems are not peculiar to the restaurant industry" but dictate the social configuration of all work environments (and, even more broadly, all human environments), they can only be deemed problematic insofar as they are damaging to any given social participant (1948: 15).

Despite the fact that the restaurant industry is, like any facet of the human world, governed by status configurations, Whyte asserts it is unique in a number of regards. Rather than the dyadic relationship, customary in most work environments, between an employee and his direct superior, the service schema is triadic, involving a tripartite interaction between the server, the patron, and the supervisor/manager (Whyte, 1948: 19). Integrate a host of other employees, in different status positions, and the restaurant becomes a highly stratified environment defined by complicated, multi-faceted social interactions in an "evolving system of human relations" (Ibid. 20-29, 30). Nonetheless, Whyte insists, the "human elements" involved in the service industry are predictable and constant, enabling supervisors to apply consistent, universally applicable managerial techniques.

[7] With regard to Whyte's statements on waitresses' crying, we must take note of the era in which he writes. Not only was sexual essentialism a common view, even amongst scholars, in this era, the social context differed considerably from that which we now know. Waitresses themselves likely often shared the very sexual essentialism that Whyte espouses, meaning that public and semi-public weeping probably was an instance of self-fulfilling prophecy: because many women in that era were socialized to view themselves as sentimental, they likely allowed themselves to express their emotions more floridly.

12

In addition to advocating specific practices for managers, Whyte addresses the service provision role at great length. In his era, tipping had already become an invaluable source of income, comprising at least half, and often more, of a server's income (Whyte, 1948: 98). Whyte identifies this "tipping system" as an "economic problem," particularly vis-à-vis its implications for the nexus between server and served; servers feel, Whyte writes, "that some customers use their tipping power to demand a subservient attitude and special favors" (Ibid. 98). This claim is particularly interesting from our historical vantage point. If we are to take Whyte's assertion at face-value, then it stands to reason that subordination has been entrenched in restaurant service by the solidification of tipping as commonplace—in this interpretation, the incentive for serving (financial reward through tips) is itself a guarantor of a waitress's social subordination relative to the patrons she serves.

Tipping—The Consequences of Caprice and Circumstance

Tips, my interviewees concur, are the principal incentive for waitressing. As such, they are a specific focus in my research. Emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the practice of tipping was examined—and problematized—by early scholars, like Donovan and Whyte. In late millennial scholarship, most social sciences literature on the service industry focused on tipping, with scholars like Michael Lynn, Bruce Rind and David Strohmetz devoting considerable attention to the social psychology of this practice. Tipping, they discovered, was dictated by a host of factors; while some determinants of tip values are inherent within the server-patron relationship (i.e. a server's personableness or competence within a given service interaction), many other determinants are dictated by extraneous factors, particularly those that hold psychological influence over the tipper. Because of the eminent importance of tipping to my interviewees, the scholarly literature on tipping warrants close scrutiny.

The earliest significant scholarly work on tipping in North America is Leo P. Crespi's 1947 article "The Implications of Tipping in America". Crespi, then a professor of psychology at Princeton, provides considerable insight into early debates about the merits and pitfalls of tipping. Notably, in this article Crespi also established paradigmatic scholarly approaches to both: psychological explanations for tipping—as an incentive for good service, and a means to avoid social disapproval (see below discussion of Lynn & Grassman, 1990)—and methodological approaches to the study of tipping, particularly survey-based statistical methodology.

According to an editorial in Life magazine's July 15th, 1946 edition, tipping had already become a "national nuisance" deserving of attention. This attention was obtained in Gallup poll results published on April 12, 1947 (cited in Crespi, 1947: 424); the poll indicated 49% of Americans "believed in" tipping, with clear majorities (55%) in urban areas of 10 000

13

people or more, and increasing approval with increased urban population mass. On the basis of this disparity between ostensive public opinion and Life's scathing editorial, Crespi set out to uncover the truth about people's perspectives on tipping. By this time, tipping had already become a Western institution, originating in Europe when London coffeehouse patrons began attaching coins to notes, "To Insure Promptness". This institutionalization was evidenced by the American Treasury department's stance on tipping—by 1947 they had already begun to tax tip income. As Crespi noted, the importance of tipping as a component of the service industry economy made it a viable topic for scholarly inquiry.

Prior to Crespi's work, tipping had been discussed only in journalistic accounts, which Crespi criticizes, asserting that "their pronouncements upon the psychology of the public in tipping [were] sketchy and conflicting" (1946: 425). Instead of journalism, Crespi intended, "to supply the authoritative information which is needed, the crystal ball of personal observation must defer to public opinion measurement" (Ibid. 425).[8] To this end, Crespi deployed a survey designed to ascertain public perspectives on tipping. His results are particularly important from a retrospective vantage point that sees tipping as a practice galvanized in a North American economic climate in which service staff are simply not remunerated sufficiently by employers. His survey corroborates the 1946 Gallup poll results—a majority (68.3%) of survey participants agreed with the practice of tipping; nonetheless, a majority (69.7%) would also prefer to see tipping eliminated in a context where employers provided fair wages to employees. Thus, the Gallup poll data was accurate, but incomplete:

> The error in the simple 'believe in' or 'approval' question is the failure to factor out what might be termed humanitarian tippers—individuals who do not favor tipping in itself, but simply feel the necessity under present circumstances of augmenting in this fashion the inadequate salaries of service workers. What these people 'believe in' or 'approve' is simply fair wages, not the practice of tipping. When the question is worded so as to disentangle the two ideas the majority opposition to tipping is made evident (Ibid. 426).

Unfortunately Crespi's is the only notable scholarly work that explores the question of tipping equity relative to employer wage-provision, and most subsequent research seems to take-for-granted that server wages will be low and tipping will be the institutionalized means of servers' economic subsistence.

---

[8] Crespi's preference for "scholarly" (especially statistical) methods of inquiry would be shared by future generations of scholars working on the service industry in general, and on tipping in particular. Not until Spradley and Mann's canonical ethnography, *The Cocktail Waitress: Woman's Work in a Man's World*, would the scholarly community expand to include new (i.e. non-statistical) methods, and only in recent years (i.e. 1990's onwards) have the publications really begun to include divergent formats, such as personal narrative and works written by/on waitresses themselves (Ryan, 2004; Owings, 2002; Rose, 2001; Paules, 1991). Notably, there is a relative paucity of scholarly publications on the service industry between the 1950s and the 1970s, and only the commitment of prolific scholars like Michael Lynn and Bruce Rind—and, more recently, the increased loquacity of waitresses themselves—have entrenched this field of research in the literature.

14

Crespi's work is exemplary in another fashion—he assesses not only tip giver perspectives (i.e. patrons), but also tip receiver perspectives (i.e. servers). While tip receivers' basic approval (95%) of tipping practice, in Crespi's survey, considerably exceed givers' approval (68.3%), a majority of tip receivers also agree with eliminating the practice of tipping in (theoretical) fair wage conditions (56.6%). Thus, most patrons and servers, according to Crespi's survey, basically agree that tipping is necessary because employers do not provide servers with fair wages, and elimination of tipping, in favour of fair wage-remuneration, would be preferable to the tipping arrangement.

Working from an academic psychologist's perspective, Crespi pursues another line of inquiry that is largely neglected in subsequent research (notwithstanding Lynn & Latane, 1984 and Lyne & Grassman, 1990)—psychologically speaking, why do people tip? Rejecting the assertions of "popular writings" (i.e. journalistic) that tipping is a matter of pride (Scott, 1916), self-elevation (Sparks, 1946), anxiety (Davis, 1946) or condescension (Harlow, 1938), Crespi defers instead to "quantitative public opinion measurement", discovering two dominant interpretations—"the incentive-reward theory" and "the fear of disapproval theory" (1947: 427). There are, Crespi is careful to note, significant differences between why people think they tip and why people actually tip, and having ascertained the supposed reasons, he goes on to pursue the actual reasons for tipping. To this end, he employs three indirect question:

> Do you generally tip (a waiter or waitress for example) even when you have received poor service?
>
> Though you disapprove of the practice, do you tip anyhow?
>
> Do you generally tip a shoe clerk or a salesgirl in a store? (Crespi, 1947: 428).

An affirmative answer to the first question was presumed to indicate that social pressure (rather than incentive-reward) motivated tipping. An affirmative answer to the second question, likewise, was assumed to indicate fear of social disapproval as motivation for tipping. A negative answer to the third question was accepted as an indicator of custom-based social expectation/ pressure as the motivator for tipping. In the first question, Crespi received a majority (55.7%) of affirmative answers; in the second, he likewise received a majority of affirmative answers (83.3%); in the third, he received a vast majority of negative responses (97.0%). Thus, Crespi contends, the results suggest "that custom, meaning primarily fear of social disapproval, is today the principal reason why people tip" (Ibid. 429). As such, if we accept Crespi's inferences, the primary shares of tipper respondents (38%), and tippee respondents (47.5%) were incorrect in assuming that incentive-reward was the motivation for tipping.

Crespi's thorough and comprehensive study goes on to examine tipper behaviour, determining that 67.3% of interviewees tip "practically always" and that "most American urbanites tip frequently, widely, and substantially" (Ibid. 430. Crespi concedes, however, that

15

he is biased against tipping, contending that "tipping is an aristocratic hangover which is inconsistent with the democratic assumptions of the equality and dignity of men" (Crespi, 1947: 432). Nonetheless, he acknowledges that this is no assurance "that the public views the custom in such a light" (Ibid. 431); in fact, he discovered, 82.7 % of tipping patrons and 88.9% of tip receivers answered negatively when asked "do you believe it is degrading or beneath one for people to seek and receive tips?" (Ibid. 431). Crespi found that a majority of respondents would favour the elimination of tipping in circumstances in which larger bills accommodated increased service staff salaries (Ibid. 432-433).

Writing in a time when tips were a nascent fiduciary practice, Crespi recommends against tipping. He proposes that widely publicizing his research results (the finding that a majority of Americans would pay larger bills to ensure fair salaries for service workers), in conjunction with a collective, reflective refusal to tip, would ensure that managers eliminate tipping in favour of fair wages. Instead of tips, he suggests, a patron might leave a card indicating his/her conscientious objection, and status as a member of an "anti-tipping league" (Ibid. 434). Although Crespi's excellent piece is intellectually superior to most subsequent scholarly work on the service industry, history has shown that Crespi's "anti-tipping league" proposal could not gain purchase against a corporate system that consistently refuses to share profits with service sector employees.

Consequently, when the scholarly community began meaningfully to re-examine tipping in the latter part of the twentieth century, the practice had already been codified into the North American social system. By this point, tips already accounted for the majority of a server's earnings. Beginning in the nineteen eighties a, principally quantitative, literature on the determinants of tip percentages has found publication in social psychology journals, especially the Journal of Applied Social Psychology. Unlike Crespi's earlier work, this body of scholarship presumed tipping as commonplace, treating it as a taken-for-granted reality, to be understood socially and socio-psychologically, according to its determinants and predictors of variance. These studies have sought to uncover the impacts of various conditions, ranging from weather to interpersonal touch, on tip values. For pragmatic reasons, these studies have tended to focus on the influence of server behaviours on tips, although a minority examine factors extraneous to server behaviours.

As early as 1984, Michael Lynn and B. Latane examined "The Psychology of Restaurant Tipping". Lynn, now an associate professor of consumer behavior and marketing at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, is a longstanding scholar in the study of tipping and social psychology and a pioneer in intellectual work on the hospitality industry with a formidable list of publications on the service industry in general, and tipping psychology in particular. This work posited that a system of reciprocity was established in the

16

tipping arrangement. In essence, a system of normative expectation is created in the service relationship: psychologically, diners generally feel obligated to tip, as a form or restitution for services provided in good faith.

Based on prior research that alcohol consumption can contribute to both antisocial and prosocial behaviour, Lynn's next major study, "The Effects of Alcohol Consumption on Restaurant Tipping," explores the relationships between: alcohol consumption, positive affect, and tip values. Because of improved moods and decreased information processing ability (and consequent disability in processing inhibitory cues), Lynn argues, alcohol often has a positive effect on helping behaviours, and therefore can by hypothesized to increase tips. Nonetheless, Lynn concedes, prior research (Crusco & Wetzel, 1984; Cunningham, 1979 and Freeman et. al., 1975) disagrees with this hypothesis. These studies, however, are flawed in Lynn's esteem; they use tip percentages, measured as a proportion of the overall bill value, as a dependant variable. This measure is problematic, Lynn argues (a critique on which he would later elaborate in his 1992 publication, co-authored by C.F. Bond, "Conceptual Meaning and Spuriousness in Ratio Correlations: The Case of Restaurant Tipping") because "it assumes the relationship between the tip amount and bill size has a zero intercept...[and] if the intercept is positive, then dividing tip amount by bill size will create a spurious negative correlation" (1988: 88).

Lynn corrects for these perceived shortcomings by conducting a regression analysis of tip amount on bill size. To determine the relationship between alcohol consumption and tip values, he conducted three separate analyses: a regression analysis of "residual tips on the linear and quadratic components of number of alcoholic drinks," a "t-test on the difference in mean residual tips between parties that did and did not have alcohol" and "a hierarchical multiple regression of residual tip on group size, children service structure, service discount, customer's gender, payment method, alcohol, and number of drinks" (Ibid. 89). In all three analyses, Lynn determined statistically significant positive correlations between alcohol consumption and increased tipping, although these results were putatively obscured when a simple ratio correlation between tip size and bill size was employed. On this basis, Lynn argues for a re-assessment of previous work, using regression analyses, rather than simple ratio correlations to reinterpret prior data. Unfortunately, although he provides statistical insights, Lynn does not explore the social-psychological factors of tipping in this article. Instead, he directs his attention to causal explanations of tipping in his next major published work.

In an interview-based study, "Restaurant Tipping: An Examination of Three 'Rational' Explanations," (1990) Lynn and Grassman explore rational motivators for patron tipping in restaurant settings. Tipping as remuneration-for-service defies economic custom and, therefore, must be theorized apart from the customary cash-for-goods/services economic archetype:

In most economic exchanges, the price of a good or service is identified by the

17

seller and this amount must be paid in order to obtain the commodity. However, gratuities are paid at the discretion of consumers after they have already received the services they are paying for. This voluntary aspect of tipping raises questions about why rational people leave tips and about what factors determine how much they tip (Lynn & Grassman, 1990: 170).

On the basis that tipping is not a motivation for good same-occasion service ("since tips are paid after current service has already been rendered"(Ibid. 170)), Lynn and Grassman propose three possible rational inducements for tipping: to purchase social approval, to establish equitable relationships, and to provide incentive for quality future service.

Tipping, Lynn and Grassman point out, "is a customary behavior guided by social norms about who to tip and how much to tip them" (Ibid. 170). As such, tipping is governed by normative rule sets, and refusing to tip constitutes a form of deviance from standardized social codes about dining behaviour. It can then be expected that restaurant patrons will consistently encounter pressures to conform to tipping customs and that non-tippers will generally be aware of their deviance. Although Lynn and Grassman do not pursue explanations for non-tipping, it is likely (as indicated by many of my interviewees) that restaurant patrons will intentionally refuse to tip ("stiff") a server to convey that they are dissatisfied with their dining experience; in this circumstance, patrons willingly incur a server's social disapproval in order to express their own disapproval. This theory is consonant with Lynn and Grassman's second rational explanation for tipping—"buying equitable relationships" (Ibid. 171). Since the patron-server relationship constitutes a site of social exchange, it requires equitable reciprocity, according to Lynn and Grassman.

To avoid being distressed by an inequitable relationship, patrons should increase tip values proportionally to services provided. Lynn and Grassman point out, however, that prior research on tipping (Crusco and Wetzel 1984, Lynn and Latane, 1984 and Lynn, 1988) does not substantiate this theory, having produced null results in the relationship between service (quality/quantity) and tip values. The theory remains defensible, though, Lynn and Grassman contend, because service "quality" is subjective, and prior studies may have been constrained by "poor operationalizations of service quantity or quality" (1990: 171). They conclude that more research on the relationship between tipping and patrons' assessments of service is needed (Ibid. 172).

Lynn further explores the shortcomings of statistical service industry research in his next article, co-authored with Charles F. Bond Jr., "Conceptual Meaning and Spuriousness in Ratio Correlations: The Case of Restaurant Tipping" (*Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1992). Using previous research on tipping, Lynn and Bond contend that ratio correlations often introduce spuriousness into data analysis. In most related research, the tip value expressed as a percentage of the restaurant bill is deployed as a ratio variable. Although this

18

ratio is meaningful to prior researchers, restaurant employees, and restaurant patrons, Lynn and Bond's article is intended to show the "spuriousness of correlations involving percent tip and...illustrate both the problem of spuriousness in ratio correlations and the inadequacies of the argument about conceptual meaning" (1992: 331).

In 1993, Lynn and Kirby Mynier, from the University of Houston, published a study on the "Effect of Server Posture on Restaurant Tipping". Lynn and Mynier note that "squatting down next to a table increases the congruence between the server's and customers' postures" and, according to research that indicates "that postural congruence, more eye contact, and greater proximity are associated with rapport and liking," they hypothesize that "squatting down will increase a server's tips because it makes the server seem friendlier" (1993: 679). This research included two studies. Results were conclusive in both studies: a statistically significant positive correlation was recorded between increased tip values and the squatting condition. Although the waiter in the first study anticipated that squatting would yield greater tips (begging the question of self-fulfilling prophecy), the waitress in the second study did not believe that posture would affect tip values, and Lynn and Mynier argue that self-fulfilling prophecy can, therefore, be ruled out as a causal explanation (Ibid. 683). Furthermore, they contend the disparities between the servers' sexes and races, as well as the types of establishments, means that the effect can be supposed to obtain across circumstances (in different restaurants and with different servers). Ultimately, although Lynn and Mynier are cautious about making definitive causal inferences, they argue that their results are consonant with previous research, and that squatting provides a non-verbal cue that servers like their patrons personally. This perceived liking, they contend, provides motivation for increased tip values.[9]

In 1996, Lynn synthesized his previous research into seven recommended ways to increase tips: touching, smiling, greeting, squatting, credit-card insignias on tip trays, writing "thank you" on checks, and drawing a happy face on a check ("Seven Ways to Increase Servers' Tips"). This piece is amongst Lynn's proliferating advisory works oriented towards servers and managers, intended to help combat the high turnover rates and employee shortages in the service sector documented in the praxis-oriented service industry literature (Boles et. al. 1995;

---

[9] A more thorough study by Davis et. al., published in 1998, confirms Lynn's results on the relationship between servers' posture and tip values. This study, in fact, explores a number of considerations, and discovered that "significantly higher tips were given (a) at dinner than lunch, (b) in the urban area, (c) to female servers, and (d) when the server squatted" (Davis et. al., 1998: 223). Tip values were increased by squatting for both male and female servers, in both a small-town environment and in a larger urban area; Davis et. al., like Lynn, proposes that this could be the result of congruent eye levels and increased eye contact created by servers' squatting (Ibid. 225). Unlike most other scholars, Davis et. al. provide a caution in interpreting their results, writing,

> although this study evaluated the effects of squatting, it is arguable that squatting may not be
> a unique response. Any unusual or salient behavior of the server may be sufficient to increase
> tips. Likewise, the present study did not evaluate the possibility that squatting may have
> inadvertently resulted in a change in serving behavior (Ibid. 225),

a concern that probably obtains for other studies as well.

19

Bonn & Forbringer, 1992; Hogan, 1992; Woods & Macauley, 1989). Rather than hiring new employees, or giving employees greater financial incentives directly, management can combat staffing problems by recommending tip-enhancement strategies, Lynn contends. Since money-making is the primary incentive for employment for most people, increased earnings will increase the attractiveness of an occupation, thus, "restaurant managers can attract and keep competent servers by promising and delivering them a high income" (Lynn, 1996: 25). Since increasing wages is detrimental to the fiscal bottom line (and, hence, unattractive for most business managers), this is not an ideal means by which to create financial incentive. Instead, Lynn blithely suggests, "knowledgeable managers can help their servers boost their tip percentages. Managers who know what their servers can do to increase their tips can pass that knowledge on to the servers" (Ibid. 25).

A server can enhance tips, Lynn suggests, by personalizing the service experience and creating a meaningful social nexus between server and patron. This interaction will be most lucrative for a server if it is friendly and sympathetic. Specifically, introducing oneself by name helps a server to elicit a magnanimous response from patrons, increasing the probability of generous tipping. Lynn cites Garrity and Degelman's 1990 study, "Effect of Server Introduction on Restaurant Tipping" to substantiate his point. Garrity and Degelman used one confederate waitress who greeted half the studied table groups (21 dyads) by saying "Good morning. My name is Kim, and I will be serving you this morning. Have you ever been to Charley Brown's for brunch before?" and the other half (21 dyads) using the same greeting, omitting only "my name is Kim" (1990: 169). In this study, there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the name introduction and increased tip values.[10] On the basis of these results, Lynn recommends "that managers should encourage servers to introduce themselves to their customers in a sincere and professional way" (1996: 25).

Lynn's second recommendation—that servers should squat down next to tables—relies on the evidence of his aforementioned 1993 study with Mynier, "Effect of Server Posture on Restaurant Tipping". He cites the data from that study, in which servers received higher tips in the squatting condition (than the non-squatting condition). Lynn explains this effect, contending that

> squatting does several positive things: it increases the congruence between the server's and customers' postures, facilitates eye contact by putting the server on the customers' eye level, and brings the server's face closer to the customers' faces (1996: 26).

Despite this general trend, Lynn cautions, servers must use discretion about which tables will

---

[10] Garrity and Degelman also determined results, consonant with previous research (May, 1978), that patrons who paid using credit cards left significantly larger tips (on average $5.24, or 22.6%) than diners paying with cash (average $3.68, or 15.9%) (1990: 170).

20

welcome such informality (Ibid. 26).

Although Lynn's third point—that servers can enhance their tips by smiling at patrons—seems intuitively obvious, he cites longstanding research by Tidd and Lockard (1978), which provides substantiating data garnered in a cocktail lounge in Seattle. In this study, waitresses were instructed to smile largely at half their patrons, and to smile small, close-lipped smiles at the other half; the large-smile condition yielded higher tips, on average. This substantiates, Lynn contends, the longstanding conviction that smiles help to increase tips, and validates the common managerial tactic of encouraging servers to smile (Lynn, 1996: 26-27).

Lynn's fourth strategy for tip enhancement—touching customers—is endorsed in a host of studies (Hubbard et. al., 2003; Lynn et. al., 1998; Hornik, 1992; Stephen & Zweigenhaft, 1985; Crusco & Wetzel, 1984), discussed extensively below. As Lynn indicates, all studies on the subject support the claim that touch enhances tips.

Fifthly, Lynn recommends a subliminal strategy for increasing tipping. Citing published research by Feinberg (1986) and unpublished research by McCall and Belmont (1995), Lynn argues that merely seeing credit card insignias encourages customers to spend.[11] Therefore, he claims, ensuring that credit card insignias are present on tip trays and billfolds will help to secure greater tips for servers.

The sixth recommendation—writing 'thank you' on checks—relies on the fact that "expressions of gratitude may increase the perceived friendliness of the server, which would increase tips" (Lynn, 1996: 28). The increased perception of friendliness will likely increase tip values, irrespective of its form; however, as Rind and Bordia's 1995 study "Effect of Server's 'Thank you' and Personalization on Restaurant Tipping," suggests, writing 'thank you' on the check is a concrete and salient expression of gratitude (the results of their study are discussed below).

Lynn cites another study by Rind and Bordia, "Effect on Restaurant Tipping of Male and Female servers Drawing a Happy, Smiling Face on the Backs of Customers' Checks," published in 1996, in his seventh recommendation on how to enhance tips. This study uncovered a clear, but gendered, effect obtained by servers' drawing a smiling face on the backs of checks: a waitress's tips were increased when she drew happy faces, however, a waiter's tips were decreased when he drew happy faces (Rind & Bordia, 1996: 222). Rind and Bordia theorize this differential gender effect, contending that

expressive behaviors of this type, although perceived by members of our society as

---

[11] Lynn concedes that there are no definite explanations for this psychological correlation, but posits two theories, stating

That effect may be due to the fact that credit-card insignia are so often present when consumers buy things that the insignia have become conditioned stimuli that elicit spending. Alternatively, credit-card insignia may remind consumers of the availability of credit and thereby increase their perception of their own spending power (1996: 27).

21

appropriate for females, are perceived as less appropriate for males. Rather than inducing customers to see a male server as friendly, this procedure may be more likely in general to induce customers to form the impression that the server is strange (1996: 223).

Lynn concludes by stating that the effects of these seven strategies are not necessarily cumulative and, in fact, since "as tip size goes up, so does resistance to further increases…combining actions that separately increase tips will probably not produce an even larger effect" (Lynn, 1996: 29).

Lynn's most recent publications (especially the aforementioned "Seven Ways to Increase Servers' Tips" and "Gratitude and Gratuity: A Meta-Analysis of Research on the Service— Tipping Relationship," published in 2000, with McCall) strive towards praxis, attempting to communicate the insights of previous work to restaurant managers, with a view to accurately generalizing about the service—tipping arrangement. These results are synthesized in his 2001 publication "Restaurant Tipping and Service Quality: A Tenuous Relationship". Here, he departs from the common wisdom that restaurateurs use tips to: "motivate servers…measure server performance, and…identify dissatisfied customers" (Ibid. 15), since his results indicate, "the average (or median) tip increases only slightly as service ratings increase" (Ibid. 18). Lynn is targeting a managerial audience, intending to suggest managerial strategies for motivating servers and assessing servers' service-provision quality; he thus recommends that, rather than relying on tip values, managers should use

> other means of evaluating and rewarding server effort. Managers should personally
> observe their servers' work, hire mystery diners to evaluate servers, or ask customers
> to evaluate servers on comment cards or in post-dining interviews. Furthermore,
> managers should use monetary bonuses, work schedules, station sizes, preparation
> and clean-up assignments, or other incentives to reward those servers who receive
> the best evaluations (Lynn, 2001: 19).

These recommendations are problematic, however, in that their implementation risks (by treating servers unequally) creating an inequitable work environment in which inter-employee competition could devolve into animus, and perceptions of favouritism could contribute to employee resentment of managerial policy and practice. In an environment where staff co-operation is undeniably essential (this is a point of consensus between my interviewees), such anti-egalitarian policies could prove detrimental.

Even in his most recent articles, however, Lynn generally does not address these server-level concerns. His 2003 publication, "Restaurant Tips and Service Quality: A Weak Relationship or just Weak Measurement?" returns to his longstanding concern (dating back to 1992 when, "Conceptual Meaning and Spuriousness in Ratio Correlations: The Case of Restaurant Tipping", co-written by Bond, was released) with tipping as a statistical measurement. "The Norm of Restaurant Tipping", published in 2003 with Conlin and O'Donoghue, merely

22

reaffirms the weak relationship between service quality and tip values, by comprehensively examining a greater number of restaurants (39) and patrons (1,393) than any single previous study.

In "Tip Levels and Service: An Update, Extension, and Reconciliation" Lynn attempts to move beyond his other works by exploring new research, by re-examining the relationship between server behaviours and tip values, and by assessing the connection between average tip values and the average turnover rate. He determines the same basic result as previous research regarding tip value and service quality—"service quality has a statistically reliable, but small effect on tip percentages (2003a: 142). This research also generalizes beyond the United States, by citing research (Dewald, 2003) that explores another geographical region, specifically Hong Kong. Lynn asserts that a similar relationship between service quality and tipping obtains even outside North America. Furthermore, Lynn evaluates the relationship between tip averages and server turnover, indicating "that server turnover is sensitive to tip income, but that servers can acquire the tip income they need from high sales volumes in addition to high tip percentages" (Lynn, 2003a: 144). The implication of this finding is that "increasing servers' tips will reduce turnover" and to this end, Lynn provides a new set of seven recommendations for increasing servers tip values (Ibid. 145).

These seven recommendations are: "sell, sell, sell", "personalize appearances", "entertain customers", "draw a picture on the check", "forecast good weather", "call customers by name", and "give customers candy" (Ibid. 145-147). The first recommendation—"upselling" (a common emphasis of restaurant managers)—is intended to increase check size and thereby increase the value of tips, predicated on the assumption that patrons generally determine a tip value as a raw percentage of an overall check value. This strategy relies on insights provided in Lynn and McCall's unpublished research (viewable at www.people.cornell.edu/pages/ wml3/working papers.htm), which asserts that "check size was twice a [sic.] powerful as all other factors combined in determining the size of tips left by different dining parties" (Ibid. 145).[12] The second recommendation depends on the fact that "wearing something unusual or distinctive is a way for servers to stand out and make customers perceive them as an individual person rather than a faceless member of the service staff" (Ibid. 145). This strategy presumes that being perceived "as an individual person" will encourage higher tip values from customers. The third recommendation, that servers "entertain" their customers, refers to publications by Guéguen (2002) and Rind and Strohmetz (2002) (discussed later), which advocate the use of a joke or game provided with the check. Jokes or puzzles provided with the check have

[12] It is noteworthy that this strategy differs circumstantially. As Kimes suggests, during busy times, servers benefit by encouraging a high turnover rate, rather than trying to suggestively sell appetizers and desserts (which elevate check values less than expensive entrees). By contrast, during less busy times (when turnover rates are lower), servers can increase overall check values—and, consequentially, tip values—by upselling desserts and appetizers (Kimes, 1999).

23

been shown to encourage higher tip values. The fourth recommendation—which refers to a publication by Guéguen (2000)—that servers draw "cute and happy pictures on the back of checks" depends on a tripartite causal connection between: "cute and happy pictures" and positive affect, and between positive affect and increased tipping (Lynn, 2003a: 146). The fifth recommendation, that servers forecast good weather (by writing on the check), relies on a publication by Rind and Strohmetz (2001) (discussed later), which provides a similar causal connection between the prospect of good weather and positive affect, and between positive affect and increased tipping. The sixth recommendation, to call customers by name, posits that "most people find such recognition flattering and enjoyable" and this flattery and enjoyment, theoretically, translate into greater tip values (Lynn, 2003a: 146). The seventh, and final, recommendation, that servers give customers candy, also depends on work by Strohmetz et. al. (2002), which proposes that a demand for reciprocity is created when gifts—even small ones, such as free restaurant candy—are provided, and that this reciprocal obligation will contribute to higher tip values.

In light of his recommendations, Lynn's assertion of the weakness of the relationship between service quality and tip values is questionable; his first set of seven tip enhancement strategies (Lynn, 1996) and his second set of seven recommendations (Lynn, 2003a) can be perceived as strategies to improve service quality. Thus, the service improvement created by the implementation of these strategies would be the source of (statistically significant) increased tip values. Also, although these recommendations can benefit servers, it is apparent that Lynn's target audience is actually comprised of managerial figures. His declared objective, to help restaurant managers create server incentive through enhanced gratuities, and thereby decrease turnover, serves to further the objectives of the restaurant, and any benefit to be derived by servers is inadvertent to this. Thus, Lynn is attempting to further the agenda of an entrepreneurial arrangement that (according to my interviewees) socially and economically exploits servers to the benefit of owners and management.

Ultimately, Lynn's works, particularly those published in the Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, consistently refuse to challenge the conservative bases of service industry economics. His capitalist sympathies (which are congruous with most service industry research on tipping) are evident in his unquestioning acceptance of the dominant paradigm in which servers are provided a very modest wage in the expectation that they will be remunerated through gratuities. As such, he recommends means by which tips can be enhanced, instead of advocating a restructuring of service industry economics to provide greater financial incentives for servers through profit sharing or fiscal redistribution. This conservatism dominates service industry research, and the overriding question on tipping is "how can tips be enhanced to provide greater financial incentive for servers?" rather than "how

can the service industry be restructured to facilitate more equitable profit distribution?" The same motivations seem to motivate Rind and Bordia's research.

Rind and Bordia's work deserves specific attention for two significant reasons. First, their 1996 study on the effect of happy faces on checks reveals that differences consist in the way male and female servers are perceived. Second, Rind is, along with Lynn, one of the two most important and prolific scholars in the field of service and tipping. Rind and Bordia's results concur with their initial hypothesis, which proposes

> the expressive behavior of drawing a happy, smiling face would be likely to be perceived as gender-appropriate and socially desirable when done by female servers, but as gender-inappropriate and less desirable when done by male servers. The resulting negative impressions in the case of male servers... who draw the face would then be expected to counteract any perceptions of friendliness which drawing the face might create...it was hypothesized in the current experiment that drawing a happy, smiling face would increase tips when done by a female server but not when done by the male server (1996: 220).

Rind and Bordia merely note that this behavior generally may be seen as "appropriate" for females and "inappropriate" for males, and they do not extend their discussion of gender roles in service work. In fact, the role of gender in serving, pertinent directly to tipping or otherwise, has been largely neglected in scholarship, and has only become a focal point relatively recently (i.e. in the last fifteen years)(Ryan, 2004; Owings, 2002; Loe, 1996; Hall 1993a; Hall, 1993b; Hall 1990), notwithstanding Donovan's *The Woman Who Waits* (1920), Whyte's *Human Relations in the Service Industry* (1948), and Spradley and Mann's *The Cocktail Waitress: Woman's Work in a Man's World* (1975), dated works in which gender is relevant, though problematic for reasons that are, hopefully, evident in this literature review.

In his expansive oeuvre, Rind explores the role of gender at a number of junctures. His acknowledgement of gender, however, is generally cursory and incomplete—more a passing reference than a meaningful research focus. For instance, in his 1999 publication, "Effect on Restaurant Tipping of a Helpful Message written on the Back of Customers' Checks," written with Strohmetz, Rind unreflectively uses only a female confederate server. In this study, Rind and Strohmetz' data indicated that a personalized message, indicating a feature on a specific date, correlated with increased tip earnings (Rind & Strohmetz, 1999: 141). In this study, Rind and Strohmetz also provided a cursory assessment of the relationship between party size and tip percentage. In this analysis, they discovered a negative correlation between dining party size and tip percentages. This latter discovery, however, merely corroborates the findings of many preexisting studies (Rind & Bordia, 1996; Lynn & Latane, 1984; May, 1978; Freeman et. al., 1975). Although results from this study "support the prediction that adding a helpful message to a check would increase tip percentages," this piece does not contribute meaningfully to the body of scholarship on tipping and certainly does not explore the possibility of gender effects

25

on gratuity.

Rind and Strohmetz's next publication, "Effect of Beliefs About Future Weather Conditions on Restaurant Tipping," published in 2001, is no better. This work is, in fact, only a very slight variation on an earlier publication by Rind, "Effect of Beliefs about Weather Conditions on Tipping" (1996), and it is unclear why the Journal of Applied Social Psychology would publish these obviously similar articles. The original piece is noteworthy, since it seeks to determine a cause of tipping generosity extrinsic to server behaviours—a focus that is uncommon in the scholarly work on tipping. Building on earlier work by Cunningham (1975)—which suggested that weather in general, and sunshine in particular, contributes to individuals' willingness to tip—Rind (1996) set out

> to explore further the possibility that beliefs about weather may affect overt behavior. The question addressed was, 'Would the overt behavior of individuals who are shielded from all weather conditions and who know about these conditions only by being told about them still be influenced by this information?" (Rind, 1996: 139)

Tipping was used to measure individuals' "overt behavior" in the context of room service exchanges wherein the in-room dining server informed hotel guests about "sky conditions".[13] Based on widely divergent tip averages determined by manipulating the independent variable, Rind concluded that "a positive association between the quality of sky conditions and tipping continues to exist even when knowledge of these conditions is purely informational, rather than sensory" (Ibid. 141).

Rind and Strohmetz's 2001 study, "Effect of Beliefs About Future Weather Conditions on Restaurant Tipping", changes the study locus to a restaurant. Also, rather than a verbal medium, the confederate server wrote weather predictions on the back of the check. The authors hypothesized, citing Rind's 1996 data, "that induced beliefs about future weather conditions written on customers' checks would affect tipping" (Ibid. 2161). Statistically significant differences consisted between mean tip values when the independent variable was manipulated. Ultimately, while this study shifts the temporal focus from present weather conditions to predicted weather conditions, its results do not differ thematically from Rind's 1996 work, nor does this study add any significant explanatory insights into these weather-belief effects.

Rind and Strohmetz's only other collaborative work, 2001's "Effect on Restaurant Tipping of Presenting Customers with an Interesting Task and of Reciprocity" identifies another server behaviour that can increase tip values—presenting customers with an "interesting task".

---

[13] "Limo tinted" windows prevented hotel guests from determining weather conditions on their own with any degree of exactitude.

26

The "interesting task" in question was a grammatical puzzle.[14] In this study, the researchers determined that patrons tipped more when presented with the puzzle.

To further explore the relationship between bill personalization and tipping rates, Nicolas Guéguen built on Rind's earlier work to study the "Effect on Barmen's Tipping of Drawing a Sun on the Bottom of Customers' Checks" (2000), and "The Effects of a Joke on Tipping" (2002). The earlier of these works, co-written with Legoherel, synthesizes Rind's 1996 work on weather effects with Rind and Bordia's research (1995, 1996) on check personalization. Guéguen's work differs contextually, since it is based on studies conducted in France where tipping practices differ[15] from North America. Guéguen hypothesizes that since "combining a personal drawing of an ornamental stimulus associated with positive feelings should increase tips" it can be expected that "such a drawing at the bottom of a bar bill would more dispose the client to leave money for the waiter" (2000: 224). Guéguen employed two conditions: a control in which nothing was drawn on the check, and, alternatively, a hand-drawing of a sun on the back of the check. He determined that "drawing a sun on the bill was associated with increased tips"[16] (Ibid. 225). Guéguen proposes that this effect may have been the result of increased positive affect.[17]

Guéguen's second study (2002) replaced the drawing with a joke card, delivered at the same time as the bill. This study was also conducted in France, and relied on the same premise of positive affect to substantiate Guéguen's hypothesis that "a humorous card, if read, will result in larger tips" (2002: 1957).[18] Guéguen used three confederate waiters and two confederate waitresses who deployed the three conditions randomly. As with his earlier study, no difference was observed between waiters and waitresses (implying that gender did not present an interaction effect). Guéguen determined that, to a statistically significant degree,

---

[14] Patrons were presented with the following, block-capitalized, sentence, and were invited to count the number of F's:
> FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT
> OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY
> COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE
> OF MANY YEARS (Rind & Strohmetz, 2001b: 1380).

[15] In France, servers receive a guaranteed minimum wage, and a service charge of 12% is included in the price of restaurant items. For this reason, tipping is "an occasional practice" (Guéguen, 2000: 223).

[16] These results obtained for male and female confederates alike.

[17] Incidentally, it is also of note that Guéguen discovered no differences in effect based on servers' gender (unlike Rind & Bordia, 1996), and proposes that this may be an environmental difference, since his experiment was carried out in a resort in which the weather was of particular relevance.

[18] The joke card read:
> An Eskimo had been waiting for his girlfriend in front of a movie theater for a long time,
> and it was getting colder and colder. After a while, shivering with cold and rather infuriated,
> he opened his coat and drew out a thermometer. He then said loudly, "If she is not here at
> 15, I'm going! (Ibid. 1957)

the joke card enhanced tip probability and tip value. As before, Guéguen speculates that his results are likely the consequence of increased positive affect. Guéguen's work provides insight into the relatively under-theorized field of social-psychology and tipping in a European context. He does not, however, delve into one of the major research considerations in North American works on servers' behaviours and tipping: haptics.

Tipping and Touch

In 1984, Crusco and Wetzel conducted a ground-breaking study on the effects of servers' physical touch on gratuities. This was the first haptics-based inquiry into tipping, and one of the first academic works seeking to determine the social-psychological dynamics behind increased or diminished tips. These theorists controlled for server gender by restricting their study only to waitresses. Building on previous haptics research, which suggested that "innocuous touch...increased positive affect", Crusco and Wetzel conjectured that touching could increase tips (1984: 512). Notably, however, Crusco and Wetzel viewed status as a complicating factor. Drawing on Henley's 1973 treatise, "The Politics of Touch," Crusco and Wetzel assumed that "touching generally flows from a high status toucher to a lower status touchee, and being touched can signify inferiority or dependency"; on this basis, they devised an experiment in which

> Diners in a restaurant were administered one of two types of touch by a waitress just before the diners left their tips. A brief touch on the hand was expected to produce positive affect towards the waitresses for both male and female customers and hence increase the amount of tip. However, a touch on the shoulder, often used as a sign of dominance by high status individuals, might not be viewed as positively, especially by males. Servants, after all, are not expected to dominate their employers.[19] Hence, the shoulder touch condition may reduce tipping compared to the hand touch condition, and more so for male than for female customers (Ibid. 513).

Crusco and Wetzel instructed their confederate waitresses to employ three levels of touch in their study: the no-touch condition, the "Fleeting touch condition," in which the waitress momentarily touched the patron's palm while returning change, and the "Shoulder Touch condition," in which the waitress placed her hand on the patron's shoulder for a second or two

---

[19] Although the power/status dynamics of server and served are at issue throughout my work, Crusco and Wetzel are correct in asserting that waitresses have a subservient status relative to patrons. Nonetheless, their choice of the word "servant" could be contestable for many who self-consciously define male and female service providers as servers rather than servants. Anecdotally, I had a restaurant coworker who emphasized the grammatical distinction, pointing out that he was a server, and not a servant in instances when he felt guests overstepped boundaries; likewise one of my interviewees emphasizes that she is a server and not a servant. Here, we must recall that their work, published in 1984, preceded my interviews by more than twenty-years, and was, as such, produced in a significantly different socio-historic context. Also, we must acknowledge that their use of the term "servants" might be a tongue-in-cheek reference, intended not to define servers' actual roles, but rather deployed to suggest the possible attitudes of restaurant patrons regarding the service configuration.

28

while returning the change (Ibid. 514).

Crusco and Wetzel provide conclusive results. They determined that both the shoulder-touch condition and the hand-touch condition were correlated with increased tipping rates for both male and female patrons. Crusco and Wetzel do not, however, further explore the gendered aspects of their research, aside from pointing out that in their study men tipped, on average, more than women. Although Crusco and Wetzel restricted their study to female servers in particular, they do not offer a reflexive reason for this exclusion, nor do they devote much time to theorizing the gendered aspects of their work. In fact, they content themselves with deferring to prior research suggesting disparate statuses of the touching party (high status) and the touched party (low status), and construct their research around unsubstantiated biases[20].

Stephen and Zweigenhaft's 1985 quantitative work on touch and gratuity was intended to replicate Crusco and Wetzel's 1984 work, accounting for gender; they speculated that "when serving a man and woman who have come to a restaurant together, the gender of the person touched by a waitress would be a relevant variable" (Stephen & Zweigenhaft, 1985: 141). Thus, they controlled for server gender (by selecting only waitresses) and patron gender (by restricting their study subjects to male-female dyads), and assessed results according to the gender of the patron touched. Stephen and Zweigenhaft hypothesized that

> because American males generally respond less positively to being touched than do females...and because a waitress touching a male customer with a female companion might arouse jealousy on the part of the female companion and discomfort on the part of the male customer...it would be more profitable for a waitress to touch the female than the male (1985: 141-142).

Overall, Stephen and Zweigenhaft determined that touching was correlated with increased tip values. They concluded that "the main effect for touch...was based on the touching of the female customer rather than the touching of the male customer" since tip values were increased more in the "female-touch condition" (15%), over the "male-touch condition" (13%) and the "no-touch condition" (11%).

Stephen and Zweigenhaft's work only provided insight into the gender dynamics involved in waitress interactions with male-female pairs, and only in relation to touch and tipping. A more questionable restriction in their work is their failure to account for who was paying the bill. Even though they determined results of statistical significance, the fact that the bill-payer is unknown prevents further social-psychological speculation regarding their results.

In 1992, Jacob Hornik produced the next major research piece on haptics in the service industry. Unlike prior academics, Hornik conducted three distinct studies, published

---

[20] For instance, Crusco and Wetzel excluded "teenaged males and college-aged females dining in groups greater than two...because they generally do not tip" but offered no substantiation for this claim (1984: 513).

29

as "Tactile Stimulation and Consumer Response" in the *Journal of Consumer Research* (1992). Hornik deviates from the pattern established in Crusco & Wetzel (1984) and Stephen & Zweigenhaft (1985) by providing an extensive exploration of the theoretical issues involved in touch in consumer settings. Working from the theory that touch, while ambiguous, tends to elicit positive affect (Hornik, 1992: 449), Hornik specifies that response generally will vary according to social context and the sex of the touching party and the touch recipient; to this effect, he writes:

> The behavioral response to touch will depend on the touching situation or context as well as on the sex of the source and/or the recipient...people are more likely to comply with requests from touching than from nontouching solicitors when the solicited response is valid....An examination of the literature makes it apparent that touch has different influences on men and women. Generally, women respond more positively than men to being touched...However, it is not clear from previous research whether a casual touch by a male or female stranger also has a stronger positive influence on females and, if so, under what circumstances (Ibid. 450).

Hornik designed his three studies so as to explore this unknown gender effect—the first was conducted in department store interactions and sought to evaluate customers' perceptions of department stores in differently gendered touch conditions. The second study assessed restaurant patrons' evaluation of their server in various touch conditions, using tip value as a measure. The third study "intended to evaluate whether touch facilitates customer compliance to marketing requests" (Ibid. 455).

In the restaurant-based study, Hornik explicitly built on the work of Crusco and Wetzel, intending to replicate, but also to expand, their work. With a view to elaboration, Hornik included considerations not accounted for by Crusco and Wetzel: first, Hornik "investigated a possible server-customer gender interaction effect," second, he "looked into the possible influence of server attractiveness on customers' behavior,"[21] third, he "focused on the reaction to touch by mixed couples" (comparing to Crusco and Wetzel's results), and fourth, he deployed "additional dependent variables to measure the customers' evaluation of the servers" (Ibid. 452). Hornik used eight confederate servers, four of whom were male, four of whom were female. Having been pre-tested for physical attractiveness, two servers of each sex scored as "highly attractive" while the other four (two female, two male) scored low.[22]

Hornik, like previous researchers, used tip values as his principal measure of customers' valuation of the service experience; additionally, he deployed a second dependent variable

[21] This is a consideration of particular import, since, as suggested much earlier in Donovan, 1920 and the 1912 report, "The Girl Employed in Hotels and Restaurants," physical attractiveness is a major employability consideration in the service industry. Further, as many of my interviewees indicate (Lindsay, Reaghan, Cyndal), physical attractiveness and, in particular, sex appeal, are often significant influences on tip values. Unfortunately, waitresses' physical attractiveness and flirtation patterns are under-theorized in the service industry literature.

[22] The physical attractiveness rating system was adopted from Simpson et. al.'s study 1990 study "Perception of Physical Attractiveness—Mechanisms Involved in the Maintenance of Romantic Relationship".

measure—customers' "general evaluation of the server obtained from subject response to a nine-point bipolar semantic differential scale. A similar test was used for the third dependant variable, which aimed to assess overall attitude toward the restaurant" (Ibid. 453). Evaluations of the second and third dependant variable measures were obtained through a survey.

Data from Hornik's study are clear: touch generally increased tip values and survey ratings for all servers, irrespective of gender or attractiveness. Attractive waitresses received the highest tip values of all categories, when tips were received from female diners. Waiters rating low on the attractiveness measure received the lowest tip percentages of all categories when tips were administered by male diners. Mean tip differences were statistically significant for both male and female diners in the touch and no-touch conditions. Servers' gender was the only main effect that did not have a statistically significant effect on tipping; customer's gender, server's physical attractiveness and the touch conditions all had statistically significant effects on tip values and server survey ratings. Gender is nonetheless a defining quality of tip administration and touch effects for both parties (server and patron), and "servers who touched the female diner of the pair received more appreciation than those touching the male diner" a result that is "particularly apparent when the touching server is an attractive waitress" (Ibid. 454). Thus, while servers gender in this particular, restaurant-based study of inter-sexed dining dyads was not found to significantly effect customer tipping (or survey evaluations), Hornik does show gender to be, like touch, a salient component of the service configuration.

Abandoning the gender consideration, but building on pre-established haptics insights (especially the common scholarly hypothesis that "touching is a powerful way to communicate our caring and liking for one another" and thereby an effective means to elicit positive affect (Lynn et. al., 1998: 61)), Lynn, Le and Sherwyn, produced a 1998 study, "Reach Out and Touch Your Customers" for *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, encouraging servers to touch their customers to enhance tips. Additionally, this work sought to determine "whether a positive customer reaction can be generalized to different touch durations or to different customer age groups," new research foci in the field of tipping and touch; specifically, these scholars were attempting to define the boundaries of acceptable touch duration, and sought to discover "whether touching customers for more than a second or two might backfire and provoke negative rather than positive reactions" (Ibid. 61). Simultaneously, Lynn et. al. attempted to determine whether a patron's age would influence her/his reaction to being touched.

Notably, no confederate waitresses were used in this study, and only one Asian-American confederate server administered the entire study. The waiter was instructed to administer two different durations of shoulder-touch to different restaurant patrons:

The brief touch lasted approximately two seconds (silently counted as one-

Mississippi, two-Mississippi) while the prolonged touch lasted approximately four seconds (counted silently as one-Mississippi, two-Mississippi, three-Mississippi, four-Mississippi) (Lynn et. al., 1998: 61).

In addition, the waiter was instructed to document bill size and tip size in addition to the patron's sex, race and age.

Lynn et. al.'s results are consonant with those of Crusco & Wetzel, Stephen & Zweigenhaft and Hornik—touch yielded a statistically significant increase in tip values. This held true for patrons of all demographics, although there were statistical disparities according to sex and age variables, with a lesser increase in the touch-conditions for older subjects.

Lynn et. al. argue vehemently that such brief touching is not a foundation for sexual harassment or battery lawsuits, as some restaurant managers may contend in arguing against touching patrons. This position seems intuitively obvious, since a two to four-second touch on the shoulder is unlikely to provide grounds for a sexual harassment claim (and even less likely to substantiate a battery claim) in the context of North American proxemic conventions.

Although Lynn et. al. do an excellent job of validating and extending previous research, integrating a consideration of age factors in tipping haptics, they do not offer socio-psychological explanations for the effect, or the difference in effect according to age. Rather, they content themselves with deferring to the longstanding notion that touch elicits positive affect and that there is some (likely causal) psychological correlation between positive feelings and increased tipping. Another shortcoming of Lynn et. al.'s work (1998) consists in the fact that the payer of the bill remains undetermined, since the touched party was predetermined as the patron who signaled for the bill (p. 62). Thus, while "Reach Out and Touch Your Customers" furthers the research by providing evidence for age effects in haptics and tipping, it, understandably, leaves many questions unanswered.

Building on the earlier works by Crusco and Wetzel (1984), Stephen and Zweigenhaft (1985), Hornik (1992), and Lynn et. al. (1998), in a 2003 study on "Effects of Touch on Gratuities Received in Same-Gender and Cross-Gender Dyads," Hubbard et. al. explored the relationship between touch and tipping. Like most of the earlier scholars, they restricted their analysis to dyads. Hubbard et. al., however, expanded their considerations to include same-gender and cross-gender dyads, as well as waitresses and waiters. They theorized that the effects of haptics (touch) on tipping would be determined by gender, especially by the relationship between a server's gender and a touched patron's gender.[23] Furthermore, unlike Crusco and Wetzel, they asserted (citing numerous studies) that brief touches to the shoulder would result in "more favorable interpersonal perceptions and evaluations...increased compliance...and

---

[23] Like Stephen and Zweigenhaft, as well as other quantitative scholars in the field of gratuity research, Hubbard et. al. take gender for granted in a non-critical, binary way that divides people into "male" and "female" categories.

32

increased perception of affect, warmth and immediacy" (Hubbard et. al., 2003: 2428); on this basis they hypothesized that "patrons who are touched briefly on the shoulder will give their servers a larger gratuity than will patrons who are not touched briefly on the shoulder" (Ibid. 2428).

Hubbard et. al. cite previous research by Hall and Veccia (1990), Jones (1986) and Major (1981), to bolster their claim that touch is not only more common in cross-gender dyads, but also much more accepted (Alagna et. al., 1979). In light of contradictions in previous studies on tipping, touch and gender, Hubbard et. al. posit a specific research question: "will patrons who are touched by a server of the opposite gender give a larger gratuity than patrons who are touched by a server of the same gender?" (2003: 2429). Hubbard et. al. build on prior works with a view to overcoming their limitations (Ibid. 2428), especially their limitations in terms of server gender. Prior to Hubbard et. al., only Hornik's 1992 study, "Tactile Stimulation and Consumer Response," evaluated cross-gender relationships using both male and female servers. Thus, only recently (2003) have the co-determinant factors of touch and gender begun to be explored thoroughly.

Examining 400 patrons (200 male, 200 female) in two different locations (a "semi-fine-dining restaurant" and a "café-style sports bar"), Hubbard et. al. collected an immense amount of data for their research. In addition to numerical information on tip values, they collected basic demographic information on restaurant patrons, as interpreted by their confederate servers, observations not pursued by previous researchers on touch and tipping. Like prior scholars, Hubbard et. al. used an even split between a touch-condition and a no-touch-condition: half the patrons were touched briefly (2-4 seconds) on the shoulder, the other half were not touched. For each of four servers (2 female, 2 male), one-hundred participants were touched, half of them being male, half being female. As with previous studies, Hubbard et. al. used the raw tip value, measured as a percentage of the overall bill, to determine tip variations; unlike previous studies, these researchers also used "the tip dollar amount...as a measure of gratuity with the tab amount as a covariate" (2003: 2430).[24] Having discovered that these gratuity measures "replicated each other," Hubbard et. al. chose to report only the tip percentage results.

Hubbard et. al. produced conclusive results for their hypothesis that touched patrons would tip more than untouched patrons, in both the bar and restaurant environments (Ibid. 2431). Their additional question—whether servers who touched patrons would obtain larger gratuities from patrons of the opposite gender than those of the same gender—yielded mixed results in a three-way interaction analysis:

    In the restaurant, there was no significant three-way interaction on tip percentage...

[24] Interestingly, and irrespective of gender, Hubbard et. al. determined that "as the overall bill increased, the tip percentage decreased...in both the restaurant and the bar" (2003: 2430).

33

There were also no other significant interaction effects in the model. In the bar, there were two significant interaction effects on tip percentage: (a) a significant two-way interaction between server gender and patron gender on tip percentage... and (b) a significant three-way interaction among touch, server gender, and patron gender on tip percentage...Follow-up simple effects tests probing the effect reveal that patrons gave their opposite-gender servers a larger tip percentage than their same-gender servers. Additionally, patrons gave their opposite-gender servers who touched them a greater tip percentage than their same-gender servers who did not touch them...Thus, although there was no statistically significant difference on tipping by servers who were of the same gender or opposite gender of their patrons in the restaurant setting, there was strong support for this difference in the bar setting (Hubbard et. al., 2003: 2432).

These findings, then, provide support for the common assertion by my interview participants that gender is performed in very different ways in different kinds of service establishments. My interviewees (esp. Cyndal, Lindsay, Reagan) articulated a common perception that different kinds of service establishments cultivate different kinds of gendered behaviours and expectations. Perhaps this insight could account for the divergence between the restaurant and bar settings in Hubbard et. al.'s study: according to my interviewees, bars are often more sexually explicit environments with a greater degree of overt flirtation than restaurants. This more overt sexualization (and greater alcohol consumption in bars than in restaurants) could serve to entrench traditional male and female gender roles and could make same-sex touching more obtrusive in a bar than in a restaurant setting. Hubbard et. al. offer a similar explanation in their discussion of gender differences.[25]

The most noteworthy aspects of Hubbard et. al.'s research are: the confirmation that touch, in general, does lead to increased tip percentages, the observation that the relationship between gender and touch (inter-gender or intra-gender touching) differs according to the type of service establishment. Most important in their work, however, is the increased attention to gender as a factor in service relationships. Historically, acknowledgement of gender in service industry literature was either essentialist and dogmatic (especially in the older literature, such as Springsteed, 1894 and Donovan, 1920), or cursory, reductive and condescending (especially in Whyte, 1948 and Spradley and Mann, 1975). Scholarly literature has only begun to focus on the mutabilities and nuances of gender construction, with the emergence of critical and emancipatory literatures, beginning in the early 1980s. Hubbard et. al. reveal the intersection between quantitative work on tipping/haptics and the proliferating literature on gender.[26]

[25] They also offer a number of other theoretical explanations for the disparity between the restaurant and bar settings. These include: different "types" of clientele at these establishments, and the different average size and gender constitution of patron groups in these two settings (Hubbard et. al., 2003: 2434).

[26] Although Hubbard et. al.'s work expands successfully on previous research, it does have shortcomings. Hubbard et. al. provide a clear critique of their own work, outlining shortcomings such as :
    -unknown variables (i.e. who in the party determined the gratuity)
    -numerical limitations in terms of group size (they restricted their work to dining parties of only one

34

Gender

In the past twenty-five years especially, new kinds of scholarly work on the service industry in general, and waitresses in particular, have emerged. As new academic methods (such as personal narrative, emancipatory critiques, and artistic media applications) have gained credibility, waitresses have begun to be more powerfully represented. They have been taken up as a focus in "the sociology of everyday life" and have begun to tell their own stories (Ryan, 2004; Owings, 2002; Loe, 1996; Hall, 1993 a&b). Donovan's work in 1920 was the earliest prototype for a participant-observation research approach. Decades later, in 1975, Spradley and Mann's groundbreaking ethnography, *The Cocktail Waitress: Woman's Work in a Man's World*,[27] legitimated waitresses as an important research focus, and revealed the value of focusing on actual waitresses' workplace experiences as important facets of their identities.

Spradley and Mann introduced the theme of cultural relativism to a research topic that had previously (Donovan, 1920, Whyte, 1948 and elsewhere) often been treated essentially.[28] This relativist reorientation was foundational in allowing future researchers (Ryan, Owings, Loe and Hall in particular) to evaluate the socially constructed aspects of the service industry experience and the gender roles involved. It concurred with a shift in scholarly perspective that was more attentive to cultural and experiential relativism—the social context, rather than (allegedly essential) aspects of "being a woman/waitress," became a basic research focus. Rather than treat waitresses as essentially gendered into a presupposed archetype of 'femininity,' Spradley and Mann sought to uncover how waitresses, as individual social agents, interpreted and negotiated the experiences they faced in the workplace specifically, and in their lives in general. In this respect, *The Cocktail Waitress* is a groundbreaking work.

Spradley and Mann declared an exceptional and innovative research objective:

> to see experience through the eyes of these women, to describe their culture in their terms, and to see the larger context in which such behavior occurs...to retain the wholeness and detail of their everyday experiences as cocktail waitresses and to

or two people)
-the complications of using different types of service establishment (since the limited number of confederate servers—one of each gender in each establishment—could indicate confounding personal idiosyncrasies influencing tip amounts) (2003: 2435-2436). This self-critique is of particular benefit to anyone trying to extrapolate from their work, or build thereupon in designing future studies.

[27] Admittedly, *The Cocktail Waitress* is a dated work, and many social conventions (especially with respect to gender) during its era have changed in the past thirty-plus years. Nonetheless, it was pivotal in legitimating waitresses as a research focus, and remains one of the most important, most frequently cited works on waitresses.

[28] Spradley and Mann explicitly identify three governing principles for ethnographic inquiry, indicating that these considerations governed their research: "1. *Every human group creates its own reality, a shared culture...2. Everyone takes their own culture for granted...3. There is frequently more than one cultural perspective for any social situation*" (1975: 6-8). These insights are requisite for contemporary research to acknowledge and examine the constructed and arbitrary aspects of gender and sexuality that so powerfully influence the service industry, and waitresses' experiences.

35

avoid the distortion which comes from relegating women to a category of secondary theoretical interest (1975: 12).

This goal provided a methodological precedent for future works that have strived to provide waitresses' own accounts, rather than second-party interpretation (which risks adulterating waitresses' testimonies, or misrepresenting waitresses' perceptions, sentiments or motives). In this respect *The Cocktail Waitress* is an invaluable precursor to my own research, which is an attempt to provide waitresses' stories in their own voices, through videographic representation. My research principally is comprised of direct conversations with waitresses,[29] videotaped and edited for brevity. This approach was requisite since I was not afforded the opportunity for participant observation, as was the case for Spradley and Mann (Brenda Mann was actually employed as a cocktail waitress in the bar in which they conducted their research). Their participant observation research emphasized the benefit to be derived from allowing waitresses to speak for themselves.

Spradley and Mann conducted their research at "Brady's Bar" (pseudonymous), a college bar in a large midwestern city (pseudonymously, Oakland), between July, 1971 and July, 1972. Since this research was conducted so long ago, we can generalize from their research only with the understanding that considerable socio-cultural changes must have occurred subsequently. Their work, though serving as a valuable precedent for subsequent research, is a synchronic historical snapshot of a bygone social context. Nonetheless, despite profound social changes, many of the gendered themes they suggest continue to be applicable in the service industry, and many of the sexualized components of waitresses' social roles depicted in their work continue to apply to North American waitresses' experiences. Gendered disparities are inscribed on the very terminology Spradley and Mann encountered in their fieldwork, and even in the terminology they deploy in their writing. Throughout their writing, they "use the term 'girls' when referring to the women...employed at Brady's bar"; they defend this practice by pointing out that

> this is the term used by the males in the bar, both as a term of reference and address, and adopted by the waitresses. Other terms include broads and bitches. Since the word 'Woman' was never used by our informants to refer to themselves or other females in the bar, we will not use it here (Ibid. 15).

There are, obviously, attendant dangers involved in using such a term uncritically. By referring to these young women as "girls" rather than "young women," Spradley and Mann risk tacitly endorsing a sexist terminological configuration. Any emancipatory potential, or textual

---

[29] Throughout my research I have strived to be attentive to the fact that my own gender identity differs basically from my interview subjects. I can only hope for a sympathetic understanding, gained through our conversations; that is, I cannot occupy their subject position myself, but only interpret it as an outside observer. For these reasons, providing direct access to video interviews serves as a means to enable waitresses to "speak for themselves" without interpretative adulteration.

resistance to such sexist terminology, is undermined by uncritically adopting such idiom in a scholarly work.[30] Looked at socio-historically, however, it is feasible that such terminology has adapted considerably over time, and my marked disinclination to use such a seemingly condescending term is itself a result of my socio-historical context. In fact, it is possible that several decades from now the use of the term "waitress" (which I employ throughout this work) will be perceived to be as offensive as the diminutive "girl".

"Brady's girls," the focus of Spradley and Mann's work, are (or, rather, were, when Spradley and Mann conducted their research), primarily college students. All are in their twenties, most in their early twenties and, en mass, the appeal of working at Brady's centers around the social opportunities it presents. Many had preconceptions about cocktail waitressing before they began; twenty-one year old Sandy assumed that being a cocktail waitress was "for well-proportioned girls in hot pants and net stockings—superslim and supersophisticated," but quickly learned that appearance is only one facet of the occupation, and cosmetic details are less important than sociability and competence (Spradley & Mann, 1975: 17). Denise, also a young college student, likewise emphasizes the stresses of being a novice waitress, shifting her focus towards gender roles in the workplace. She recollects her first night at Brady's, saying:

> I was really uptight, trying to remember the prices of drinks, kinds of drinks, special orders, making change, running errands for customers, getting ice from the kitchen and fighting my way through the crowd. And several customers were real bastards—I just didn't know how to take it. One who was sitting at the bar next to my station kept crowding me on purpose; brushing up against me every time I came to the bar to order drinks. He kept grabbing my leg and asking me inane questions and then apologizing for offending me. One time, as I turned from the bar...he brushed up against me and said, 'keep this up and we can get married.' I wanted to spill my whole tray on him, but instead I merely said, 'We may have to get married.' As I took off across the room I wasn't sure if I had done the right thing. Now, something like that wouldn't faze me. I've learned a lot" (Ibid. 19-20).

In Denise's statement, we see the uncertainty that waitresses can face when dealing with sexual advances from patrons—how can waitresses assert themselves and command respect without alienating the customers upon whom they rely for tips, their very livelihood? Suppression, Denise suggests, is inevitable: rather than spill her tray on her patron, as she longs to do, she makes a sassy comment, which could be interpreted as flirtatious. Similarly, Denise suggests that over time waitresses are inured towards the sexual attention they receive, eventually unfazed by things that initially would have disturbed them.

In Spradley and Mann's assessment, cocktail waitresses face abundant (wanted and unwanted) sexual attention. My interviews have indicated that this also is often the case

---

[30] It is significant, however, that Spradley and Mann do not identify emancipation as one of their work's objectives.

37

in contemporary lounges and bars; this contributes to the stigmatization of waitresses, as subservient and potentially even sexually submissive. As such, many waitresses feel the need to defend their occupational choice against the job's perceived stigmas. Sue, for instance, a young college student from a conservative background, feels the need to justify her job at Brady's to family and friends, with a prepared speech:

> This is one of my part-time jobs. I work in a bar. But it is not like what you would imagine a bar to be. It's not a hard core bar with a bunch of dirty old men slobbering or fighting or crying over their beers. It's a happy place and all full of college kids. It's like a soda fountain but they serve booze (Ibid. 20-21).

In her prepared defense, Sue is depicting Brady's as a healthy environment, positive and constructive. It is clear, however, that she is glossing over significant sexual and gender discriminations present in the bar. Sharon, one of the senior cocktail waitresses, who works at Brady's to supplement her income as a secretary, highlights the social differences between the more "proper" office setting of her day job and the more colourful experiences, and potentially demeaning, experiences she faces at Brady's. A transcribed altercation with one of the male bartenders instantiates the sexism that dominates social interactions at Brady's. After one of the male bartenders undermined her for requesting ID from some young female patrons, Sharon's asserted, "if you're not going to stand behind me, then I just won't card anyone. That can be you're responsibility" (Ibid. 23). According to Spradley and Mann, "that was a challenge that couldn't be overlooked.

> 'Listen, bitch,' he bellowed for all to hear, 'I don't take that kind of shit from anyone in my uncle's bar.' After bouts like this, Sharon will turn in her resignation, and Mark always accepts it. Then she'll just show up for work again, or Mark will ask her to come back" (Ibid. 23).

This interaction is rooted in gender conflict, and overt sexism. The authors imply that Mark will let young women drink in the bar ("sometimes even if he knows they are under 21" (Ibid. 23)) because he has a sexual interest in them. Mark's inequitable (and illegal) behavior disagrees with Sharon's desire to enforce the legal codes governing the bar; his undermining of her authority causes a conflict in which he inveighs against her with a sexist epithet and an expletive. His power is only affirmed by his acceptance of her resignation—in such a power struggle, it is Mark whose job is secure, and Sharon who must defer to his authority. Retroactively, he may coax her into returning, or she might return spontaneously, but in any case, it is Mark—as a male bartender—who ultimately has authority over such decision-making, and the ability to demean Sharon through sexist verbal abuse.

Spradley and Mann indicate that such derogatory, sexist treatment is common in Brady's, used by customers and male bartenders towards waitresses. Holly, another of "Brady's girls", who waitressed to make ends meet while taking English literature at a local university,

38

defines Brady's as a phallocentric environment, although she emphasizes the sexual component rather than the hostile sexist abuse:

> Brady's Bar was a man's world and being part of it brought an excitement all its own. You dressed for the men, served drinks to the men, laughed at jokes told by men, got tips and compliments from men, ran errands for men. Men called you sweetie and honey and sexy. Men asked you out, and men made passes. And always there were men who offered to protect you: 'Just let me know if any of these guys give you shit.'(Ibid. 23).

Here, even the 'generous' offer of protection is written into a codified system of paternalistic condescension and implicit sexual interest. "Brady's Girls" are defined in apposition to the empowered masculine role; they are, clearly and definitely in *The Cocktail Waitress*, the disempowered and subservient parties in male-female interactions. Their subservient role and, at times, their complicity in its attendant definitions lend themselves to objectification, and they are frequently diminished in this way by the men they work with. Any waitress who refused her subservient role at Brady's, it is clear, would be considered unfit for the occupation.

Broad social changes in gender roles and social expectations in the past decades have created different standards of propriety. While Brady's bartenders were exclusively male, most establishments now employ both male and female bartenders[31]; furthermore, openly referring to female employees as "bitches" is bound to be met with a greater degree of social disapproval now. Sexual objectification, though, my interviewees agree, is still to be expected in the service industry—in bars and nightclubs in particular. Anecdotally, my own experiences working for a trendy nightclub reveal the sexist potential of such environments. After our shifts, at the end of the night (while waiting for tip outs), the level of sexual harassment directed towards waitresses by male bartenders, bouncers and managers, was overwhelming. Most nights, there was ample and overt innuendo about waitresses—constant inquiries whether a given waitress was going to "bend for the boys," suggestions that waitresses were "sluts," and an ongoing joke that "there's a party in Jen's[32] mouth, and we're all invited". Thus, while many broad social changes have transpired, it is evident that abundant sexism and sexual objectification still occur in certain types of service establishments.

Spradley and Mann define this sexism in terms of a "sexual division of labor", which applies even now, though to a lesser degree, perhaps (Ibid. 34). In this context,

> Routine tasks become symbols of sexuality. The values that underlie femininity and masculinity are restated continuously each night merely by the act of working. As a symbol of one's sex, work is transformed into a ritual activity that announces to the audience of customers the significant differences our culture attaches to sexual gender (Ibid. 34-35).

---

[31] Although, as some of my interviewees point out, male bartenders continue to outnumber female bartenders in many, many establishments.

[32] A random name—I've never, to my recollection, had a coworker of this name.

While gender constructions have changed since Spradley and Mann wrote *The Cocktail Waitress*, it is clear that gender is still performed and created in the workplace, and that to be defined as a "waitress" often differs from being defined as a "waiter" (Hall, 1993a&b).

In two outstanding articles published in 1993, Elaine Hall explores the role of gender in service industry occupations. She identifies a theory of gendered organizations, positing that "job tasks and duties require workers to construct and display gender as an integral part of doing their work" (1993a: 454). According to this paradigm, gender is performed by individuals in the context of preexisting social (workplace) expectations; inevitably, this acceptance of expected gender roles/behaviours perpetuates these expectations. Firstly, Hall argues, service work in general is contextualized as "women's work" (Ibid. 455), subsequently, the (gendered) image of an appropriate, deferential and subordinate service worker is constructed and enforced as standard. Citing Spradley and Mann, Hall argues that sexual objectification is then specifically structured into the gender roles of female servers (Ibid. 455-456). Paradigmatically, Hall proposes, this convention relies on gendered behavioural scripts, which differ superficially according to "the type of restaurant, the social class of the customer, and the salience of gender stereotypes" (Ibid. 457). These scripts are behaviour models that dictate predictable social interactions, and, for Hall, "good service scripts of friendliness, deference, and flirting are defined as interpersonal scripts constructed with gender stereotypes and ideals of service derived from conventional cultural scenarios" (Ibid. 457). In Hall's schema, to defy the dominant gender stereotypes is to deviate from the scripts of "good" service. To evaluate the role of gendered scripts in service provision, in "Smiling, Deferring, and Flirting: Doing Gender by Giving 'Good Service'", Hall conducted research in five restaurants, at three different levels of "prestige rank".[33]

Unlike previous academic work, Hall conducted interviews directly with waiters and waitresses. This work, therefore, is a precedent for my own project, and establishes the academic credibility of servers' interpretation of their own experiences (rather than deferring to an 'authoritative' scholarly interpretation, ethnographic or otherwise). Sexisms, written into the scripts of service, dominate the industry and affect servers own perceptions: in general, female servers are perceived (by patrons, managers, coworkers and even themselves) to be more friendly and personable (Ibid. 460). Concurrently, differential gender expectations apply for customers—female patrons are traditionally expected to be less friendly, a position endorsed by the servers Hall interviewed, with one waitress stating, "men will look you over because you are a woman...women (customers) will look you over (as a server) and try to find your faults... they are very picky...much more finicky" (Ibid. 461). Hall extrapolates that the perception

---

[33] The restaurants' prestige ranks were determined "based on the average price of dinner. Dinners cost between $15 and $60 in prestigious restaurants, between $6 and $15 in middle-prestige restaurants, and $5 or less in low-prestige restaurants" (Hall, 1993a: 458-459).

40

of waitresses as friendlier than their male counterparts is a component of a gendered service script, rather than an attitudinal expectation applicable directly to their sex.

An ongoing frustration that all servers face is the risk of being treated like a "servant". Hall describes dismissive treatment by customers as the "invisible servant" treatment, quoting a waitress on the topic as follows

> It's clear as a bell...you go to greet a table and they'll be speaking and they let you stand there and stand there and stand there...without acknowledging your presence...and they'll do it when you greet them...when you take their order.... when you bring dessert...they won't look at you...they'll just go on with their conversation and won't acknowledge you are there...it's very rude...they expect you to stand there as if you had nothing else to do (Hall, 1993a: 462-463).

This frustration was iterated by virtually all of my interviewees, and appears to be one of the most significant aggravations involved in restaurant service provision. Responding to this kind of disregard as a "good server" requires "emotional labour" a process that many authors (Hochschild, 1983; Tolich, 1993; Wharton, 1993; Hall 1993a/b) identify as an inevitable component of servers' work. Ultimately, Rose proposes, serving involves, "the commercial use of feeling...the calling forth or suppressing of emotion as part of one's work" (Rose, 2001: 8). These emotional management processes, as Hall suggests, are varied according to service scripts that depend on both (server and patron) gender and establishment type.

Due to preceding gender expectations, service scripts often differ considerably for male and female servers. In "Waitering/Waitressing: Engendering the Work of Table Servers," Hall reiterates that table service is automatically feminized in a gender configuration that defines service, and its accompanying "side duties," as "women's work" (1993b: 329). While service, and the subservience that it implies for so many people, is generally "feminine," there are subdivisions according to service styles/scripts that in many ways privilege a more "masculine" service style; in this respect, men's higher gender status[34] mitigates against servers' lower social status. Hall distinguishes between a more "formal service style [that] requires servers to appear dignified and reserved and is gendered as masculine" and the contrasting "home-style service [that] promotes a casual, familial form of interaction and is gendered as feminine" (Ibid. 330). Traditionally, food and beverage service in North America has been performed primarily by women. Formal (i.e. fine dining) establishments have been the noteworthy exception to this generality—customarily, fine dining servers have been male.

In recent years, service staffs have increasingly been integrated to include both male and female servers in most establishment types.[35] Hall posits, however, that

[34] According to standards of authority. Obviously this greater social power/prestige is contingent on dominant cultural biases.

[35] Cocktail lounges and nightclubs provide an exception to this principle. In these environments, traditional gender roles generally still obtain, and most cocktail servers are still female. This lends credence to the claim that lounge/club hiring practices are based on the economic strategy of employing sexually appealing waitresses

41

even when male and female servers are working side by side in the same restaurants, one form of table service is interpreted as waitering and the other is waitressing; waitering remains the higher-status work (Ibid. 331).

Propounding a performative theory of gender, Hall suggests that workplaces are structured to demand displays of gender that employees then act out to avoid censure or stigmatization: gender is constructed in acts, mandated by social expectations, and those who defy customary gender roles risk ostracism, or other social sanctions. Gender expectations, and gendered meanings are inscribed on "work roles" or "behavioral scripts" that define "good service" (Ibid. 332). Thus, workplace behaviors/scripts are—attributively rather than inherently—gendered; acts become gendered sites where "femininity" and "masculinity" are performed[36], and ultimately, Hall argues, "at the occupational level, to give service by waiting on tables is to perform work tasks typically cast as feminine" (Ibid. 332). These divergent roles/scripts/expectations are entrenched by the use of gendered terminology ("waiter"/"waitress"). Gendered labels, for Hall, are linked to perceptual differences between "feminine" service and "masculine" service, essentially, "the label is linked to the kind of service being provided and not just the workers who serve" (Ibid. 338).

Because of these conceptual and linguistic customs, food and beverage service continues to be profoundly gendered. Despite the gender integration of service staffs at many kinds of establishment, Hall argues, there continues to be a definitive split between "feminine" and "masculine" roles—semantically, between "waitressing" and "waitering". Essentially, while "the structural transformation of the restaurant industry has placed male and female workers in positions as coservers in the same restaurant...these positions retain their gender meanings" (Ibid. 342). These shifts, then, continue to privilege male servers and masculine service roles. For Hall, males can perform "waitressing" (service provision of a more informal nature, at less prestigious establishments), yet, "sumptuary and etiquette norms maintain their higher status as men"; by contrast, although women can be "waiters" (providing more formal service at more prestigious establishments), and "individual women may benefit financially from performing waitering" they are still at risk of subservience, compounded by their preexisting lower gender status (Ibid. 343). Furthermore, in this context, "the positive evaluation of male work may go unchallenged," leaving traditionalist gender roles entrenched, even in integrated service environments (Ibid. 343).

Even more problematic, perhaps, than gender-integrated environments, are gender-stratified settings that appeal to reactionary, and often profoundly imbalanced, gendered roles. Meika Loe explores the dynamics of such an environment in her 1996 publication "Working

to attract male patrons.

[36] That is, for Hall, "gendered work roles arise from the contextual meanings of the work site and are not inherent in the work tasks themselves" (Hall 1993b: 333).

42

for Men—at the Intersection of Power, Gender, and Sexuality". Conducting participant observation-based research at "Bazooms" (a thinly-veiled pseudonym for Hooters), Loe explores the "job-based power relations and inequities, gender roles, implicit and explicit sexual roles, and sexual harassment... 'at work'" in the restaurant (Loe, 1996: 399).

Based on the indomitable allure of tits, Bazooms is a hotbed of gender dilemmas. In a paper that is all the more impressive for being an undergraduate paper award winner, Loe explores these gender expectations and tensions. Loe's work typifies an increasingly popular format in academic work on the service industry—analytical personal narrative. A number of recent works (Ryan, 2004 & Owings, 2002) have taken more narrative and creative angles[37], and Loe, specifically, supplements her narrative with biographical information about her coworkers, garnered throughout her research. In some respects, her objectives parallel my own—to show that each waitress is a unique social agent, but also that, categorically, waitresses face many similar challenges. Loe is particularly emphatic that, even in an environment like Bazooms, women cannot be treated as simply passive or abject, and despite the intentional sexualization of waitresses, we must acknowledge that "women are not merely 'objectified victims' of sexualized workplaces, but are also active architects of gender, power, and sexuality in such settings" (1996: 400). This is an important point. Throughout my interviews, and observationally during my experiences in the service industry, it is apparent that each waitress is a willful agent. Any given waitress's response can range from resistance to complicity, or even reciprocation, in any instance. Each waitress's response is contingent on a host of factors, including personal attitudes, previous experiences and basic affect. In essence, each waitress defines her social world uniquely and can be expected to think, feel, and behave, based on this individuality. Loe's project, like my own, endeavours to acknowledge and explore this fact.

Another fact, however, obtains in a place like Bazooms: sexual attention, innuendo and, at times, harassment, are inevitable. Clearly, the classification of such behaviours depend on a waitress's own interpretive particularities. Nonetheless, sex admittedly is part of the sales pitch in an environment where waitresses are required to sign an "official sexual harassment policy form, which explicitly states: 'In a work atmosphere based upon sex appeal, joking and innuendo are commonplace'" (Ibid. 400). Sexual attention, often low-brow and bawdy, is to be expected at Bazooms; however, Loe cautions, we must not assume that all the waitresses working there feel oppressed or marginal. In fact, she indicates, most of her interviewees "were very committed to their jobs" and many "expressed general contentment with the job" (Ibid. 401). Nonetheless, she describes working conditions that are, in numerous regards and in innumerable social relationships, patently offensive to a feminist and pro-feminist readership.

---

[37] As I have noted, this narrative approach has an early precursor in Frances Donovan's *The Woman who Waits*, and, interestingly, Loe's work harkens back to Donovan's, employing contemporary insights and theories about gender construction and power relationships.

43

Loe notes obvious structured gender inequality in her Bazooms experiences. Management, she notes, is almost exclusively male. By contrast, the servers are exclusively female, according to explicit guidelines in the employee handbook:

> Since its inception, Bazooms' business success has been based upon the 'Bazooms girl.' The Bazooms girl motif and ambiance is the essence of the unique and profitable business theme developed by Bazoms which now benefits all of us. Bazooms is in the entertainment industry where authenticity is an essential qualification. As such, we conider the exclusive hiring of wholesome, attractive females as entertainers/servers to be a bona fide occupational qualification (Handbook, quoted in Loe, 1996: 403).

While the handbook documentation defines sexist (and perhaps chauvinistic) hiring practices as pursuant of "authenticity", a critical observer might be more likely to see them as venal and exploitative business strategies. Prejudiced practices continue unabated in the "jump start" policy—a pre-shift pep talk and inspection, in which it is "male management's right to exercise veto power over each worker's appearance[38], attitude, and so forth"—which "reflects gendered power relations at Bazooms" (Ibid. 402). Notably, aesthetically prejudiced hiring practices strive to deliver a uniform, emotionally 'managed' and highly sexualized, 'product' to the consumer. Tips further perpetuate the expectation of "emotional management" (Ibid. 405). Essentially managers and customers alike hold a waitress to the expectation that she will behave in a way that is invariably friendly, and, more than likely, flirtatious, even if such behaviour is inconsistent with her immediate wants or sentiments. Simply, if a waitress wants to maximize her tip earnings, and if she wants to be looked upon positively by management, she will reconcile herself to, and even cater to, the expectation that she flirt with a significant proportion of her customers.

In and of itself, this flirting is not necessarily problematic. However, Loe suggests, flirtation and sexualization in an environment like Bazooms lend themselves to certain abuses: "what a sexually permissive environment allows for is room for degrading comments, sexist behaviors, and 'insults made in jest'" (Loe, 1996: 410). Succinctly, waitresses are called upon to put up with a great deal of shit. I have observed this personally, heard it emphasized by my interviewees, and read it, verbatim, in Loe's work. According to one of Loe's coworkers, it is a basic managerial expectation—"what they [managers] want is [sic.] the ones who can deal with people and shit and don't complain. They don't want you there if you are going to stick up for yourself" Ibid. 411). Certain kinds of abuses, evidently, are structured into highly sexualized workplaces, like Bazooms. In the words of another of Loe's coworkers,

    It's weird, a little frightening at (Bazooms). You go in there wearing a little outfit

---

[38] Indeed, aesthetic expectations are often explicit in Loe's experiences, with the director of training at the restaurant in which Loe conducted her research advising new waitresses to "look pretty like you are going on a date. You were chosen because you all are pretty. But I say makeup makes everyone look better. Push-up bras make everyone look better. And we all want to look our best" (Loe, 1996: 404).

44

and they are just staring like that. You have to learn how to deal with people more sexually than just talking to them. It's something you need to learn, like how to talk without blushing—without letting them get to me. I want to be like 'HEY!' Now I just get so embarrassed and walk away. They say stuff, sometimes they'll comment on your boobs or your butt or they'll say, 'Oh yeah...' It's all flattery but sometimes it can be so disgusting (1996: 411).

Much of Loe's feminist and pro-feminist readership is, no doubt, sympathetically repulsed. However, for those of us who've had occasion to observe, extensively, interactions in restaurants and bars, this testimony surely is unsurprising. It is obvious to us that in such environments, "because of their subordination and vulnerable positioning, women become easy targets of verbal abuse, and of others' (managers', customers', even colleagues') displaced feelings" (Loe, 1996: 406). The pressing questions that remain rely on the reasonable assumption that (some) bar/restaurant environments work in these sexist and salacious ways.

Should these establishments and social configurations be changed? By whom? How? To waitresses, do the benefits outweigh the harms? The problem is that these questions can only subjectively be answered. For this reason, waitresses need to be acknowledged and heard both collectively and individually. Because each waitress is a unique social agent (a fact that Loe consistently emphasizes), we must be attentive to waitresses on an individual level; my project and Loe's agree fundamentally in this respect. Similarly, I concur with Loe's assertion that in sexist service environments, "formal power can be undermined by informal means" (Loe, 1996: 413). According to Loe, it is possible for waitresses to

work within and against the constraints imposed...in at least three ways: (1) they attempt to undermine or otherwise challenge the power structure, (2) they manipulate gender to preserve self-image, and (3) they both co-opt and counteract sexualized identities (Ibid. 413).

The greatest difficulty waitresses face in resisting their identification as sexual objects is the dominant cultural prejudices associated with "women who dress to get attention, to show off their bodies, to look or feel 'sexy' in our society"...such women, Loe argues "often end up getting labeled 'whore,' or 'slut,' and may be seen as 'asking for it'" (Ibid. 415).[39] Stigmatic cultural labels, then, constrain waitresses' resistance by defining them in pejorative terms based purely on superficial qualities (in Bazooms' case, based on a 'sexy' uniform mandated by managerial policy). Waitresses in such establishments, Loe contends, are associated with sex workers or simply with "'those kind of girls'" and function in a social permutation in which "sex appeal is part of the product commodified and sold in the marketplace to men" (Ibid. 416).

Coping strategies to deal with licentious attention vary considerably between waitresses. While some will emphasize to their customers that they are students or mothers trying to earn

---

[39] In fact, a number of my interviewees made statements which seem to accord with this perspective on "slutty"/ attention-seeking attire.

45

money for college bills or family necessities, others will "co-opt" the 'bad girl' image, in the hopes of exploiting sex appeal for greater earnings or customer attention (Ibid. 416). Thus, in Loe's observations,

> There appears to be a split among these women: those who try to resist the Bazooms girl role, downplaying the sexualized, flirty image, and those who co-opt it, embellishing it as their own. One employee rejects the company's expectation; another turns it to her own ends (1996: 417).

Notably, however, even waitresses who accept and exploit the sexual and flirty role are not at liberty to concede this to their peers. Even for those who are comfortable taking advantage of flirtation and sex appeal, there is a discomfort with admitting that this is their preferred strategy, and, "while all of the waitresses knew of women who have co-opted this sexualized role, the attached stigma means that few will admit to doing it themselves" (Ibid. 417).

Ultimately, however, some measure of sexual harassment is unavoidable at such workplaces, forcing waitresses to adopt coping strategies. For Loe, even acknowledging harassment as inevitable is itself a kind of coping technique;

> harassment is taken for granted as part of the job at Bazooms. By defining abuse as part of the job, waitresses can continue to work without necessarily internalizing or accepting the daily hassles and degradations as aspects of their self-definitions or sense of self-worth...in other words, if women enter into a waitressing job expecting crude remarks, degrading uniforms, and unnecessary management-based power plays, they may prepare themselves for the worst by setting personal boundaries, with conditions attached (Ibid. 417-418).

We must be cautious, Loe emphasizes, in drawing inference from the fact that these women inevitably will face sexual harassment. A seemingly natural inclination would be to characterize these women as 'victims'. Although this classification is sympathetic, and probably has emancipatory motives, this reductive designation actually obscures waitresses' subjectivity. Rather than passive 'victims,' waitresses are social subjects, active in both defining and interpreting the gendered workplace experiences they face:

> women are not just victims in instances of harassment. They may indeed be at a disadvantage, but a victims-only perspective views women one-dimensionally. To see the other dimensions, one must view them as agents (economically, sexually and otherwise), actively setting boundaries, negotiating circumstances, reacting, and in many cases resisting (Ibid. 418).

Agency is the core consideration of Loe's study, and my own research. This view of agency has been highlighted in the literature especially by Loe and by Hall, and paved the way for more recent literature (Ryan, 2004; Owings, 2002) to ground their work in the archetype of waitress-as-social-agent. For Loe, Hall, Ryan, Owings and myself, each waitress undeniably is a unique social agent; by definition, each waitress (as a social agent), will interpret and negotiate her gendered workplace experiences individually and uniquely. Furthermore, each waitress

46

will face choices about whether to passively accept, actively accommodate, or assertively resist the gendered scripts of her work environment.

Power and Resistance—Waitresses at the Intersection of Sex and Gender

Those of us who have ever felt outraged by sexual harassment cannot help but admire Kristen-Hall Geisler's assertive heroine, who responds to a patron's uninvited groping by saying,

> 'Fuck you.' She plants her right boot heel on the toe of his topsider, feeling the crunch of metatarsals under her foot. She spins on her heel, applying as much torque as possible, and walks back to the manager's office (Geisler, 2004: 64).

Although these instances of aggressive assertion are rare—at least according to the literature and most of my interview participants—they do occur. During my research I often have reminisced fondly about one of my firebrand coworkers at a popular night club in Edmonton's much vaunted (and much maligned) bar district. At the time, I was working as a bouncer at a small upstairs nightclub that catered to a very young, boisterous and indulgent crowd. Simply put, the patronage was unruly and I sympathized with the waitresses who had to fight their way through a sea of belligerent drunks carrying large trays of drinks. One night, a particularly noteworthy event transpired, involving my waitressing friend. It was a busy weekend evening and the crowd was particularly rambunctious. She'd been putting up with advances and questionable innuendo all night, she later told me. This was difficult for her, she explained, since she was not a "flirty" waitress, and preferred to do her job with detached efficiency. Near the end of the evening, one of the patrons, a young man who had, she explained, been propositioning her throughout the night, approached as if intending to say something into her ear. At the last moment, though, he stepped in and grabbed her crotch, putting his hand up under her skirt. Her response was instant rage: she grabbed the man's hand, and used two fingers to force his hand behind his back, then, using her weight on his arm as leverage, pushed him down the flight of stairs at the entrance to the bar.

Although physical violence generally is indicted as ethically problematic and methodologically risky, this story is a delight for many of us who have worked in close proximity with disrespectful drunks. I myself, given my acquaintance with this woman, feel a sense of satisfaction when I think of this incident, and I believe that she was well within her rights to take matters into her own hands in this way[40]. This young woman was reluctantly working at a job that she didn't like, where she consistently felt disrespected, to help pay her way through graduate school. Furthermore, she was an accomplished fitness buff, recognized on her campus with accolades for her athletic accomplishments. Essentially, she was and is much more than

---

[40] It is significant that the man in question was not significantly physically hurt by his fall down the stairs.

47

a sexual object and deserves better than that kind of maltreatment. Academically, I would be inclined to emphasize her subjectivity, or status as a social agent. I'm inclined however, to define her in simpler terms: she's a person, and deserves to be treated as such.

This thesis is in response to stories and observations such as this one, especially those that remain untold. It is part of a growing body of scholarship endeavoring to 'give voice' to waitresses. Waitresses are, as Alison Owing's says in her important 2002 anthology, *Hey Waitress: The USA From the Other Side of the Tray*, "surprisingly muted" p.4). My objective, much like hers, is to provide them with a forum in which to speak. As with Leah Ryan, in her 2004 collection *For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry*, my intention is "not so much to gripe, complain, or expose the evil establishment—if those things happen as a by-product, so be it...my motive was (and still is) to tell stories, and to create a place for stories to be told" (Ryan, 2004: v). As Rose argues, "given the partial nature of the research on service work such as waitressing, any single approach will be inadequate to tease out the layers of complexity of that work" (Rose, 2001: 8). As such, I have chosen to consolidate a number of resources.

I supplement my video, the central component of my thesis work, with the individual textual interpretations that follow. The prior literature review strives to situate waitresses—as a sociological consideration—within the scholarly literature on the service industry. Ultimately, this work is depictive: I have strived to show waitresses, especially my interviewees, as unique social agents, subjectively negotiating myriad shared experiences and challenges.

Section 2—The Interviewees

Cyndal

Cyndal's dad picked up Cyndal's mom at a bar twenty-some years ago. A discotheque, actually. The rest, as they say, is history. Cyndal, contrarily, does not get picked up at the bar. Unless she is drunk, in which case seventy five percent of pickup lines will work with her (according to her, during our interview, at least). I didn't meet Cyndal at a bar. In fact, we met in a scholastic context, and I consider it my good fortune to have had Cyndal as a student while I was a Teaching Assistant for introductory Sociology (Soc. 100) in winter 2005. A rapport cultivated in that environment set the context for our interview. The preexisting student-teacher relationship between Cyndal and me had beneficial and detrimental effects: while we conducted the interview with a sense of trust, I felt a pressure to speak more than in other interviews, and perhaps to teach even in this context.[41] Also, I cannot help but wonder

[41] In a pragmatic regard, reviewing the interview revealed a flaw in my strategy—I deployed yes/no questions throughout, which likely yielded less comprehensive responses than open-ended questions. I used this observation to improve my interview techniques in further interviews by retaining a reflexive self-awareness of my questioning methods.

48

if Cyndal herself felt an obligation to perform according to the pre-established student-teacher paradigm.

Cyndal was nineteen years old, unmarried and had no children at the time of our interview. She lived at home with her (allegedly "very happily married") parents and had just completed her first year of a human ecology degree. Her parents were paying for her post-secondary education fully and her choice to work was motivated by preference rather than necessity; in particular, Cyndal emphasized a desire to be "productive" as a principle motivator in her choice to retain part-time employment. Because she prefers socially interactive jobs[42], Cyndal has tended to choose service industry occupations, her work history consisting of employment at Burger King in her earlier teens, followed by a job as a barrista/server in an independently-owned coffee shop when she was seventeen and eighteen, and finally as a bartender in a sports club's lounge. She'd been working as a bartender for roughly a year at the time of our interview.

Cyndal claimed to enjoy her job for the most part, and identified a number of factors that make the job worthwhile. She contended, however, that it is not an inherently fulfilling occupation, saying, "it seems so pointless, like, I'm not really making a difference in the world, I'm not really helping anything being a waitress. I want to do more with my life than just give people drinks". So, while the job provisionally satisfied Cyndal's need for social interaction in the workplace, it was not basically fulfilling, and she aspires to do "more" with her life. Apparently, her motivation for waitressing is not as lofty as existential or social satisfaction. Instead, she was attracted to the fact that she could do her homework at work when it was not busy, make a few bucks and work with people. All of Cyndal's jobs have been in the service industry. When asked why she gravitates towards service industry occupations, she was clear, stating, "I really like working with people," and offering this penchant as the impetus for not only her short-term career choices, but also for her long-term career objectives, saying "that's why I want to be a counselor, because I love interacting with people".

---

[42] Cyndal is a highly social/sociable person and her commitment to inter-personal relationships has also informed her educational choices. During our interview, she stated that she had an initial inclination to pursue a career as a youth counselor, but began to rethink this, stating,

> I really, really wanted to be a youth counselor, and that's what I wanted when I went into the course, but now I'm more worried that I'm going to get attached to people, because I have a tendency to do that. And so, I'll see the kids and I'll see them in trouble and it'll just crush me. So, then I've kind of moved to family finance because I think it'll be a lot easier to handle and I can be more distant from it if I have to be.

Thus, while she feels waitressing is a good short-term job, she does not find that it fulfills the sense of moral commitment to helping others that she identifies as personal prerequisite for any long-term career. This sentiment was a fairly common theme among the waitresses I interviewed, as might be expected according to preconceptions about occupational prestige and legitimacy. It is noteworthy, however, that Cyndal has an acutely reflective self-awareness, as she identifies the need to do pursue a career that gratifies her sense of moral obligation (to help others) but is not personally harmful (as youth counseling might be, due to the personal attachments involved).

49

Cyndal's fondness for social interaction and her long-term desire to do something "more" (i.e. more important, meaningful or rewarding) career-wise were common sentiments amongst the waitresses I interviewed. For Cyndal, however, there was a clear divergence from the majority of my interview subjects—her choice to work was purely optional. Since she lived at home and received financial support from her parents, gainful employment was not a fiscal necessity, but rather a result of her desire to be "productive". To this effect, she stated, "I need something to motivate me to leave the house, otherwise I'll just sit on the couch and eat chips and watch TV". Cyndal's need to work productively is consonant with Rose's theory that waitresses do not work purely to fulfill economic need (though for most, this is a vital consideration), but are also "driven by a complex of other needs: cognitive, social, existential" (2001: 6). Speculatively, this assortment of needs can explain Cyndal's desire to work as a waitress in the short-term, while simultaneously aspiring to do something "more significant" in the long-term: waitressing gratifies her cognitive, social and existential needs, but does not completely fulfill them. As such, it serves a purpose (a desire to feel "productive") that is provisionally, though not indefinitely or entirely, satisfying. Despite the satisfactions she derived from the job, Cyndal clearly identified a number of distressing and frustrating aspects of waitressing, particularly regarding gender roles.

With respect to the gendered aspects of waitressing, while Cyndal will, with the right amount of alcoholic inebriation, allow men to pick her up[43] while she is a patron in a bar, workplace advances are an entirely different matter. She is unequivocal on this issue, stating, "I feel when guys are trying to pick me up while I'm working, it's more like I'm being prostituted than I'm serving them beer, because I'm being paid and they're, like, leering at me". In this regard, Cyndal provided a valuable sociological insight—the social environment created in lounge and bar settings contributes to a specific set of gender rules and sexual constructs. Thus, when I asked, "do you find that it is a lewd environment?" her response was nonchalant: "it can be, it comes with the territory, I just kind of expect it". To exemplify this point, she highlighted the significant differences between the coffee shop she'd worked at and the sports club lounge, defining the lounge environment as being "a lot more lewd". Because patrons do not often get severely inebriated in her lounge, Cyndal identifies a contextual social root for this difference; not because of the alcohol, per se, but because of a system of social meanings that define "bars" and "lounges," waitresses can generally expect a kind of sexual attention that would be deemed inappropriate in other social settings (i.e. coffee shops).

Cyndal identifies another contributing factor in sexual innuendo—complicity. This complicity occurs on at least two fronts. First, there is a kind of groupthink[44] mentality in

---

[43] The vernacular "to pick up" is a reference to acquaintanceship. As Cyndal explicitly states in her interview, for her this means allowing a man to strike up a conversation and, potentially, giving him her phone number.

[44] Interestingly, though the term generally is associated with the later work of Irving Janis, the coinage of

which one man's sexual advances/innuendo will implicitly validate comparable behaviour for his peers. Although this is a source of discomfort for Cyndal, who is often the only female in the sports center lounge, it is a common and seemingly inevitable social configuration; since "most of the people who come upstairs to the lounge are guys...it's mostly men and if one says something, another will say something and then another, and then it's me as the only girl in the lounge with all these guys and they're all thinking and I don't want to know what they're thinking". Sexual attention directed towards the waitress then becomes a form of male bonding—a fraternal behaviour of the lowest order in which the waitress is accorded (potentially unwanted) sexual attention, and is sexually objectified by the numerical majority of male patrons. It is likely that this attention/objectification is a base aggressiveness bolstered by the complicity of male peers and the putative strength and pervasion of groupthink. This chauvinist social configuration could, perhaps, be counteracted by increased female presence in the lounge or by a waitress's assertive resistance to the processes of sexual objectification involved (i.e. direct verbal and physical interventions to resist touching or unwanted sexual conversation).

According to Cyndal, however, female resistance to sexually aggressive male attention is often lacking in bar environments. The second site of complicity, then, is the waitress herself and consists in her behaviour. Waitresses who attire themselves provocatively or scantily, Cyndal asserts, are trying to attract masculine sexual attention, and are plagued by "false consciousness" or deceit if they deny this. While she concedes that there is a financially strategic aspect to provocative attire, Cyndal claims that waitresses are often doing it

> for the attention, that's what clothes are for, like, you can dress and put yourself forth in any way you want to. If you dress like that, then that's the kind of attention you should expect...if it's not an invitation, it's someone that's in denial that they want that kind of attention...in truth she wants, like, she wants the attention, or else she wouldn't dress like that.

Thus, psychology is an elemental component of waitresses' work choices, as well as the aesthetic strategies that accompany them, Cyndal suggests. Like many of my interviewees, Cyndal is suggesting that the waitress occupies a subject position, in which actions and events are

---

"groupthink" is attributed to William H. Whyte. In his 1952 article, "Groupthink", in *Fortune* magazine, he writes

> Groupthink being a coinage — and, admittedly, a loaded one — a working definition is in order. We are not talking about mere instinctive conformity — it is, after all, a perennial fail-ing of mankind. What we are talking about is a rationalized conformity — an open, articu-late philosophy which holds that group values are not only expedient but right and good as well (p. 114).

With regard to Cyndal's experiences, I am referring to a socio-ethical schema which builds from instinctive conformity to a social configuration that many participants (especially male conformists) likely would define as 'natural,' 'harmless' and socially acceptable.

51

contextualized by one's individual identity, and defined subjectively. Personally, Cyndal draws a definite boundary—while she accepts the sport center's relatively mild innuendo, she only lasted one night as a "shooter girl" in a nightclub; the overt groping and "stigma" were too much for her to bear, even for a potentially much greater financial payout. She is unequivocally condemnatory of her single shift as a "shooter girl"[45], saying, "I felt really bad about myself. You know it's something that's not good…I ran into an old friend of mine, and I was embarrassed for myself, and so I just knew that's not something I could do".

Cyndal illustrates the dynamic relationship between socially-predictable external forces and a given waitress's subjective interpretation of such extrinsic forces. Nightclubs, and nightclub waitressing jobs—for instance, as a "shooter girl"—will inevitably be sexualized. As a matter of social convention, waitresses are sexually commodified within such roles/settings. This sexual commodification proves lucrative for the waitress and the establishment alike. Any given waitress, however, will be unique in interpreting her work environment, and the experiences she faces. For Cyndal, the licentious nightclub atmosphere, and the "stigma" of working in such an environment was intolerable. For other waitresses, she readily acknowledges, this sexual atmosphere could be enjoyable, and sexual advances could be deemed flattering, rather than degrading. We must note, though, that waitress's subjective perspectives are diffuse, rather than dichotomous. Some waitresses might find such environments to be annoying-yet-tolerable, whilst others might find them insufferable, yet continue to work there out of perceived financial necessity. Ultimately, Cyndal's interview reveals that the relationship between perceived cost (especially emotional, social, and socio-psychological) and prospective benefit (esp. financial), dictates any waitress's work choices.

Kamilla

Kamilla would like to tell many of her customers to "fuck off…because they're ignorant". Like all of my subjects, though, she is poignantly aware that this kind of assertiveness generally falls well outside the waitress-customer paradigm. Indeed, virtually all of my interview subjects expressed frustration with the stifling limitations of customer service conventions[46]; universally, they expect that a certain amount of abuse or disrespect is inevitable in their occupation. Generally, they treat these derogations as necessary evils, to be tolerated. It is noteworthy, however, that each waitress distinguishes her boundaries

---

[45] A "shooter girl" is a waitress who carries a large tray of shooters (one ounce beverages) around a nightclub, selling them to customers.

[46] It is clear, in fact, that this has always been one of the vexations waitresses face, one of Whyte's interviewees asserted more than fifty years ago: "the trouble is, when the guests get nasty with you, you can't tell them off. You have to keep it all inside you. That's what makes it so nerve-wracking. It would be easier for us if we could talk back"(Whyte, 1948: 94).

52

subjectively.[47] These highly-individual social distinctions rely on a waitress's past (personal and professional) experiences and socialization events.

Kamilla's workplace experiences have convinced her that "working with people is a pain in the ass". This conviction has specific, and largely foreseeable, consequences. The stresses of dealing with people have inspired particular career objectives in Kamilla: she aspires to be "self-employed". To this end, she is a student, pursuing a college diploma in Design and Digital Media. This training is well-suited to her artistic tendencies—since early childhood, Kamilla has been a musical and visual artist, painting, drawing and playing piano from the age of six. Kamilla's life-objectives, however, are patently philosophical; Kamilla is ambitious for "happiness and a good career". Notably, she does not see herself waitressing in later adulthood.

For Kamilla, waitressing is a means to an explicitly financial end, a common perspective amongst my interviewees. Like innumerable post-secondary students, she uses her service-industry earnings to cover her living expenses, and to defray the costs of her education. She's generally not disappointed in her job because she expects very little from it. She says, definitively, "it's a job. I'm not expecting a miracle, happiness from my job. I expect money. It's money, that's all it is". Financial necessity, rather than cognitive satisfaction (i.e. work-based personal fulfillment), drives Kamilla's choice to work as a waitress. She does not preclude the possibility, however, that a job can be inherently fulfilling. In fact, she envisions her future—as a freelance digital designer—as being "successful [and] happy". The fulfillments of such a career would be only secondarily fiscal; the primary gratification would derive from the conviction that she's doing something meaningful and significant. She talks about personal success on a scale relative to Mozart, Beethoven and Freud...for Kamilla, satisfaction is to be obtained by making a significant impression on the world. Money, as a motivator, is a distant second.

Money, nonetheless, is an inevitable concern, and mandates gainful employment. In this light, Kamilla asserts, the lessons of waitressing are universal, "if you look at it this way, it's like yeah, of course I'll always be serving something to someone, I'll always be selling something to someone". Kamilla is adamant that money is necessary, but that it's purely instrumental,

> our culture and our society's so money driven that in order to be flexible, to be able
> to travel, to do whatever you want whenever you want...you have to have capital.

---

[47] It is, though intuitively obvious, of note that waitresses' tolerance limitations vary widely. For most interviewees (including Rose, Tracy, Kamilla and Lindsay), sexual innuendo and flirtation are inevitable parts of service industry work, and are functional in enhancing tips and getting along with coworkers. Each draws the line between flirtation and harassment subjectively, contingent on the particulars of a given instance (for most waitresses, these specifics include the gender, age, and personal grooming of their social counterpart). Unlike other waitresses interviewed, Kirsten asserts she'd "rather be touched" than be the subject of lewdness, since physical touching represents a clear boundary, for which she could have a patron removed from her establishment. Cyndal seems even more sensitive to gender/sexuality issues than many of her peers, and is discomfited by sexual attention of any kind from her patrons, since—as she is working—it makes her "feel like a prostitute".

53

> That's all it takes. I'm not saying I'll be happy if I have money, or that it will bring
> me love or joy, or any of those things; that's up to me to make sure that I have that,
> always, along the way, that I have the right people in my life supporting me and
> encouraging me to go after what I need.

In her perception of life's necessities, money is requisite, though not as significant a necessity as social contacts with the right people; the mental and emotional satisfactions of support and encouragement are more imperative needs. In fact, loved ones' support provides the foundation Kamilla needs in her career pursuits. Kamilla regards money with great disdain, and only social contacts, and the freedom money confers, can affirm her need for salaried work.

Because of her abstract disinterest in money—she simplifies her sentiments, saying "I just don't like to think about it too much". Notably, Kamilla was reluctant to discuss finances with respect to salaries, tipping, earnings or earning expectations. With respect to supply-side economics, however, Kamilla is emphatic on the benefits of quality and reliability. "People," she says, "will pay more if the product is good, if they know they can come back every time and it's good".

Devotion to quality was one of her main motivators in working for a small, Greek restaurant, which provided ample content for our interview. Her experiences at this restaurant also reveal the importance of non-financial workplace benefits: "I got fed," she says matter-of-factly, "I think that's what kept me there the longest". On the whole, she describes the job as "awesome," saying, "I had fun while I was there". Kamilla's enjoyment of her job, however, was contingent on her ability to dissociate herself from her work and her workplace, "I actually had fun, just because I'd be able to separate myself from there"; her coworkers, she says, did not always share that ability, since "their job was pretty much everything to them and they hated it". For Kamilla, workplace satisfaction depends heavily on one's ability to determine her/his identity independently from her/his workplace experiences; incorporating one's job too profoundly into one's identity is dysfunctional, in her esteem.

Kamilla's experiences at the Greek restaurant also reveal some of the work-related frustrations involved in working in restaurants, particularly independently-owned ones. After nine months of employment she quit, after seeing the restaurant's owners redistribute her most lucrative shifts to a former employee who'd returned to work there. Despite this waiter's glaringly obvious vices (using cocaine and getting drunk on shift), his "seniority" entitled him to the best shifts in the restaurant owners' view. Like other interview subjects, Kamilla suggests that an exaggerated tolerance for substance abuse is often accorded to servers by management, coworkers and even patrons.[48] Being a moderate drinker herself, and reluctant to indulge while on shift, Kamilla does not afford herself the luxury of recreational drug use while at work. As

---

[48] It is, in fact, a common conception amongst my interviewees that the service industry is uniquely tolerant towards employees' (especially servers') use of alcohol and other drugs.

54

such, her waitressing jobs grow tedious very quickly, "I tend never to stay at jobs for a long time," she says, "I get really bored".

Coworkers, Kamilla indicates, can be one of the most tedious or aggravating aspects of the job. One component of this annoyance, particularly aggravating to Kamilla, is the repetitiveness of dealing with coworkers, in particular their complaints. This concern presents an interesting consideration: the notable effect of other employees' behaviour on a waitress's work satisfaction. My interviews tend to primarily focus on the social nexus between waitresses and patrons, and secondarily on the node between waitresses and management. Kamilla, however, expands my foci in pointing out that coworkers can cause boredom, vexation, or enjoyment. Unlike patrons, who change constantly (as diners come and go), a waitress's coworkers remain—more or less—constant from one shift to the next. Although a waitress generally works with the same employees every day, their behaviour can vary considerably according to various factors, and can change the employment landscape drastically. In Kamilla's experience, coworkers' behaviour can shift from affection, or flirtation, to hostile profanity, and back again over the course of a single shift. Coworker interactions are additionally complicated by the blurring of professional boundaries as coworkers become friends, or enemies, or even begin to date one another. In these relationships, social interactions are dictated by both professional and personal social roles, in which status, subjectivity and gender are all components.

Notably, gender issues are not cause for complaint, for Kamilla. Gender in the service industry, she proposes, is merely "a system in a system," a microcosm of gender in society more broadly. Although she recognizes that gender and sexuality are performed in different ways in different environments (explaining her refusal to work at a nightclub in light of this), in general, her gendered experience of her work environments are consistent with her experiences of gender in her personal life, on which she is unequivocal, "I have never felt a victim of sexism…never in life. Why would I be a victim of sexism? I only make myself a victim if that offends me. Why do I care?" Admittedly, sexist beliefs and behaviours are often present in the service industry; Kamilla, however, shows a specific interpretation of gender and harassment: someone is only victimized if s/he internalizes the harassment. If one rejects others' biases, for Kamilla, these prejudices are actively de-legitimated, and effectively defused. Nonetheless, sexuality and flirtation are standard tools of the job. Upon being asked whether she flirts with tables, Kamilla responds "every time I step up to one".

Rose

Twenty-five-year-old Rose is consummately ambitious. At the time of our interview, she had just begun law school on an academic scholarship, having completed a B.A. in criminology at a major Canadian institution. Her scholarly work on gender, in general, and sex work,

55

specifically, gave her an educated insight into gender roles, sexual marginalization, and power dynamics. Furthermore, the set of character traits that will make Rose an excellent lawyer enabled her to articulate her perspective on waitressing directly, without mincing words; to Rose, "serving is a horrible job". There is, for her, only one motivation to work as a waitress:

> the only reason it's worth it is the money, it's the only redemption you have at the end of the day. It's like 'my shift sucked, people treated me like shit, my boss treated me like shit'. I mean, it depends, sometimes you have a good day, if you're lucky then you work with reasonably decent to really fun people, but at the end of the day the only thing that makes you go back is the fact that you walked away with at least a hundred bucks in your pocket.

For Rose, the calculus is basic: the job is aversive, but the money makes it worthwhile to do. Her financial expectations, she says, have changed over the course of her work experience. Although her first service industry experience was in a café for minimum wage with no tips, when she was eighteen, Rose says she will no longer work for less than an average of one hundred dollars in gratuities per shift. Her earning expectations have changed, she says, as she's worked various jobs and learned her own earning potential.[49]

Earnings, though, Rose indicates, are difficult to predict. Since they are almost entirely tip dependant (like most of my other interviewees, Rose clearly states that essentially all waitressing jobs pay at, or near, a minimum-wage-rate, in terms of salary), earnings are governed by a variety of factors. Intuitively, one might assume that pricier establishments offer better gratuities; Rose cautions against this presumption, however, indicating that menu price-point is only one factor. Additionally, Rose states, a server's gratuity earnings depend on an establishment's turnover rate, and the number of tables in a server's section. First and foremost, however, the type of clientele at a given establishment dictates tip percentages; this dictate is not so simple, however, as a matter of patron affluence. Rather, Rose posits, age and socio-cultural demographics are the most important patron attributes dictating tip percentages.[50]

Money, Rose states, is the determinant of most service industry social configurations. Since it is "very common for the owners of any restaurant or bar to cut corners any way they can," a predictable outcome is that staff becomes a purely numerical consideration. In Rose's perception, to most managers and owners, any given employee is "just a number. It's not like they can't find a replacement for you". Here, Rose illustrates that, despite the skill set that servers require, they are perceived as replaceable, since very little specialized training is required

---

[49] From this, we can speculate that there may be a positive correlation between experience and earning expectations, for waitresses. Clearly, we must be careful about generalizing from an individual waitress's work experience. It seems, however, sensible to infer that as any given waitress discovers the opportunity to make greater money, her earning expectations will increase.

[50] Like numerous other interviewees (esp. Lindsay, Reagan and Kirsten), Rose defines certain categorical characteristics of good tippers. In agreement with Lindsay, she suggests that younger (i.e. early twenties) adults, particularly post-secondary students, generally are the best tippers.

to perform the job, and credentialism is negligible. Rose, however, agrees that servers generally are expendable: "then again," she says, "we are…there's a lot of shitty servers out there". Here again, money becomes a vital consideration. The establishments offering the greatest financial rewards, in terms of tips, are able to pick-and-choose their waitresses from amongst the most talented and capable applicants. Additionally, the most lucrative service positions tend to have much lower turnover rates than other jobs. The confounding factor, naturally, is politics.

Because the service industry is a relatively small community, in which gossip travels quickly, Rose states, waitresses again find themselves at the mercy of managerial caprice, "if you have a fight with the management…that's a problem". Rendering a definitive verdict on management and ownership, Rose says, "management is generally bad, and the owners…don't give a shit about you because they're only interested in making money". In Rose's view of the waitressing experience, servers are confronted with a number of difficult dilemmas. First, ownership's refusal to pay more than a minimal wage forces waitresses to rely on the tipping generosity of patrons. Ownership, however, not content with the savings acquired by their cost-consciousness, then plunder waitresses tips (through "tip out" [51]) to enhance the earnings of other staff. Staff members are consistently viewed as mere 'numbers', minimally trained and easily replaced. We must take note, Rose cautions, that these problems are symptomatic of the capitalist system in which the service industry functions. Capitalist codes 'naturalize' the service industry's social configurations. Rose views the service industry's financial framework, therefore, as 'a system within a system' [52].

The service industry's financial configuration imposes a burden of responsibility on restaurant patrons. If a group fails to tip, Rose says, in her case she's forced to pay (in tip out) equivalent to seven percent of the total bill, before tax, to the establishment anyway, meaning she loses money for serving that table. Thus, she says, diners are faced with the obligation to tip, at a standard of fifteen percent, in all but the most exceptional cases; "if I do my job well," Rose says, "if I get you the little extras, you should at least be tipping me fifteen percent, simply because of the way it's been set up in terms of minimum wage…this is what I'm relying on." Nonetheless, she says, there are numerous people who "take advantage of it, or want freebies". Since prices are non-negotiable, patron thriftiness in this environment generally translates into direct and negative financial repercussions for waitresses. Nonetheless, patrons

---

[51] Many people are not familiar with the customary "tip out" policies enforced by most restaurants. Servers generally are required to remit a set amount (presumably derived from their tips) to the establishment, to be redistributed to other employees, including: kitchen staff, bussers, hostesses/hosts, bartenders, and sometimes even (as study subject, Lise, indicates in her interview) to management/ownership. This amount varies, but usually ranges between three percent and seven percent of a server's total "ring out" (their net sales for a given shift).

[52] Rose's perspective on the service industry's financial schema is, in this regard, much like Kamilla's view of gender in the service industry—it is a subset of a larger framework.

can be shockingly parsimonious, and the server's position provides a unique vantage point on this, "it shows you a different face of people".

Customers' spending habits are just one of the social facets to which servers are privy in the service relationship. Some customers, for instance, "take the title 'server' literally," Rose says. Here we encounter the true dilemma of the server's imputed subordination—when a customer internalizes the prejudices of the service relationship, this often translates into disrespect and abuse. These hostilities vary considerably, Rose indicates, and range from sexual harassment and verbal abuse to the "invisible servant treatment" (Hall, 1993a) and outright disregard, contingent on the type of establishment, and qualities of the specific patron and server. Most common, according to Rose, my other interviewees, and the literature (Hall, 1993a&b; Loe, 1996) is an overall rejection of etiquette conventions. Simply, servers often are not accorded the same respect, dignity and courtesy mandated by most social interchanges. Sociologically, we can understand this treatment according to the classist prejudices that obtain in such a stratified set of social roles. Ultimately, as Rose's interview indicates, the social players involved are placed in subordinate position of "server" and the superordinate position of "served".

Social stratification, however, is not limited to the interaction between servers and diners. The employment hierarchy within a restaurant inevitably itself places waitresses in a subordinate position relative to managers, as well. This relationship can be, equally, a source of frustration and disillusionment, for a host of reasons. It is almost inevitable that waitresses can, as mentioned above, expect managers to treat them as replaceable; aside from compromising one's sense of job security, this depersonalizes the social interaction between waitresses and managers. Rose cautions, however, that these relationships are hardly impersonal. In fact, she says, these interactions frequently become all-too-personal, and waitresses often are subjected to harassment from managers who are "almost always male". The preponderance of men in managerial roles and the stratified (arguably archaic) gender roles present in the service industry establish a system in which waitresses generally are susceptible to sexual advances—wanted or unwanted—from male managers. A waitress's awareness that she is, in the context of her workplace, completely replaceable (and is viewed as such by management) compromises her ability to resist male managers' sexual incursions: if she resists, it is likely that she will lose her job[53]. Additionally, a waitress relies on managers for employment references. As such, if a waitress alienates a male manager by resisting his advances, her job is at risk, and her career prospects somewhat limited, since he may additionally deny her a positive work reference.

Rose suggests that most managers are (in addition to being male) "handjobs". That

---

[53] Rose emphasizes that, for a waitress, losing a job might not be a clear-cut as being fired. Instead, Rose indicates, managers often employ more indirect techniques, such as limiting the shifts a waitress is accorded, giving her less desirable shifts, or less desirable work conditions. These techniques are intended to alienate a waitress, in the hope that she will quit, or fall in line with managerial expectations (even if these expectations are unprofessional).

58

is, they generally are, in Rose's esteem, incompetent. Hiring practices for management are primarily sexist and secondarily arbitrary. Rather than a promotional system which rewards competent performance, skills, or potential, the service industry assures men of greater advancement potential, and rewards people on the basis of superficial charm; "if you know somebody," Rose says, "you've got a job. If you're funny…you got a job". Social connections, male gender status and a seemingly personable attitude, then, are the primary qualities by which one can expect to advance to a managerial position. It is unsurprising, then, that management becomes a source of frustration for waitresses, especially with respect to gendered relationships.

Tracy

At the time of our interview, thirty-five-year-old Tracy was my boss. She occupied a unique role, as floor supervisor of our restaurant and lounge. While having nominal manager status, she actually had an intermediary position, somewhere between hourly employees and salaried junior management. She was paid hourly, rather than on a salary contract, making her pay-rate consistent with her subordinates[54]; however, she had managerial authority, and carried out innumerable managerial tasks delegated by higher-level managers. In fact, I observed during the time I spent working with Tracy, she shouldered a greater burden of management responsibilities than most managers, since numerous upper-level managers (particularly the restaurant manager, the hotel's banquet manager, and the senior food and beverage manager) took advantage of her job description (food and beverage supervisor) to re-allocate much of their own work loads to her. It is notable, although not transparently significant, that all of the higher-authority managers she answered to were men. Tracy herself identified this re-distribution of tasks as exploitative and consistently declared her resentment towards some of the demands made of her. She did not, however, attribute these exploitative expectations to gendered inequality, and instead explained them according to a structural bureaucratic hierarchy.

In viewing and reviewing our interview, I was impressed by how thoroughly Tracy seemed to have been inculcated with the rhetoric of the corporate world. In this respect, her work history is of particular interest—at the time of our interview, she'd been working as a server in corporate hotels for almost seventeen years. The ideology of this workplace was apparent in the things she said about productivity, teamwork, company loyalty and personal obligations. She expressed devout faith in the occupational ideal of synchronous personal and professional growth, asserting that one can grow simultaneously as an employee and as an

---

[54] Actually, Tracy only made a few cents more per hour as a supervisor than I did, at $10.50, as bartender. In fact, her net income was substantially less per hour than mine, when gratuity is considered.

59

individual. Tracy seems to have faith that the corporate world and its values are legitimate and desirable.

Unlike the rest of my interviewees, Tracy identifies corporate climbing as one of her employment objectives.[55] Perhaps this is because, at thirty-five, Tracy is in a different life stage than the rest of my interviewees (who range in age from nineteen to twenty-four).[56] Although she could have pursued these advancements much sooner in her work history, she was reluctant to take on more responsibility for lesser earnings. Managerial earning limitations, although I will not delve into them at length in this research, are of passing interest; even though managers are allotted greater responsibility, they generally are remunerated at a lower rate than their subordinates, when tips are considered. As such, we can infer that many of the most talented waitresses will be reluctant to pursue such career 'advancements' for purely pragmatic reasons— if promotion is seen as additional responsibility with no financial gain, this perception could itself be imposing a kind of glass ceiling for waitresses (and, indeed, servers in general) who otherwise might consider corporate climbing.

Fitting into a corporate image, with a view to career advancement, is one of Tracy's primary challenges. Tracy seems to lack the officiousness befitting a restaurant manager, and would, "prefer to be quite quiet and let things unfold as they may, as opposed to being unnecessarily instructive". She expresses frustration with her superiors' insistence that she be more assertive with staff; this frustration, however, is tempered by the conviction that their instructions are both legitimate and beneficial. Tracy's respect for managerial authority also diverges considerably from the view, held by most of my interviewees, that managers are largely incompetent and uneducated men who advance more or less arbitrarily. In Tracy's esteem, corporate climbing (especially promotion to management positions) is earned on the basis of merit, experience and performance. In this light, Tracy emphasizes her desire to perform well in her duties. Additionally, in her bid for professional self-improvement, she's identified managerial role models; "I'm trying to monitor my management style," she says, "I'm trying to emulate some of the bosses I've worked for".

Although she's hesitant to explicitly definer her projected career path, when asked what kind of occupational positions she'd accept, Tracy responds "I guess it would depend on what comes up, and what step that would take me further up the chain". Nonetheless, we must not mistake her ambition for avarice; Tracy is quick to caution that "job fulfillment" is her primary

[55] Along with Candice, Tracy is only one of two waitresses who identify service industry work as their most likely prospective careers.

[56] Older waitresses, and waitresses from visible minority groups, are unrepresented amongst my interviewees. This is one of the dilemmas of the snowball sampling technique (Neuman, 2000) I used; since my waitresses came from amongst my own acquaintances, and their associates, the demographic range of my participants was severely limited. I regret this lacuna, since a broader sample of subjects would have provided insights into other sociological facets.

60

source of work related satisfaction. This sense of fulfillment, she emphasizes, is not financially based. In fact, money is strictly a secondary consideration, relative to the aforementioned "fulfillment". Personal "job fulfillment," for Tracy, is rooted in her concurrent and co-related personal and professional development. Just as she grows as a person, she claims, she will simultaneously grow as an employee, and growth as an employee will mean growth as an individual.

A balance between job competency and a personable character, in Tracy's estimation, is necessary for a skilled service industry employee. Since it is a socially interactive role, sociability is essential. Mere "charisma", however, is inadequate, since productivity is a vital consideration. Someone capable of socializing, but incapable of the kinds of organization and task performance requisite in service simply will not make a good waitress. In this assertion, Tracy reveals her capitalistic faith in the necessity of productivity. As is customary in capitalism, productivity is co-opted into a schema of profitability, in which profit becomes the unquestioned motivation of the business design. Tracy again is in disagreement with the majority of my interviewees. For most waitresses interviewed, profitability is a vital consideration insofar as they work for profit—the business's profit is of little or no relevance to the profitability of their individual jobs. For Tracy, by contrast, the business's productivity is a vital concern.

The presumed importance of business profit has specific implications for management tasks. Managers are charged with enhancing/ensuring profit. As such, their relationships with staff (i.e. servers) must encourage profit. Speaking about managers, Tracy states, "if someone's going to be a jerk all day long, staff productivity is just going to go down the toilet". To Tracy, profit is the necessary motivation for proper employee relations, ergo, management behavior must be intent on securing productivity and, presumably, profit. Thus, friendliness and censure must be predicated on the (largely quantifiable) standard of employee performance, rather than sentimentality inherent to any given inter-personal relationship. Because of the clearly defined demands of managing, certain character traits are prerequisite. The ability to relate to others is foremost amongst these requisite characteristics. Whilst this characteristic is invaluable for waitresses in serving patrons, it is doubly important for managers who are called upon to relate both to employees and patrons with consideration and empathy.

In managing, much like waitressing, Tracy says, personal restraint is vital. A waitress is called upon by a manager (as the executor of a capitalistic business configuration) to self-monitor and regulate her personal responses. In this respect, Tracy agrees with all of my interviewees—as a waitress, one is forced to reign in her impulses and assume a particular social role, one that is in many respects subordinate. Tracy, unlike many of my interviewees (esp. Kirsten, Rose, Lindsay, Lise and Tammy), takes an uncritical view of this self-censoring. Such self-adjustments, Tracy claims, are intrinsic to the business organization of any given

61

establishment. As a waitress, or even as a manager, Tracy says, "you have to look at your personality and make those adjustments because [the patron] is coming to you for a service, and you on behalf of [your employers] have basically pledged that you are, as an employee, going to represent them". Here, Tracy is expounding a view of waitress-as-employee, rather than waitress-as-social-subject, although these are not mutually exclusive classifications. It is evident that, for Tracy, the waitress's status as a unique social agent is secondary to her role as an employee.

Tracy, it is apparent, has been inculcated into a capitalist schema that views individuals according to their employability, rather than their subjective agency. Each individual must be considered according to her/his ability to fit within a work-role. A waitress is employable to the extent that she will be effective as a waitress. The workplace and its structures are taken-for-granted, and it is expected that an employee will change or adapt to suit her/his placement within the business structure. To Tracy, the need to adhere to job expectations begins with managers—as a manager, one must fall in line with the set of behavioural codes that govern the managerial role. One's subjectivity is a moot consideration, and individuality often must be suppressed or disregarded so as to ensure proper performance. Having been a banquet server in hotels for sixteen years, and functioning as a senior employee and online trainer in this role no doubt accustomed Tracy to the corporate agenda into which she has been indoctrinated. Like managers, waitresses must employ diligent emotional management strategies to accept a subordinate role without complaint, Tracy says,

> you have to look at your personality and make those adjustments, because that person is coming to you for a service and you on behalf of the [business] have basically pledged that you as an employee are going to represent [the business]. So for me to go in and treat some person that I wouldn't necessarily talk to on the street like an idiot, that doesn't give me the right. That's not what they're paying me to do, so I have to treat them like anybody else.

Tracy concedes that this schema is unfortunate, since "more often than not" waitresses face abuse or disrespect from their customers. The only recourse waitresses have in this circumstance, Tracy states, is to complain to coworkers, and solidarity and emotional support from one's fellow employees is, therefore, vital. With customers, however, Tracy is convinced, resistance is pointless and undesirable, and a certain amount of abuse is inevitable.

Candice

According to her own prediction, Candice is embarking on a lifelong career as a waitress. At twenty-three, she is already a seasoned veteran, having begun her first service industry job at Dairy Queen when she was thirteen years old. Her early employment was motivated by necessity, since her mother (also a career waitress) did not provide her with an

allowance. Working at DQ, however, made her richer than her peers and provided financial freedoms not enjoyed by most adolescents. Teenage priorities being what they are, Candice used most of her money for partying—specifically, going to raves[57]. In fact, her social maturation in the party scene was expedited by her service industry connections, she even began going to bars at fifteen, very underage in Ottawa where the legal drinking age is 19.

By the time she'd turned 16, Candice had held retail positions at two large chains, The Body Shop and the Gap, which purvey cosmetics and designer clothes, respectively,. At 16, she got her second service industry job[58], working at Eastside Mario's, a large, corporate, casual Italian restaurant chain. Because she was, at this time, too young to serve alcohol, she worked as a hostess, for roughly six months. Although she'd "loved" working at Dairy Queen, she "hated" working at Eastside Mario's; here an important detail of her employment outlook is revealed— Candice vastly prefers to work for small, independently-owned businesses, rather than large, corporate outlets. As such, Dairy Queen was preferable since, though a franchise, the store she worked at was family-owned. By contrast, Candice found Eastside Mario's' impersonality and corporatism disaffecting; for her it had "too many rules, too many regulations" and was "too impersonal, too fake". Ultimately, for Candice, as her early work experiences reveal, it is important to her to sustain a sense of belonging at her workplace, and genuine friendship with her coworkers—common sources of satisfaction amongst my interviewees.

When she was seventeen, Candice moved to Newfoundland (where she was born, and lived during early childhood), securing employment in a rock and roll bar at which she would work for roughly fifteen months. The jobs she held in this establishment were, by far, the most lucrative to this point in her life. She started working as a coat check attendant, earning roughly one-hundred-and-fifty dollars in gratuities per shift (in addition to her eight-dollar-an-hour salary) remaining in this role, until turning 18, when she could legally serve alcohol. After a two-month transition period working as a cashier, collecting cover at the front door[59], Candice was promoted to the shooter bar, where her earnings increased exponentially. In this role, Candice says, she earned up to five hundred dollars in tips in a night. While these earnings are the highest estimated averaged earnings reported by any of my interview subjects,

---

[57] 'Raves' are large-scale dance parties. These events tend to run all-night and were particularly popular in the 1990s.

[58] Here, I am differentiating between "service industry" occupations (restricted to food and beverage provision), and "retail occupations" (purveyance of other items, such as clothing or cosmetics). These lines of work are comparable, in that they both involve dealing directly with patrons/customers. My study, however, is focused on waitressing (food/drink service), and I do not directly examine my interviewees' retail experiences in this thesis.

[59] Candice identifies these occupational changes as components in a system of promotion by which she earned her way into the bar, where her job as a shooter bar bartender earned her vastly more money than any previous role. By 'proving herself' in these other roles, Candice earned the opportunity to fill the more challenging (and financially rewarding) role bartending.

63

these financial rewards were offset by specific challenges and demands. Although the technical demands of the job were minimal, there was an ever-present aesthetic expectation, Candice says: "you had to look pretty, that was the hardest thing". To this end, she states, a large portion of her earnings were spent on clothing and cosmetics—the uniform for the job.

The financial trade-off of Candice's nightclub job consisted, most importantly, in the inevitability of sexual attention. A powerful system of expectation—inculcated in Candice through her initial experiences working at the coat check, and cashier stand—ensured that she would heavily reinvest her earnings in purchasing clothes and "following the trends". Although the job was "easy," Candice says (pointing out that she "just had to pour alcohol"), its principle challenges consisted in dealing with flirtation and sexual advances.[60] In this kind of environment, Candice illustrates, high-levels of alcohol consumption in conjunction with pre-existing social expectations (patron and employee pre-conceptions about the nature of such environments) exaggerate the sexual aspect of inter-personal interactions. The environment is highly sexualized, which can be exasperating, frustrating, or tiring, at times, for many waitresses. Candice's interview, however, indicates that she is relatively tolerant of the sexual components of her job—she is explicit in stating that she consistently employs flirtation as a strategy by which to garner more tips. She acknowledges that she is complicit in the system of flirtation that enhances tip earnings for so many waitresses, and sees nothing wrong with this practice. In fact, when directly asked if she flirts with her patrons, Candice responds unequivocally, "absolutely, you have to. I know I do it".[61]

Candice's character bespeaks a certain savvy, and her interview conveys the sense that she was never naïve about, or victimized by, her nightclub experiences. The risk for her, moreover, consisted in the potential of slipping into a "nightclub lifestyle". Over the course of her employment in the rock bar, Candice concedes, she did fall into a pattern of alcoholism, partying, and increasing excess; the social aspects of the job—the very reasons she found it worthwhile—were becoming perilous, and her routine "was getting bad". In Candice's experience, just as nightclub employment dictates a greater-than-average level of workplace sexuality, there also are attendant lifestyle factors in terms of substance use. Drinking is common,

---

[60] It is important to acknowledge the specific possible mentalities regarding flirting and sexuality in a highly sexual environment, such as a nightclub. As the literature denotes (and the vast, vast, majority of my interviewees corroborate), waitresses respond subjectively to flirtation or sexual attention—which is a point inherent to my own thesis. As such, it is important to recognize the difference between "dealing with" flirtation and "catering to" it. Most of my waitresses indicate that they use flirtatious methods in serving patrons (and here we must note that even the term 'flirtatious' only can be interpreted subjectively). To achieve enhanced tip earnings, a number of interviewees state, flirting is an almost universal method.

As Candice acknowledges in her interview, flirting generally is unobjectionable to her, and is a strategy she consistently uses in her serving work.

[61] In fact, virtually ALL of my interviewees acknowledged readily (without shame or apology) that they use flirtation in dealing with their patrons, as a means by which to increase their earnings. Moreover, my interviewees allege that flirting is an extremely common practice employed by servers to increase gratuity earnings.

64

Candice claims, amongst nightclub employees because the environment is so intemperate, and alcohol use romanticized for patrons and employees alike. This kind of environment, she says, breeds excess by condoning alcohol indulgence. As such, she says, her employment in the bar was leading to increasingly destructive partying. Because she "didn't want it to get any worse," she quit the bar after 15 months.

At this point, Candice returned to Ottawa, securing work as a grave-yard-shift server at an all-night diner downtown, a job she held for five months in the summer and early fall. Her position required that she work from eleven pm to five am, a shift fuelled by patrons from nearby bars, stopping in (often for the diner's signature dish—the $2.99 breakfast) after spending the night drinking. In this job, she served "tons of drunks" and "loved it". Partly, her enjoyment was increased by the financial rewards—averaging two-hundred dollars on a busy night, and generally at least one hundred on a slow one. Additionally, however, Candice actually enjoyed dealing with her drunken patrons. She emphasizes her ostensively improbable pleasure, saying her job was "a riot," and her intoxicated patrons were great fun to serve, since "it's funny to laugh at them, laugh with them, serve them their food, [and] have them give me all their money". Her patrons here, even more than at her preceding nightclub job, tended to make sexual advances, which Candice addressed with the same equanimity as in the previous establishment. Candice truly enjoyed the job, but was forced to quit after five months because the establishment went under renovation.

Candice tends not to hold jobs for more than a few months. She's worked in hotel food and beverage outlets (ranging from exclusive, expensive hotels and resort properties to affordable, family-oriented chains), casual restaurants, bars and pubs. Furthermore, she clearly understands her employment objectives, and has an incisive comprehension of her own work-satisfaction (/dissatisfaction). For Candice, sexuality, flirtation, and—in certain types of establishment—alcohol-indulgence all are components of waitressing work. With respect to these themes, Candice propounds a theory that waitresses are autonomous subjects, and their responses (to work-place experiences and expectations) are more important than work-related pressures themselves. Ultimately, the occupational choice to waitress is financially motivated. Toleration of work-related frustrations, pertaining to coworkers, patrons, employers, or working conditions, transpires as the sum of a cost-benefit equation, in which any given waitress is forced to question whether her job is "worth it". A job's worthiness, then, hangs on the congeries of factors relative to satisfaction, challenge, and ultimate financial reward, and the interrelationship between these qualities. At its worst, work-related pressures can yield dangerous patterns of alcoholism, lifestyle risks, and fraught employee-employer relationships, afflicted by financial tensions.

When asked if stealing occurs in the service industry, Candice responded, "of course

it does. Been there, done that." In this, she espoused a perspective that, although relatively uncommon amongst my interviewees, is likely very common in general amongst service industry employees.[62] Here, she articulates an ethical conviction that workplace theft is acceptable "as long as you're not stealing from each other" (i.e. other employees). Socio-psychologically, it is likely that many waitresses (and waiters, bartenders, kitchen staff, managers, etc.) justify theft from an employer through their conviction that they themselves are being exploited by said employer. According to this theoretical psychological configuration, these employees are essentially "taking back" what they are owed by an unscrupulous employer. Candice confirmed this interpretation in her interview; when asked why theft occurs, she responded "because it's there for the taking. I find it's almost like revenge, it's like 'you don't pay me enough, you don't treat me well enough, so I'm going to make up for that in another way'".

Ultimately, like almost all of my interviewees, Candice waitresses for financial reasons. Although waitressing positions are variably enjoyable (and, at times, variably frustrating), the ultimate motivator is financial. Strategies, such as flirting, or even efficiency, are financially motivated. Earnings are contingent, Candice points out, since they are principally based on tips. A waitress can abstain from flirting, if she prefers, but her tip earnings will likely suffer. Similarly, she can be a poor server—and Candice is emphatic that many servers in the industry are sub-par employees—and her tip earnings will suffer. As such, the general motivator for waitressing, in Candice's assessment, is financial; simply, tips compel her to work in this occupation.

Lindsay

Unlike my other interview subjects, Lindsay has extensive training in video media. At the time of our interview, she had already completed a two year diploma in T.V. and broadcast media at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and held down several jobs in television and radio, even doing an internship as a news anchor in Kelowna, B.C. As such, she was able to provide me with guidance regarding my own videographic choices. The two-person-in-frame video format I'd been using, she informed me, was "terribly Wayne and Garth,"[63] and a better alternative would be to station the camera behind me, facing the interviewee. She would be facing me and the camera behind me, and the frame could include the back of my head, or exclude me entirely. We agreed that my total exclusion from the shot would be best.

My interview with Lindsay had a free flowing, easy feel because of her comfort with

---

[62] As indicated by my own workplace experiences, and by the extensive antitheft measures implemented by (especially corporate) ownership of various food and beverage outlets.

[63] Wayne and Garth are two characters in a sketch comedy series that appeared on Saturday Night Live in the nineteen nineties. These characters were bumbling rock music enthusiasts who videotaped an amateur rock-talk-show in their basement.

the camera; her past experiences in film (she's also had minor roles in a number of feature films) gave her a sense of ease and naturalness under the lens. Most importantly, Lindsay's vast personal experience (10 years total) in the service industry, and her detailed memory of her work history, made her an invaluable interview subject.

Having begun service work as a matter of personal necessity—Lindsay "doesn't come from a particularly wealthy family" and needed to work, if she wanted "extra spending cash"—when she was only fourteen, Lindsay provides a window into how inequitable, sexist, and sexual the service industry can be. A recurrent theme in my interviews is particularly salient in Lindsay's case: waitresses are sexually commodified. Having worked in very different establishments, Lindsay suggests that some are more sexual than others, but in general, "the less you wear, the better the tips". Waitresses, Lindsay says, are co-opted into an intentional schema of sexual commodification in many establishments, which benefits both their gratuity earnings and the overall profitability of the businesses in which they are employed. We must note that Lindsay's persuasive sex appeal surely has influenced her experiences in the service industry considerably, and we must, therefore, be cautious in generalizing based on her experiences.

Lindsay's first service industry job was as a hostess and busser at a Joey Tomato's Restaurant—a trendy chain restaurant, comparable to Earl's and noted for its hiring practices: Joey's hires overtly sexually attractive front-of-house[64] staff. Since Lindsay was only fourteen when she was hired, this presents a unique set of considerations: was she sexualized by coworkers and restaurant patrons? Did her age have a bearing on her relationships with other employees? "I don't look a whole lot different now than I did when I was fourteen," Lindsay acknowledges. Even at fourteen, she was subjected to sexual attention and advances. Shockingly, this prurient interest was even more common from her coworkers, who knew her age, than from patrons; "honestly," Lindsay says, "it's kind of creepy to be working in a restaurant at fourteen...you've got these significantly older men hitting on you". She was the subject of extensive teasing and flirtation, an ongoing joke to the effect that "fourteen will get you twenty". Although it is tempting to write this attention off as mere joking, Lindsay is quite clear that sexual advances are commonplace in the service industry, and she's been subjected to licentious attention throughout her career, even in her first job, at fourteen. Even though she found this attention "creepy," Lindsay deemed the job worthwhile. Lindsay describes the male gaze in her work experiences as being simultaneously disturbing and "flattering". On the one hand, she found it unsettling to be sexually objectified by much older male coworkers; on the other hand, however, the attention provided a direct form of ego validation.[65] When asked if

---

[64] Restaurants are subdivided into "front-of-house" and "back-of-house". "Front-of-house" is comprised of the service team, including servers, bartenders, hostesses, server assistants/bussers, and floor managers. "Back-of-house" includes employees who work in the kitchen—cooks, dishwashers, prep. cooks, etc.

[65] This conflict between troubling sexual objectification and ego-gratification is an important subtext in gender

she liked her first job at Joey's, Lindsay responds, "did I like it on the whole? I mean, it's much better, I think, much cooler, maybe, to be in an environment like that than at McDonald's, isn't it?" For these reasons, and for the financial rewards, Lindsay continued to work at Joey's, intermittently, for several years. She'd return to the job, after hiatuses to pursue other options, out of convenience and ease.

Initially, Lindsay quit working at Joey's, at sixteen, because her teenage boyfriend (her first serious relationship) was "not so accepting of the fact that I'd be in an environment like that". Here, Lindsay provides a glimpse into the role of gender in a personal context. She describes her first boyfriend as being unhealthily jealous. She suggests that maturation has given her a more intelligent perspective on the role of gender in her personal relationships, even though she took a more acquiescent stance as a teenager:

> in hindsight, now, if a guy told me where to work, I'd tell him where to go, but at that time I wanted to make things work with him, so I was willing to dress how he wanted, I was willing to work where he wanted me to work, I was willing to do anything. It wasn't until I started making decisions for myself that that relationship ended...now I wouldn't even put myself in a relationship like that. It was so bad, he would organize my closet as to which clothes I could wear for him, which clothes I could wear to school and which clothes I could wear to the bar. You can only imagine the turtlenecks and sweatpants I could wear to the bar.

After four years, this relationship ended, as Lindsay was again forced to choose between her boyfriend and a job. This time, however, at age twenty, she chose to pursue the job, an occupation in media (the field in which she aspires to build a career) at a popular radio station. According to Lindsay, it was increased maturity that enabled her to terminate her relationship in favour of a great job.

For Lindsay, increased maturity has put things, in general, into a very different perspective. Mature composure has enabled her to minimize her emotional responses to being sexualized and sexually commodified within the context of service industry hiring and relations. Thus, she has negotiated her service industry experiences competently and securely, making enough money to support herself through post secondary, securing a diploma in telecommunications; in fact, she used waitressing to fund her work practicum for broadcast journalism. Here, the financial instrumentality of waitressing work is salient, "while I was going to school," Lindsay says, "working at a bar was pretty much what funded me to be able to go to school".

Lindsay aspires to a career in television journalism and has worked in this field before. Unaccustomed, however, to the (relatively) low pay of an entry-level television journalist position, Lindsay got into financial arrears while working as a broadcaster and went back

relations in general, and service industry configurations in particular. Many of my waitresses allude to the fact that there is a shifting distinction between unwanted advances and flattering attention. This difference hinges on an array of factors, including a counterpart's age (Candice and Cyndal), looks (Cyndal), social standing and demeanor (Lindsay, Kirsten, Rose).

to waitressing to pay off her debt. Working as a waitress, she says unequivocally, is much more lucrative than working as a novice broadcast journalist. As such, she is faced with an interesting dilemma—to work in her desired field and lead a relatively impoverished lifestyle, or to work as a waitress and live relatively comfortably. She's managed to strike a balance, supplementing her broadcasting income by working part-time as a waitress. In fact, at the time of our interview, she was working simultaneously as a data analyst for Statistics Canada, and as a waitress in a nightclub. Her career-objectives, though, continued to be governed by a desire to work in television media, and she intended for her work as a statistician to provide her with a strong analytical foundation for journalism.[66]

Though Lindsay does not intend to work as a waitress indefinitely, she nonetheless acknowledges the value of the skill-set cultivated by working as a server. In contrast to formal academic skills, she insists, serving hones one's social skills; "that's the whole difference," she says, "people skills versus book skills, and I think that people skills, in the long run, is [sic.] what makes you successful in this world". Lindsay's interview is unique in this regard: while many interviewees insisted that their social proclivities influenced their choices to work in the service industry, Lindsay is the only interviewee who directly accredits her waitressing work with helping to cultivate her social attributes.[67]

Lindsay, nonetheless, corroborates other waitresses' testimonies in a number of other regards—especially with respect to gender issues. "It's very backwards in the bar industry," Lindsay insists, "it's very rare to have a female bar manager. Unless she owns it, unless she has money invested in it herself, they're not going to give her that shot". Managers—who are almost invariably male in Lindsay's experience—devalue waitresses as being "a dime a dozen" Lindsay says (echoing Rose, Reaghan, and almost all interviewees). This, however, is not because waitresses actually are unskilled workers, but rather because their skills tend to be devalued by managers. Because waitressing requires virtually no formal training, it is relatively easy to find women to fill these positions. Lindsay highlights, however, that to be a competent waitress, one requires sophisticated social skills, organizational skills, effective emotional management strategies and a host of other invaluable attributes. This, however, is generally disregarded by the managerial viewpoint that classifies waitresses as being fundamentally replaceable, no matter how skilled any given waitress is.

The root of this managerial incomprehension is basic ignorance. The men managing these establishments are, generally, Lindsay says, ignorant; this ignorance is to be expected

---

[66] Indeed, subsequent to our interview, Lindsay resumed her work in broadcasting, securing a job as a local news anchor in a small town in Western Canada.

[67] It is, nonetheless, likely that my other interviewees also have learned and cultivated their social skills in their work as waitresses. It is noteworthy, however, that no other interviewee explicitly acknowledges this experience as educational. Perhaps we can surmise that these occupational learning experiences are, for many, occluded by the fact that waitressing work often is viewed as financially-motivated and unfulfilling.

69

since the standards by which they are promoted are not merit or performance based, but rather sexist and largely arbitrary:

> Men managing these bars, you know, most of them, don't have any post-secondary, they're working their way up from bartender to manage this place. It's just ignorance, they view their job more as a social atmosphere than a business in a lot of cases. And if these women working under them aren't giving them the attention they need for their ego, of course they're indispensable [sic.], like they're replaceable, you know?"

Here we see intimations that waitresses are susceptible to another, more pernicious, form of commodification. Male managers view them as being fundamentally replaceable. Candidacy for employment, in fact, is not even skill-based, as much as it is based on other attributes, such as whether or not a manager will enjoy working with any given waitress. Often, Lindsay suggests, this involves flirting. If you flirt with a manager, you're more apt to get, and keep, your job, irrespective of work performance.

Reagan

At the time of our interview, Reagan was twenty-three years old, and single with no kids. Like many of my interviewees, she was a post-secondary student. Her waitressing earnings, however, were supplemental income, helping to defray incidental costs, since she lived, at the time, with her parents, who helped pay for her education. She was in her fourth year of post-secondary school, completing a Bachelor of Education degree with specialization in special needs education. When I asked, "why are you in Ed?" Reagan responded with conviction: "because I want to make a difference". In this attraction to a "higher calling", Reagan revealed a view that was common amongst my interviewees; a large proportion of the waitresses I interviewed identified comparable motivations in their career objectives—"higher" moral callings, and/or the will to participate in something "important" (i.e. Cyndal, Lyndsay). For Reagan, like many other waitresses, service work is a temporary occupation, instrumental as a means to attain more "meaningful" long-term career objectives.

Like most of the other waitresses I interviewed, Reagan emphasizes the importance of social contact/interaction as a motivation for working as a waitress. In fact, she says, social contact is "the benefit" of this kind of work, since, for her, "the job sucks, but you're meeting really cool people that you're having a good time with". She goes on to say, "it sounds funny, but I really enjoy the fake, superficial rapport that you have with your tables." When asked why she enjoys this form of social contact, Reagan responded with insights garnered in a sociology class:

> Well...my sociology 100 prof., actually, I forget what the context was, but he made the comment once that...when you're walking down the street and you see

70

someone you know and you say 'hey how's it going,' like you don't want to hear
'my mom just died and like, whatever, I'm poor and blah blah,' you want to hear
'good good, how are you' and you're like 'good' and you're both satisfied with that.
For the most part, you're both satisfied with that.

In general, for Reagan, the social interactions between a waitress and her patrons are unobjectionable. These contacts act provisionally and are marked by etiquette conventions and norms that protect the waitress from overt abuse. This social arrangement, however, requires structural provisions by a dining establishment to protect a waitress's subjectivity in instances where customers deviate from normal behaviour.

For Reagan, managerial failures to protect waitresses are both common and significantly objectionable; these shortcomings are the root of her complaint that managers at The Olive Garden (the site of her first service-industry job, as a hostess, when she was sixteen to nineteen years old) "didn't respect their employees at all". The job was, in general, "brutal," but Reagan's everyday work dissatisfactions were exacerbated when a customer called her a "bitch" for enforcing restaurant policy[68]. Upon defending herself by saying "I'm not a bitch," Reagan was reprimanded by restaurant management for "talking back" to a customer. This overall disrespect from management is structured, Reagan says, into a schema of staff depersonalization—"you know you're replaceable from the time you start working at a place in the industry"—but this employee expendability is exaggerated in larger, corporate restaurants. In corporate restaurants, Reagan insists, employees can rest assured that they will receive their legal entitlements, since these businesses adhere closely to rule books and protocols; managerial attitudes towards staff, however, likewise are purely policy-guided, and indifferent to the human conditions of servers' lives.

As with other interviewees (Rose, in particular), Reagan suggests that work-related dissatisfaction impel reactive responses amongst employees. Regarding instances of managerial arrogance, disregard or insensitivity, she asserts, "conditions like that prompts [sic.] people to want to steal from the company". Reagan was quick to point out that she herself had never stolen significantly from any of her employers, confessing only to purposefully wrecking dessert orders, occasionally, so that she could eat them herself. She also proclaimed a conservative view on theft's consequences, insisting that "someone's going to catch you eventually, and then what do you do? You're in trouble for stealing, and that's way worse than being treated shitty, you know?" Here, a number of things are inferable; first, Reagan has accepted the common assertion that theft will eventually be found out. Furthermore her preceding statement that she "do[es] not believe in stealing," reveals that theft is, according to her moral code, unequivocally wrong, even when it is carried out against a dissatisfactory or unconcerned employer. Finally,

---

[68] In the incident in question, Regan had refused—in accordance, she insists, with restaurant policy—to allow a high-chair to be placed at the head of a table, as it obstructed the walking lanes available to other patrons, and constituted a fire hazard. The patron responded by saying "you don't have to be such a bitch about it".

71

she manifests a clear faith in the deterrent measures with which uncovered stealing will be greeted, defining the "trouble" incurred from stealing to be "way worse than being treated shitty". For her, the immorality and inevitable (and inevitably "way worse than...shitty") consequences of theft outweigh any benefit to be derived therefrom.

Oddly enough, however, when asked directly a moment later, in the following interchange, Reagan asserted that people often do not get caught for service-industry theft:

> "So you think that there is a considerable amount of theft in the service industry?"
> "Ya."
> "Do you think that people generally get caught for doing this?"
> "No".

In light of this denial, it becomes reasonable to speculate that her earlier claim that "someone's going to catch you eventually" indicates that she's been effectively socialized into a system pattern of socialized fear-response designed to enforce dominant anti-theft normativity.

Normative issues were the preeminent theme in my interview with Reagan. She possesses strong moral views, and has clearly spent a great deal of time contemplating ethics with respect to the service industry. In this regard, I directly asked her if restaurant service work is conducive to a particular, deviant kind of lifestyle, to which she responded:

> Well, I guess, yes and no. I think it contributes to a lot of poor choices based on what I call 'the Peter Pan syndrome'. Well, basically, you're in this, like, never-never land where no one has to grow up, everyone's good looking, everyone's making a lot of money, everyone gets along. You can pretty much do whatever you want without any real sense of responsibility, and I think that in itself contributes to people making bad choices.

In Reagan's view, service industry work can contribute to a lifestyle that affects everything from sleep patterns, to social contacts, to recreational choices. Service industry work, in her experience, does not merely provide an opportunity to drink or use recreational drugs, but often contributes to a lifestyle in which "it's easier to partake in choices that probably aren't the best for you".

Reagan explicitly identified three high-risk "morally wayward choices" in the service industry:

1) Alcohol (excess)
2) Drug use (/abuse)
3) Sexual promiscuity

She was careful, though, to indicate that these temptations are not uniformly persuasive in all service industry jobs and are more prevalent, in her experience, in trendy establishments staffed by young, upwardly mobile men and women (the places where the "Peter Pan syndrome" would be most prevalent). Even within such establishments, she indicated, there are subgroups in which these three "destructive" activities are more common. It is evident from her testimony

72

that these activities have conflicted status—they are often simultaneously valorized and demonized; while alcohol abuse, drug abuse and promiscuity often are explicitly condemned by management and employees in general, they can also, contradictorily, be the very means for occupational advancement. Peer pressures to indulge in these behaviours are "very subtle" and tend to occur in subgroups that can include both employees and managers, Reagan says,

> if you're the girl or the guy who's going out with the general manager and having a good time all the time, you're becoming their friend and you're getting better shifts and you're getting promoted, whereas, you know, if you have to go home every night…you're not going to make those kinds of connections and those ties that are going to get you further along if that's what you're looking for.

Reagan was quick to point out her own relative abstention from the aforementioned vices. She was also quick in asserting, repeatedly, that she "hate[s] to generalize, or stereotype, or what-have-you," which is in some ways a strategic response to another social pressure that servers face, according to Reagan's interview: to gossip. She does not deny participating in gossip. Social entanglements and pressures, in Reagan's experience, are often inescapable; with the high level of social contact involved, gossip tends to emerge and pressures to participate in the "he said, she said game" are almost irresistible. These pressures are often exaggerated by the proximity, amity and solidarity fostered in the workplace experience; Reagan states, "you genuinely do like these people, like, they're a good time, you're in this kind of, you're all in it together, you know, like at the end of the shift you're all, you've all worked together to get kind of get the shift over and get everything done. Like, you're bonded somehow," which inspires a genuinely insightful observation on Reagan's part—these connections between coworkers (though imperfect and fraught with numerous tensions), are not superficial, but significant and inevitable. The importance of these friendships and, admittedly, occasional animosities, makes it difficult to avoid conversational gossip.

Reagan emphasized that she is a very non-judgmental person and identified this neutrality (along with limiting one's gossip correspondents and topics) as a strategy to avoid political fallout when gossiping. When discussing the three aforementioned vices, Reagan continuously asserted both: her objective indifference to these acts when performed by others, and her own refusal to participate in them herself. As such, Reagan's interview clearly reveals that 'illicit' temptations abound in the service industry, but that one's complicity or resistance of these behaviours—as with accession to, or resistance of, managerial maltreatment—depend on a unique subject-response.

Tammy & Lise

I met Tammy at a coffee shop halfway between my house and the university, and ours developed into an amicable, though casual, friendship. She was eager to participate in an

73

interview, and wanted to bring her outgoing friend, Lise, to minimize the imposition of the videography. Both young women were post-secondary students at the time of our interview, and were working as waitresses to defray the costs of living and school fees. After taking a year to indulge her love of music at an arts college, Tammy had just returned to a B.Sc. program, with a view to pursuing a career in dentistry. Lise was in the fourth year of her B. Ed. degree, having completed a classroom practicum a few months prior. Both worked at large chain restaurants, Tammy at a Moxie's and Lise at an Earl's. These establishments are noteworthy for their corporatism, youthful feel, and entrenched aesthetic strategies with regard to atmosphere and staffing policies. The common observation, particularly with respect to Earl's restaurants, is that they employ predominantly youthful, "good looking" people.

According to Tammy and Lise, the corporate strategies of, and social interactions cultivated within, these restaurants contribute to sexist hiring and promotional practices, and the normalization of flirtation in general and sexual commodification of staff in particular. Throughout their interview, Lise and Tammy both display critical awareness of the hierarchy of power in which they participate. Sexism and gender prejudice dominate in this setting. In this regard, however, they defend their supervisors as mere emissaries of higher litigious codes. In Tammy and Lise's assessments, gendered power relationships are integrated completely into the structure of these restaurant corporations. Since they are codified social systems, Lise and Tammy see these social constructions of gender as inevitable. As such, these young women seem to perceive resistance as being essentially ineffective and, therefore, basically unworthy of pursuit. We can speculate that these hierarchical and gendered social structures are, in some regards, instances of self-fulfilling prophecy and employee capitulation. Because employees and management alike expect these sexualized and stratified social configurations, they manifest them through their own actions. Essentially, the presumption of these inequities' inevitability stifles resistance.

Unsurprisingly, rampant sexual harassment is the most extreme, and troubling, facet of gendered relationships in these settings. Male employees in these environments, according to Lise and Tammy, can be particularly prurient, and they often physically and verbally molest their female counterparts. Most shocking, perhaps, is the definitively physical harassment that frequently transpires in these settings. With reference to male co-workers (particularly kitchen staff), Tammy states factually, "if they want to grab your ass, they're going to grab your ass". Lise provides another anecdote to exemplify the sexual abjection of employees before management; she describes an incident in which a male manager—observed by a number of other restaurant managers—referred to her as a "slut". In this incident, she states, none of the managers present intervened on her behalf at the time, and although one later approached her, apologizing for his reticence, nothing was ever formally done in response to this abuse. Lise

74

views herself as almost lacking recourse, since, "if it's you're leader doing it, who are you going to go talk to?"

Interestingly, Tammy and Lise both assert that generally one could, theoretically, take formal action against her harassers. Furthermore, they are both confident that upper management "would do something" in response to these concerns. Both, however, assert that such action would not be worthwhile; for them, the stress it would impose on coworker relations would outweigh any benefit to be derived from disciplinary action against the antagonists. They are quick to point out that most workplace sexual harassment seems trivial and not worthy of worry. Each claims that she is not particularly bothered by sexual harassment and that if it became particularly aggressive or troublesome they insist they would speak up.

Tammy and Lise are thoughtful, composed, competent young women, and it seems credible that they are relatively unperturbed by workplace sexual harassment. We can also suppose, however, that they have female coworkers who may be more perturbed by such encounters. Tammy and Lise's accounts, however, depict restaurants in which management and patrons alike generally are complicit in, or willfully ignorant towards, sexual harassment. As such, it can be presumed that many women will be subject to sexual harassment in these environments, even women who are very sensitive to, and feel victimized by, these kinds of behaviours. The danger, then, is that many women (and, we can assume, men as well) are made uncomfortable by some coworkers' overtly sexual behaviour and language. This risk is exaggerated by the overall tendency, suggested in Lise and Tammy's attitudes and testimonies alike, to define these activities as insignificant, and not worth worrying about. Any person who feels victimized in this type of environment might be reluctant to come forward and formally complain about her(/his) treatment, since s/he might be perceived as overreacting. There is likely, in these establishments, a pressure to accept this treatment, and even to avoid 'tattling'. In particular, managerial complicity in, or indifferent awareness of, sexual harassment must be disheartening for those who feel victimized by the treatment to which they are subject. We must bear in mind, Lise says, that managers often harass their own employees; "sometimes," she says "the [restaurant leader] or the [kitchen leader] will smack your ass with a towel".

We must surmise, based on Tammy and Lise's interview, that flirtation and sexual behaviour are predominant in the service industry. Tammy and Lise insist, however, that this sexuality and flirtation influence the behaviour of men and women alike in the industry, and we must resist any temptation towards conflating 'male' with 'victimizer' or 'female' with 'victim'. Rather, sexuality and flirting simply are commonplace for service industry employees, male and female alike. "Flirtation is just the way people talk in the industry," Tammy says, "but there's always going to be some people who just cross the line".

Sexual harassment, however, is not the only gender-related concern in these

75

environments. Hiring and promotion policies are also, Lise and Tammy claim (in agreement with many other interview subjects), patently sexist. These restaurants' hierarchies clearly, and in Moxie's case explicitly, favour men for managerial promotion. Occupying a male gender role in the restaurant industry, in Lise's view, is a more significant advantage for promotion than work performance. "Usually," Lise says, "a guy can get hired as a server, and two weeks later he's a shift leader. It's like he doesn't even know what he's doing, but just because he's a guy, he gets pushed up there". In explaining inequitable managerial hiring practices, Tammy says, her managers claim that patrons "like to see a male dressed up nice, with the authority to say, 'here's some money for your meal,' or 'we'll buy you dessert'. They say the male figure dressed up nice makes people feel more comfortable than a female". Although sexist attitudes about the 'authority' of masculine identities, and sexist managerial practices, surely abound in the service industry, particularly with respect to managerial hiring and corporate promotion, it is uncommon to encounter an explicitly sexist policy, openly endorsed by restaurant managers. Tammy proposes that the general manager of the Moxie's at which she works obtained her position because she holds a degree in business. Without such a credential, Tammy states, a woman would not have been hired to occupy this role.

Lise suggests that promotional practices in the restaurant business typify the so-called 'glass ceiling ,' and ' glass elevator' effects. These theories that women's promotion opportunities are limited by subtle (i.e. 'invisible') socio-economic barriers (which constitute a metaphorical "glass ceiling"), based on common social constructions of gender, while men are inversely enabled expedient/facile promotion on the basis of similar gender prejudices (which constitute a "glass elevator"). According to Lise and Tammy, promotion in the service industry undeniably is ruled by sexism; in their observations, men obtain managerial promotion with much greater celerity and ease than their female counterparts. This interpretation is consonant with other interviewees' perspectives (Rose, Lindsay), and is substantiated by a considerable body of scholarship (Cotter et. al. 2001).

Unlike other interviewees, Tammy and Lise emphasize that another intra-restaurant-relationship-structure dictates their workplace satisfaction: waitresses' relationships with kitchen staff. Tammy is quick to point out that most overt sexual attention she faces in the workplace is from kitchen staff, and Lise asserts that her own experiences are the same in this respect. The relationships between a waitress and the employees in the kitchen are inescapable and vitally important, both waitresses insist. Likewise, they are quick to point out that any given interchange depends on the unique social agency of each party involved; Lise and Tammy are emphatic that every employee in the kitchen is an individual, and every interchange is dictated by this subjectivity. It is a contentious social site, however, since waitresses must remain on

76

good terms with kitchen employees[69]. In these circumstances a risk emerges: if a waitress wants to ensure that her shift goes as smoothly as possible, she must have amicable and functional working relationships with cooks and other employees in the kitchen. Therefore, if a waitress faces sexual harassment from kitchen employees, she might be reluctant to resist this treatment aggressively, since enmity with kitchen employees could have a direct effect on her food service capabilities, and, therefore, her work performance and earnings. In this regard, it is clear, waitress's gender position (and the prevalence of male staff in the kitchen—as Tammy and Lise verify), again puts them in a potentially compromising situation; they are often expected to flirt (and, as Lise confirms, flirting with kitchen staff usually is an effective strategy by which to ensure the functionality of these relationships) and refusal to flirt could result in the deterioration of relationships that are vital to their job performance.[70]

Kirsten

There are friend friends and there are work friends. Kirsten is the closest thing to a true friend I've ever had in a work environment. While I'm sure that our friendship will end with the end of my tenure in that restaurant, I have had a close, concerned, honest relationship with this woman. Most importantly, an inter-personal trust cultivated over the course of a year-and-a-half as coworkers influenced our interviews (I conducted three sessions with her). In one regard, our friendship opened up the discursive space, on the basis of preexisting trust. Nonetheless, I must be attentive to the pressures of expectation that friendship can cultivate— perhaps her testimony was constrained in some ways by the fact that anything divulged in our interviews could affect our personal relationship. On the whole, however, Kirsten's testimonial seemed candid and direct, as though without fear of censure or judgment. Kirsten is heroic.

I attribute Kirsten's boldness more to her courageous character than to any enhanced forthrightness established by our friendship. In observing her in work relationships with coworkers and patrons, she has manifested consistency, genuine friendliness, and a simple honesty of character that I am inclined to call "integrity". She is someone for whom I have long had considerable admiration and respect—an intensely thoughtful person who defies any dismissive stereotypes about service workers. A young woman with overabundant potential, Kirsten's thoughtful engagement with her workplace experiences, and her directness in divulging her perspective, made her interview invaluable. Kirsten's interview addressed an exceptionally broad range of topics, from her childhood, to her private life and most intimate personal

[69] Whyte illustrated the importance of this relationship in 1948 (*Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry*), and it is equally true today.

[70] On a related note, Lise makes reference to the expectation of theft that she's faced in certain restaurants. Off-duty coworkers often expect on-duty employees to provide them with free alcohol. Refusal could be perceived as a social snubbing, and likely would be detrimental to workplace relationships.

77

experiences. My editorial choices, in the video and written assessment alike, closely adhere to the work-related themes in her interview (which were also covered at length). Although the more personal items we covered in the interview do seem relevant, I chose to only include portions that seemed directly pertinent to the waitressing themes governing my project.[71]

Prior to her first hostessing[72] job, at an Earl's restaurant, Kirsten was self-admittedly "naïve" about the service industry; she attributes her naivety to a sheltered upbringing, saying "I did not know that there was an aspect of, well, especially with Earl's, sexuality...I just didn't associate food with sex". Even her recruitment into the job, Kirsten says, was troublesome:

> I was very naïve, in the fact that I was working at superstore at the time, and I was training another girl who was short and fat, and the manager of Earl's came up to us and said, 'Oh, I'm from Earl's, you should come by, we're hiring, blah, blah, blah'. So we went over there, both of us and I got the job and she didn't, and I didn't think anything of it. Honestly, I mean that's how fucking stupid I was. Later on I was talking to one of the hostess girls and she was like 'yeah, I heard about you'...The district manager was with the manager of the Earl's...buying benches at superstore...and the district manager's like 'I want her'. And they got me and that made me so fucking mad, because I was like 'how did I not know?'

Clearly, Kirsten suggests, the hiring practices that enabled her first restaurant job, were shallow, and based on sex appeal rather than aptitude or merit. The district manager's insistence that she be hired was based purely on an aesthetic impression. The rest of her experiences in the hostessing role—a position she kept for six months—were consistent with this initial impression. There was a clear expectation by management that the young women in this position dress and behave in a sexy and flirtatious way. Kirsten, however, as a strong-willed person, refused to attire herself as provocatively as many of her peers. Interestingly, however, she says, this willfulness helped her to earn the respect of the managers above her, and she earned more responsibility and a faster rate of promotion despite—or possibly because of— this refusal. In the six months during which she worked at Earl's, Kirsten discovered that popular prejudices about Earl's employment are more or less accurate; she describes the staff as resembling a hedonistic "cult". Employees, she said tended to party together often, and date promiscuously amongst themselves. Although she was on good terms with her coworkers, Kirsten remained somewhat distant, generally choosing her pre-existing social circle over her

---

[71] Hereby, I felt I could also circumvent some of the ethical conundrums presented by these intimate topics without compromising the integrity or depth of my work. While these private issues are relevant to my work as ethnography and biographical case study, they can legitimately be excluded from explicit exposure in favour of a bona fide focus on the specifically work-related aspects of an interviewee's life. Furthermore, more intimate testimony by many of the waitresses provided contextual and analytical insights, without warranting explicit iteration.

[72] The "host" or "hostess" in a restaurant is the individual stationed by the door who controls admittance and seating within a restaurant, including the reservation book. This role is occupied by females so frequently that the term "hostess" finds common, non-inclusive use throughout the industry. "Hostessing" was Kirsten's first service industry position, as, at seventeen years, she was too young to work as a server.

78

work acquaintances.

At eighteen years old, Kirsten moved from an Alberta town to Edmonton, where she proceeded to flunk, decisively, out of University.

After a brief, financial-necessity-driven stint working at a call center, Kirsten secured a job hostessing at a fine-dining restaurant, becoming my co-worker and working her way into a serving position very quickly (in a couple of months). Initially, Kirsten "was impressed" by the establishment, but when asked how her perspective `had changed over the course of a year and half of employment in this environment, she describes her disparate interpretations as being as different as "night and day". Asked how she feels about her place of employment, she responds with a very negative view:

> I only like a few of the people I work with genuinely. The clientele...[shaking
> head], what can you say?...I find myself watching them walk in and just dying a
> little inside.

Aside from a rather objectionable clientele specific to our restaurant, Kirsten does not generally have a favourable view of serving. Essentially, she finds it frustrating and unfulfilling; she does not enjoy it. Most importantly, serving is a temporary job, with Kirsten saying unequivocally, "I don't plan on doing this for the rest of my life. I'd kill myself probably before [doing so]". For Kirsten, it is clear, serving is motivated by financial need—it is a means to make money in the form of tips, which are "the whole point...that's the focal point of why you do what you do, why you put up with the abuse".

In Kirsten's view, to serve, necessarily, is to occupy a subordinate subject position. As such, servers are susceptible to "abuse" of some form or another. This " abuse", however, varies considerably according to the type of establishment in which one is employed. Kirsten, exemplifying self-awareness, says

> there's definitely different kinds of disrespect. I know that I for one could not work
> in a bar environment where the disrespect is going to be various kinds of groping,
> various kinds of comments, because I'm not the kind of person who could put up
> with that.

In fact, with regard to sexual harassment, Kirsten "would rather get [physically] grabbed" than be forced to withstand ongoing verbal harassment, "because, if you get grabbed, there's no ifs, ands or buts". By contrast, in her view, with "innuendo", a certain amount of ambiguity obtains, rendering it, at least superficially, defensible. Contextually, Kirsten contends, bars and nightclubs are highly sexualized environments into which sexuality and sexual harassment are integrated: "that's why you work there, it's about the sex, and you're meant to put up with a certain amount of that". While "that's fine" for some, Kirsten says, she personally just can't do that; "my appeal," she insists, "lies in my personality, in who I am," and nightclubs and bars ultimately disregard a waitress's personality, diminishing her to a reductive sexual image. Quite

79

simply, such environments, in Kirsten's assessment, objectify waitresses, and she, as a social subject, is unwilling and unable to tolerate that kind of relegation.

Kirsten is convinced, however, that maltreatment is an occupational inevitability for servers in general and waitresses in particular; the sexual harassment waitresses face in certain establishments is only one form of mistreatment. In other environments, "it's a different kind of abuse that you do put up with, definitely". Abuse, however, is inevitable for waitresses, irrespective of the setting in which they are employed. From her interview, we can conclude that the subordinate social position waitresses occupy makes them susceptible to abuse, and perhaps, more disconcertingly, that human dispositions inevitably yield abuse in these social configurations.

Section 3—Towards Future Research on Waitresses

This thesis is intent on exploring a foundational hypothesis-schema. I began with the theory that service employees occupy a subordinate role in relation to the people they serve within the context of the service relationship. I posit, however, that subordinacy plays out uniquely in every individual instance of service. Though each service relationship is defined by a specific assortment of social and spatial facts, each relationship can likewise be understood according to social roles: at its core, a service relationship involves two focal role categories— "the server" and "the served". In any given instance, however, these role categories will be occupied by unique social agents. That is, each participant—anyone occupying the role of "server" or "served" in any given case—is her/himself an individual subject. It has been my goal always to retain sight of this status, and, indeed, my commitment to acknowledging this subjectivity has heavily informed the structure of my research, and its presentation.

I chose to focus my research on individuals occupying an identifiable role—"server". As mentioned, I began by theorizing that this position is one of subordination, or at least that servers tend to experience it as such. My research, both literarily and in my interviews, generally corroborates this hypothesis. All my interviewees indicated that waitresses feel socially subordinate to their patrons at times; many interviewees even indicated (Kirsten, Rose, Tracy) that they see this as an inevitable part of the structure of this relationship. My research hypotheses speculate that this subordination presents unique challenges to waitresses, and therefore requires strategies by which to deal with these vexations. These strategies, however, are formulated subjectively, at an individual level. Each waitress defines a unique set of expectations and personal boundaries that cohere with her unique moral code and worldview; both self-presentation and situation management transpire along these highly individual lines.

Striving to consistently bear in mind the individuality/subjectivity of my research participants, I sought to explore another set of research questions surrounding gender. Gender

80

simultaneously provided a well-defined means by which to define my research group, and a set of questions and issues to explore with them. Hall argued (1993a) that men's higher gender status mitigated the subordinacy of the server role for them. Taking inspiration from this argument, I sought to uncover the ways in which social constructions of gender present challenges to female servers. Building on the work of Meika Loe, I theorized that sexual harassment would be a major concern for many waitresses. Supporting my hypothesis, many waitresses insisted sexual harassment is a challenge they consistently face in the workplace. Notably, however, many of my interviewees identified coworkers as the most frustrating perpetrators of harassment. Although many do identify patrons as harassers (Cyndal, Reaghan, Kirsten), a large number define problems with coworker harassment as one of the most vexing issues they face (Lindsay, Tammy&Lise). While patrons come and go, they point out, one is forced to work regularly with the same people. It is a social system, they insist, where many coworkers believe they can act out in sexual aggressive ways with impunity. Once this precedent is set, it appears, it can be difficult to combat, particularly since managers are often the perpetrators.

In light of these concerns, I wondered, do waitresses tend to find job satisfaction in their work, and what motivates them to continue? Unfortunately, my interviews were demographically limited by my sampling methods, and almost all of my interviewees were in their early-to-mid twenties when interviewed. Future research will benefit by inquiring about the perspective of older waitresses, who would, theoretically, face different issues and choices and would be able to provide different insights.

My interviewees, almost universally, declare that they do not particularly like their work. For most, it is a short-term job. For virtually all, it is financially motivated—undesirable-but-legitimate employment. Many proclaim a desire to do "something more;" most seem to feel that waitressing is not adequately satisfying to be pursued as a career. A gender dilemma, established in both the literature and interviews, must contribute to waitresses' dissatisfaction: men are favoured for promotion to management positions. Although it is beyond the scope of my study, it could be fruitful to pursue research questions such as: do waitresses feel more satisfied with their work when they perceive promotion opportunities as viable?

In many ways, my interviewees' perspectives on waitressing seem to echo the popular view of work-as-grudging-necessity. Nonetheless, most adhere to an equally prevalent belief in a "higher" calling and are pursuing careers they hope will be fulfilling (beyond pragmatic materiality). It is likely that most waitresses are sustained by the conviction that their waitressing work is temporary; the tip earnings provide the singular material incentive, which, however, requires the justification of temporariness.

The preponderance of tipping considerations in the scholarly literature likely responds to the significance of tipping for waitresses. Research on tipping considerations, however, could

81

be expanded in a number of ways. At present, tipping research is largely restricted to the socio-psychological factors governing patrons' choices about tipping. Research oriented towards waitresses' perspectives on tipping would be particularly useful, and at present is almost entirely neglected in the scholarly literature. Further research could focus on waitresses' perceptions of tipping as a practice, the relationship between tips and gender (particularly vis-à-vis flirtation, which my interviewees consistently identify as a very important aspect of tipping as a social-exchange)

Though a small body of gender-related literature on the service industry recently has begun to emerge, gender in the service industry continues to be under-theorized by scholars. Alison Owings' *Hey Waitress: The USA from the Other Side of the Tray* (2002) and Leah Ryan's *For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry* (2004) are invaluable works, as they have provided a forum for waitresses to speak. I accredit these projects with exemplifying the kind of expository format that I have strived to attain in my video work. This form of scholarship, which endeavors to give voice to social subjects themselves, is invaluable in enabling a clear, unadulterated depiction of waitresses' own experiences. Hopefully this type of scholarship will expand in the decades to come.[73]

Directly interviewing waitresses enabled insights I otherwise would not have garnered. Occupying a male gender position, I am precluded from experiencing service work as a waitress. Furthermore the relative dearth of work by waitresses significantly limits secondary (i.e. non-experiential) learning about waitressing experiences. Waitresses' own accounts of their biographical experiences, both personal and professional, clearly are invaluable sources of data. Obvious difficulties, however, are presented by using this informative avenue. First and foremost, waitresses' testimonies cannot be treated as purely objective facts; rather, these interviews must be acknowledged as the subjective accounts of unique social agents. Rather than generalize from any particular waitress's testimony, we must examine the continuities and recurrent themes apparent throughout the interviews. Future research can build on these commonalities, testing whether they are generalizable across different demographical circumstances. For example, in prospective work, we might ask (how) how these waitresses' concerns and experiences compare to the concerns and experiences of male servers? Furthermore, future research projects might inquire how waitresses' perspectives differ according to a number of factors, including their: age, ethnic background, and the types of establishments in which they find employment. Even issues explored in my thesis research and in the preexisting literature warrant further exploration. Gender relationships, socio-economic workplace factors such as restaurant

---

[73] This type of scholarship is particularly valuable, since it bridges the gap between scholarly and popular audiences. It is accessible to a broader range of readers/viewers, and speaks both powerfully and informatively. I have strived to be accessible, entertaining and cogent in my presentation of data, and these objectives influenced my decision to employ a video.

82

hierarchies, status and management, as well as flirtation, sexuality and power-relationships all warrant further inquiry.

Admittedly, my thesis generates more questions and concerns than definitive facts—I consider this research a success in that regard. As hoped, my expository orientation provides a foundation for further questions and research work on waitresses, from a number of sociological and socio-psychological viewpoints. Furthermore, my research seems to confirm the fundaments of my hypothesis: according to my interviewees' testimonies, waitresses feel that they occupy a subordinate position relative to the patrons they serve. This sense of subordinacy is itself cause for frustration and vexation, and makes these women susceptible to abuse and maltreatment of various kinds. Within this schema of subordinacy/superordinacy, numerous issues emerge, particularly the relationship between emotional 'cost' and financial 'benefit'. The perception that tip earnings outweigh the vexations faced on the job compels waitresses to continue their work. Ultimately, virtually all of my interviewees seem to agree with Rose's assertion, "serving is a horrible job. The only reason it's worth it is the money, it's the only redemption you have at the end of the day".

Bibliography:

Books

Cobble, Dorothy Sue. Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Donovan, Frances. The Woman Who Waits. New York: Arno Press, (reprint) 1974, © 1920.

Glaser, Barney G. & Anselm L. Strauss. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. New York: Aldine de Gruxter, 1967.

Henley, N. Body Politics. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Hill, Janet McKenzie. The Up-to-Date Waitress. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1910.

Hochschild, A.R. The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

May, J.M. Tip or Treat: A Study of Factors Affecting Tipping Behavior. Unpublished master's thesis, Loyola University of Chicago, 1978.

Neuman, W.L. Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Owings, Alison. Hey Waitress: The USA from the Other Side of the Tray. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.

Paules, Greta Foff. Dishing it out: Power and resistance among waitresses in a New Jersey Restaurant. Philadelphia: Temple Press, 1991.

Ryan, Leah. For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry. New Orleans: Garrett County Press, 2004.

Scott, W. R. The Itching Palm: A Study of the Habit of Tipping in America. Philadelphia: Penn Publishing, 1916.

Snyder, William. Waitress, There's an Eye in My Soup. Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer College Press, 1975.

Spradley, James P. & Brenda J. Mann. The Cocktail Waitress: Woman's Work in a Man's World. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975.

Springsteed, Anne Frances. The Expert Waitress. New York: Harper and Sons, (reprint) 1912, ©1894.

Ulmer, Gregory. Grammatology in the Age of Video. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Whyte, William H. Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry. New York: Arno Press (reprint) 1977, ©1948.

Articles

Adams, S. "Inequality in Social Exchange". Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, L. Berkowitz, ed., vol. 2, New York: Academic Press, 1965: 267-299.

Alagna, F.J., S.J. Whitcher, J.D. Fisher & E.A. Wicas. "Evaluative Reaction to Interpersonal Touch in a Counseling Interview. Journal of Counseling and Psychology, vol. 26, 1979: 465-472.

Barbara, Santa. "Constant Comparative Method and Grounded Theory". Language Arts, vol. 81, Issue 4, 2004: p. 321.

Bloor, Michael. "Techniques of Validation in Qualitative Research: A Critical Commentary". In Emmerson, Robert M. Contemporary Field Research, 2nd ed. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2001: 383-395.

Boles, James S., Lawrence E. Ross & Julie T. Johnson. "Reducing Employee Turnover Through the Use of Pre-employment Application Demographics: An Exploratory Study," Hospitality Research Journal, vol. 19, no. 2, 1995: 19-30.

Bonn, Mark A. & Lous R. Forbringer. "Reducing Turnover in the Hospitality Industry: An Overview of Recruitment, Selection and Retention". International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 11, no. 1, 1992: 47-63.

Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods". In Denzin, Norman. Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003: 249-291.

Cotter, David A. Joanne M. Hermsen, Seth Ovadia & Reeve Vanneman. "The Glass Ceiling Effect". Social Forces, vol. 80, no. 2, 2001: 655-681.

Crespi, Leo P. "The Implications of Tipping in America," Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 11, 1947: 424-435.

Crusco, A.H. & C. G. Wetzel. "The Midas Touch: The Effects of Interpersonal Touch on Restaurant Tipping". Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, vol. 10, no. 4, 1984:

512-517.

Cunningham, M. R. "Weather, Mood, and Helping Behavior: Quasi-Experiments With the Sunshine Samaritan". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, vol. 37, 1979: 1947-1956.

Davis, C. B. "Tips". Atlantic Monthly, vol. 178, 1946: 126-127.

Davis, Stephen F., Brian Schrader, Teri R. Richardson, Jason P. Kring, and Jamie C. Kieffer. "Restaurant Servers Influence Tipping Behavior". Psychological Reports, vol. 83, no. 1, 1998: 223-226.

Dewald, Ben. "Tipping in Hong Kong Restaurants". International Journal of Hospitality Management, vol. 22, 2003: 307-319.

Earney, Anne. "Molly O'Dell's Restaurant and Bar Employee Manual Revisions". For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry, Leah Ryan, ed. New Orleans: Garrett County Press, 2004: 142-147.

Feinberg, Richard A. "Credit Cards as Spending-Facilitating Stimuli: A Conditioning Interpretation". Journal of Consumer Research, vol. 13, 1996: 348-356.

Fontana, Andrea & James H. Frey. "The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text". In Denzin, Norman. Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003: 61-106.

Garrity, Kimberly & Douglas Degelman. "Effect of Server Introduction on Restaurant Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 20, no. 2, 1990: 168-172.

Geisler, Kristen-Hall. "No One Here is Irish". For Here or To Go: Life in the Service Industry, Leah Ryan, ed. New Orleans: Garrett County Press, 2004: 60-64.

Guéguen, Nicolas. "The Effects of a Joke on Tipping When it is Delivered at the Same Time as the Bill". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 32, no. 9, 2002: 1955-1963.

Guéguen, Nicolas. "Effect on Tipping of a Barman Drawing a Sun on the Bottom of Customers' Checks". Psychological Reports, vol. 87, no. 1, 2000: 223-226.

Hall, Elaine J. "Smiling, Deferring, and Flirting: Doing Gender by Giving 'Good Service'". Work and Occupations, vol. 20, no. 4, Nov. 1993(a): 452-471.

Hall, Elaine J. "Waitering/Waitressing: Engendering the Work of Table Servers". Gender & Society, vol. 7, no. 3, Sept. 1993(b): 329-346.

Hall, J.A. and E.M. Veccia. "More 'Touching' Observations: New Insights on Men, Women,

and Interpersonal Touch". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 59, 1990: 1155-1162.

Harlow, A.F. "Our Daily Bribe: The Degrading Practice of Tipping". Forum, vol. 99, 1938: 231-235.

Harris, Mary B. "Waiters, Customers, and Service: Some Tips About Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 25, no. 8, 1995: 725-745.

Henley... "The Politics of Touch". 1973.

Hogan, John, "Turnover and What to Do About It". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, vol. 22, no. 4, 1992: 40-45.

Hornik, J. "Tactile Stimulation and Consumer Response". Journal of Consumer Research, vol. 19, no. 3, 1992: 449-458.

Hubbard, Amy S. Ebesu, A. Allen Tsuji, Christine Williams & Virgilio Seatriz Jr. "Effects of Touch on Gratuities Received in Same-Gender and Cross-Gender Dyads". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 33, no. 11, 2003: 2427-2438.

Jones, S.E. "Sex Differences in Touch Communication". Western Journal of Speech Communication, vol. 50, no. 3, 1986: 227-241.

Katz, Jack. "Analytic Induction Revisited". In Emerson, Robert M. ed. Contemporary Field Research, 2nd ed. Prospect Heights, Illinois, 2001: 333-334.

Kimes, Sheryl. "Implementing Restaurant Revenue Management: A Five-Step Approach". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, vol. 40, no. 3, 1999: 16-21.

Leidner, Robin. "Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance: Gender, Work, and Identity in Interactive Service Jobs". Gender & Society, vol. 5, no. 2, June 1991: 154-177.

Loe, Meika. "Working For Men—at the Intersection of Power, Gender, and Sexuality". Sociological Inquiry, vol. 66, no. 4, Nov. 1996: 399-421.

Lynn, Michael. "Tip Levels and Service: An Update, Extension, and Reconciliation". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, vol. 42, no. 3, 2003a: 139-148.

Lynn, Michael. "Restaurant Tips and Service Quality: A Weak Relationship or Just Weak Measurement?" International Journal of Hospitality Measurement, vol. 22, 2003b: 321-325.

Lynn, Michael, Michael Conlin & Ted O'Donoghue, "The Norm of Restaurant Tipping".

Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, vol. 52, no. 3, 2003c: 297-321.

Lynn, Michael and Ann Lynn. "Experiments and Quasi-Experiments: Methods for Evaluating Marketing Options". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, vol. 44, no. 2, 2003d: 75-84.

Lynn, Michael. "Restaurant Tipping and Service Quality: A Tenuous Relationship". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, vol. 42, no. 1, 2001: 14-20.

Lynn, Michael and Michael McCall. "Gratitude and Gratuity: A Meta-Analysis of Research on the Service—Tipping Relationship". Journal of Socio-Economics, vol. 29, no. 2, 2000: 203-214.

Lynn, Michael, Joseph-Mykal Le & D.S. Sherwyn. "Reach Out and Touch Your Customers". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, vol. 39, no. 3, 1998: 60-65.

Lynn, Michael. "Seven Ways to Increase Servers' Tips". Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly,vol 37, no. 3, 1996: 24-29.

Lynn, Michael & Kirby Mynier. "Effect of Server Posture on Restaurant Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 23, no. 8, 1993: 678-685.

Lynn, Michael & Charles F. Bond, Jr. "Conceptual Meaning and Spuriousness in Ratio Correlations: The Case of Restaurant Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 22, no. 4, 1992: 327-341.

Lynn, Michael & Andrea Grassman. "Restaurant Tipping: An Examination of Three 'Rational' Explanations". Journal of Economic Psychology, vol. 11, 1990: 169-181.

Lynn, Michael. "The Effects of Alcohol Consumption on Restaurant Tipping". Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, vol. 14, 1988: 87-91.

Lynn, Michael & Latane, B. "The Psychology of Restaurant Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 14, 1984: 551-563.

Major, B. "Gender Differences in Touching Behavior". Gender and Nonverbal Behavior, Mayo, C. & N.M. Henley, eds. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1981: 15-37.

McCall, Michael & Heather J. Belmont. "Credit Card Insignia and Tipping: Evidence for an Associative Link". Unpublished Paper, Ithaca College, 1995.

Rind, Bruce & David Strohmetz. "Effect of Beliefs About Future Weather Conditions on Restaurant Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 31, no. 10, 2001(a): 2160-2164.

Rind, Bruce & David Strohmetz. "Effect on Restaurant Tipping of Presenting Customers With an Interesting Task and of Reciprocity". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 31, no. 7, 2001(b): 1379-1384.

Rind, Bruce & David Strohmetz. "Effect on Restaurant Tipping of a Helpful Message Written on the Back of Customers' Check". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 29, no. 1, 1999: 139-144.

Rind, Bruce & Prashant Bordia. "Effect on Restaurant Tipping of Male and Female Servers Drawing a Happy, Smiling Face on the Backs of Customers' Checks". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 26, no. 3, 1996: 218-225.

Rind, Bruce. "Effects of Beliefs About Weather Conditions on Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 26, no. 2, 1996: 137-147.

Rind, Bruce & Prashant Bordia. "Effect of Server's 'Thank You' and Personalization on Restaurant Tipping,' Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol.25, no. 9, 1995: 745-757.

Rose, Mike. "The Working Life of a Waitress". Mind, Culture, and Activity, vol. 8, no. 1, 2001: 3-27.

Simpson, Jeffrey A., Margaret Lerma & Steven W. Gangestad. "Perception of Physical Attractiveness—Mechanisms Involved in the Maintenance of Romantic Relationship". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 59, no. 6, 1990: 1192-1201.

Sparks, F. "Headwaiter, Esq.". Collier's Weekly, vol. 118, 1946: 26.

Stephen, Reneé and Richard L. Zweigenhaft. "The Effect on Tipping of a Waitress Touching Male and Female Customers". The Journal of Social Psychology, vol. 126, no. 1, 1985: 141-142.

Stevens, Joy. "An Observational Study of Skilled Memory in Waitresses". Applied Cognitive Psychology, vol. 7, no. 3, 1993: 205-217.

Strohmetz, David B. Bruce Rind, Reed Fisher, Michael Lynn. "Sweetening the Till: The Use of Candy to Increase Restaurant Tipping". Journal of Applied Social Psychology, vol. 32, no. 2, 2002: 300-309.

Tolich, Martin B. "Alienating and Liberating Emotions at Work: Supermarket Clerks' Performance of Customer Service". Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, vol. 22, no. 3, 1993: 361-381.

Wharton, Amy S. "The Affective Consequences of Service Work: Managing Emotions on the Job". Work and Occupations, vol. 20, no.2, 1993: 205-232.

Whyte, William H. "Groupthink". *Fortune*, vol. 45, no. 3, March 1952: 114-117, 142, 146.

Woods, Robert H. & James F. Macaulay. "R$_x$ for Turnover: Retention Programs That Work". *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1989: 79-90.