

Seduction and Power:  
Dynamics between Servers and Customers in Bars

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Seduction and Power: Dynamics between Servers and Customers in Bars**

**Maria Polychronis**

The bar provides an important site for hyper-performativity in which to observe interactions in North American society. This research examines how dynamics between actors in a bar (bartenders, servers, customers, managers and coworkers) produce, reproduce and contest gender and status differences through techniques of seduction and power. My methods of research include drawing on insight from my personal experience working in bars, participant observation and in-depth interviews with 17 male and female workers. I examine the costs and benefits of emotional management in the workplace, the reproduction of gender performances through sexual division of labor, emotional management and alcoholic beverages, as well as the ways in which power is produced and exercised between individuals of varying status. A workers level of integration of self into their work role is a significant factor in determining their job satisfaction level as well as possible psychological implications of the work process. Workers with high levels of autonomy possessed the greatest levels of job satisfaction. Men and women exercise power in different ways, and therefore, power is also gendered but is not restricted to the asymmetrical limitations explicit in gender and status differences. Although the micro-politics of resistance do not elicit major and immediate changes on a macro-scale, it is important to acknowledge moments of resistance between individuals as essential sites of analysis of both men and women as active participants in the cycle of production, reproduction and contestation of existing societal values related to gender and status differences.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my family, especially my parents, Gus and Stacy Polychronis whose consistent support and encouragement made the completion of this thesis possible. To my siblings, Jamie and Simo, thanks for being there through the good, bad, and the ugly.

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## INTRODUCTION

This research explores dynamics of seduction and power that are practiced and negotiated between servers, customers and other actors in a bar environment and the implications of gender differences on this type of interaction. In contemporary North American society, interaction in the workplace constitutes active, dynamic and nuanced relations, as most jobs now involve dealing with people rather than with things (Hochschild 1983). Bartending and serving have traditionally been viewed as “passive professions”, as reactive to the demands and actions of others (Bell 1976: 93). The tasks involved in this work, however, are much more complex as they require “a reflective involvement in social life” (Bell 1976: 97). Bartenders and servers do not merely pour or serve drinks but also engage in several different roles, from employees, to counsellors, entertainers, sex objects and regulators of alcohol consumption and social order.

The bar is a unique environment in which to study social interactions among individuals; it is an important element of North American society and facilitates a playful, permissive and intensified atmosphere of social activity. The bar offers individuals an escape from the mundane routines of everyday life, inviting them to enter a Dionysian realm in which consumption, interaction, rhythm, sound, lighting, and clothing styles transcend ordinary life and contribute to an atmosphere of intensified as well as superficial interaction. In addition, the bar also provides a unique arena of examination because of the implications of the tipping system on customer-server dynamics. Servers are paid less than minimum wage by their employers due to tax deductions, and therefore the majority of their earnings are generated from tips (i.e., gratuities) given by customers.



The incentive for a “successful” performance is thus significantly increased and not only necessitates mental and physical competence, but also emotional investments. This inquiry therefore begins an investigation into the costs and benefits of labor requirements in service industry work and the effects on an individual's psychological well-being, which has traditionally been undervalued in research (Hochschild 1983; Leidner 1999; Shilling 2003; Williams and Bendelow 1998).

Women and men experience the social world in sometimes dissimilar ways and therefore social situations in a bar context pose differential expectations, consequences and benefits. In general, women are often taken less seriously and experience more instances of verbal and physical abuse and sexual objectification compared to males, whose presence tends to carry more status and authority (Hochschild 1983). Also, in their presentation of self, as Hochschild (1983) noted in her study of flight attendants, they are required to do more “emotion work”. My research includes an integrated gender analysis into the dynamic ways men and women, and servers and customers in the service industry experience and enact role-play, 'emotion work' and power play as well as the implications of such interactions.

Bars, restaurants, and the service industry generally have been the subject of considerable research (Butler and Skipper 1980, 1983; Donovan 1920; Hall 1993; Hochschild 1983; LaPointe 1991, 1992; Leidner 1999, 1991; Owings 1994; Paules 1991; 1999; Whyte 1948, 1977). In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Erving Goffman introduced the ideas of front stage and back stage and especially “face work” to discuss the world as a stage and the self as actor. Several authors have developed these

ideas, and others in researching bars (Bayard de Volo 2003; Bell 1976; Hearn and Stoll 1975; Loe 1996; Spradley and Mann 1975). My own research continues this tradition, including especially the theoretical insights of Hochschild, Foucault, and Baudrillard, in-depth interview data, and my own comparative gender analysis.

I conducted 17 in-depth interviewees with men and women in the bar scene, about their experiences along a wide range of topics including job satisfaction, gender, discrimination, violence, self-concepts, objectification, conflict, and relationships with coworkers, then analyzed their responses for variations both within and between the genders. The data is rich, funny, wise, and poignant and presents a Goffmanesque “back-stage” view of bars. I have also interwoven my own experiences as a server and bartender for over 10 years in many types of bars (neighborhood-pub, Irish pub, corporate-chain establishment, and nightclub), and my own participant observation while I was working on this thesis.

This research explores how customer-server dynamics of power and seduction as displayed in the bar provide a unique site of analysis for examining the practice, reproduction, consumption and negotiation of conventional, taken for granted cultural meanings and social identities of gender and social status in contemporary North American society. And my conclusions demonstrate how bars are, in so many ways and details, gendered worlds.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BARS, SEDUCTION AND POWER**

Bars are important spaces for social interaction in North American society. Men and women go to bars for every reason under the sun: to drink of course, to eat, to relax, to have fun, to celebrate or to console themselves, to meet people, to pick up people, to dance perhaps or just to get out of the rain. They are sites of public and private interaction of seduction and power, from walk-outs to bar fights. Socially they are, or have been, important venues for most people at various times in their lives.

Goffman, Hochschild and Foucault's theoretical interpretations of social interaction and control illuminate the investigation of server-customer dynamics in a bar environment. Goffman's dramaturgical perspective suggests that individuals are ultimately performers who are actively involved in the presentation of their 'fronts' to others. Goffman's investigation of interaction provides insight regarding techniques of 'impression management' which individuals employ in order to maintain successful performances.

Hochschild investigates the work experiences of flight attendants and bill collectors to examine 'emotional labor' and gender differences. She expands Goffman's analysis to investigate the psychological implications of 'emotional work' on individuals well-being and identity, especially when 'frontstage' requirements for interactive service work, are, for example, controlled and dictated by corporations and management.

Foucault's theoretical insights of 'power' and 'discipline' explain how the proliferation of a normalizing social gaze produces obedient and docile citizens. His genealogical examination of power relations enables him to unravel its constructed elements and to further a conception of power as a relational phenomenon which is also exercised and negotiated between individuals. The theoretical tools offered by these theorists are constructive to an exploration of the interactional production and negotiation of techniques of seduction and power among actors in a bar environment and the societal meanings embedded in their performances.

### **Goffman and the Presentation of Self**

To stay in one's room away from the place where the party is given, or away from where the practitioner attends his client, is to stay away from where "reality" is being performed ... the world, in truth, is a wedding.  
(Goffman 1959: 36)

Performances, according to Emile Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown, can be conceptualized as ceremonies that celebrate, represent and reproduce cultural values of a society (Goffman 1959: 35). In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman conducts a dramaturgical analysis of the study of human interaction and examines how social situations and the work environment influence the ways individuals present themselves to others. Goffman defines performance as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (1959: 15). Drawing from symbolic interactionist and social constructionists' perspectives, individuals are conceptualized as actors engaged in

varying performances contingent on the context of the situation and influenced by factors such as gender, status, age, appearance and personality. In this view, individuals become actors on a stage who perform numerous roles, present various 'fronts', utilize several 'props' and employ different techniques to make a successful performance possible (Goffman 1959).

As social beings, individuals desire acknowledgment in their everyday interactions with one another. Deference, according to Goffman, is a symbolic medium of interaction and a sign expressing appreciation or regard that “celebrates and confirms a relation to one another” (Goffman 1956: 476-477). Goffman explains that:

The individual ... is not allowed to give it [deference] to himself, being forced to seek it from others. In seeking it from others, he finds he has added reason for seeking them out, and in turn society is given added assurance that its members will enter interaction and relationships with one another. If the individual could give himself the deference he desired there might be a tendency for society to disintegrate into islands inhabited by solitary cultish men, each in continuous worship at his own shrine (Goffman 1956: 478).

In this passage Goffman suggests that social acknowledgment and praise significantly influence individual's livelihood and sense of self. Goffman states that individuals are well socialized to abiding by the perceived importance of these 'ceremonial rules' and 'marks of devotion' of society, so that they are able to feign them when necessary (Goffman 1956: 476-478). Thus, individuals, influenced by societal conventions and expectations are constantly engaged in the active production and negotiation of their performances. This is most evident in the service industry, as actors engage in performances that are often not an expression of their true feelings, but rather representative of intensified extenuated social traits and manipulated behavior. This is

therefore instructive and informative to the investigation of societal values and meanings embodied in dynamics between individuals interacting in a bar environment.

Individuals, in their multiple engagements with others, are continuously involved in the manipulation of their presented selves depending upon the context of the situation and the relationships they have with their audience. Individuals engage in active games of communication and techniques of 'face and body work' that offer their audience idealized social representations with the goal of maintaining controlled, creditable performances, or what Goffman refers to as the 'definition of the situation' (Goffman 1959: 48). As Robert Park suggests,

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role ... it is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves ... in a sense, and in so far as this mask represents a conception we have formed of ourselves – the role we are striving to live up to – this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our role becomes second nature and integral part of our personality. We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons (Goffman 1959: 19-20).

Park's account explains that idealized values embedded in the socialization and role-playing processes create conflicting identities that the individual needs to negotiate. Goffman cites Santayana to further illustrate the civilization process: "Our animal habits are transmuted by conscience into loyalties and duties, and we become "persons" or masks" (1959: 57). Personal 'fronts', Goffman explains, are "socialized, molded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which [they are] presented", and furthermore, "tend to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which [they] give rise" to become 'collective representations'

and facts (1959: 35, 27). A constructive element is implicated in the process of socializing individuals to conform and interact in socially desirable ways which involves identification with an ideal, “something unreal, fixed, perfect” (Simone de Beauvoir as cited in Goffman 1959: 57). As Cooley suggests, “If we never tried to seem a little better than we are, how could we improve or train ourselves from the outside inward?” (as cited in Goffman 1959: 35). This type of perception reveals a transfiguration of values that takes place in which the inward feeling is conditioned to fit the desired outward display. Goffman uses language such as “staged confidence games” and “illusions” to further illustrate the artificial element often required for a successful performance (1959). Performances thus require individuals to employ certain techniques of impression management to add credit to the reality they are presenting to others and suppress aspects that might discredit their performances (Goffman 1959: 47-48).

Goffman's ‘theatre’ consists of a ‘frontstage’ and ‘backstage’, the front displayed to others, and the back area that is contradicted and both physically and internally concealed from others (Goffman 1959). Goffman suggests that congruency does not exist between the true feelings of a performer and the socialized guise of the performance (1959: 29, 56):

One of the most interesting times to observe impression management is the moment when a performer leaves the back region and enters the place where the audience is to be found, or when he returns therefrom, for at these moments one can detect a wonderful putting on and taking off of character (1959: 121).

Impressions offered by performances can easily be discredited, as Goffman states, “a single note off key can disrupt the tone of the entire performance” (Goffman 1959:

52). From the perspective of impression management, contradictions of displays presented to others are observable and inevitable as the audience is often given glimpses of the backstage of a performance or the “image of the man behind the mask” (Goffman 1959: 210). Individuals are required to learn to act with control and responsibility as well as employ defense mechanisms and protective strategies in order to avoid 'embarrassment' and 'dissonance' and protect the credibility of their performances (Goffman 1959: 208, 210).

Goffman (1959) distinguishes between sincere and cynical performances as two extremes individuals can adopt and/or oscillate between in varying degrees with respect to engagement with their performances. Individuals who are sincere, are convinced that the impression of reality they are giving is the 'real' reality. Conversely, individuals who are cynical are aware of their masquerade in which there exists a clear distinction between 'real' and 'fake' characters. Disciplined performers are thus able to exercise 'self control' between their 'frontstage' displays and 'backstage' feelings by engaging in 'impression management' techniques and suppressing emotional responses to maintain the 'definition of the situation' (Goffman 1959: 217). Actors must distinguish between their 'social selves' or 'work selves' (how they are expected to feel and act) with their 'real self' (how they actually feel) (Goffman 1959: 136). This type of discipline, or manipulation of self operates on both conscious and unconscious levels, depending on the degree in which individuals have internalized their work role or 'social self'. Idealized identities and social expectations have profound effects on individuals, and consequently, a certain “bureaucratization of spirit” or standardized and instrumental way of engaging with



others may result (Goffman 1959: 56). Goffman advises individuals against taking performances too seriously, he explains that extreme identification or lack of identification with respect to one's belief in their role may lead to confusion and other psychological consequences such as dissonance, alienation and 'self-distantiation' (Goffman 1959: 81). Though Goffman acknowledges and cautions individuals against extreme identification with respect to their performances, he does not further explore the emotional consequences that are likely to manifest in the individual over a period of time.

### **Hochschild, Emotion Work, and Seduction**

Emotions are the life force of the soul, the source of most of our values...the basis of most other passions

(Solomon 1997: 14).

Inquiry into the costs and benefits associated with 'emotional labor' have largely been neglected and considered irrelevant or insignificant in sociological research (Hochschild 1983; Leidner 1999; Shilling 2003; Williams and Bendelow 1998).

Contemporary North American society can be described as a 'service producing society' (Hochschild 1983: 7). As society increasingly moves from the production of goods to the focus on the production of services (Bell 1976; Hochschild 1983), 'emotional labor', "the management of feeling in order to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild 1983: 7), becomes an increasingly crucial element of the work process (Leidner 1999). Emotional labor according to Hochschild is "sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value" (Hochschild 1983: 7). Hochschild scrutinizes the

profound impact that authority exercises in enforcing individuals on how they *should* feel and demonstrates its consequences on individuals and society.

Emotion work, according to Hochschild, involves what can be done by the 'self upon the self', 'by the self upon others' or 'by others upon oneself' (1979: 561-2).

Hochschild (1983) argues that struggle to maintain a healthy distinction between one's 'authentic' feelings and 'false' or 'feigned' displays is inevitably straining, and has psychological consequences for an individual's sense of self, often causing her or him to question how they are “really feeling”.

Hochschild claims that contemporary society has increasingly become more 'inauthentic' and emotions have become more 'calculated', 'managed', and 'instrumental' (Hochschild 1983: 22, 185; Williams and Bendelow 1998). The 'artificial' element of interaction in society is exemplified in the increase of psychological therapies ranging from gestalt to psychoanalysis which emphasize “getting in touch with spontaneous feeling” (Hochschild 1983: 190). She cites Robin Lakoff's insight on etiquette, which suggests that therapy books “are to the 20<sup>th</sup> century what etiquette books were to the 19<sup>th</sup> century ... because etiquette has gone deeper into the emotional life” (Hochschild 1983: 192). As a result, 'artless', 'spontaneous' and 'unmanaged feelings' are becoming more valued because they are becoming increasingly 'scarce' (Hochschild 1983: 194).

The management of emotions, on the one hand, is a positive act in that it allows society to function more pleasantly. On the other hand, Hochschild suggests that although service work has always existed, it is becoming problematic because the terms of emotional labor are increasingly being imposed by management and corporations and

'socially engineered' to become more like 'properties used to make money' (Hochschild 1983: 8, 54).

Hochschild suggests that individuals develop a 'false self' that assists in the maintenance of cordial interaction in society that would otherwise not be possible by the 'true self alone' (Hochschild 1983: 195). "In the work world", she argues, "It is part of the job to":

Accept uneven exchanges, to be treated with disrespect or anger by a client, all the while closeting into fantasy the anger one would like to respond with...where the customer is king, unequal exchanges are normal, and from the beginning customer and client assume different rights to feeling and display...supposedly evened by a wage (1983: 85-86).

This false self, can also be described as a 'sociocentric', 'disbelieved' and 'alternative' self that lives a separate existence from one's real self or one's 'claimed self' (Hochschild 1983: 194). Hochschild cites Christopher Lasch's view on the consequences of such extremes:

... Our culture's latest model of an unhealthy false self may be the narcissist. The narcissist feeds insatiably on interactions, competing desperately for love and admiration in a Hobbesian dog-eat-dog world where both are perpetually scarce. His efforts are self-perpetuating because he must discount the results: what admiration he does receive after all, is offered to his false self, not his real one (1983: 194).

A psychoanalytic perspective suggests that the false self constitutes an "acceptance of early parental requirements" of acting to "please others, at the expense of [one's] own needs and desires" (Hochschild 1983: 194).

Hochschild distinguishes between surface and deep acting as two types of acting that are important to understanding 'emotion work as tool' (Hochschild 1983: 167).

Comparable with Goffman's analysis, surface acting and deep acting are analogous with

cynical and sincere performances. Surface acting (cynical performance) is described as a disconnected presentation in which actors manipulate others without 'deceiving' themselves (Hochschild 1983: 33). Deep acting (sincere performance) involves genuine, 'self-induced' expressions that can be conceptualized as “deceiving oneself as much as deceiving others” (Hochschild 1983: 35, 33). She suggests that individuals actively shift and engage in both types of methods (Hochschild 1983: 36).

Hochschild argues that both “deep and surface acting become forms of labor to be sold” (1983: 89). Surface acting, “involves the expression of an emotion the actor does not necessarily feel”, which may, for example cause the individual to feel 'fake' or 'phony' (Hochschild 1983: 33). Feeling 'phony' becomes problematic when it is seen as a 'personal moral flaw or a stigma' rather than just 'bad acting' (1983: 133). This estranged or 'disconnected performance' may engender feelings of inauthenticity or 'emotive dissonance' (Hochschild 1983: 90), decreased self esteem, identity crisis, nihilism, alienation, cynicism and emotional deadness (Hearn and Stoll 1975; Hochschild 1983; Wharton 1999: 163).

Deep acting results from fusing authentic and displayed emotions, thus making 'faking' effortless because it is no longer necessary (Hochschild 1983: 33). Consequently, a lack of separation between one's self and work role is likely to lead to increased experiences of stress and burnout, guilt and self blame, causing individuals to take interactions more personally, even when circumstances are not their fault or out of their control (Hochschild 1983; Wharton 1999). Ultimately, as suggested by Hochschild, a lack of detachment between one's self and one's work role is likely to increase

symptoms of burnout which also includes experiences of 'contact overload' or over stimulation and may cause individuals to feel “robotic, detached and unempathetic” (Albrecht and Zembke 1985: 114 as cited in Wharton 1999: 162). Hochschild suggests that such consequences could be reduced if workers could exercise a greater degree of autonomy and control in the workplace as well as maintain a healthy distinction between their “real” and work selves as an important technique to protect their identity and well being (Wharton 1999: 164).

### **Gender and Emotion Work**

“Gender identity issues”, according to Hochschild, “are central components of interactive service work”; females and males are affected and engage in emotional performances in different ways (LaPointe 1991: 20). Hochschild found that the job of the flight attendant was not the same for a woman as it was for a man: women generally experience more abuse, are regarded as a lower “subordinate stratum” and have a weaker “status shield against displaced feelings of others” (1983: 163). In addition, they are more likely to experience instances of intimidation, sexual objectification, verbal and physical abuse, heightened sensitivity and emotion (1983: 176-177). In contrast, she found that men were perceived as more intimidating and carried more authority and respect through their mere presence (Hochschild 1983). Hochschild argues that men “are socially assigned tasks of aggressing against those that break rules of various sorts ... the private task of mastering fear and vulnerability” (Hochschild 1983: 163). Hochschild observed that women's feelings are more often regarded as 'weak' or 'unstable' and not

taken as seriously as the feelings of men, whose expressions carry “more weight” and are associated with rational, deeply held convictions (Hochschild 1983: 173, 179).

Men and women experience differential consequences and benefits with respect to emotion work and workplace dynamics. Although Hochschild offers important insights into the inquiry of emotions and gender differences in the workplace, she suggests that gender differences lie in the “psychological effects of having or not having power”, and concludes that social inquiry into emotional labor is more important for females than males (1983: 169). This has proved to be a useful insight to my research and somewhat neglected by Goffman. Nonetheless, Hochschild's point of view on gender differences is limiting and the investigation of emotion work is equally important for both genders. Men and women are thus part of the same network of relations in which they are required to manage their emotional displays in alternate ways. They therefore experience different advantages and disadvantages in their interaction with others.

### **Foucault, Power and Resistance**

Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals,  
which all resemble prisons?

(Foucault 1977: 228)

Foucault's theoretical notions of 'panopticism' and 'docility' are insightful to analyzing the construction of power in society (Foucault 1977: 308). Discipline, or the regulation of self, according to Foucault, constitutes a 'technology of power' that constructs individuals into “ideological representations of society” (1977: 194). He argues that discipline is a technique “that regards individuals both as objects and as

instruments of its exercise” (1977: 170). Individuals thus discipline or manipulate their bodies in accordance to internalized conventional expectations acquired from their culture. He uses the 'panopticon' as a metaphor derived from Jeremy Bentham's architectural design of a prison. This prison, represented by “a circular building of cells where prisoners were always available for surveillance from a central watch tower” (Shilling 2003: 67), operated with the purpose of producing in the prisoner “a state of conscious and permanent visibility to assure the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 1977: 201), and therefore has the “ability to penetrate into men's behavior” by means of observation (Foucault 1977: 187). Foucault argued that power is “exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility” (Foucault 1977: 187, 204). Visibility thus becomes 'a trap', where 'inspection functions ceaselessly' and 'the gaze is alert and everywhere' (Foucault 1977: 200, 195).

Society, as suggested by Foucault, “is not one of spectacle but of surveillance ... we are neither in the amphitheatre, nor the stage, but in the panoptic machine” (1977: 217). The panopticon can thus be interpreted as an expansion of Goffman's 'stage'; in this light, everything is visible, the backstage is exposed, and the individual is ultimately always on stage, consistently observing, 'calculating' and 'manipulating' their thoughts, actions, 'gestures' and 'behavior' (Foucault 1977: 138). As Thapan suggests, the individual becomes “ruled ... by its dominant other which ... it has internalized as its own” (1995: 39). This suggests the far-reaching and productive impact of conventional societal expectations and values on individuals construction and manipulation of self.

Foucault suggested the principle goal of these disciplinary techniques is to produce a 'docile body', a state of self discipline and control in the individual over their own body. A 'docile body', is a body that is easily “manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces” (Foucault 1977: 136). Bodies become manipulable or docile to the extent that they can be “subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault 1977: 136). The panopticon is “polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work” (Foucault 1977: 205). Just as prisons, schools, the army and hospitals impose strict rules on the actions and behaviors of individuals, in the service work environment, performances of desirable emotional expressions, punctuality, appearance, demeanor and dress are carefully monitored from multiple angles. Managers, customers, coworkers, and servers are involved in a web of power relations in which performances are judged, rewarded or punished, and consequently produced, reproduced, and resisted.

Foucault's perspective provides a tool through which to analyze and deconstruct power relations in contemporary society. Foucault's genealogical method of analysis in which he traces power relations throughout history, enabled him to “shift from the 'objectivisation' to the 'subjectivisation' of the subject” and develop concepts of agency and reflexivity, thus enabling a more encompassing and liberating interpretation of power (McNay 1994: 133; Williams and Bendelow 1998: 33). A Foucauldian analysis of power is empowering in that it uncovers the constructed nature of power relations to reveal a relational process which is vulnerable to disruption (Winter 1996: 819), as he states,



“where there is power there is resistance” (Foucault 1978: 95). He reveals that “power’s condition of possibility... permits one to understand its exercise” (Foucault 1978: 93). This relational notion of power suggests that power is exercised through interaction rather than an omnipotent force or possession of individuals of higher status or authority. Power is exercised from top-down, but also from bottom-up, and laterally. Foucault’s conception of power thus transcends hierarchical and one-dimensional perspectives which suggest that power is in the hands of those with higher status who force their wills upon others. Although there exist different concentrations of power within the social network, it is more informative to interpret power in terms of a web of social relations (Winter 1996). Steven Winter suggests:

The social phenomenon of power is possible only because it is a shared hermeneutic phenomenon: it is a contingent product of common ways of understanding and living in a social world, a function of reciprocally enacted roles, routines, institutions and understandings (1996: 742).

This alternative interpretation of power provides a tool in which to analyze the multidimensional ways in which it operates and the strategies of resistance and negotiation that are practiced in everyday life, particularly when social relationships are asymmetrical in nature.

Hochschild attributes asymmetrical relationships between men and women to a “difference in the psychological effects of having or not having power” (1983: 169). The problem with this statement is that it implies a traditional interpretation of power as a property someone has or does not have. Hochschild further asserts that inquiry into emotional labor is more important and has more relevance for women than for men: she states that “Women more than men have put emotional labor on the market, and they

know more about its personal costs” (1983: 169). A Foucauldian perspective would advance that “power is not a property of an actor who exercises domination over another; it is the emergent quality of a reciprocal social relation” (Winter 1996: 742). For Foucault, power’s “socio-cultural construction is an all-pervasive process from which no one escapes and in which everyone participates” (Winter 1996: 728) and therefore “what produces ‘power’ must also be in the head of those who are its subjects” (Winter 1996: 742). Power is therefore ‘productive’ rather than “something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault 1978: 94). He states that power “produces reality” and “produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (Foucault 1977: 194). Foucault argues:

We must not look for who has the power in the order of sexuality (men, adults, parents, doctors) and who is deprived of it (women, adolescents, children, patients); nor for who has the right to know and who is forced to remain ignorant. We must seek rather the pattern of the modifications which the relationships of force imply by the very nature of their process (Foucault 1978: 99).

Winter explains that “power...retains its cogency as an explanation of social phenomenon only so long as the concept itself remains unexamined” (1996: 744). Hochschild’s statements are therefore of limited value in terms of understanding how the relational nature of power is produced and reproduced in society. In contrast to tautological statements of traditional hierarchal views of power, Foucault argues against describing power in “negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’” (Foucault 1977: 194). Foucault’s reinterpretation suggests that

power is “exercised rather than possessed, decentralized rather than exercised from top down, and productive rather than repressive” (Sawicki 1991: 52). This type of analysis is enriching in that it can allow for the 'undoing' of prior conceptions by redefining and moving beyond the restrictive boundaries that may confine and 'disempower' individuals (Winter 1996). A conceptualization of power as something that is *exercised* between individuals reveals that such inquiry is important for men and women as well as for individuals of varying social status. As Winter suggests, “just as assertion enacts power, deference can generate or sustain it” (1996: 742). Although asymmetrical divisions between men and women are prevalent in all areas of social life, a Foucauldian analysis of power illuminates that individuals of varying gender and status are part of the same social system, and therefore actively participate in maintaining, producing or contesting and re-negotiating societal norms and values in their interactions with one another.

The various perspectives offered by these theoretical viewpoints provide valuable lines of interrogation into the techniques with which bartenders, servers, managers and customers employ techniques of seduction and power and the multiplicity of ways they interact with one another to manage emotions, imbalances of 'power', and gender differences. Goffman offers creative illustrations in which to analyze social interactions in everyday life. The theatrical element of his perspective is insightful to the analysis of bartending and serving as performance and provides valuable illustrations into the multiple ways which servers, customers and managers engage with one other. Servers engage in role play, they perform for an audience (customers) while employing a wide range of strategies and techniques in order to sustain balanced performances to maintain

customer satisfaction and personal profit. Social relations are dynamic in nature rather than robotic and static, and therefore examining interaction from the perspective of 'impression management' proves a constructive point of departure from which to analyze this type of phenomenon.

Hochschild's research is also significant to the study of emotions in the workplace and in society. Hochschild delves further into the individual's personal backstage to include their 'inner voice' and to explore the consequences associated with the consistent manipulation of displays on their psychological well-being (Hochschild 1983: 217-216).

Foucault's notion of power enables an understanding of how dynamics of power and resistance are exercised and produced between individuals of varying gender and status positions. An integration of these perspectives is insightful for the analysis of how individuals experience and enact performances of seduction and negotiations of power in society, as demonstrated through examining the interactional dynamics of actors in a bar environment.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

Triangulation is a powerful strategy for enhancing the quality of the research, particularly the creditability [or internal validity]. It is based on the idea of convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of a phenomenon have been investigated.

(Krefting 1991: 219)

The methods employed for this qualitative study on interaction between individuals of varying status and gender in a bar atmosphere consists of triangulated methods including participant observation, self reflection and informal and formal semi-structured interviews. Participant observation and interview data is used to further complement or contradict the theoretical frameworks and relevant literature.

#### **Participant observation and Self-Reflection**

In sociology, the study of occupations has been enriched by field research techniques rooted in the “Chicago tradition”. Park, Hughes, Becker, and Donovan – concerned themselves with documenting real life dramas on the job, gaining insight and understanding availability only to persons employed in the occupation(s) studied.

(Hughes 1971: 1951 as cited in LaPointe 1991: 24-25)

According to Dewalt and Dewalt, participant observation is “the foundation method of ethnographic research design and supports and complements other types of data collection” (2002: 14). Participant observation further enhances the quality of the data, as well as the interpretation of the data and contributes to the advancement of new research questions (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002: 8). My personal experience and “active participation” in the service industry for over ten years, six of which were working

specifically in bars will provide a unique standpoint into the realm of the service industry that is otherwise not possible or accessible for those observing from a more detached stance.

The bar is a fast-paced environment that required me to be in the presence of others at all times, with the exception of bathroom breaks, and in the cases where I was required to go 'backstage' to eat. This work environment did not facilitate an overt note-taking strategy, and in addition, it is not always possible to take detailed notes after a minimum eight hour shift. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) offer practical suggestions on jotting notes; they suggest that researchers should actively engage in jotting down key words or phrases that will later activate the series of events that occurred and will enable field researchers to take extensive notes at a more practical time; and they also advise researchers to jot down events as vividly and as detailed as possible, and to refrain from writing evaluative summaries or psychological analysis of the events until later (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995). During work shifts, I was always actively involved in taking 'head notes', and did take brief moments to write down jottings of key words or emotions I was experiencing in order to write about them in more detail at a more practical time.

Werner and Schoepfle suggest that the "combination of insider/outsider provides deeper insights than are possible by the native alone or an ethnographer alone" (1987: 63). Spradley and Mann, in their ethnographic work on cocktail waitresses, emphasize that involvement and detachment of the experience are both required to fully understand culture, and believe that "one of the hazards of research in our own society is lack of

detachment and objectivity” (1975: 12). Spradley suggests “the more you know about a situation as an ordinary participant, the more difficult it is to study it as an ethnographer” (1980: 61). As both “insider” and “outsider” I struggled with inevitable biases by attempting to maintain an objective stance at the same time as recognizing my subjective stance. When I was employed as a bartender with a part-time position, when I began this research endeavor, I often found myself adapting a cynical position, and experienced difficulty getting into my work role. This was particularly difficult at the beginning of a shift, especially when I was only scheduled to work one day per week. As the night would progress however, I found it easier to get into my work role. My use of theory, relevant literature and interviews is thus an important complement to maintaining and gaining more objectivity in my analysis. Furthermore, as Spradley and Mann suggest, “the researcher interested in sex roles brings his or her special biases to such an investigation” (1975: 12). Personal biases and value judgments pose limitations to this study, my attempt to lessen this is demonstrated in my choice to incorporate both female and male perspectives without resorting to tautological or one-dimensional arguments often utilized in research concerning gender relations. Furthermore, since I do not have first-hand insight into the experience of men, I will compensate for this through my observations of male bartenders, literature on this topic as well as interview data from male bartenders and servers.

## **Interviews**

The formal semi-structured interviews consist of 17 male and female bartenders, varying in age, experience and type of bar they work in (i.e., night clubs, Irish pubs,

neighborhood pubs, lounges, sports bars). These informants were selected using convenience and purposive sampling. They consist of individuals I have worked with in the past, and friends of individuals who are involved or have experience working in the industry. According to Babbie (1992), researchers may use purposive sampling, when they have “special knowledge” in the area they are concerned with (as cited in Stubbs 2001). Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select individuals they feel will best represent the study (as cited in Stubbs 2001). I therefore have included bartenders who I know possess a unique ‘skill’ in this area, and are consistently successful in generating a significant number of regular customers every week in my interview sample. From the point of view of the dramaturgical perspective, these individuals have mastered the ‘art’ of this work role and will thus provide unique insights and further illuminate strategies and techniques they have developed throughout the years. All interviewees were required to sign an informed consent form and their identification and location of work is anonymous and replaced with pseudonyms. As a participant in this work field as well as a researcher, it is my ethical responsibility to keep the individuals' identities private. Formal interviews varied from one to two hours in length, and were recorded on a digital mp3 device where they were later manually transcribed. The use of interviews will capture both male and female perspectives of working in a bar, as well as complement personal fieldwork and theoretical and relevant literature.

Informal interviews consisted of several males and females. During the time I was employed and conducting research, co-workers were aware I was studying interactions in my workplace for the purpose of my thesis project. I often asked them to



tell me about recent encounters they have experienced with clients, and to elaborate on how it made them feel, and therefore respect requests for keeping certain encounters “off-the-record”. Given the context of the situation, it was not practical for me to inform customers of my research objectives. Doing so may have posed limitations including detracting from the customers experience, as well as jeopardizing the authenticity of the encounter which would possibly have contributed to skewed data. As Spradley argues, “Participant observation represents a powerful tool for invading other people’s way of life” (1980: 22). For the purpose of this research, the names and identities of individuals and the identity and locations of the establishments have been excluded and or changed and replaced by pseudonyms to ensure privacy and anonymity.

### **Limitations and Weaknesses**

Dynamics of the service industry environment vary and are contingent on several factors including the status and type of work environment (restaurant/lounge, neighborhood pub, Irish pub, and night club) and work experience, age, personality type, appearance, years of experience and gender characteristics of the individual. Thus the results obtained from this research are indicative of my particular sample. Furthermore, the focus of this research was concentrated on heterosexual spaces and issues of race were not explored. These additional factors could offer rich insight into the experiences of power and resistance associated with differences in race and sexualities. Future research including such additional elements of analysis would enhance an analysis informing dynamics of power and seduction between individuals in the service industry and hence, in society.

## **Contributions**

This research is valuable for enhancing knowledge regarding service industry work and perhaps to bring about greater awareness and appreciation for undervalued and often taken for granted phenomenon. The bar represents an important element of North American society, and embodies a rich site of information regarding complex issues such as gender differences and social status. In contemporary society, Hochschild argues that individuals are losing touch with their natural spontaneous feeling, and becoming, or expected to become increasingly more machine-like or inauthentic and standardized. We are increasingly becoming subject to the rules of mass production in the workplace and this is also effecting our private functioning of emotions (Hochschild 1983). Institutions increasingly play a major role in this process, and put their corporate interests of making profit ahead of the needs of their workers. This study explores the emotional implications of social interactions which are often overlooked and misunderstood in research and theory. Individuals involved in these types of service roles are often disrespected or perceived as being of lower status. There has not been a significant amount of research written on customer-server interactions, and traditional studies generally offer gender biased accounts. This research study explores perspectives of both women and men without resorting to tautological traditional arguments suggesting that those of higher status (men, managers, customers) oppress individuals occupying lower status positions (women, servers). Individuals in lower status positions are not viewed as victims but rather agents in a relational interactive process in which techniques of power and seduction produce as well as negotiate gender and status meanings.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SEDUCTION AND EMOTION WORK

#### **Acting as 'Art' and Emotion Work as 'Tool'**

**(Hochschild 1983: 167)**

People want to be fed just as they want to be wined and dined and entertained. They want a show; they're paying for a service. It's not just about putting a drink on a tray and handing it to them. It's about the ambiance you're creating, the experience you're creating for them ... what they have to look at.

[Angelina]

During a job interview for a club, a former manager asked me why he should hire me: what qualities did I have that made me a “good” bartender because, as he stated, “anyone could just stand behind the bar and serve drinks”. Successful role performances, in addition to physical and mental labor capacities, require active emotional investments which involve selling one's self or one's personality to entertain or trigger a desired emotion in an audience. As Leidner states, in this type of work environment:

... Workers' identities are ... not incidental to the work but are an integral part of it. Interactive jobs make use of workers' looks, personalities, and emotions, as well as their physical and intellectual capacities, sometimes forcing them to manipulate their identities more self-consciously than do workers in other kinds of jobs (1991: 155-156).

Bartenders and servers engage in techniques “aimed at investing the social world with a particular ‘artful’ reality” (Bell 1976: 94). Performances in the bar constitute a hyper-exaggeration of social traits employed to receive desired outcomes such as profit and customer satisfaction. In this perspective, the atmosphere can be analyzed as constituting a 'hyperreal' environment ruled by 'appearances' and 'illusions' (Baudrillard

1990, 1983). As Monica, one of my interviewees, explained, “It’s really superficial, but when you do go out ... you want what you don’t necessarily have in your life”. The server, like the flight attendant in Hochschild’s study, produces a service, or an ‘illusion of good service’ (Hochschild 1982: 135) and knows when the job is ‘done’ when the ‘customer feels content’ (1983: 5).

Dynamics between individuals in the service industry involve techniques of power and seduction which illuminate investigation into ‘plays’, ‘challenges’ and ‘strategies of appearances’ (Baudrillard 1990: 7) that occur between servers, customers and managers to receive desired rewards especially in terms of financial profit. Given that employees depend on tips from customers for the majority of their income, the tipping system creates a climate where successful interactions are of utmost importance. Customers, in addition to contributing to the amount of profit a server will make, also profoundly influence the rhythm of the type of encounter that will occur. A female server and bartender at a neighborhood pub stated:

You gotta feed off your customer ... you just gotta play the card out, do I wanna approach this person normally how I’m approaching the guy beside him that’s laughing and enjoying his time here? Well, obviously not because it’s a different persona. So you just kinda have to play – every table wears a different hat, you just gotta read your customers [Ericka].

The tone and form of an individual’s presentational display to others is therefore heavily influenced by the customer, as suggested in the informant’s emphasis on the importance of “reading” or “feeding off the customer” and “playing the card you’re given”. This represents an asymmetrical relationship between customer and server in which the server is required to sway to the needs and moods of the customer, and which,

as Hochschild writes is “supposedly evened out by a wage” (1983: 85-86). Although customers exercise a significant impact on the flow and emotional tone of the interaction, servers also actively engaged in numerous techniques in order to manipulate the situation to their advantage. The customer-server dynamic, according to Paules (1996: 272) “resembles less that of master-servant than micro entrepreneur- client” (as cited in Bayard de Volo 2003: 364) and therefore also perceive the customer as “raw material from which a tip is extracted” (Paules 1991: 34). This relational perspective enables an examination of the various ways individuals exercise techniques of power and seduction in their interactions with one another. As Johnny stated, “Your personality goes to the limits when you know that you're potentially gonna make money”.

Bartenders and servers quickly learn the significance of acting, or the 'arts of impression management' when entertaining and praising their audience for the gain of personal rewards such as profit or prestige (Goffman 1959). They invest a greater amount of emotional energy with customers who are good tippers compared to bad tippers or non-tippers. Customers who are more demanding or cause trouble also require significant amounts of emotion management and are generally viewed as “waste of time”. As Monica states: “I always have in the back of my mind the tips, always, always”. Servers therefore engage in performances that are not always consistent with a true reflection of their genuine feelings.

Goffman suggests that ‘backstage’ expressions are inevitably likely to surface since there is often no congruency between an individual's inner feelings and the guise they display to their audience (1959: 29). ‘Backstage’ expressions are demonstrated, for

example, in the moment when a server transitions from a big smile they flash at a customer to the rolling of the eyes (Goffman 1959: 121). They are also apparent at the end of the shift, when the lights go on, informing customers that the “game” is over for the night. The bartender’s reactions towards demanding (and most often drunk) customers changes and the customer is no longer the center of attention, but alternately is ignored and/or kicked out. Although special exceptions are sometimes permitted for ‘important’ or more valued individuals, regular customers and friends of the staff who are often able to stay after-hours, at the end of the night, bartenders and servers are generally focused on cleaning and finishing the shift as soon as possible. Thus, successful performances involve a manipulation of both inner and outer displays of emotions in order to, as Goffman (1959) suggests, 'maintain the definition of the situation'.

Individuals are well aware that they must provide their audience with the deference and acknowledgment they desire, and are thus well socialized in the rules of its ceremonial importance to be able to feign it when necessary (Goffman 1959). When I questioned Johnny whether his personality was reflected in his work role he replied, “It depends on who your customer is ... and as sad as that is, your personality is going to change for every guy that walks through that door,” he continues:

...To make money in here, you can't be just like, “Oh, how is everything?... Oh, that's great guys, see you later ...”. You have to say something stupid, you have to say a joke, you have to read your customers, what do these people wanna here from me? Do they want me to suck their ass? Do they want me to be professional? Do they want me to say the dumbest things in the world to them to make them smile? You gotta judge them from the beginning, that's what makes a good server ... “How's your day?”... Do I give a shit about your life? Absolutely not, but I'm gonna ask you! I'm gonna ask you four different questions, and then I'm gonna be like “Wow, I'm really busy, I'm gonna come back to talk to you in a bit” ... You need to

judge every customer that walks in and then work off them, and give them what they want, it's just all about reading. The goal is always money at the end of the night – you wouldn't be here if it wasn't [Johnny].

Acting, as suggested by Hochschild (1983), and as outlined by Johnny is therefore a necessary art in maintaining a proper 'definition of the situation' (Goffman 1959).

Johnny's cynical tone with regards to his work role highlights that manipulative and surface acting techniques ranging from the humiliation of self (saying “something stupid”) to humoring his audience are active parts of his bartending performance. He also stresses the importance of social receptiveness for “judging” and “reading” his audience as an essential skill servers should have in order to capitalize on characteristics that will provide the audience with the deference (“therapy”, feeling “special”) they desire and increase personal profit. Cynical performances can thus also be employed for the good of the audience, as performers feel a pressure “to delude their customers because their customers show such a heartfelt demand for it” (Goffman 1959: 159).

Acting as 'art' and emotion work as a 'tool' is further exemplified in a statement from a female interviewee who stated that “At least half the time, everything [she says] is 100 percent fake”, because she has more of a “personal agenda” on the line:

It's pure manipulation from start to finish, every shift. I guess life is manipulation but it's definitely more when you're serving – from the way you dress to the way you walk to everything, you're always playing a character and in the end it's all to make tips or to get better tips [Anna].

Manipulative ‘arts’ involve several external and internal manifestations, whether genuine or simulated, such expressions have profound influences on the encounters and profit. External forms of manipulation include physical contact, such as touching the

hand, shoulder and back. One bartender explained the significance of physical contact as a technique of seduction:

... One thing I've learned, read, and used, and it made all the difference in the world is: when you serve people and you touch them, automatically they're gonna ... enter that zone, cause you kinda went through that bubble, and the tips, seriously, go up! And it's not even sexual necessarily it's friendly human contact – especially these days everything is electronic ... cyber-everything ... [Monica]

The 'zone' implies transcendence from 'electronic' and standardized interactions characteristic of everyday interaction in North American society into a playful space. Friendly and intimate interactions are becoming increasingly scarce in everyday life, and therefore physical contact often has a favorable influence on tip earnings.

Internal forms involve superficial or 'superfacial' (Jackson 2004) and calculated efforts of emotion work including engagement in conversations, 'head games', humor, compliments, deference, flirtation, winking, eye contact and smiling. One female server claimed that she overheard a group of regular customers complaining that one of the employees that frequently serves them “never smiled”, thus suggesting the smile may be used to rate the quality of the service and hence influence the tip amount. A former coworker one night, after serving a few rounds of drinks to a couple who sat at the bar remarked: “Cool, they tipped well, and I didn't even have to talk to them!” Implicit in his remark is that emotional investments are generally essential techniques for making profit. According to Vanessa: “Mood is the number one thing that affects tips, the type of attitude you're having affects your well-being and how customers will respond to you and treat you”. Alec suggests that he takes “advantage of the female clients” by flirting with them to increase his tips, he adds, “Females are not necessarily better tippers than males –



but they can be if you take the time to work on it". Marilyn explains that her physical appearance as a blond female, as well as deferring and flirting are profitable techniques:

You get a lot of 30 and up guys, who – like I've been in this business a lot, I'm used to these guys: drunken business men. I work with a bunch of business men, I know how to handle them, I know they like blond girls and I can work that. Yeah I flirt, but nothing sleazy, it pretty much looks like I'm having a good time with them, if they wanna flirt and joke with me [laughs], I'll laugh at their jokes...

Monica, a female bartender, when discussing whether she felt that her 'real' personality was reflected at her work stated: "I add a lot. I'm generally a happy girl, I'm generally bubbly and perky but I'll *add* flirtation a lot – oh yeah, I'll sugar coat it all the way... ". Monica illustrates that exaggerated superficial exchanges are important techniques to seduce her audience:

If you serve a couple, if there's a guy and a girl, *always* ask the girl first, always. And, you know, don't flirt too much with the guy, you know ... just to avoid – you know. And usually I compliment the girl a lot, I'm like ... "I love this" ... and then I go to the guy and say, "you know – you got a good girl there" ...

Joe describes how a "friendly" joking relationship with a pretense of a domineering attitude makes her a successful bartender:

Guys come in, like vice presidents come in – it's like an S&M thing – they just fired five hundred people but they come in to get browbeaten by her ... they walk in and she's like "You son of a bitch, where have you been for two months?" ... But in the meantime, they have their drink in front of them they have exactly what they want, what they need. Why she's so good is because she doesn't realize how good she really is. Her customer base I would say is gotta be one of the tops. And you don't know who half these people are, they're all executives, C.E.O's of companies, and whenever the cook has any kind of special event, she has all their personal numbers, she knows all their wives names, she's got weird photographic memories for wives names and wives and kids birthdays', she remembers everyone's name.

Joe also demonstrates that she has developed a personal relationship with her clientele, (she knows their names, wives names, personal numbers and birthdays). All interviewees agreed that friendliness is important in the workplace: generating displays of friendliness in manifestations such “sugar-coating”, flirtation and compliments of admiration are proven to be profitable techniques of emotion work. As Linda stated, “In this industry you *have* to be friendly, any customer service industry you could work in no matter how shitty your day is”.

### **Appearances Vs Reality: Effects on the Self**

The mental and physical energy required before a work shift was described by one interviewee as similar to that of an actress preparing for a performance. One bartender stated that when he gets behind the bar he “comes on”, suggesting that his work role persona(s) become activated as soon as he enters his 'stage'. As Tseelon notes, “Goffman's actor ... has a repertoire of ‘faces’ each activated in front of a different audience, for the purpose of creating and maintaining a given definition of the situation” (1995: 40). One female informant revealed:

... Because I've worked in so many places, every place I was a different person, and even further than that, for every single person I served I wore a different hat, everybody wants you to be someone different, sometimes they want you to just serve them and just shut up and be basically their servant, like, maybe at the more corporate places, some places – I've so been a therapist for a billion people, some people are really into the whole snippy witty comments, and they just want to see how long you could hold it up, you know, and [sigh] that's so much pressure cause it's like you don't have time to be funny ... you know? But you sorta have to play their game ... some people. they're families, they want you to talk to their kids ... it's endless ... that's what I think is so exhausting about waitressing, is that you're constantly being something else to someone else, so you go from

one table to the other to the other and you're like, constantly switching hats all night and ... acting basically, acting non-stop [Anna].

Anna's expression “constantly switch hats all night” is consistent with theoretical perspectives offered by both Goffman (1959) and Hochschild (1983) which suggest that individuals actively manipulate their physical and emotional displays to entertain and humor their audience. Furthermore she demonstrates that the multiplicity of roles she is required to engage in (servant, therapist, comedian, chameleon, etc.) are dependent upon her particular audience. For example, Anna explained that in corporate places she was expected to act more as “non person” (Goffman 1959) and play a “servant” role. This type of work is therefore demanding physically, mentally and emotionally.

Anna explains that the active emotional energy and management of her ‘fronts’ is what she finds most “exhausting” about her job, she continues:

I feel like I'm pretty good at not getting stressed out ... like I don't get stressed out oh I'm in a rush ... it's more of a tired stress ... I don't get frazzled, it's more like exhausted, the exhaustion is a result of always having to act cause it's not like a stress oh, I can't perform, it's more like holy crap I have no more energy to fake being nice or to like to kiss this bitches ass or whatever ... like I know for sure I could never do it as a career ... there's no way, that's really rough, for that reason not so much for the physical reasons [Anna].

Anna's descriptions of her work requirements as “exhausting” and “rough” supports Hochschild's (1983) claim that emotional labor requires additional energy which may lead to psychological consequences such as stress, burnout, cynicism and frustration. Linda, who is employed as a part-time bartender stated “I'm definitely not making a career out of it ... because I don't think that I could mentally handle it ... and I have other goals”.

Success in the performance is most probable when workers separate their self from their occupational role (Bell 1976: 95; Goffman 1959; Hochschild 1983).

Investigating individual's levels of investment in their work role is an important area of research in that it is linked with psychological well being (Erickson and Ritter 2001; Goffman 1959; Hochschild 1983;). Individuals who are too fused in their work role, or alternatively, estranged from their work process are more likely to experience psychological and physical ramifications.

### **Self- Seduction and the False Self**

Job performances, in addition to producing services, also produce illusions. Both customers and servers can get caught up in the webs of seduction. Stage plays of entertainment, manipulation, flirtation, friendliness and admiration thus constitute seductive 'hyper' performances which require emotional investments involving both the manipulation of others as well as the manipulation of self in order to control outward displays and emotional expressions and successfully seduce wages from customers (Hochschild 1983). Rewards, although primarily motivated by profit, extend beyond financial gain, thereby involving varying degrees of self seduction.

Baudrillard argues that: “To seduce is to die as reality and constitute oneself as illusion” (1990: 69). A female bartender who worked in a club/lounge establishment described her work self as the comic book character 'Poison Ivy':

I flirt but in a mean kinda way, like if someone came up to me and says, “Can I have a Black Label on the rocks?” I'd be like “No, no, I don't think so, no, I don't really wanna serve that to you”. And they'll be like “What?” And I'd be like “Well, only because your eyes are so beautiful alright, that's the only reason why”. And then I'll serve it to them. I flirt, but I don't

flirt the same way I would flirt if I was flirting with someone I actually really liked, I'm more, playing, I'm more teasing the person – it's so much more exaggerated, like the way I walk and the way I stand, it's so overtly sexual, like I'll bend over [provocatively] ...

'Poison Ivy' is an appropriate comparison to the comic book persona, who represents a seductress who manipulates people by making them feel exceptionally attracted to her (Comic Vine 2008). Her current employment during the “music hours” (from 10pm until closing), allows her an opportunity to play with 'surface' displays of flirtation and sexually provocative displays of her femininity, as the loud music does not facilitate an environment in which people could effectively engage in in-depth verbal exchanges.

This type of work is challenging on many levels and has been described by informants as important for “building character”. Poison Ivy plays a constructed or illusory character at work which she 'developed' and is beneficial to generating profit:

... I find that I play a character when I'm at work, like I'm not actually the person I am you know ... it's something that developed. When I first started it was like throwing a kitten into a cockfighting ring ... I was very naive ... you definitely develop a personality – some bartenders don't ever develop a personality, some bartenders are just the person they are inside work ... I know a bartender, she's very young though, it's her first bartending job where she works right now and she's very very – like she doesn't know how to lead on a guy without actually promising him anything you know what I mean, like milk as much money out of him as possible ... if somebody hits on her she'll be like “I have a boyfriend by the way”, instead of being just like “thanks darlin” ... I think it's something you develop over time.

Poison Ivy suggests that individuals who have not yet acquired skills for manipulating their audience or “milking money” from their customers are viewed as not developing a personality. This is especially the case regarding individuals who are young

and new to the industry. This view resembles Park's analogy of humans as “masks” who “come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons” (Goffman 1959: 20). Her expression, “It was like throwing a kitten into a cockfighting ring”, suggests humans begin as unconditioned, “naive”, and fragile “individuals” and generally with experience become “persons” and develop skills to facilitate them in profitable interactions with others. Hochschild expanded on Park's mask analogy to explain and discuss the development of the 'false self' which she defines as a 'sociocentric', 'other-directed self', or “the part of me that is not 'really me'” (1983: 194). The false self assists in successful interaction between individuals which “can never be attained or maintained by the true self alone”, however, as Hochschild explains, in extreme cases, the false self and the real self may become fused, and warns that there is a “danger in becoming the part one plays” (1983: 194-195).

According to Baudrillard, seduction is “always a matter of self- seduction” (Baudrillard 1990: 68). Consider the following statement from Monica:

Bartending ... gave me an opportunity – at one point in my life I was really naive, and I was with this guy that was really manipulative and did really horrible stuff to me – but, when I came to work I put all of that aside and not just for the customers to be like “okay, everything is good”, but also for myself because it allowed me to enter a character that I could just disconnect and be happy and perky and make people feel good ... and you meet really interesting people ... some of them, it's like, “wow, you're really fascinating”

Monica demonstrates that she was able to embody a high degree of her work character which allowed her to enter an alternate state of reality in enabling her to disconnect from negative situations in her life as well as enjoy and be taken in, or seduced by *her* audience (“some of them ... wow, you're really fascinating”) and generate

desired emotions in them (“make [them] feel good”) while maintaining a proper 'definition of the situation' (“okay, everything is good”). The following interviewee described what she liked most about her job:

... All the compliments you get, and the money. No – the money first, obviously, cause I work for money, I don't work for compliments and ego boost – because ... I meet so many hot guys at my job and ... I guess if I really wanted to ... like if I was dude, let's just say I'd be racking it in, you know what I mean? ... If you ask a guy this question, he'd probably say the girls, then the money, because guys make less money but they get way more girls. It has boosted my self confidence, cause you know that if you're a bartender, you're working at a reputable establishment, you know you're good looking, you know you're smart, you know that you're good at what you do, cause otherwise they just fire you, good looking girls who could pour drinks out of bottles are a dime a dozen ... [Poison Ivy]

Whether women make more money than males in the bar, or whether men have more opportunities to meet women, elevated levels in confidence provided by customers and from the workplace itself are suggested advantages that complement financial gain. Poison Ivy's bartending position at a “reputable establishment” was viewed as prestigious and expressive of her exceptional qualities and desired characteristics of attractiveness, intellect, and competence. As she noted, she was not just a “good looking girls who could pour drinks out of bottles”; she was worth more than “a dime a dozen”. Marilyn expressed similar thoughts regarding her bartending position:

You get flirted with, you get the good comments, you get a lot more confident when you're working at the bar flirting with all these people than when I actually go to the bar myself.

According to Monica, “the tip should be based on the amount of energy” she gives the customer. Tips, in addition to symbolically rating the quality of the service, function as a form of deference, suggesting respect or admiration for an individual's

personal characteristics and attributes. Social exchanges of admiration significantly impact individual's livelihoods and sense of well-being. Too strong identification with one's work role or a high degree of investment of emotional energy in an encounter may cause an individual to take the tip amount seriously, as a reflection of their own self worth. Consider the following example from an interviewee who elaborated on an encounter she had with a man who spit on her out of impatience and frustration for not being served fast enough:

... I was working the main bar, and it was really busy ... you have to prioritize, you know what I mean? You gotta be like okay, I'm gonna start from this side and then you gotta tell them "Okay – I'm doing you, you and then you". And then if somebody with a tab that you know is gonna tip you really well you gotta like, sorta like squeeze them in you know what I mean, and make sure that nobody else notices ... so this guy ... just walked up to the bar, was just standing there like 3 seconds, and ... I didn't look at him, didn't make any eye contact with him, and then he starts slamming with his hand on the table on the bar, and then I went, "What", and I gave him a look. And then he starts screaming at me, and then no I'm like ... "Pas de service pour vous aller l'autre bar!" (No service for you, go to the other bar!). And then he's like "No! Service maintenant!" (No! service now!) like screaming at me because I didn't serve him fast enough and I'm like "No ... go to the other bar!", and then he got really angry and he spat at me, it didn't hit me but he spat at me, he spat at me ... that's really gross. So I went and found the bouncer ... and unfortunately it was a friend of the bouncers and so instead of kicking him out like he should have done, he [sighs], he just let him stay and made him stand near the door, but then the guy was ... fake lunging at me ... like trying to intimidate me all night. Are you kidding me? Are you retarded? What are you gonna do? Like jump over the bar and wrestle me down? [Poison Ivy]

Interestingly enough, although Poison Ivy clearly demonstrates she was frustrated, her refusal to serve the man demonstrates that she dissociated or separated herself from the interaction right away. She explains that she took the encounter more as "shock value", and that she gets "more upset not when somebody is being rude to [her],



but when somebody tips [her] really badly after she gives them amazing service”. This suggests that when an increased degree of self is invested in performing a service (giving “amazing service”), the tip amount may be interpreted as a personal attack or alternatively, as an expression of praise affirming one's desirability.

Interview data suggests that increased self-esteem, confidence and adoration from the public constitute desired rewards of working in the bar environment. Although this may be enlightening and entertaining, on the extreme, a high degree of investment of self in one's work role or 'deep acting' (Hochschild 1983) and 'sincere performances' (Goffman 1959) can lead to an unhealthy 'false self' in which the work role influences an individual's sense of self, identity and well being.

The following insight from Joe is illustrative of Christopher Lasch's analysis of an unhealthy false self. Joe illustrates the potential cycle that bartenders and servers can get caught up in:

Oh my god. Well, they are a thing of beauty, a thing of adoration, everybody wants a barmaid, everybody wants a waitress, and it doesn't matter what they look like, they're so sexy, they're kickin' and they're laughin' and they have this aura about them and all of a sudden – when you start believing your own press, you come tumbling down baby, big time!

...You're always the object of their affection. And that's where the ego thing comes in, well “I must be really sexy” and “I must be really beautiful because everybody wants me here”. It's a 'catch 22'.

Joe's insight illustrates the pressures associated with working in a bar; “believing in your own press” suggests being taken in by one's own illusion. The importance of maintaining a distinction between the inevitable conflicting personas between self and work role is expressed by interviewees. Consider Kate's example:

It affects my character a lot because you're around so much that you actually almost take it home with you ... it effects your work too, I can't concentrate, and I can't remember drinks ... I'm waitressing ... it gets crazy busy on the weekend, and people are just standing at the bar, and if I'm just standing there and I don't have any drink orders to take out then my boss is like "people are standing around the bar ask them what they want to drink and ring it in" ... so I was doing that one night, and my bartender got mad at me and yelled at me, and told me "Don't do that, you're stealing our customers!"... and I was just like "What, are you serious?" This is my good friend, my coworker and he's yelling at me and he's like "don't do it again"! ... I was just hurt, on the verge of tears – I'm just like "But – it's not my fault...", and for the half the night I couldn't remember drinks – but I get like that over anything, over family, over friends, work .. anything, maybe because I'm just a sensitive person, maybe others are different but I'm like that, I just can't forget right away ... even if I act like nothing's wrong, I'm still thinking, and I'm forgetting drinks, I'm not in the zone. When you're in the zone you can remember so many drinks, and I can't like remember one tables drink orders when I usually take like five tables drink orders...

Kate describes herself as a "sensitive person" who demonstrates an inability to depersonalize from her work role. She demonstrates a lack of separation between her work persona and her personality outside of work and she expects her "good friend" at work to treat her the same way he or she would outside of the workplace. Conflicts or mis-communication in the workplace are likely to be taken personally and further influence her work process as conveyed in her statement, "not in the zone". Stubbs described being in the zone as "feeling in control" and feeling a "sense of competence and comfort in one's job" (2001: 71). Moreover, new employees to the industry demonstrate difficulty maintaining a balance between their work role and personal self and are likely to take situations more personally. Consider the following description from Angelina whose first experience in the bar working at a pool hall only lasted a few months:

[It's] ... draining. You're trying to please all the ... People feel the need to tell you when you look tired – do I owe you something? It's like you owe them something to look good all the time. Does my looking 'tired' affect the taste of your drink? ... [Consequently] it affects the way you work, knowing you look good or vice versa ... one comment is all it takes sometimes. You go through mixed emotions. You feel violated ... guys are touching you, guys are taking pictures of you. You feel like you're worth nothing but more than an object ... you don't feel your value is more than that of a pretty face ... A lot of people start drinking a lot, I've seen that a lot in the bar industry. The fragility is there. At one point you feel rejected, then accepted. Accepted. Rejected. This guy didn't look at me. This guy didn't tip me ... [sighs] you know? Comparing yourself ... Imbalance ... your mind goes crazy a little bit. Judging. It's unhealthy because you almost lose your sense of self in it, if that makes any sense. You get lost in this world of comparison and feel like you're owing things to other people.

Angelina demonstrates that servers ultimately offer a service or a state of mind in their audience as exemplified by “does my looking ‘tired’ affect the taste of your drink?” She also outlines the emotional consequences and pressures associated with this type of work. From her experience, she suggests that servers are objectified, “violated”, and judged. This can therefore be dangerous if an individual bases their sense of self worth or value to their role at work. Joe extends upon the 'dangers' associated with taking the job role too seriously:

Some people get devastated. You can't let it become your whole world. I work long shifts, I work from 5 to close [until the bar closes] – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, if you let yourself go out every night till 6, 7, 8 in the morning – sleep until 2 or 3, you don't have any life except the bar – I never go there ... in the 4 years, [I've worked here] I think I've been in there four times when I was not working, and it's usually just in a passing thing ... but you could get suckered into that ... And what kills me is all these people they work four days a week and they're on their three days off! It's like “guys, don't you have a life?” It kills me! It is unbelievable ... but something happens to their whole self of being, self of worth, and that's dangerous ... big time. Because you walk into a bar – it's amazing, you see a girl walk in the first day and they're like little virgins basically, and within a month – their hair – as they're walking through the

bar, their hair is flying back, “Hi, hi, hi, talk to you later”, and it's literally like a .. little butterfly coming out of its cocoon. But it's a false sense of self worth, you know what I mean, because you don't know these people. It's amazing, but you think everybody is your friend and that's when it becomes dangerous I find.

Joe demonstrates that high involvement or getting “too caught up” in the work role becomes dangerous when individuals allow the dynamics of the workplace to consume or determine their sense of self worth. Several interviewee's suggested that working in the bar significantly influences character development, recall the following descriptions from the following interviewee's: “It's ...like a little butterfly coming out if its cocoon” [Joe]; “It's like throwing a kitten in a cockfighting ring” [Poison Ivy]; “If you're in a shell it definitely brings you out of your shell, that's for sure” [Alec]; “If you think you're tough, you'll find out just how tough you are” [Bruce]. The illustrations also suggest that individuals are exposed to challenges and other dynamics they must learn to adapt to or manage over time. The inconsistency of extreme and fluctuating dynamics and superficial relations (“you don't even know these people”) in the bar may inevitably lead to “dangerous” psychological implications. One female server offered the following advice for people new to the industry:

Stick with it but don't get caught up with it. We had a guy die from an overdose and we were all friends with him and he got caught up ... It can beat you up, and a lot of people get stuck, and they are 30 to 40 years old, getting fake boobs, cocaine nose jobs you know ... a lot of people get caught up in it, I've gotten caught up in it ... I think it's important to do it while you're doing something else [Marilyn].

Marilyn suggests that consequences associated with getting “caught up” with the work role may manifest themselves in psychological as well as physical forms such as involvement in alcohol, drugs and extreme surgical procedures. Both Joe and Marilyn

stress the importance of maintaining a separation or balance between work life and personal life. Hochschild contrasts stage acting and everyday acting, cautioning that:

On stage, illusion is a virtue. But in real life, the lie to oneself is a sign of human weakness ... it is far more unsettling to discover that we have fooled ourselves than to discover that we have been fooling others (Hochschild 1983: 47).

Performances are thus most dangerous when they come at the expense of the self rather than attributed to the work role, in other words when individuals start believing their own stage performances (Hochschild 1983). A high level of fusion between one's self and one's work role is thus likely to take both positive and negative experiences more seriously, consequently posing greater psychological and physical implications.

Joe demonstrates a high level of job satisfaction and is successful at generating a large number of regular clientele to his bar every week. His popularity as a bartender is further demonstrated in an example he gave about an alcohol "detox" he went on after St. Patrick's Day for two weeks in which he had to remind his customers that they "are in a bar" after they would tell him: "Well if you're not drinking, I'm not drinking". Although he has a good relationship with his clientele, he demonstrates that he is able to depersonalize from his role and maintain a balance between his real self and job to maintain control:

I have to [separate myself from the job]. I have ... 200,000 acquaintances, I might have 5 friends. I walk downtown it's like: "Hi Joe, hi Joe, hi Joe, hi Joe!" But they're not my friends, some consider themselves my friends when they come into the bar, but outside of the bar, half of them I don't even know their names. It sounds bad. But while I'm there I do my purpose, I do my job.

He also explained that working in the bar is “not for everybody”, consider Joe's description:

You need that self control first of all, with the alcohol and the drugs which we all lose, which is fun now and then but you gotta be able to come out of it and realize what you're doing and where you're going ... and that's a lot of pressure for a lot of people: it's too much, big time! Because you're always on stage. You're always on stage. It's amazing. You have to be on, which is a lot of pressure for people. Some people take everything to heart ... and when you come in some people will be sulking for two days, I say, “Well like what's the matter?” “Well I'm having problems at home”, and when people try to talk to them they can't handle it and ... it's mental, physical and emotional pressure constantly, always bombarding you, and that's why I say, it's not for everybody.

Joe emphasizes that maintaining self control in the face of mental, physical and emotional pressures associated with bartending is challenging and is “not for everybody”.

While a healthy balance between work self and personal life is advised in research (Bell 1976; Butler and Skipper 1980; Goffman 1959; Hochschild 1983; Wharton 1999) and by interviewees (Hochschild 1983; Goffman 1959), maintaining a distance between self and work life may be challenging, and may lead to high levels of alienation, or depersonalization and lack of creative expression over the work process, especially when management attempts to exercise control over workers levels of autonomy. Other consequences of alienation include cynicism, jadedness, and inauthenticity and are harmful to individual's well-being and identity (Hochschild 1983; Leidner 1999; Wharton 1999). Inauthenticity refers to calculated expressions and managed feelings and is especially problematic as the service industry becomes increasingly more standardized and routinized (Leidner 1999).

## **Autonomy and Job Satisfaction**

Hochschild cites Jean Jacques Rousseau to explain the increasing influence large organizations are having on their employee's emotional scripts: "In a social system animated by competition for property, the human personality was metamorphosed into a form of capital (as cited in Hochschild 1983: 185). Hochschild argues that this develops a more "instrumental stance towards feeling" (1983: 20), which is evident when examining inauthentic relationships between individuals and hence within society.

As Leidner explains, routinization and standardization processes in the workplace "systematically diminish both autonomy and skill, as invariably undermining both workers' bargaining power and their pride in their work" (1999: 90). As Poison Ivy experienced, "The bigger the business is, the shittier you get treated". She felt that she was not treated with the same respect in larger establishments she has worked at where she felt "more of a number and less of a person".

In addition to Rousseau's statement about the human personality being "metamorphosed into a form of capital", it should also be added that the body itself is also a form of capital in contemporary society. As Leidner explains, "Scripting of speech, movement, and body language is an especially common approach to regulating emotion work" (1999: 87). Several interviewees discussed experiences they have in the service industry in which they felt like a "machine". Consider Anna's training experience at one of her former workplaces at a corporate high end establishment:

... The training manual is like eighty pages, and I have a University degree, and I was like I don't think I can do this! It was insane, you have to meet and greet within eight seconds, have the beverage menu/mat down

two seconds later, then ask for first round of drinks blah blah blah... your earnings can be no bigger than a dime, and your hair has to be its natural color, and your elastic has to match your hair color, and your eyebrows have to be groomed, and you have to have three ironed pleats in your tablet every shift, blah blah blah... and it was like insane! And just the table rotations and their whole system it's like wow – it's like their running an army. And you're not allowed to eat anything there, you're not allowed to even chew gum, you can't have anything to drink ... nothing. It was nuts, it was not so friendly ... these servers have to be non-existent especially in fancier places, you have to disappear and be really efficient while being invisible. I felt like a machine [Anna]

Anna's description suggests the ways in which management and organizations attempt to produce docile bodies through standardization and routinization processes. Standardized work environments create docile bodies in that they “manipulate, use, transform and improve” (Foucault 1977: 136) their employees to become more productive and efficient employees. As LaPointe suggests, when work becomes “highly rationalized and fast paced ... and “there is no time to develop rapport with customers”, “the element of theatre” is therefore replaced by mechanical drudgery” and resembles more “factory assembly line work (1991: 63-64). This is relevant in Anna's description, worker's levels of autonomy become diminished, (stringent rules), invisibility, in which “customers no longer have faces and the server works automatically” (LaPointe 1991: 64).

Simmel suggests that:

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life (1950: 409).

As Joe suggests, “I'm only worth a drink an hour, the rest is up to you”. LaPointe found that the “potential for autonomous decision making is one of the most valued



aspects of the work” (1991: 64-65). This suggests that individual's livelihoods, levels of job satisfaction, and identities are contingent on the degree of autonomy in which they exercise in their lives and in the workplace (Leidner 1999: 90).

Hochschild discusses the impact that organizations exert on their employee's emotional scripts, she argues, “The thing to be engineered, mass produced, and subjected to speed up and slowdown – is a smile, a mood, a feeling, or a relationship, it comes to belong more to the organization and less to the self” (1983: 198). Hochschild argues that this can be an extremely alienating process. Alienation, as described by Bartky “occurs ... when activities which not only belong to the domain of the self but define, in large measures, the proper functioning of the self, fall under control of others” (1998: 49). Furthermore, the 'management' and 'calculation' of acts produce and reinforce superficial and inauthentic exchanges which Hochschild argues are characteristic of interactions in contemporary North American society. Artificial elements behind emotional expressions such as the smile are described by Baudrillard as “empty intimacies” (Coulter 2004):

Smile and others will smile back. Smile to show how transparent, how candid you are. Smile if you have nothing to say. Most of all, do not hide the fact you have nothing to say nor your total indifference to others. Let this emptiness, this profound indifference shine out spontaneously in your smile (1988: 34).

Baudrillard's cynical tone emphasizes the pervasiveness of inauthentic expressions. Calculated efforts often employed by servers and demanded from managers and customers are further demonstrated by an analysis of the artificial elements of the smile as ‘hyper’ smile.

## **The 'Hyper Smile'**

People whine, bitch, and complain while I keep serving them with a big smile [Guy]

A big big smile (I have to move, I have no money, life sucks) – in front of the customer, everything is cool!!! [Marco]

[Personal job descriptions from two servers]

An analysis of the smile in terms of a 'hyper smile' is appropriate in the study of server and customer interactions in a bar environment. The smile is over-emphasized in service industry occupations, and is so pervasive and expected that in North American culture, when a server is not smiling, the customer often assumes that they are angry, upset or rude. Hochschild described the smile as an “extension of the make-up, uniform, recorded music, colors and drinks” (1983: 8). Servers and managers are well aware of the significance of its expression, however the consequences associated with the expectations and demands of the smile are not as well understood.

The smile in the service industry can be analyzed as a 'prop' or impression management technique used to manipulate feelings in the audience and assists individuals deliver a service. Thus, the smile can be interpreted as a technique individuals use to exercise control or a 'socially engineered' and calculated act which may result in alienation from the workers own genuine feelings and expressions (Hochschild 1983: 54). The smile can satisfy an audience's desire for deference and acknowledgments while at the same time alienate an individual from their own feelings. Hochschild found that “Workers often spoke of their smiles as being on them but not of them” (1983: 8) and argues that this could be an alienating process, as she states: “When conditions estrange

us from our face, they sometimes estrange us from feeling as well” (Hochschild 1983: 90).

One bartender expressed his discontent with the over-emphasis and anticipation of the smile from his audience:

They [customers] tell me that [to smile] at least three times per day ... It's not like were in a night club, I tell people, and I'm pouring drinks half cut out of my tree ... and the music's going on, what do I have to smile at? I'm looking at you man! I'm looking at you! [Johnny]

In addition to low levels of job satisfaction, feelings of cynicism, frustration and hostility are evident in Johnny's statement. In the service industry environment, the smile is demanded by both managers and customers alike. Several interviewees recalled multiple instances where they were reminded to smile or made aware when they were not smiling by their managers. After a manager reminded everyone to “smile” at a pre-shift meeting a former coworker stated: “I hate when they tell us to smile – it makes me feel so stupid”.

Interviewees suggested that extreme levels of alienation from the work role can lead to the development of a jaded attitude. A 'jaded' attitude is a stress management technique servers are likely to develop in order to detach themselves from their work role. However, such a development could lead to feelings of alienation from one's personal feelings and expressions (Hochschild 1983; Leidner 1999). Several interviewees discussed the jaded attitude as a common development in the service industry.

Georg Simmel's conception of a blasé attitude is relevant in interviewees' descriptions of the development of a 'thicker skin' or 'jaded' attitude. A blasé attitude, as

Simmel suggests, functions as a shield or defense mechanism resulting from the continuous over stimulation from the hustle and bustle of everyday urban life (Simmel 1950). Clark described a jaded attitude as a “fire wall against the stress”. Bruce described it as becoming “immune to many things”; he explained: “You have to actually have it happen to you to become immune ... [it has a] huge emotional impact” [Bruce]. This is consistent with relevant literature and observational and interviewee data that suggest that over time, individuals employed in the service industry, develop a “jaded” attitude as a way to control and manage workplace dynamics (Hochschild 1983). Alec explains how working in the bar changed him:

When I first started going to bars ... I noticed the bartenders always seemed arrogant ... fairly jaded. I wondered, why do they become like that? Now I know it's easier to become like that if you've been doing it for ten or so years ... you just become so, I dunno – just seem to block out everything I guess – you have to. It's easier to get respect from people, from clients if you have this arrogant air to you or if you come across strong. It's a way in a busy bar to take control over your clientele ... people who have been in the service industry for a long time develop a thicker skin ... and I find that it changes your character in a way. You just become complacent. It seems that the people who have been working in the service industry for a long time seem to be jaded because they've put up with so much crap over the years.

New employees are described as “strangers” and are likely to take situations more personally. According to one bartender, socialization into the work role is like a “personal shock, [and] as time goes on you realize that customer's complaints or comments are not at you individually”. Part time or transient servers' or bartenders' job satisfaction levels mostly paralleled the bipolar dynamics in the work environment:

It's so dependant on how much money I make – because sometimes I leave work and I'm like I hate this job, I never wanna go back, I don't wanna work there anymore, I want to find a new job tomorrow. And other times,

I'll be like oh my god – like last night I had a great night, and the night before I had a great night... [Poison Ivy]

When discussing her level of job satisfaction with her job bartending at a neighborhood pub, Linda stated, “It depends what day you're talking about”. She reasoned:

...It's not that I don't like doing this it's just some days it's very aggravating and can be very stressful ... and that's what I don't like, because other people's stress becomes my stress and I don't like that ... I'd rather it be my own stress.

The bipolar atmosphere caused by unpredictable and fluctuating extremes of the workplace, and the expectations and pressures from managers and customers, creates a situation that fosters inauthenticity, alienation and cynicism with respect to servers and customers performances. Joe is a professional bartender who exercises high levels of job autonomy, and demonstrates high levels of confidence, status and job satisfaction in the workplace. He explained that “they (managers and owners) leave him alone”, and it's like his “own place”. He demonstrates a mastery over techniques of self control as well as control over his clientele. He does not allow petty problematic encounters get to him, and he rarely gets “flustered”. As he said, it's “a party lifestyle” but he does not let it completely consume his life, and maintains a distinction between his “bar” friends and his “real” friends. As he said, “it's not for everybody”. Joe's experience contrasts with the experiences and levels of job satisfaction exemplified by individuals new to the industry as well as part time transient servers and bartenders. New and transient employee's who may be students, or pursuing other career goals demonstrate a likelihood

to take the job too seriously. Their job satisfaction levels are contingent on the flow of the particular shift.

Expectations from customers may also often be unreasonable or 'frustrating' as one female bartender explains:

They [regular customers] come here all the time, you know them by name, you know their history, and they expect you to walk ... on the moon for them, and they tip you – 3 dollars at the end of the night, after giving them such good service – and that's frustrating ... and once that happens all the time you're just like: "Why am I wasting my time?" You do not come here for minimum wage. You make minimum wage! You do not come here for your wage [Linda].

Frustration is an inevitable element of service industry work; when a server receives a bad tip or no tip at all, they ultimately have to pay to serve the customer from their own earnings because in addition to tax deductions, they are required to tip out a specified percentage of their total sales during their shift to coworkers that assisted them, including bus boys, hosts, and dishwashers. Joe explains:

I love the business. I've been in it for this long, I work long hours, but I enjoy the people ... and the ones that I don't usually know it and they're not around my bar ... there's not many people I dislike, cause either I like you or I won't associate with you – there's no in between, no second chance ...

Joe demonstrates a high degree of autonomy in the workplace and control over his clientèle ("...the ones that I don't [enjoy] usually know it and they're not around my bar") as he is able to freely express his emotions towards people he does not like, ("there's no in between, no second chance").

Joe explains the importance of differentiating between a bar and real life, as he suggests, "It's such a fleeting business... you learn quickly who you're friends are and are not, that's why I have my real friends and my bar friends". Maintaining a separation

between work and real life allows him to not get “flustered” by understanding that he cannot “please everybody” therefore not allowing his customers problems to influence him:

... It's very emotional. But when I go in, it's a job, so it's not my problems. I'm not really a good listener for problems, I just tell people to have a shot and then they get on with it. But yeah, you gotta control your emotions, this is a job, this is what I do. It takes a toll on you. I had some girl, she says what should I do, I'm screwed what should I do. I say I'm not that type of bartender. She says, “Well what do you think I should do”? I say, “Get drunk, get laid, and get sober, and go and wake up tomorrow” ... but that's it, that's my advice, I don't wanna run your life, I don't wanna know about your life because you're not my problem, it's sad sometimes, but ... people have no other outlet. But guess what, I'm not that 40's movie bartender, “Hey buddy come on tell me about”, I make money and then I'm gonna talk to you for a few minutes while I'm running around serving everybody else – [you] can't let people monopolize your time, it's a technique you learn with experience ... I also tell people, “I don't wanna hear your problems, you wanna shot? Here you go!”

Research has suggested that employees “Relationships with regular customers in the service industry can be as emotionally involving and fulfilling (or disturbing) as other close relationships” (Frank 1998: 187). As Joe stated, “I had one guy ask me to be his best man and I knew him as 'Charlie key hole' because he was a locksmith. It's like, scary.” Regular customers often consider their bartenders “good friends”. One bartender gave an example of a regular customer who was “draining” and constantly expressed suicidal thoughts. She explained that sometimes she would run into him outside of work, and would not give him the same attention: “The only reason I would listen to him is because he was at work but ... I guess a lot of these people are not well, but in their mind it's like I was their friend”.

Inauthentic relations pervade the workplace. Many interviewees demonstrated a cynical attitude of distrust, where “everyone is a potential threat” from stealing to walk-outs. Alcohol consumption intensifies social interaction within the bar. It can also make customers more difficult to deal with. As one informant stated, when people have too much to drink they are “unable to reason”. Carlo stated that, “You'd never even guess, I've had the sweetest and kindest customers walk out on their bill”, and everyone is therefore a “potential threat”, from stealing, to walk-outs. Joe, an experienced bartender in the industry stated that he only gives everybody “one chance”:

... You don't get two chances, people will do what they do, it doesn't matter how they try to change, how they try to be different, if they do something, they're gonna do it again. It doesn't matter what you're spending, who you are, everybody has one chance – actually no chances, once you mess up, you're gone, and you're gone forever. If you do it once, you're gonna do it again, always, always! I don't like bullshit, so you take care of it right there.

Joe demonstrates a detachment and untrustworthy attitude towards individuals who demonstrate suspicion or step over his boundaries. A lack of separation inevitably leads to disappointment, as may experience self blame through lack of control. One bartender explained she was a victim of a scam mostly due to misunderstanding between her and her coworker that resulted in a \$600 penalty they had to pay. A bartender who had been “short” on her cash several times in her previous job explained that she would always feel nervous at the end of her shift when her managers would confirm if she was “short” or not. Skepticism is common from all interactional players in a bar. According to interviewees, it is common to receive accusations of being disloyal by customers. As Poison Ivy stated:



I would always have people telling me, “Oh, I didn't order that – you overcharged me!” ... trying to get free drinks, or running a tab with me and saying that they didn't drink all those drinks. Buddy, I have it in my Azbar, what, did I make up these drinks? No! I'm sorry you drank that many drinks. Like I know you don't wanna pay for that many drinks, but you drank that many drinks...

An untrustworthy attitude is prominent in the service industry. Measures are also taken by management to ensure that their staff does not steal alcohol, for example the Azbar system, which pours and records alcohol, is a method in which employers introduced to ensure that bartenders do not give out free alcohol to their customers or consume it themselves.

Authenticity, individuality and self-direction are characteristics valued and idealized in North American culture (Hochschild 1983; Leidner 1999: 93). Consequently, when individuals are unable to exercise control in the workplace they are more likely to experience psychological consequences such as cognitive or 'emotive dissonance' (Hochschild 1983) which may have damaging and 'painful' effects (Hochschild 1983; Sloan 2007) and may generate feelings such as alienation, inauthenticity and fakeness (in Hochschild's (1983) terms: “am I just an illusion maker”), low levels of job satisfaction (Erickson and Ritter 2001: 151; Leidner 1999; Hochschild 1983), and poor self esteem (Wharton 1999: 163; Hochschild 1983).

Working in a bar was described by multiple informants as a “Catch 22: Good and bad”. Bruce defined the bar environment as a “line of fire” in which you need to be “constantly out there” and ready for the unpredictable. Angelina described the bar environment as:

... An unstable environment: mind, emotions are fragile in this environment. I've seen girls cry. I've seen girls scream. You're dealing with intoxication, people who are on drugs, people who are drunk, people who are sexually stimulated, people who are on the prowl [Angelina].

Alec defined his bartending job in the following way: "I make drinks. I get shit from assholes. Then I drink". This comment suggests that abuse from customers and managers are common features of this type of work, thus, "drinking" is a way many release tension after a shift. Bruce explained that he has been tested on "all levels" and has seen "everything", and that not much more would "surprise" him. He stated, "If you can work with these people, you can do anything". Bruce described his work environment in the following way:

If you think you're tough, you'll find out just how tough you are after just a few shifts, it is what you make it – if you take it personally, they are going to crush you – stress management is important, otherwise it will decrease your self esteem and you'll get destroyed [Bruce].

Emotional consequences include symptoms of stress, emotional drainage, identity crisis, verbal abuse, existentialist crisis, inauthenticity, jaded attitude, loss of control resulting from low levels of autonomy in the workplace, low levels of job satisfaction, negative sense of self resulting from abuse such as negative comments from customers, managers or coworkers or not living up to ideal roles and cognitive dissonance (Hochschild 1983). Working in the bar can also pose difficulties on relationships, as Joe stated:

The only people you could be social with is bar people, girlfriend, boyfriend – basically go out with bar people or people in the industry, otherwise you have no life. I've worked weekends for 30 years basically, so, it's hard on relationships ... it's a party life style. It's really hard to keep a relationship going, even if you're both in it, there's too many outside influences hitting your relationship.

Physical disadvantages linked with working in the bar industry include disruptive sleeping cycles, harsh hours, increased exposure to violent situations, sexual abuse, and drug and alcohol abuse that pose threats to an individual's overall health. Advantages of the job may include money, sense of control, increased networks, meeting new people, deepened social bonds and networking, entertainment, increased effectiveness in social skills, increased confidence, and feelings of importance and desirability. Bruce stated, "What makes it an exciting environment to work in is there is hardly ever a dull moment". As individuals continuously experience both positive and negative extremes, the advantages act as a reinforcement to balance out the negative aspects, and further provide the bartender with incentive to remain in this type of work.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PERFORMING GENDER IN THE BAR**

Male and female [identities are] linked to specific roles, attitudes, feelings, aspirations, and behaviour patterns ... the sexual identities of a society become woven into the fabric of the culture; acquired early in life, taken for granted by most people, they permeate and structure the work place.

(Spradley and Mann 1975: 144)

Sexual division of labor, emotional management displays, and choice of alcoholic beverage in a bar constitute gendered performances that bartenders, servers, management and customers, sell, practice, reproduce, consume as well as contest (Spradley and Mann 1975: 3). These performances involve dynamics of power and seduction and reveal some of the costs and benefits of pervasive gender norms and meanings.

#### **Sexual Division of Labor in the Workplace**

One of the most striking aspects of the social construction of gender is that its successful accomplishment creates the impression that gender differences in personality, interests, character, appearance, manner and competence are natural.

(Leidner 1991: 155)

The bar environment can be analyzed as a productive and reproductive process of “female–male interaction that calls attention to the significant features of masculinity and femininity” (Spradley and Mann 1975: 145). Traditional definitions of masculine and feminine roles anchor the ways men and women perform job tasks, and consequently, the ways in which managers and customers expect them to display and perform them. This reinforces a sexual division of labor in the work environment that is “grounded in

stereotypes of innate sex differences in traits and abilities” (Reskin and Roos 1987: 9 as cited in Loe 1996: 225). Feminine and masculine roles in the bar workplace can be analyzed as polarized characteristics representative of an “extension of the traditional female [and male] roles in the home,” and an articulation of what is assumed as a part of their “‘being’ rather than something of their own making” (Spradley and Mann 1975: 4; Hall 1993; Hochschild 1983: 167, West and Zimmerman 1987: 140). Social positions in society, as demonstrated within the service industry, generally correspond with traditional gender roles.

The sexual division of labor in the service industry is reflective of the values and societal trends operating on the macro-level: authoritative positions, such as manager, supervisor and security guard are primarily occupied by men, while women predominantly comprise more dependent positions: server, cocktail waitress and hostess. Furthermore, gender differences are generally consistent within establishments of varying social status as managerial hiring practices often correspond with stereotypical perceptions associated with masculine and feminine characteristics.

If the establishment is a sports bar targeting a male audience, the bartending and serving staff are most likely to be female. For example, a sign displaying “Go Habs, Go! We Have Big Jugs!” served as a promotional tool in attracting customers to view a hockey game inside the bar. One can presume that those “big jugs” are likely not to be served by males! One female informant discussed her opinion on why mostly female employees were hired to work at the pool hall where she was employed: “To bring in money, because it's mostly men that come in there. Obviously they're not gonna want to

look at men. The typical heterosexual, he wants that pretty woman, something aesthetically pleasing to his eye” [Angelina]. A male bartender discussed one of the reasons he experienced dissatisfaction with his job at a neighborhood pub consisting of mostly male clientèle:

Lots of guys don't like coming in here and seeing a bartender behind the bar that's a guy... cause if you're having a beer you wanna watch the girls bum walking passed you ... if she's wearing a low cut shirt you wanna look at cleavage or whatever ... guys that come in here ... they wanna look at something different ... other then the wife before they go back home. It's the truth, right? And they're having a couple drinks and they can fantasize. As sick as it is, that's all these cocksuckers are and that's how it works out to be [Johnny].

Visual and sexual displays of women constitute significant elements of a heterosexual bar atmosphere. If the establishment is a popular location in a trendy area, the 'frontstage' display is most likely to be decorated with attractive female servers and bartenders (Goffman 1959). Another female interviewee suggested, “It’s an advantage being a female, especially a female with big boobs ... unfortunately this is the raw part of the business, it's a lot about looks”.

An employee's particular position often corresponds with their gender and the desired clientèle and image the institution wishes to target. If the establishment is a prestigious restaurant/bar targeting a higher class clientèle, the staff is likely to be male (Hall 1993; LaPointe 1991). Research data suggests that men are more likely to work in higher-end restaurants, which generate high earnings (LaPointe 1992, 1991, Hall 1993; Giuffre and Williams 1994). When comparing his current job at a pub to a prestigious restaurant Johnny stated, “If I was a waiter at a high-end restaurant, the atmosphere is not to drink ... so the server automatically doesn't matter, now you're going. is the service

good or not good?” [Johnny]. This suggests that the quality and efficiency of the service is more important in more prestigious work environments comprised mostly of men, as compared to visual displays mostly produced by women in establishments which capitalize on feminine charms of sexuality and attractiveness.

Interviewees suggest that a sexual division of labor was most pronounced in establishments owned by individuals with ethnic backgrounds. Anna described her experiences with managers in negative terms:

Owners: drunken, sexist, assholes. I've worked for Persian men, Indian men, Bangladesh men, Italian, Greek ... and they were all like really really really sexist, really. I can't think of one who wasn't.

She also described her experience during a slow shift working with a male coworker. Although her coworker had finished serving his customers, the male manager decided to send her home instead because he wanted the clients to know that there was “a man in the house”. Anna explained that the reason she quit one of her jobs after several “severe arguments” with two of her managers is because she “didn't have the self-control to suck it in-crap from managers”. According to Jacques' experiences, the nationality of the manager or owner significantly influences the organizational process of the establishment: “Most restaurant/bars in the city of Montreal”, he suggests, “are owned and managed by individuals from Europe or with strong European backgrounds” and “this 'type' of mentality has”:

A strong opinion on sex ... I think they have a very strong opinion on, women do this, men do this, whereas here, North American culture is much more both could do both ... and I think that for them it's what determines what the status is for the restaurant too. If it's an upscale dining restaurant this is what they feel gives them that image, whereas if they

want a young fun place where guys could come and flirt with girls then that's what they're gonna do.

Many interviewees expressed similar experiences and generalizations regarding comparisons between the ethnicity of the management and the ways they were treated which are consistent with patriarchal and hegemonic stereotypical conceptions. This suggests that a sexual division of labor may be more pronounced in establishments which are privately owned by individuals with “strong ethnic backgrounds”. However, although gender discrimination may be more subtle in other types of work environments (such as corporate establishments), it is pervasive within all bars.

The staff may also consist of mixed genders; when men and women occupy the same job specifications, differences exist in the ways they perform them and are embedded with their particular gender identities (Hochschild 1983; Leidner 1991; LaPointe 1992; Hall 1993: 454). As one informant suggested: “There exist two distinctly different types of service which are usually gendered; the quiet invisible type service, usually done by men, and the showmanship service typically performed by women”. Invisible and detached service is usually performed by males and is generally associated with performances required in higher-end establishments. This is suggested in the differences between advertisements of establishments varying in prestige or status. For example, a commercial for an affordable corporate restaurant chain states that they, “Guarantee to put a smile on your face” with images of females smiling faces giving friendly service to customers who were smiling back. A similar type of establishment indicates that the food is served “with a friendly smile”, emphasizing that friendliness generated by the smile is part of the service. In contrast, a commercial promoting a



higher-end restaurant proclaims: “From the moment you sit down, it's like no one else exists”. In this commercial, male servers were depicted as blurred images and invisible faces while pouring wine and serving food with the camera zoomed in on content and smiling customers. Wharton explains that “the type of emotions workers are encouraged to display appears to be strongly related to the kind of authority workers have over their customers and clientele” (1999: 172). Anna's reflection on her work experience in a corporate white collar environment which consisted of mostly male staff demonstrates the differences in the type of service expected according to the classification of the establishment. She states:

It was hard for me to give this really impersonal service ... like they come for corporate business lunch or whatever and they don't want you to talk to them or ask them if it's okay, you really just wanna leave them alone and they really – I mean, this waiter I work with ... he worked in fancy places for a long time and – just the way he worked was just so different from the way I worked, I was coming from a really blue collar place where people were like – I was basically like their freaken therapist [Anna]

Her description of being a “therapist” suggests that work role requirements in blue-collar establishments involve a greater amount of interactional exchanges and investments between customers and servers, whereas she found that in higher-end establishments she was treated as invisible, or as more of a “nonperson” (Goffman 1959). Moreover, this suggests that establishments and employees, in addition to “doing gender”, also “do class” (Trautner 2005: 772).

Some interviewees discussed experiences of receiving differential treatment based on the status of the clientele and workplace. Anna states that there exist differences between blue collar and white collar environments. Anna explains that she felt like she

was treated differently based on the type of establishment she worked in. She noticed a difference between blue collar and white collar environments. Consider her following descriptions:

The corporate was a whole different world. I got used to it – you would put down their plate and they wouldn't even look at you or say “Thank you” they would just keep talking about whatever their talking about ... and often when they're just talking, and you're busy, and you come to take their order, you stand there for like three to four minutes, and you have to be like “um, excu-, can I take your-...?” You have to be more deferent, you have to sort of kiss their ass a bit more without talking a lot ... people don't really respect the fact that it's your job. At the more expensive corporate places in particular, people were rude: the food is late and they're basically giving a hissy fit on you. Sometimes people would be like “This table is wobbly” and I'd be like on my knees and they'd be like, “It's still wobbly!” ... sort of shaking it...

I had one woman who freaked out because the gin and tonic wasn't the way she wanted it and it turns out the boss has been giving her triples for years and I didn't know, and she's just like: “What is this?” And she was with a group of like ten other business people for 5a7 and she just sort of amused herself by yelling at me in front of everybody and I'm like “what is this?” I mean, it's not that she got me crying or anything, but she really was making a spectacle out of it.

These experiences support the argument that authority and social status are “conveyed through a non emotional persona” (Wharton 1999: 172). Anna explained she felt like she was treated with indifference, invisibility and as a spectacle by clientele who occupy a higher social status. Blue collar clientele, she explains, tipped more and treated her with more respect and deference. As she states, “They're always conscious [that] you're working ... they're always more considerate”.

One interviewee offered his views regarding why prestigious restaurant/bars catering to a business and professional class hire mostly male staff, he explained:

... That's the way it used to be. A lot of these places 30-40 years ago a lot of women didn't even work, let alone serve in high end establishments ... In the lounge – men want to see good looking women, in the lounge, in the lounge setting. But, when you go for a business lunch, martini lunch, you know, you don't want like – you want the guy who's [\*snaps his fingers\*, implying efficiency] you know ... who's not gonna sit there and chat all valley girl on you and stuff.

This example suggests that men are perceived as being in control, and giving more professional, prestigious, detached, efficient and competent service, and that women's physical appearances and 'bubbly' personalities are more desirable or appropriate in less 'professional' settings (Hall 1993; Hochschild 1983; LaPointe 1992, 1991). LaPointe explains that perceptions of skill are often based on ideological constructs rather than facts (1992: 386). Such gendered conceptions are consistent with Hochschild's findings that suggest men are perceived more as “functionaries” and “businessmen” and thus generally treated with more authority (LaPointe 1991: 108; Hochschild 1983). These widespread beliefs and practices regarding gender roles and identity reinforce a traditional ideology that attaches more status and value on work done by men.

## **Uniforms**

Servers occupy a contradictory social position in the bar: on the one hand, they are independent workers, working for personal profit and prestige, and on the other, they are dependent employees, expected to follow specific rules and demands set by their management (Butler and Skipper 1980, 1983; LaPointe 1991; Paules 1991). One informant suggested, “It's like you're your own contractor, running your own business, yet you get crap from managers that you're not doing your job fast enough or well

enough". The contradictory position of the worker often creates a conflicting relationship between employees and management as individuals struggle to exercise or maintain their own autonomy at work. LaPointe suggests that tension and feelings of resentment towards management are most likely to manifest when servers occupy low levels of autonomy (1991: 2). This is often the case when mandatory rules such as undesired uniforms are implemented by management.

Uniforms constitute part of the 'expressive equipment' (Goffman 1959) of a performance, and are also part of the standardization and scripting process in which managers attempt to exercise control over workers (Leidner 1991: 156). The body, according to Foucault, is a "central location for the expression and reproduction of power relationships" (Dellinger and Williams 1997: 152). Monica demonstrates the degree to which a former manager attempted to exercise control over her body:

I was working there when I was 19, I was a hostess, and he used to always call me his 'Lolita', and he would sit me down with his millionaire-ass, rich-ass customers smoking cigars drinking champagne so I could entertain his guests. And [sighs] after, I became a waitress, and he actually told me to change the way that I walk, to change the way that I talk, and he would try to make me this person I was not, and I quit. "You hired me like this! I will do everything more professional but – what? Do you want me to dye my hair blond? Do you want me to get a nose job? Like what is it? What's next?" [Monica]

Monica's experience demonstrates the extent to which her former manager attempted to "change" her through his attempt of sexually exploiting her body. She eventually quit as a resistance to his efforts. Uniforms and "appearance rules" reproduce a sexual division of labor in the workplace that is symbolic of status and gendered

meanings (LaPointe 1992: 382; Loe 1996: 224). Consider Anna's description of what it is like to work at one of the most popular and well known restaurant/lounges in the city:

The training ... it's just nuts. I think it's four inch heels minimum, the shoes and dress code ... you have to buy it – I think it changes every two weeks ... so everybody wears the same dress, same shoes, and [sighs] ... you have to dance on the tables ... you have to be the party girl, if the clients are wanting you to dance on the table and take your shirt off – you gotta do it ... it was insane, and this was just the training. If they think you look ugly they'll send you home. But they make *sooo* much money and girls that have been working there for a while, they're super competitive ... and a lot of girls don't care: if they're gonna profit from it they don't care.

Anna demonstrates the standardization process which management implement regarding their employees uniforms, as well as the control they exercise over workers appearance. As she said, “If they think you look ugly they'll send you home”. This statement suggests docility and obedience to cultural demands and conventional definitions of beauty. As the passage clearly demonstrates an objectification of self, Anna stated, “they don't care” or as another interviewee explained “they accept it”, as profit and other rewards such as acknowledgment and increased self esteem become valued outcomes of engaging in desired gendered displays and are considered empowering, a means in which individuals “gain power and control” in an expression of women’s pleasure and identity (Dellinger and Williams 1997: 152).

An individual’s perception of their uniform is contingent on their age, work experience, personality and degree of autonomy they exercise in their work. Angelina explained that the introduction of a “very low cut” and “super revealing” new dress code had a profoundly negative impact on her:

I remember the first night I wore it, my fellow staff members told me my ass was showing when I was walking so they told me to be careful. I felt

disgustingly self conscious to the point where I wanted to quit. I don't know why I stayed in that. I don't know why I didn't think I could get another job ... I guess because my self confidence was a little bit shot at the time. But I remember being in the back room and they're like "Hey, okay everyone try on the uniforms". I'm not going to lie – I have some body issues ... I'm like oh I'm not gonna fit in this dress – it reveals like every fucken bulge I have on my body. I went to the back room and there were three managers standing there, I felt so vulnerable and on display. I felt almost like I was naked ... I remember being in the back room ... I automatically thought they were going to be looking at my pouch ... judging my dress and I had to come out. I said "Don't worry I'm gonna fix it up ... I'm planning on wearing a body hugging thing – a shaper". They didn't even ask me anything, they just wanted to know if it fit. Who knows what they were thinking ... Why I even said that – none of their god damn business! I don't owe these people anything. They're paying me 8 dollars per hour. I have a little fucken tip jar. Like fuck off. Without the uniform, I had the control to dress the way I wanted to dress. I know what looks good on my body, I know what doesn't look good on my body ... I can make myself feel good so I could go and do my job properly, feel comfortable, feel at ease and make tips. And I believe when you're comfortable you make better tips, because you're interacting with people and you're not awkward ... you're moving more freely, you're more yourself, you're a little bit more liberated and people can catch on to that.

Angelina demonstrates that employers control over the way she dressed at work made her feel resentful, angry, vulnerable and self conscious. Her existing sensitivity regarding her body image and confidence levels caused her to experience a heightened degree of job dissatisfaction and a great deal of emotional discomfort. In this case, the implementation of uniforms is problematic as it did not permit her to exercise control or autonomy over the expression of her body through her choice of clothing style.

In settings where physical appearance functions as a primary attribute for the image of the establishment, interviewee data suggests that there have been instances in which some managers have suggested or offered to pay for their female employees to undergo breast augmentation. Aesthetic appeal is often valued and favored in this

environment, for example, a smiley face drawn by a manager beside a females' name after handing him her resume represented that “she's hot”. Management often chooses and rewards individuals who fit a specific image and devalues those who do not. One female interviewee who felt discriminated against by her former employer stated that she 'hated' working there, because “the management only cared if you had big boobs and weighed 100 pounds”. According to another interviewee, when women would come into her workplace and drop off their resume, she was required to “jot down notes when they came into the bar and apply” rating them on their appearance, and to “just forget about ... those who didn't fit the criteria”. Poison Ivy revealed the factors of consideration behind the hiring process at her workplace in a lounge/club environment:

... When he went and hired 40 people when the pub opened he [the manager] showed me every single one of their pictures, and he's like ... “I don't like her in this picture”, because he had them on facebook – he wouldn't even have an interview with them until he saw their facebook profile and [sighs] yeah ... he would be like “...She has a nice face but her legs are too fat”, and he also said one day, “When I ... hire for the pub, no girls are gonna have their legs touch, alright?! When I see the legs, if their legs flap together when they walk by me, they are not working at my bar!” So ... he really liked skinny girls.

As demonstrated by the above statement, the manager's hiring process centered on sexual attractiveness and leg size, thus reaffirming that visual display is an important part of the theatrical stage of the bar.

Dress code styles generally correspond to the status and the atmosphere of the bar. When bartenders and servers are given the option to choose what to wear to work, it is usually upon the condition that they follow the particular dress code dictated by management such as “professional”, “classy”, “provocative” or “sexy”. Uniforms are a

seductive element of a bar atmosphere, most often focusing attention on women's cleavage and legs. As suggested by Bayard de Volo, uniforms are:

Designed with the heterosexual male desires in mind ... thus, they invite the male gaze, celebrate male leers, and position women as objects, potential prizes to be won by lucky (male) winners (2003: 355).

The bar represents a sexualized environment that appeals to the male fantasy.

Monica commented on an experience she had working at a 'higher class' establishment, where the uniforms in this environment were more conservative:

The rule was to wear red lipstick, we had to wear red lipstick. What does that tell you? Red lipstick, okay ... why men are attracted to girls with red lipstick ... is, subconsciously ... when a girl is in heat her lips are more red.

This particular example illustrates that although uniforms were less revealing, red lipstick operated as a seductive, yet subtle prop suggesting sexual availability or arousal. Popular perceptions of female uniforms are consistent with perceptions that uniforms objectify women, exploit their sexuality and suggest their “sexual subservience to men” (Bayard de Volo 2003: 347; LaPointe 1992: 383; Loe 1996).

The type of uniform or how one wears it varies according to the establishment, and may not always be considered oppressive, but rather as a 'prop' or technique which allows females to exercise power and seduce higher wages from their audience (Bayard de Volo 2003; Loe 2006). As Leidner suggests, women often find that enacting socially desired feminine attributes is pleasurable as it “affirms their gendered identity” and rewards them in the forms of tips and praise (1991: 174; Giuffre and Williams 1994).

One server, referring to 'body' and 'sex appeal' stated “I do feel, as a girl, you do have an advantage, and you could use it if you want”. She offers the following examples:



I always wear black on top and black pants, so it's like somewhat classy, and one night I wore this like low cut top and this one guy ... I gave him his drinks and ... he gave me 20 bucks for his \$4.50 highball ... he's like, "Keep it, you deserve more just for wearing that top" [sighs] I'm like shut up, you know?! But it definitely works ... and I remember with my friend coworker we did it one night ... on Friday ... we would just wear cute t-shirts, and we're like ... "Tomorrow night: boob shirts!" And ... we made *sooo* much more money that night, so I've kinda tested it out [Kate].

Women are often objectified and also objectify themselves to capitalize on their particular qualities to increase profits. Consider the following example:

... It was New Years ... open bar, so people bought tickets at the door. Well, I don't know if some of them thought that the tip was included in the ticket or whatever, but there were at least four of us behind the bar and we were *not* making money! So out of desperation and for fun, one of the male bartenders put a plastic cup ['tip jar'] in one of the female's shirt, between her cleavage – and she played along with it ... she started shaking it and parading it so we could make money. All of a sudden guys were coming up to her – flashing 20 dollar bills ... putting money into the tip jar that was basically between her breasts – but if it wasn't for her, we wouldn't have made money that night!

The following bartender detailed the measures she took in order to change her management's decision regarding the implementation of a new uniform:

...they were gonna make us wear these cheap aquamarine t-shirts – okay, you're gonna sweat through that in about, twenty minutes ... and jean skirts that ... I literally, to convince the management not to do this, I put on the jean skirt and I waggled around like a fish through the entire office for 10 minutes ... going "waggle waggle waggle", I was kinda drunk but ... it [the skirt] made me have fish tails, I was like, "Do you actually think I'm gonna make money and that you guys are gonna make money with this waggle skirt I've got on?", so I convinced the management. I wasn't about to wear that ugly skirt, [sighs] so gross. It totally destroys your wanting to go to work when you put it on, you're like "Ohhhh great, how am I supposed to flirt when I know I look like a retard"? [Poison Ivy]

The bartender was able to convince the management against this decision because she demonstrated the uniforms looked silly (made her have "fish tails" as she "waggled"

across the office), were “ugly”, and not feminine (as sweating does not comply with conventional characteristics of femininity) and thus not sexy enough for either party to make money. Perhaps she would have not been as successful in her attempt if she was arguing for something more conservative. Moreover, she demonstrates that her perception of her appearance significantly influences her mood and perception of self and reinforces conventional standards of beauty. As Bayard de Volo suggests, “Workplace identity and the value they [women] attach to their job are in part based on a subjective sense of attractiveness of their uniform” (2003: 355). This is demonstrated in Angelina and Poison Ivy's examples of the significance of the uniform.

Male and female uniforms enforce a status division that separates the client from the worker. When men are expected to wear uniforms, they are often more conservative and even “professional” in appearance: the tuxedo or a tie for instance. The following informant's statement reveals a gender bias that operates in the bar with regards to appearance:

... If I got fat I would get fired. One of our bartenders who has definitely gained a big chunk of weight around his tummy over the last year and not as good looking as he was like a year ago – he won't get fired. But if it was a girl, they would get fired immediately – like the minute that you gain a couple dress sizes, you're outta there. So, you could be an unattractive male bartender but you can't be an unattractive female bartender. [Poison Ivy]

As suggested by the above informant, expectations of attractiveness appear to have a greater significance for women than for men. This is emphasized in the interviewee data where one bartender stated, “Women, as long as they look good, they'll make money”. Most interviewees stated that being an attractive female is an advantage in terms of financial gain:

[Being] female [is] an advantage – especially if they flirt a little bit, and the bartender flirts back, they know they're going to work for their tip. They don't wanna give tips to males ... and they've even told me that ... “if you were a girl I would have given you a better tip but you're not, and I like you, and I have no problems with you – but I'm still not tipping you because you're not a girl. That happens a lot. [Johnny]

What is suggested by Johnny in his statement “they know they're going to work for their tip” demonstrates the active emotional energy that is necessary in order to generate higher profits. One male bartender who described his tip earnings as “average” experienced that women may make slightly more than males, however he found that they also “have the biggest gaps in their tips: they'll get the best tips and the worse tips” whereas his remain consistent. Interviewees suggested that inconsistency between mens' and womens' tip earnings may be attributed to “traditional roles of caring for women”, “generosity”, attraction”, “showing off” or just “being cheap”.

Through their hiring practices and specific treatment towards employees, employers are implicated in producing and reinforcing appropriate, specific and desirable conventional gendered displays which reinforce a sexual division of labor in the workplace (Hall 1993).

The bar is a sexualized environment in which men and women exercise and negotiate dynamics of power and seduction in different ways which are consistent with their respective identities: the traditional female roles of sex object, nurturer and seductress and the male roles of protector and aggressor are valued and rewarded and therefore continuously reproduced and legitimated.

## **Reinforcing Gender: 'Emotion work'**

Bartenders and servers give “good” service by 'doing gender' in a particular way based on conventional stereotypes (West and Zimmerman 1987). In the restaurant/bar industry, the terms of emotion as conveyed through conventional meanings of gender become embodied and demanded from organizations and customers alike. Emotional labor is not a “gender neutral activity ... its effects thus are likely to reflect an interaction between the type of emotional labor performed and the characteristics of the performer” (Wharton 1999: 172) and therefore correspond with traditional, hegemonic ideals of femininity and masculinity. Servers engage in seductive performances that “give service by using their bodies, emotions, and personalities to create a pleasant experience” (Hall 1993: 457). The process of performing “good service”, in addition to requiring a great deal of emotional labor, reinforces gender differences. As Poison Ivy suggested:

It's a lot, a lot about – well, it's not all about appearance, because you have to have personality behind that appearance, like he said to me ... “You're not the best looking barmaid I have, you know, you are good looking, but you have a sexy appeal because of your attitude, and, I like that, you know ... you don't have big tits or anything but you know...”.

As Johnny explained, to make money in the bar: “You can't be ugly ... unless you're ... smart and witty and somewhat appealing or somewhat cute”. What is suggested in these statements is that personality is also an essential attribute. “Sex appeal” is therefore not based solely on visual display, but also the active emotion work involved in making performances more seductive.

Performing feminine roles involves characteristics of deference, nurturance, passivity, hospitality, “elevation of others status” (Hall 1993; Hochschild 1983; Spradley

and Mann 1975; Wharton 1999), an “adeptness at manipulating people (and) sympathetic ways of responding to the needs of others” (Benson 1986: 130 as cited in Hall 1993: 455). The performance of feminine service was for example, suggested by a comment from a male customer telling his female bartender that she would “make a great wife someday”. Men, in contrast, are expected to act more intimidating and carry more authority and respect with their presence (Hochschild 1983). Femininity is equated with characteristics of nurturance and “caring for others”. One female informant explained:

Personally, I love when my customers are having a good time and I'm making their going out experience that much more fun, you know ... and then after, I'm almost like their friend, and you know, you don't wanna be cheap with your friend, so ... Honestly, I actually feel *really* good, once ... you know, you see a guy ... flirt with a guy ... making him feel really important, really entertained ... either have a drink, make them feel really good, and then smile at them and then you see that they're like wow, she's being nice to me, it just – it makes me feel good.

This interviewee suggests that friendliness and flirtation are important seductive performances, and simultaneously demonstrates that making the customer feel “good”, “important” and “entertained” is what she considers to be a significant part of her job.

Catherine MacKinnon states that female servers perform job qualifications by showing:

Constant vigilance, skillful obsequiousness, and an ability to project the implication that there [are] sexual possibilities for the relationship while avoiding the explicit 'how about it' that would force refusal into the open (1979: 44).

Working in the bar, as suggested by Joe is a “party lifestyle”, and therefore projecting impressions of availability is conducive to seducing tips from clientèle. As

Monica stated, she would receive phone numbers from guys every night, and would “*never*” tell them she has boyfriend:

Some girls do say that to protect themselves, I would never say that because the more you are available, the more the stupid mind of a man – sexual – ... They're like: I have a chance, so I have to impress her, so I have to give her money so she has to like me! As long as you're always available.

It is common for female bartenders or servers frequently get propositioned for dinners, drinks, and even to go on vacations with their male customers. Servers' performances however, must be managed to employ techniques and maintain boundaries:

... You just try to avoid it till you can't avoid it anymore, and then, once you can't avoid it anymore, you're like “Okay, well I don't really like to give my number at the bar cause you know it's my work, but I'll definitely get your number and I'll definitely give you a call tomorrow” ... And then you don't– I crumple up all the reject numbers and I give them to the bus boy at the end of the night when I tip him, as a joke [Poison Ivy].

Evident in Poison Ivy's example is an impression management technique of 'counterfeit intimacy' based on inauthentic relations which suggest that “the illusion that sexual intimacy is possible” (Sijuwade 1996: 30 as cited in Wittman 2002: 173). Wittman (2002) describes it as “being skilled at cultivating a facade of sincerity” (Wittman 2002: 173). Both interviewees demonstrate an engagement in masquerade performances. Leading on that there is a sexual possibility may increase financial rewards, however, it also may have negative consequences, and the 'definition of the situation' can be damaged when men may see through the performance. As Wittman suggests, “Some audience members fail to understand that the performance only resembles authentic social relations but is in fact an imitation of such interaction” (2002: 168). I recall a particularly busy and lively night; I smiled at a male customer as he

walked through the door. He walked up to me and we engaged in conversation, and as soon as he revealed that he did not want a drink, I discontinued the conversation by telling him, “Okay, well, you know where to come if you want a beer”. He paused, looked at me and said, “Oh, you're just a salesperson!” and walked away.

According to a former male coworker, a major difference between women and men was one of intimidation. In his 20 years of experience, he observed that women are easily intimidated by customers, particularly male customers, and he reasoned that this was why he experienced fewer problematic encounters with customers. He also explained that he felt he took situations less seriously as compared to women bartenders. This is consistent with Hochschild's findings (1983) as well as with conventional definitions of masculinity as displaying strength, power and authoritative qualities. Joe suggests that “Women could usually sweet talk their way out of it ... I just kinda bully my way out of it. Or I intimidate”. Intimidation, as illustrated in these examples is a power technique exercised to gain control in a situation. Joe explains:

The best and worst day of my life is when somebody called me 'Sir', all of a sudden I started feeling old but then I realized *they belonged to me*. [Laughs]. “Sit down!” “Yes Sir, okay”. It's intimidation.

Joe demonstrates that exercising control suggests an ability to intimidate. A male informant explained that the male security guard makes him feel more comfortable and secure in comparison to a female security. Techniques to maintain control of the workplace as exemplified by male bartenders include “being assertive” or “clear”, “taking charge”, “wrestling control”, “bullying”, and letting the customer know that they are not “afraid”, “scared” or “weak”, otherwise, as suggested by one bartender “they'll

smell blood”, and the 'definition of the situation' or the ability to maintain control of the situation will be jeopardized. These characteristics are consistent with stereotypical descriptions of hegemonic masculine performances. A male bartender and pub manager observed that:

Females get a decreased amount of respect ... they are seen as a sex symbol ... often treated like a piece of meat. Even if you're not attractive – guy thinks he can talk to you in whatever way. You're owned by the customer ... from the moment you say hello, they know they own you [Bruce]

In this interviewee's work experience in the industry, he noticed that women are often not taken as seriously as men which is consistent with Hochschild's argument that men's presence carries more authority. What is also suggested by this interviewee is that first impressions are significant, “From the moment you say hello” includes tone of their voice, demeanor, personality and appearance as influential factors. One female server discusses her views and experience of working in a pool hall:

[Being] female ... a personal advantage and financial advantage regarding male clientèle. Men – they want women ... that whole sexual aspect of it – they want to see women they wanna talk to women they wanna be involved in that. But I dunno ... I could look at it a different way in terms of respect level ... maybe not. But sometimes I wonder ... who does this guy ... who does this man think he is touching me ... putting his hands on me. I am not a fucken free show for him. I am here to give you your pool balls but I'm not here to touch your balls! [Angelina]

Hochschild attributes differential treatment between men and women to a women's “weaker status shield against the displaced feelings of others” (1983: 163). She found that the amount of abuse women endure is often significantly greater than the amount of abuse men endure from clients (Hochschild 1983). Hochschild observed that women's feelings are viewed as weak or unstable and are not taken as seriously as men



whose expressions are associated with rational, deeply held convictions (Hochschild 1983: 173). Asymmetrical effects with respect to gender differences are illustrated in the following anecdote by a female bartender:

There was this guy in my bar and he was drunk and that's when a lot of the arguments happen because it's when you're unable to reason ... and that's where I get a lot of my stress from. So, this guy was playing the VLT's (Video Lottery Terminals) and he wanted more money to play – but he had reached his limit on his card, so he was asking me to get him cash back on his bank card. ... I was telling him, “It's against the law, and I can't do that”. And he just – he wouldn't let it go! Like he would *not* let it go! And I was just like “Listen, it's not me, it has nothing to do with me, it's against the law. I'm gonna get a 3000 dollar fine if you wanna go play another 500 dollars, I'm sorry, I'm not gonna do it!” And we sat there for a good 25 minutes arguing, and he was not able to reason, like he did not understand where I was coming from, he was calling me a liar and you know, “I'm never coming back here again”, and you know, “I've put 1200 dollars into your VLT's already and ...” And the only reason he backed off was because my manager came out and said, “It's against the law”. He said exactly what I had been saying for 25 minutes, he said it in one sentence and the guy was just like “Okay” and he stopped. I was like – are you kidding me right now? [Ericka]

This example supports Hochschild's argument that men carry more authority in their mere presence and that women often experience greater instances of intimidation, sexual objectification, verbal and physical abuse, heightened sensitivity and emotion (Hochschild 1983: 179).

Gendered displays of emotion are significant features in the bar environment (Loe 1996). The ways in which men and women perform emotion work in the service industry are informed by gender stereotypes pervasive throughout all areas of social life, which are consequently reproduced and legitimated through interaction in the workplace (Hall 1993: 452-3, LaPointe 1991; West and Zimmerman 1987; Whyte 1946: 134).

## **Consuming Gender: Alcoholic beverages and beyond**

The bar environment works as a microcosm of society, and is constructive to analyzing ways that gender is practiced, reproduced and consumed in social life. As one male informant expressed “You're not just selling a drink ... you're selling sex”. The bar is a highly sexualized environment in which the drinks themselves are often also sexualized, as exemplified by popular drinks and shooters like, 'sex on the beach', 'screaming orgasm', and 'blow job'. Gendered displays are part of giving a particularly valued and symbolic service. Rewards in the form of tips and praise by management and customers contributes to a cycle which legitimates stereotypical beliefs of traditional gender roles.

Alcohol is a significant part of a bar scene: it intensifies social interaction and behavior, and also symbolizes gender differences. Through their choice of alcoholic beverage, customers express cultural values symbolic of their gender identity (Spradley and Mann 1975: 108). Gender, thus, is consumed both metaphorically (as exemplified through the differential ways it is performed and rewarded) and literally (through consumption of gendered alcohol).

I have witnessed many groups of guys come into the bar to celebrate their friend's engagement. In this popular ceremony, the bachelor party, they often order the bachelor the most feminine drink possible in an attempt to tease and humiliate him. One of the 'victims' of this “ritual reversal” pleaded with me not to “let them do this to [him]!” In this circumstance, drinking a feminine drink was considered a major stigma and a threat to his dignity. A female bartender recalled an experience she had with a male customer

who ordered a margarita she recommended. The drink was a pink/orange color and she recalled that he drank it particularly fast. When she approached him to ask if he wanted another drink he replied “Nice try, well done – you made me look like a wuss! Do you have one that's blue or green?” One male informant explained:

If somebody tells me “Your table wants a cocktail and a beer”, I'm coming to the table, automatically in my head I'm giving the beer to the guy, and the cocktail to the girl and it happened quite a few times where I got it wrong, where the woman is having the beer and the guy is having the cocktail and it turns into a joke and it ends up being very very funny. There are those stereotypes of who drinks what and I think – I think it's a stereotype in the sense that it's what you automatically assume but it's also often what it is ... there was another guy who had a strawberry daiquiri at another table and it not only became a joke for the server and the table, but it also became a joke for the server, the table, and the three tables around them. Like it was just like really really bad ... [Jacques]

When a male orders a feminine drink it often becomes a joke. Gender stereotypes permeate in social discourse and perpetually manifest themselves in every area of social life, including in choice of alcoholic beverages. The bar is a “place where men can come and play exaggerated masculine roles, acting out their fantasies of sexual prowess, and reaffirming their own male identities” (Spradley and Mann 1975: 131) As Spradley and Mann observed, “the pressure to order drinks that correspond to your sex is ever present” (1975: 108). As Jacques explains:

I've had many male customers, who will say, “We want a drink but not too 'girly' – or not too feminine” ... what does this mean? Not too weak, not too sweet, not a certain color, not a frozen drink, not in a fancy glass ... I've had guys – one guy ordered a margarita but asked for it in a pint glass ... I see things like that all the time because it's a fear of judgment thing ... and it's subtle – you joke about it and it's funny. It's also like a woman ordering a beer with a glass ... and I think that in a restaurant or a bar she feels like she has to have it out of a glass, whereas at home she might have it out of a bottle, so I think there's that aspect of it as well. It's not just what the drink is or what the alcohol in it is, it's also how it's served and

what it's served in – a guy that orders a margarita, 9 times out of 10 will order it on the rocks, and a girl that orders a margarita 9 times out of 10 will ask for it frozen... same thing, but because one of them is blended – it looks more feminine, same amount of alcohol, same amount of ice, its just that one is crushed and other is not.

Masculine drinks are straightforward and mostly consist of beer, and 'hard liquor' such as whiskey and scotch. Feminine drinks are “exotic” and often complicated and time consuming to make. They are colorful and appealing in display consisting of various sorts of different juices and sweet ingredients. As a female bartender explained, this also contributes to an atmosphere of judgment towards females who are often seen as the more fussy or complicated customers:

Girls are cheap when they go out to drink, girls don't drink as much as guys, guys usually pick up the check when they're with girls (not all the time) but ... actually it varies within cultures I find, but, usually guys pick up the check ... and uh, that's interesting because ... a lot of people, myself included would call guys better tippers and women as more problematic customers ... girls are ... more about the image thing. Like, they'll come and they'll order a cosmopolitan ... even though it has the same amount of alcohol as a mixed drink, well it's only a quarter more – but it's a whole 3 dollars more and it's in a glass you could hardly hold ... so I think they find it more trendy, they want better service, they want – they're not as nice to deal with... [Poison Ivy]

Women were described as more “time consuming” and “indecisive” and men were described as “easy”: “it's beer or it's rum and coke” in contrast to time consuming or complicated beverages usually ordered by women. The consumption of gendered alcoholic beverages can be analyzed in terms of ceremonies that reproduce and reaffirm masculine and feminine identities, sexual status and other values in society.

Individuals are engaged in active, relational games of 'face and body work' and physical displays of power and seduction that offer their audience idealized social

representations (Goffman 1959: 48). The conceptualization of gender in terms of binary differences based on traditional roles and conventional stereotypes is pervasive in contemporary society and is consequently reflected in the workplace. Traditional conceptions are consistently being contested on the micro-level, as LaPointe suggests, “Gender differences are just as likely to be employed very directly and very consciously when individuals attempt to manipulate situations to their advantage” (1991: 21). Power differences can not therefore be defined as 'properties' possessed by those representative of a higher societal position (men, customers) enforced on those with lower status (women, servers), but rather, power is gendered in that it is exercised by men and women in different ways. It is also important to consider notable changes, for example, bartenders, who traditionally were exclusively male, are now both male and female, and women are increasingly taking on managerial and ownership positions. Idealized performances constitute power relations between individuals which are 'productive' in society (Foucault 1977) in that they reproduce ideal feminine and masculine emotional and physical displays because it is profitable to do so. Resistance, as demonstrated by men ordering feminine alcoholic beverages often results in humiliation or stigmatization. The sexual division of labor, emotional management and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the bar highlight how gender representations in popular culture permeate in social discourse, and the subtle and taken for granted ways they are produced, reproduced, consumed and challenged in everyday life as demonstrated in a bar environment. Examining the various ways dynamics of seduction and power are

performed between the players in the bar environment illuminates the embedded gender meanings embodied in the process reflected from the larger culture.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **POWER, ABUSE, AND RESISTANCE**

The bar is a microcosm of society: a hierarchically organized system encompassing asymmetrical social relationships reflected through gender, social status, age, appearance, demeanor, race and ethnicity, among the many elements that influence interaction, outcomes, and expectations. Hierarchical differences of status are exercised between servers and customers and also exist within the interdependent relationships of the workplace itself: managers, bartenders, servers, cooks, hosts, busboys and dishwashers must exercise power in their interactions with one another and work together. Interactions between men and women, servers and customers, and servers, managers and other employees are therefore not passive processes. Servers are not mechanical bodies whose roles are merely to serve the needs and demands of their customers and coworkers, they are reflexive actors responsible for manipulating physical and emotional bodies and maintaining social order.

I explore some of the conflicting and asymmetrical relationships between actors in the bar to outline the relational, productive, and strategic processes of power dynamics. Power is not interpreted as a 'property' of individuals belonging to those occupying positions of higher status, but a 'strategy' involving techniques of manipulation and negotiation in which individuals exercise their agency (Foucault 1978). A relational conception of power is significant to analyzing techniques servers and customers participate in to sustain or contest existing values and status differences.

## **Bartenders VS Servers: “You have all the power”**

In the bar, bartenders occupy a hierarchically superior position of status compared to floor servers (LaPointe 1992; Spradley and Mann 1975). Often employees usually work towards becoming promoted to bartending positions. As Kate, a female server stated, employees usually “start off” as busboys, hosts, or servers and “once they know you and they've gained your trust, they'll bump you to bartender”. She also stated that she felt that bartenders, especially those with a high level of seniority, as “being above” her.

The physical bar itself acts as a boundary and a 'prop' which facilitates more protection, control, and authority from undesired physical contact with customers as well as other employees. For example, in a bar environment “ass grabbing” or other inappropriate forms of touching are commonplace activities often initiated by drunken male customers. One female server recalled an instance in which a wealthy male customer bought several rounds of drinks for the entire bar. Enjoying the spotlight, as she walked past him with a tray of drinks in her hands, the customer slapped her on the rear and laughed amongst *his* audience. In retaliation, she fought back with an aggressive and angry demeanor proclaiming that she did “not care how much money” he had, he did not have the “right” to touch her. When she assertively ordered him not to touch her ever again, the customer simply told her to “lighten up” and that he was “only joking” as he continued to laugh. This server explained that she felt furious, humiliated and disrespected and that he had “crossed the line”. This example demonstrates that individuals employed in the service industry are often not taken seriously, objectified,



and treated as spectacles, but also that they can and do resist, and may humiliate the customer in front of his friends. Several interviewees' have admitted that they have been inappropriately touched or grabbed by customers. One bartender explained that she prefers bartending to waitressing because she does not like "being touched" by customers:

Some guy was stalking me so I quit – he was very aggressive and very grabby ... [he] came up to me and tapped me on the crotch with his beer bottle and ... would say, "I'd like to take you home tonight". You don't have that problem bartending ... because you're behind a bar, and the only time anybody touches you is when they touch your arm ... sometimes I would have some guys try to kiss me and then I just – they get the ear [Poison Ivy].

The bar, as interviewees have suggested, offers protection from inappropriate behaviors from customers. In her waitressing experience, Monica explained that she was often grabbed inappropriately several times and "couldn't do anything about it", as it would often happen while she walked through the crowd with a tray filled with drinks, thus unable to detect the individual or individuals who grabbed her. She also prefers bartending to waitressing, as she states: "Behind a bar you're indispensable, no one could touch you, you're like a fantasy doll ... or just this un-attainable person, and you have the power, you have all the power". Joe explains how being behind the bar facilitates more control:

That one foot is a security blanket. It's unbelievable. It gives you that power, it gives you self-confidence, self-worth, it's unbelievable. I noticed that years ago because I also worked in the promotional business ... we used to do shows, and when we used to do our tables, we put metal rods on them so we'd be standing up and we'd be eye level with the people instead of them looking down at us, and it gives you such an edge because you're looking right at them. And you have that ... cushion ... your safety buffer as you will. You're safe. You could do anything, it is my world, this

is my world, and that's where it comes into control. You could control whatever happens in front of you, and I always watch what's happening, so I know exactly where people are going and exactly what they need.

Moreover, Joe explained that he prefers bartending to serving because “people come up to [him] now”:

Like who else would be able to stand behind the bar and go like this [makes a signal motion with his hand] to all his customers for table service. I wave my hand and finger at them and they walk up.

The physical act of approaching or being approached for service is symbolically indicative of power differentials. For example, consider an instance when customers approach the bar to order and the bartender is busy. Customers are often given the signal to wait, and generally do so until the bartender has freed up space to take their order. In contrast, when a server is approaching customers, are often treated invisible or as “nonpersons” (Goffman 1959). Interviewees have commented on moments in which they approached their customers and treated as though they were rudely interrupting something important and expected to patiently wait or speak up to make their presence known. Interviewees have also suggested that the public often perceives bartenders as having more authority:

A lot of people put bartenders in Montreal on a pedestal, being behind the bar gives you more authority – you're a focal point ... a disposition of authority. Usually when a bartender gets involved they'll kinda listen to you – listen to him, he's right. A couple times I've actually heard people in discussions like, “Ask the bartender, bartenders know everything” [Alec].

Alec suggests that bartenders are perceived as social experts, and are often expected to listen and offer psychological advice. This perception is also glamorized in portrayals of bartenders in the media, (for example as previously suggested by Joe's

statement about not being that “40's movie bartender”). Moreover, compared to servers, bartenders are mainly in charge of alcohol which makes them less dependent on other coworkers including dishwashers, cooks, bus persons, hosts, and managers, especially when they are not required to serve food. This allows them to exercise more autonomy and control as compared to servers, who must manage interdependent working relationships more carefully (LaPointe 1991: 157) and detailed in the following bartenders statement:

I don't like working with food, and I don't like being a waitress because ... it's way harder and it's less money, way less money because you tip out more and people are cheaper and ... only tip like 10 percent. So, I can get 3 dollars for making like two rum and cokes and smiling, or I can make 3 dollars for serving like 30 dollars worth of food, running back and forth, filling up water, making small talk... [Poison Ivy]

When servers or bartenders are responsible for serving food, it often complicates the interaction: customers are more likely to judge the quality of the service based on the waiting time and their satisfaction with the meal, thus penalizing servers for factors that may not be in their direct control, Poison Ivy continues:

With waitressing, the kitchen could screw up and then you can get in trouble and it reflects in your tips, and it's not your fault, where as in bartending everything is your fault if it doesn't go right because you're more in control [Poison Ivy].

When customers come to a bar section of an establishment, their focus is primarily on the drinking experience rather than the dinning experience and the tip will most likely reflect the efficiency, poise and interactional skills of the bartender serving them the beverages. Bartenders are mainly responsible for the regulation and distribution

of alcohol, which allows them to occupy a position where they can more readily exercise control of their workplace.

Several interviewee's agreed that they felt working behind bar allowed them to exercise more power and control in the interactions with others. Bartending was perceived as being a more prestigious, glorified and desired position within the service industry.

### **“A Dime a Dozen”**

Performances are exaggerated when individuals interact in a service industry environment: the structural implication of the tipping system intensifies the incentive for servers to invest additional amounts of emotional energy in their interactions with others. On the one hand, servers are independent contractors' or “private entrepreneurs” (Paules 1996) with an increased incentive to successfully seduce wages from their audience at the same time as being dependent employees who are required to follow the rules and demands of their employers (LaPointe 1991: 2, 16; Butler and Skipper 1980, 1983). The conflictory nature of the tipping system may also explain the high turnover rates which are a common characteristic of service industry work (LaPointe 1991). Furthermore, under-staffing is a common practice by managers attempting to cut their labor costs and creates more tension and stress in the workplace.

The wage-tip system intensifies the existing status differences between customers and servers, creating a conflicting and resentful climate which gives the customer more

status (Butler and Skipper 1980; Howe 1977; LaPointe 1991). Slogans such as “the customer is always right” additionally reinforces servers inferior social position.

Tips are an acronym for “To Insure Prompt Service” and represent a 'social rating' system in which servers' performances are judged by customers (LaPointe 1991). When customers do not express their remarks or frustrations, they may make it explicitly known through the tip amount. Tips have been previously described as having “pernicious” effects when insinuating, for example, dissatisfaction with the service or as an expression of disrespect (Owings 2004: 14). As Hochschild suggested, abusive behavior or unequal exchanges from customers are “supposedly evened by a wage” (1983: 85). As Angelina suggests, in this environment:

... You're like a slave to the people. You're bowing to their every need. It's dehumanizing. You're a human just like them. Funny how there's such a dichotomy when you look at it. People don't see you as that.

Some servers accept abuse or harassment by customers because as Anna and Poison Ivy suggest “you could make really good tips out of it”:

I used to work with lottery machines ... if I ran out of money – people were like threatening to kill me because I didn't have their money or they're trying to steal my shit, or throw shit at my head ... but you could make really good tips out of it [Anna].

I had some guy tell me he wanted to smoke a cigarette out of my vagina ... I was like “What!??”... I – he was tipping me super well ... so I just laughed it off and then I turned around and he got kicked out because he lit up a cigarette. So he was out of there, whatever, I was just like, oh I'm just gonna ignore him and just keep serving him drinks, pretend I didn't understand what he said. He wasn't really doing anything, he just said something weird to me, I'm hoping I misunderstood what he said but I really don't think these motions and what he said are really gonna be lost in translation, pretty explicit if you know what I mean [Poison Ivy]

Poison Ivy did not classify her experience as abusive, as she said, “he wasn't really doing anything, he just said something weird to me”. Poison Ivy and Anna demonstrate although customer actions were disrespectful and inappropriate, it is almost accepted because “you could make good money” and because they tip “super well”.

Definitions of what constitutes sexual harassment or abuse are subjective (Giuffre and Williams 1994). Customers' control over the tip amount allows certain behaviors to be acceptable. Bruce, a male bartender and manager of a pub stated that whether “‘The customer is always right' depends on the money you want to make”. Kate stated: “There's only so much you could take even as a server till you have to start, you know, defending yourself”. What is implied in this comment suggests that part of the server's job is to “take” or accept abuse from customers, and that “even servers” should defend themselves.

Physical, social, cultural, and psychological limits and boundaries are thus tested on all levels and by all players (LaPointe 1992: 378). Server's subservient position in the workplace creates a climate in which they are undervalued and disrespected by customers and managers (Hearn and Stoll 1975). According to a server with over six years of experience in the service industry, waitresses are essentially “glorified slaves” and that there is “no respect for workers”. This is demonstrated in actions such as snapping of the fingers, unempathetic responses and demands to servers when they are clearly overwhelmed and busy, disrespectful language such as “you're not going anywhere – you're slow as shit!” proclaimed by a customer to his busy server, and sexual harassment. Job security in the service industry was described as extremely unstable and

unpredictable. For example, Vanessa explained how one day her manager passed on the message to the hostess to inform her that her “services are no longer needed”. When she confronted him for the reason, which she suspected was racially motivated, he simply said: “I don't even care, you waitresses are worth a dime a dozen”.

At a nightclub where I worked for approximately six months, employees were responsible for bartending as well as promotion work in which we were rated based on our total sales as well as the number of guests brought into the club. Moreover, management put further pressure on the staff by displaying a white board in the back office area with each bartender's name listed in rank order of the number of guests brought into the club that particular night, and was measured by guest list numbers and V.I.P passes which the staff was responsible for arranging and distributing. Before every shift, the manager would encourage and reinforce the promotional requirements of the job and threaten our job security by reminding us how “easily replaceable” we were.

Monica was indifferent to threats about being fired which managers often make to their staff. She explains: “If you fire me, that's fine, I'll go somewhere else, there's next door ... I was never within two weeks without finding a job”. LaPointe suggests that one way women defy their employers or “deal with their relatively powerless positions” and lack of authority and control in the workplace is by quitting frequently (1992: 11-12, 39). Many interviewees' suggest that quitting gives them a sense of control, especially during busy events of the year when they know they will be needed the most.

According to my interviewees, female servers were the most likely to express or ask customers for a tip as compared to male bartenders who were less likely to say

something. In fact, some female interviewees even stated that they have refused service to customers that do not tip them:

If they're French I say, "Pour vous pas de service", (no service for you) because I'm very bad at French, if they are English I say, "Okay I don't wanna be really rude but- ...". If they're clearly not from Canada they might not know, so then you just say it in a really polite way ... "I'm really sorry but umm, you know we tip out a percentage of our sales, and every time I serve you I'm basically paying to serve you if you don't tip me, so I need at least a 10% tip", and either they're like "I'm sorry I didn't know", or, if it's a person that's clearly from Canada, clearly knows that they should tip but they're just being cheap ... I usually just take the drink back and I say "if you're not gonna tip me then I'm not gonna serve you" and then ... they usually tip me. ...Unless they look like they're gonna complain to the management then I do it in a nicer way ... [Poison Ivy]

She also said that if they are rude to her, she will make the bus boy go around to every bar and tell them to refuse service to that customer because as she stated, "I'm sorry, I'm not paying to serve you a fucken drink". One female recalled a night she worked at a station on the floor known as the "beer tub" serving. The beers were five dollars each, and in the beginning of the night, when people would ask her the price of the beer, she would tell them, "five dollars". After several times of only receiving five dollars, she changed her response to "five dollars plus tip" along with a smile:

It's the way you say it, some customers would be like, "Oh yeah? Plus tip?" And I'd be like "yeah, that's right", in a flirtatious tone, sometimes a wink. Sometimes when I would give them the change I would purposely wait for a tip before serving another customer so they wouldn't have the chance to walk away without tipping – some people think you don't notice sometimes. It's also important to have fun with it – at first it was difficult because I was actually really pissed off that people were not tipping me at all, so I tried it a few times and it worked, I really got into that role for the rest of the night and made a lot of money.

This informant demonstrates that explicitly telling customers that the tip was not included along with feminine charms such as displays of flirtation friendliness served as



an effective technique. She explained that her male coworker who was bartending that night argued that he would not have had the same success if he were working beer tub that night. Joe explained that unless the bill is of a substantial amount he will not ask for a tip, he explains:

For a nickel or dime, I'm not gonna lower myself for a dollar for a quarter. Because the good make up for the bad. I'm not gonna lower myself to that, and eventually people see ... so it's not a big deal if someone here or there doesn't tip ... Basically I do very well, it's not a life and death thing.

Joe also explains that he does “very well” financially in the industry, and therefore it is not as necessary for him to say something. According to servers who are not as financially stable, the non-tipper was perceived in a negative light, in terms of paying to serve them. The type of establishment additionally plays a role with respect to tip amount. In some establishments, employees are not permitted to explicitly ask their customers for tips, and sometimes a tip suggestion of 15-18 percent of the total amount will be written on the bottom of the bill in fine print. In some establishments the tip amount is already included in the bill, and is also more likely to be added to the bill when the number of people in a section exceeds a certain amount. Most interviewees agreed that older female customers were the worst tippers. Ironically, while conducting an interview with Linda at her workplace at a neighbourhood pub on a slow night, just as we were discussing whom she perceives to be the best and worst tippers, an older woman came up to the bar to pay for her drink and, as a tip, gave her some of her over-the-counter sinus relief medication just in case she gets sick.

Alec explained that he does not feel comfortable asking people for tips:

I don't think you should say something because people get really offended by that. But it's funny because especially when you have tourists, you get a lot of English tourists. European tourists in general are not used to tipping – Germans, English, Irish. Sometimes you wanna put it in a way like, “well, you know, this is the way it works in Quebec”. I've said it a couple times before: “Listen – I know you guys are gonna be in the country for a while so, just so no one gets mad at you in the future – I don't care personally but – this is the way it is” ... usually they say “didn't know, sorry”. Never really backfired on me. But other people I've worked with got in fights or got screamed at because of that. I think it's the way you come across it too – there's this girl I work with, sweet, super sweet girl – an older couple that seemed to have a lot of money ordered three or four rounds of drinks off her and finally after three or four rounds left like 2 dollars as a tip. She said, “So that's good for the 3 rounds?” The guy exploded on her: “You know – I was gonna give you more until that stupid brainless comment of yours!” And he was going off, and I heard it and I went over to him and I stood up for her 100% and I started firing back at him. I said, “Listen, I don't know how it works for you where you're from, but over here we're taxed on our sales so if it's not worth it for us to serve you, we're not gonna serve you anymore”. I told him straight up. He didn't say a bloody word after that.

Another male bartender I was working with, he was working upstairs ... his waitress was serving this table of Europeans. Their bill came up to 150 dollars and, I think they left 5 dollars. It wasn't a busy night, so that was half their sales – the bartender goes up to the table and he says really politely “Was there anything wrong with your service?”, [they responded], “No, why?” ... “Well because I noticed you left 5 dollars on a 150 dollar bill which is far less than the 15 percent suggestion” and they stood up from their table, faced him – and were clenching their fists ready to fight him over it. They started screaming. I was working downstairs, I heard them screaming from downstairs! I've heard a lot of people getting really offended about it. So, I donno if it's the smartest thing to ask for the tip – usually I won't say anything if it's off one or two drinks, whatever – I let it go ... I've been scared from these stories man.

Women are thus more likely to get away with asking for a tip, and men are more likely to experience a threat of violence from offended customers. Monica, who speaks up for herself every time a customer does not tip her stated that offended customers have

requested to speak with a manager. Alec also suggests that offended customers are more likely to exercise resistance by abusive psychological remarks (“brainless comment”).

### **Relationships with Coworkers**

Relationships between employees are an important aspects of the workplace; they can make the work more enjoyable or unpleasant. Conflict and emotional tension between coworkers is highly problematic, and unlike the customer-server relationship, (with the exception of the regular customers), individuals cannot “just cut [their coworkers] off”, “it extends till the next day”, and may progress. Jacques explained the difference between experiencing conflicts with customers versus coworkers:

That guest is there for an hour or an hour and a half and when that guest is gone that guest is gone ... I can still talk about it later but the emotional impact that it has goes away by like 75% as soon as that person steps out the door, and there might be a little bit left to vent out or talk about but when that person leaves the door then half of the battle is done, you bounce back like really really quickly. If the issue was with a co-worker then I feel like that stays with you a lot more because you know the next time you get in, that persons gonna be there again, you know your gonna run into that person again.

Interviewees noted that coworkers attempt to exercise power over each other in many ways. They explained that, most notably competition, seniority and status create the most conflicts and thus influence the flow of the work process as well as impact on an individual's well-being.

The bartender-server relationship is especially problematic since the bartender has control over the amount of time they take to make drinks for servers, thus influencing the server's earnings since the promptness of service influences the tip amount. Monica,

who has worked as both a server and bartender discussed the tension she experienced with the bartending-serving relationship:

When you're a bartender you have to deal with the waitress at the bar, when I was waitressing ... I had to deal with the bartenders, which, one was on cocaine and was always telling the others that I'm "Too stupid" and "Don't know what I'm doing", he used to get so mad. Like, I would be waiting for my drinks and he used to get the ice and slam everything else around, and it was affecting me because I'm sensitive to vibes like that.

Interviewees also mentioned that the negative moods or attitudes of their coworkers create an unpleasant atmosphere that is often difficult to deal with. Monica explained a conflict she had with a female coworker who became upset after a game of 'paper, scissor, rocks' determined that Monica would be the one to go home early that night. The coworker was annoyed and as a result, pushed her down the stairs while she was carrying a tray full of drinks. This conflict was also physically dangerous as Monica could have easily been injured. Other malicious instances that happen between coworkers include gossip, spreading rumors, rude comments, cursing and making the shift purposely difficult. Servers or bartenders with a high level of seniority were described as problematic as they often were described as giving new employees a "hard time". Kate explains that, in some cases, managers have to warn and council their new employees not to take particular individuals too seriously, as several rookie servers have quit because they could not handle the pressure of working with them. Interviewees have noted that this was especially evident between females. As Poison Ivy explained in reference to her female coworker: "She's been working there for so long, she takes over my area, she takes my customers, if I take her customers I get yelled at by her". Joe describes how he analyzes the tension between female coworkers:

Insecurity maybe. Or, you're not adept. They're used to working at a certain level, and you're not adept. They see so many people come in and lie about their experience, so they give them a hard time ... When she's in the juice and she's miserable, everybody is miserable. But they're also professionals, they're there to make money, when people come in and they see them have a party and they're partying all the time, and I guess that's why they nail them, they say, "you're supposed to know what you're doing", and in the new people's defense, nobody ever shows you what to do, they kinda just like "here, here's a tray"... and they really don't have a training process for anybody. It's a women thing I think.

The competitive and territorial characteristics demonstrated by women who exercise their seniority and defend their position also reproduces conventional definitions of femininity. Interactions between female employees with female customers and coworkers (especially those with higher seniority towards those new to the industry) were mostly characterized by interviewees as problematic, difficult, insecure, territorial, rivalrous, catty, picky, critical, competitive, and high maintenance. Anna stated:

My friend, she's really gorgeous... I remember her saying that one of the other girls had been there for a while, and has big fake boobs, and she's not that pretty or whatever and the girl was hating on her ... trying to discourage her ... saying mean things.

As Wittman states, "An informal status hierarchy is built around those waitresses who make the most tips... young, white, blond, thin, with the large breasts – earn the most tips" (2002: 181). LaPointe suggests that:

The experience of being of a subordinate status and the subsequent desire for personal self-respect shows up when women deal with other women who are defined as status inferiors (1991: 174).

When I questioned Marilyn about what she disliked the most about her job she stated:

Probably the dumb chicks. Honestly, you wanna come in a place and work as a team and work united and there's a couple people who don't really do

it. At the same time – it's kinda fun cause it unites the new girls – you become the group, because we all hate them. They're like “Ohh you new girls don't know anything”. But we do – well in the beginning we might screw up things here and there and get bossed around. We've actually turned it into fun. We all get frustrated but then we vent to each other and then we laugh about it then we bitch behind their backs and then feel better! So in the end they just hurt themselves.

As Marilyn demonstrates, competition and exercising a superior status fosters an atmosphere which provides servers the opportunity to also engage in micro-resistance strategies in which they deal with or resist abuse as well as reproduce the cycle. Men also attempt to assume superior positions in the workplace. Joe describes his past experience of working with a female bartender who has been employed in the industry for the same amount of time as him. He started working at the same bar with her, because “he was the only one that survived”, he continues:

And we fought like cat and dog, but I don't give in, it's intimidation. Especially in the beginning, she was keeping her customers right down my bar, I let it go. The next day I came in, as soon as I came in, I cleared everybody's drink off she's like “What are you doing?” I said, “Well it's my bar, I'm just cleaning my bar”. She said, “No, well these are my customers”, I said “Well, guys, you all know me, yeah? You wanna order from me, yeah?” And we yelled and screamed for maybe a week and then if she would be yelling at me I'd just grab the back of my hair stick my tongue down my throat and then laugh and it would be fine [Joe].

Exercising resistance is therefore crucial to managing conflicting workplace relationships. Resisting intimidation and techniques of humor proved effective control strategies. Standing up for one's self is an important aspect of the work. An informant explained that a male server who was employed at an establishment in which he worked at for over six years often made her shift “miserable”. She explained that he was demanding and rude to her because he resented her for starting off as a bartender, a

position he was attempting to get promoted to for a long time. He felt threatened and engaged in games of 'power play' wherein he attempted to gain authority over her. One day, she resisted his demeaning comments and gestures and cursed at him with disregard for the customers and managers who were close by. These examples demonstrate the ways individuals engage in power struggles with each other, to survive workplace dynamics as well as to maximize their earnings and control their work environments. Such strategies range from humor to physical violence.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment, according to Konrad and Gutek (1986): “occurs when submission to or rejection of sexual advances is a term of employment, is used as a basis for making employment decisions, or if the advances create a hostile or offensive work environment” (as cited in Giuffre and Williams 1994: 239). Giuffre and Williams (1994) argue that an individual's experience of what behaviors constitute sexual harassment are ambiguous and based on an individual's subjective interpretations and the social context of the situation.

Research in the area suggests that sexual harassment from coworkers is “the most common form of sexual harassment (Schneider 1982 as cited in Giuffre and Williams 1994: 240). However, Giuffre and Williams (1994) suggest that behaviour is likely to be classified as sexual abuse or harassment when perpetrated by individuals occupying higher positions of authority such as managers, customers, and people of different sexual and racial identity, and unlikely to be perceived as sexual abuse when performed by those occupying equal status, such as coworkers. According to Giuffre and Williams, such

double standards reproduce and legitimate hegemonic cultural values such as gender and status and “compulsory heterosexuality” as normal aspects of the workplace and thus society (1994: 240). All of the interviewees in my sample who discussed instances of sexual abuse or harassment referred to experiences with managers or customers thus supporting Giuffre and William's research.

Sexuality is an institutionalized aspect of the restaurant and bar industry (Giuffre and Williams 1994: 240) as demonstrated in uniform styles and drink names. Thus, sexual harassment “may be especially strong in organizations that use and exploit the bodies and sexualities of the workers” (Giuffre and Williams 1994: 239). Monica explains:

In this business, almost everywhere I've worked there's been some kind of harassment by bosses, by whoever. When I went to apply to work at a club, the first thing I said when the manager asked me why I left my other place is that “the manager disrespected me, and I left because I don't accept that”, so right there I made it clear from the start...

Monica, who has over seven years of bartending experience, claims to have experienced “some kind of sexual harassment” in every establishment she worked in. Several examples of sexual harassment from employees affirm that this type of behaviour pervades the workplace. Giuffre and Williams explain that “many men and women experience some sexual behaviours in the workplace as pleasurable” (1994: 239). Since individuals in this type of profession, as Giuffre and Williams suggest, “are hired on the basis of their attractiveness and solicitousness” (1994: 239), it may create an attitude of acceptance because of workers' eagerness to work in a particular environment as well as



reaffirmation of their attractiveness or desirability. Monica described an instance in which a former manager took advantage of her coworker because “she wanted the job”:

There were so many other bartenders he could do what he wants with ... [a coworker] told me that when she went for her interview – and the manager even knew her boyfriend at the time – and he turned around, touched her breasts and said “Do you like when I touch you like that” and she said “Yeah” because she wanted the job!

Monica described some of her several personal experiences with sexual harassment:

I was working at this club – when I went for the interview there were about 50-60 people: security, busboys, waitresses, DJ's ... we were all waiting with our resumes to talk to the owner. I was the first person he called, he goes, “You, come here” ... I go in his office, we talk a little, he's like “You're gonna be head bartender, you're gonna take care of that whole bar”, there were three other bartenders besides me- “You're gonna look after them, the opening night is that night, I want you here at this time ... you can go now”. And I was like, okay that's cool – I was the first girl in his office, I wasn't even in front or nothing ... I didn't have to wait there for like three hours. ...He went to drive me home one day, and he's telling me ... I look like his ex-girlfriend except she was more toned and more dark and [sighs], after he's like “You know what, I'm very wealthy, I can take care of you, I can pay for your rent – if you just be my little 'honey girl’”. And I wanted my job, and I'm like, “Well, I prefer not to mix business with pleasure” and all this crap, I tried to be diplomatic about it. Finally it ended up that I went from head bartender to no bartender.

In this situation, Monica was fired because of her refusal to accept her manager's advances. She also discussed another experience of sexual harassment she had with a manager at a club she was applying for. She went to the club one night to drop off her resume and “hang out” since one of her friends was the DJ. Briefly meeting the manager upon arrival, she gave him her resume and they agreed they would talk later on:

... But at the end of the night ... I'm like “Hey”, he's like “Hey you”- he pulls me by my belt and unzips my jeans. And there's like this elevator that goes upstairs to the office and stuff, because he was drunk right ... and I'm

like “What??” And I just left. You know what, I would say on an average ... 30 percent of the girls will go with it, they will say “I’m so cool, I’m gonna make money, I’m gonna be a bartender, I’m so cool – okay so he grabbed my boob a little bit but I’ll do it”.

Monica suggests that compliance to sexual advances by management in order to get a job, or to get better shifts or sections is a common practice. Furthermore, recall Monica’s experience of being sexually exploited by a former manager who treated her as his ‘Lolita’, in which she eventually quit. Monica’s experiences with sexual harassment by managers prevented her from getting a job, got her fired from another job and was also a reason she had to quit another job.

Vanessa explained that in her experiences as both a waitress and bartender that inappropriate comments, gestures, and gazes from both managers and customers were common. She described an encounter she had with a male customer, who, she explained, was frequently inviting her over to his section, buying her drinks, and even requested her to sit on his lap. Already feeling “shy”, she explained that he told her the reason that he was making extra effort to talk to her was because he found her voice “incredibly sexy” and suggested that she should be a phone sex operator. Vanessa dealt with the situation by “laughing it off” even though she felt extremely embarrassed and uncomfortable and explained that “it’s hard to take comments like that light heartedly after a while”. This demonstrates how servers are both “visual and auditory props” (Bayard de Volo 2003: 355).

Service workers are also likely to classify an experience as sexual harassment only when it becomes physically threatening (Giuffre and Williams 1994). Poison Ivy detailed an experience that occurred to one of her friends:

I had a friend who worked at an Italian restaurant and her boss got her really drunk on New Years ... and then followed her into the bathroom ... exposed himself and then tried to have sex with her ... and then they had a fist fight in the bathroom – he pulled down his pants and basically was trying to pull down her pants, she was super drunk and she just started kicking and screaming ... so luckily they got a lot of it on the camera – so she went and got the cameras the next day and she sued him and she won – she didn't actually have to go to court they settled it outside of court and she got 10,000 dollars.

She continued:

... It very rarely happens, the only thing was is that she had the tape and he was married ... all she woulda had to do was show the wife the tape – she knew the wife too – it would have been easy ... the guy just wanted to keep it quiet ... that's the only reason he settled. Because I'm sure if it actually had gone to court she wouldn't have won any money, the only thing that really was on the tape was him following her into the bathroom and then like some kind of– I didn't actually see it– but you could see them fighting and then you see him leave the bathroom and her ... fall to the ground and cry. And to his wife, that's pretty self explanatory ... but to a jury, is that enough? ... Do I have enough money to pay a lawyer? And ... her dad is a doctor ... most girls don't have dads who are gonna get them a lawyer...

Interviewees demonstrated varying degrees of experiences with sexual harassment. Less explicit encounters were dismissed and not considered as constituting “sexual abuse” but more as “part of the job”. Service workers set their own boundaries and forms of resistance. However, as the examples demonstrate, resistance often requires them to quit their job, and winning court settlements “rarely happen” as most workers do not have the financial capital to make it happen.

### **Age and Stigma**

If you're a bartender ... it goes back to what are the main things to be a bartender: good looking and personality, and as you get older, usually people's personalities start to get more jaded, and also, they are not as good looking as they were in their 20's or 30's so...

Bartending and serving are “not the most prestigious career choices”, according to perceptions from the general public. One informant explained:

There is an expectation from society that you're going to spend five or six years doing this type of job then your going to get a “real” job. That you're going to “move along” after you're done your bachelor or whatever, and if you don't, then there's a problem. If you see a waiter that's like 40-50 years old, he's a career waiter, you're like “Oh like great”, he's like a good waiter but... [Gary]

Gary, a former waiter demonstrates a negative perception towards older individuals who work in the industry and suggests that it is problematic. Jacques, a server and bartender employed at a corporate establishment explained that the reasons he got into the industry in the first place was because it was “so cool” to be a bartender. Occupying a high level of job satisfaction, Jacques plans to move up to managerial position in the future. He revealed his feelings regarding bartending and his age:

... When you're 18, 19 [years old] and you're a bartender ... everyone thinks it's so amazing, and, all of a sudden you're – I'm approaching 28, and all of a sudden you tell people you're a bartender and people kinda have a different reaction about it they're like – “Oh” ... Not – you're a nobody but they're kinda like, “Yeah that's a good career choice” [sarcastic tone] and people see it very very differently. When you're young people are like “Oh good for you, you're working hard, you're making money ...”, but all of a sudden they're like “Oh, for the same salary why don't you have another job?” And “Why aren't you doing this?” and “Why aren't you doing that?” And I feel ... when I tell them – ...it's almost like they expect me to answer something else when they ask me what my job is, and all of a sudden I'm like “I'm a server and a bartender” ... I feel like I have to defend myself for being a server or a bartender ... I can't just answer “I'm a server and a bartender”, I always have to say, “Oh well you know, while I'm finishing school” ... well that's what it was for a while ... and now it's ... like, “Oh well until I find something else ... until I decide what I wanna do, you know?”...

Jacque discussed the pressure and stigma he experiences from his family and society in general in terms of his career choice. A 26 year old women explained how she also experiences negative reactions from acquaintances who come into her workplace; she described how she deals with it:

I feel like I almost have to tell people. Like sometimes I run into people from high school and they're like "Oh heeeyyy" you know, and I'm just like "Oh, no, but – I'm going to South America and I have a job in public relations". Like, I almost spell-it-out: "This is my second job because I'm going traveling" [Marilyn]

Marilyn demonstrated a negative response towards her female coworkers who are "just waitressing":

... I honestly – I see a difference between the girls that are just waitressing. We have so much time because the [hockey team] is gone for two weeks, so it's like what do you do in that time when you don't have another job? Yeah, people can sustain themselves because we probably make 3000 bucks a month that you take home, that's a lot of money. But I see the girls that are just – [sighs], I dunno, I don't wanna hang out with them cause that's' all they have going for them.

Transient part time interviewees in their 20's mostly demonstrated negative perceptions towards their serving positions. They stressed "30" as the cut off age when it is no longer "cool" to serve or bartend, and time to get a "real" job. Poison Ivy stated she plans to work in the bar:

Just until I get a real job. So once I finish my education and I get a real job, because I would obviously like to go out with my friends on a Saturday night, I would love not to stay up until five o'clock in the morning every night I work, I would love to lead a normal life kinda thing.

What is suggested in her example is that bartending is not a "real job", and bartenders do not lead "normal" conventional lives. Another female server stated that she does not feel this type of job is a career option because she perceives:

The bartending/waitressing thing as based on young blood and if you're pretty or not. ...A lot of places ... they only hire hot girls and ... that's kinda like taking over the whole industry, the girls have to dress slutty or sexy, and ... that's why I don't think it would be a career option for me, I don't think I would do it once I'm older then ... I dunno, 30 [Kate].

Kate's statement implies that it is not a respectable career choice for women over 30, who are also not considered as “sexy” by the public. Consider perceptions towards older women as described by Poison Ivy:

There's like a 53 year old bartender that works at my work, she has the best bar because she's been working there for so long, she's a good bartender but she's not young and you know, she doesn't make the kinda money she made when she was like you know – 30 or whatever ... People will be like “Why the fuck is there like this old broad working?” ... People ask all the time, they're like “Why is there a 60 year old woman serving me my drinks?” And I'm like “Well, because she's a good bartender”. ... If you're a manager you can be as old as you want, you know what I mean? My manager told me that she's got two years until they're gonna get rid of her, she's getting really angry now, she's getting really bitter, and really aggressive and stuff ... she doesn't enjoy her job anymore, and, umm, she's a good bartender, she knows what she's doing, even though she's old – she's still pretty good looking, umm, I donno – she doesn't really have that great of a personality but she's really, she's really fast, she knows her stuff, you could ask her the most obscure drink ... It's not like that feminine kind of attitude that people expect when you're like in your 20's and 30's. Like she's nice, but she doesn't charm her customers and if something does go wrong she screams, she uses vile language and screams. Last night someone ordered three shots and she was like “30?”, and they're like “yeah, 3-0”, and she's like “30, 3-0?”, and she brought over thirty shots and they're like “no, we only wanted three” and she lost it on the person – she started screaming, swearing...

Interviewees suggested that with respect to age, it is more acceptable and respectable for men to work in the industry, especially when they occupy managerial positions. Kate explained that her 32 year old female manager who also bartends frequently receives remarks from customers regarding her age. According to Jane, “It's different if you're gonna own, then it could be a career option”. She also stated “It

depends on who you are” and gave an example of a 60 year old male bartender employed at the most prestigious restaurant in the city.

### **Exercising Resistance**

As active agents in the work process, workers draw and reinforce boundaries of what they define as acceptable or unacceptable behavior, in which case the tip amount or the job itself is no longer important, but rather, a statement of resistance or “fighting back” and reaffirming their agency becomes an important factor for maintaining their dignity and self-respect. Workers resist degradation and exercise power in many ways: from explicit forms such as quitting to more subtle micro forms of resistance, these practices produce, reinforce or contest existing values of status differences. Many women, for example accept advances that exploit their femininity for increased financial gain, which reproduces and legitimizes the power relations reflected by such behaviors. In instances where customers are rude or disrespectful towards workers, it has been suggested by informants that “defending” oneself is necessary in order to gain respect and maintain integrity. Kate explained “The line becomes blurred; you don't want to be unprofessional, but you don't want to let people walk all over you ... you gotta figure out the line you don't want to cross”. Monica stated “When people give you a hard time, the moment you mouth them off or stick up for yourself you gain more respect”. Joe described problematic customers as “bullies” and advised the best action to take is to “stand up to a bully”. As a female bartender reasoned:

I think because they test your limits, and once they see that you don't back down and that you hold yourself up and that you're way more stronger than they thought, and that you have your weapon – you're not there just to

take all this shit – especially with men, because they will test you ... That's why I'm not scared to be a bitch [Monica].

Monica's reference to a “weapon” refers to strength and exercising agency. Ritzer and Walczak (1986) state that exercising resistance involves “wrestling control” (as cited in Hall (1993: 456). Alec suggests that:

It's usually meant as a joke a lot of the time. So you gotta fire back at them. A lot of people feed off that. They're looking for your reaction ... if you look like you're affected by it then they'll keep going at you ... I've learned that if people are aggressive towards you, if you're aggressive towards them, then they'll back off.

As these informants suggest, “Proving oneself” or “proving one's strength” is thus essential to maintaining and exercising control and self dignity in this type of work environment. According to Carlo: “It's all about respect”, feeling insulted after a customer left him pennies as a tip. As a sign as resentment, he ran out after the customer, who had already walked down to the bottom of the stairs and shouted, “Excuse me sir, you forgot your money” and threw the pennies onto the street beside him.

Vanessa discussed an encounter she had with a European family during a busy day shift in a corporate-chain restaurant/bar she worked at. She stated that her customers “were not friendly from the get-go”:

... The father got very angry – went up to the hostess and aggressively threw empty cups into her hands and he said he was waiting thirty minutes for his kid's refills. After the hostess warned me, I immediately went up to him and apologized: “Sorry sir – I didn't realize that you wanted refills of Pepsi for your kids – I'll get the refills”. Then he started arguing with me but I tried to stay composed. I told him, “Sorry sir but you are overreacting – I am here now and will get you refills”. He started cursing at me, calling me a whore, in front of his kids! In front of my other customers! So I slammed the cups on the table and told him “You know what sir – I'm not going to get you refills because you are not treating me with respect – I'm a human being and I deserve to be treated with respect” [Vanessa].



She then rushed off to a private or 'backstage' area to compose herself. After she had calmed down, she apologized for the disruption to one of the nearby customers who were also a family and witnessed the scene. The customers to whom she apologized congratulated her for sticking up for herself and told her that they used the incident of what happened as an example for their kids: “No matter where you work you have to maintain respect and for yourself, if you're ever degraded in any way you need to stand up and not let them take away your dignity”. Vanessa stood up for herself because the customer had crossed an unacceptable boundary; consequently, this act of resistance was admired by some of the other members of the audience, and she was perceived as a positive role model. Vanessa's example demonstrates that individuals employed in the service industry constantly deal with impatient, demanding and trivial situations and furthermore, illustrates how social status differences of the workplace enable customers to feel that they have the right to treat servers in a disrespectful manner. Vanessa's many years of experience in the industry may have given her the confidence to stand up for herself. Workers with less experience may not have had the 'guts' to stand up for themselves, or alternatively, may have quit on the spot.

Alec described how he dealt with a conflict he had with a male (friend) customer:

Probably my worst day as a bartender – there's this really really good customer, well known by everyone ... popular guy in the city, we were supposed to go on vacation together and a month and a half before that, I couldn't go anymore – I was moving out and everything at the same time. I emailed him and said, “Sorry, I can't go with you, I have to be here...” I get to the bar one day and he's there and he's wasted and then he starts swearing at me, every time I went near him at the bar he's like “F. you, fuck you ...” every time I went near him. Every time. I didn't know what to do. I was just near him I didn't even talk to him. He's just like: “Fuck you. You're ugly. You're an ugly piece of shit”. I couldn't work you know? It's

all I could think about. I was trying to ignore him. So I went right up to his face walked by and told him, “Listen! How old are you? You're acting like a 16 year old. Just wake up, what's your point?” And he just shut up from there. Sometimes you just gotta let them know. It was terrible though I couldn't even work man, it was just too much.

Customers can be rude and insulting and comments and curses can have a profound influence on a worker's emotional state and identity. Alec's experience demonstrates the profound emotional impact that interactions at work may have on both customers and employees alike. One informant explained that one of her customers told her that she “needed a nose job”. She stated that it is “Upsetting to hear comments like that, or when you just broke up with your boyfriend and maintain a smile on your face afterwards”. Bartenders and servers may be treated as 'scapegoats', (Hearn and Stoll 1975: 110) and are often are expected to give psychological advice or listen to their customer's problems; as Monica noted, “sometimes they have no other outlet”. Interviewees have suggested that “playing their game” and “battling them with kindness”, and reverse psychology proves as useful techniques:

You have your own power, you have your beauty, you have your body, you have your strength – forget all of the other bullshit: you have your strength. You could so easily take control, just gradually reinforce that you are the boss, you already are the boss but you have to reinforce it to people in a nice way and the way to do it: convince them to convince you that they know that you're the boss, it's like reverse psychology but you can't think about it, it just has to happen and it does happen naturally. That's what's happened to me over the years [Joe].

Joe explains that exercising techniques of resistance such as reverse psychology is a skill which service workers develop over time. According to Anna:

You can stick up for yourself in certain ways, you just have to know how. I'm a big fan of ... the “oh yeahhh, no problem”, your tone is telling them

their fucken assholes without telling them ... you don't want to sacrifice your job, so you just find other ways.

Another technique involves “taking control right away”:

As soon as the person walks in, “Hi, how are you? I'm Joe ... whatever you need”, but also, “this is my place, I'm Joe”. It all comes in the same way – but then I smile behind it. Last week I had these drunk guys, after the hockey game, they came in, Canadians just won, and some guy blows a horn. I say, “No horns!” He does it again, and I yell – I just stop and say “No fucken horns in my bar!” he said “wha-?” “No horns in my bar!” The guy stood there, for the rest of the night he never blew it once. You just stop it right away and that's it. You can't take power you gotta slowly, gradually hold on to it, because if you go in after it's already done it's not power, it's just cleaning up. And how to take power, how to take control, you don't wait till it's ineffective, you hit it right away.

Joe stresses the importance of exercising power from the beginning and gradually reinforcing or exercising it throughout the interaction, otherwise, as he suggests, it is ineffective: “it's just cleaning up”:

I usually stop it before it happens. In the bar, to me it's the staff that has the power – the women, the guys, you control it, you control your little space. You get a section you get four tables, that's your section, that's your kingdom that belongs to you. Whatever happens there is up to you. If you have a bunch of idiots you say, “Guys, sorry I'm not serving you, get out of my kingdom”. And they have to move, and if they don't move, you got muscle right behind you who will say, “Guys, and get out of here now!” And it's like this belongs to me. That bar is like my own private house and I treat it that way, and if you disrespect me and you disrespect my bar you're going out. And I think I kinda, give people that impression that if you do mess around in my house.

Taking control is analogous to enforcing and maintaining autonomy and authority. As Alec suggests, it is important to “let them know you're not afraid”, “otherwise they'll smell blood”. Joe suggests that control is “realizing you could only do one thing at a time – you don't get frazzled”.

Joe does not believe gender plays a role when it comes down to controlling workplace dynamics:

...Because I know some of the toughest, toughest women who worked in the bar, it's all in the way you do it, they've taken on mobsters, bikers, and walked away to talk about it, whereas I might not have cause I'm a guy, they would have shot me or beat me ... I find it's mostly in my tone. I've always basically been like this: this is my space and if you don't like it don't be here. It's my business. To a lot of people it's a game when you go into the bar business, you make all this money, you get drunk, you get high, you get laid, all that sort of stuff, but to me, fine, I like doing all those things too, but it's my business, it pays my rent, it buys my condo, it has my retirement fund going, it lets me make tips whenever I want. If you try to take that away from me, that's when you're going into my pocket that's when I'll get nasty or harsh [Joe].

Joe demonstrates a cynical attitude with respect to his customers: as he said if “they do it once, they will do it again”. The ability to maintain control and stand up for oneself without getting flustered describes the most successful people in the industry. Job autonomy is also influential in maintaining control in the workplace, as Joe states, he is basically his own manager, as he stated “It's the best bar I've ever worked in ... “It's mine, they leave me alone, it's like my own place”.

### **Responsibilities and Social Order: Alcohol Consumption and Liquor Laws**

Food service stresses virtues such as speed, courtesy, efficiency and attention to detail. But in the case of liquor service, legal liability demands one more quality: responsibility (Anonymous 2005)

Working in the bar is clearly not just “a game”. Bartenders, servers, and managers are legally responsible for maintaining social order and control and monitoring individual's alcohol consumption as well as ensuring their safety. Failing to do so may

result in serious legal penalties such as fines, suspension or loss of a liquor licence, and other charges that can have devastating consequences to workers and businesses.

Bartenders and establishments are legally responsible for ensuring that they do not serve alcohol to minors and are required to obtain valid government issued identification from all patrons who generally look under 25 years of age. Moreover, it is bartenders' and servers' responsibility to ensure that parents or other adults who are of legal drinking age do not order or give alcohol to their companions who are not. Bartenders must therefore actively monitor their customers at all times which could be difficult when they are serving a significant number of people.

Over-serving alcohol to drunk patrons is illegal. Recently, a bartender was charged with manslaughter for over-serving alcohol to a 22 year female in Calmar, Edmonton, Alberta in October 2007 whose blood tests indicated that she was five times over the legal limit for drinking and died from “acute ethanol toxicity” or alcohol poisoning (Macdonald 2008). After a thorough one year investigation, the bartender, the manager and the company that owns the bar were additionally charged with “criminal negligence causing death” (Macdonald 2008)<sup>1</sup>. There are countless other incidences where bartenders, managers, and businesses faced severe penalties for over-serving alcohol to already intoxicated patrons, and failing to take safety measures such as ensuring they get home safely. Considering many people go to the bar to “get drunk”, signs of intoxication are often ambiguous. Consider these general guidelines provided by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission:

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<sup>1</sup> See the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission [http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/pdf/liquor/Liquor\\_Laws\\_&\\_You.pdf](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/pdf/liquor/Liquor_Laws_&_You.pdf) for further examples of charges related to lack of regulation of alcohol consumption.

When intoxicated, some patrons become loud and boisterous, some get angry and want to fight, some cry, some become happy with excessive laughter and others merely fall asleep. Signs of severe intoxication include staggering, falling down, slurring of speech, watering of eyes, and loss of coordination. Intoxicated patrons are usually annoying to other patrons (2002: 9).

There is often no clear cut indication of intoxication as some people can “hold” their liquor better than others. Assessment is therefore determined based on the servers' judgement. Employees must therefore be acutely aware and monitor their guests at all times. When patrons are intoxicated, employees must refuse to serve them, confiscate their existing alcoholic beverages and make sure that they get home safely. Drunken individuals are described as “unable to reason”, and taking away keys and ensuring they get into cabs safely may not be an easy task. I witnessed a customer putting his keys into his car when I followed him outside after he refused to give me his keys and “assured” me that he would not drive home. It can also be a burden for servers who are legally liable for their guests safety as well as the safety of potential innocent third party bystanders who may be harmed as a result of alcohol negligence.

Interviewees have mentioned that refusal to serve drunk customers often results in conflict and arguments. Employees often have to “put up a fight” when refusing to serve drunk individuals, and when they make sure they will not drink and drive. Several instances were cited by informants in which they were “talked down to”, “cursed profanities” or physically threatened after “cutting off” (refusing alcohol to) customers. In some bars which do not employ bouncers, bartenders must additionally play the role of security guard which may make their tasks more difficult and problematic.

Just as some regulars can come to consider their bartender as a “good friend”, participant observation and interviewee data suggests that some consider the bar as a second home, and it is often difficult to get them to leave at the end of the night. This puts bartenders and servers in a contradictory position, as one interviewee stated:

Sometimes when you'll tell everyone, “OKAY, LAST CALL”, and it's weird what happens when you call “last call”, people become anxious, like they're gonna miss a flight or something if they don't get that drink NOW, before the clock strikes 2 or 3 or whatever! It's crazy – Throughout the night, you're sorta persuading people to have another drink so they could stay longer ... but at the same time, I've started to empathize with the regulars who have a clear drinking problem and actually try to convince them that they shouldn't have another drink [Erica]

Bartending is not just “fun and games” as implied in popular culture images. It may be a fun atmosphere and a “party life style”, but employees also have serious responsibilities. Bartending is generally an undervalued profession, however, individuals in this work environment have many responsibilities and play many roles in order to maintain control and social order. As demonstrated by the countless charges such as the recent charge of the Albertan bartender, they may also face serious penalties and this can result in devastating consequences.

## CONCLUSION

My investigation into the dynamics between men and women, servers, coworkers and managers, and customers and servers in the bar highlight the complex ways which individuals employ and exercise techniques of power and seduction in their relations with one another. Not everyone came to the same conclusions, they are therefore not in rank order, but all of my respondents did discuss them in one way or another.

Bartenders and servers, ultimately, offer a service in which they are essentially rated on the quality of the interaction. Since they depend on tips from customers for the majority of their income, they engage in hyper-exaggerated performances which require acting techniques and emotional labor to elicit feelings of contentment, generosity, and entertainment in their audience. This type of work therefore creates physical, mental and emotional challenges which significantly influence worker's identities and well-being. Individuals with an insufficient degree of detachment or alternatively, a high degree of investment of self in their work demonstrate higher levels of vulnerability to experiencing harmful psychological consequences. A female server, especially, is expected to smile, flirt, be sexy, friendly, and efficient, and will often present herself in such a way to maximize her income. But it is also an act. The waitress or bartender is also an actress and needs to carefully distinguish between self and work role.

Workers who invest high levels of self in their work role are likely to derive meanings of self and their livelihoods from their interactions at work. Inevitably they are likely to perceive interactions, both positive and negative more seriously based on the fluctuating extremes associated with the nature of the workplace. The danger of self-



seduction is when a server is so caught up in other people's beer goggle vision of themselves that they begin to lose their own sense of self, and to develop a false sense of self.

Conversely, workers with high levels of separation between themselves and their work personas are likely to experience alienation from the work process, which is likely to generate feelings of jadedness, cynicism, inauthenticity, and low levels of job satisfaction. The development of a jaded attitude as a defence mechanism to deal with the demands of the workplace is especially common for those who have been employed in the industry for a long period of time. Inauthentic relations, or, in other words, simulated expressions of genuine feelings are commonplace characteristics of interactions between individuals in the bar. These calculated and superficial displays are especially observable in performances of friendliness and flirtation as exemplified by the smile as a 'hypersmile'.

Individuals with high levels of autonomy in the workplace demonstrate the greatest levels of job satisfaction. This became very clear – and is perhaps not very surprising as it is well documented in relevant theory and research (Erickson and Ritter 2001; LaPointe 1991; Leidner 1999; Simmel 1950). Authenticity and autonomy are valued features of North American society, and individuals who frequently engage in inauthentic exchanges and have low levels of autonomy in the work place are thus likely to experience harmful psychological effects.

Job satisfaction is also evaluated based on the earnings of a particular shift. Many interviewees, especially part-time and transient employees, demonstrate an inconsistency

with regards to their levels of job satisfaction suggesting that working in this environment is a complex and challenging process. Additional factors including gender, age, personality, and years of experience also impact the level of self individuals engage in their work role, and thus influence their levels of job satisfaction and autonomy in their work.

The manager-server relationship is conflictory and is problematic, especially when managers attempt to influence control over their employees' bodies and emotions. Workers demonstrated hostility and resentment towards managers who abuse their authority and attempt to control their levels of autonomy. Standardized and routinized conditions diminish workers autonomy levels and causing them to feel more like “numbers” and “machines”. Other ways managers attempt to control their employees is demonstrated through appearance and demeanor rules (e.g. Uniforms), emotional scripts (“I hate when they tell us to smile, it makes me feel so stupid”), sexual harassment and inappropriate and disrespectful comments (“you waitresses are worth a dime a dozen”).

The sexual division of labor of the workplace, performance of emotional management as well as the consumption of certain alcoholic beverages constitute gendered performances in the bar. Men and women did not therefore only literally 'consume' beverages, but also consume the messages associated with the gendered and sexual display symbolic of the beverage and performance.

The bar, in addition to “doing gender” or reinforce gendered performances also “does class” as authority is conveyed through the absence of emotional displays and deference (Wharton 1999: 172). Higher status establishments mostly employ men and

reproduce conventional masculine emotional characteristics of detachment, authority, and professionalism. In addition, these characteristics are perceived as conveying more authoritative qualities which enable men to intimidate and to effectively control workplace dynamics. Individuals working in establishments of lower status or blue-collar clientele are more likely to engage in roles requiring increased and hyper-emotional displays and performances (e.g., therapist, chameleon, comedian...). Blue collar clients are described as treating their servers with more respect and deference. Interviewees also demonstrated that the bar is based on superficial ideals of age, or “young blood”, which is especially more pronounced and practiced based on the type of establishment. Older individuals, especially females in the industry are more likely to be stigmatized or judged.

Alcohol plays many roles in a bar. It symbolizes gendered, sexual and status meanings; it intensifies social interaction; it functions as a prop which may assist servers in their 'stage performances', and it may make the shift more enjoyable or easier to deal or cope with. Moreover, the consumption of alcohol can and does make the work more difficult for the bartender and server, as drunk patrons' lowered inhibitions are likely to bring out rude or violent behavior and expose backstage or hidden “faces” and personalities thus making them “unable to reason” and difficult to deal with. Job tasks thus require employees to exercise control and responsibility as they must maintain social order and carefully monitor and manage their customer’s alcohol consumption levels. Failure to do so may result in serious physical harm as well as legal liabilities. Bartenders and servers participate in complex roles and interactions which pose harmful

psychological and physical complications to both themselves and to others. Their job tasks are often undervalued in both research and the public eye. Individuals in this profession however, experience serious pressures and responsibilities that should be more respected.

Gender and status differences represent asymmetrical relationships which are exercised between men and women, servers and customers, employees, coworkers and management. Working in the bar is challenging on many levels. Servers have to exercise their power and control over every relationship and new encounter and do so in many ways. Masculine and feminine performances and techniques of 'body' and 'emotion work' prove to be important and profitable components of the hierarchal, sexualized and gendered theatrical characteristics of the bar. Men and women exercise power in different ways, and therefore power is also gendered but is not restricted to the asymmetrical limitations explicit in gender and status differences. Asymmetrical relationships suggest that power is not evenly distributed, however it is resisted and therefore is 'productive', both men and women of varying status differences have to "prove" or exercise their strength or agency in order to generate higher levels of respect when dealing with problematic customers. Techniques of resistance include the use of their emotions and bodies to convey messages or manipulate displays with "head games", flirtation, friendliness ("killing them with kindness"), reverse psychology, and intimidation. Explicit forms range from throwing petty tips back at customers to refusing service, and sticking up for themselves through verbal expressions, and quitting. As Elias Norbert (1982: 242), who discussed rising thresholds of shame in post-industrial societies

suggests, the civilization process, or, the transmutation of primitive behaviors into civilized social expressions has transformed power struggles from physical battles to emotional 'head games' where the war zone is just as dangerous (as cited in Jackson 1994: 123). Although the micro-politics of resistance do not elicit major and immediate changes on a macro-scale, it is important to acknowledge moments of resistance between individuals as essential sites of analysis of both men and women as active participants in the cycle of production, reproduction and contestation of existing North American values related to gender and status differences.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

#### Personal Background

Age, Gender

Type of bar currently working in? (i.e. restaurant/bar, jazz bar, hotel bar, nightclub). Is this a part time or full time occupation? Are you employed in any other jobs?

Type of bars worked in?

Other past occupations?

Why did you become a bartender?

Years bartending?

Day Shift? Night Shift?

Other job(s)?

Hobbies outside the bar?

Education level? Are you currently a student, or planning to go pursue further education?

#### Job Satisfaction (Implications of working in the bar scene)

How many years have you been employed in your current job?

What is the nature of your relationship with the other employees?

How much do you make? How much do you declare? Is it enough?

How long do you expect to keep this job? Is it a career option?

Advantages

What do you like most about this job? What other things do you like about being a bartender? (tips, girls, guys, friends)

What is the most money you've ever made in a shift? What was the reason for this (busy, generous customers, etc?)

Disadvantages

What do you like the least about your job? What other things do you dislike about the job?

What is the least money you've ever made? Reason (cheap tippers, slow night, etc)?

#### Presentation of Self/ Effects on Self

Gender differences

Do you feel that being male/female an advantage or disadvantage? Explain?

Personal front (does it reflect your role as a bartender, or your personality?)

What types of qualities do you feel makes you effective at your job?

Define/describe qualities of a "good bartender"?

What makes the night “successful?”

People come back?

Money?

Good time?

How does this job positively and or negatively impact you? (emotionally, physically, psychologically?)

### **Interaction** (Techniques of Negotiation and Seduction)

What types of things have you learned about bartending?

Do you employ certain techniques to maximize tips?

What do you define as “good service”

Techniques to deal with difficult customers (rude, drunk, demanding etc)

Take the initiative?

Flirt?

Any stories?

Common themes you talk about with customers?

Regulars?

Drink on the job? After the job?

Advice to give to other bartenders? (esp. those that are just starting out)

### **Resistance**

Resist harassment

Have you ever been harassed?

Have you experienced a situation where individuals talked ‘down’ to you?

What happened?

How frequently does this happen? Was the individual male/female?

People fighting?

Problems

What sorts of problems have you had with customers? (annoying customers, drunk, demanding)

How you dealt/controlled/resisted the situation? (call someone to help?

Manager? Bouncer? Dealt with it yourself?)

Have you ever left a job because of your manager? What happened?

Resistance stories?

Dealt with refusing to give somebody any more alcohol? What usually happens? (Something about role of the physical “bar”) – would you waiter/waitress? What is the difference?

Anything to add?