

Lallani, Shayan S. “Cultural Globalization at Sea: The Rise of the Modern Caribbean Cruise Industry.” *Globalizations* (2024): 1290-1308.

ABSTRACT: Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian—the largest cruise lines today—emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, advertising their packaged vacations to a growing audience of middle-class Americans interested in encountering cultural difference. This article argues that, beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the following decade, the cultural representations that these mass-market companies leveraged drew on Eurocentric understandings of Caribbean societies, homogenizing those countries despite attempts to showcase difference. These companies also reimagined global cultures Eurocentrically in onboard themed experiences. As both a product and agent of globalization, the mass-market cruise industry selectively deployed referents in ways that increased the appeal of cruising as escapism while reducing the likelihood of cultural confusion and reassuring passengers of their comfort. Through these processes, companies produced cruise ships as metaspaces while simultaneously expanding the construction of metaspaces to ports as they gained economic and political power in the Caribbean. This process resulted in the erasure of cultural difference.

KEYWORDS: Cruise industry; cultural encounters; Eurocentrism; cultural globalization; metaspaciality

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author thanks Mishall Lallani for her valuable suggestions. The author wishes to acknowledge that parts of this article appear in a book under contract with University of Illinois Press.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [grant number 767-2019-1678].

Please refer to the authoritative version when citing:
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2024.2343452>

INTRODUCTION

By the late 1970s, the mass-market Caribbean cruise industry was well on its way to maturity, a trajectory furthered by *The Love Boat*. At a time when nearly every American household had a television and some households had more than one (Cohen, 2004, p. 373), the show idealized cruising for its millions of viewers. It gained tremendous popularity quickly, with maritime historian John Maxtone-Graham describing it in 1980 as ‘an enduring Saturday night ritual for 37 million American television watchers’ (Maxtone-Graham, 1980). By featuring passengers that everyday Americans could identify with, *The Love Boat* chipped away at the idea that cruising was exclusively for wealthy retirees (Weaver, 2003, pp. 112–113).

As cruising gained popularity thanks in no small part to *The Love Boat*, Carnival Cruise Line (CCL), Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (RCCL), and Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL)—the largest lines today, which emerged in the late twentieth century—advanced marketing tactics that portrayed cruises as respites from the monotonous routines of daily life. Beginning in the late 1970s and continuing into the following decade, mass-market lines leveraged cultural referents specific to Caribbean countries on the itinerary—as well as international destinations—as part of this marketing strategy. In a partial turn away from cultural homogenization in the decade prior, companies advertised and recreated experiences purported to be authentic forms of the cultures represented.

In an increasingly globalized era, this marketing strategy followed tactics used by land-based corporations in the late twentieth century to commodify cultural referents for the American middle class, which had increasing curiosity about other countries (Samuel, 2014, pp. 104–106). However, as this article will argue, the cultural representations that mass-market cruise lines advanced to attract this middle class drew on Eurocentric understandings of Caribbean cultures,

homogenizing those countries despite attempts to showcase supposed cultural difference. So too were international cultural themes on cruise ships reimagined Eurocentrically—sanitized and tokenized for the consumption of passengers.

While late twentieth century globalization encouraged interactions between different cultures, between the late 1970s and 1980s mass-market cruise lines used mediation strategies to selectively interpret and deploy referents in ways that increased the appeal of cruising while simultaneously reassuring passengers of their safety and comfort despite confrontations with foreign societies. Through these mechanisms, cruise lines transformed their ships into metaspaces—enclaves in which tourists encountered cultural representations easily digestible for western audiences because companies undertook the labour of cultural interpretation for passengers, thereby reducing the risk of cultural confusion (Hottola, 2004; 2011, pp. 139–145). However, metaspace construction was also expanded to Caribbean ports as cruise lines increasingly asserted economic and political control in the region. Though the industry attempted to sell cultural otherness, these representations homogenized difference because they relied on corporate formulas that balanced exoticism with familiarity before being shown to passengers. CCL, RCCL, and NCL designed cultural representational strategies—aspects of cultures to be displayed, rendered invisible, or reinvented—based on their own profit mandates. As the resulting forms were filtered through corporate mediation processes, they erased cultural difference and paved the way towards cohesively themed onboard venues and port enclaves that did the same much more extensively in the decades to come.

METHODOLOGY

This article juxtaposes cruise advertisements with newspaper articles, traveller accounts, and memorabilia books to study historical the relationship between the mass-market cruise industry and globalization. Approximately 20 advertisements, 5 memorabilia books containing additional advertising material, and 40 newspaper clippings were examined for patterns in the industry's late-twentieth century cultural representational strategies. The strongest examples from this source base have been deployed here to illustrate these patterns.

Advertisements represent an authoritative lens into mass-market cruise industry profit strategies, revealing how companies wanted customers and competitors to perceive their brand and product. Aside from their value in obtaining ideological information, cruise advertisements also provide a range of important factual data: costs of trips at particular times; itineraries and their evolution, details of onboard accommodations and activities; conceptualizations of the travellers, staff, destinations, and locals; and the purpose(s) of the trip (i.e. romance, getaway, or exoticism). Advertisements were primarily obtained from digital newspaper and periodical archives including the *New York Times*.

Newspaper coverage of Caribbean cruise tourism is extensive, detailed, and provides a wealth of factual information not available elsewhere. This article uses historical newspapers to complement, and fill data gaps in, advertising literature. Newspapers based in Florida became more relevant after the mass-market US-Caribbean cruise industry's shift to that state as its base for embarkations—a transition that began in the 1970s and progressed over the coming decades. Even so, the *New York Times* remained an important database because cruise lines continued to spend large sums advertising Florida-based cruises to New Yorkers, incentivizing them, for example, by including flights to Florida in the cruise fare. Furthermore, *New York Times* staff

included prominent cruise travel writers who discursively constructed these vacations, as well as the Caribbean, for passengers. Though largely based in New York, these travel writers became national authorities on the cruise industry. Passengers throughout the country turned to them for information about cruise vacations. Finally, despite its name, the *New York Times* was a national newspaper. By the late twentieth century, the media giant had gained a reputation for journalistic excellence, in no small part owing to its in-depth coverage of both World Wars. In turn, the *New York Times* enjoyed a national audience (Diamond, 1993). Focusing on the *New York Times* ensured robust and consistent data over the study period through advertisements and travel columns that targeted not just New York City residents, but a national readership. These factors informed the article's focus on the *New York Times* over Florida-based newspapers.

Other print materials produced by cruise lines were also used to study how companies represented their brands and products to the public. CCL, RCCL, and NCL each produced memorabilia books, sold to Americans interested in cruising. Featured in these books was information about port enclave infrastructure, which this article uses to study the rise of multinational chains in those spaces. Similarly, each cruise line supplied customers with print materials before they debarked at Caribbean ports. These publications influenced how passengers toured ports, where they spent their money, and how they perceived local cultures. By analyzing brochures and magazines such as NCL's *Voyages*, this article offers a lens into company representations of Caribbean countries, mediation processes, and profit strategies.

Using cultural mediation strategies as an analytic to examine the above sources, this article studies how the creation of metaspaces—both onboard and at Caribbean ports—facilitated sanitized cultural encounters.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CULTURAL THEMING ON MASS-MARKET CRUISES

During the late 1970s, maturing cruise companies continued to invest in newer, bigger ships and expanded itineraries, all the while competing against one another and resorts alike to secure middle-class dollars. In response to industry growth, ports in Florida and the Caribbean invested millions in infrastructural upgrades annually (Clarke, 1970; Stansfield, 1977; “New Seaport Passenger Terminal to Open in Miami,” *New York Times*, 29 December 1968). At the doorstep of the decade’s end, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian showed little sign of slowing their growth. In fact, Port of Miami director Carmen Lunetta predicted that 1.5 million passengers would sail from the city in 1980—250,000 more than 1979—(Maxtone-Graham, 1980) many of them from the Big Three mass-market lines.

As the US-Caribbean mass-market cruise industry continued to expand its influence, it relied on the accumulations of economic globalization to reap profits. Proceeds from the exploitative practices brought forth by flags of convenience—the registration of cruise ships in select nations for economic benefits, often resulting in unfavorable labour conditions for seafarers—were used to build still more sophisticated ships in the late 1970s. Despite congressional concerns with these practices in the earlier half of the decade, they only continued to grow more prominent as cruise lines leveraged flags of convenience to fill ships with international labourers. Jeraldine Saunders, creator of The Love Boat, even wrote of the international dining and entertainment staff that passengers would encounter (Saunders, 1978, pp. 47–51, 72–73).

Yet, the cruise industry’s financially motivated decisions had cultural implications. Saunders described how the ethnicities of waitstaff could impact the type of service received, ‘Many [waitstaff] come from countries more family-oriented than ours, so they fuss over the

needs of children and treat elderly folks with extra dignity' (Saunders, 1978, pp. 21–23).

Though, as implied by Saunders, the outcome of having an internationally diverse restaurant staff was positive, the guide nevertheless attributed specific character traits to entire countries and the people therein, shaping how readers would view cultural others during the cruise and the perceptions they would take home after the experience. The publication also conditioned passengers to expect exoticism from entertainment staff, noting that, if the ship had personnel from a nation famous for its folk music and dances, there may be a crew show wherein staff dress 'in the costumes of their native land' and entertain passengers (Saunders, 1978, pp. 47–51, 72–73). The remark inaccurately suggested that entire cultures and their histories could be reduced to singular costumes, while simultaneously implying that these cultures existed to entertain western audiences.

Thus, by the late 1970s, mass-market cruise lines were simultaneously products of globalization and interpreters of its cultural accumulations. While an increasingly interconnected world allowed the American middle class to encounter representations of other cultures in daily life at unprecedented speed, those iterations were always mediated, and cruise vacations were no exception. As the historian Jeffrey M. Pilcher shows in his work on the reimagination of Mexican cuisine through its global circulation by American expats,¹ power relations are central to the construction of cultural identities. Actors with greater social, economic, and political capital have more agency in shaping cultures as well as the terms of engagement. Cruise lines—alongside popular media (guidebooks, newspapers, and television shows)—filtered which cultures reached tourists and shaped how passengers would perceive them. Mediation involved excluding certain cultural forms from the vacation experience, while selectively constructing the cultures that were included. The construction process began when one began to consider a cruise,

for instance via advertisements that shaped cultural expectations, but continued once passengers boarded the ship through themed entertainment options and amenities that homogenized, tokenized, and ultimately sanitized the cultures represented to balance palatability with the exoticism required to evoke distance from daily life.

The installation of tokenistic themes on these vessels can be understood through sociologist Mark Gottdiener's work on the proliferation of themes in mid-twentieth-century American society when, as he argues, companies and their advertising agencies strategically deployed symbols to improve the product's entertainment factor as well as the memorability of brands, thereby shaping consumer product choice and increasing profitability (Gottdiener, 2019). While fantasy themes are the most well-known variety—they are famously found in Disney parks, toys, and movies (Bryman, 2011)—so too did corporations use cultural themes to target consumers increasingly interested in sampling difference, a key facet of the ethnic revival and globalization (Gabaccia, 2000, pp. 149–174; Halter, 2000). This trend gained traction in consumer advertising during the 1980s by which time brands across a variety of industries experimented with cultural theming. For example, as Gottdiener notes, it was for this that the Italian-American restaurant chain Olive Garden gained notoriety (Gottdiener, 2019, p. 79).

Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian drew on these land-based trends, simulating encounters with global societies using cultural theming throughout their vacation packages beginning in the 1980s. Mass-market cruise lines held considerable influence in determining which cultures were visible to passengers on cruise vacations, while the use of themes allowed companies to selectively highlight, mask, or invent aspects of the cultures replicated. However, because the installation of successful cultural themes relied on arranging built environments and scripting labour (Weaver, 2006), the cruise line's ability to mediate encounters between

passengers and other cultures directly depended on its control over a given space. Therefore, cruise companies had significantly more autonomy to mediate these interactions onboard than at ports. While, in this decade, mass-market cruise lines sought to market cultural difference, the process of mediation continued to reproduce Eurocentric understandings of other cultures that had homogenizing tendencies.

SIMULATING MULTICULTURALISM ON THE OCEAN

The interactions with symbols of global cultures onboard mass-market cruise ships that Saunders described of the late 1970s intensified in the 1980s. CCL, RCCL, and NCL increasingly used references to international cultures in advertisements and onboard vessels. In doing so, they sold the cruise experience as multicultural. In reality, these cultural referents were pastiches that relied on reinvention or fabrication—consequences of decontextualization and appropriation processes that cultures underwent as a result of globalization. By no means did cultures displayed onboard cruise ships exist in harmony or receive equal representation. Rather, cruise lines selectively chose which countries or regions were worthy of display and the terms upon which passengers would encounter them—vital to the construction of a product that balanced the exoticism needed to evoke distance from daily routine with an overall atmosphere of social and physical comfort. Cruise lines mediated these interactions because, while many Americans were becoming more interested in sampling cultural difference, they were also just becoming comfortable with the diversity that emerged as a product of globalization. Vacationers enjoying escapism were especially opposed to hearing about the poverty, inequality, and social issues impacting the Caribbean islands they were visiting because these realities betrayed the fantasy of the cruise experience, at least until slum tourism gained enough popularity to encourage the offer of dedicated tours to impoverished neighbourhoods. For the time being, however, most

consumers shunned products perceived as too foreign. For the cruise industry, such a perception would dissuade valuable first-time and repeat customers—the former reading a cruise advertisement promising an overly unfamiliar vacation experience, and the latter having experienced it on their trip. Balance needed to be achieved while ensuring that cultural themes served to reduce the monotony of cruising by entertaining the maximum number of passengers possible.

Writing of his Caribbean cruise onboard NCL's Norway in 1981, journalist James Holloway stated that the ship contained 'touches of the United States, France, Norway and the Caribbean'. In the previous decade, travel writers tended to emphasize the modernity of a mass-market liner's built environment. Americanised modernity became a theme used to construct and advertise cruise vacations (Lallani, 2023, pp. 69–110), and Holloway did not completely digress from this characterization. In fact, he mentioned some of the key tenets of postwar modernity—the ship's 'air conditioned comfort', colour television in staterooms, and the appearance of a celebrity on each voyage (Holloway, 1981). However, Holloway's description gave equal attention to the other countries that NCL used to theme onboard space. For instance, Norwegian installed 'a colorful expanse of artificial glass fringed with exotic plants in pots', perhaps to evoke Caribbean foliage, just as entertainment included 'a West Indian Steel Band'.

Nevertheless, referents on the Norway were carefully selected to reflect an 'international' characteristic that passengers would already be familiar because the symbolic associations that NCL used had been made through popular culture long ago, and repeatedly circulated through media representations since. Its International Deck, for example, contained main promenades evoking prominent symbols of western capitalism. NCL even named them Fifth Avenue and Champs-Elysees, evoking the commercial hubs in New York and Paris respectively. Each of

these promenades housed shops with an array of goods from around the world. Norway's International Deck and the discursive construction of its environment evidences a shift away from the use of American modernity to theme spaces in the previous decade, towards western modernity to do the same. NCL passengers shopping onboard consumed the fruits of postwar modernity in much the same comfort as they would on a cruise in the last decade—in this case, in 'an enclosed deck where one strolls in air-conditioned comfort past glamorous boutiques'. The difference was that NCL's discursive construction of the experience through geographic referents rendered the experience 'international' rather than simply 'American'. This marketing tactic was advanced in an era when the American masses were exposed to global cultures—and culturally themed advertising—at home as a complement of globalization, and it became profitable for NCL to do the same (Holloway, 1981; Oldham, 1986; Sitomer, 1982). As such, though the cruise line attempted to construct an International Deck, it ultimately promised a westernized vision of international diversity which offered little room to showcase the diverse cultures that comprised the Global South, or even the Caribbean region through which the ship sailed. Thus, NCL produced the ship as a floating metaspace where passengers encountered shallow yet easily understandable cultural referents prepackaged for their consumption rather than any meaningful cultural contact.²

In that same year, NCL released a series of advertisements encouraging overworked readers to seek respite in the Caribbean. 'Let us take you away from your everyday routine', one such advertisement in the Miami Herald exclaimed.³ The ship would transport passengers '[t]o a special world where you see new sights, hear new sounds, enjoy new pleasures, and taste a new and different kind of freedom. A world where you can throw away the clock'. The plea appealed to middle-class Americans who had grown tired of the rhythms of capitalist modernity—to

‘people on the go’ who, through a NCL cruise, could enjoy ‘a long-awaited chance to unwind and catch up with themselves’.

While NCL had used advertisements of a similar persuasion to convince the masses to cruise in the decade prior, they had also discursively constructed their ships as symbols of modernity in those same documents. These ships certainly continued to offer passengers the comforts of postwar American living, but this was no longer the dominant theme in their marketing. Instead, when passengers ‘Let [themselves] go’, it would be ‘To the Caribbean of [their] choice’. Though on the surface this headline acknowledged that countries on the itinerary were culturally different from one another, suggesting a shift away from homogenizing tendencies, a closer analysis reveals that the document nevertheless commodified those cultures even when it sought to differentiate between them. This process was evident in how the cruise line represented the countries on its itineraries. Each of the four cruise packages was themed: St. Thomas, Nassau, Great Stirrup Cay (the latter of which was described as ‘an uninhabited Out Island’) made up ‘Playground of the Caribbean’. San Juan, St. Thomas, and either Nassau or Puerto Plata depending on the time of year were ‘Caribbean Favorites’. Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, and Great Stirrup Cay were ‘Mexican Fiesta’. Finally, ‘The Other Caribbean’ was made up of Cozumel, Grand Cayman, Ocho Rios, and Great Stirrup Cay. The organization of these distinct itineraries into themes implies that the countries in each had much in common. This was rarely true. For instance, even though Playa del Carmen and Cozumel were both in Mexico, the inclusion of Great Stirrup Cay on ‘Mexican Fiesta’ seemed misplaced given that it was a part of the Bahamas. Instead, these themes homogenized otherwise diverse countries under vague and equally problematic headings such as ‘Playground’, a label that—as applied to

early-twentieth-century Caribbean tourism—has its own history of US hegemony in parts of the region (Henthorne, 2018, especially pp. 3–16; Moruzzi, 2008).

NCL also included onboard activities that it represented as inclusive of Caribbean cultures. It is telling, for instance, that the cruise line promised a Caribbean revue, Calypso night, and Jamaican entertainment on its ships, whereas ports remained spaces for beach parties, snorkeling, and touring waterfalls and rainforests rather than cultural excursions. NCL arranged for these encounters onboard rather than at port because it had complete control of the former space, and significantly less control over the latter. Onboard, the company iterated Caribbean cultures on its own terms—through referents that passengers would easily understand and consume in the safety of a modernized enclave of western comfort. Despite this corporate mediation, NCL marketed its cruises as worldly experiences that passengers purchased to discover new worlds without ever leaving the ship. In reality, these themes served to keep passengers entertained in a metaspace merely simulating encounters with other societies. While there was some attempt to differentiate cultures from one another, these cultures remained sanitized products for passengers to experience as a means of escaping from the monotonous rhythms of daily life.

‘Mexican Fiesta’ was the exception to the rule, as it explicitly marketed culturally oriented activities throughout the cruise vacation.⁴ NCL created another advertisement following the ‘Let yourself go theme’ specifically for its Mexican Fiesta cruises. ‘Experience the sights, sounds, and flavors of Mexico, on board as well as ashore’,⁵ it exclaimed in a promise of supposed cultural immersion through engagement with a multisensory experience. ‘On board you’ll have a chance to sample Mexican dishes and sip margaritas. You’ll be serenaded by strolling mariachi musicians and thrill to a Mexican Mardi Gras and folkloric singers and

dancers'. This advertisement built on a long history of entrepreneurs commodifying Mexican cultures, but also sanitizing them for resale to western audiences. It was American businesswomen who popularized their own conceptualizations of Mexican food for tourists in late nineteenth-century San Antonio, just as corporations mass-produced chili and canned tamales soon thereafter. American expats took their understandings of Mexican cuisine abroad in the postwar era, opening restaurants across the globe. By this time, the representations of Mexican fare that American entrepreneurs had constructed had gained hegemony both nationally and internationally, relegating the cultural practices of Mexican migrants to the peripheries—a trend that only reversed itself in the final decades of the century (Pilcher, 2017).

In much the same way, NCL used its power as cultural mediator to define Mexican identity for its clientele—deciding which Maya artifacts would be featured in or excluded from its onboard museum, serving so-called Maya dishes in its restaurant,⁶ and ultimately commodifying these references in an era when culturally themed products were becoming increasingly popular amongst middle-class American consumers. Because this was a space where NCL had absolute control, it was able to selectively install referents that supported the leisurely atmosphere of a cruise vacation—experiences that evoked difference from daily routine without wandering into the realm of unpalatable. Its control allowed it to sanitize even some of the culturally foreign activities that it constructed for passengers. For instance, the cruise line dedicated one evening to the showcase of Maya culture, installing a 30-foot model of a Maya pyramid and a model Maya village for passengers to interact with. The festivities also featured a simulated sacrifice of the cruise director (Kidd, 1981).⁷ While NCL presented human sacrifice as a part of Maya religion unique to that culture (Tiesler & Cucina, 2007), the practice was by no means limited to the Maya. Numerous European cultures had similar traditions. For example, the

Roman Empire made a sport of human sacrifice using gladiator fights. Greek plays also portrayed sacrificial rituals. By using human sacrifice as a representational aspect of Maya religion, NCL turned a blind eye to European examples of the same, in turn advancing Eurocentric conceptions of non-European societies as violent and uncivilized. In different circumstances, NCL's activity was likely to have been perceived as overly dark by many onboard. However, NCL's power as cultural mediator instead allowed the company to cast the experience in an almost humorous light—as but one part of the night's theme. The activity took place onboard—a culturally and technologically westernized space, promising passengers safety and comfort. Passengers would likely have viewed the ritual in a darker light had it been carried out on a shore excursion.

In attempting to sell an understanding of Mexican culture, NCL emphasized Maya civilization, homogenizing and anachronizing the country. Seemingly invisible on this cruise was the place of other indigenous societies in the history of Mexico. Further, the extensive inclusion of references to an ancient civilization on a cruise meant to celebrate Mexico presumed the lack of a modern culture, save for the stereotyped inclusion of mariachi and margaritas. Based on the advertisements and travel columnist Vernon Kidd's description of the cruise (Kidd, 1982), passengers were not informed about the Spanish conquest, resistance to colonial rule, independence, and the development of distinct regional and national identities. Instead, the Mexican Fiesta cruise was overwhelmingly about the Maya. Activities on the cruise left passengers to associate Mexico with premodernity, and to view the country as anachronistic, perpetuating a Eurocentric understanding of cultural difference.

While the experience was discursively constructed around binaries, tourists also engaged in activities associated with empire. For example, passengers participated in a simulated

archaeological dig onboard the ship. Archaeological activities situated in countries that experienced colonialism have inherent imperialist connotations because they often involved the plundering of a country's cultural resources by outsiders (i.e., European colonial forces) (Lydon & Rizvi, 2016). This onboard activity exemplifies Pratt's archaeologization of humans. Participants encountered symbols of indigenous Mexican inhabitants from a bygone era—as opposed to representations of modern cultures—blurring the lines between past and present (Pratt, 2007, pp. 130–132). Simulated as it was, the dig legitimized the authority of actors from the Global North to unearth, study, interpret, and possess artifacts from the South. So too would purchasers of shore excursions explore Maya ruins at Tulum, Coba, and Chichén Itzá, following in the footsteps of Spanish conquistadors fascinated by those sites in prior centuries. However, Kidd labelled the shore excursions 'optional, and maybe even redundant', implying that the 'enormous show-and-tell' of Maya culture onboard would suffice as a substitute for exploring the port (Kidd, 1982). For *New York Times* readers, the journalist legitimized a multinational corporation's authority to construct sanitized pastiches of local cultures for the traveling American masses.

NCL selectively leveraged symbols of Mexican culture that had already become popular through circulation and reinvention via mass media avenues, in turn maximizing relatability and engagement. Excluded, on the other hand, were aspects of Mexico's diverse cultures that may well have been more accurate but were simply not perceived as interesting enough to entertain passengers. NCL presented a decontextualized collage of Mexico that cherry-picked representations from across time and space based on the company's own understanding of what would be popular with their middle-class, mostly white, American clientele, and thus most profitable. The cruise line's cultural production process in turn erased regional differences and

cultural change over time. Furthermore, by implicitly presenting cultural interactions at ports as redundant to those constructed in the onboard metaspaces, the cruise line improved its position to capture revenue from the increasingly captive audience.

Though mass-market lines had tremendous influence in shaping the tourist gaze, so did the popular media (Urry, 2002). Diana Loercher, correspondent for the Boston-based *Christian Science Monitor*, framed NCL's 'Mayan Magic' cruise for readers of that publication (Loercher, 1983). She stated that Caribbean cruises have tended to offer their clientele 'escapism', attracting a passenger base looked down upon by 'Serious vacationers who travel to learn about different cultures'. Loercher promoted the Maya-themed voyage as a bridge between these ventures—'a cruise...that combines escapism with intellectual adventure'. The journalist equated this intellectualism with a genuine attempt to understand the cultures being toured. For fees ranging from US \$50 to \$65, passengers used transportation provided by the cruise line to take 'unique shore excursions...to the Mayan ruins at Chichén Itzá, Tulum, and Coba'. According to her account, NCL educated its passengers on the ship before excursions took place through multimedia shows about Maya society,⁸ which took place in a replica Maya temple that the cruise line erected onboard.⁹ However, Loercher also persuaded future cruisers to be knowledgeable about locals before the cruise itself (Loercher, 1983).

Loercher's account shows the processes through which the tourist gaze is constructed. As sociologist John Urry argued, the tourism industry discursively frames how travellers are to view the sites that they encounter while abroad through sets of binaries: as objects of the collective or individual gaze; as historical or modern; and as authentic or inauthentic (Urry, 2002). Loercher represented Maya ruins as objects that one learned about with fellow passengers, 'authentic' insofar as they were historical objects representative of societies past that

contrasted tourist sites of ‘synthetic origins’, in her example Cancun. However, Loercher almost invariably delegated western actors with authority and agency to ‘educate’ travelling Americans about Maya culture. The exception were tour guides ‘of Mayan descent’ on some tours, an inclusion that framed the trip as an opportunity for insider cultural knowledge while commodifying Maya identity.

NCL and travel writers constructed a thoroughly mediated view of Mexico for passengers before they even took shore excursions and encountered the country’s inhabitants. It was through this sanitized lens that passengers would tour Mexico and make demands of locals, owing to which locals selectively deemphasized parts of their own cultural identities while promoting or inventing other aspects that the tourism industry deemed valuable. Valuable, in this instance, meant anachronistic, turning local cultures into objects of collective ‘intellectual’ study through a mimicry of the archaeologist’s gaze. Loercher evoked anachronism by framing the Mexican ports on offer as premodern—as spaces for escapism from daily life, though extreme variations of escapism would have been uncomfortable for some passengers. ‘These excursions are not for the impatient’, she told readers, ‘A word of warning’, to those accustomed to the fast-paced living of postwar modernity, the conveniences of which were nowhere to be found among the ‘narrow stairs’ and ‘dank, tight spaces’ of the Maya ruins being toured. The journalist also distanced Mexico from modernity by designating the cruise line as the centre of knowledge production about these historical societies, a Eurocentric framework portraying the Global West as the producer of historical knowledge and the East as the recipient of these transmissions (Blaut, 1993). Even on the tour bus, Loercher tells us, passengers listened to a tape of NCL’s multimedia presentation on the Maya (Loercher, 1983), while NCL-produced guidebooks educated them about the culture,¹⁰ overriding the agency of the local tour guide to iterate their

own cultures and giving the cruise line almost complete authority over constructing passenger understandings of the destination. These excursions, offered and mediated by the cruise line, also provided ‘sanitary lunch box[es]’, the emphasis on ‘sanitary’ implicitly casting anything ordinarily available there as unsanitary. The bus was airconditioned, which, Loercher says, ‘helps compensate for the monotony of the ride—vistas of jungle and rural poverty’ (Loercher, 1983). The bus was thus cast as a space equipped with the comforts of western modernity—provided by the cruise line’s contractors and contrasting its surroundings. The vehicle separated passengers from supposedly untamed nature and impoverished locals, descriptors that themselves drew on Eurocentric binaries produced in part through colonial travel accounts.

Through this framing, the actual daily lives of Mexican inhabitants were implied to be unexciting aspects that one ignored while the bus drove to the Maya ruins. Theming centred aspects of Mexican heritage that the travel industry deemed to be most profitable, while erasing ‘monoton[ous]’ aspects that were reality for some local inhabitants, including jungles and poverty. This was similar to onboard processes that made cruise port educational seminars more entertaining by inventing themes to decorate the spaces where these events took place. The attraction was not Mexican culture, but sanitized tours of Maya history constructed through western capitalist perspectives. Even in their attempts to highlight the unique aspects of Mexican cultures, both Loercher and the cruise line resorted to Eurocentric binaries. The cruise industry’s overrepresentation of Maya culture in Mexican shore excursions relegated the country’s contemporary cultures to the periphery, instead perpetuating anachronisms advanced by western actors framing their representations as authoritative.

TRANSFORMING THE CARIBBEAN FOR CRUISE PASSENGERS

As the mass-market cruise industry encouraged its clientele to use shore excursions (especially culturally oriented ones) as a way to meaningfully experience host societies, the Caribbean saw a rapid infrastructural transformation over the 1980s to support the comforts and demands of these tourists—both at ports themselves, but also at the destinations they frequented. Local administrators and entrepreneurs invested hundreds of millions (USD) in cruise infrastructure to attract cruise lines and their passengers.¹¹ However, Caribbean governments could not always afford to fund such developments themselves, especially as larger cruise fleets—comprising increasingly larger ships—imposed costly logistical requirements on host nations.

These challenges paved the way for foreign actors to gain economic interest in tourism development projects, supported by the tenets of economic globalization. The most important foreign investment in Caribbean interests at this time was the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). The CBI began in the early 1980s and was meant to bolster Caribbean economies by creating jobs and foreign exchange earnings in the region. However, its overall objective was to encourage democratic influence in those nations. Communism was perceived as a major threat to the United States during the 1980s and communist influence being allowed to consolidate in the Caribbean was viewed with fear given the region's geographic proximity to the United States. Opportunities produced by the CBI encouraged private American investment in the region, especially as it pertained to tourism.¹² The initiative aimed to shift American perceptions of the Caribbean region to encourage tourism therein.

Yet, the initiative also proved beneficial to the mass-market cruise industry more specifically. Its mandates mentioned enclaves for cruise tourists, suggesting that the CBI had a role in developing those.¹³ It even received support from industry executives. Arthur W. Kane,

Vice President of Norwegian Caribbean Line, testified before United States Congress in 1983 as a representative of the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, expressing his ‘strong support for the Caribbean Basin Initiative’ because it would provide economic opportunity for ‘friendly nations whose development, for political and geographic reasons’ was connected to that of the American economy.¹⁴ Micky Arison, President of Carnival Cruise Lines, asserted before Congress that ‘Carnival is a strong supporter of the Caribbean Basin Initiative’.¹⁵ Both statements suggested that the mass-market cruise industry stood to economically and politically benefit from the CBI.

Foreign investment in the Caribbean and Latin America came from a variety of other sources. The World Bank provided a US \$14 million loan in support of a Mexican plan to build ports in four coastal regions in an effort to handle increasing sea traffic.¹⁶ The organization also helped the Dominican Republic in its transformation of Puerto Plata—a port city that exported sugar and tobacco to the United States—into a cruise destination. Puerto Plata was booming with mass-market cruise ships by decade’s end (Treaster, 1989). Similarly, Haiti planned to use US \$11 million in International Development Association (IDA) funding to expand and revitalize Cap-Haitien’s ports. The region served cruise ships but outdated and deteriorating port facilities negatively impacted traffic. IDA funding helped Cap-Haitien remain an attractive cruise destination, supporting by extension the increasingly tourism-oriented Haitian economy.¹⁷

These developments took place at the behest of western corporations selling leisure to the American masses and were supported through international investments, signaling the growing economic control and political leverage that foreign actors had in Caribbean spaces.

Development in the Caribbean was closely tied to western interests. Even the World Bank’s decision making has historically been led by western, industrialized nations through which those

countries imposed their ideological and geopolitical agendas onto the Global South. World Bank financial assistance routinely came with attached policy considerations, especially by way of structural adjustment programmes. The World Bank used these initiatives to impose a western style of development onto so-called Third World nations that they implied to be incapable of producing their own knowledge, in line with Eurocentric diffusionist traditions (Brohman, 1995). Caribbean development led by multilateral financial institutions often resulted in infrastructure that supported western interests, just as these developments supported US mass-market cruise tourism.

As the cruise industry gained economic control over their theatres of operation, they were in a more advantageous position to install themes portside, never more evident than in the case of private resorts. Starting in the late 1970s with NCL's acquisition of Great Stirrup Cay, these enclaves were a means for cruise lines to maximize their revenues with such incentives as reduced or nonexistent head taxes and company-operated concessions throughout port complexes. The ownership structure also allowed cruise lines to arrange built environments in these spaces on their own terms—usually in line with their passengers' cultural tastes and expectations. Royal Caribbean acquired the right to lease Labadee, a Haitian port, for 20 years, transforming it with an initial investment of US \$2 million (Cooke, 1985; Petrie, 1987). The company chose a 'secluded, private playground' theme for a port meant to balance escapism with western comforts. To meet the former goal, Royal Caribbean marketed the 'natural materials' it used to theme the space, 'power white sand. Jade green palm trees. And acre upon acre of bougainvillea blossoms'.¹⁸

Though there were some tokenistic offerings that referenced Haiti, for instance a native bazaar with 'prized Haitian ironwork, paintings, and woodcarvings', Royal Caribbean's

marketing of Labadee framed the private resort as an exclusive way for travellers to encounter a homogenized Caribbean picturesque. Cultural referents often had Eurocentric undertones. For example, the cruise line even described Labadee as ‘everything you’d imagine a lush, Caribbean paradise to be’,¹⁹ echoing the anachronizing language that European travel writers had used to frame the region for tourists over centuries past. Eurocentric understandings of regional cultures also shaped a make-believe enclave economy. Drinks and equipment rentals took the currency of doubloons, which passengers could buy on the ship before they debarked for Labadee, referencing the history of Caribbean piracy (Petrie, 1987) while ignoring any cohesive attempts to show passengers that they were in fact in Haiti. Indeed, RCCL even faced backlash for deemphasizing or allegedly misleading passengers about Labadee being located in Haiti in an attempt to distance the port from association with the crime, poverty, and political unrest that was impacting other parts of that country (Orenstein, 1997), while razor wire fences kept unauthorized locals out of the enclave.

Royal Caribbean physically themed Labadee and discursively constructed the enclave’s tropicity through advertising, but in the same breath reassured guests of the space’s familiarity, stating for instance that at this port one enjoyed the luncheon buffet just as they would ‘on one of the floating members of our fleet.’²⁰ The statement implied that the Haitian territory was but another part of a conglomerate of spaces under Royal Caribbean’s control. Joseph B. Treaster, writing for the *New York Times*, spoke of Labadee’s ‘paved stone walkways, information boots, perfect landscaping’, and the Americanised culinary offerings of hot dogs, hamburgers, and fried chicken. References to local cultures were tokenistic by comparison. There was ‘some of the flavor of Haiti;’ indeed, the workers who maintained the space and entertained cruise passengers, as well as the merchants, were Haitian. However, Treaster noted that Labadee contained ‘nothing

to suggest the country's bitter poverty or social problems' (Treaster, 1986). Richard Steck, a spokesman for Royal Caribbean, even said that Labadee was 'like a microcosm of the Caribbean without the things a passenger might find distasteful' (Treaster, 1987). For example, the souvenir market in Labadee contained 'sun hats and dresses, vibrant island art', and generic sculptures for sale rather than items specific to Haiti (Maxtone-Graham, 1988, p. 11). Steck's statement suggested that Royal Caribbean wanted passengers to conceive of Labadee as a genuine (though homogenized) encounter with the Caribbean. In reality, however, guests toured a tropical Disneyland where the cruise line used essentialized themes to invent symbols of local cultures—or perpetuate Eurocentric iterations thereof. Balanced with material familiarities and objects presenting a guise of security, Labadee was an entertaining simulation of the Caribbean rather than a 'microcosm'. It was the cruise industry's increasing control over ports that allowed it to mediate experiences therein for its passengers, in turn shaping how Americans viewed Caribbean nations.

In these ways, private ports like Labadee exemplified the extension of metaspaces to cruise ports themselves. As cruise lines gained economic power and, in turn, political influence, they were able to construct these sanitized enclaves under industry control. Therein, passengers were led to believe they were encountering Caribbean cultures. While this was accurate to a limited extent, much of the clientele's interaction with local inhabitants was orchestrated by Royal Caribbean, which decided how Labadee would be marketed, who sold merchandise there, and what was available for purchase. The cruise line undertook the labour of cultural interpretation for passengers so that the destination remained a space for relaxation oriented towards escapism. Furthermore, by inserting itself into—and displacing locals from—the service chain, the cruise line increased its capture of passenger spending. Such examples would become

increasingly commonplace in the coming years, even in ports that cruise lines did not own or lease.

MEDIATING PASSENGER PERCEPTIONS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Cultural mediation was ubiquitous on cruise vacations, even when passengers toured ports of call, where their understandings of local societies were shaped by booklets and brochures that cruise lines distributed amongst guests before they debarked at ports. ‘If you’re coming ashore with the idea that there’s nothing to do but lie in the sun, you’ve come to the wrong place...there’s plenty to do besides lying on the sand when you come ashore’, Norwegian told readers of one such booklet in 1988.²¹ In this statement the company appeared to oppose homogenizing representations of the Caribbean as a tropical picturesque, popular in mass-market cruise industry conceptualizations of the region in the previous decade. Nevertheless, the booklet was an arena for cultural negotiation in which representations were produced through differential power dynamics. As the producer and distributor of this booklet, Norwegian wielded uncontested power to define Caribbean cultures for its clientele, whereas the local inhabitants constructed as subjects of the tourist gaze were offered no agency in its pages.

Norwegian used its agency to perpetuate Eurocentric understandings of the Caribbean—the lens through which it framed many of the cultural activities it told readers about in the document. In discussing Barbados, the cruise line told readers, ‘The first thing you’ll notice is how like England Bridgetown is, with its proud British architecture. Even the countryside is similar, with its orderly hedgerows and rolling hills’. NCL asked readers to understand the independent Caribbean nation not through the cultures of inhabitants—practices produced through centuries of collision between indigenous inhabitants, imported slaves, and colonizers—but through the eyes of former British colonizers. NCL did construct Barbados as a space that

would offer passengers respite from the demands of modernity, for instance through ‘a Barbados Bombshell, a delicious drink that will carry you miles away from any civilization’. However, even in their exploration of the foreign, passengers were meant to understand Barbados as familiar first and foremost—a view that NCL accomplished by framing the island Eurocentrically. Even the ‘distinct Caribbean differences’ were glorified remnants of colonial conquests, such as tours of sugarcane plantations and cottonfields.²²

Similarly, while NCL told readers that Martinique ‘is a blend of Gallic and Caribbean charm’, little of their description elaborated on what that Caribbean charm might have been. Passengers touring Fort de France ventured ‘down narrow European streets’ with ‘tiny boutiques and cafes’, evoking for readers a quaint French town—a stereotype constructed through the tourist gaze. The cruise line iterated colonial ways of viewing Martinique, never more evident than when they promised, ‘very little has changed since Columbus called it “the most charming, delightful land in the world”’. If the bay, where ‘fishermen cast nets as they have for centuries’ was the ‘Caribbean charm’²³ that NCL wished to convey, the company sold its passengers iterations of Caribbean cultures homogenized through anachronisms.

A similar sanitization of European colonialism is evident in NCL’s framing of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which gained independence from Denmark in 1917 but became an organized, unincorporated United States territory thereafter. NCL began its description of St. Croix by telling readers of the ‘seven countries [that] have flown flags over this U.S. Virgin Island. England, Denmark, The Knights of Malta, Spain, France, Holland and America. Giving the island its colorful cultural blend’. While passengers touring St. Croix would see the result of historical collisions between these cultures before them, the section on St. Croix iterated for passengers a Eurocentric variety of creolization that failed to account for the contributions of

slaves from diverse African nations or even indigenous inhabitants. Instead, blackness was rendered nearly invisible as NCL encouraged passengers to experience a version of St. Croix sanitized through colonial European histories. Indeed, the text continued, ‘In the Dutch towns of Christiansted and Frederiksted, you can tour pastel-colored Victorian gingerbread buildings...Or walk the St. George botanical garden’,²⁴ the latter being a former sugarcane plantation.

The cruise line also used homogenizing anachronisms to theme destinations in the Mexican Caribbean as distinctly Maya. They told tourists visiting Playa del Carmen that one would ‘have to look to the past to find the real excitement of this simple little Mexican village. It’s the archaeological gateway to Tulum and Xel-Ha...much like a trip to the dawn of civilization. Of course, you have a very civilized ship to return to’. By representing the locality as a ‘simple...village’ devoid of civilization to be understood in contrast to the modernity of the ‘civilized ship’,²⁵ NCL guided the tourist gaze along a Eurocentric axis, encouraging their passengers to view Playa del Carmen through that lens. As the ship represented American modernity, this comparison perpetuated Eurocentric understandings of the Global West as bearer of civilization and its peripheries as recipients of it (Blaut, 1993). In advancing this comparison through popular, anachronistic understandings of the Mexican Caribbean via association with Maya civilization, NCL constructed an experience that passengers would easily recognize and be more likely to engage with. However, the experience did not promise a genuine cultural encounter, but rather a fabrication produced using a pastiche of symbols from across time and space, decontextualized and appropriated by a western corporation to simulate authenticity.

Norwegian’s cultural representation of cruise ports shifted away from homogenizing the entire Caribbean as sun and sand as had been common industry practice the decade prior, differentiating Caribbean cultures from one another as a point of advertisement. However, the

company constructed difference not through local cultures evolving in the context of postcolonial identity formation, but rather through Eurocentric views of the region that were produced during the colonial era and reinforced by the tourism industry thereafter.

By no means was NCL alone in using corporate literature to shape passenger perceptions of Caribbean nations. Carnival and Royal Caribbean produced commemorative books for various ships containing dozens of advertisements for shops in port enclaves, influencing how passengers toured the region (Carnival Cruise Lines, 1985, 1986). One such advertisement for a jewellery shop in Cozumel promised major savings and a massive selection of gems in language that appealed to middle-class American bargain-hunters, while also guaranteeing a ‘Certificate of Authenticity & Origin’ for shoppers that were wary of these deals (Carnival Cruise Lines, 1986, p. 142). The book contained similar advertisements for luxury boutiques and duty-free shops located at cruise ports across the Caribbean—Grand Cayman, St. Maarten, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica. There were also advertisements from regional tourist boards attempting to articulate their own cultures for passengers (i.e. Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and Curacao), as well as from local shops that could afford ad placement.

However, these local representations paled in comparison to those produced by companies seemingly interested in convincing passengers that Caribbean nations were homogenous tropical backdrops against which one could shop for luxury goods in the safety of the port enclave. Indeed, many of the companies that Carnival and Royal Caribbean represented in their books were affluent, international firms. Transnational chains that advertised to Carnival passengers in the Holiday book included the Swiss luxury watchmaker Ebel which had half a dozen authorized dealers across the Caribbean; the French designer Louis Vuitton, which had a location in St. Thomas; Japanese watchmaker Seiko, which sold to cruise passengers through

over a dozen authorized dealers in Nassau; and Swiss watchmaker Rolex, offered through Little Switzerland locations in St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. Martin (Carnival Cruise Lines, 1985). Royal Caribbean's book for *Sovereign of the Seas* similarly contained an advertisement for Rolex via Little Switzerland in St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. Martin, St. Barth, Aruba, and Curacao, as well as Cartier and Movado locations in St. Thomas (Maxtone-Graham, 1988). Luxury boutiques were overrepresented in cruise industry advertising literature because it was difficult for local advertising dollars to compete against the economic might, and thus representational power, of their transnational counterparts.

Both Carnival and Royal Caribbean advertised various transnational jewellery stores through their books. For instance, Royal Caribbean's book contained an advertisement for Denver-based Shane Company, now one of the largest privately-owned jewellers in the United States specializing in diamonds. Shane's St. Thomas location outlined their diamond procurement process, highlighting how it brought both quality and savings to customers. Owing to the economies of scale in which Shane purchased, the transnational company was able to 'undersell competition in...St. Thomas', even promising a 30-day money-back guarantee if the passenger was not completely satisfied. The guarantee was redeemable at the company's stateside locations in Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco, or Seattle, or even by mail (Maxtone-Graham, 1988). This advertisement exemplified a marketing strategy that transnational luxury chains often used to entice cruisers. Passengers buying through the cruise line's advertisers were given guarantees that locals simply could not compete with. Any concerns that one's money would be lost after leaving the Caribbean were addressed with the stateside moneyback guarantee. Along a similar vein, other transnational jewellers operating at Caribbean ports promised that customer service calls would be addressed by US-based call centres. These

guarantees—difficult for local companies to match—made passengers more comfortable with spending their money at transnational boutiques advertised through cruise lines.

Transnational luxury retailers thrived in Caribbean port enclaves, in part owing to their ability to pay the vast advertising fees that mass-market lines charged for direct access to their passengers. However, their presence in cruise port enclaves across the Caribbean served to homogenize because it discouraged local entrepreneurial representation. As a result, port enclaves looked more similar than different to one another no matter which country passengers toured. The overrepresentation of elitist chains in cruise industry marketing literature and at many ports suggested to passengers that the Caribbean was a space where they could shop for duty-free bargains against a sunny, picturesque backdrop, further stifling perceptions of cultural difference. While this process generated advertising dollars to further profit mass-market cruise lines, it also minimized the local impact of passenger spending in the Caribbean because those funds largely profited companies based in the United States and Europe.²⁶

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the mass-market US-Caribbean cruise industry used cultural difference, constructed both onboard and at ports, as a point of advertisement. These developments took place at a time when many Caribbean countries were seeking independence from colonizing nations. The resulting political and economic turmoil limited the abilities of these nations to narrate their cultures. The increasingly influential cruise industry leveraged its power to fill this vacuum, packaging sanitized iterations of Caribbean cultures for consumption by the American masses whose growing curiosity about other cultures was intensified by the dissolution of national borders as a tenet of globalization. The cruise industry mediated and even simulated encounters between passengers and foreign societies—before the cruise through

advertisements and travel writing, and during it using the arrangement of space. This trend continued in the coming decades, as the Big Three acquired competing cruise lines and increased their market shares.

In their construction of metaspaces both onboard and at Caribbean ports, cruise lines leveraged Eurocentric understandings of the world to choose which cultures passengers would be exposed to, and which ones would remain hidden. Companies selectively installed referents that signified cultural difference while muting aspects that middle-class American tourists may have perceived as unpalatably exotic. At many times, these processes were grounded in cultural simulation. These curatorial decisions carried out the labour of cultural interpretation for passengers, balancing novelty, comfort, and spectacle to attract new passengers and retain existing customers, in turn maximizing revenue. However, the process also homogenized cultures through a corporate formula seeking to maximize profitability. In these ways, the growth of mass-market cruising in the 1980s exemplified globalization's ability to increase both mobility and inequality. This case also demonstrates the homogenizing effects of globalization.

The findings of this study as they pertain to onboard experiences cannot be directly applied to non-mass-market cruise lines. In the coming decades, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian acquired many of the popular upscale cruise brands under their corporate banners (i.e. Cunard, Princess, Holland America, Seabourn, Celebrity, Regent Seven Seas), which allowed the Big Three to further expand their market reach. Luxury-oriented lines relied on cultural and geographic theming less than their lower-end counterparts in producing experiences for a more affluent passenger base. They also stopped at ports that were not accessible to the larger, mass-market ships. The analysis of high-end cruises, their evolution, and their modes of cultural engagement with Caribbean societies, is deserving of its own study.

The results of this study may not readily translate to regions outside of the Caribbean. The modern cruise industry's relationship with Caribbean countries is deeply embedded in a long history of western exploitation of the so-called New World. Caribbean tourism grew from those roots, which continue to shape the region's cultures, economies, and dependence on tourist dollars. The small size of Caribbean nations, coupled with this long history of colonialism, has uniquely shaped the cruise industry's patterns of economic, political, and cultural activities in this region. Finally, while this article sought to illuminate the mechanisms through which the cruise industry represented Caribbean cultures, as Jamaica Kincaid reminds us (Kincaid, 2000), local communities have the agency to respond to such Eurocentric constructions. There has been profound local resistance against the Caribbean cruise industry in the late twentieth century, meriting further studies focused on these events.

NOTES

1. Pilcher (2017) is concerned with the globalization of Mexican food, a process that entailed the redefinition and deployment of the cuisine for different purposes over time. For the role of American expats in this process, see pp. 163–188.
2. On touristic metaspatiality, see Hottola (2011).
3. ‘Let Yourself Go! To the Caribbean of Your Choice’, *Miami Herald*, 11 October 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.
4. While acknowledging that Mexico is not formally in the Caribbean, cruise lines marketed Mexican cities bordering the Caribbean Sea as part of Caribbean itineraries.
5. ‘Let Yourself Go! To a Mexican Fiesta’, *News-Press* (Fort Meyers, FL), 8 November 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.
6. ‘Norwegian Line Tries Mexican Motif’, *Miami Herald*, 21 December 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.
7. For the commodification of Maya culture by the tourism industry, see Little (2004).
8. Such lectures were not limited to NCL. They were, by this time, common practice in the cruise industry. See Saunders (1978, pp. 57–58).
9. ‘Norwegian Line Tries Mexican Motif’.
10. ‘Cruise to Maya Magic of Mexico’s Yucatan’, *Miami Herald*, 18 April 1982, Newspapers.com Databases.
11. St. Kitts, for instance, invested US \$64 million in 1981 towards government development projects, including building a harbour for large cruise ships, Winder (1981). Cruise ship tourism grew in the Dutch Caribbean during the mid-1980s because oil refineries, the primary industry, were closing. In turn, Curacao businessmen funded a US \$50 million revitalization of Curacao’s capital historic centre to make it more attractive for tourists. The first cruise ship arrived in the Aruban port of Oranjestad in 1979, just a few years before Exxon closed its refinery, Treaster (1985; Thomas, 1988). Montserrat was making efforts to create ‘an organized system of serving cruise ship passengers at the port’ in 1987, while St. Lucia’s construction of the Pointe Seraphine port resulted in expanded berthing capacity and thus appealed to more cruise ships. Soon thereafter, more shops and restaurants were being built at Seraphine. In that same year, Curacao attempted to make the cruise port more attractive for passengers by adding shops and information booths to the cruise terminal, ‘UPDATE ON THE CARIBBEAN’, 15 November 1987, *New York Times*, ProQuest Databases.
12. ‘Display Ad 70’, *New York Times*, 20 October 1986, ProQuest Databases; ‘Display Ad 75’, *New York Times*, 10 May 1985, ProQuest Databases.
13. ‘Memorandum—Business Mission to Caribbean: Boston’, Robert Anderson Ambassador to the Dominican Republic Subject File Caribbean Basin Initiative (3) Box 27, Folder ‘CBI Seminars—April 29—May 4, 1985’, Gerald R Ford Presidential Library & Museum, Ann Arbor, MI. ‘Latin American Program Working Papers—The Caribbean and the United States: Problems and Prospects’, Robert Anderson Papers, 1965–1995 Box 26, Folder ‘Caribbean’, Gerald R Ford Presidential Library & Museum, Ann Arbor, MI.
14. ‘Caribbean Basin Initiative – 1983’, Hearing Before the Committee on Finance United States Senate Ninety-Eight Congress, First Session on S. 544, 1983, HeinOnline Databases.
15. ‘International Competitiveness’, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Taxation and Debt Management of the Committee on Finance, United States Senate, One Hundredth Congress, first session, 16 November 1987, HeinOnline Databases.

16. '\$83 Million in Loans for Improving Transportation in Latin America and Caribbean Region', *Finance & Development* 18, June 1981, 4, ABI/INFORM Collection Databases.
17. '\$83 Million in Loans'.
18. 'Display Ad 327', *New York Times*, 2 November 1987, ProQuest Databases.
19. Ibid.
20. 'Display Ad 327', *New York Times*, 2 November 1986, ProQuest Databases.
21. Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988. Tourism studies scholars have argued that travel companies, and the guidebooks and brochures they produce, mediate encounters between tourists and locals. See for instance Young (2009). Guidebooks shape the tourist gaze, and the shaping process can begin even before tourists ever step foot in the destination. NCL's booklets are examples of the same.
22. Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988.
23. Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988.
24. Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988.
25. Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988.
26. For the same reason, the economic impact studies commonly commissioned by cruise lines to justify their practices in the Caribbean were often inaccurate.

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