

The World on a Ship: Simulating Cultural Encounters in the US-Caribbean Mass-Market Cruise
Industry, 1966 – Present

by

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ABSTRACT

Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian—the most profitable cruise lines today—emerged between the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the elitist leisure ocean travel industry attempted to recover from economic downturn. These mass-market lines targeted an American middle class that increasingly had the desire and financial means to travel. They secured much of this untapped market by creating packaged vacations that responded to the needs and tastes of a middle-class clientele. Drawing on cruise advertisements, newspaper articles, ephemera, industry documents, travel writing, and memorabilia books, this dissertation analyzes how these three companies used cultural and geographic referents to produce cruise vacations, responding to an increased consumer interest in cultural sampling as an accrument of economic globalization. Findings suggest that cruise ships offered their owners a space to arrange simulated interactions with global cultures—a practice that soon extended to Caribbean cruise ports as these companies gained the market power to influence encounters there. This complex collision of global cultures was advanced by a goal to offer passengers opportunities to discover new worlds. However, many of the cultural representations displayed on cruise ships were pastiches—essentializations drawn from popular media forms and based in Eurocentrism. These were meant to be entertaining, not accurate, representations. Nevertheless, as themed environments gained momentum, these cultural forms helped to transform ships into destinations in their own right—a process through which cruise lines produced a captive audience to siphon passenger spending from the Caribbean. At the same time, cruise lines leveraged their mediating power and economic influence to hide from passengers the supposed poverty, crime, and disease at Caribbean ports, and even the mundanities of daily life there, while increasingly installing mechanisms to appropriate spending from those who chose to debark the ship. These processes

intensified as the decades advanced. This study thus finds that cultural homogenization did not result in an immediately apparent reduction of difference, because difference was profitable and central to the mass-market cruise industry's advertising strategies. However, the surface-level cultural heterogeneity that cruises offered was reduced through a homogenizing vision that balanced novelty with passenger comfort, engagement, and convenience in support of corporate profits. The resulting cultural production process was not suggestive of glocalization, but rather a new phenomenon meriting further research.

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I took my first cruise at the age of 17, in July 2011, when my family and I flew to Miami to sail onboard the *Carnival Liberty*. I did not realize at the time that the week-long vacation would influence my professional goals and guide me towards academia. As we continued to take more Caribbean cruises over the years, I had a growing number of questions about the representation of different cultures during these vacations. Encountering symbols—or altogether simulations—of global cultures was unavoidable by the time I started cruising. I became more and more curious about the mechanisms behind the cruise industry’s framing of otherness for its passengers, and how these practices evolved into the reality that stood before me on every cruise I took. The following dissertation is the culmination of my efforts to address those inquiries.

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behind his words was not immediately clear to me in that moment, it became increasingly so over these years. For her part, Eda had a less conventional way of driving the same message home. During my second year of studies, we sat in her office discussing politics when she quipped, “You’re not cynical enough, we’ll change you.” I thought a great deal about her humorous remark as I continued my studies and witnessed the many global events far too depressing to elaborate on in a note that is meant to be celebratory. Yet, as I advanced in my training, I realized that I was thinking about the subject in more nuanced ways—with an appropriate degree of cynicism. My doctoral training made the world much less black and white—exactly what Alberto and Eda said it would do in their different ways. For that, I thank the greatest advisors I could ask for. I wish both of you the happiest of retirements.

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INTRODUCTION

In February of 2011, *New York Times* journalist Toni Schlesinger recounted her experience onboard Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's recently debuted *Allure of the Seas*. "I was standing in Central Park in the middle of the Caribbean Sea near an Indian mangosteen tree, a Malaysian olive tree, a number of elephant ears and a total of 96 other species of plants." For Schlesinger, the Royal Promenade appeared to be "the inside of a shopping mall in Singapore or Dubai." This appeal to globality extended to the ship's selection of restaurants, which included a Mexican cantina, Brazilian churrascaria, and a Japanese speciality restaurant, alongside over a dozen other eateries.¹ Passengers could be forgiven for characterizing the ship's atmosphere as a celebration of cultural difference. Indeed, Royal Caribbean's strategy to construct their ship around global themes was increasingly common in the mass-market cruise industry. Yet, the notion that a mass-market cruise could offer a way of experiencing diverse cultures contradicts media coverage and popular stereotypes of cruise vacations, which are commonly associated with those who want to be whisked away to a tropical destination to escape the 9 to 5—not with travelers who desire cultural experiences. After all, could anyone truly experience another culture in a floating Disneyland? Nevertheless, since their inception, mass-market cruise lines have marketed their vacations as opportunities for the American middle class to have meaningful encounters with cultural 'others.' Over the decades, these interactions evolved into the simulation of globality onboard *Allure* that Schlesinger witnessed.

The tension between what mass-market cruise lines advertised and what they delivered is the subject of this dissertation, which investigates the role of cultural and geographic symbolism in marketing cruise vacations for the US-Caribbean industry. It asks as its primary research

¹ Toni Schlesinger, "A City on the Sea," *New York Times*, February 13, 2011, ProQuest Databases.

question how these symbols, and later cohesive themes, formed, evolved, and informed the cruise industry since the 1960s, when mass-market lines arose in response to declining consumer interest in transatlantic passenger shipping. The study shows how mass-market cruise lines, as both products of late-twentieth century globalization and purveyors of its accretions, used their market power to influence passenger encounters with global cultures onboard and Caribbean cultures at ports. It traces how these practices evolved over the decades in response to increasing representation of other societies in US popular culture, to land-based trends in the development of themed spaces, and to shifting profit strategies. It also considers how portside developments and ships themselves evolved to accommodate cultural encounters in ways that enhanced corporate profits. The flows of people, ideas, meanings, and cultural practices that are part and parcel of globalization are driven by unequal power dynamics. To investigate these dynamics and reveal the economic and cultural patterns through which globalization has operated in the cruise industry, this study adopts a historical approach focused on the largest segment of the industry and its regional operations. This approach allows us to see not only how these patterns evolved over time, but also how and to what extent cruise tourism has acted as a hegemonic force and perpetuated economic and cultural inequality in the Caribbean.

Though dozens of other cruise lines operated in the US-Caribbean industry over the period of analysis, this dissertation studies Carnival Cruise Line (CCL), Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (RCCL), and Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) because they quickly seized the market and kept it in their grasps. After their inception, they grew at such rates that they were able to acquire competing lines via horizontal integration. These relatively new companies effectively monopolized the US-Caribbean cruise industry by the end of the twentieth century, which makes them an appropriate focus of research. Furthermore, historical sources are widely available for

CCL, RCCL, and NCL. Ephemera crucial to the analysis, for instance cruise menus and brochures, are often destroyed over time or designated as ‘useless’ by travelers and discarded. However, the prominence of mass-market cruising meant more passengers traveled home with ephemera, and by that same token more documents survived and are now available for historians to study. The rise of the American mass-market cruise industry drew a great deal of controversy, producing yet more historical sources for study. From politicians concerned about onboard labor practices, to foreign policy staff studying the cruise industry’s role in bilateral agreements like the Caribbean Basin Initiative, to environmentalists concerned with the degradation of natural resources in the Caribbean, there was plenty of criticism to go around. Owing to their economic success, CCL, RCCL, and NCL were larger targets and drew much of that criticism. For those reasons, there exists an array of literature from diverse perspectives concerning these lines that is not available for every cruise line operating over the past five decades. Lastly, owing to the fact that those lines have been operating for half a century each, placing historical sources produced by these companies at the forefront of my analysis results in consistent data over the temporal frame. Unlike many competitors, these three were not acquired, nor did they go bankrupt.

While leisure cruises were long the preserve of the social elite, they have become more closely associated with the middle class since the 1960s. By that time, the introduction of commercial jet travel offered upper-class travelers a modern way to confirm their social affiliations, leading to economic downturn in the passenger shipping industry. Some passenger lines responded by reconfiguring their vacations for the masses, while NCL, RCCL, and CCL (founded, respectively, in 1966, 1968, and 1972) all conceptualized their vacations as middle-class activities from the inception of their companies. Given this connection of mass-market cruises to the middle-class, an explanation of the latter term as it is used here is appropriate. In

discussing the postwar American middle class, historians typically refer to the new middle class that emerged in the middle of the twentieth century. While there is little consensus on the exact definition of the term, seldom are rigid household income ranges enough to define inclusion in the middle class. Instead, scholarly attempts to define this group as it existed in the 1950s and 1960s often emphasized consumerism as a point of reference. For instance, some historians have argued that American middle-class identity consolidated with the emergence of department stores filled with mass-produced goods—the fruits of industrialization.² For many others, automobility and home ownership are central to scholarly understandings of the new middle class.³ These were individuals who took advantage of suburbanization to purchase houses and fill those spaces with appliances to make life more comfortable—accruements of postwar modernity.⁴ Middle-class consumers were able to participate in cultural experiences that transformed their tastes and worldviews. They ate out more,⁵ demanded television programming that differentiated them from the working class, and resisted hegemony via rock n’ roll music.⁶

This thesis views the ability and desire to travel as central to the practices of this emerging American middle class. It follows historian Susan Sessions Rugh, who argues that

² See here Vicki Howard, *From Main Street to Mall: The Rise and Fall of the American Department Store* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 9-29. Charles F. McGovern discusses the rituals of American consumerism and, through it, the consolidation of citizenship in “Consumer Culture and Mass Culture,” in *A Companion to American Cultural History*, edited by Karen Halttunen (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 2008), 187-92. Warren I. Susman argues that department stores, restaurants, and hotels, among other institutions, ushered in new ways of living that foregrounded spending money, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Smithsonian Institution, 2009).

³ For example, Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004); “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 4 (1996): 1050-81.

⁴ See in this regard Susanne Freidberg, *Fresh: A Perishable History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 45; Camille Begin, “Kitchens,” in *The Routledge History of American Foodways*, edited by Michael D. Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach (New York: Routledge, 2016), 189-94.

⁵ Andrew Hurley, “From Hash House to Family Restaurant: The Transformation of the Diner and Post-World War II Consumer Culture,” *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 4 (1997): 1282-1308

⁶ George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 72-73, 120-121

vacation travel was central among elective cultural experiences that these individuals sought, in turn informing their identities.⁷ Similarly, Gary Cross analyzes consumer surveys from the 1960s to show that the growing middle class increasingly spent money on vacations.⁸ Increasing affluence and the institutionalization of paid time off permitted discretionary spending on family road trips. International travel also grew in this context. Christopher Endy discusses middle-class Americans travel to Cold War era France, as well as how the tourism industry made French destinations culturally safe for the tastes of these consumers.⁹ It is this American middle class of travelers that constituted the main clientele for the mass-market Caribbean cruise industry.

Approach & Historiographical Context

This thesis uses a holistic approach that combines the history of culture, business, technology, and material culture to study the mass-market cruise industry. It seeks to uncover the multiple messages and meanings of the material culture and infrastructures associated with mass-market Caribbean cruises. It studies how these aspects relate to cultural encounters, illuminating scholarly understandings about the nature of late-twentieth century globalization and the systems of neocolonial hegemony through which globalization has operated.

As a historical study, this work follows the tenet that culture is not set in stone; rather, it shifts over time in response to circumstances both internal and external to the culture. Cultural representations can be discursively transmitted to other groups via any number of avenues: newspapers, television, conversation, cookbooks, or art to name a few. Meanings conveyed may

⁷ *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

⁸ *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 178-9.

⁹ *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

also shift over time, in no small part owing to the mediating power of technology. Cruise tourists thus had assumptions and expectations about the national cultures on their itineraries based on their prior exposure to media representations of those countries—just one factor that informs world views. Ultimately, the transmission of cultural symbols can be highly subjective and influenced by many extraneous factors. Historians can make sense of these processes by studying symbols in their contextual modes of production, transmission, and reception—¹⁰ a semiotic methodology that scholars analyzing advertising and material culture draw upon.¹¹

This work responds to a growing interest in the cultural history of globalization—a continuing phenomenon connecting distant societies and environments, which has become particularly intensified in the postwar era. Scholars have studied the history of globalization from economic, technological, and cultural perspectives, to name a few approaches relevant to this study.¹² By integrating these approaches, this dissertation seeks to begin developing a more holistic understanding of the Caribbean cruise industry as both a product and agent of economic, technological, and cultural globalization.

¹⁰ For the historical uses of culture, see, for example, Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); or Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

¹¹ Stefan Schwarzkopf, “The Subsiding Sizzle of Advertising History: Methodological and Theoretical Challenges in the Post Advertising Age,” *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 3, no. 4 (2011): 528-548; Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (1982): 1-19.

¹² Communication networks, transportation infrastructure, data networks, port technologies, and airports provide the infrastructure needed for economic globalization to occur. See here the work of Vaclav Smil, *Prime Movers of Globalization: The History and Impact of Diesel Engines and Gas Turbines* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010); Marc Levinson, *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016); Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Economic interconnectedness had cultural implications. See among a plethora of examples Jeffrey M. Pilcher's work on the globalization of Mexican food, *Planet Taco: A Global History of Mexican Food* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Scholars studying the relationship between culture and globalization generally fall into one of three camps. One group has argued that globalization homogenizes cultural representations.¹³ Yet, as cultural studies scholars have shown, globalized cultural systems rarely replace local practices and preferences in their entirety. Accordingly, the second camp asserts that globalization is an opportunity for locals to appropriate the global for their own purposes.¹⁴ The third camp has taken a middle position, arguing that globalization brought cultural negotiation and mixing, which has in turn fostered hybridized cultural representations and practices.¹⁵

Sociologists Ulrich Beck, Bronislaw Szerszynski, and John Urry have extended ideas about globalization and hybridity in their respective works on cultural cosmopolitanism,¹⁶ which

¹³ George Ritzer argued that the corporate efficiency exemplified by American fast food restaurants eschewed differences between international cultures as methods of corporate rationalization were exported globally and used to manage various economic sectors. *The McDonaldization of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2000). Even when globalization leads to cultural homogenization, it does not go uncontested. For Mike Featherstone, global integration resulted in more spaces for cultures to clash and redefine one another, producing cultural complexity, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1995). This type of cultural negotiation or resistance is seen in the works of scholars interested in the cultural implications of colonialism. Anthropologist Partha Chatterjee's work on British colonialism showed that Indian elites resisted western iterations of modernity through cultural expressions of nationalism, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). In their work on Spanish colonialism in the Americas, Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins asserted that Andean communities appropriated Spanish literacies, combining them with their own expressions of culture to resist rule, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous literacies in the Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ James L. Watson's edited volume on the reception of McDonald's in East Asia is a convincing argument of this; the essays within show how locals in various nations used those fast food establishments for their own purposes and how McDonald's itself had to adapt to their demands. It is a demonstration of local resistance to cultural globalization—a phenomenon that has been termed glocalization. *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Arjun Appadurai posits that studies advancing the homogenization theory failed to consider how outside forces became indigenized by locals when brought into new societies. Appadurai suggests that oversimplified binaries used to analyze past global flows—core-periphery and push-pull, for instance—are insufficient to understand the disconnections inherent in movements of people, objects, capital, and ideas in the new global order. He instead proposes analyzing five dimensions of global cultural flow across national borders to adequately understand late twentieth century cultural globalization, each revealing complex movements of culture that cannot be pigeon-holed into existing theories: ethnoscapescapes, mediascapescapes, technoscapescapes, finanscapescapes, and ideoscapescapes. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (1990): 295-310.

¹⁶ Ulrich Beck, "Cosmopolitical Realism: On the Distinction between Cosmopolitanism in Philosophy and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 4, no. 2 (2004): 131-56; Bronislaw Szerszynski and John Urry. "Cultures of Cosmopolitanism," *The Sociological Review* 50, no. 4 (2002): 455-481.

they understand as a force that people experience daily owing to the increased material interconnectedness of the world. Building on social psychologist Michael Billig's theory of banal nationalism,¹⁷ proponents of banal cosmopolitanism posit that people do not choose to embody a cosmopolitan identity. Rather, it is a force that acts incessantly upon people and their cultures by being woven into the structures of their daily lives.¹⁸ Examples include international foods at grocery stores, or the circulation of news about other countries through mass media avenues. Their work speaks to the hybridization of international cultures. They hold that even powerful agents of cultural diffusion, such as the U.S.—with its quest for global Americanization—inevitably also import other representations from abroad. The export of culture, in their view, is thus not a one-way street, nor a fully controllable undertaking, but rather something that will occur owing to the globalization of daily life. By that same token, Arjun Appadurai theorizes that unpredictable international circulation of people and media representations has resulted in confrontations between viewers and ideas in spaces that cannot explicitly be defined as local or national, resulting in the incorporation of the global into the daily lives of individuals.¹⁹

Many scholars studying tourism have adopted the cultural negotiation approach, which has been especially important for those studying tourism in former Caribbean and Latin American colonies because economic subservience to the global North in the colonial era often transitioned into reliance on the citizens of wealthier nations for tourism dollars, while local resistance to invading cultures was evident in both instances. Richard Wilk came to this conclusion in his historical study of Belizean cultures, arguing that the confrontation between

¹⁷ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1995); Michael Billig, *Talking of the Royal Family* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁸ Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies," *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 1–2 (2002): 17–44.

¹⁹ *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

that nation and colonial forces resulted in the reinforcement of local, though creolized, identities. These hybridized cultural representations were displayed for visitors touring Belize when such displays became desirable to western tourists and thus profitable for locals.²⁰ Amalia L. Cabezas et al. show how the globalization of the sex trade led to its importation into Jamaica, adapted by local entrepreneurs to sell the country as a destination for sex tourism.²¹ Polly Pattullo's study considered the impact of modern tourism in the Caribbean more broadly, concluding that rising interest in travel to that region resulted in marketing representations of local cultures that emphasized a homogenized image of a picturesque Caribbean in response to demands posed by international tourism.²² This view is supported by Catherine Cocks and Krista Thompson in their respective works on the historical marketing of Caribbean vacations to American tourists,²³ just as James W. Martin asserted that the rise of United Fruit Company cruises to banana plantations in the early twentieth century resulted in the sanitization of local cultural representations in those

²⁰ Richard Wilk, *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2006).

²¹ Shirley Campbell, Althea Perkins, and Patricia Mohammed, "'Come to Jamaica and Feel All Right:' Tourism and the Sex Trade," in *Sun, Sex and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean*, edited by Kamala Kempadoo (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 125-156.

²² Polly Pattullo, *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean* (London: Cassell, 1996).

²³ Thompson examines the circulation of visual representations of Jamaica and the Bahamas through the British Empire, arguing that the modern strategy of marketing the Caribbean as a picturesque originated in the late nineteenth century when colonial officials and English artists represented those islands as such, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). Catherine Cocks argues that, between the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries, tourism boosters circulated representations of the Caribbean as rejuvenating to counteract stereotypes of the region as disease-ridden, thereby promoting leisure travel there. *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Mimi Sheller studied how romanticized imperial imaginaries of the Caribbean influenced its representation in modern tourism marketing, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (London: Routledge, 2003), 36-70, 157-65. Mark Carey studies tourism as one factor, among others, that shaped historical understandings of Caribbean climates, "Inventing Caribbean Climates: How Science, Medicine, and Tourism Changed Tropical Weather from Deadly to Healthy," *Osiris* 26, no. 1 (2011): 129-141.

front regions.²⁴ In each example, while references to local or regional cultures played an important role in marketing destinations, unequal power dynamics between hosts, guests, and mediators influenced the discursive construction of those representations. Building upon these works, the present thesis pays attention to the forms and degrees of “agency” utilized by the various actors in the Caribbean cruise system.²⁵

Most studies on cultural globalization have understood the collision between homogeneity and heterogeneity as glocalization. While glocalization is framed as a cultural negotiation process, in principle, it does not adequately address the power differentials that can exist between local actors and actors from outside (i.e., large multinational corporations). This thesis explores how glocalization operated in the case of the US-Caribbean mass-market cruise industry. It explores whether, and to what extent, the cultural representations that passengers encountered were produced through negotiation, and how they were influenced by factors such as business decisions, cultural mindsets, ideas of modernity, or technological advances in naval architecture and shipbuilding.

This study frames opportunities for cruise passengers to engage with other cultures as cultural encounters, or at times interactions. The use of these terms does not suggest that the parties involved had equal power or agency in those relationships. Rather, these terms may

²⁴ James W. Martin, “The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business and the Creation of the “Golden Caribbean,” 1899-1940,” *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 8, no. 2 (2016), 238-62; *Banana Cowboys: The United Fruit Company and the Culture of Corporate Colonialism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018). Martin studied the United Fruit Company's (UFC) role in developing Caribbean tourism in the early twentieth century. UFC ships transported Anglo-American passengers to company banana enclaves, spaces purposefully curated to showcase for tourists the benevolence of empire through the display of seemingly happy Latin American laborers engaging with state-of-the-art American technology. So too did a growing airline industry transport American passengers to Caribbean destinations. Blake C. Scott traces the development of US-Caribbean routes, as well as the cultural implications of this space and time compression. “Changing Caribbean Routes: The Rise of International Air Travel,” in *The Business of Leisure: Tourism History in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Andrew Grant Wood (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021): 67-84.

²⁵ For a discussion of the concept of agency, see Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113-124.

denote contact that is unequal and perhaps conflicting. To help understand the dynamics of cultural encounters, Mary Louise Pratt introduced the concept of “contact zones”—spaces where cultures meet and interact, often along unequal axes of power relations.²⁶ Extending this idea, essays in *Close Encounters of Empire* show that contact zones are geographically fluid, and that transnational power in these spaces shifts over time and across space.²⁷ In the context of cruise tourism, ports of call were prominent ‘contact zones’, but the cruise industry also simulated cultural encounters for passengers well outside of those enclaves, as well as onboard the cruise ships themselves. And initial ‘contact’ might not take place in a physical space at all. For example, a cruise tourist’s first encounter with a Caribbean nation may have been through a newspaper advertisement or brochure in which a cruise line unilaterally articulated those cultures for their customers. This thesis studies the kinds of interactions that occur in the “contact zones” of the Caribbean cruise industry—onboard ships, within gated cruise ports, and beyond those enclaves.

The Caribbean is foregrounded as the historical (and contemporary) center of cruise traffic. Methodologically, focus is placed on the cruise lines and their region of operation rather than on a single nation—or a handful of specific countries—within that region, as other tourism histories have done.²⁸ A regional approach that follows mass-market cruise line itineraries can

²⁶ *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2007), 7-8.

²⁷ *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*. Edited by Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

²⁸ There exist many important historical studies on tourism in Caribbean nations. In a case study of colonial Nassau, Gail Saunders examined the development of a burgeoning tourism industry in that Bahamian locality, including how indigenous cultures were packaged for early-twentieth-century visitors, “The Changing Face of Nassau: The Impact of Tourism on Bahamian Society in the 1920s and 1930s,” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 71, no. 1-2 (1997): 21-42. Frank F. Taylor undertook a similar analysis of Jamaica, *To Hell with Paradise: A History of the Jamaican Tourist Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). The early-twentieth century Cuban tourism industry has been studied extensively from a cultural perspective, perhaps more than that of any other

help to understand the extent to which and the ways in which this industry sought to leverage and enhance its market power in dozens of Caribbean locales. Yet, the cruise industry also had to take into consideration differences among Caribbean nations' official policies towards the cruise industry. Each country's own historical relationships with European colonial powers informed its business dealings with these newer loci of Western power. It would be difficult to give due consideration to each of these evolving relationships in appropriate detail while simultaneously conveying the far-reaching scope of the industry's control over the region, all within several hundred pages. Indeed, the historical relationship between the cruise industry and any one of the nations discussed in the following pages is worthy of its own dissertation. Instead, this study follows cruise itineraries in order to better understand how the cruise industry constructed a Caribbean for passengers to consume, how those geographic boundaries and cultural production practices changed over time, and how and to what extent the cruise industry acted as a globalizing force in creating a vacation destination for middle-class, mainly American tourists.

Any discussion of cultural globalization in the Caribbean must center the region's histories of colonialism and imperialism. Stretching back to the era of Columbus, these histories included processes of political, economic, and cultural imperialism in which Europeans shaped the 'New World' to advance their own projects in commerce, geography, resource extraction, industry, politics, science, and culture, forging an enduring legacy of Eurocentrism in the

Caribbean nation. Indeed, Tony L. Henthorne's, *Tourism in Cuba: Casinos, Castros, and Challenges* is another important work on Cuba's tourism history (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2018). This scholarly attention to Cuba can be explained by the country's historical importance as a gambling and beach destination for upper-class and working Americans alike seeking short getaways, especially during the Prohibition. While the Cuban tourism industry was virtually non-existent for the first three decades under Castro, it thrived in the first half of the century, during which time masses of Havana-bound tourists enjoyed escapism in any given week. Thanks to that extensive clientele, an equally sizeable database of sources—especially traveler accounts and promotional material—is available for analysis by historians, who for their part have studied those documents to understand the discursive construction of Cuba as a playground for American travelers.

process.²⁹ Eurocentric perspectives—often homogenizing, fetishizing, or racist— emerged early on in travel writing, and were reproduced and expanded over the centuries in European art, literature, politics, and academic research, among other forms, until they became seen as ‘common sense’ ways of understanding the world. For example, Eurocentrism often incorporated the assumption of a timeless cultural, intellectual, social, political, and technological superiority of Europe over the Americas, which was seen to lead inevitably to “Western” pre-eminence. Such ideas were ingrained into culture through hegemonic power structures and endless, varied repetition. Eurocentric ideas continue to influence our understanding of the past and the present, in contexts ranging from popular culture to academic research and international diplomacy.³⁰

The cruise industry, which mediates cross-cultural encounters for millions of travellers every year, offers a powerful lens into the late-twentieth century history of cultural imperialism in the Caribbean. Yet, cruise tourism’s role in relation to cultural imperialism needs more scholarly attention. Much of the historiography on the cultural implications of passenger shipping has considered the impacts that mobile people (i.e., tourists, refugees, and immigrants) had on the societies they left or arrived in. Lacking by comparison are studies that view ships as sites for important cultural exchanges and shipping companies as agents of cultural mediation or

²⁹ Donald E. Pease. “New Perspectives on U.S. Culture and Imperialism,” in *Cultures of Imperialism*, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 26-27.

³⁰ Studies on the nature, history, and impact of Eurocentrism are voluminous. A useful introduction to Eurocentrism and its influence on historical understanding is James M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1993). Among the most prominent pioneering studies of this subject are Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); and Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (New York University Press, 1989). Also conceptually important to understand the power and dynamics of Eurocentrism is Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). More recent studies include Ella Shohat and Robert Stam *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 2014), which traces how popular culture has privileged European perspectives.

cultural imperialism, a gap that ocean studies and mobilities scholars have noted.³¹ Though much work has been done on the mobilities of automobiles, airplanes, trains, and pedestrians,³² ships have not received the same attention. Few works directly address the cultural history of passenger shipping,³³ and even fewer study cruises specifically. There are, however, a few important studies on the mobilities of cruises. Historian Simon Spalding briefly discussed dining on cruise ships as a cultural activity, though that work is primarily a narrative account of shipboard cuisine since antiquity.³⁴ David Cashman considered the sociocultural importance of jazz music on turn-of-the-twentieth-century passenger cruises and transatlantic voyages, arguing that its production evoked social distinction for the predominantly elitist clientele in this era, alongside other elements like French food.³⁵ In previous articles, I analyzed how mass-market lines transmitted meanings about different cultures and civilizations through onboard dining

³¹ Martin Dusinberre and Roland Wenzlhuemer, "Editorial—Being in Transit: Ships and Global Incompatibilities," *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 2 (2016): 155-162; William Hasty and Kimberley Peters, "The Ship in Geography and the Geographies of Ships," *Geography Compass* 6, no. 11 (2012): 660-676; Jason Monios and Gordon Wilmsmeier, "Introduction: Applying the Mobilities Paradigm to the Maritime Sector," in *Maritime Mobilities*, edited by Jason Monios and Gordon Wilmsmeier (New York: Routledge, 2018); Jonathan Pugh, "The Relational Turn in Island Geographies: Bringing Together Island, Sea and Ship Relations and the Case of the Landship," *Social & Cultural Geography* 17, no. 8 (2016): 1040.

³² Anyaa Anim-Addo, William Hasty, and Kimberley Peters, "The Mobilities of Ships and Shipped Mobilities," *Mobilities* 9, no. 3 (2014): 337-38. On discussions about mobilities, take for instance Chandra D. Bhimull's work on how those traveling in planes during the 1930s viewed the colonized differently by performing aboveness, "Reshaping Empire: Airline Travelers and Colonial Encounters in the 1930s," *Transfers* 3, no. 1 (2013): 45-64; *Empire in the Air: Airline Travel and the African Diaspora*. (New York University Press, 2017). See Wolfgang Shivelbusch who examines how nineteenth-century railway travelers experienced space/time compression for one example of railway mobilities, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014). For the politics of automobile travel in postwar America see Cotton Seiler, "Statist Means to Individualist Ends: Subjectivity, Automobility, and the Cold-War State," *American Studies* 44, No. 3 (2003): 5-36; Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center." Christopher Schaberg analyzes how airline passengers consume airports as textual spaces in *The Textual Life of Airports: Reading the Culture of Flight*. (New York: Continuum, 2012).

³³ John Mack's cultural history of the sea conceptualizes passenger ships as some of the first cosmopolitan spaces owing to the ethnic and racial diversities of crews. *The Sea: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013). His work signalled increasing scholarly interest in studying the mobilities of passenger ships, preceding others that centered those vessels as the arena of study.

³⁴ *Food at Sea: Shipboard Cuisine from Ancient to Modern Times* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

³⁵ "Brass Bands, Icebergs and Jazz: Music on Passenger Shipping 1880–1939," *Journal of Tourism History* 6, no. 1 (2014): 1-15

experiences.³⁶ Perhaps the most complete cultural history of cruising is the work of Peter Quartermaine and Bruce Peter who trace the evolution of onboard culture from transatlantic shipping to Caribbean cruising using historical brochures, advertisements, and photographs.³⁷ Important as the work is, it is primarily a narrative and visual history documenting chronological shifts in cruise design rather than one concerned with the mechanisms behind these aspects, for instance the cultural meanings transmitted through those design choices. It also roots the rise of themed onboard entertainment and dining in the 1990s, whereas these activities emerged in in the early 1970s as this thesis shows. Finally, the study by Quartermaine and Peter does not consider in any depth the cultural contact between cruise lines and the ports they toured, for instance through shore excursions. Given the centrality of ports to the cruise experience, understanding the evolution of cruise ports—especially how international actors increasingly gained control of spaces and operations therein—is as important as studying onboard activities to achieve a comprehensive cultural history of the US-Caribbean cruise industry.

While literature on the cultural history of Caribbean cruising is sparse, many more scholars have studied the industry from business, economic, geographic, environmental, and political perspectives.³⁸ Nevertheless, no broad history of the US-Caribbean cruise industry yet

³⁶ “The World on a Ship: Producing Cosmopolitan Dining on Mass-Market Cruises,” *Food, Culture & Society* 22, no. 4 (2019): 485-504; “Mediating Cultural Encounters at Sea: Dining in the Modern Cruise Industry,” *Journal of Tourism History* 9, no. 2-3 (2017): 160-177.

³⁷ Peter Quartermaine and Bruce Peter, *Cruise: Identity, Design and Culture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2006).

³⁸ Allan R. Miller and William F. Grazer L.J. Lawton and R.W. Butler examine how sociopolitical changes affected the US-Caribbean cruise trade between the late nineteenth and late twentieth century, “Cruise Ship Industry—Patterns in the Caribbean 1880–1986,” *Tourism Management* 8, no. 4 (1987): 329-43. In his work about the US passenger trade, Blaine Branchik recounts the rise and fall of transatlantic voyages, and the subsequent emergence of mass-market cruise travel, “Staying Afloat: A History of Maritime Passenger Industry Marketing,” *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* (2014): 234-57. William H. Miller covers a slightly later period and emphasizes in his account the histories of specific ships, *Transatlantic Liners, 1945-1980* (New York: Arco Pub., 1981). Philip

exists. Indeed, tourism studies literature at large tends to focus on the present, which limits understanding of contemporary tourism's connections with historical systems of colonialism and cultural imperialism in the region. As demonstrated in this work, a historical framework, and the methodology of analyzing temporal change, can reveal the way in which practices of cultural imperialism shift over time, sometimes in subtle ways that mask continuing hegemony. A historical approach also makes it possible to explore how the growing presence of the Caribbean cruise industry in the region has affected forms or levels of inequality, thus testing the hypothesis that globalization diminishes inequality by contributing to a region's economic development.

This thesis examines the cruise industry's cultural mediation strategies to understand what drove the choices made, and whether and in what ways these choices opened up new spaces for cultural interaction, or whether cruise lines extended Eurocentric ideas and ideologies instead. It studies how these processes occurred over time in various "contact zones," including on ships, in port enclaves, and past those gated communities through accompanying tours. It asks how cultures and histories were depicted through these representation techniques, and why they were mediated in certain ways and not others. In considering these mediation strategies, this study follows John Urry's work on the tourist gaze to understand how cruise lines, newspaper columnists, travel guide authors, Caribbean administrative officials and locals, and investors

Dawson details the technological shifts central to transforming transatlantic liners into dedicated cruise ships, discussing in a different monograph how entrepreneurs designed modern cruise ships to achieve speed, efficiency, and economies of scale, *The Liner: Retrospective & Renaissance* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 2003); *Cruise Ships: An Evolution in Design* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 2000). Brian J. Cudahy narrates the rise of the major mass-market lines, as well as processes of ship construction and itinerary building, *The Cruise Ship Phenomenon in North America* (Centreville, MD: Cornell Maritime Press, 2001). Kristoffer A. Garin traces the modern cruise industry's growth, with special attention to the entrepreneurs involved and the legal challenges that the industry has face, *Devils on the Deep Blue Sea: The Dreams, Schemes, and Showdowns that Built America's Cruise-Ship Empires* (New York: Viking Press, 2005). Andrew Vladimir and Bob Dickinson recount the economic mechanisms and business decisions behind the rise of mass-market cruising, and its continued success through the late twentieth century. Given Dickinson's title as former President and CEO of Carnival, this monograph offers a particularly unique perspective on the history of cruising, *Selling the Sea: An Inside Look at the Cruise Industry* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

strategically leveraged cultural symbols to shape passenger views of other cultures—both onboard and at ports—before and during cruise vacations.³⁹ The study seeks to show how mediated encounters intersected with technological and infrastructural changes of ships and ports, and with economic interests of the cruise lines and host nations.

The historical construction of themed environments and experiences on US-Caribbean cruises is examined in this thesis as a manifestation of cultural globalization. The relationship between cultural theming and globalization has been given considerable scholarly attention, though mostly as it takes place in the twenty-first century. Themed restaurants,⁴⁰ museums,⁴¹ and entire cities⁴² can be viewed as outcomes of globalizing forces. These simulated motifs have been used to market tourism destinations. Themed tourist sites are spaces for cultural negotiation between the local cultures they depict and industry stakeholders from the Global North often responsible for—and profiting from—their production. For instance, the geographer Adam Weaver argues that spatial theming, which he sees as a dimension of “Disneyization,” underpins the entertainment offerings of supersized cruise ships.⁴³ Yet, this and other existing studies examining theming on cruises avoid the question of authenticity—a label that tourism operators have increasingly used to add value to their experiences. Companies deploying authenticity

³⁹ *The Tourist Gaze* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002).

⁴⁰ Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (London: Routledge, 2014); Natalie T. Wood and Caroline Lego Muñoz, “‘No Rules, Just Right’ or is it? The Role of Themed Restaurants as Cultural Ambassadors,” *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 7, no. 3-4 (2007): 242-255; Lucy M. Long, *Culinary Tourism* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

⁴¹ Carolyn Oesterle, “Themed Environments—Performative Spaces: Performing Visitors in North American Living History Museums,” in *Staging the Past: Themed Environments in Transcultural Perspectives*, edited by Judith Schlehe, Michiko Uike-Bormann, Carolyn Oesterle, and Wolfgang Hochbruck (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 157-176.

⁴² Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: Dreams, Visions, and Commercial Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2019); John Hannigan, *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 2005); Hal K. Rothman, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁴³ “The Disneyization of Cruise Travel,” in *Cruise Ship Tourism*, edited by Ross K. Dowling (Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2006), 389-396. See also Jose I. Castillo-Manzano et al., “When Las Vegas Takes to the Sea: New Trends in Cruising,” *Tourism Economics* 24, no. 1 (2018): 135-140.

expect customers to view the cultural experience on offer as the ‘real’ thing. Here, “authentic” is taken to mean an object, practice, or idea with historical meaning for—though not exclusive to—a given culture. A cultural form presented as authentic stands in opposition to an imitation.

Through its study of the US-Caribbean mass-market cruise industry, this thesis posits that a historical conceptualization of authenticity is important to understand how tourism operators convince consumers that an experience is culturally authentic, even though the tourism operators curated it themselves. In its usage of the term “authenticity,” this dissertation does not suggest that Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian produced genuine engagements between passengers and diverse cultures. Rather, it explores how these companies constructed experiences that they marketed as authentic, how a desire for meaningful interactions with cultural others gained social currency, and how the companies’ cultural mediation practices changed over time. Mass-market cruise lines followed their land-based counterparts—hotels, restaurants, and shopping malls—in commodifying the growing demand for cultural experiences because, as the geographer Dean MacCannell argued in his seminal work, an American middle class with growing wealth looked abroad to satisfy the search for authenticity, and this thesis studies how the Caribbean mas-market cruise industry responded to that desire.⁴⁴

Ultimately, it is hoped that this thesis will provide a foundation for further studies aimed at understanding the impact of the cruise industry’s mediation strategies on Caribbean societies. Although numerous instances of local resistance to the cruise industry’s intrusions were found during archival research, deeper analysis of this issue requires further research focusing on specific Caribbean communities, which is well beyond the purview of the present dissertation.

⁴⁴ “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings, *American Journal of Sociology* 79, no. 3 (1973): 589-603.

Indeed, multiple volumes are needed to study the power relations between the cruise industry and local actors, their cultural negotiations, and to examine how colonial histories informed each nation's policy dealings with cruise lines and local reactions to those companies. However, by analyzing how the cruise industry approached these matters, the present study takes a necessary step toward this larger inquiry and provides essential orientations for further research.

Source Base & Methodology

As a business history advancing a cultural approach, this thesis would have benefited from access to archives for CCL, RCCL, and NCL. While all three cruise lines were contacted for access to archives, they declined or claimed that no archives existed. The cruise industry is extremely protective of its archival material, likely to avoid the revelation of documents that may lead to additional negative publicity in the popular press. Some relevant documents were available in other archives, though not enough to produce a thesis centered only on those documents.

Short of company archives, this thesis juxtaposes historical cruise advertisements with a range of other sources offering multiple perspectives to study the relationship between the mass-market cruise industry and globalization. The source base includes infrastructure and material culture sources pertaining to ship interiors, port enclaves, and shore excursion sites, such as photographs and descriptions of décor; menus; cruise industry verbiage transmitted through brochures, guidebooks, magazines, signs, lectures, and memorabilia books; news reports about the Caribbean cruise industry from several newspaper databases; industry press releases; financial documents such as cruise port construction project profiles and annual reports; television shows; cruise line websites, including digital archives of historical versions;

documents from government, cruise industry, and destination marketing organizations; interviews with industry executives and contractors; and travel writing accounts, journalistic reporting, and comments from passengers. In the absence of cruise industry archives, these diverse sources were brought to bear to develop a more holistic analysis and understanding of the history of Caribbean cruise tourism in its cultural, technological, and economic dimensions, revealing insight about the industry's strategies, ideologies, and interactions with local actors.

Advertisements from CCL, RCCL, and NCL provide an authoritative lens into mass-market cruise industry profit strategies. As client-facing documents, advertisements reveal how companies wanted others 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 and places; itineraries and their evolution, details of onboard accommodations and activities; conceptualizations of the travelers, staff, destinations, and locals; and the purpose(s) of the trip (i.e., romance, getaway, or exoticism). Advertisements were obtained from physical archives (especially Duke University David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library collections), though to a much greater extent through 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 study 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* remains 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 just as companies themselves did. 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. Circulation grew beyond New York City after the 1970s, until one-third of the newspapers' daily circulation was from the Northeastern coast—Maine to Virginia—and from a national edition printed in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other major metropolises. National readership especially grew after the availability of digital subscriptions in 1995.⁴⁵ 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 this dissertation's focus on the *New York Times* over Florida-based newspapers.

ABI/INFORM and Factiva by Dow Jones, both accessible online, contain trade journals, working papers, market and industry reports, and press releases about CCL, RCCL, and NCL throughout the last five decades. These databases contain some of the most authoritative industry-facing publications on the cruise industry, including *International Cruise & Ferry Review* which features articles by industry executives and contractors discussing first-hand their motivations for representing cruises as a way to encounter new worlds, strategies for cultural simulation, and how these cultural processes were connected to profit strategies. Documents

⁴⁵ Edwin Diamond, *Behind the Times: Inside the New New York Times* (New York: Villard, 1993).

from *PR Newswire* (and to a lesser extent *Business Wire*), both of which served as digital archives for industry press releases from the 1990s onward, also proved helpful.

As a general rule, search terms entered into digital databases and archives remained consistent whether advertisements, news coverage, or industry-facing publications were the target. Search terms used to obtain data about mass-market lines included: “Carnival Cruise,” “Royal Caribbean Cruise,” “Norwegian Cruise,” and “Norwegian Caribbean.” After background research on these lines, results were further narrowed to search for documents on the historical development of onboard theming by using those terms in combination with others, including though not limited to combinations and variations of: “cultural,” “dining,” “restaurant,” “lounge,” “deck,” “themed,” “authentic,” and “immersive.” These searches revealed the names of themed venues located on mass-market cruise ships, as well as the nature of their theming. To research those spaces in-depth, the above searches were narrowed down using the cultural or geographic affiliations of these onboard venues, for instance “Egyptian,” or “Cuban,” “or by using the names of these establishments. To trace the cruise industry’s growing cultural and economic influence at Caribbean ports, combinations and variations of “port enclave,” “development,” “redevelopment,” “revitalization,” “construction,” “funded,” “partnership,” and “shore excursion” were used to obtain a broader overview, while the names of specific cruise terminals, port enclaves, and nearby shopping centers pinpointed geographic areas of interest. These searches revealed various actors of interest, the names of which were used to trace specific development and profit strategies, for example “Diamonds International,” and “Dufry.”

CCL, RCCL, and NCL produced menus passengers to use during cruises. As with much ephemera, some of these documents were taken home by passengers and remain available for historical study. The New York Public Library’s “What’s on the Menu?” project is dedicated to

the preservation of these important documents. Some of the cruise menus used in this study are from that digital archive, while additional menus were procured from private collections and institutional archives. As an activity that is ubiquitous to the human experience, eating habits as understood through historical menus can illuminate cultural realities of societies past, for instance how companies balanced exoticism and familiarity in constructing dining as an encounter between the patron and cultural others.⁴⁶ Eating is an inherently political practice;⁴⁷ in turn, analyzing menus and food items is a powerful way to unpack how cruise lines have transmitted assumptions about different cultures, and how these have evolved over the decades.

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. These are useful to understand how cruise lines wanted (potential) passengers to perceive cruise vacations, providing important insight into marketing strategies and brand identity development. Also featured was information about port enclave infrastructure, which this dissertation uses to trace 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 and where they spent their money. By analyzing brochures and magazines such as NCL's *Sun, Sky, Star, Southward Views*, this dissertation offers a lens into company representations of Caribbean countries, mediation processes, and profit strategies.

⁴⁶ Long, *Culinary Tourism*; Jennie Germann Molz, "Eating Difference: The Cosmopolitan Mobilities of Culinary Tourism," *Space and Culture* 10, no. 1 (2007): 77-93.

⁴⁷ Kennan Ferguson analyzes the political nature of cookbooks in her work, *Cookbook Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020). Many of the same conclusions about the production of cultural identity can be extended to menus. Bryce Evans analyzes the evolving cultural referents on Pan American Airline menus, arguing that in-flight dining during the Cold War era showcased the benevolence of American capitalism for passengers, *Food and Aviation in the Twentieth Century: The Pan American Ideal* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

While the above client-facing documents were studied to interpret how companies wanted passengers to perceive cruise vacation packages, these were combined with internal sources to produce a more holistic picture of marketing strategies. Company documents such as advertising copies and designs, meeting summaries, correspondence between cruise lines and creative agencies, and market profiles—were available on a limited basis. These sources, obtained from Duke University’s David M. Rubenstein Rare Book Library, were used to study the mass-market cruise industry’s motivations in producing encounters with new worlds for its customers. On the other hand, travel memoirs, travel journalism, and passenger reviews were important to understand how cruise passengers perceived these encounters.

Business history material such as trade and industry papers, newspapers, and construction profiles are a lens into cruise industry economics. These sources helped to track the funds that cruise lines invested in Caribbean nations. They revealed how the industry leveraged its wealth to generate political influence in the region, thereby gaining more agency in cultural representations. These processes were especially pronounced by the 1990s but were rooted in decades immediately prior. Cruise lines sanitized Caribbean countries for passengers through the development of port enclaves—projects that paved the way for greater industry control of these spaces and produced more opportunities for transnational companies to appropriate passenger spending, further depriving the Caribbean of economic benefits from the cruise industry.

Analysis of the most current period is supported by the author’s experience cruising. Eight Carnival cruises to the Caribbean were taken between 2011 and 2022, each between seven and eight days in length. These trips inform the dissertation’s understanding of mass-market cruise industry mediation practices through onboard lectures, shore excursion desks, and related

print material. Photographs from these trips provide further evidence supporting the study's claims about cultural mediation and hegemonic characteristics of the cruise tourism system.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 traces the emergence of the modern cruise industry up to the 1960s, explaining the forces and factors that shaped the emergence of Caribbean cruise tourism. Chapter 2 begins with the emergence of CCL, RCCL, and NCL in the 1960s. It studies how these new corporations came to dominate the market by the end of the 1970s. It considers how they advertised their vacation products, who they marketed to, and how they competed against one another. Chapter 3 takes as its starting point the airing of *The Love Boat*, a comedy drama that introduced millions of Americans to cruising. It argues that, though mass-market lines increasingly used cultural representations both onboard and at Caribbean ports to attract American middle-class consumers between the late 1970s and 1980s, these iterations continued to draw on Eurocentric understandings of cultures, homogenizing those countries despite attempts to showcase supposed cultural difference. Beginning in 1990, chapter 4 is concerned with a decade in which the installation of cohesive themes onboard ships to simulate global cultural encounters grew exponentially. It was in the 1990s that mass-market lines truly began to market their ships as cultural destinations in their own right. During this time, the industry also consolidated its influence at ports throughout the Caribbean. Chapter 5 covers the mass-market cruise industry post-9/11. The first part of this chapter studies onboard experiences in the twenty first century, by which time mass-market cruise lines simulated the world on a ship. The chapter's second part considers the extent of the cruise industry's mediation of cultural experiences at Caribbean ports and through on-shore excursions. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of findings, implications for future research, and the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER I: FROM TRANSATLANTIC LINER TO MODERN CRUISE SHIP, 1880 – 1970

In 1923, the British company Cunard's *Aquitania* conveyed thousands of passengers from New York to Southampton. Weighing in at 45,000 tons and over 900 feet in length, it had the space necessary to make the six-day transatlantic crossing an entertaining and relaxing experience for its passengers. The ship also embodied affiliations to different nations. Its construction contract went to Scottish shipbuilder John Brown & Company.⁴⁸ The passenger base was British or Anglo-American. Fittingly, then, that Cunard advertised the ship's connection to the United Kingdom, promising "the deft, cheerful service of her perfectly trained English staff."⁴⁹ Early-twentieth-century Cunard menus similarly reflected a British influence, offering roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, scotch bread, scotch broth, and meats cured in traditionally British cuts such as Wiltshire ham.⁵⁰ In the 1920s, a Cunard transatlantic voyage was a comfortably British experience by and for those who identified with that culture.

The Eurocentric experience that Cunard promised was not unusual in the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, whether they offered transatlantic voyages or leisurely cruises, shipping lines were often constructed in—and flew the flag of—one European nation, offering service, dining, and amenities that reflected the same country. Holland America, Hamburg America, and Italian Line were popular shipping companies that evoked ties to specific European countries.⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Aquitania (1914)," Maritime Quest, Accessed September 27, 2021, http://www.maritimequest.com/liners/aquitania_data.htm.

⁴⁹ "A Great Liner," *New York Times*, June 17, 1929, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁰ Cunard Line R.M.S. Adriatic Menus, June 7-12, 1924, MS-0026, Box 8, Folder 35, John B. Goodman Collection, University of California, San Diego.

⁵¹ Connections between shipping lines and their cultural ties to European nations are evident in the cuisine served. An analysis of menus revealed those connections. "What's on the Menu?," New York Public Library, Accessed September 27, 2021, <http://menus.nypl.org/menus>.

In the latter half of the century, cruises—circular voyages—overtook transatlantic ocean travel, defined here as one-way crossings from the United States to Europe or vice versa. While other markets certainly existed, emphasized here is the US-Caribbean industry that dominated in the twentieth century after overtaking Mediterranean itineraries. Caribbean cruises after the Second World War were more globalized experiences than transatlantic crossings, in that an ever-expanding array of actors from the world over were involved in producing postwar cruises. Yet, they were also more international than cruises from previous decades. By the late-twentieth century middle-class turn in cruise ship tourism, passengers sailed from Miami on ships owned by American corporations, built in Europe, flagged in the Caribbean and Latin America, and staffed by seafarers from the world over though most prominently from Asia.

This chapter traces the shift from the era when transatlantic travel by ship predominated, with vessels that were deemed to be national symbols, to an era in which globalized, mass-market Caribbean cruises predominated. The discussion spans from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century. It uses several key framing questions. How were early-twentieth century Caribbean cruises different from transatlantic voyages? Which key global events shaped the popularity of ocean travel at any given time? How did Caribbean cruises from the late 1960s, the eve of an era that ushered in mass-market cruise travel, differ from their counterparts from earlier decades? Lastly, how and why were these newer cruises uniquely positioned to offer leisure voyages to the American masses in affordable ways?

Prelude to Popular Cruising, 1880 – 1918

The Transatlantic Passenger Shipping Industry

The cruise industry evolved from the ocean liner business. As opposed to cruises, ocean liners primarily transported people for non-leisurely purposes. While transatlantic ocean crossings have taken place since the era of exploration, the invention of steamships in the early nineteenth century supported the logistics of scheduled crossings. Steamships replaced sailing ships in that era in part because they reduced international mail delivery transport time. These new vessels also improved passenger shipping. Advances in engine technology and hull strength allowed the construction of longer and taller steel ships, faster, stronger, and more comfortable than their predecessors while accommodating more passengers in each vessel. For shipping magnates, these factors increased the profitability of the transatlantic passenger trade.⁵²

Transatlantic crossings were widely available by the late nineteenth century. Improvements to propulsion systems and hulls allowed steamers to prosper in the migrant transportation business.⁵³ While their sailing ship predecessors took 6 to 12 weeks to cross the Atlantic, the steamers of the 1870s promised a crossing time of 12 days or less. As supply grew, ticket prices became increasingly affordable.⁵⁴ By the end of the century, migrants sailing with Cunard and White Star crossed in steerage for USD \$25.50.⁵⁵

⁵² Drew Keeling, “Transatlantic Shipping Cartels and Migration Between Europe and America, 1880-1914,” *Essays in Economic & Business History* 17 (2012), 196-97.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 195-96.

⁵⁴ Dirk Hoerder, “European Migrations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Immigration and Ethnicity*, edited by Ronald H. Bayor (London: Oxford University Press, 2016), 38; Keeling, “Transatlantic Shipping Cartels,” 195-96.

⁵⁵ “NEW STEERAGE RATES IN FORCE: If Maintained a Material Difference Will be Made in the Income of Steamship Companies,” *New York Times*, December 5, 1895, ProQuest Databases. In 1895, a blacksmith from New York could expect to earn \$25.50 in 10 days; a bricklayer or plumber would have earned this in 7 days. 688. <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/bulletin-united-states-bureau-labor-3943/september-1898-477571/wages-united->

European immigrant demand fueled the transatlantic ocean travel business. Nineteenth-century economic and political turmoil across Europe made leaving desirable.⁵⁶ The United States was perceived as an attractive option for migrants. Representations of the country's institutions, the vast availability of cheap farmland, and job growth fueled by post-Civil War industrialization appealed to the millions of Europeans crossing over the next decades. Additional factors emerged from gendered differences across the pond. European women migrated in large numbers to take advantage of less restrictive gender roles in the United States compared to their homelands. Upon arrival they worked on farms, factories, and in domestic services.⁵⁷

Transatlantic steamships organized passengers by class. Before 1880, these classes were for the most part cabin and steerage. Immigrants were mostly housed in the latter while tourists, businessmen, and diplomats used cabins on the main deck. These social boundaries were dynamic and subject to personal wealth, especially after 1880 when the 'in-between' space of second-class was introduced; many wealthier immigrants crossed in second class as opposed to steerage after the turn of the century.⁵⁸

Ticket price dictated one's experience on voyages, including available amenities and menu options. The British company White Star had three menu classes in 1912. Third Class

states-europe-1870-1898-498267?start_page=10. For reference, in the same year a resident of a major American city could expect to pay \$0.12 for 5 lbs. of flour, \$0.15 for 10 lbs. of potatoes, and \$0.26 for 5 lbs. of sugar. *U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census*, "Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970," September 1975, HathiTrust Databases, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951000014585x&view=1up&seq=1>.

⁵⁶ Perhaps the most well known of these events is the Irish Great Famine, in which millions died of mass starvation. Kerby A. Miller analyzes the historical mechanisms behind the Great Famine, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2008).

⁵⁷ Hoerder, "European Migrations," 38-39.

⁵⁸ Keeling, "Transatlantic Shipping Cartels," 196-97, 201-204; Miller, *Transatlantic Liners*, 7; Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 36. The cheapest Cunard fares at the turn of the century were approximately USD \$25, whereas more well-to-do passengers enjoyed second-class Cunard sailings for \$35, or first-class for \$60. "Display Ad 17," *New York Times*, April 8, 1896, ProQuest Databases.

passengers could expect simple dishes such as oatmeal porridge for breakfast. One would have an equally simplistic soup dish as a dinner starter, alongside a main course of corned beef and cabbage, or perhaps roast pork. By comparison, First Class breakfast promised fresh fruit, harder to come by at sea for the logistical difficulties of keeping it edible and aesthetically appealing. Seafood options peppered breakfast menus, followed by mutton and an egg dish. Dinner was an extravagant eleven-course feast, with many of those courses accompanied by different wines. The fare was French cuisine, matching elite tastes. Across the various courses one would enjoy, among other dishes, salmon, filet mignon, lamb with mint sauce, roast duckling in apple sauce, beef sirloin, and roast squab. Dinner finished with a choice in equally opulent desserts—Waldorf pudding, peaches in chartreuse jelly, or eclairs.⁵⁹ Accordingly, those who could afford First Class crossed the Atlantic in the lap of luxury.

Class structures on early-twentieth-century ocean crossings enforced at sea the land-based social order. Cunard viewed managing onboard space to reflect clientele's society as part of its duty. Just as on land, then, social class dictated in whose company one spent their voyage. Cunard strictly enforced the separation of classes on its sailings, shaping social life onboard. Rules and environment combined to reassure elites that lower classes, though physically proximate, would behave appropriately. For example, pursers were instructed to make all reasonable efforts to deter Third Class passengers from using First Class public rooms.⁶⁰

Some liner companies stood out among the competition for their luxury. The German company Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt-Aktien-Gesellschaft, also known as Hamburg-

⁵⁹ Spalding, *Food at Sea*, 169-170.

⁶⁰ Graham P. Gladden analyzed documents from the Cunard Line archive at University of Liverpool to draw this conclusion in, "Post Second World War Trans-Atlantic Travel for Business and Pleasure: Cunard and its Airline Competitors," *Journal of Transport History* 41, no. 2 (2020): 163.

America Line (HAPAG) was renowned for its opulent accommodations and service.⁶¹ Many aspects of its designs were innovative for the industry; it is therefore an apt case to understand how architecture and atmosphere contributed to social experiences at sea. The *S.S. Amerika* was compared to the luxurious Paris Ritz hotel. London's *Daily Mail* even remarked that she evoked "the highest perfection in respect of construction, furnishing and outfitting," and predicted that the ship would find many imitators around the globe "even if an increase in extravagant luxury seems scarcely possible."⁶² The commissioner of the British newspaper *The Sphere* similarly exclaimed that *Vaterland* passengers live "at least as well as in the best hotel in any country in the world," speaking to the grandeur of the ship by noting that those on passing steamers and yachts gazed upon the marvel of *Vaterland*.⁶³ Comparisons to grand hotels were expected as early-twentieth century shipping lines borrowed grand hotel material culture to design ship interiors, appealing to elite interests in social stratification while rendering interiors familiar so that the wealthy easily understood how to navigate and socialize in these spaces. The introduction of maritime architects enabled shipping lines to emulate their luxurious land-based counterparts effectively. Both Cunard and HAPAG hired the services of Mewes & Davis, the architectural company that designed Ritz hotels in London and Paris, to design public rooms.⁶⁴

⁶¹ HAPAG sailings also tended to be more expensive than those of British competitors. Passengers could expect to pay a minimum range of USD \$70 - \$118 for first-class Mediterranean service. "Display Ad 23," *The Globe*, October 23, 1905, ProQuest Databases.

⁶² Quoted from Mark A. Russell, *Steamship Nationalism: Ocean Liners and National Identity in Imperial Germany and the Atlantic World* (London: Routledge, 2020), 60, 119.

⁶³ "On BOARD the "VATERLAND:" An Impression by "The Sphere's Commissioner," *The Sphere*; May 23, 1914, 226, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁴ Christie D. Jackson, "Linking Land and Sea: The Design, Decoration, and Use of Space on Transatlantic Liners," Masters thesis (University of Delaware, 2009), 3-4, 24-26. Jackson argues that the extensive marketing and coverage of interior design enjoyed by Cunard ships suggested that both the company and media outlets cared greatly about the opulence of onboard spaces. Jackson also traces how Cunard adopted grand hotel public room and stateroom designs, 37-47.

Alongside wealthier passengers, HAPAG also carried migrants on some of its ships, but class differences remained intact. Though lower classes traversed the ocean in spaces designed by French architect Charles Frédéric Mewès, responsible for various Ritz hotels, social experiences nevertheless reflected class differences. First Class dining rooms onboard the *Auguste Victoria* had individual tables compared to the long trestles in third-class. Consequently, elite dining was more intimate and reflected a grand hotel atmosphere, whereas immigrants ate communally. Furthermore, both *Amerika* and *Auguste Victoria* contained Ritz-Carlton restaurants operated by Cesar Ritz. Therein, First Class passengers consumed grand hotel quality Parisian cuisine through which they practiced social distinction from non-elites,⁶⁵ just as they did on land.⁶⁶ HAPAG made a point of providing a range of first-class dining options to cater to individual tastes. *Imperator* had no fewer than four restaurants, far ahead of its time where dining was concerned.⁶⁷

HAPAG constructed almost otherworldly social experiences for elites. They stated that magical elegance radiated from the *Imperator's* First Class dining room and from those eating therein. Culinary pleasure, conversation, and music elevated diners in convivial ways. HAPAG told of the fragrant flowers during a First Class dinner on *Vaterland*, while guests conversed in a variety of languages to the backdrop of music and laughter. For elites, HAPAG voyages offered sociable experiences as much as transportation.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 60. The Ritz-Carlton restaurant was referenced as a prominent point of advertisement in marketing literature, among other special features like a grill room and palm garden, "Display Ad 32," *New York Times*, May 23, 1907, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁶ Andrew P. Haley explores the prestige of French cuisine in the United States in "Restaurant Culture," in *The Routledge History of American Foodways*, edited by Michael D. Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach (New York: Routledge, 2016), 214-32; *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

⁶⁷ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 119.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

If one wishes to compare the class experiences of HAPAG passengers, there is perhaps no better example than the *Imperator's* public rooms. The lounge, sizeable as it was, did not contain supporting columns. This contributed to the spacious effect that HAPAG wished to convey for its wealthy clientele. It decorated First Class public rooms in historical revival styles, imitating the architecture of American and European grand hotels. As opposed to transatlantic liners past that employed Neo-Baroque or Neo-Renaissance aesthetics, HAPAG—and for that matter its competitors NDL and Cunard—advanced Neo-Classical tastes evoking eighteenth-century France in many of *Imperator's* public rooms. These were not overly extravagant, highlighting instead muted elegance. In comparison, Third Class passengers knew they were on ships and not in grand hotels when they patronized their public rooms, which emphasized functionalism and not embellishment.⁶⁹

As important as sociability was, wealthy passengers cared just as much about the quality of experiences away from the public. HAPAG advertised the comfort of its First Class cabins, furnished with easy chairs, sofas, and tables. The accounts of wealthy clients implied a positive reception of those features. In solitude, clients equated the spaciousness of cabins with luxury.⁷⁰

Though first-class accommodations were superior to their lower counterparts, HAPAG improved the comfort of accommodations across cabin classes. *Imperator*-class vessels were constructed from the inside-out—hotel accommodations were emphasized, and a ship was built around those spaces. HAPAG stood behind the quality of its Third-Class accommodations, advertising simple yet well-furnished spaces and appealing to non-elite desires to travel inexpensively while simultaneously enforcing separation of spaces by promising those

⁶⁹ Ibid., 114-18.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 113.

passengers that they would not encounter steerage travelers. HAPAG treated lower classes comparatively well by industry standards. Their amenities were considered more elegant than usual in transatlantic shipping, with a report drafted for Cunard in 1913 even describing Third-Class arrangements as “very excellent.”⁷¹

Though leisure was not the primary goal of prewar transatlantic travel, aspects of enjoyment existed for those willing to pay for it. Wealthier passengers had better views and fresher air from upper decks. On the other hand, those in lower decks—typically migrants—generally traveled uncomfortably amongst freight. The standardization of the lounge onboard Cunard and White Star ships for first-class passengers only exaggerated class differences. Lounges were characterized as spaces that were both luxurious and at the same time informal; both men and women could co-mingle therein, and one could smoke. These aspects were more restricted in other public spaces such as music rooms at the time, wherein comingling with the opposite sex was frowned upon at certain times of the day. Smoking rooms were, for the most part, gendered male, even if women did violate that rule.⁷²

Before the First World War, the most successful steamship lines had European affiliations, and the spaces onboard reflected those connections. The British shipping magnate Samuel Cunard adorned the *Britannia* with a bronze figurehead of Britannia—the personification of Great Britain—carrying a trident.⁷³ Cunard ship names also conferred hegemonic iterations of European identity, strategically drawing on Roman and Greek mythology to evoke strength and

⁷¹ Ibid., 113, 122.

⁷² Douglas Hart, “Sociability and “Separate Spheres” on the North Atlantic: The Interior Architecture of British Atlantic Liners, 1840-1930,” *Journal of Social History* (2010): 200-203.

⁷³ John G. Langley, *Steam Lion: A Biography of Samuel Cunard* (Halifax: Nimbus Pub., 2006), 17, 80-86. Langley went further with his argument for the national affiliations of steamships, asserting that Cunard’s steamship service positively impacted diplomacy between Britain and the United States and Canada. Francis E. Hyde argued that Cunard provided Britain with such benefits for decades to come, *Cunard and the North Atlantic 1840–1973: A History of Shipping and Financial Management* (London: MacMillan Press, 1975), 171.

wealth.⁷⁴ HAPAG, its German rival, implemented similar symbols throughout ships. Those fortunate enough to sail cabin-class in Emperor-class ships could gaze upon artwork that evoked the German Empire: imperial portraits, allegorical figures, and romanticized landscapes. One could find portraits of the Kaiser, or eagles mounted on the ship's prow.⁷⁵ NDL passengers on the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Große*, which launched in 1897, encountered a large portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II in the first-class dining room. The portrait frame contained allegorical representations of the virtues Loyalty and Sagacity, celebrating and idealizing German heritage. NDL depicted such paintings and sculptures of nationally important figures, architecture, and cities throughout its fleet.⁷⁶

Luxurious vessels went past tokenistic representations of national identity with references to broader European themes. These references appealed to the well-traveled because, just as traveling was important to finishing the educational experiences of elites as in the Grand Tour of earlier centuries,⁷⁷ a knowledge of other cultures continued to be a social marker of highbrow identity. Historic interior designs were especially in demand. Incorporating these lent shipping lines pedigree and credibility, which Cunard accomplished in part by drawing on the work of furniture designers known for their antique styles.⁷⁸ Reflecting also the more diverse nationalities of the clientele, music was “international” in its character on HAPAG ships, with popular

⁷⁴ Jackson, “Linking Land and Sea,” 87-88.

⁷⁵ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 1-7, 146, 208, 278. Russell argued that HAPAG's Emperor class ships were ambassadors for the nation at home and abroad. Countless popular texts and images were produced for the citizenry, displaying for them the achievements and prowess of the German Empire. However, these representations were often stereotypical and described by some commentators at the time as inaccurate.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁷⁷ Pau Obrador Pons et al., “Corrupted Seas: The Mediterranean in the Age of Mass Mobility,” in *Cultures of Mass Tourism: Doing the Mediterranean in the Age of Banal Mobilities*,” edited by Pau Obrador Pons, Mike Crang and Penny Travlou (London: Routledge, 2016), 169. For more background on the perceived educational value of the Grand Tour, see Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 2003).

⁷⁸ Jackson, “Linking Land and Sea,” 95-103. Jackson examines Cunard's collaborations with British furniture designer Frederick Parker to incorporate reproductions of his antique styles into onboard public rooms.

German and English tunes on offer. HAPAG brochures noted various useful sentences in three languages: English, German, and French, while libraries onboard the *Imperator* contained books in multiple languages. In each of these instances, however, supposedly international references were limited to the Global North. The *Imperator* used French historical styles for its most important public rooms, evoking highbrow European elegance. Evidently successful, the ship was even described by one passenger as a “cosmopolitan city,” though the passenger’s conception of cosmopolitanism seems to have been limited to European nations. At the same time, HAPAG’s Eurocentric as opposed to decisively German approach to onboard theming disappointed some passengers who expressed concern about the undercutting effect that broader references had on expressions of German identity.⁷⁹

The Birth of Caribbean Cruising

Cruises emerged in the late nineteenth century, the same era when transatlantic liners enjoyed their popularity. As opposed to their counterparts mainly meant to transport passengers from one place to another, cruises emphasized leisure. Cruises were, for the most part, circular voyages, offered seasonally by steamship lines; dedicated cruise lines had yet to emerge.

The steamships of the late nineteenth century were equipped to offer passenger cruises, sailing south from New York, the key embarkation port at this time,⁸⁰ to the tropical waters of the Caribbean. The shift in emphasis from the transportation of cargo to people, largely owed to

⁷⁹ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 120, 165, 207-208.

⁸⁰ Among other reasons related to its proximity to the Caribbean, New York was a key embarkation port because it consistently maintained dredging operations that allowed the harbor to accommodate the new, often larger ships that German and British steamship companies constructed to remain competitive. Ports unwilling to expand their harbors did not remain competitive for long, evident in early-twentieth century criticism of French transatlantic ports as failing to meet modern requirements, “A New Route to New York,” *The Review of Reviews*, 43 (253), January 1911, 52, ProQuest Databases.

immigrant demand, fueled technological innovations that optimized steamships to carry people.⁸¹ The speed lent to steamships by screw propellers, which replaced slower paddle wheelers decades earlier, was key in meeting the demands of cruising vessels. The rising efficiency of steam engines made possible the construction of larger and faster ships without increasing demands for coal. Over the nineteenth century, steam engines grew in power thirty-fold,⁸² making them fit for cruise voyages that relied on larger passenger capacities to increase profitability for shipping companies. Shifts from paddlewheels to screw propellers freed deck space while the transition from wood and iron to steel in maritime construction allowed ships to grow larger flexibly. These aspects provided more room for the amenities that were essential for cruises.⁸³

Quebec Steamship Line (QSL) was an important actor in developing what would ultimately become the Caribbean cruise industry. In the late nineteenth century, the company served Canadians traveling from Montreal across the eastern coast. It allowed passengers to connect with pleasure travel routes further south such as New York by the end of the century.⁸⁴ Their trips from New York to Bermuda were just one such possibility. Some scholars point to QSL as a cruise pioneer, with their Caribbean tours foreshadowing a rising interest in pleasure ocean travel to the region.⁸⁵ Even contemporary travel guides look back to Bermuda as one of the earliest cruise destinations, with QSL to thank for it.⁸⁶ However, that Canadian company was renamed to Furness Bermuda Line after it was acquired in 1919 by British transport company

⁸¹ Gaetano Cerchiello and José Fernando Vera-Rebollo, "From Elitist to Popular Tourism: Leisure Cruises to Spain During the First Third of the Twentieth Century (1900–1936)," *Journal of Tourism History* 11, no. 2 (2019): 149-150.

⁸² Smil, *Prime Movers of Globalization*, 12-13.

⁸³ Jackson, "Linking Land and Sea," 19-20.

⁸⁴ "Quebec Steamship Company," *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, July 18, 1889, ProQuest Databases.

⁸⁵ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," *Tourism Management* 8, no. 4 (1987): 330.

⁸⁶ Heidi Sarna and Matt Hannafin, *Frommer's Cruises & Ports of Call 2008* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007), 652.

Furness Withy, which shifted to serve the American market on its famous Bermuda sailings. The move signalled the rising interest of European and American actors in Caribbean cruising.⁸⁷

No discussion on cruise industry pioneers is complete without considering HAPAG. Already a powerhouse in the transatlantic immigrant shipping business, it also innovated the cruise sector. With transatlantic ships laid up during the winter, the company turned to seasonal cruising. Historian Mark A. Russell argues that the first modern leisure cruise was undertaken by HAPAG—a January 1891 voyage onboard the *Augusta Victoria* to the Mediterranean.⁸⁸

Successful, HAPAG expanded its investment in the cruise sector thereafter,⁸⁹ even constructing the first known dedicated cruise ship.⁹⁰ Following the company's decision in 1898 to cater to the North American elite market,⁹¹ they contracted German shipbuilder Blohm & Voss to construct the luxurious cruise ship *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*.⁹² She began her maiden cruise in 1901, a month-long New York to West Indies voyage for 200 wealthy passengers.⁹³

The *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* differed from transatlantic counterparts in several ways. She did not have the second and third-class cabins standard in the transatlantic shipping industry.⁹⁴ One-class fare dictated who would be able to sail her West Indies, Norwegian Fjord, and Mediterranean itineraries. That fare was out of reach for all but the very rich. HAPAG even

⁸⁷ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 330.

⁸⁸ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 43.

⁸⁹ "The Hamburg-American Yacht "Prinzessin Victoria Luise," *Scientific American*, February 9, 1901, 86, ProQuest Databases.

⁹⁰ Nancy H. Wynen, "A Survey of the Cruise Ship Industry, 1960-1990," Master's thesis (Florida Atlantic University, 1991), 4; Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 331-32.

⁹¹ Cerchiello, "From Elitist to Popular Tourism," 148.

⁹² Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 43.

⁹³ John S. Hogue, "Cruise Ship Diplomacy: Making US leisure and power in the Anglophone Caribbean, 1900-1973," PhD diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2013), 29. On its longer Caribbean cruise itineraries of 25 days starting at USD \$115, HAPAG also offered one-way, round-trip, and hotel tour packages to Jamaica starting at USD \$35, \$63, and \$84 respectively, "Display Ad 22," *New York Times*, January 13, 1908, ProQuest Databases; "Display Ad 25," *The Globe*, December 1, 1908, ProQuest Databases.

⁹⁴ Hogue, "Cruise Ship Diplomacy," 29.

stated that its cruises were intended to carry small groups to isolated destinations, suggesting that these were never meant to be highly accessible.⁹⁵ Transatlantic voyages, on the other hand, had to cater to the masses because large numbers of immigrants represented the key sources of profits for those trips.⁹⁶ Those who could afford HAPAG's cruise fares enjoyed loftier rooms than they would find on transatlantic sailings. They would also have access to amenities that one would expect to find on a ship meant explicitly for leisure, such as a state-of-the-art gymnasium, opulent social hall, deck shelters used to enjoy views of the sea, and a ballroom. Shelters and ballroom were in the open air while they also had the technology needed to shield passengers from the weather if necessary;⁹⁷ that HAPAG worked to provide passengers with enjoyment regardless of the weather epitomizes the lengths its cruises placed on entertainment. The ship was constructed with leisure in the context of the warm Caribbean climate in mind, allowing passengers to enjoy the sun from comfort. HAPAG's considerations were innovative compared to transatlantic counterparts which did not always account for entertainment because that was not the purpose of those voyages. So successful was the *Princess* in her cruises that HAPAG took on another cruise ship—the *Meteor*—in 1904.⁹⁸

The interior of *Prinzessin Victoria Luise* was decisively Eurocentric. Some aspects of material culture pointed squarely to Germanic heritage; most pointedly, the bow had a statue of

⁹⁵ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 43-44. HAPAG cruised to these destinations seasonally, with voyages to phenomenally isolated destinations such as the arctic Norwegian territory of Spitzbergen, reinforcing the elitism that the company lent its adventures, "Display Ad 11," *The Globe*, June 29, 1906, ProQuest Databases. HAPAG also offered longer "Pleasure Cruises," such as a 74-day South American sailing starting at USD \$350, "Display Ad 30," *New York Times*, January 11, 1911, ProQuest Databases.

⁹⁶ Keeling, "Transatlantic Shipping Cartels."

⁹⁷ Hogue, "Cruise Ship Diplomacy," 29. Technology was key to HAPAG's promise of modernity, used prominently in marketing. The company boasted that its new 17,000-ton ships were "equipped with all modern safety appliances" including elevators and electric baths, "Display Ad 30," *New York Times*, January 11, 1911, ProQuest Databases.

⁹⁸ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 43.

Princess Victoria Louise of Prussia.⁹⁹ Yet, the wealthy clientele inspired the incorporation of elements familiar to the well-traveled elite. Paintings of Constantinople, Sydney, Germany, and North America adorned the saloon.¹⁰⁰ Commentators praised the opulent paintings of global cities as well as the “tastefully decorated” social hall, “furnished in red.” The smoking room had carved oak finishing and contained majolica paintings.¹⁰¹ These accounts of interior spaces evoked the material culture of European grand hotels that these same elites frequented on land.¹⁰² In addition to material culture, onboard German labor inherently contributed to the European cultural orientations of onboard space.¹⁰³

Prinzessin Victoria Luise encountered an unfortunate end in 1906 when her captain ran her aground off the coast of Jamaica,¹⁰⁴ but the event did not hinder cruise sector progress. The ship’s publicity meant the construction of more cruise ships. HAPAG even withdrew the *Deutschland*, its premier transatlantic liner, to convert her to a cruise ship in the next decade.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ “New Cruising Yacht: Prinzessin Victoria Luise Arrives on Her Maiden Voyage,” *New York Times*, January 18, 1901, ProQuest Databases. References to German identity were equally often evoked in subtle ways, especially through the daily media representations that Americans consumed about the ship’s construction, delivery, and voyages. The same *New York Times* article describes the “modern” staterooms as well as the “many innovations” onboard the ship, emphasizing that “several” of these innovations were instituted at the suggestion of the emperor. Such mass consumer media representations of the ship consumed by everyday Americans cemented the connection between the German Empire, luxury, and technological advancement.

¹⁰⁰ “The Hamburg-American Yacht,” *Scientific American*, 86, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Opulence, comfort, and luxury were key themes in media accounts of the ship. “Cruising in the Black Sea,” *Outlook*, January 5, 1901, ProQuest Databases; “Luncheon on a New Yacht: Mr. Boas Entertains a Party on the Prinzessin Victoria Luise,” *New York Times*, January 24, 1901, ProQuest Databases; “New Cruising Yacht.”

¹⁰³ Russell, *Steamship Nationalism*, 43-45. Though HAPAG cruises introduced European and American elites to foreign cultures, Russell argues that this did not always translate into cultural openness. Some Germans cruise passengers defined themselves through the societies they encountered, comparing the achievements of the German Empire against the perceived backwardness of southern European and “Orient” destinations. In those examples, HAPAG cruises justified German imperialism as bringing order to chaotic ‘Others.’ The evidence also suggests that HAPAG may have intentionally advertised their cruises as opportunities to witness German superiority. Advertisements often painted a contrast between a modernized West and ‘simplistic’ Others, while cruise ships themselves validated for some passengers German technological and cultural superiority.

¹⁰⁴ “Her Captain a Suicide, Victoria Luise Ashore: Hamburg-American Liner Pounding on Rocks Near Kingston,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1906, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁰⁵ Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry,” 331.

HAPAG also inspired competition amongst European shippers who began offering cruises over the next two decades, key among them Cunard, North German Lloyd, and Holland America.¹⁰⁶

Developing a Caribbean Cruise Product

Though European shipping lines emphasized Mediterranean and world cruises, some companies marketed voyages to the Caribbean region. The itinerary was beneficial for non-elite Americans, for whom the Caribbean was more accessible than European or Asian destinations. Writer Frederick A. Ober proclaimed in 1903 that American tourists had “cause for congratulations” owing to the increasing accessibility of the West Indies via cruises. Ober stated that explorers have long been familiar with the region, alluding to the history of colonial exploitation, but asserted that it only recently became known to the American public. He reasoned that the Spanish-American War brought attention to the West Indies as a potential vacation destination, an “attractive winter resort lying at our very doors, within reach by a few days’ voyaging—accessible in every sense of the word.” Ober then detailed attractions in the ports of the Bahamas, Bermuda, Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.¹⁰⁷

As Ober rightly pointed out, the Spanish-American War placed the Caribbean at the forefront of American imaginaries and fueled interest in tourism to the region. Citizens consumed popular media representations of the conflict. *The Annual Register* even published monthly chronicles extensively detailing its progress.¹⁰⁸ *The New York Times* also covered it,

¹⁰⁶ “A Cunard Yachting Trip: The Shores of the Mediterranean,” *The Tatler and Bystander*, February 17, 1909, ProQuest Databases; “Many to Sail Today on a World Cruise,” *New York Times*, November 21, 1922, ProQuest Databases; “Franconia Arrives After World Tour,” *New York Times*, March 28, 1924, ProQuest Databases; “Tourists Return from Cruise Today,” *New York Times*, April 25, 1924, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁰⁷ Frederick A. Ober, “A Winter Cruise in the Caribbean Sea,” *Town and Country*, January 17, 1903, 24, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁰⁸ “Chronicle of Events in 1898: July,” *Annual Register* 140, 1898, ProQuest Databases.

releasing accounts of major events for everyday Americans.¹⁰⁹ Even during the War, some writers attempted to sell the advantages of Spanish islands in the Caribbean to Americans. In an article entitled, “Cuba and her People,” William Eleroy Curtis asserted that Cuba had ideal environmental conditions for business, yet he relented that it could not become one of “the foremost communities of the world” until its citizens “have a just and liberal government.” Though his apparent justification for imperialism targeted enterprising American businessmen who might invest in the nation, Curtis’s portrayal of Cuba as a warm and exotic destination would have simultaneously attracted tourists.¹¹⁰ By the conclusion of the War, the United States acquired the Spanish territory of Puerto Rico and established temporary control over Cuba, enforced through the Platt Amendment of 1903.¹¹¹ While military and religious authorities imposed European conceptions of civilization on the population and capitalists planned investment in the region,¹¹² some mass-media publications encouraged Americans to tour those islands.¹¹³ For instance, *The New York Times* advertised the publication of a new book entitled *Puerto Rico and Its Resources*, marketed in part to prospective travelers who desired an “account of the people, land, and products.”¹¹⁴ Perhaps more visibly, attendees at the Charleston

¹⁰⁹ “Cuban Invasion Put Off: Administration Delays Action for News of the Purpose of the Spanish Fleets,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1898, ProQuest Databases; “Puerto Rico Much Distrubed: Capt. Dexter Says Anglo-Saxons Are Not Safe in San Juan,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1898, ProQuest Databases.

¹¹⁰ William Eleroy Curtis, “Cuba and Her People,” *The Chautauquan*, May 1898, 185, ProQuest Databases.

¹¹¹ For background on the Platt Amendment and how the United States used it to exercise authority over Cuba, see Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba Under the Platt Amendment, 1902-1934* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986). The U.S. detention facility Guantanamo Bay is a potent example of the continuing political implications of the Platt Amendment.

¹¹² “Reforms in Puerto Rico: Archbishop Chappelle Plans to Teach the People the Value of American Control,” *New York Times* January 7, 1899, ProQuest Databases; “Episcopalians' Puerto Rican Plans,” *New York Times*, January 8, 1899, ProQuest Databases; “To Develop Puerto Rico: Chicago Capitalists Said to be Planning Numerous Enterprises in the Island,” *New York Times* January 8, 1899, ProQuest Databases.

¹¹³ Ober, “A Winter Cruise in the Caribbean Sea.

¹¹⁴ “Puerto Rico and its Resources,” *New York Times*, January 7, 1899, ProQuest Databases.

Exposition of 1902, held in South Carolina, gazed upon displays depicting the resources and industries of Puerto Rico and Cuba.¹¹⁵

Americans wishing to satisfy curiosities about the Caribbean through cruising had a few companies to choose from. Hamburg-American advertised its 1907 cruises to Americans. Its 28-day voyages sailed from New York to “West Indies” destinations such as Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Barbados, Trinidad, Martinique, and Nassau¹¹⁶ North German Lloyd and White Star also advertised cruises from New York to the “West Indies” in the 1914 season.¹¹⁷

Following European shipping magnates, American companies began to offer cruises. Some of the most prominent shipping companies based in the United States targeted non-elites with voyages to the Caribbean, emphasizing escapism as opposed to the luxury promised by such European lines as HAPAG. Ober himself cited Ward Line in speaking to these cruises accessible to the American public.¹¹⁸ American Line’s 1911 cruises to the West Indies, 31 days long, started at USD \$150.¹¹⁹ State and local government workers around this time earned an annual income of USD \$699.¹²⁰ While an American Line cruise would likely have been unaffordable to the average American, that vacation would be feasible for an upper-middle class individual. Nevertheless, cruising to the Caribbean before the First World War remained an unpopular vacation choice, cost-prohibitive and generally more attractive to adventurous tourists.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ James B. Townsend, “A Great Southern Exposition,” *The Cosmopolitan*, March 1902, 523, ProQuest Databases.

¹¹⁶ “The Hamburg-America Cruises, *Town and Country*, January 12, 1907, 42, ProQuest Databases.

¹¹⁷ “Display Ad 18,” *New York Times*, November 4, 1913, ProQuest Databases.

¹¹⁸ Ober, “A Winter Cruise in the Caribbean Sea.”

¹¹⁹ “West Indies, South America and the Panama Canal,” *New York Observer and Chronicle*, October 20, 1910, 509, ProQuest Databases.

¹²⁰ “Income and Prices 1900—1999,” U.S. Embassy & Consulates in Germany, Accessed September 27, 2021, https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/his/e_prices1.htm.

¹²¹ Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry,” 331.

The most instrumental American shipping line was the United Fruit Company (UFC), an agricultural enterprise dealing in bananas founded in 1899 through a merger between Boston Fruit Company and the Tropical Trading and Transport Company.¹²² Its demographic was white, middle-class urbanites, especially the managerial class of the American business community. In short, UFC targeted those who had the funds to escape urbanity.¹²³ The company used cruises, often two or three weeks in length¹²⁴ and initially for only 60 first-class passengers,¹²⁵ to increase the profitability of their fruit venture.¹²⁶

The construction of the Panama Canal led to popular media representations depicting neighboring tropics tamed by American modernity; though Panama is not in the Caribbean, these representations enticed American steamship lines to expand their offerings to warmer, southern destinations more broadly, which included the expansion of cruises into the Caribbean. United States Congress authorized the construction of the Canal in 1902 under the Spooner Act. The United States was unable to reach a deal with Colombia at the time; in spite of America having America supported the separation of Panama. Ultimately successful, America's construction of the Panama Canal began in 1904. Over the next decade of work, companies and tourists alike expressed fascination with the project, steamship lines among them. Thousands of Americans visited the Canal during its construction to view and photograph the conquest of western

¹²² Marcelo Bucheli, *Bananas and Business: The United Fruit Company in Colombia, 1899–2000* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 47.

¹²³ Martin, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 241-46; James W. Martin, "Mapping an Empire: Tourist Cartographies of the Caribbean in the Early Twentieth Century," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 9, no. 1 (2011): 11-12.

¹²⁴ United Fruit Company Great White Fleet Brochure, n.d., RL.11193, Box 9, Folder "Tourism & Travel—Cruise Lines 1901-1955," Baden Collection of Print Ads, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

¹²⁵ Hogue, "Cruise Ship Diplomacy," 32.

¹²⁶ Martin, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 240.

modernity over Southern nature.¹²⁷ They felt safe to do so because it was during American interventions in Panama and Cuba that dedicated teams combatted malaria and yellow fever. Disease rates among white canal workers dropped significantly by 1906. US Army Physician William C. Gorgas proclaimed American victory over tropical disease at the American Medical Association conference in 1909, stating, “The white man can live in the tropics and enjoy as good health as he would have if living in the temperate zone. This has been demonstrated both by our two military occupations of Cuba and by our present occupancy of Panama.” The proclamation made national headlines, encouraging tourists to seek pleasure in the Caribbean, imagined as a wonderland rather than a graveyard with American imperialism to thank for the shift. The United Fruit Company acknowledged that the Canal increased touristic interest in Caribbean nations and targeted that demand. It renovated its small steamships into luxurious vessels with increased capacities, now capable of carrying both tourists and bananas to support UFC’s enterprise.¹²⁸

Cruising, however, had neocolonial connotations,¹²⁹ and the arrival of cruise ships in the Caribbean was yet another example of western control in the region. Historian Christopher Endy argued that the expansion of America’s empire increased the number of Americans who could travel abroad, and where they could travel. Imperialism also helped construct the spectacles, sites, and meanings of tourism experiences,¹³⁰ never more evident than in UFC’s banana plantation excursions in which passengers toured sanitized fronts with technological innovations

¹²⁷ Jeremy Sherman Snapp, *Destiny by Design: The Construction of the Panama Canal* (Lopez Island, WA: Pacific Heritage Press, 2000), 11.

¹²⁸ Blake Scott, “From Disease to Desire: The Rise of Tourism at the Panama Canal,” *Environmental History* 21, no. 2 (2016): 270-75.

¹²⁹ Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business.”

¹³⁰ Shelley Baranowski et al., “Tourism and Empire,” *Journal of Tourism History* 7, no. 1-2 (2015): 109-10.

set up to showcase happy workers benefiting from the benevolence of American expansion.¹³¹ Further, UFC itineraries featured Honduras, Jamaica, and Cuba.¹³² Each of these had a history shaped by complex relations to imperial regimes, which ultimately shaped tourism in those regions.¹³³ Cuba is a concise example of colonial intersections. A Spanish colony for over four centuries,¹³⁴ the nation was subject to occupation by yet another rising power after the 1898 Cuban War of Independence. The United States intervened in the conflict during its final months—now known as the Spanish-American War—as it was hoping to consolidate its own place on the global stage. Even after Cuba became a sovereign nation in 1902, the United States continued to exercise soft power using a range of methods, including tourism. American businessmen purchased oceanfront properties near Havana and lobbied the Cuban government to fund harbor dredging and other development projects. Beach cabanas and golf courses were constructed, while real estate speculators helped pass the Casino and Tourist Bill of 1919 which legalized gambling in establishments with enough funds invested in them. Cuba rose as a casino and booze destination in the postwar era, fueled by American Prohibition. Cruises were the chosen method of travel for many Americans.¹³⁵ Thus, both hard and soft power advanced by no fewer than three global powers constructed this American playground.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business,” 257-58.

¹³² Kevin Coleman, *A Camera in the Garden of Eden: The Self-Forging of a Banana Republic*. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016), 80.

¹³³ John S. Hogue, “Neither Wholly British nor Wholly American but Something In-Between: US Tourism and Layered Colonialisms in the British West Indies,” in *Colonialism, Tourism and Place*, edited by Denis Linehan, Ian D. Clark & Philip F. Xie (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020), 77-93.

¹³⁴ Barring 1762-1763, when Cuba was taken by Great Britain.

¹³⁵ Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: US Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

¹³⁶ Henthorne, *Tourism in Cuba*, 2018), 3-16.

The First World War brought a temporary halt to passenger shipping,¹³⁷ especially reducing Caribbean cruises offered by European liners, though some American companies continued to offer service.¹³⁸ The conflict also impacted the rivalry to construct larger and faster ships between Cunard and Hamburg-America as labor and materials were dedicated to ships used to import necessities of life.¹³⁹ The Great War did not, however, impede America's negotiations to acquire Caribbean islands that would, decades later, become popular global cruise destinations. St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix are the main territories that make up the U.S. Virgin Islands. These were previously the Danish West Indies, key ports of embarkation and debarkation for the Danish slave trade between the mid-seventeenth and early-nineteenth centuries.¹⁴⁰ However, the Danish government questioned its investment in those islands when profitability dropped. This was especially true of St. Thomas, a once key stop for trade vessels restocking on coal as well as a hub for sailors to learn of current events. St. Thomas diminished in importance during the 1870s. The invention of the telegraph made obtaining news easier, and more efficient steam engines allowed ships to travel further without stopping for coal. The United States purchased the Danish West Indies in 1917 for USD \$25 million in gold. The American government expressed interest initially for reasons related to military strategy, fearing

¹³⁷ Walter T.K. Nugent, *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 156.

¹³⁸ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 331.

¹³⁹ Archibald Hurd, "ECONOMICS, TRADE, AND FINANCE: OCEAN TRANSPORT IN THE NEW ERA," *The Living Age*, Vol. 16 (3930), November 1, 1919, 310, ProQuest Databases. Gordon Beckles, "The Battle of Big Ships," *The Sphere*, March 9, 1929, 414, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁴⁰ Per Hernæs, "Slave Trade, Slave Plantations and Danish Colonialism," in *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation: Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World During the Era of the Slave Trade*, edited by Damian Alan Pargas and Jeff Flynn-Paul (Boston: Brill, 2016), 101-39.

Germany might invade those islands to establish a naval base. Decades after the War, however, the former mercantile port of Charlotte Amalie grew to accommodate American tourists.¹⁴¹

Caribbean Cruises for American Consumers, 1919 – 1945

Booze Cruise Imperialism

Shortly after the War, another political event that would impact the development of the Caribbean cruise industry came to bear. United States Congress passed the Volstead Act in October 1919; a year later, Prohibition became law. Ocean travel played a key role in how Americans obtained their liquor. Smuggling rings spanned Canada, England, and the Caribbean, and speedboats were an important instrument in those operations. The United States Coast Guard sank numerous such vessels.¹⁴² But entrepreneurs also used ocean vessels to carry thirsty Americans into international waters, for trips known as booze cruises. Several smaller ship companies—prominently Ward, Furness, and UFC—offered roundtrips to the Caribbean in the early twentieth century, opportunities for tourists to drink as much as they desired.¹⁴³

Prohibition thus incentivized UFC and its competitors to expand cruise operations in the Caribbean. UFC was primarily an agricultural enterprise that imported bananas for American consumers; carrying passengers on booze cruises subsidized the company's trips. UFC signalled the beginnings of mass-market cruising, making those vacations affordable for Anglo-American

¹⁴¹ Erik Gøbel, "Shipping Through the Port of St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, 1816–1917," *International Journal of Maritime History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 155-73;" "A Brief History of the Danish West Indies, 1666-1917," *Danish National Archives*, Accessed September 27, 2021, http://www.virgin-islands-history.dk/eng/vi_hist.asp.

¹⁴² Michael A. Lerner, *Dry Manhattan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 269.

¹⁴³ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 332-33.

white-collar workers.¹⁴⁴ Access to credit and increased wealth in the 1920s offered consumers disposable income, while more leisure time encouraged Americans to spend their capital on tourism.¹⁴⁵ For its part, UFC carried tens of thousands of tourists to the Caribbean annually by the late 1920s.¹⁴⁶ A company annual report even asserted that passenger service contributed significantly to their revenue.¹⁴⁷

Aside from UFC's place in Prohibition history, it was also important to the development of a Caribbean cruise industry.¹⁴⁸ Contemporary writers acknowledged UFC as a pioneer in US-Caribbean cruising.¹⁴⁹ The company built linkages between the United States and its banana plantations in such western Caribbean nations as Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Jamaica to support its enterprise.¹⁵⁰ It was owing to their remoteness and lack of economic importance that non-western Caribbean nations (i.e. the southern Caribbean destinations of Aruba and Curaçao) received less attention from tourism industry actors. They would continue to

¹⁴⁴ Martin, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 246, 258; Catherine Cocks, "The Pleasures of Degeneration: Climate, Race, and the Origins of the Global Tourist South in the Americas," *Discourse* 29, no. 2 (2007): 221-22; John Soluri, "Empire's Footprint: The Ecological Dimensions of a Consumers' Republic," *OAH Magazine of History* 25, no. 4 (2011): 15-20.

¹⁴⁵ Shelley Alden Brooks discusses how these factors converged alongside increasing access to automobiles to advance travel within the United States, especially to the California Coast, in *Big Sur: The Making of a Prized Landscape* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 28-29.

¹⁴⁶ Martin, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 238-39.

¹⁴⁷ "United Fruit Company Annual Report—1925," *America's Corporate Foundation*, 1925, 7, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁴⁸ The relationship between Caribbean nations and UFC was influenced by imperial power relations, invariably favoring the steamship line as an agent of American capitalism which allowed the company a significant deal of autonomy in its agricultural and touristic operations. Historian John Soluri argues in "Empire's Footprint," 15-19, that UFC invested in technological innovations to increase efficiency and profitability that could produce and distribute goods at previously unattainable scales, to meet American demand for bananas. The company's interventions were most pronounced in the banana enclaves of Honduras that they established. Therein, United Fruit cleared forests, drained wetlands, and exposed people to pesticides to turn a profit and, as James W. Martin argues, to showcase for Americans the benefits of empire, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 257-58. However, UFC did not act alone. American troops were deployed in Honduras numerous times over the first decades of the twentieth century to protect American interests in the Banana Wars. See for example "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2020," *Congressional Research Service*, July 20, 2020, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R42738>.

¹⁴⁹ "New Cruise Program of Great White Fleet," *The Globe*, February 18, 1933, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁵⁰ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 330. Though not part of the geographic Caribbean, Honduras was popularly offered on western Caribbean cruise itineraries.

be sparsely visited for decades to come.¹⁵¹ UFC's affordable trips helped Caribbean cruising as an industry to take off in the Prohibition era. American interest in cruise vacations remained even after liquor flowed from the taps again.

UFC's vacations are an important case study in understanding the problematic representations of the Global South used to advertise cruise vacations. An office manager wandering into UFC's New York City ticket office in 1928 would have encountered references to escapism, encouraging him to enjoy a trip away from his quick-paced life as a bureaucrat. UFC evoked escapism through tropicality, a theme which began right in the ticket office. One UFC employee described the "tropical splendor" in the space. For onlookers, the office promised both mystery and adventure. The décor was vaguely Spanish-American and ticket agents provided "characteristic" Latin American hospitality by being cheerful, friendly, and patient. The floors had Mayan patterns, while carved furniture and tropical plants gave the office the feel of antiquity. It was an anachronistic space, signalling myth-laden destinations that everyday Americans could increasingly access via cruises.¹⁵² The space also advanced stereotypical themes of local subservience and friendliness, as well as picturesque lands untouched by modernity that tourism promoters and travel writers long used to portray the Caribbean.¹⁵³

While UFC ticket offices and advertisements in print and radio media highlighted cultural exoticism,¹⁵⁴ tropical themes were equally as prominent on cruises themselves. Outside-facing staterooms encouraged passengers to experience the "tropical waters," as did the "wide and

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 330-31. UFC's advertisements support its emphasis on destinations in the western Caribbean. Take for instance, "Advertisement: Great White Fleet (United Fruit Company)," *Vogue*, November 1, 1914, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁵² Martin, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 246, 256.

¹⁵³ Cocks, "The Pleasures of Degeneration," 216, 223-25; Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, 13.

¹⁵⁴ Martin, "The United Fruit Company's Tourist Business," 241; "Display Ad 165," *New York Times* December 8, 1935, ProQuest Databases.

spacious” promenade decks with considerable space to enjoy the Caribbean sun.¹⁵⁵ Palm courts, sitting rooms that surrounded passengers with foliage and cane furniture, immersed passengers in tropicality.¹⁵⁶ Passengers encountered otherness—cultural representations unfamiliar to them—on excursions, when they toured UFC’s sanitized banana enclaves and viewed the labors of plantation workers.¹⁵⁷ References to Caribbean cultures before and on UFC cruises intentionally homogenized the global South by alluding to peaceful indigenous inhabitants and preindustrial islands, and the company was not unique in their representation of the region. They advanced a symbolic economy popular in the twentieth-century American tourism industry that encouraged travel to the Caribbean by opposing centuries-old stereotypes of the Caribbean as a malaria-ridden haven for cannibals.¹⁵⁸

Mediating tropicality was an important part of UFC’s cruise offerings, and technology was key to mediation. Onboard, passengers would enjoy the pinnacle of American modernity by way of technology from industrialized societies; these were fast ships with state-of-the-art air conditioning designed to protect fruit and passengers from the muggy tropical climate.¹⁵⁹ Some accounts even spoke of the air-conditioning as luxurious—modern innovations that millionaires before had only dreamt of.¹⁶⁰ That passengers sailed on westernized platforms did not have to be stated explicitly; it was enough for UFC to highlight modernity in advertisements. The company promised abundance of food, evoking a culture of plenty that industrialized foodways provided. The onboard availability of sound movies offered sailing American tourists the same innovations

¹⁵⁵ “New Cruise Program of Great White Fleet,” *The Globe*, February 18, 1933, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁵⁶ Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business,” 242.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*,” 257; Cocks, “The Pleasures of Degeneration,” 221; Soluri, “Empire’s Footprint,” 17.

¹⁵⁸ Cocks, “The Pleasures of Degeneration;” Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business,” 239, 244; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 30, 204.

¹⁵⁹ Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business,” 241-42.

¹⁶⁰ Hogue, “Cruise Ship Diplomacy,” 33.

they enjoyed on land, painting the cruise experience as both modern and comfortable. Any remaining doubts that passengers would be sailing in the pinnacle of Americanized modernity were erased by promising state-of-the-art “spotless” and “sleek white liner[s], air-conditioned throughout.¹⁶¹ The discursive augmentation of Americentrism into cruises continued at port,¹⁶² where UFC used technology to transport passengers to its shoreside banana enclaves. Tourists experienced Caribbean nations from the comfort of railway and motorcar technology. Even though they witnessed the production of bananas, these excursions were primarily meant to showcase the benevolence of American empire.¹⁶³ In those sanitized front regions, tourists saw the technological innovations that allowed the efficient production and transportation of cash crops, as well as the seemingly happy indigenous inhabitants who benefited from the modernity that UFC brought to agriculture. Additionally, cruise directors narrating shore excursions focused not on labor, but on narratives of visionaries who organized banana enterprises and UFC’s conquest over the land and barriers previously posed by distance.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ “Display Ad 165,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1935, ProQuest Databases; “New Cruise Program of Great White Fleet,” *The Globe*, February 18, 1933, ProQuest Databases; “Display Ad 73,” *New York Times*, April 20, 1938, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁶² Richard Peet discusses the concept of Americentrism in his work, “From Eurocentrism to Americentrism,” *Antipode* 37, no. 5 (2005): 936-943.

¹⁶³ Here, “American empire” is used in the postcolonial context, referring to the exercise of soft power as a means of cultural and economic control. This contrasts the use of military power to subjugate other nations.

¹⁶⁴ Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business,” 257-58; Martin, “Mapping an Empire.” Perhaps the most potent example of the imperialism inherent in these cruises was the relationship between UFC and the United States government. According to Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry,” 331, America provided subsidies to offset the costs of taking on cruise passengers. The country also deployed soldiers on multiple occasions to protect UFC’s Latin American interests. Additionally, UFC contributed to The Good Neighbor Policy, introduced by the Roosevelt administration in 1933 and key to US-Latin American relations between the early and mid century. More information on the relationship between the policy and tourism can be found in Amy Spellacy, “Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor: Geography, Globalism, and Pan-Americanism During the 1940s,” *American Studies* 47, no. 2 (2006): 40, 51-55. Of the shipping line’s involvement in the policy, Cynthia Enloe argues that UFC opened the Middle American Information Bureau to educate schoolchildren about the western conceptions of progress that American technology brought to Latin American nations, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 220.

Choppy Waters: Cruising Through Economic Depression & Global Conflict

Caribbean cruising had been well established by the Great Depression. Economic downturn meant a decline in transatlantic travel. 1,069,000 passengers crossed the Atlantic in 1929, compared to 460,000 in 1934. Cruising, on the other hand, continued to gain popularity. Caribbean cruise visitors doubled from 25,000 in 1930 to over 50,000 in 1931.¹⁶⁵ Cruises were opportunities to escape the woes plaguing the United States. A consolidated American middle class could increasingly afford to visit these sunny destinations with bottomless caches of rum. Popular culture portrayed a Cuba where Americans could partake in booze-driven debauchery never possible in the States, luring many.¹⁶⁶

The Great Depression era saw shifts in dominant industry actors. UFC, Ward, and other American companies lost their dominance in the Caribbean market as eroding transatlantic companies turned to cruising to augment their profits.¹⁶⁷ Restrictive migration measures had thwarted immigrant shipping; expanding the cruise segment was the logical means for shipping lines to proceed.¹⁶⁸ Among those European ocean liner companies breaking into the Caribbean cruise market, Cunard was a key competitor.¹⁶⁹

The Great Depression also shaped cruise itineraries. Companies switched some of their world cruises, less affordable in times of economic uncertainty, to shorter itineraries. Weekend

¹⁶⁵ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 332-33. However, more passengers did not always translate to profits for the cruise industry. Lawton asserts that, owing to a highly saturated market, it was not uncommon for companies to make very little money on each ticket.

¹⁶⁶ Joshua W. Poorman, "Escaping in the "Tender, Blue Haze of Evening:" The Morro Castle and Cruising as a Form of Leisure in 1930s America," *The Gettysburg Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (2013): 14.

¹⁶⁷ Nugent, "Crossings;" Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 332.

¹⁶⁸ Keeling, "Transatlantic Shipping Cartels," 206; Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 332.

¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, the industry pioneer HAPAG did not partake significantly in this market during the interwar era. Instead, the company focused much of its cruising efforts in Europe; through it, the German state-operated organization Kraft durch Freude offered working-class citizens cruises through which it promoted the Nazi Party's ideology of national socialism. Laurence Vanzandt Moyer, "The Kraft Durch Freude Movement in Nazi Germany: 1933-1939," PhD diss. (Northwestern University, 1967), 129-30.

cruises from New York to Florida, Nassau, and Havana were especially popular. During the 1930s, Cunard offered such four-day cruises for USD \$50 per passenger; previously luxurious “palaces” such as Cunard’s *Berengaria* were now carrying passengers away from the United States to enjoy cheap gin.¹⁷⁰ Both of these were popular ports because they were in the northern Caribbean, making them feasible options on shorter cruises. Distance was an important factor because the most popular debarkation ports were in northern cities—New York,¹⁷¹ and to a lesser extent Boston and Baltimore. In deciding which ports to include on itineraries, the southern Caribbean was infeasible when Furness could provide service from New York to Bermuda in 36 hours.¹⁷²

Global conflicts were equally influential in determining where cruises sailed. The Italian-Ethiopian War was especially important in shifting attention to the Caribbean as prime cruise territory. Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935 to expand its empire,¹⁷³ destabilizing the Mediterranean region and making it risky for tourism. In turn, transatlantic companies switched Mediterranean cruise itineraries for Caribbean ones.¹⁷⁴

The trend towards Caribbean cruising continued upward until the Second World War. The United States would not formally become involved until 1941. During the conflict’s earliest years, the American government promised that cruising was safe.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, citizens

¹⁷⁰ Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry,” 332-33. According to Stephen Fox, *Transatlantic: Isambard Brunel, Samuel Cunard and the Great Atlantic Steamships* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004), Cunard was relatively austere in its time, and there were certainly more luxurious ships available at higher premiums; Quartermaine, *Cruise*, 40.

¹⁷¹ The invention of the steamship contributed to New York’s port growing in prominence, and it remained the key American debarkation port for transatlantic voyages and cruises until the 1970s when emphasis shifted towards Florida. Levinson, *The Box*, 11-12.

¹⁷² Victor B. Teye, “Cruise Sector Policy in a Tourism-dependent Island Destination: The Case of Bermuda,” in *Cruise Ship Tourism*, edited by Ross K. Dowling (Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2006), 51-60.

¹⁷³ The invasion ultimately served as one of the precursors to the Second World War. Neelam Srivastava elaborates on the casual factors and implications of the Italian-Ethiopian War in *Italian Colonialism and Resistances to Empire, 1930-1970*, (New York: Springer, 2018).

¹⁷⁴ Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry,” 332-33.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

viewed media representations of disasters abroad, impacting their own travel decisions. Axis powers sank numerous civilian and mercantile vessels. Germany's torpedoing of the British ship *S.S. City of Benares* in September 1940 was a particularly influential event because the vessel was carrying British child evacuees to Canada.¹⁷⁶ Such atrocities, even abroad and despite promises of safety by the government, inspired fear among prospective tourists, owing to which demand for Caribbean cruising declined. It stopped altogether after the United States entered the War, at which time vessels were used to support war efforts.¹⁷⁷

Caribbean Cruises in a Globalized Era, 1945 – 1965

The postwar era brought with it an intensified wave of globalization; the growing integration and interdependence of actors around the world fundamentally changed Caribbean cruising.¹⁷⁸ Now, more than ever, economic and political events on one side of the globe impacted the operations of companies on the other side. At the same time, the globalization of supply and service chains introduced cost-cutting measures that impacted how Caribbean cruises were advertised, who offered them, and who consumed the product.

Cruising in the Immediate Postwar Era

Caribbean cruises were not initially as prominent after the Second World War as they were beforehand. There were, to be sure, companies that tested the cruise market. Cunard was one company that increased cruise capacity to augment profits from the transatlantic sector,

¹⁷⁶ Ashley Jackson, "The Empire/Commonwealth and the Second World War," *The Round Table* 100, no. 412 (2011): 65-78.

¹⁷⁷ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 332-33.

¹⁷⁸ Smil, *Prime Movers of Globalization*, 17.

while Holland America trialed Caribbean cruises to study the popularity of those voyages. Nevertheless, seasonal cruise travel on New York-based transatlantic liners remained limited.¹⁷⁹

Cunard revitalized its vessels to remain competitive in the transatlantic trade. Prior to the war, many of its interiors advanced historic aesthetic styles. Public room and cabin material culture referenced kingdoms across different spaces and eras. However, a decline in immigrant travel and consequent efforts by the company to cater to tourists who perceived highbrow designs as snobby led to a decline in those styles. Indeed, the increasing number of American tourists were not as invested in European elite culture. In turn, contemporary designs and more spaces for carefree, unregimented socialization replaced historical themes in the following decade.¹⁸⁰

Cunard's innovations signalled technological modernity for passengers, but they also changed social life at sea. The construction of wide screen cinemas onboard the *Ivernia* in the mid 1950s encouraged passengers to enjoy land-based entertainment options that an increasingly suburban American populace engaged with in daily life. The comforts of home were increasingly available at sea. However, Cunard also dictated who could use those spaces. *Scythia's* cinema was built in First Class; the Tourist Class gained access via a special staircase. Further, despite the growing tourist class, as late as 1951 Cunard asked its captains to discourage First Class passengers from inviting lower class friends to dinner. These design choices reinforced separation, preserving luxury for elites. Even so, Cunard was more progressive in its handling of

¹⁷⁹ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 334-35; "Shipping News and Notes: Two Holland-America Transatlantic Liners to Make Winter Cruises to South America New York Times," *New York Times*, September 3, 1948, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁸⁰ Gladden, "Post Second World War Trans-Atlantic Travel," 166-67; Jackson, "Linking Land and Sea," 132-43.

gendered social encounters. Men and women intermingled in *Ivernia's* smoking rooms, a point that Cunard advertised to prospective clientele.¹⁸¹

Ocean liner culinary service in the immediate postwar era shows the continued dominance of Global North cultural representations. American ships were well known for the high quality of their steaks, emblematic of Anglo-American cookery.¹⁸² Traditional tea service was commonplace on British ships. Similarly, Cunard advertised the conversation, food, and wine at dinner as “civilized pleasure,” a nod to British imperial superiority over purportedly uncivilized Others, and in this instance the superiority of British ships over ocean liners flagged out of other nations. While British ships had their tea, French liners had champagne licenses, and German ships beer licenses. Historian Birgit Braasch argued that these historical stereotypes about drinks served as symbols of nationalism.¹⁸³

International Relations & Caribbean Cruises

Several key political and economic events in the postwar era decimated transatlantic travel and shaped the advances of Caribbean cruise ship tourism.

The Suez Crisis directly contributed to the rise of Caribbean cruising. In July 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal as part of his fight against

¹⁸¹ Gladden, “Post Second World War Trans-Atlantic Travel.” 163-68.

¹⁸² Steak has a long history in the American foodscape and is often associated with the country’s culinary repertoire. In 1880, Mark Twain included “porterhouse steak” in a list of dishes he wished to consume again in the United States, which included such quintessential regional specialties as Southern fried chicken and Baltimore perch, Adam D. Shprintzen, “The Nineteenth Century,” in *The Routledge History of American Foodways*, edited by Michael D. Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach (New York: Routledge, 2016), 37. Historian Jennifer Jensen Wallach argues that administrators of indigenous boarding schools taught indigenous women how to cook steak in home economics classes to assimilate them into American society, showing just how potently American the steak was by the early twentieth century, “Food and Race,” in *The Routledge History of American Foodways*, edited by Michael D. Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach (New York: Routledge, 2016), 301-303.

¹⁸³ Birgit Braasch, “Eating Across the Ocean: The Role of Food in the Construction of the Tourists’ North Atlantic, 1947-76,” in *Cultural Histories of Sociabilities, Spaces and Mobilities*, edited by Colin Divall (London: Routledge, 2015), 171-72.

British colonialism. Previously owned by Great Britain and a position of strategic economic and political importance to the West, Egypt's nationalization of the Canal inevitably led to tensions in Europe, culminating in a British, French, and Israeli invasion of the country.¹⁸⁴ The political instability of the Mediterranean during the Suez Crisis negatively impacted leisure travel in the region, including Mediterranean cruises. Cruise operators in turn increased their interest in the Caribbean.¹⁸⁵

The Cold War shifted how and where cruising Americans traveled, and no aspect of the escalation impacted cruising as greatly as the faltering of US-Cuban relations. Cuba was prime territory for vacationing Americans in the early twentieth century.¹⁸⁶ That changed during the 1950s. Fidel Castro, who came to power in 1959, was a strong opponent of American imperialism. Castro's anti-American and nationalist rhetoric dismayed the United States, though it appealed to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. To strengthen relations with Cuba and secure a strategic geographic position against the United States, Moscow representatives visited Cuba in February 1960 and negotiated trade agreements alongside commercial loans. The United States viewed Castro's alliances with the USSR as threats to democracy, in turn supporting counterrevolutionaries through Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) efforts to topple Castro's regime. In what became known as the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, US-trained rebels invaded Cuba in April 1961. The failed invasion pushed Cuba closer to the USSR, a relationship that escalated in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 when USSR nuclear missiles in Cuba raised the

¹⁸⁴ Danny Steed, *British Strategy and Intelligence in the Suez Crisis*. (New York: Springer, 2016).

¹⁸⁵ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 336.

¹⁸⁶ Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise*.

possibility of a nuclear conflict.¹⁸⁷ Political instability between the United States and Cuba destroyed diplomatic relations between the countries.

Faltering US-Cuban relations had potent impacts on cruising. The United States barred citizens from traveling to Cuba, impacting the once immensely popular Havana cruises. Nassau rose as an important replacement cruise destination. As he announced how the construction of a USD \$20 million Miami port would benefit Caribbean cruising, Arthur E. Darlow, Director of the Seaport Department of Metropolitan Dade County, Florida, even credited Castro's actions for the diversion of cruise traffic from Havana to the Bahamian city.¹⁸⁸ Port-au-Prince in Haiti and the Jamaican port cities of Kingston and Montego Bay also grew in prominence.¹⁸⁹ Formerly important for strategic reasons during the First World War, the U.S. Virgin Islands capital of Charlotte Amalie emerged as a playground and thriving cruise port for American tourists.¹⁹⁰

Air Travel, the Fall of Transatlantic Ocean Travel & the Rise of One-Class Cruises

Innovations in air travel technology and its increasing affordability throughout the 1950s posed a significant challenge to transatlantic travel; turning to one-class Caribbean cruising offered ocean liner companies an alternative to financial ruin.

¹⁸⁷ Hideaki Kami, *Diplomacy Meets Migration: US Relations with Cuba During the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 18-53. The United States resorted to military power to protect its interests in Cuba as it often did over the decades for other Caribbean nations. For more examples of military actions in the region, see Alan McPhearson, *A Short History of US Interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2016).

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Carter, "Head of Miami Port Sees Gains on Completion of New Terminal," *New York Times*, October 8, 1961, ProQuest Databases.

¹⁸⁹ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 336-37.

¹⁹⁰ "A Brief History of the Danish West Indies, 1666-1917."



Figure 1. *Pan Am's Inaugural New York–Paris Flight.* October 26, 1958. Photograph courtesy of Pan Am Historical Foundation. Reproduced with permission.

Pan Am introduced commercial jet travel in 1958 (**Figure 1**), a key source of competition for transatlantic liners.¹⁹¹ Having introduced a tourist fare earlier in the decade, major airlines highlighted that air travel was no longer limited to elites. However, those who wanted to fly in luxury had no shortage of options. Airlines advertised the speed and comfort of transoceanic trips. Flights were painted as luxurious experiences, with some advertisements targeting travelers who were disappointed by ocean liner experiences. The membership of major airlines in the International Air Transport Association strengthened efforts to persuade Americans to fly

¹⁹¹ Ross A. Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze: The New Pirates of the Seven Seas* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2005), 9; Miller, *Transatlantic Liners*, 8; Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry, 336.

because it meant the airline industry's advertising efforts were more consolidated, pointed at issues important to the general public as well as ship passengers.¹⁹²

Faced with competition from Pan American and the British Overseas Airways Corporation, shipping lines fiercely debated the continued feasibility of transatlantic passenger shipping. Cunard considered with grave seriousness investing more in its cruise business, but ultimately stayed true to its course, choosing to frame transatlantic crossings as social experiences for tourists and businesspeople alike. Its new advertisements promised holidaymakers succulent feasts amongst good company. Businessmen would interact with an entirely different set of actors—female pursers to take notes while businessmen dictated and simultaneously recuperated from time at the office.¹⁹³

Cunard increasingly told its transatlantic passengers that the journey itself was half the fun of trip,¹⁹⁴ and dining experiences were key in Cunard's framing of social life at sea in an increasingly competitive era. First Class passengers enjoyed five meals a day, the first of which was luncheon right after boarding—a three-course affair with fish and meat. Dinner was a more opulent five-course feast: a fruit cocktail, hor d'oeuvres, soup, mains of meats and fish, and sides. A dessert of fresh fruit or ice cream was on offer thereafter.¹⁹⁵ Social experiences during meals contributed to the luxurious affair. The captain invited a select few to dine with him at the “captain's table,” a performance of social distinction that continues to this day. So sought after were invitations that passengers of lower social classes who were set on “status-climbing” often attempted to procure one from the captain. One's choice of dinner companions was important for

¹⁹² Gladden, “Post Second World War Trans-Atlantic Travel,” 170-75. For further reading about the increasing affordability of air travel, see Marc Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds: How Air Travel Changed the World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008).

¹⁹³ Gladden, “Post Second World War Trans-Atlantic Travel,” 166-69, 177-181.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁹⁵ Braasch, “Eating Across the Ocean,” 167-68.

even those who did not receive an invite. Passengers often reserved seats with the most socially desirable people onboard to cement their own place in the social hierarchy. Dining together resulted in the construction of small communities and networks of travelers who spent the voyage together. For upper-class passengers, company set one apart from others on a large ship. The continuation of these traditions was in Cunard's interests because it set ocean travel apart from transatlantic airline service, where dining was comparatively expedited and impersonal.¹⁹⁶

Cunard was far from the only shipping company facing pressure from the airline industry. 892,000 passengers traveled by ship between North America and Europe in 1953, representing 64 percent of the total traffic between the two continents; that figure was reduced to 338,000 passengers by 1969, which by then amounted to a mere five percent of the total traffic. Ocean liner companies did not recognize quickly enough the competition that airlines posed. Such interindustry factors as rising crew costs and declining government subsidies also contributed to the decline of transatlantic passenger shipping.¹⁹⁷

Converting to year-round cruising was an option. However, luxury liners could not easily be converted into Caribbean cruise ships. The process involved augmenting ships with sports decks and air-conditioning throughout, expensive tasks.¹⁹⁸ Some companies undertook these labors anyway. Yet, if the point of cruising was fun for all, these shifts did not result in dedicated cruise ships. Ocean liners were constructed in classist ways that restricted amenities to certain social classes. Including more amenities or restructuring those on offer while declaring the ship as one-class would not change who had the most convenient access to spaces of leisure, and the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.,” 169-70.

¹⁹⁷ Lawton, “Cruise Ship Industry,” 336.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

reality was that most ships in the mid twentieth century continued to be classed, structurally restricting who had access to the activities that cruises revolved around.¹⁹⁹

Companies attempted to save their businesses by shifting transatlantic berths to the second, tourist class in the 1950s.²⁰⁰ The fall of immigrant shipping came with the decline of the steerage class, as well as the emergence of a two-class model where the lower tourist class would be afforded some desirable amenities. Extending traditionally first-class amenities such as special dinners with ship officers and breakfast in bed to the tourist class portrayed the ocean travel experience as a sociable one, important to the democratization of ocean travel because leisure and sociability during transatlantic voyages were traditionally reserved for elites. However, this was not complete democratization because the first, cabin-class passengers continued to enjoy superior experiences. The democratization of ocean travel was a product of the emergence of dedicated cruise ships.²⁰¹

Shifts in maritime architecture were central to the transformation from ocean liners to cruise ships. The design of Holland America Line's *Rotterdam* innovated the cruise sector. Debuting in 1959, the ship was the first to segregate first and tourist classes by horizontal instead of vertical divisions. Willem H. de Monchy, President of Holland America Line, explained that the design gave both classes access to the most desirable parts of the ship. This was an appeal to demands by non-elites; he even noted that competing vessels commonly kept tourist classes confined to the aft while first class passengers roamed the more desirable forward and midship. The innovative design meant that first and tourist classes each accessed one full deck of public

¹⁹⁹ Miller, *Transatlantic Liners*.

²⁰⁰ Holland America Line was one of the larger liners that emphasized the tourist class with more limited, exclusive first-class accommodations as Miller notes in *Transatlantic Liners*, 7-8.

²⁰¹ Braasch, "Eating Across the Ocean," 165-78.

rooms, posing fewer restrictions to amenities that tourists could access. Holland America accomplished this by placing the engines aft of the normal midship position. They also used a secret staircase with folding louvered walls. When deployed, it separated the two classes even though they shared the same decks. The staircase also allowed flexibility, the division positioned where needed depending on how many passengers were sailing with each class.²⁰² The retractable partitions allowed it to transition between dual and one-classed structures, and between cruising and transoceanic crossings, speaking to the increasingly fluid nature of both cruise ships and cruise vacations.²⁰³ However, this was not a complete shift away from regimentation. The staircase was based on one in the Chateau of Chambord in France, a Renaissance-era chateau that had a stairway with two separate spirals so those ascending and descending would not meet,²⁰⁴ evidence of continued enforcement of class distinctions.

Evolution in maritime technology was equally important to the emergence of mass-market cruising for reasons related to space and efficiency.²⁰⁵ While steam power drove passenger shipping until the 1970s, diesel gained some ground over it in the decade prior.²⁰⁶ Diesel promised more efficiency over steam, savings that were important for companies catering to a middle-class clientele. Furthermore, diesel engines generally occupied less onboard space than steam engines,²⁰⁷ allowing more space for amenities sought by fun-seeking passengers.

²⁰² “Rotterdam to be ‘Horizontal’ Ship: Division of Classes on New Liner to Restore Rights of ‘Poor Little Rich Guy,’” *New York Times*, July 19, 1959, ProQuest Databases; Quartermaine, *Cruise*, 53.

²⁰³ These are examples of the tenets of “liquid modernity” that Michel P. Vogel & Cristina Oschmann discussed in the context of cruise ship tourism, “Cruising Through Liquid Modernity,” *Tourist Studies* 13, no. 1 (2013): 62-80.

²⁰⁴ “Rotterdam to be ‘Horizontal’ Ship.”

²⁰⁵ Smil, *Prime Movers of Globalization*, 71.

²⁰⁶ Andrew Oscar Coggins Jr., “What Makes a Passenger Ship a Legend: The Future of the Concept of Legend in the Passenger Shipping Industry,” PhD diss. (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2004), 82.

²⁰⁷ Wynen, “A Survey of the Cruise Ship Industry,” 5.

Not all shipping companies were successful in restructuring their transatlantic operations for this competitive era; many were forced to shut down or shift away from the passenger trade. Some liner companies diversified into freight, container cargo, and tanker services. In turn, companies transitioning to cruise travel purchased ships from defunct firms. Air travel called into question which modes of transportation would dominate in the decades to come, but the restructuring gamble did pay off for some. Among companies that successfully restructured in this way were Cunard and Holland America.²⁰⁸ As a result of successful restructuring efforts and marketing campaigns, cruise-goers from the United States tripled from 342,699 to 1,106,431 between 1960 and 1970. Nearly 90 percent of those passengers were American citizens. Miami grew as a hub for short cruises to the Caribbean in the mid 1960s, while Nassau and Freeport in the Bahamas emerged as key destinations owing to their proximity to Florida.²⁰⁹

While air travel contributed to the downfall of transatlantic travel, it served as a boon to the cruise industry. Though close to the Caribbean, Florida was a long way to travel for the urbanites of the colder, northern states that cruise advertising increasingly targeted. Fly-cruise packages grew tremendously during the late 1960s with significant impact on the cruise industry, more than doubling the number of cruise passengers handled by the Port of Miami between 1968 and 1970—from 245,000 to 569,000.²¹⁰ It also contributed to the rise of Miami as a global tourism hub.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Dawson, *The Liner*, 193; Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 9-16; Miller, *Transatlantic Liners*, 8.

²⁰⁹ Lawton, "Cruise Ship Industry," 336-37.

²¹⁰ Eastern Airlines offered one fly-cruise vacation package in 1969, and 125 by 1970. Jay Clarke, "Miami is Becoming a Major Winter-Cruise Port," *New York Times*, January 18, 1970, ProQuest Databases; Werner Bamberger, "Winter Cruise Forecast: Fair and Warm," *New York Times*, November 2, 1969, ProQuest Databases; Jay Clarke, "Jetting to the Jetty: A Fast Start for a Slow Cruise," *New York Times*, December 13, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²¹¹ For further reading about Miami's rise as a global tourism hub see Anthony P. Maingot, *Miami: A Cultural History* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2015).

Mass-Market Caribbean Cruises & Postwar Consumerism

The democratization of ocean travel did not come until the emergence of cruise travel because that type of voyage appealed more to the demands of the American middle class. The flexibility offered on cruises, as opposed to the regimented structures of transatlantic voyages, was a key attraction for that clientele. Dedicated cruise ships would take flexibility further.

Flexible cruise packages were a product of consumerism becoming a more cosmopolitan phenomenon. The groundwork for the quintessential American consumer was laid during the Great Depression, and a growing white, middle class of Americans proudly took up mass consumerism after the Second World War.²¹² Many more had the means to travel owing to postwar affluence. They were also interested in experiencing other cultures because of a rising curiosity about foreign societies tied to an increasingly globalized postwar world. Lengthy supply chains brought international commodities to local grocery stores, while Americans consumed mass media representations of global events right at home. Relaxed immigration laws in the 1960s brought cultural others closer, inspiring further curiosity. These were Beck's tenets of banal cosmopolitanism.²¹³ At the same time, consumerism was associated with freedom and democracy in citizen imaginaries.²¹⁴

The rigid social classes and routines traditionally associated with transatlantic voyages did not fit the definition of an ideal vacation for everyday Americans. Cruises, by contrast, were advertised as fluid vacations with limitless choices and customization possibilities, promising

²¹² Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*; Charles F. McGovern, "Consumer Culture and Mass Culture," 183-194. Note that the American middle class was predominantly white until the postwar era, at which time it gradually expanded to incorporate African-and-Hispanic Americans.

²¹³ Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Turn," in *The Future of Social Theory*, edited by Nicholas Gane (London: Continuum, 2004), 143-66;" Beck, "Cosmopolitical Realism; Bronislaw Szerszynski and John Urry, "Visuality, Mobility and the Cosmopolitan: Inhabiting the World from Afar," *The British Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 1 (2006): 113-131;" Johnston, *Foodies*, 8-11.

²¹⁴ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*.

personal liberty not possible on ocean liners. Cruise ships also seemed to embody greater freedom in some ways compared to land-based option. They could be deployed anywhere in the world, while itineraries, onboard spaces, and amenities were flexible to change, even though behind-the-scenes labor invisible to passengers was extremely regimented, important in performing the complex through redundant tasks necessary to construct an illusion of freedom for passengers.²¹⁵

In the shift from transatlantic ocean liners to cruise ships during the 1960s, transatlantic companies inadvertently poised the emerging cruise industry to become a highly cosmopolitan one. Cosmopolitanism at this time was not an element that companies infused into their ships intentionally; rather, it was a product of the cost-cutting measures needed to keep prices low and attract the American masses. Some transatlantic lines responded to the declining profits inherent in the maritime economic downturn by using open or international, as opposed to national, ship registries. This meant more lenient regulations, and shipping lines were able to outsource construction, ownership, management, and employee recruitment in an era that was increasingly economically globalized. Ships could be built in one nation, flagged in another, the company headquartered in another yet, while procuring labor globally, each of these aspects based on competitive economic advantages.²¹⁶

None of the above measures were used, at least initially, to paint ships as global spaces. However, shipping lines used “international” aspects to cater to passengers increasingly diverse in terms of nationality, first and foremost through cuisine. “International” dining tended to

²¹⁵ Vogel, “Cruising Through Liquid Modernity.”

²¹⁶ Hiring laborers from around the world, in turn, became more acceptable, though it was still not the norm before the 1970s. Christine B.N. Chin, “Labour Flexibilization at Sea,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 10, no. 1 (2008): 3.

reference French cookery owing to its global prominence, and the experience thus remained Eurocentric in its cultural orientations.²¹⁷ Equally as often cruises offered fare that can be described as “Frenchified”—favorite English meats with French sauces, or even otherwise standard fare with invented French cultural ties via translation into that language.²¹⁸ Cunard *R.M.S. Mauretania* menus from 1962 also show evidence of non-European fare such as the pepper pot, which has its origins in Guyana.²¹⁹

Cunard’s Guyanese offering succinctly represented how the cultural landscape of the US-Caribbean cruise industry had changed over the last half century. Initially Eurocentric in their construction, staffing, and cultural experiences, Caribbean cruises were globalized in these aspects by the 1960s. Cost-cutting measures advanced through economic globalization like international labor were not used as points of advertisement in that era, though cruise advertisements would frame these as cultural encounters in the decades to come.

The economic shifts in passenger shipping brought about by the downfall of ocean liners ushered in a globalized Caribbean cruise industry in which national borders were dynamic and the actors international. These factors set the stage for the industry’s expansion and mass marketization in the 1970s.

²¹⁷ Braasch, “Eating Across the Ocean,” 172-73.

²¹⁸ Paul Freedman and James Warlick, “High-End Dining in the Nineteenth-Century United States,” *Gastronomica* 11, no. 1 (2011): 51.

²¹⁹ “R.M.S. Mauretania Luncheon,” *New York Public Library*, August 8, 1962, accessed September 27, 2021, <http://menus.nypl.org/menus/28906/>; “R.M.S. Mauretania Dinner,” *New York Public Library*, August 8, 1962, accessed September 27, 2021, <http://menus.nypl.org/menus/28905/>.

CHAPTER II: AMERICA SETS SAIL: PRODUCING FAMILIARITY THROUGH CONSUMERISM IN FOREIGN WATERS, 1966 – 1978

Between the mid-1960s and early 1970s, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian formed their companies and established footing in the US-Caribbean cruise market. These cruise lines quickly seized the market by offering affordable yet attractive vacation packages for the American masses.

This chapter studies how three relatively new corporations came to dominate the market by the end of the 1970s. It considers how they advertised their vacation products, who they marketed to, and how they competed against one another. Mass-market cruise advertising used conceptions of exoticism to differentiate cruises from land-based vacations, though these representations were limited and mediated by references evoking familiarity. By this time cruise vacations offered by CCL, RCCL, and NCL were inherently global in their construction because companies took advantage of economic globalization to build and operate ships in cost-effective ways—for instance by hiring foreign seafarers—just as these lines themselves were operated by international actors. However, cruise lines carefully deployed cultural Americanization in advertising to mediate the degree to which the accruals of globalization would impact passenger perceptions of cruising and ultimately their experiences.

Cruise lines advertised their vacations as familiar and approachable using the language of consumerism as a tenet of cultural Americanization. Travel emerged as an important part of the consumer experience in postwar America. As citizens gained more disposable income and paid time off, travel increasingly became incorporated into consumer budgets by the 1960s; in turn,

marketers framed travel experiences as products, advertised to a growing middle class.²²⁰ This was equally true of cruising. While it has been asserted that consumerism underpins the contemporary cruise experience,²²¹ this chapter extends that argument to the 1970s to study how Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian secured the patronage of middle-class Americans. Owing to the unique logistical axes along which cruising operated, these companies were able to portray cruising as highly flexible vacation options,²²² offering an array of product choices mirroring those available to their clientele in daily life. At the same time, companies advertised onboard features and amenities that their clientele could not access in daily life, paradoxically representing cruise vacations as consumer societies par excellence but also opportunities to leave the banalities of American consumer society behind. These spaces were filled to the brim with an attractive variety of leisurely products and experiences—some that were novel because they were unaffordable to passengers in daily life. However, cruise ships filtered out the unattractive aspects of American cities. In those spaces, passengers would not encounter visible poverty or traffic jams, nor would they have work long hours at the office to enjoy the fruits of American capitalism.

Cultural globalization exposed citizens to people from around the world and their societies, and technological and economic globalization made travel to foreign countries more feasible. This was certainly the case for the middle-class travelers taking these mass-market

²²⁰ Rugh, *Are We There Yet?*; Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, 156. Cohen shows how marketers targeted products towards specific age groups based on the lifestyle choices and priorities of those consumers. For instance, by the 1960s, while newly married couples spent their income on homes, empty nesters had shifted their priorities to travel, 407. Furthermore, as Gary Cross argues, it was in this decade that consumer surveys showed a desire for more than simply a house and a car; they were spending more on vacations. This was especially true of overseas trips as commercial air travel became more affordable over the following two decades. *An All-Consuming Century*, 178-9.

²²¹ Ian Mahoney and Victoria E. Collins, "The Capitalist Voyeur: Commodification, Consumption and the Spectacle of the Cruise," *Leisure Studies* 39, no. 2 (2020): 280-293.

²²² Vogel, "Cruising Through Liquid Modernity."

cruise vacations. However, even in this increasingly interconnected world, consumerism operated as a political tool to discursively construct cruise vacations as culturally American. While references to other countries were central to marketing cruises, most such mentions were tokenistic, even homogenized, and ultimately counteracted by the overall tendency of mass-market cruise lines to advertise their ships as utopic extensions of American society itself.

Humble Beginnings: The Formation of the “Big Three” Mass-Market Cruise Lines

In many ways, Knut Kloster, who eventually founded NCL, was well-poised to innovate in the cruise industry. Born in Oslo in 1929, his family owned Klosters Redder A/S, a cargo shipping company. Soon after he graduated with an engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, his father passed away, making Knut Kloster the managing director of the family shipping enterprise. Kloster turned the company toward passenger transport. Soon after taking over, he attempted to expand into passenger service between England, Spain, and Gibraltar with a newly built ship to fit the purpose. The *Sunward*, designed by the Danish maritime architect Tage Wandborg, was commissioned in 1966. It carried 558 passengers in luxury. Cabins featured private baths; ship amenities included a nightclub, theatre, and shopping complex. Interiors were fully air-conditioned for comfort in Mediterranean climates. Kloster’s venture failed after Britain introduced foreign travel currency restrictions, just as a geopolitical dispute prompted Spain to close its borders with Gibraltar. The young executive was left with a

state-of-the-art ship and no passengers to entertain. His meeting with a shipping entrepreneur from Israel, then, was timely.²²³

Israeli immigrant Ted Arison arrived in the United States over a decade before the *Sunward's* construction. In his earliest years as a new migrant, Arison ventured into the air cargo sector and eventually retired. Shortly after deciding to come out of retirement, he navigated the maritime passenger trade.²²⁴ However, in 1966, he found himself in a predicament, for the shipping company he managed had a passenger base but no ship. Arison was searching for another vessel to replace the *Nili*, confiscated by the Israeli government who owned it. Given that he already had future passenger bookings, there was great incentive to expedite the search. Arison learned that Kloster was having trouble finding a port to sail from. During a phone call, the Norwegian entrepreneur convinced Arison to trial three-to-four-day Miami-Caribbean cruises with *Sunward* over the 1966-67 cruise season. The trial was successful, with the ship carrying 40,000 passengers during its debut year. In response, the partners founded Norwegian Caribbean Lines (NCL).²²⁵

By the late 1960s, NCL was primed to expand its fleet. It announced in 1968 plans to add another two ships to its fleet over the next two years. Already operating *Sunward* from Miami, the city would also host those new vessels. Miami opened a new cruise terminal later that year in anticipation of increased demand. John Andrews, an Australian architect in charge of its design,

²²³ Allan E. Jordan, "In Memoriam: Knut Utstein Kloster - Pioneer of Modern Cruising," *The Maritime Executive*, September 20, 2020, Accessed October 13, 2021, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/in-memoriam-knut-utstein-kloster-pioneer-of-modern-cruising>; Anne Kalosh, "Cruise Visionary, NCL Founder Knut Kloster is Mourned," *Seatrade Cruise News*, September 22, 2020, Accessed October 13, 2021, <https://www.seatrade-cruise.com/people-opinions/cruise-visionary-ncl-founder-knut-kloster-mourned>; Stephanie Gallagher, *True North: A Flickering Soul in No Man's Land* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse), 2009, 7.

²²⁴ "The Forbes Four Hundred Over \$5,000,000,000," *Forbes* 152, no. 9, October 18, 1993, 116-17, ProQuest Databases.

²²⁵ Dickinson, *Selling the Sea*, 20-27; Jordan, "In Memoriam."

borrowed heavily from modern airport infrastructure to address passenger convenience. The project was expected to reduce turnaround time for clearing inbound ships owing to the state-of-the-art baggage conveyor facilities. At the same time, it also sought to offer pleasure. Andrews prioritized aesthetic appeal in his version, contrasting a previous design by a different architect which was discarded when city leaders complained about its lack of beauty. Passengers waiting to board *Starward*, NCL's newest ship, enjoyed carpeted, air-conditioned lounges, bars, panoramic views of Miami Beach and the skyline, and an environment elaborately landscaped with citrus fruits, palm trees, and other themes referencing the tropical city. Despite the recent expansion, port officials continued to review plans for further upgrades. Port director Irvin J. Stephens stated that additional berths were planned,²²⁶ evidencing just how quickly the mass-market cruise industry was growing and how that exponential growth influenced adjacent port infrastructure.

Kloster went all in on Miami, announcing in 1968 the construction of a \$12 million Downtown Miami headquarters.²²⁷ He followed *Starward* with more ships based in the city's ever-expanding port,²²⁸ debuting *Skyward* in 1970 and *Southward* in 1971. Each of these diesel-powered sister ships measured around 525 ft. in length.²²⁹ In just five years, NCL's fleet could convey 150,000 passengers annually. At this time, NCL had enough information about their demographic to use targeted marketing campaigns. Determining that the American masses were their best bet for expansion, NCL advertised Caribbean cruises as vacation alternatives to be had

²²⁶ Jay Clarke, "Comfort of Cruise Begins at New Miami Terminal," *New York Times*, December 1, 1968, ProQuest Databases; "New Seaport Passenger Terminal to Open in Miami," *New York Times*, December 29, 1968, ProQuest Databases.

²²⁷ "New Seaport Passenger Terminal to Open in Miami."

²²⁸ Jay Clarke, "Miami Is Becoming a Major Winter-Cruise Port," *New York Times*, January 18, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²²⁹ "M/S Starward," Knude E. Hansen, Accessed October 16, 2021, https://www.knudehansen.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Product_Sheet_Starward_KEH_67119_84103.pdf.

at good value.²³⁰ NCL's marketing trajectory in these early stages was significant because it began a long-term trend that used economies of scale to lower cruise fares, maximizing the number of passengers onboard each ship as well as profit margins.

As NCL tested the waters, it received significant attention from government officials. Addressing the Speaker in the US House of Representatives in January 1970, the Honorable Edward A. Garmatz of Maryland expressed concern with the significant economic losses that American passenger shipping lines had sustained. While Miami's cruise business was booming, Garmatz asserted that this business was "going to foreign lines...who apparently find it quite lucrative." He brought to the attention of his fellow representatives a recently published *Miami News* article about Norwegian businessmen taking up the cruise industry in the American market.²³¹ As NCL continued to pave the road to offering cruise vacations at a value, Garmatz's remarks shed light on the negative economic impacts that the globalization of the US mass-market cruise industry had for American businesses.

The Congressman foreshadowed an issue that would represent a growing concern for lawmakers in the coming years. Economic globalization allowed companies to operate in one country and register their operations in another for financial benefits. For instance, Carnival registered its ships in Panama from the early 1970s,²³² taking advantage of the country's relaxed labor and tax laws to increase its own profits. The company then used those larger profit margins to fund the construction of more ships. Carnival's transnational structure was central to the

²³⁰ Jordan, "In Memoriam."

²³¹ "Congressional Record Vol. 116—Extension of Remarks," *Library of Congress*, January 22, 1970, 889-90, <https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1970/01/22/extensions-of-remarks-section>. So too did the influx of Scandinavian businessmen competing in the American cruise industry garner media attention. Werner Bamberger, "Norway Completing Entry Into U.S. Cruise Market," *New York Times*, September 10, 1973, ProQuest Databases.

²³² An advertisement shows that the Carnival Mardi Gras was registered in Panama as of 1972, "Display Ad 26," *New York Times*, February 29, 1972, ProQuest Databases.

company's rise as a formidable competitor in an industry that it had entered just years prior. Its competitors would follow suit, with NCL registering its ships in the Bahamas and Royal Caribbean taking advantage of the Liberian flag.²³³

NCL was a success in its first years, but the partnership did not last. Kloster and Arison ended their dealings on bad terms and in 1971. Arison's contract was cancelled, leaving him once again with no ships. He was, nevertheless, determined to find his place in the cruise industry. He purchased *Empress of Canada* and renamed it to *Mardi Gras*. It entered service in March 1972 but ran aground soon thereafter. After recovery operations, Arison spent a year and a half on renovations. The two-class passenger accommodations concerned him, for as it stood the ship was better suited for transatlantic voyages. In response, he transformed those cabins into accommodations meant for one-class cruising. This was the beginning of Carnival Cruise Line,²³⁴ which would soon become one of Norwegian's fiercest competitors.

While Kloster and Arison are often credited as the pioneers of the mass-market cruise industry,²³⁵ they had competition. Ed Stephan, formerly with Commodore Cruise Lines, was between jobs when he designed and planned a new cruise line. His proposal impressed Norwegian shipping executives Sigor Skaugen and Anders Wilhelmsen, who invested in Stephan's concept. Thus were the beginnings of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line in 1968,²³⁶ the

²³³ "Display Ad 385," *New York Times*, October 4, 1987, ProQuest Databases; "Display Ad 120," *New York Times*, October 2, 1988, ProQuest Databases.

²³⁴ Dickinson, *Selling the Sea*, 26-29.

²³⁵ Kalosh, "Cruise Visionary;" Gallagher, True North, 59-60. Both Kloster and Arison have been inducted into the Cruise Lines International Association Hall of Fame for their work in the industry, "CLIA Announces 2013 Cruise Industry Hall of Fame Inductees," *Cruise Industry News*, May 13, 2013, Accessed October 16, 2021, <https://www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/9225-clia-announces-2013-cruise-industry-hall-of-fame-inductees.html>.

²³⁶ Dickinson, *Selling the Sea*, 21-23.

third and final of the “Big Three” cruise lines that would chart the mass-market cruise industry’s course over the next decades.

The Postwar Cruise Passenger

Leisure travel grew during the postwar era in part because it served as an escape from American modernity. A growing counterculture movement in the 1960s, led by college students though by no means limited to that group, was dissatisfied with traditional middle-class values, such as aspiring for home ownership, white-collar employment, and upward mobility at work. Participants in the counterculture also criticized the hypocrisy of middle-class belief systems, for instance the emphasis on peace while justifying the Vietnam War and mistreatment of African Americans.²³⁷ Representations of foreign societies circulated via mass media avenues contributed to curiosity about other cultures, serving as a motivational factor for postwar travel for Americans seeking alternative lifestyles.

Postwar travel also appealed to those who continued to subscribe to traditional middle-class values, for it was in these years that more Americans gained access to disposable income and paid time off to spend on trips.²³⁸ Citizens also took advantage of more affordable higher

²³⁷ Lawrence Samuel, *The American Middle Class: A Cultural History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 62-63.

²³⁸ In her work about postwar family holidays, Rugh traces the push for paid holidays by citizens, legislators, and tourism boosters. It was in 1948 that the Department of Labor declared the standard nature of paid vacation clauses in most union agreements. This benefit was owed in part to increasing acceptance of the idea that paid vacations were a right, lending dignity to ordinary working citizens. Unions argued that leisure time produced employees with high labor moral, and thus efficiency and reduced worker turnover. Rugh asserts that, as of 1949, 93 percent of collective bargaining agreements contained clauses pertaining to paid holidays. Additionally, these agreements were more generous with benefits than they had been in years prior. Service length required to earn paid holiday leave was reduced, while vacation time awarded was increased. Longer paid holidays became common by the mid-1950s. *Are We There Yet?*, 17.

education, leveraging their diplomas for higher wages.²³⁹ Yet, even as the counterculture movement declined in popularity, its values had seeped into traditional middle-class lifestyles by the mid-1970s.²⁴⁰ With a decline in organized religion and the discipline it encouraged, an increasingly secular middle class seeking purpose and meaning partook in self-fulfilling forms of leisure, among them tourism.²⁴¹ The middle-class customer base that Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian appealed to in the 1970s is best understood as a product of these factors.

Although cruise travel represented the quintessence of modernity, it also promised ways to escape its everyday shackles. The emergence of a postwar consumer society—a variety of advanced capitalism that relied on the media, advertising, and spectacle to perpetuate its grip—was modernity manifest. Consumerism encouraged citizens to purchase mass-produced commodities in hopes of achieving the so-called American Dream, in an era when the freedom to choose from a variety of goods came to symbolize the political freedom of the United States as

²³⁹ Increasingly affordable higher education was central to the middle-class' ability to travel. The skillsets obtained in college promised access to higher paying jobs, generating disposable income. Important to the widespread shift towards more egalitarian postsecondary education was the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (more commonly known as the G.I. Bill), which made colleges, formerly a relatively elitist undertaking, more affordable for veterans. According to the United States Navy, nearly 8 million took advantage of the Bill's educational concessions. The subsequent Vietnam Era GI Bill extended these benefits well into the final decades of the century, "Vietnam Era GI Bill (VEGIB)," MyNavyHR, Accessed November 25, 2021, <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Career-Management/Education/GI-Bill/Vietnam-Era-GI-Bill/>. As historian Edward Humes tells us in *Over Here: How the GI Bill Transformed the American Dream* (Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006), while many college administrators expressed skepticism and even disdain about the enrolment of blue-collar veterans into these exclusive establishments, post-secondary institutions also needed more enrolment to make up for profits lost owing to the Second World War when college-age men left to fight. Ultimately, the Bill forced colleges to rethink who could attend, making higher education more widely available and expanding the American middle class. Equipped with college diplomas, millions of veterans were positioned to reintegrate into society by acquiring white-collar jobs—a sector of the labor market accessible to more citizens as higher education became cheaper. As the urban planning scholar Robert A. Beauregard notes, increasingly accessible higher education produced a labor force that was better equipped for white-collar positions, as opposed to manual, blue-collar work. According to Beauregard, the shift towards white-collar roles increased salaries and granted middle-class status, *When America Became Suburban* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 107.

²⁴⁰ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*, 83-84.

²⁴¹ Robert C. Ritchie, *The Lure of the Beach: A Global History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 199-200.

the champion of the “Free World.”²⁴² By the 1950s, retail developers increasingly built commercial shopping centers in suburbs. As the buying power of suburbanites increased, these developments allowed them to conveniently access consumer goods close to home.²⁴³ However, the pursuit of things eschewed relationships between people, just as social interactions were increasingly based in consumption, with one important example being the growth of shopping malls as community hubs.²⁴⁴ The same capitalist efficiency that guaranteed cheap goods also alienated workers from their labor.²⁴⁵ In these ways, modernity called into question the authenticity of daily life and inspired a nostalgia for the ‘real.’

Traveling to destinations portrayed as primitive—those contrasting industrial urbanity—was a means to satisfy this quest for authenticity.²⁴⁶ Escaping to natural spaces within the United States,²⁴⁷ among them national parks, appealed to those who disapproved of postwar consumption. It was but one manifestation of rebellion against modernity, among many others.²⁴⁸ Opponents of modernity were found in troves at Big Sur, combating alienation by exploring the Californian wilderness to “find themselves.”²⁴⁹ Likewise, the Southwest turned to tourism in the

²⁴² Mica Nava, “Consumerism and its Contradictions.” *Cultural Studies* 1, no. 2 (1987): 204.

²⁴³ Cohen, “From Town Center to Shopping Center.”

²⁴⁴ As Cohen notes, shopping malls were attractive as social spaces because centralized administrators designed them to incorporate the best qualities of downtown districts, including a diverse mix of stores and idealized pedestrian streets, while excluding the negative aspects associated with urbanity—chaotic inefficiency, prostitutes, vagrants, disruptive rebels, and in some cases racial minorities, *A Consumers’ Republic*, 261-65.

²⁴⁵ Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 168-69.

²⁴⁶ MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity;” *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 83, 103, 159-60; Erik Cohen, “A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences,” *Sociology* 13, no. 2 (1979): 191.

²⁴⁷ David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon & Schuter, 2000), 72-76.

²⁴⁸ Grace Elizabeth Hall delves into the different forms of rebellion associated with hippie culture in the postwar United States, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011). Rock n’ roll music played an especially important role in an avenue for the expression of dissent for the masses, Michael J. Kramer, *The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²⁴⁹ Brooks, *Big Sur*, 107.

postwar era after its extraction-oriented industries fell owing in part to cheaper overseas labor. As historian Hal K. Rothman asserts, tourism was an attractive opportunity for local entrepreneurs to exploit the region's image of a mythic, multiracial past forged through Indian and Hispanic histories. Businessmen framed the Southwest as a preindustrial space in which one could befriend indigenous inhabitants and gaze upon their labor as they crafted cultural products. Those venturing to the Southwest could consume commodified cultures, discursively represented as refuge from an inauthentic, postmodern society.²⁵⁰ Tourism boosters framed national travel as cultural encounter between the self and supposedly premodern other. These entrepreneurs taught a growing middle class to travel as a means of escaping the perceived problems of modernity just before the inception of mass-market cruising when Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian advanced similarly homogenizing, anachronistic themes in their initial portrayals of Caribbean nations.

Increasing encounters with foreign societies right in one's hometown inspired curiosity about international cultures, serving as another motivational factor for both cultural sampling and travel. Interest in fine dining took off in the 1950s. Cooking shows and cookbooks encouraged Americans to emulate highbrow dishes in their kitchens. Perhaps most influential of these was the work of Julia Child in the next decade.²⁵¹ As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai notes, cookbooks allowed those who identified with one social class to engage with the cultural habits of others, incorporating those representations into their own identities.²⁵² Further contributing to

²⁵⁰ Hal K. Rothman, "Tourism and the Future," in *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest*, edited by Hal K. Rothman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 1-11.

²⁵¹ Victor W. Geraci, *Making Slow Food Fast in California Cuisine* (Gwerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 133-35.

²⁵² Arjun Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (1988): 3-24.

rising curiosity about other cultures was the 1965 Immigration Act, which ended quotas established by the National Origins Act of 1924 and 1929, both favoring migrants from northern and western Europe. The United States saw a subsequent rise in immigrants from Latin and Central America, as well as Asia.²⁵³ At the same time, evolving media technology compressed time and space. As sociologists Bronislaw Szerszynski and John Urry argue in their understanding of banal globalism, the widespread availability of television weaved together the local, national, and global, contributing to the formation of post-national citizenships. Representations of other cultures became a part of daily life, allowing Americans to feel connected to issues from around the world instantly.²⁵⁴ Finally, while increasingly affordable postsecondary education promised social mobility as previously stated, it also had cultural implications. College exposed students to the histories and current events of other nations, while an educated class of diploma-wielding businessmen traveled abroad for work. These factors increased interest in international cultures.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Johnston, *Foodies*, 10; Charles B. Keely, "Effects of the Immigration Act of 1965 on Selected Population Characteristics of Immigrants to the United States," *Demography* 8, no. 2 (1971): 157-169; Elliott Young, "Beyond Borders: Remote Control and the Continuing Legacy of Racism in Immigration Legislation," in *A Nation of Immigrants Reconsidered: US Society in an Age of Restriction, 1924–1965*, edited by Maddalena Marinari, Madeline Hsu and Maria Cristina Garcia (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2019): 27; Michael J. Greenwood and Zachary Ward, "Immigration Quotas, World War I, and Emigrant Flows from the United States in the Early 20th Century," *Explorations in Economic History* 55 (2015): 78. For the impact of the Immigration Act of 1965 on the racial and ethnic makeup of the United States, see the essays in *The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965: Legislating a New America*, edited by Gabriel J. Chin and Rose Cuisson Villazor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²⁵⁴ Szerszynski and Urry, "Cultures of Cosmopolitanism." The potential for mass media technology to weave together and define communities has been given significant attention in more recent years. Take for instance the work of Toby Miller, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2007); Myria Georgiou, *Media and the City: Cosmopolitanism and Difference* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013).

²⁵⁵ Johnston, *Foodies*, 13. Erica T. Lehrer's work on cultural tourism is one case study of the rising interest in international travel for cultural experiences, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013). Lehrer examines the rise of Jewish-themed museums, monuments, commemorations, celebrations, and festivals in Poland. Beginning in the 1970s, these events and sites fueled travel to the country.

So too was this American middle class more diverse along ethnic and racial lines. Though African Americans continued to be discriminated against openly and systematically in the postwar era, cultural historian Lawrence Samuel argued that the group had made significant economic and social progress in these years, assessing that around a third of African American families owned a home in 1960 and increasingly took up white-collar (especially government) jobs. With upward mobility, however, came social and economic splitting within the black community, as wealthier individuals tended to distance themselves from those who were less well off, which entailed refusing to support the NAACP, Urban League, and other anti-discrimination organizations. In other ways, African Americans did not fit within the same class-based definitions used to categorize white Americans. Owing to hundreds of years of slavery and continued discrimination, economic wealth was simply insufficient for black Americans to enjoy social stratification as easily as their white counterparts. This is why it is difficult to accurately conceptualize what percentage of African Americans belonged to the middle class at any given time. In addition, the tendencies of African Americans to celebrate or mask symbols of cultural pride were heavily influenced by age and intergenerational differences.²⁵⁶

As African Americans fought for their rights, so too were Mexican Americans engaged in a heated battle for their own civil liberties in the context of rising crackdowns by federal authorities on legal and illegal Mexican migrants alike, as well as the US-born Mexican population. The Chicano movement and emerging civil rights organizations resulted in increased socioeconomic opportunities for Mexican Americans, paving the way to legal permanent residency and in turn college education, stable employment, and middle-class status. Like the African American civil rights movement, the Chicano movement also contributed to the creation

²⁵⁶ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*, 51-62, 76-78.

of antidiscrimination policies and the subsequent institutionalization of diversity initiatives that encouraged the celebration of ethnic pride.²⁵⁷

Ethnic Americans from Southern and Eastern Europe also gained mobility. Urbanites of Italian, Greek, Jewish, Slavic, and Irish heritage had long been viewed as working class. However, as the more traditional WASP-based middle class weakened in the 1970s and as the country came to terms with its national pluralism, there were more opportunities for tens of millions of ethnic Americans to be recognized as part of the middle class. These groups—especially the first-and-second-generation citizens within them—took pride in as opposed to masking their identities. Along the same vein, the civil rights movement resulted in many more African Americans celebrating their cultural heritage instead of attempting to imitate the lifestyle of their white counterparts.²⁵⁸ These changes resulted in an ample market to whom companies could market their goods.

American corporations commodified the growing consumer interest in cultural difference by mass-producing goods with ethnic affiliations, further connecting consumerism and cultural identity. Citizens satisfied curiosities about societies perceived as foreign in their neighborhood restaurants and grocery stores.²⁵⁹ Indeed, by now imported foods were commonplace,²⁶⁰ just as

²⁵⁷ Jody Agius Vallejo, *Barrios to Burbs: The Making of the Mexican American Middle Class* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 33-36, 122.

²⁵⁸ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*. See also Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-civil Rights America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

²⁵⁹ Marilyn Halter, *Shopping for Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity* (New York: Schocken Books, 2000); Long, *Culinary Tourism*; Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 149-74. While Gabaccia argues that corporations commodified ethnicity in the advertising of so-called ethnic foods, as she notes, they did not invent the consumption of ethnic goods in marketplaces. Rather, they capitalized on existing connections between ethnicity and consumerism.

²⁶⁰ "Marketing: Big Appetite for Gourmet Foods," *Business Week*, August 23, 1958," quoted in Scott Derks, *Working Americans 1880-1999: Volume II: The Middle Class* (Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing), 383.

innovations in transportation and shipping technology made goods from the world over available for American consumers at affordable prices.²⁶¹

The expectations and demands of those purchasing vacations were shaped through their experiences as citizens of an increasingly diverse consumer society.²⁶² They had come to expect a variety of goods, for the ability to choose one's purchase was a means to exercise freedom of choice, and these goods increasingly had various ethnic connections. Mass-market cruise lines were undoubtedly aware of these cultural factors that influenced the behavior of their prospective clientele,²⁶³ which had shaped over the decades how the American middle class learned to perceive the products offered to them in everyday life.²⁶⁴ Over their first decade in business, mass-market lines advertised their cruise ships as idealized iterations of the consumer society.

Caribbean Cruises for the Masses

Mass-market cruise vacation packages addressed middle-class wanderlust while remaining aware of the demands and economic limitations of this consumer base.²⁶⁵ Trips were

²⁶¹ Levinson, *The Box*, 10-11.

²⁶² James R. Bettman, "Consumer Psychology." *Annual Review of Psychology* 37, no. 1 (1986): 257-289.

²⁶³ By now, academic and industry research into the psychology of consumer behavior was both well-established and burgeoning. It was in 1960 that Raymond A. Bauer, a pioneer in consumer psychology, described consumer behavior as risk-taking, "Consumer Behavior as Risk Taking," in *Proceedings of the 43rd National Conference of the American Marketing Association*, American Marketing Association (Chicago, IL, 1960). Since then, many scholars of consumer behavior have expanded on his theory, one of the more influential works being James W. Taylor, "The Role of Risk in Consumer Behavior: A Comprehensive and Operational Theory of Risk Taking in Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Marketing* 38, no. 2 (1974): 54-60.

²⁶⁴ As the consumer psychologist James R. Bettman notes in his work, "Consumer Psychology," as products became ubiquitous in daily life, so too did consumers increasingly receive communications about goods and their brands to persuade them into purchases. However, as Bettman elaborates, the impact of culture also influences the purchase decisions. Exposure to radio broadcasting, newspapers, and television equip buyers with information directly related to the product, or indirect knowledge influencing the purchase of one product over another. For those reasons, companies must consider cultural processes in formulating their understandings of the demands of their target demographics, as well as how to meet those needs.

²⁶⁵ Economic limitations that travel companies needed to account for included the clientele's disposable income, availability of paid time off, and access to competing vacation choices. W. Fred Van Raaij and John C. Crotts, "Introduction: The Economic Psychology of Travel and Tourism," *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 3, no. 3 (1995): 1-19.

advertised as affordable, itineraries plentiful in their variety, and expedited cruise port calls meant that those with limited paid time off could incorporate more countries in a single, week-long trip. However, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian mediated these vacations to foreign lands so that passengers would not be overwhelmed by exoticism.²⁶⁶ Through the language of consumerism, ships were represented as extensions of American society, rendering them familiar for the clientele. These were enclaves of American identity physically and culturally separate from their Caribbean surroundings.²⁶⁷ Messaging promised passengers the modern amenities they were accustomed to, alongside experiences typically out of their reach in daily life. Cruise lines also advertised ports of call using homogenized references to tropicality, a representative strategy that tourism boosters had long used to familiarize the Caribbean. Thus, the first decade of mass-market cruise travel promised American passengers both cultural novelty and comfort.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ The process of mediation was important to the psychological value of leisure travel. At once, vacations needed to propose novelty—differentiation from the personal and/or interpersonal environment that the traveler was accustomed to, while remaining familiar enough that novelty did not make tourists uncomfortable. Seppo E. Iso-Ahola, “Towards a Social Psychology of Recreational Travel,” *Leisure Studies* 2, no. 1 (1983): 45-56; Liubov Skavronskaya, Brent Moyle, Noel Scott and Anna Kralj, “The Psychology of Novelty in Memorable Tourism Experiences,” *Current Issues in Tourism* 23, no. 21 (2020): 2683-2698.

²⁶⁷ Tourism studies scholars have extensively critiqued enclave tourism, for example in the form of all-inclusive resorts, for this tendency to culturally, socially, and economically isolate hosts from guests. This is especially owing to the prominence of this tourism type in the Global South and East where the economic benefits of travel expenditures would prove beneficial to local economies but are instead pocketed by corporations, often global chains. Of particular importance is the work of Tilman G. Freitag, “Enclave Tourism Development: For Whom the Benefits Roll?,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 21, no. 3 (1994): 538-554. See also Sheena Carlisle and Eleri Jones, “The Beach Enclave: A Landscape of Power,” *Tourism Management Perspectives* 1 (2012): 9-16.

²⁶⁸ Comfort was achieved at ports through modernized infrastructure and amenities catering to western tastes. Some of this development had already taken place before mass-market lines arrived on the scene. Imperial officials constructed lodging, railways, and telegram infrastructure to support colonial business and to encourage vacationers to tour the islands. However, development continued along a vein that made touring Caribbean countries more tasteful for the American masses. While a comprehensive discussion of tourism development for each Caribbean country is beyond the purview of this chapter, much of it took place as shifts away from cash crop export economies necessitated reliance on a different industry to fund economic and political independence in the context of decolonization. Tourism emerged as the choice, resulting in local, regional, and international efforts to transform the Caribbean to support that industry including roads, airports, hotels, resorts, and cruise ports. See for instance Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*; Cocks, “The Pleasures of Degeneration,” Martin, “The United Fruit Company’s Tourist Business.”

Norwegian Caribbean Line was the first of the three major mass-market cruise companies to begin operations in Florida. Those reading its 1969 brochures for 7-day *M/S Starward* cruises were met with depictions of passengers lounging around the swimming pool under the Caribbean sun, dancing “to the irresistible beat of a calypso band,” partaking in spa treatments, and consuming lavish meals. For fares as low as USD \$195 per person, the company exclaimed, passengers gained access to “two beautiful and unique swimming pools...4 spacious and vicarious sun decks to take on a glowing tan,” and various sports, among them skeet-shooting. Included were “three delicious meals daily...and a heaping midnight buffet,” each in “gracious service, attentiveness and charm.”²⁶⁹ Through these images and verbiage, NCL advertised opportunities for relaxation and abundance, painting a utopic consumer society. Though postwar consumerism had brought into the reach of middle-class citizens a wide range of products and experiences, it always left wanting—a key tenet of capitalism that promised to keep the so-called American Dream just out of reach so that companies could profit from subsequent products. Each new consumer good reignited the citizen’s desire to purchase as a means of achieving self-satisfaction, in turn deepening the connection between purchasing and the American Dream.²⁷⁰ By contrast, passengers onboard the *Starward* would not be left wanting, for the food was “heaping,” the wines “well-stocked,” and the abundance of entertainment and amenities included in the fare price. One did not have to spend additional money to see their “dreams come true.”

Though passengers boarding the *Starward* were bound for three Jamaican cities, strikingly absent in the same brochures was any information about those ports or anything that

²⁶⁹ “Norwegian Caribbean Lines MS Starward Caribbean Brochure,” 1969, *eBay*, Accessed March 28, 2022, https://www.ebay.ca/itm/MS-Starward-Caribbean-Brochure-1969-NCL-Norwegian-Caribbean-Lines-Jamaica-/194920316992?_trksid=p2047675.m43663.110137&nordt=true&rt=nc&orig_cvip=true.

²⁷⁰ Todd McGowan, *Capitalism and Desire: The Psychic Cost of Free Markets* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 36; Andrea Migone, “Hedonistic Consumerism: Patterns of Consumption in Contemporary Capitalism,” *Review of Radical Political Economics* 39, no. 2 (2007): 173-200.

might strike readers as exotic. Instead, NCL advertised its ship as a space passengers would be familiar with, if only because the cruise revolved around consumption—in restaurants, though also at the onboard shopping mall and duty-free shop. The vacation’s novelty came from the *Starward*’s portrayal as a utopic consumer society where passengers woke up not to work, but to staff waiting on them hand-and-foot and cleaning up after them, luxuries included in the cruise price that would otherwise be out of reach. They did not go about their day wanting for the next consumer good or experience, for the ship did not leave them that option. By boarding the ship, citizens could for one week live under the illusion of upper-class opulence that evaded them on land.

Cruise lines were not the only actors influencing how the American masses perceived cruise vacations. Newspapers and travel writers were popular avenues by which prospective passengers obtained information about cruise vacations. Just before Royal Caribbean’s *Song of Norway* entered service in November 1970, the *New York Times* told its readers about the technological features onboard. The 18,000-ton, 550-foot ship had telephones and three-channel radios in each of its 377 staterooms. The 60-cycle, 110-volt electric current running through those accommodations promised compatibility with “American gadgetry.”²⁷¹ These features meant that passengers would have access to the technologies that they had become so accustomed to using every day in postwar America.²⁷² The same population was used to the material comforts of home. So, while the fin stabilizers guaranteed stability in rough seas, the ship also had air conditioning throughout the ship, while each stateroom contained private

²⁷¹ “New Norwegian Cruise Vessel Has Observation Stack Lounge,” *New York Times*, January 2, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²⁷² Carroll Pursell, *Technology in Postwar America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 174-92; Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic*, 126-27.

showers.²⁷³ A ship missing basic material comforts such as showers—accoutrements guaranteed by mass consumerism—²⁷⁴ would surely make a bad impression for a new company. Without the inclusion of these amenities, the cruise experience would have been a rather uncomfortable one. With them, alongside technological innovations guaranteeing speed and comfort, the cruise experience reflected the cultural values of postwar American modernity while serving as a timely political display of American capitalism triumphing over Soviet communism.²⁷⁵

Norwegian Caribbean Line kickstarted their *New York Times* advertising campaign in Spring 1970,²⁷⁶ drawing on verbiage that appealed to the growing middle class of American consumers. They advertised “a choice of cruises on the newest, most beautiful ships.” Customers could choose between 3-, 4-, and 7-day cruises across 3 ships and various ports.²⁷⁷ Just as consumers were used to choosing from a variety of mass-produced goods at department or grocery stores, they now had unprecedented choice in vacation customization, bringing the tenets of American consumerism vis-à-vis capitalist modernity to sea. So too were the vacation packages described as a bargain, “The best vacation value in America!” Understanding that their intended demographic had limited paid time off and perhaps equally limited funds, NCL proposed flexible cruises of varying lengths fit for different budgets, between USD \$85 and \$195 per person.

²⁷³ “New Norwegian Cruise Vessel Has Observation Stack Lounge.”

²⁷⁴ Susman, *Culture as History*; T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11-18.

²⁷⁵ Historians of technology have begun exploring how technologies have been linked with conceptions of modernity and how these, in turn, have strongly influenced American national identity. See for example James Spiller, *Frontiers for the American Century: Outer Space, Antarctica, and Cold War Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); ““Our Kitchen is Just as Good:” Soviet Responses to the American Kitchen,” in *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users*, edited by Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 83-112.

²⁷⁶ While Miami would emerge as the dominant cruise port by the late 1970s, New York remained a key clientele into the 1970s. Therefore, cruise advertisements and articles from the *New York Times* continued to be relevant as primary sources, even in studying cruise lines that would soon shift most of their operations to Florida.

²⁷⁷ “Display Ad 2161,” *New York Times*, March 15, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

However, while NCL represented their cruise ships as vessels that would carry passengers away from workaday living for relaxing Caribbean vacations, there were limits to how exotic these trips would be. Advertisements focused squarely on the sleek ships cast in the image of American modernity, with only a few words about ports themselves. Though passengers would visit a mix of 5 ports depending on their choice of itinerary—Nassau, Jamaica, San Juan, St. Thomas, and Haiti—NCL simply described these locales as “the most romantic islands.”²⁷⁸ Even the ten ports promised to passengers on a fourteen-day cruise in 1971 were but “romantic” with no elaboration on how the localities differed, nor even how the cruise line defined the term.²⁷⁹

In both advertisements, NCL drew on a long history of tourism companies homogenizing Caribbean nations as generic tropical destinations for the tourist gaze. These traditions dated to colonial times in which explorers represented the ‘New World’ in broad strokes, ignoring differences between regions and their inhabitants. Eurocentric representational practices casted the Caribbean as a primitive space filled with natural resources, in need of western modernity. Colonial officials viewed their extraction of the Caribbean’s vast natural commodities as fair entitlement in exchange for bringing so-called modernity to the region.²⁸⁰ These commodification practices evolved into western tourism companies using the Caribbean’s natural resources to sell vacations, in this case at the hands of NCL. The company also portrayed Caribbean societies as consumer products through which paying customers could exercise their freedom to choose the best bargain, just as they would on land. Though globalization continued

²⁷⁸ “Display Ad 2161,” *New York Times* March 15, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²⁷⁹ “Display Ad 476,” *New York Times*, December 5, 1971, ProQuest Databases.

²⁸⁰ Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*; Cocks, *Tropical Whites*.

to expose everyday consumers to international cultures, in this instance through cruise vacations, it resulted here in the reduction of diverse cultures to a homogenous conception of “romantic.”

Where NCL elaborated on portside activities, cultures were represented as objects for touristic consumption. Participation in these encounters served to advance escapism from the work ethic. In 1970 the company advertised 3-and-4-day cruises onboard the *Sunward*, describing the only port of call—the Bahamas—as the reader’s “Island of Fun,” a “charming, quaint, bustling, colorful...Paradise,”²⁸¹ drawing on historical tropes once again based in colonial projects that homogenized the Caribbean as a tropical playground for American tourists.²⁸² Their portrayal of the cruise as one of “enchantment and discovery” depicted the potential passenger as a European explorer in the Age of Sail, leaving home behind to discover unfamiliar lands. Americans disenchanted with inauthentic living—a sense of disconnection between people and communities advanced through the pursuit of consumer goods—ventured to Nassau for an experience that NCL represented as premodern, a time before capitalism and the problems associated with it dominated.

As the geographer Dean MacCannell argued, an interest in authenticity for those alienated by modernity was a central motivator for travel, but those who stood to profit from tourism also staged cultural referents that implied authenticity for touristic consumption.²⁸³ It was certainly ironic that consumerism mediated the passenger’s search for authenticity. Passengers had the opportunity to patronize “delightful shops” near Nassau’s cruise port “that bring you all the treasures of the Continent.” Local cultures thus became “treasures” available for

²⁸¹ “Norwegian Caribbean Lines MS Sunward Miami Nassau Brochure,” *eBay*, 1970, Accessed March 28, 2022, https://www.ebay.ca/itm/MS-Sunward-Miami-Nassau-Brochure-1970-NCL-Norwegian-Caribbean-Lines-/144472024927?_trksid=p2047675.m43663.110137&nordt=true&rt=nc&orig_cvip=true.

²⁸² Mimi Sheller, *Natural Hedonism: The Invention of Caribbean Islands as Tropical Playgrounds* (London: Routledge, 2004), 23-38; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

²⁸³ MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity.”

purchase, and in the interests of the clientele's social class, NCL specified that these commodities were offered at "bargain prices."

Purchase decisions continued into the night, when the brochure invited readers to "'go over the hill,' the Bahamians' way of saying the pulsating night clubs." Passengers would choose between a selection of venues, assessing the merits of each based on advertised criteria, including authenticity. However, it is unclear how "Bahamian" the "colorful native shows" therein were. It is true that Nassau's Over-the-Hill district has historically been a center of entertainment for locals seeking the nightlife. Tourists were also welcome, and—as the district stood in stark contrast to hotel nightclubs—it drew visitors seeking a more authentic musical experience. Yet, as the ethnomusicologist Timothy Rommen argued in his history of Bahamian popular music, alongside the shows that appealed to locals, Over-the-Hill nightclubs put on floor shows that were not necessarily "native," but instead spectacular. Fire-dancing, limbo, and staged mini-Junkanoo parades were popular amongst tourists.²⁸⁴

The so-called "colorful native shows" NCL promised, then, were likely the sanitized entertainment forms catered to touristic demands for spectacle that Rommen discussed, all the more probably given that the cruise line discussed those shows alongside other activities. Tourists were advised to "stroll through the native straw markets and pick up a souvenir...listen to a Calypso band and do the Limbo." The point of these entertainment forms was to "take [passengers] far away from the everyday world" by constructing an experience that contrasted the inauthenticity of American modernity, even as consumerism drove almost every aspect of the passenger's tour of Nassau.

²⁸⁴ Timothy Rommen, *Funky Nassau: Roots, Routes, and Representation in Bahamian Popular Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 80, 95-6.

NCL also advanced Eurocentric iterations of modernity to construct the onboard atmosphere. “In an incomparable Norwegian tradition,” the company declared, “SUNWARD is commanded and staffed by officers trained to the highest standards.” In consistently evoking western standards of comfort, convenience, and abundance throughout the brochure, NCL portrayed the *Sunward* as a distinctly familiar space—an enclave shielding passengers from the foreign influence surrounding them as they sailed through the Caribbean Sea. Though the cruise line advertised Nassau through tropicality, the *Sunward*—they urged readers—was “the most...civilized way to cruise the Caribbean,” suggesting that traveling to the island without the cruise ship to mediate the encounter would result in an experience far less civilized. Therefore, even if, in a shift away from cultural homogenization, the brochure attempted to portray the Bahamas as a unique space through its lengthy discussion of Nassau, the advertisement ultimately reinforced homogenization because it based its discursive construction of the country in Eurocentric binaries informed by and constructed through colonial conquest.

Along a similar vein, the travel agency Liberty Travel advertised in 1971 a 14-day Royal Caribbean cruises to “nine sparkling Caribbean islands!”²⁸⁵ It was marketed as a cultural encounter—the verbiage even stated passengers would “meet” these islands. However, the experience was mediated. Homogenizing ports as “sparkling” without articulating cultural differences encouraged passengers to accept a surface-level tour of those societies, experiencing some degree of separation from daily life while avoiding unpalatably exotic cultural representations.

²⁸⁵ “Display Ad 414,” *New York Times*, November 21, 1971, ProQuest Databases. Specifics of the Viking Crown Lounge were detailed in another *New York Times* article, “New Norwegian Cruise Vessel Has Observation Stack Lounge.”

Furthermore, the same advertisement invited tourists to “View [ports] first from” Royal Caribbean’s Viking Crown Lounge, a ten-story tower onboard the *Nordic Prince*. The Lounge was an avenue for passengers to gaze upon islands from the comforts of American modernity because it functioned as a skyscraper at sea—a vantage point that discursively contrasted urbanity and tropicality.²⁸⁶ Just as the historian Chandra Bhimull argued that air travel passengers in the colonial era exercised “aboveness” by gazing down upon subjects from a space of technological superiority, differentiating those airborne from those on the ground along time and space,²⁸⁷ the Viking Crown Lounge allowed passengers to perform aboveness over Caribbean societies. From the distance provided by the Lounge, passengers would not be able to interact with the countries they gazed down on, nor understand how various ports were different from one another. Instead, the Lounge offered a view of sunny beaches and palm trees—the homogenized tropicality that Royal Caribbean attempted to evoke in its use of “sparkling.” The Lounge allowed tourists to sample exoticism in a culturally and technologically modern space, complete with air-conditioning and staff to wait on them hand and foot. Passengers going “ashore to shop and explore” after experiencing the Viking Crown Lounge, as the advertisement suggests,²⁸⁸ would debark the ship with understandings of Caribbean cultures constructed through postcolonial aboveness, the spectacles through which they would continue to view those countries. For those reasons, even though the advertisement promised that Royal Caribbean customers would meet nine Caribbean ports, any such meeting took place on unequal grounds

²⁸⁶ American skyscrapers were deployed as symbols of capitalist innovation against Soviet communism, as discussed in Benjamin Flowers, *Skyscraper: The Politics and Power of Building New York City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: 2009); Adrienne Brown, *The Black Skyscraper: Architecture and the Perception of Race* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2017), 22.

²⁸⁷ Bhimull, *Empire in the Air*.

²⁸⁸ “Display Ad 414,” *New York Times*, November 21, 1971, ProQuest Databases.

and was but a tokenistic taste of exoticism in a vacation that was ultimately Americanized through the cruise line's construction of the tourist gaze.

Advertisements presented by the cruise line itself also sanitized Caribbean cultures. While a 1972 Royal Caribbean advertisement for a 14-day cruise described the “potpourri of peoples and cultures of the Caribbean” that passengers would encounter, even listing the countries on the itinerary, the company did not elaborate on how those cultures differed from one another. In homogenizing the “9 islands,” cultures became commodities for passengers to consume as but one part of the overall “bigger bargain,” which also included “2 plane rides...42 meals, plus 14 midnight buffets—all from \$630 to \$880 per person.” Royal Caribbean advanced a culture of abundance, drawing parallels to the postwar United States where ideals of freedom and democracy guaranteed participants in the consumer society freedom from want, though the company also signalled that these experiences were affordable for everyday Americans. At the same time, the advertisement simplified diverse cultures shaped by complex histories of colonialism and resistance as mere products available for purchase.²⁸⁹

The cruise industry's essentialization of Caribbean cultures was far from unopposed, for the Caribbean Travel Association (CTA) itself had an important role in shaping how potential cruise tourists viewed Caribbean countries. The organization advanced concerted advertising campaigns in the *New York Times* to encourage Americans to explore the Caribbean—in part to counteract Eurocentric stereotypes about the region that had become hegemonic, though also in

²⁸⁹ “Display Ad 426,” *New York Times*, October 22, 1972, ProQuest Databases. Economic value was the prevailing theme in early-1970s Royal Caribbean advertisements. See also for example “Display Ad 709,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1973, ProQuest Databases, which echoed similar themes with its headline, “New York's best Caribbean cruise value sails from Miami.”

response to increasing competition from European destinations. The CTA's \$200,000 "Eighth Continent" campaign,²⁹⁰ depicted the Caribbean as:

"A strange, exotic land combining the languages, customs, food, music and cultures of dozens of countries all around the world...Its countries are bounded not by borders and landmarks. But by the Caribbean Sea. And the Atlantic Ocean."

And yet, even if Caribbean islands were united and "very close to each other," they were "very different from each other" too. Owing to this variety of cultures, CTA asserted that exploring the Caribbean was "the closest thing to travelling around the world. Without travelling too far from home."²⁹¹ The organization partook in persistent efforts to oppose conceptions of a homogenous Caribbean, instead promoting what its director Herbert Hiller called "indigenous values." "For too long we assumed that what an American wants on vacation is more of America, no matter where he is," he stated, believing instead that promoting cultural difference would attract more tourists.²⁹²

Nor, for that matter, did Caribbean locals always look fondly upon tourists more generally. It was reported that rapport between guests and locals was sometimes unfavorable in

²⁹⁰ Philip H. Dougherty, "Advertising: Blacks Press Commercial Use," *New York Times*, July 1, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²⁹¹ "Display Ad 1305," *New York Times*, October 18, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²⁹² Philip H. Dougherty, "Selling the Sunny Je Ne Sais Quoi," *New York Times*, January 2, 1972, ProQuest Databases; "Display Ad 702," *New York Times*, May 13, 1973, ProQuest Databases. Other Caribbean organizations joined that systemic effort to promote local cultural representations to Americans on home territory while working to diminish the place of colonizers in those identity formations. The Visual Arts Research and Resource Center Relating to the Caribbean, alongside New York City's Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, sponsored a four-week festival entitled "African Diaspora in the Americas: Caribbean Expressions." It would take place across NYC in September 1979 and focused on Cuba, Dominican, Haitian, and Jamaican cultures, including "conferences involving Caribbean scholars; dance theater and musical performances, exhibitions by Caribbean artists and a crafts show—called an Artisans' Fair." Marta Moreno Vega, project director for the Visual Arts Research and Resource Center Relating to the Caribbean, said that "The festival acclaims...the African forms retained almost unchanged and others finely woven into the cultures of the Caribbean peoples. These African manifestations in the Caribbean are often overlooked, whereas the influence of Spain in Puerto Rico or England in Jamaica is commonly acknowledged...By highlighting the influence of Africa in the cultures of the Caribbean, the festival will contribute to a more complex understanding of cultural and national entities." C. Gerald Fraser, "Africa in Caribbean in Festival: Four Aspects," *New York Times*, June 14, 1979, ProQuest Databases.

the American Virgin Islands. In response, the Virgin Island Visitors Association sought to improve residents' perceptions about tourism, for instance making known the economic benefits of the industry via radio and newspaper advertisements in 1970.²⁹³ Neighboring countries, too, saw opposition to tourism; locals drew on United States civil rights movements in taking their own stands on such issues as nationalism, anticolonialism, racial consciousness, and rising rates of unemployment and poverty.²⁹⁴

The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico experienced many tourist complaints regarding relations between tourists “and black Bahamians,” especially an attitude of indifference towards tourists.²⁹⁵ Criticism often approached tourism from a postcolonial stance,²⁹⁶ expressing concern about the impact that western actors had in commodifying sanitized iterations of local identities. It was argued that tourism diminished the dignity of locals, necessitating a type of tourism wherein tourists accepted Caribbean nations without having to consume sanitized versions of those cultures. In response to that criticism, the CTA's president stated that he hoped no nation would attempt to change its social standards, cultures, or character to please tourists, but that he hoped some nations would change their attitudes towards visitors, to view tourists as human beings, as opposed to dollar signs. Both parties, he said, needed to understand and accept one another. On the issue of some Caribbean inhabitants opposing tourism because they viewed it as

²⁹³ Paul J.C. Friedlander, “Shadow Over the Caribbean,” *New York Times*, June 28, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²⁹⁴ Wade Greene, “Radicals Still Lack Broad Support, But Recent Events Have Shaken the Area's Image of Tranquility,” *New York Times*, February 7, 1971, ProQuest Databases.

²⁹⁵ Ian Glass, “Bahamas Push Campaign to Meet Tourist Complaints,” *New York Times*, August 23, 1970, ProQuest Databases.

²⁹⁶ Even initiatives to quash colonial legacies were met with backlash. Black power campaigns in the Caribbean left “some circles” in that region concerned because they “may have permanently shattered the area's image of ultimate tranquility, of somnambulant beachlands in the sun away from it all.” Jamaica, Curacao, and Trinidad and Tobago were said to “have experienced major upheavals” according to Greene's *New York Times* article, “Radicals Still Lack Broad Support.” Anticolonial protests were connected to decreased standards of service for tourists and the houses of Americans being broken into—impactful enough that tourists were noticing, Richard Cummings, “Barbados No Blasted Paradise Now!': Between Rage and Reaction, Anticolonialism and Subsistence,” *New York Times*, August 21, 1974, ProQuest Databases.

promoting servility, the CTA president encouraged locals to view tourism as a service to be pursued professionally—”the business of making friends.”²⁹⁷ On the other hand, there were those locals who argued that tourism was their way of achieving power and agency, so long as they were permitted to have stakes in the industry that—during the early 1970s—heavily favored government concessions to western corporations rather than Caribbean inhabitants.²⁹⁸ Being able to represent their own cultures in a shift away from industry representations that largely homogenized Caribbean nations was but one part of a long-term process aimed at obliterating the chains of colonialism.²⁹⁹

Cruise lines’ homogenization of Caribbean identities was part of a broader, Eurocentric system that favored the cultural representations of Europeans. By 1972, NCL used themed dinner menus across its fleet, attempting to create a sense of exoticism for passengers.³⁰⁰ However, the themes promised on those menus betrayed reality, for these menus offered many dishes that had become common offerings on land. The “Tropical Night Dinner” menu contained food options that evoked anything but tropicality.³⁰¹ “Norwegian Fish Soup,” and Italian or Italian-American fare like “Chicken Parmigiana Rigatoni” and “Zucchini Squash Marinara” were European favorites. “Caribbean Night Dinner” had on offer spiced eggplant, which would perhaps have evoked the Caribbean, had it not been labeled “Norwegian Spiced Eggplant” in what appeared to

²⁹⁷ Friedlander, “Shadow Over the Caribbean.”

²⁹⁸ J. Wandres, “I Began to Think of These Islands as Top-Secret Outposts,” *New York Times*, November 7, 1971, ProQuest Databases.

²⁹⁹ Jon Nordheimer, “Caribbean Seeks Way to Give Islanders Share in Tourism Benefits,” *New York Times*, March 4, 1973, ProQuest Databases.

³⁰⁰ Only the featured section on these NCL menus, i.e., “The Chef Suggests” were analyzed because the other pages were unavailable. The argument here assumes that the featured sections would incorporate any relevant iterations of the theme on offer that the cruise line wished to convey to its passengers.

³⁰¹ “Norwegian Caribbean Lines Cruise Menu Signed - Tropical Night Dinner,” eBay, 1972, Accessed July 27, 2019, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/Norwegian-Caribbean-Lines-Cruise-Menu-1972-Signed/273787402930?hash=item3fbf003ab2:g:JgsAAOSwAj5Z2qaQ>.

be an effort to familiarize foreign connotations,³⁰² just as the “Fiesta Night” menu featured mostly fare from western Europe.³⁰³

Americans at large had grown familiar with such European favorites over the decades. Masses of European immigrants journeying to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century brought their cuisines with them.³⁰⁴ Some of them became restaurateurs, purveying symbols of home to their fellow migrants.³⁰⁵ By the early twentieth century, however, Americans from outside those ethnic groups attended immigrant eateries, dining out without possessing the monetary or cultural capital necessary to patronize more popular French restaurants.³⁰⁶ European ethnic cuisines continued to grow in popularity in the postwar era, reflecting a strengthening ideology towards tolerating minority ethnicities and religions. This shift signalled the beginning of a redefinition of American social justice, in turn opening previous generations to engaging with cultures not their own.

As economic and cultural globalization increasingly facilitated interactions between the American masses and the world around them, popular social discourse increasingly encouraged pluralism—the acceptance of difference—rather than assimilation ideologies representative of

³⁰² “Norwegian Caribbean Lines Cruise Menu Signed - Caribbean Night Dinner,” *eBay*, 1972, Accessed July 27, 2019, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/Norwegian-Caribbean-Lines-Cruise-Menu-1972-Signed/273787402930?hash=item3fbf003ab2:g:JgsAAOSwAj5Z2qaQ>.

³⁰³ “Norwegian Caribbean Lines Cruise Menu Signed - Fiesta Night Dinner,” *eBay*, 1972, Accessed July 27, 2019, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/Norwegian-Caribbean-Lines-Cruise-Menu-1972-Signed/273787402930?hash=item3fbf003ab2:g:JgsAAOSwAj5Z2qaQ>.

³⁰⁴ Hasia R. Diner examines the foodways of Italian, Irish, and European Jews migrants to the United States, understanding food consumption as a cultural practice open to transformation as immigrants crossed the ocean. For those immigrants, reproducing Old World food practices in the United States was a means to foster community in an unfamiliar space, as well as a method by which culture could be passed down to the next generation. *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

³⁰⁵ Ethnic grocery stores were another important site of identity negotiation for European immigrants. Elizabeth Zanoni, *Migrant Marketplaces: Food and Italians in North and South America* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2018).

³⁰⁶ Haley, *Turning the Tables*.

the melting pot.³⁰⁷ Sampling other cultures, for instance through food, became more socially desirable and in turn commercially commodified with the ethnic revival of the 1970s.³⁰⁸ Sampling other cultures did not begin in the late twentieth century. Many other instances of Americans expressing interest in foreign societies—often satisfied through imported commodities—can be located throughout American history, for example in the historian Kristin L. Hoganson’s work on the consumer habits of upper-class white women in the late nineteenth century.³⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the accoutrements of late-twentieth century globalization made cultural sampling more desirable to, and accessible for, the American masses. Even so, the ethnic revival tended to encourage the celebration of European ancestries,³¹⁰ encouraging a specific form of cultural consumption that largely continued to exclude those from the Global East and South. While NCL’s themed dinner menus initially promised exoticism vis-à-vis vague references to the Caribbean or the tropics, they ultimately offered an experience that championed the tenets of the white ethnic revival movement. Even “International Night” was not as “International” as one might expect, highlighting mostly European fare as the other themed menus did.”³¹¹

Culturally themed dinner menus and dishes on NCL cruises were a means to celebrate ethnicities different from one’s own, albeit in ways that favored European iterations. The cultural

³⁰⁷ Kevin Michael Schultz, *The Decline of the Melting Pot: Catholics, Jews, and Pluralism in Postwar America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). By no means did the postwar era represent the first period in which the United States’ diversity was celebrated. However, the different cultures comprising the nation were increasingly acknowledged in the 1960s. Gillian A.M. Mitchell studies this through the lens of the United States folk music revival in “Visions of Diversity: Cultural Pluralism and the Nation in the Folk Music Revival Movement of the United States and Canada, 1958–65,” *Journal of American Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 593-614.

³⁰⁸ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*; Halter, *Shopping for Identity*.

³⁰⁹ Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

³¹⁰ George M. Fredrickson, *Diverse Nations: Explorations in the History of Racial and Ethnic Pluralism*. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 18. Matthew Frye Jacobson studies the postwar revival of white ethnic identity in *Roots Too*.

³¹¹ “Norwegian Caribbean Lines Cruise Menu Signed—Captain’s Gala Dinner,” *eBay*, 1972, Accessed July 27, 2019, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/Norwegian-Caribbean-Lines-Cruise-Menu-1972-Signed/273787402930?hash=item3fbf003ab2:g:JgsAAOSwAj5Z2qaQ>.

orientations of these encounters mirrored land-based sociopolitical discourse on ethnic difference, which promoted a Eurocentric understanding of pluralism. Similarly, NCL mostly drew on the cuisines of cultures that their passengers were already familiar through their inclusion into the broader American foodscape. In doing so, the cruise line promised an experience that was diverse only along the Eurocentric axes that the ethnic revival encouraged in the early 1970s—different without being very exotic—in turn shaping how middle-class American travelers would encounter and perceive of cultural difference.

Further evidence of this cultural mediation is provided by an advertisement from 1972, which conceptualizes the “Better World” of a Norwegian Caribbean Lines cruise. Nearly a dozen ports were offered across seven itineraries, with cruises from three departure ports at prices catering to nearly anybody who wished to take one—USD \$95 to \$995. However, the world that passengers would be a part of on their vacations had little to do with the “fascinating islands” NCL spoke little of. The document elaborated little on any aspects of those countries that one might experience. Instead, the cruise line appealed to a growing middle class concerned with the discontents of American modernity who wished to get away from it all. “Get away to it all,” Norwegian exclaimed, telling readers that their cruise vacations were “a world of restful, quiet corners; warm, friendly lounges and bars. A place where you will enjoy more of the things that make it fun to be alive,” going on to highlight the various onboard amenities. They invited readers to “forget [their] troubles...and be happy” in a “carefree, relaxed” atmosphere.³¹² Therefore, “fascinating islands” served as a homogenized backdrop that contributed to a construct of tropicality encouraging escapism from daily life. These diverse cultures were reduced to a trope that could be consumed simply by gazing down upon them from a ship that

³¹² “Display Ad 367,” *New York Times* April 30, 1972, ProQuest Databases.

epitomized postwar modernity with its technologies and conveniences, while simultaneously being free of the negative perceptions that associated with modernity. While the accretions of globalization intensified interactions between the American masses and international cultures, the mediated encounters on NCL vacations perpetuated Eurocentric ways of viewing the world rather than transforming passenger understandings of other societies.³¹³

NCL produced publications about Caribbean cruise ports and distributed them to debarking passengers. These, too, mediated destinations for tourists.³¹⁴ “A walking tour,” one such booklet told its readers, “is a good way to see Nassau’s chief tourist sights.”³¹⁵ The brochure guided passengers to a plethora of colonial historical monuments including a walkway honoring the English sea captain Woodes Rogers, a marble statue of Queen Victoria, a colonial jail, and the Queen’s Staircase. It elaborated on the history of the latter as “honor[ing] the 64-year reign of Queen Victoria,” before going into an in-depth colonial history of the Bahamas that focused on wars between European powers to secure it, offering visitors the opportunity to visit some of the fortresses involved. If, as the historian Alan Gordon argues, guidebook walking tours mediated local cultures for participants and embodied power imbalances pertaining to actors who were permitted to define cultural identity,³¹⁶ this booklet suggests that NCL used this opportunity to define Bahamian national identity at a time when this was heatedly contested—

³¹³ There is limited evidence of NCL marketing cultural immersion. For instance, in the early 1970s the cruise line offered opportunities for Jamaicans to volunteer to teach passengers about their cultures. Thereafter, tourists would go to the homes of locals for a meal and conversation. However, this program was short-lived and limited to NCL, serving as the exception to the iteration of cultural interactions on early-1970s mass-market cruise vacations rather than the norm. Paul J.C. Friedlander, “Rx for Tourism’s ‘Cultural Disparity,’” *New York Times*, December 6, 1970, ProQuest Databases; Vernon Kidd, “Cruise Directory,” *New York Times*, September 12, 1971, ProQuest Databases.

³¹⁴ There is an extensive literature on the mediating power of modern tourist guidebooks. Consult for instance the work of Deborah P. Bhattacharyya, who studied portrayals of India in *Lonely Planet* and how the publication shaped guest views of locals, “Mediating India: An Analysis of a Guidebook.” *Annals of Tourism Research* 24, no. 2 (1997): 371-389.

³¹⁵ “Sun, Sky, Star, Southward Views, Nassau,” *Norwegian Caribbean Lines*, 1972, Personal Collection.

³¹⁶ Alan Gordon, “What to See and How to See it: Tourists, Residents, and the Beginnings of the Walking Tour in Nineteenth-Century Quebec City,” *Journal of Tourism History* 6, no. 1 (2014): 74-90.

the Bahamas would gain independence from Britain in just a year. NCL highlighted sites showcasing British conquest over the region, advancing a reductionist and Eurocentric perspective of that history which deemphasized opportunities for passengers to understand colonial contact from the local perspective, for example through alternative sites or stories that celebrated Bahamian resistance to British rule or even the country's status as a haven for escaping American slaves after slavery in the Bahamas was abolished in 1834.³¹⁷

To be sure, the publication did highlight some aspects of local culture, including a section on Bahamian culinary favorites. However, aspects of this, too, were de-exoticized through references that compared the local cookery to dishes found in New Orleans and New England. Ultimately, the entire experience was mediated through the language of postwar American consumerism. The guide dedicated pages to the "Abundant Bargains" in Nassau, including on Rolex, Bulova, Seiko, and Patek Philippe; the mention of these popular luxury brands as "consumer goods" to be had at a "bargain" thanks to "savings" echoed marketing verbiage with which the clientele was, by now, intimately familiar, casting Nassau as a modern space with the latest and greatest. Careful tourists did not have to worry, for the guidebook described these shops as "attractive modern arcades" and showcased a prominently placed Royal Bahamas Police constable, promising both comfort and safety.

Through the guidebooks NCL distributed, the cruise line also influenced how its customers toured in ways that profited the company. Its San Juan booklet included a map guiding passengers through Old San Juan, including such local companies as "Don Q" Rum, which presumably paid advertising fees to be included. Aside from stores advertised on the map, the

³¹⁷ Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Joe Knetsch, "Florida Slaves, the "Saltwater Railroad" to the Bahamas, and Anglo-American Diplomacy," *The Journal of Southern History* 79, no. 1 (2013): 51-78.

San Juan guidebook also included advertisements to luxury boutiques found in or around the cruise port complex. By using these strategically placed advertisements to influence how passengers toured the destination, NCL discursively produced its own conception of Nassau iterated through an elitism that carried over from cruise ship to port. Passengers reading these widely distributed documents understood Caribbean countries through companies that could afford to pay NCL for inclusion therein—often times transnational corporations specializing in luxury goods.

While, in these earlier years of mass-market cruise tourism, Norwegian had a limited degree of control over Caribbean countries, guidebooks allowed the company to shape how its passengers understood those localities. Passengers following the Nassau guidebook would have emerged with an understanding of the Bahamas constructed by NCL, which showcased a destination with some aspects of exoticism to set the vacation experience apart from daily life, but one that where the foreign was mediated or overshadowed by familiarity.³¹⁸

Of the three emerging mass-market lines, Carnival was the most explicit about targeting the masses. Arison's "Fun Ship" concept embraced the countercultural brand identity that had gained traction with American corporations just years prior.³¹⁹ The installation of discos, casinos, and nightclubs was part of the overall emphasis on "Fun," which casted ships as spaces for rebellion against the work ethic. These amenities also kept passengers entertained, while

³¹⁸ Analysis of Norwegian Caribbean Lines' guidebook for Puerto Rico produced similar conclusions. "Sun, Sky, Star, Southward Views, Puerto Rico," *Norwegian Caribbean Lines*, 1972, Personal Collection.

³¹⁹ Advertisements from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1950s tended to alienate consumers with homogeneity and conformity, one of the central concerns for the counterculture of the 1960s. As Thomas Frank argued, in many cases corporations themselves generated the counterculture owing to the anti-establishmentarian ethos of those who joined the advertising industry in this period. By incorporating rebellion against capitalist alienation into their business cultures and advertising strategies, corporations contributed to making rebellion "hip." *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

reducing ports of call and sailing at slower speeds meant fuel savings.³²⁰ The construction of ships as destinations, with ports secondary to them, effectively reversed the traditional ocean travel model.³²¹ Carnival's brand identity and reasonable price point attracted younger people who could not otherwise afford cruises, lending the company a reputation as a democratizer of ocean travel.³²² In addition to this younger crowd, Carnival relied greatly on Florida seniors and local tour operators in the early 1970s. As Carnival was operating on a low budget, advertising to the local market was strategically affordable. It was not uncommon to find residents of nearby condos pacing the cruise docks, luggage in hand, in hopes of a last-minute cancellation which sliced the cost of a seven-day cruise in half or even to a third, from USD \$225 down to \$75.³²³

The Carnival *Mardi Gras* epitomized the Fun Ship marketing philosophy by its inaugural voyage, but the ship was not ready for Caribbean cruising when Carnival acquired it as the *Empress of Canada* in 1972. Originally constructed as a 27,250 GRT transatlantic liner for Canadian Pacific Steamships Company in 1960, the *Empress* was reputed to be formal and stuffy,³²⁴ the antithesis of the "Fun Ship" theme that Carnival ultimately adopted. Its unusually large proportion of inside cabins reflected its heritage as a transatlantic liner, though its top speed of 23 knots set it apart as the fastest ship sailing out of Miami at the time of its inaugural voyage carrying 530 passengers and 360 crew.³²⁵ Carnival immediately worked to enlarge some of its

³²⁰ "How Carnival Stacks the Decks," *Fortune*, January 16, 1989, Brouillard Communications Vertical Files, Box 20, Folder "Travel (Cruise Lines)—1989-1991," David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³²¹ Dickinson, *Selling the Sea*, 27-28.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ *Ibid.*, 121.

³²⁴ Sarna, *Frommer's Cruises & Ports of Call 2008*, 114.

³²⁵ Theodore Handelman, "New Cruise Line in Miami," *The Travel Agent*, ProQuest Databases, April 27, 1972; "530 on Empress Grounded in Miami," *Toronto Star*, March 13, 1972, ProQuest Databases.

rooms while adding showers to all,³²⁶ promising passengers the comforts of home. However, the cruise experience had to be set apart from daily life. *Mardi Gras* (as *Empress of Canada* was rebranded) sailed with amenities that most middle-class individuals would not be accustomed to at home: indoor and outdoor swimming pools, sauna, a golf range, nightclubs, cocktail lounges, and even the luxury of breakfast service in bed. Rituals of consumption did not end in the suburbs, for Carnival brought them onboard with a duty-free shopping complex.³²⁷ Carnival emphatically embraced American consumer culture, which Arison was intimately familiar with by now. After all, he had resided in the United States for two decades, during which time postwar consumerism expanded rapidly.

Arison's redefinition of cruising was a success. Travel agent Theodore Handelman, who was on the inaugural voyage, described these as "luxury features not usually found on Miami-based cruise ships" and credited such amenities to the ship's history as a European transatlantic liner. That the ship ran aground shortly after making its debut only contributed to Carnival's publicity, Handelman told us, for the media circulated photographs of carefree, fun-seeking passengers around the country.³²⁸

Before its first cruise to San Juan, St. Thomas, and Montego Bay, *Mardi Gras* was repainted a sleek red, white, and blue,³²⁹ evoking for passengers the promise of a comfortably Americanized experience even as the ship traversed the Caribbean Sea. Yet, the undercurrents of cultural and economic globalization—the dissolution of national borders, as well as the international circulation of goods and ideas at unprecedented speeds—impacted every aspect of

³²⁶ "Last Passenger Liner of CP Ships is Being Sold to Carnival Cruise," *The Globe and Mail*, February 11, 1972, ProQuest Databases.

³²⁷ "AROUND AND ABOUT: Empress Changes Name," *The Globe and Mail*, March 4, 1972, ProQuest Databases.

³²⁸ Handelman, "New Cruise Line in Miami."

³²⁹ "Last Passenger Liner of CP Ships is Being Sold to Carnival Cruise;" Sarna, *Frommer's Cruises & Ports of Call 2008*, 114.

the vacation. It was difficult to assign a single national affiliation to mass-market lines.

Originally constructed in England for a Canadian company, *Mardi Gras*' registration was moved to Panama after its sale to Carnival,³³⁰ signalling the growing role that flags of convenience played in the cruise industry.

The economic globalization of tourism entailed more than just the intensified circulation of people across national borders; central to the phenomenon were offshoring methods—among them flags of convenience—representing increasingly transnational business practices.³³¹ As Carnival Corporation President Bob Dickinson suggested, cruise lines used flags of convenience to circumvent stricter labor laws in the United States, Norway, and Britain, in turn allowing companies to pay lower wages and taxes and produce cruise vacations at prices that the masses could afford.³³² Sociologist Robert E. Wood described these “new patterns of global ethnic recruitment” in Caribbean cruise ship tourism as a manifestation of globalization,³³³ though such hiring practices were not as “new” as he suggested. Wood examined the diversified labor forces on mass-market cruises in the 1990s, whereas even by the early 1970s Carnival took full advantage of *Mardi Gras*' Panamanian registry to hire seafarers from the Global South.³³⁴ While the implications of that fact were likely lost on many passengers, knowledge of reregistration fueled labor action by Britain's National Union of Seamen. Before the ship was to be transferred from Tilbury, England to the United States, the organization's members attempted to block its movement, protesting the low seafarer wages that flags of convenience encouraged.³³⁵

³³⁰ “Display Ad 674,” *New York Times*, August 26, 1973, ProQuest Databases.

³³¹ Anne-Mette Hjalager, “Stages in the Economic Globalization of Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 34, no. 2 (2007): 437-457.

³³² Dickinson, “Selling the Sea,” 63-7.

³³³ Robert E. Wood, “Caribbean Cruise Tourism: Globalization at Sea,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 27, no. 2 (2000): 345-370.

³³⁴ As observed by Handelman, “New Cruise Line in Miami.”

³³⁵ “Seamen Picket Canadian Liner Sold to U.S.,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 22, 1972, ProQuest Databases.

Nor was the globalization of cruise travel ignored by lawmakers stateside. In February 1972, Hon. Leonor K. Sullivan, US Representative from the Third District of Missouri, brought foreign cruise ship registration to the attention of the US Senate Merchant Marine Subcommittee of the Committee on Commerce. Nearly a million American citizens were cruising out of eastern ports every year, but, Sullivan asserted, “not one of them travels on an American-flag ship. There are at present no such ships in operation.” Sullivan noted that American ship lines were laid up because they had not determined a profitable and practical means to operate, nor had the Maritime Administration. According to the Representative, the consequences were dire, for the troves of passengers cruising to the Caribbean contributed to the profits of “foreign owners and the families of foreign seamen of Dutch, Norwegian, Italian, British, French, Greek, and assorted other maritime nationalities.” Sullivan advanced an argument about American exceptionalism in encouraging financial support for US-flagged lines, “The American cruise passenger should be urged to “Go American,” and they should be sold on the unique safety of the American ships.” In her treatment of the loss of business and American jobs, as well as the foreign acquisition of US ships and currency, Sullivan framed flags of convenience as a patriotic issue about the United States and its citizens being cut out of benefits they were entitled to.³³⁶

Despite attempts by lawmakers, the US-Caribbean cruise industry continued to fall into the hands of international influence. Handelman observed Jamaican waiters alongside an otherwise predominantly Italian staff on the *Mardi Gras*,³³⁷ an example of economic globalization that was expected by the early 1970s. In fact, Carnival’s staffing was likely much more diverse than he stated. Carnival spokesperson Jennifer de la Cruz reflected that the

³³⁶ Authorize the Foreign Sale of Certain Passenger Vessels. Hearings, Ninety-Second Congress, Second Session, on H.R. 11589, February 28 and March 14, 1972, HeinOnline Databases.

³³⁷ Handelman, “New Cruise Line in Miami.”

company had “always hired” food workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, and India.³³⁸

Keeping seafarer wages low through flags of convenience was in the best interest of passengers. The higher cruise fares that would come with increased wages would price much of the middle class out of the market.

Flags of convenience were just one of many cost-cutting measures that became a reality of an industry that prioritized affordability for the masses. Carnival’s first voyages came on the heels of the 1973 Oil Crisis. In October of that year, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) attempted to end the monopolization of crude oil prices by oil corporations by setting an excessive price for the commodity. At the same time, Israel and neighboring Arab states went to war. Various Arab oil-producing nations boycotted selected oil suppliers and cut production levels to support the Arab cause. Energy prices rocketed owing to these events. For the Caribbean cruise industry, the result was a series of organizational shifts that would impact the future of cruising. Cruise lines reconsidered voyage lengths, number of sea days, sailing speeds, and itinerary prices. New York declined further as an embarkation port owing to its distance from the Caribbean, while Florida benefited for the same reason; it was in 1973 that the Port of Miami surpassed New York in cruise passenger traffic.³³⁹

Despite the energy crisis and competition with better established companies, Carnival emerged intact thanks in no small part to its philosophy of fun. While the era of elite ocean travel had ended, Americans continued to scoff at the snobbery traditionally associated with cruise vacations. Carnival responded with marketing campaigns representing their product as the

³³⁸ Kathy Seal, “Cruise Ships Draw New Crews,” *Hotel and Motel Management* 213, no. 4 (1998): 9.

³³⁹ Wynen, “A Survey of the Cruise Ship Industry,” 5-6; Jay Clarke, “Jetting to the Jetty: A Fast Start for a Slow Cruise,” *New York Times*, December 13, 1970, ProQuest Databases; Paul J.C. Friedlander, “The Busiest Cruise Port in the U.S.,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1973, ProQuest Databases; Vernon Kidd, “Cruise Liners: Resort Hotels That Travel the World,” *New York Times*, October 14, 1979, ProQuest Databases; Agis Salpukas, “A Deluge of Growth in the Floating Vacation Market,” *New York Times*, November 11, 1990, ProQuest Databases.

antithesis of stuffy opulence. Strikingly absent from Carnival advertisements were references to the *Mardi Gras*' history as a renovated luxury transatlantic liner—erasure practices that disassociated cruising with snobbery in targeting a middle-class market already ambivalent about cruise vacations.³⁴⁰

In marketing to new customers, Carnival repeatedly told readers that they had a choice in any given entertainment category, paralleling the variety of options available to citizens in everyday life. So central was freedom of choice to Carnival's business model that Bob Dickinson, who was executive vice-president of Carnival in 1972, later reflected on it as “a critical ingredient in the enjoyment of one's vacation time.”³⁴¹ Freedom of choice also had political implications. Just as it was weaponized by Richard Nixon as a tenet of American freedom during the Kitchen Debate of 1959, the freedom to choose represented the fruits of capitalism guaranteed to citizens.³⁴² Carnival advertisements portrayed the cruise experience as an opportunity to consume—something the American middle-class was accustomed to—in ways that most could not afford to do regularly, differentiating this as a vacation experience. Even as an emerging brand, Carnival prospered because it successfully constructed its brand identity through an already existing symbolic economy around American conceptions of freedom, but also by building upon that economy by adding value to it.³⁴³

As the social psychologist David Uzzell argued about tourism marketing, the messaging in these advertisements made assumptions about the cultural, social, political, and economical positionalities of the clientele. Advertisements advanced symbolic economies in ways that forced

³⁴⁰ Dickinson, *Selling the Sea*, 27-28.

³⁴¹ Robert H. Dickinson, ““Fun Ship” Marketing Philosophy,” *Hospitality Review* 13, no. 1 (1995): 1-6.

³⁴² Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, 126-27; Daniel Belgrad, “The 1950s and 1960s,” in *A Companion to American Cultural History*, edited by Karen Halttunen (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 2008), 232.

³⁴³ Andy Pike, “Brand and Branding Geographies,” *Geography Compass* 3, no. 1 (2009): 190-213.

the prospective clientele to construct their own sets of meanings and associations around the product. In the first decade of mass-market cruise travel, marketing campaigns iterated the relationship between cruising, postwar modernity as performed via technology and consumerism, and the viewer's position in that relationship. In turn, rather than being passive recipients of advertising campaigns, cruise passengers became active participants in perpetuating American ideals.³⁴⁴ Thanks to the freedom of choice Carnival guaranteed, passengers performed consumerism at sea with as much flexibility as they did on land.

Economic globalization led to the mass-marketization of the US-Caribbean cruise industry by enabling companies to achieve economies of scale for a product affordable to the American masses, driving prices down by offshoring ship construction and onboard labor. This relatively new market structure impacted cultural interactions in important ways. While cultural globalization introduced American citizens to people and products from the world over in daily life, with land-based corporations commodifying ethnic difference, mass-market cruise lines did not follow suit in their first decade of their operations.

In its capacity as both a product and instrument of globalization, the mass-market cruise industry advanced a variety of the phenomenon that differentially constructed the cultures that passengers would encounter. CCL, RCCL, and NCL represented their ships as symbols of American abundance, casting for passengers an image of the United States as a modern innovator. Occidentally, cruise lines represented as having to be controlled through homogenization or the imperial gaze to make them palatable. These cultural production

³⁴⁴ David Uzzell, "An Alternative Structuralist Approach to the Psychology of Tourism Marketing," *Annals of Tourism Research* 11, no. 1 (1984): 79-99.

practices, which were largely informed by Eurocentric ways of constructing otherness, sanitized local cultures and made invisible the social issues—poverty, crime, violence—that these countries experienced as they struggled for decolonization and national identity immediately after independence. Even as the ship sailed through the Caribbean Sea, the cruise industry and its boosters promised culturally comfortable vacations, thereby mediating encounters between passengers and foreign experiences.

CHAPTER III: TAMING THE OTHER: IMPORTING EUROCENTRIC EXPRESSIONS INTO
CRUISE VACATIONS, 1977 – 1989

In September 1977, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) debuted its television series *The Love Boat*. The show depicted the romantic and comedic adventures of passengers and crew onboard Princess Cruises' *Pacific Princess*. Episodes dealt with guests' various romantic problems and by simply boarding the ship, participating in onboard activities, and interacting with the crew, passengers left the cruise happy, with their romantic dilemmas resolved.

By the late 1970s, the mass-market Caribbean cruise industry was well on its way to maturity, a trajectory furthered by *The Love Boat*.³⁴⁵ At a time when nearly every American household had a television and some households had more than one,³⁴⁶ the show idealized cruising for its millions of viewers.³⁴⁷ It gained tremendous popularity quickly, with Maxtone-Graham describing it in 1980 as “an enduring Saturday night ritual for 37 million American television watchers.”³⁴⁸ By featuring passengers that everyday Americans could identify with, *The Love Boat* chipped away at the idea that cruising was exclusively for wealthy retirees.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ CLIA President Rod McLeod stated that the show “helped convince a mass consumer market that they could have fun on a cruise,” “Cruise Lines Feeling the Pinch,” *New York Times*, May 10, 1980, ProQuest Databases. An industry overview from 1984 likewise noted the significant increase in young passengers and families over the previous year, with nearly fifty percent of passengers earning USD \$25,000 or less annually. The report credited *The Love Boat* with much of the mainstream popularity. “Cruise Line Industry: Market Overview,” January 1985, Box 88, Folder “Cruise Lines General Files,” J. Walter Thompson Company Archives, New Business Records, 1924-2006, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

³⁴⁶ Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, 373.

³⁴⁷ Cathy Schwichtenberg, “The Love Boat: The Packaging and Selling of Love, Heterosexual Romance, and Family,” *Media, Culture & Society* 6, no. 3 (1984): 301-311. Indeed, actor Ted Lange, who starred as bartender Isaac Washington, later reflected on the show as “very idealistic, that you would be able to figure out the problems of the world. If you got on this boat, by the time you got off, you know how to deal with whatever the situation was.” “Ted Lange Talks 'Love Boat' and Diversity at the Oscars,” *CBC News*, January 20, 2016, accessed October 13, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ted-lange-talks-love-boat-1.3412346>.

³⁴⁸ John Maxtone-Graham, “New Life for a Liner: Cruise Ship,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1980, ProQuest Databases.

³⁴⁹ Adam Weaver, “The McDonaldization of the Cruise Industry? Tourism, Consumption, and Customer Service,” PhD diss. (University of Toronto, 2003), 112-13.

As cruising gained popularity thanks in no small part to *The Love Boat*, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian intensified marketing tactics that portrayed cruises as respites from the monotonous routines of daily life. In the previous decade, companies accomplished this while deploying the language of consumerism as a tenet of cultural Americanization to mediate the more exotic aspects of cruising. While such references continued into the 1980s, they were used more sparingly. Instead, there was a shift towards levying cultural referents specific to Caribbean countries on the itinerary—as well as international destinations—as a marketing tactic. In a partial turn away from cultural homogenization, 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 corporations in the late twentieth century to commodify cultural referents for everyday Americans curious about other countries.³⁵⁰ However, as this chapter will argue, the cultural representations that mass-market cruise lines advanced to attract this middle class continued to draw on Eurocentric understandings of Caribbean cultures, homogenizing those countries despite attempts to showcase supposed cultural difference. So too were international cultural themes reimagined Eurocentrically—sanitized and tokenized for the consumption of passengers. While globalization encouraged interactions between different cultures, cruise lines exercised mediating power to selectively interpret and deploy referents in ways that simultaneously increased the appeal of cruising while reassuring passengers of their safety and comfort despite confrontations with foreign societies. Though the mass-market cruise 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,

³⁵⁰ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*, 104-106.

RCCL, and NCL selected cultural representational strategies—aspects 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 that did the same much more extensively.

The Beginnings of Cultural Theming on Mass-Market Cruises

During the late 1970s, maturing cruise companies continued to invest in newer, bigger ships and expand itineraries, all the while competing against one another and resorts alike to secure middle-class dollars. In response to industry growth, departure ports in Florida and the Caribbean invested millions in infrastructural upgrades annually.³⁵¹ 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—³⁵² many of them from the Big Three mass-market lines.

³⁵¹ On the growth of Florida cruise ports, see Charles A. Stansfield, "Changes in the Geography of Passenger Liner Ports: The Rise of the Southeastern Florida Ports," *Southeastern Geographer* 17, no. 1 (May 1977): 25. For investment in the Port of Miami, which became the most important US departure port for the mass-market cruise industry, see "New Seaport Passenger Terminal to Open in Miami," *New York Times*, December 29, 1968, ProQuest Databases; Jay Clarke, "Miami Is Becoming a Major Winter-Cruise Port," *New York Times*, January 18, 1970, ProQuest Databases. While tourism infrastructure in the Caribbean expanded significantly in the late twentieth century, the process began well beforehand. Art historian Krista Thompson argued in her work *An Eye for the Tropics* that local elites in late-nineteenth-century Jamaica and the Bahamas became more interested in advancing the tourism industries of those islands. They believed that tourism would bring capital and thus modernization to the Caribbean. Further yet, colonial and local elites developed infrastructure like telegram services and new roads to promote tourism in the area. While the Caribbean saw limited tourism and related development in the nineteenth century, it gained significant traction in the mid-twentieth century when the rise of regional tourism development was a product of the declining agricultural sector. On this, consult also John Harrison, "The Colonial Legacy and Social Policy in the British Caribbean," in *Colonialism and Welfare: Social Policy and the British Imperial Legacy*, edited by James Midgley and David Piachaud (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011), 67-8; Janet Henshall Momsen, "Caribbean Tourism and Agriculture: New Linkages in the Global Era," in *Globalization and Neoliberalism: The Caribbean Context*, edited by Thomas Christopher Klak (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 115-134.

³⁵² Maxtone-Graham, "New Life for a Liner."

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 continued to be 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 laborers. Jeraldine Saunders, creator of *The Love Boat*, even wrote in 1978 of the international dining staff that would be serving passengers, as well as the international diversity of entertainment staff.³⁵³

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.³⁵⁴ Though, as implied by Saunders, the outcome of having an internationally diverse restaurant staff was overwhelmingly 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.³⁵⁵ The remark inaccurately suggested

³⁵³ Jeraldine Saunders, *The Complete Guide to a Successful Cruise*, (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.com, Inc., 1978), 47-51, 72-73.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-51; 72-73.

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 Americans 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 reimagining of Mexican cuisine through its global circulation by American expats,³⁵⁶ cultural identities are constructed through processes of power relations. 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

³⁵⁶ Pilcher, *Planet Taco*, 163-88.

brands, thereby shaping consumer product choice and increasing the company's profitability.³⁵⁷

While fantasy themes are the most well-known variety—they are famously found in Disney parks, toys, and movies—³⁵⁸ so too did companies use cultural themes to target consumers increasingly interested in sampling difference, a key facet of the ethnic revival and globalization.³⁵⁹ 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 in 1982.³⁶⁰

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. As products of globalization and transmitters of its accumulations, mass-market cruise lines held considerable influence in determining which cultures were visible or invisible 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 environment and scripting labor,³⁶¹ the cruise line's ability to mediate encounters between passengers and other cultures was directly related to its control over any given space. Therefore, cruise companies had significantly more autonomy to mediate these interactions onboard rather than at cruise ports. While, in this decade, mass-market cruise lines overwhelmingly sought to commodify cultural

³⁵⁷ Gottdiener, *The Theming of America*.

³⁵⁸ As discussed by Alan Bryman in *The Disneyization of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2011).

³⁵⁹ As argued by Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 149-74; Halter, *Shopping for Identity*.

³⁶⁰ Gottdiener, *The Theming of America*, 79.

³⁶¹ Adam Weaver draws on Bryman's work on Disneyization to analyze cruise ships, investigating how themed spaces and optimal customer service come together to produce opportunities for consumption onboard contemporary mass-market lines, "The Disneyization of Cruise Travel."

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 intensified in the 1980s. CCL, RCCL, and NCL increasingly used references to international cultures in its advertisements and onboard vessels. In doing so, companies advertised the cruise experience as multicultural, though in reality these were pastiches that relied on reinvented or fabricated referents—consequences of decontextualization and appropriation processes that cultures undergo as a result of globalization. By no means did these cultures onboard exist in harmony or receive equal representation. Rather, mass-market cruise lines selectively chose which countries or regions were worthy of display and the terms on which passengers would encounter them as these aspects contributed 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 it betrayed the fantasy of the experience, at least until slum tourism gained enough popularity to offer dedicated tours to impoverished neighborhoods. 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 they viewed as overly exotic, and the latter having experienced it on their vacation. This balance needed to be achieved while ensuring that culture 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; as argued, Americanized modernity became a theme used to construct and advertise cruise vacations, 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," color television in staterooms, and the appearance of a celebrity on each voyage.³⁶² However, Holloway's description gave equal attention to the other countries that NCL used to theme Norway's 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

³⁶² James Holloway, "World's Biggest Liner Floating Resort," *The Globe and Mail*, February 21, 1981, ProQuest Databases. While the concept of celebrity was not invented in the postwar era, this period democratized the idea. More music and television personalities than before became celebrities because postwar globalization allowed for the intensified circulation of media—especially through television and radio—bringing to light the work of these people. The growing awareness of their work led to rockstars and actors becoming celebrities. The actor that Norwegian Caribbean Line promised on that cruise was a product of this phenomenon. Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

“Champs-Elysees,” evoking the commercial hubs in New York and Paris respectively. Each of these promenades housed shops with arrays 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 as a cultural referent used to theme spaces, 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,” a marketing tactic installed 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.³⁶³ 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.

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.³⁶⁴ 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

³⁶³ Curtis J. Sitomer, *The Christian Science Monitor*; October 22, 1982, ProQuest Databases; Evelyn Oldham, SS Norway a Floating Town, *The Globe and Mail*, December 6, 1986, ProQuest Databases; Holloway, “World’s Biggest Liner Floating Resort.”

³⁶⁴ “Let Yourself Go! To the Caribbean of Your Choice,” *Miami Herald*, October 11, 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.

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 power negotiations pertaining to US hegemony in some parts of the region.³⁶⁵

NCL also included activities that it represented as indicative of Caribbean cultures onboard. It is telling, for instance, that the cruise line promised a “Caribbean Spectacular 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.³⁶⁶ 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—in the safety of a modernized enclave of western comfort. In doing so, NCL portrayed its cruises as worldly experiences that passengers could purchase to discover new worlds without ever leaving the ship. In reality, these themes served to keep passengers entertained rather than offering meaningful encounters with other societies. While there was some attempt to differentiate cultures from one another, these cultures remained sanitized products for passengers to pick from and experience in hopes of satisfying their attempts to seek respite from monotony.

“Mexican Fiesta” was the exception to the rule, as it explicitly marketed culturally oriented activities throughout the cruise vacation.³⁶⁷ NCL created another advertisement

³⁶⁵ Early-twentieth-century Cuba, for instance, remained under American influence even after formal independence. It was known as a playground for American tourists, an association that only grew with increases in tourism during the Prohibition era. Consult Peter Moruzzi, *Havana Before Castro: When Cuba was a Tropical Playground* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2008); Henthorne, *Tourism in Cuba*, especially 3-16.

³⁶⁶ Nevertheless, administrative officials across Caribbean nations took interest in developing new port infrastructure, or upgrading existing facilities, in the 1980s. This would eventually lead a growth in cultural shore excursion offerings. Caribbean cruise development was part of a regional strategy that encouraged mass tourism. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. “Tourism Life Cycle, Tourism Competitiveness and Upgrading Strategies in the Caribbean,” LC/CAR/L.166, *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 27, 2008.

³⁶⁷ While acknowledging that Mexico is not formally in the Caribbean, cruise lines marketed Mexican cities bordering the Caribbean Sea as part of Caribbean itineraries.

following the “Let yourself go theme” specifically for its “Mexican Fiesta” cruises, and it elaborated on these activities. “Experience the sights, sounds, and flavors of Mexico, on board as well as ashore,”³⁶⁸ 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 builds on a long history of entrepreneurs commodifying that culture for profit but also sanitizing it before resale for western audiences. It was American businesswomen who popularized their own conceptualizations of Mexican food to 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 iterations advanced by Mexican migrants to the peripheries—a trend that only reversed itself in the final decades of the century.³⁶⁹

In much the same way, NCL used its power as cultural mediator to define Mexican identity for its clientele—deciding which Mayan artifacts would be featured in or excluded from its onboard museum, serving so-called Mayan dishes in its restaurant,³⁷⁰ and ultimately commodifying these references in an era when culturally themed products were becoming increasingly popular amongst American consumers. Because this was a space where NCL had

³⁶⁸ “Let Yourself Go! To a Mexican Fiesta,” *News-Press* (Fort Meyers, FL), November 8, 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.

³⁶⁹ Pilcher, *Planet Taco*.

³⁷⁰ “Norwegian Line Tries Mexican Motif,” *Miami Herald*, December 21, 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.

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 Mayan culture, installing a 30-foot model of a Mayan pyramid and a model Mayan village for passengers to interact with. The festivities also featured a simulated sacrifice of the cruise director.³⁷¹ While NCL presented human sacrifice as a part of Mayan religion unique to that culture,³⁷² the practice was by no means limited to the Mayans. 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 Mayan religion, NCL turned a blind eye to European examples of the same, in turn drawing on Eurocentric depictions 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 their safety and comfort. Likely, customers would have perceived the simulated ritual much more bleakly 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

³⁷¹ Vernon Kidd, "What's New for Seagoing Travelers," *New York Times*, October 18, 1981, ProQuest Databases. For the commodification of Mayan culture by the tourism industry, see Walter E. Little, *Mayas in the Marketplace: Tourism, Globalization, and Cultural Identity*. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004).

³⁷² This aspect of Mayan religion is discussed in various essays in *New Perspectives on Human Sacrifice and Ritual Body Treatments in Ancient Maya Society*, edited by Vera Tiesler and Andrea Cucina (New York, NY: Springer Science & Business Media, 2007).

the place of other indigenous societies, for instance the Aztecs, in the history of Mexico. Further, the extensive inclusion of references to 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,³⁷³ 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 Maya. Activities on the cruise left passengers to associate Mexico with premodernity, and to view the country as an anachronism, perpetuating a Eurocentric understanding of the world.

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. Archaeological activities in countries that experienced colonization have inherent imperial connotations because they often involve the plundering of a country's cultural resources by outsiders, especially by colonizers.³⁷⁴ The activity was a prime example of Pratt's archaeologization of humans in which 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.³⁷⁵ 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 the Mayan ruins at Tulum, Coba, and Chichen Itza (**Figure 2**), following in the footsteps of Spanish conquistadors fascinated by

³⁷³ Vernon Kidd, "New Ports of Call in the Caribbean," *New York Times*, September 12, 1982.

³⁷⁴ *Handbook of Postcolonial Archaeology*, edited by Jane Lydon and Uzma Z Rizvi (London: Routledge, 2016).

³⁷⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 130-32.



Figure 2. *Chichen Itza.* Cruise passengers toured this Mayan archaeological site on their shore excursions. Source: Judy Ruckstuhl, “Travel: Cancun: Caribbean Sun, Mexican Style,” *Vogue* 171, no. 11, November 1, 1981. Reproduced with permission of Vogue © Condé Nast.

those sites. However, Kidd labeled the shore excursions “optional, and maybe even redundant,” implying that the “enormous show-and-tell” of Mayan culture onboard he described would suffice as a substitute.³⁷⁶ For *New York Times* readers, the journalist legitimized a multinational corporation’s authority to construct sanitized pastiches of local cultures for the American masses.

NCL selectively leveraged symbols of Mexican culture that had already become popular through their 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 interesting enough to entertain passengers. NCL presented a decontextualized collage of Mexico that cherry-picked

³⁷⁶ Kidd, “New Ports of Call in the Caribbean.”

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.

While mass-market lines had tremendous influence in shaping the tourist gaze, so did the popular media. Diana Loercher, correspondent for the Boston-based *Christian Science Monitor*, framed NCL's "Mayan Magic" cruise for readers of that publication.³⁷⁷ 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 Mayan-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 USD \$50-\$65, passengers used transportation provided by the cruise line to take "unique shore excursions...to the Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza, Tulum, and Coba." According to her account, NCL educated its passengers on the ship before excursions took place through multimedia shows about Mayan society,³⁷⁸ which took place in a replica Mayan temple that the cruise line erected onboard.³⁷⁹ However, Loercher also persuaded future cruisers to be knowledgeable about locals before the cruise itself.³⁸⁰

Loercher's account shows the construction of the tourist gaze at work. As sociologist John Urry argued, the tourism industry discursively frames how travelers are to view the sites

³⁷⁷ Diana Loercher, "Yucatan Cruise," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 10, 1983, ProQuest Databases.

³⁷⁸ Such lectures were not limited to NCL, by now common practice in the cruise industry. See Saunders, *The Complete Guide to a Successful Cruise*, 57-58.

³⁷⁹ "Norwegian Line Tries Mexican Motif."

³⁸⁰ Loercher, "Yucatan Cruise."

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.³⁸¹ Loercher represented Mayan ruins as objects that one learned about with one's 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 the authority and agency to "educate" traveling Americans about Mayan culture. The exception were tour guides "of Mayan descent" on some of those tours, an inclusion that framed the trip as an opportunity for insider cultural knowledge yet commodified Mayan identity.

NCL and travel writers constructed for passengers a thoroughly mediated view of Mexico before they even took shore excursions and encountered the country's inhabitants. It was through this 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, rendering them objects of collective "intellectual" study through a mimicry of the archaeologist's gaze. Loercher evoked anachronism by framing the Mexican ports on offer as unmodern—as spaces for "escapism" from daily life, though at extremes that rendered some uncomfortable. "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 Mayan ruins being toured. The journalist also distanced Mexico from modernity by designating the cruise line as the center of knowledge production about these historical societies, a

³⁸¹ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*.

Eurocentric framework portraying the Global West as the producer of historical knowledge and the East as the recipient of these transmissions.³⁸² Even on the tour bus, she tells us, passengers could elect to listen to a tape of NCL's multimedia presentation on the Maya,³⁸³ while NCL-produced guidebooks educating them about the culture,³⁸⁴ 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 Mexico. These excursions, offered and mediated by the cruise line, also provided "sanitary lunch box[es]," Loercher tells us, the emphasis on "sanitary" implicitly casting anything ordinarily available there as unsanitary. The bus was air-conditioned, which, she says, "helps compensate for the monotony of the ride—vistas of jungle and rural poverty."³⁸⁵ The bus was thus cast as a space with the comforts of modernity—provided by the cruise line's contractors and contrasting its surroundings as its occidant. The vehicle separated passengers from untamed nature and impoverished locals, descriptors that drew on Eurocentric binaries within 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 Mayan ruins. Theming centered aspects of Mexican heritage that the travel industry deemed to be most profitable, while erasing "monoton[ous]" aspects that were reality for those cultures such as 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 Mayan history constructed through western capitalist

³⁸² Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World*.

³⁸³ Loercher, "Yucatan Cruise."

³⁸⁴ "Cruise to Maya Magic of Mexico's Yucatan," *Miami Herald*, April 18, 1982, Newspapers.com Databases.

³⁸⁵ Loercher, "Yucatan Cruise."

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 Mayan culture in Mexican shore excursions relegated the country's contemporary cultural representations to the periphery, instead perpetuating anachronisms advanced by western actors in an authoritative position to define Mexican culture for the American masses.

For their part, the mass-market cruise passengers encountering these mediated cultural representations remained predominantly white. These individuals increasingly identified with hyphenated ethnic identities and expressed interest in sampling cultural otherness—a by-product of the ethnic revival. Even so, this target market was also becoming more diverse along racial lines. By the late 1980s nearly a third of African Americans were middle class according to US Census data.³⁸⁶ Many were employed in government and lower managerial positions.³⁸⁷ The civil rights movement and affirmative action bore fruit in the form of economic and social mobility, though income gaps continued to exist, as did the broader issue of racism. As more black Americans gained upward mobility, fueled in large part by black women entering the workforce, some adopted activities that had until then traditionally been associated with whiteness: hunting, fishing, golfing, and attending social clubs. On that grounds, sociologist C. Eric Lincoln argued that behavior rather than income was a more accurate indicator of middle-class status.³⁸⁸ Cruising was another such activity that some African Americans had the financial means and

³⁸⁶ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*, 104-106

³⁸⁷ Charles T. Banner-Haley, *The Fruits of Integration: Black Middle-Class Ideology and Culture, 1960-1990* (Jackson, MS: 1994), 40

³⁸⁸ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*. C. Eric Lincoln is quoted in the same text, 54, the original citation being "The Negro's Middle-Class Dream," *New York Times Magazine*, October 24, 1964, SM35. Sharon M. Collins elaborates on the affirmative action legislation referenced above in "The Making of the Black Middle Class," *Social Problems* 30, no. 4 (1983): 369-382.

cultural interest to pursue, even if less well-off black individuals sometimes criticized their middle-class counterparts—especially buppies (black urban professionals)—for supposedly abandoning their roots by taking up these historically white activities or moving to predominantly white neighborhoods. There were even derogatory terms for members of the black middle class who imitated the sociocultural tendencies their white yuppie counterparts who were—for their part—fascinated with trendy new foods, particularly fare from cultures perceived as exotic, to symbolize socioeconomic status.³⁸⁹ As black Americans encountered cultural pluralism and its accumulations, they, too, gained an interest in experiencing other societies through travel,³⁹⁰ increasingly including mass-market cruise vacations.

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 in cruise infrastructure to attract cruise lines and their passengers.³⁹¹ However, Caribbean governments could not always

³⁸⁹ Samuel, *The American Middle Class*, 105-7; Johnston, *Foodies*, 11.

³⁹⁰ Banner-Haley, *The Fruits of Integration*, 171-75

³⁹¹ St. Kitts, for instance, invested USD \$64 million in 1981 towards government development projects, including among other things building a harbor for large cruise ships, David Winder, “St Kitts, THE ISLAND TOURISTS FORGOT UNTIL NOW,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, MA), March 12, 1981, ProQuest Databases. 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 \$50 million revitalization of Curacao’s capital historic center to make it more attractive for tourists. The first cruise ship had arrived in the Aruban port of Oranjestad in 1979, just a few years before Exxon closed its refinery, and gained greater prominence after the need to switch industries grew, Joseph B. Treaster, “Oil Glut Brings Slump To Curacao and Aruba: Hard Times for Curacao and Aruba,” *New York*

afford to fund such developments themselves, especially as larger cruise fleets—comprising increasingly larger ships—imposed costly logistical challenges 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.³⁹² 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

Times, March 15, 1985, ProQuest Databases; Sonia W. Thomas, “Aruba: For Lovers of Sand and Sun,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, MA), February 12, 1988, ProQuest Databases. 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 Pointe Seraphine, a new cruise port in Castries, could berth more ships and thus appealed to more cruise ships now; 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,” November 15, 1987, *New York Times*, ProQuest Databases. The Antiguan government was likewise contracting amendments to the St. John’s harbor to accommodate more cruise ships and investing constructing a duty-free enclave worth USD \$10.5 million on the waterfront. The 40 shops therein were meant to attract cruise passengers and included popular Caribbean merchants alongside restaurants, entertainment, and a casino.

³⁹² “Display Ad 70,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1986, ProQuest Databases; “Display Ad 75,” *New York Times*, May 10, 1985, ProQuest Databases.

role in developing those.³⁹³ 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 related to that of the American economy.³⁹⁴ Micky Arison, President of Carnival Cruise Lines, asserted before Congress that “Carnival is a strong supporter of the Caribbean Basin Initiative.”³⁹⁵ 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 USD \$14 million loan in support of a Mexican plan to build ports in four coastal regions in an effort to handle increasing sea traffic.³⁹⁶ 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.³⁹⁷ Similarly, Haiti planned to use USD \$11 million in International Development Association (IDA) funding to expand and revitalize Cap Haitien’s

³⁹³ “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.

³⁹⁴ “Caribbean Basin Initiative - 1983,” Hearing Before the Committee on Finance United States Senate Ninety-Eight Congress, First Session on S. 544, 1983, HeinOnline Databases.

³⁹⁵ “International Competitiveness,” Hearing before the Subcommittee on Taxation and Debt Management of the Committee on Finance, United States Senate, One Hundredth Congress, first session, November 16, 1987, HeinOnline Databases.

³⁹⁶ “\$83 Million in Loans for Improving Transportation in Latin America and Caribbean Region,” *Finance & Development* 18, June 1981, 4, ABI/INFORM Collection Databases.

³⁹⁷ Joseph B. Treaster, “A Year-Round Caribbean Resort: Playa Dorada in the Dominican Republic Draws a Crowd that Likes to Party,” *New York Times*, December 10, 1989, ProQuest Databases.

ports. The region served cruise ships but outdated and deteriorating existing port facilities negatively impacted traffic. IDA funding helped Cap Haitien remain an attractive cruise destination in support of the growingly tourism-oriented Haitian economy.³⁹⁸

These developments took place at the behest of western corporations selling leisure to the American masses and was supported through international investments, signaling the growing economic control and political leverage that foreign actors had over 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 portrayed as incapable of producing their own knowledge, in line with Eurocentric diffusionist traditions.³⁹⁹ 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 more advantageous positions 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 non-existent head taxes and company-operated concessions throughout port

³⁹⁸ "\$83 Million in Loans."

³⁹⁹ John Brohman, "Universalism, Eurocentrism, and Ideological Bias in Development Studies: From Modernisation to Neoliberalism," *Third World Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1995): 121-140.

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. Royal Caribbean acquired the right to lease Labadee, a Haitian port, for 20 years, transforming it with an initial investment of USD \$2 million.⁴⁰⁰ The company chose a “secluded, private playground” theme for a port meant to balance distance from the demands of daily life 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.”⁴⁰¹

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 travelers to encounter a homogenized Caribbean picturesque. Cultural referents often contained Eurocentric undertones. For example, the cruise line even described Labadee as “everything you’d imagine a lush, Caribbean paradise to be,”⁴⁰² echoing the anachronizing language that 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 the debarked for Labadee, referencing the history of Caribbean piracy⁴⁰³ while ignoring any cohesive attempts to show passengers that they were in Haiti. Indeed, the company even faced backlash for deemphasizing or allegedly misleading passengers about Labadee being located in Haiti in an attempt to distance the port

⁴⁰⁰ Michael Cooke, “Cruise Ships Return to Haiti as Country ‘Hides’ Poverty,” *Gazette* (Montreal, QC), November 23, 1985, ProQuest Databases; Glen Petrie, “Whoever Said Paradise is Lost? Caribbean Cruises Fulfil Fantasies,” *Toronto Star*, August 29, 1987, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁰¹ “Display Ad 327,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1987, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ Petrie, “Whoever Said Paradise is Lost?”

from association with the crime, poverty, and political unrest that was impacting other parts of that country,⁴⁰⁴ 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," implying 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 its "paved stone walkways, information boots, perfect landscaping," and the Americanized 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."⁴⁰⁵ 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."⁴⁰⁶ 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.⁴⁰⁷ Steck's statement suggested that Royal Caribbean wanted

⁴⁰⁴ Catherine Orenstein, "Fantasy Island: Royal Caribbean Parcels off a Piece of Haiti," *The Progressive* 61, no. 8 (1997): 28-31. A report on the CBI to US Senate spoke to a cruise enclave in Cap Haitian, Haiti, probably referring to Labadee, and noting that the tourist area caters to cruise passengers but does not advertise its geographic location of Haiti because of perceived negative aspects pertaining to violence in the nation. "Caribbean Basin Initiative: Impact on Select Countries," Report to the Chairman, Subcommittees on Western Hemisphere and Peace Corps Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, GAO/NSIAD-88-177, *United States General Accounting Office*, 1988, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/nsiad-88-177.pdf>.

⁴⁰⁵ Joseph B. Treaster, "Haitians' Next Uphill Battle: Winning the Tourists," *New York Times*, September 25, 1986, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁰⁶ Joseph B. Treaster, "Article 13," *New York Times*, January 11, 1987, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁰⁷ John Maxtone-Graham, *From Song to Sovereign* (Stamford, CT: Cruise Passenger Network, 1988), 11.

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.⁴⁰⁸

The Cultural Accumulations of Postwar Globalization

Just as economic globalization facilitated opportunities for international actors to gain control in the Caribbean, its accruelements also encouraged cross-cultural interactions. As companies hired seafarers from around the world, passengers interacted with international hires daily. This was contact of an intimate nature; these laborers waited on tourists, cleaned up after them, and tended to their most personal needs and desires. Royal Caribbean used this incidental diversity of labor to market their vacations, taking care to mention the “international hotel staff” in a *Miami Herald* advertisement.⁴⁰⁹ The advertisement promised cultural difference, but in the same breath informed readers that the staff were “carefully selected,” implying that any such difference would be mediated. Hired were seafarers who performed a degree of servitude that met the cruise line’s definition of “attentive service,” a term itself constructed through Eurocentric ideas about superiority.

⁴⁰⁸ This control did not come without backlash. Locals in Haiti resisted more actively when Royal Caribbean arrived in Labadee in 1986. Thousands of protestors confronted troops and police. Tensions decreased when cruise lines began providing local jobs, offering some hopefulness in trying economic times. Orenstein, “Fantasy Island.”

⁴⁰⁹ “You Didn't Wait All Year Long to Take an Ordinary Vacation,” *Miami Herald*, February 15, 1981, Newspapers.com Databases.

Along the same vein, Carnival portrayed its decision to hire globally as a benefit to passengers. In its commemorative publication for Americans interested in cruising, it was noted that:

“The crew, in keeping with the “Fun Ship” tradition, bring an international flavor to the ship as they represent some 40-plus nations. In spite of the fact that so many nationalities and, therefore, different languages and customs are represented, a spirit of cooperation prevails. They all attempt to provide the best possible service to each passenger.”⁴¹⁰

Carnival wanted its passengers to view a cost-cutting measure as a contribution to “international flavor” that supported the “Fun Ship” atmosphere. Nevertheless, Carnival mediated passenger understandings of the crew by describing their strict labor hierarchy, which appeared to be drawn along national lines. “As on all of the other Carnival Cruise Lines’ vessels,” they told readers of their book on *Jubilee*, the deck and engine officers are Italian.” The justification for this choice was rooted in invented notions around the superiority of European knowledge and traditions:

“Renowned for their seafaring skills and long maritime traditions, they have all had extensive schooling and certification in Italy’s highly reputable naval and merchant marine academies. For centuries, these academies have been graduating skilled officers whose love for the sea combines with excellent practical skills, resulting in a unique understanding of their profession.”⁴¹¹

Carnival advanced Eurocentric ideologies to filter passenger understandings of seafarer diversity. Whereas other seafarers—largely from the Global South—existed to “serv[e]” passengers, entertaining them with the cultural flavor they embodied, Carnival represented Italian staff as

⁴¹⁰ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Jubilee* (London: Sterling Publications, 1986), 94.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

having the much more important role of ensuring the safety of all onboard, suggesting that this nationality was the best fit for this task owing to the inherent superiority of Italian naval academies. The fact that this comparison was advanced in a consumer-facing publication meant for the masses suggests that passengers were predisposed to viewing white seafarers as figures of authority, and racialized staff as subservient.

Cruise lines also decided how this diverse array of staff would present themselves to passengers. For instance, New York Times travel columnist Vernon Kidd told those sailing on Royal Caribbean's *Song of America* in 1982 to expect food that reflected the countries visited on this seven-night Caribbean cruise. Augmenting that experience would be the "nightly changing of dining room décor and waiters' outfits."⁴¹² In a shift away from outrightly homogenized representations of the Caribbean, Royal Caribbean marketed cruises as experiences through which passengers could view the diversity of Caribbean countries onboard the ship. However, difference was merely a surface-level offering, for it was constructed through corporate ideas about what constituted each Caribbean nation's cultural offerings, including assumptions about cuisine, attire, and visual culture that the cruise line essentialized and displayed for passengers. Even so, these themes were not as unified as the company hoped. The seafarers performing them hailed from around the world, especially the Global South and increasingly from Southeast Asia. They were instructed to don tokenizing costumes of Caribbean countries, but they were rarely from the Caribbean themselves. As cruise lines had almost complete control over how employees interacted with passengers in spaces that the company owned, international seafarers had to repress their own identities to perform those relating to

⁴¹² Kidd, "What's New for Seagoing Travelers."

Caribbean locales, involuntarily becoming participants in the commodification process at the instruction of their employers.

More often than not in the early 1980s, however, mass-market lines did not yet represent international seafarers as a point of advertisement. These sentiments were largely absent from CCL and NCL marketing literature. Nevertheless, both companies did hire internationally by this time—a cost-cutting choice that perpetuated Eurocentric binaries. One guest onboard NCL’s *Norway* noted that steward service was “mainly Jamaican and South Korean.”⁴¹³ Another family sailing spoke of the “Jamaican waiters” on the same ship, seemingly reassuring readers that the waiters’ foreign nationality did not mean they were in any way ‘uncivilized’—they were “immaculate” and had “proper reserve.”⁴¹⁴ Writing about her cruise onboard the NCL *Skyward*, Loercher compared the national diversity of the crew to the United Nations. The scene was not a utopia, however, as labor structures were hierarchal. Officers and staff were mostly Norwegian and British, while labor-intensive roles such as waiters and stewards were predominantly Hispanic, West Indian, and Korean.⁴¹⁵ This division of labor suggests a neocolonial labor structures that reproduced those found in former colonial Caribbean societies, in which authority figures were of the Global North, while menial laborers—easily importable and replaceable—hailed from the Global South.⁴¹⁶ Writer William Davis observed similarly of CCL, asserting that

⁴¹³ Holloway, “World’s Biggest Liner Floating Resort.”

⁴¹⁴ Curtis J. Sitomer, “Caribbean,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, MA), October 22, 1982, ProQuest Databases.

⁴¹⁵ Loercher, “Yucatan Cruise.” Royal Caribbean, too, implied hierarchies in their labor force. Michael Bayley, Director of Hotel Human Resources for Royal Caribbean, noted that eastern Europeans often did not have similar skills to employees from other nations. Though it is unclear which other nations he was referencing, it nevertheless suggests that nationality was used to determine skillset and where employees would be placed thereafter. Kathy Seal, “Recruiters Find Labor Worldwide,” *Hotel and Motel Management* 213, no. 4 (1998): 8.

⁴¹⁶ International Relations scholar Christine B.N. Chin suggested, for example, that in the “Mini United Nations” created owing to flags of convenience, workers were commonly hired and placed based on their nationality, in relation to the stereotypical types of labor that passengers may expect a given group to engage in. Workers from

while most of the deck officers on the *Jubilee* were Italian, other crew members including waiters were “mostly Asian, Latin American and European.”⁴¹⁷ By the mid-1980s, recruiting staff from the so-called developing world who worked for relatively little compensation was the norm rather than the exception in the Caribbean cruise industry.⁴¹⁸ These offshoring methods paralleled outsourcing trends taking place around the world. Yet, the unique geopolitics of the maritime world permitted cruise lines to facilitate face-to-face interaction between outsourced labor forces and customers. By drawing on colonially constructed binaries about dominance and servility, this arrangement allowed shipping companies to represent outsourced, racialized seafarers as purveyors of optimal customer service, rather than a hindrance to the experience.⁴¹⁹

Ships themselves were becoming as globalized as the people on them and, just as nationality ordered maritime labor hierarchies, so too did a ship’s country of construction influence how it was perceived. Many cruise lines operating in the United States turned to European shipbuilders for construction. Arvid Lingaas, Holland America Line Senior Vice

Asia, Central and South America, and the Caribbean typically had labor-intensive and background jobs, whereas European workers occupied frontline roles like receptionists, guest relations officers, and entertainment staff. American and Western European employees had the highest positions, such as hotel managers and cruise directors. “Labour Flexibilization at Sea.”

⁴¹⁷ William Davis, “Informal Style Made Fun Ships a Huge Success,” *Gazette*, October 4, 1986, ProQuest Databases. While we cannot be sure where in Europe these non-Italian crew members in labor-intensive positions hailed from, Davis may have observed seafarers from eastern Europe. According to Kathy Seal, that region became an especially promising labor source for the shipping industry after the fall of the Soviet Union, “Cruise Ships Draw New Crews.” Nor were mass-market companies the only ones participating in these hiring practices. Holland America, an upscale line operating in the US-Caribbean circuit, had a largely Indonesian crews. The company even operated a training center for seafarers in Indonesia, Paul Lewis, “Growing Fleet of Cruise Ships: Europeans Building More Cruise Ships,” *New York Times*, April 13, 1984, ProQuest Databases. This hierarchy of seafarers along national lines continued onboard Carnival ships until at least the end of the decade, with one journalist observing in 1989 that “officers on Jubilee, as with all of Carnival’s ships, are Italian” while the remaining “crew is international.” Frank Hanley, “A Look at how Things Happen on a Superliner,” *Globe and Mail*, February 1, 1989, ProQuest Databases.

⁴¹⁸ As *New York Times* journalist Paul Lewis alleged in reference to the expanding US cruise industry, “European shipowners recruit most of their waiters and cabin staff from developing countries and pay them relatively little.” “Growing Fleet of Cruise Ships.”

⁴¹⁹ Wood, “Caribbean Cruise Tourism.” Wood suggested that cruise lines leveraged the nationalities of seafarers in representations for passengers in essentialized ways, portraying for instance workers from the Philippines and Indonesia as staff that provided high standards of customer service.

President of Cruise Operations, expressed preference for European shipyards over their counterparts in Asia, “Only the European yards have the skills to build a floating hotel...The Japanese and Korean yards turn out tankers and cargo ships, but they have never built a single passenger liner.”⁴²⁰ Whether his statement was accurate or not, Lingaas intrinsically connected nationality and shipbuilding in favor of European knowledges. Along the same vein, Scandinavia was Carnival’s choice. The company had on order three ships, a USD \$500 million investment to double its passenger capacity. *Holiday* was constructed in 1985 by a Danish company, Aalborg Vaerft Shipyard, the same firm that built Carnival’s *Tropicale* just three years earlier. *Jubilee* and *Celebration*, both of Swedish construction, were expected to debut in the latter half of the decade.

Carnival’s consumer-facing book on the *Jubilee*, released after the ship’s maiden voyage, showcased the global nature of mass-market cruise ship construction during the late twentieth century. *Jubilee*, powered by Wärtsilä Diesel engines from Finland, was built in a Swedish shipyard. It used marine satellite communication technology from Japan Radio Company, based in Tokyo. *Jubilee* contained elevators from a Danish company, as well as propellers and preconstructed bathrooms from Swedish firms. London-based Technical Marine Planning served as consultant engineers for the ship, while much of the produce used onboard came from P. Tavilla Co., Inc, of Miami.⁴²¹ Thanks to the fruits of globalization as articulated by Appadurai’s technoscapes,⁴²² Carnival was able to parcel contracts for the development, construction, and furnishing of *Jubilee* to specialized companies around the world that were positioned to offer

⁴²⁰ Lewis, “Growing Fleet of Cruise Ships.”

⁴²¹ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Jubilee*, 36, 41, 45-47, 79.

⁴²² Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.”

their services cost-effectively, resulting in a “Fun Ship” purpose-built for the mass-market that was as globalized as the era in which it sailed.

So, too, was the 46,000-tonne *Holiday* testament to this globality. Guests from several countries attended its christening in Denmark. The event featured an opportunity to meet Haakon Jensen, the shipyard’s president, as well as Carnival President Micky Arison. Lin Arison christened the ship to Star-Spangled Banner, suggesting that this event was multilayered in its nationalist orientations. So too did the ship itself embody globality. Attendees touring *Holiday* encountered eight types of Portuguese and Italian marble in its public rooms.⁴²³

Carnival’s newest ship represented the next step in the representation of cultural themes onboard: simulation. While NCL and Royal Caribbean had in previous years temporarily transformed themed spaces on their ships, Carnival permanently installed motif-driven venues on the *Holiday* during its construction. The result was a collision of disparate cultural referents. Parts of the ship evoked New York City, including 1930s Broadway with its genuine manhole cover from the city. An eatery featured as décor a converted British bus from 1934, itself being driven by a Danish mannequin, while the Tahiti Lounge suggested Polynesia.⁴²⁴ Just as the late-twentieth-century shopping malls rebranded themselves as tourist destinations through the installation of global themes, the *Holiday* compressed time and space by permitting convenient access to cultural representations from countries otherwise geographically distant from one another. As Urry tells us, these subjects of the tourist gaze are constructed through simulacra of simulacra, perpetuating iterations of so-called authentic cultures that never existed but are

⁴²³ Chip Brown, “Carnival’s New Holiday is Like a Visit to Old New York,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1985, accessed October 13, 2021, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1985-09-15-8503020838-story.html>.

⁴²⁴ Brown, “Carnival’s New Holiday is Like a Visit to Old New York.” While Tahiti is an island in Polynesia, the ship’s architect stated that the Tahiti Lounge was modeled a Bahamian bar, *Holiday* (London, UK: Sterling Publications Limited, 1985), 70. This was an example of invented traditions, a concept discussed by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

nevertheless juxtaposed, invented, reinvented, and endlessly reproduced.⁴²⁵ The final installation is a sanitized, even simulated version of the place being referenced. *Chicago Tribune* columnist Chip Brown said as much about the onboard area themed after New York City, contending that one part of it had “everything the real Broadway has except for pyramids of trash and a large population of mentally unstable people.”⁴²⁶

Because Carnival controlled the space, the company was able to selectively choose symbols that succinctly and safely called New York City to mind while filtering out representations of poverty and illness. The result was a collection of objects (and exclusion of other symbols) strategically juxtaposed and reconstituted to serve as a representation of New York City through their discursive associations with that locality—constructed for tourists well before the cruise, especially through the mass media representations. Cruise lines reproducing these themes delivered simulations that, culturally, symbolized nothing. While globalization ushered in cultural conditions that increased the demand for authenticity, it also encouraged corporations to commodify cultures through perpetual reproduction processes which favored representations that consumers would find entertaining, relatable, and comfortable. Tourists who hungered for authenticity but were satisfied by simulations, as Orvell suggested, would have been satisfied by Carnival’s offerings.⁴²⁷

Fabricated as these themes were, Carnival marketed them as genuine versions of the localities that inspired their construction. “Authenticity...was the keyword,” said Joe Farcus—*Holiday’s* decorative architect—in discussing his aesthetic choices for the ship. He elaborated on

⁴²⁵ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*.

⁴²⁶ Brown, Carnival’s New Holiday is Like a Visit to Old New York.”

⁴²⁷ Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

the Tahiti Lounge, which he said was meant to evoke “a Bahamian Bar.”⁴²⁸ This would involve constructing an establishment that signified the Bahamas rather than, for example, a bar in any other part of the Caribbean. The architect’s idea began with the problematic assumption that bars across that Bahamas had a generalized appearance or atmosphere that could be recreated for tourists, and that the resulting establishment would be different enough from a bar in, say, Jamaica or Martinique that tourists would immediately be able to recognize it as Bahamian. This was in and of itself a tall order because, while architectural trends in every Caribbean country were uniquely shaped, especially by the cultural negotiations that took place during colonial rule, the average tourist did not possess historical knowledge detailed enough to recognize a bar in any given Caribbean locality as belonging to it specifically.

If we take Farcus’ statement at face value, he was setting out on a rather difficult and fruitless task—studying different Bahamian bars to understand the properties typical across the majority, before recreating them for passengers—most of whom could not tell the difference. Such an attraction would not have been lucrative. Instead, Farcus drew on hegemonic understandings of the Bahamas—informed by Eurocentric views of the world—to recreate his bar, primarily using easily recognizable features that passengers would find entertaining. He tells us, quite paradoxically, that this brand new establishment would be constructed as “old, weathered, roofless,” resorting to anachronisms that colonial travel writers used to describe locales across the Caribbean. In a show of premodernity, his team also installed “swinging thatched paddle fans.”⁴²⁹ Given that fans constructed of metal were standard by the 1980s, the use of thatched fans was a deliberate choice used to advance the anachronistic theme in an

⁴²⁸ *Holiday*, 52, 70.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*

example of staged authenticity—the construction of spaces marketed as genuinely representing a culture using artifacts that have discursively become connected with those societies through the circulation of such associations via mass media avenues.⁴³⁰ In this instance, this insistence on anachronism was informed by colonial encounters and subsequent knowledge diffusions about the ‘New World’ that favored the representations of colonizers.

The “floor-to-ceiling authentic native carvings” similarly contributed to the staging process. There were to be 90 of these “totem pole carvings” throughout the bar.⁴³¹ While totem poles are most strongly associated with the traditions of some indigenous inhabitants from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest,⁴³² Farcus repurposed those objects as Bahamian artifacts by elaborating on production. He told us that Henry Fernander, a wood carver from the Bahamas, was commissioned to construct the totem poles using Bahamian trees. Emphasizing Fernander’s nationality and the origins of the commodity allowed the architect to cast the totem poles as authentically Bahamian, where no such connection existed prior. Additionally, as MacCannell argues, gazing upon local labor is central to staging authenticity.⁴³³ To end this, Farcus’s story detailed Fernander’s tireless labor, telling us that the carver traveled to Andros Island and spent over a month logging these trees before spending 15 months cutting, chiseling, and sanding. The story—alongside a photograph of the artisan’s toils—immersed readers in the totems’ production, reassuring them of the supposedly Bahamian origins. Finally, Fernander hand-carved

⁴³⁰ MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity.”

⁴³¹ *Holiday*, 70.

⁴³² On the place of totem poles in those indigenous cultures and the recasting of these artifacts as tourism attractions, see, Aldona Jonaitis, “Northwest Coast Totem Poles,” in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, edited by Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 104-21; Heather Zeppel, “Cultural Tourism at the Cowichan Native Village, British Columbia,” *Journal of Travel Research* 41, no. 1 (2002): 92-100. For the appropriation of totem poles by the tourism industry, see, Isabelle Lefroy, “Justice Beyond Legalism: Cultural Appropriation of Totem Poles on the Pacific Northwest Coast,” *Quebec Journal of International Law* (2019): 67-91.

⁴³³ Dean MacCannell, *The Ethics of Sightseeing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 114.

his creations with “intricate and unique Bahamian-African motifs,” completing their reimagination as symbols of Bahamian culture. Nevertheless, much of the artifact’s supposed authenticity came not from any associations with the Bahamas, but from anachronism associated with handmade commodities and legitimized through storytelling. Farcus advanced a narrative that distanced the totems’ production from commercial mass-manufacturing—they were produced, we are told, by one artisan while any machines symbolic of modernity were relatively absent from both story and photograph.⁴³⁴

In this sense, the bar’s arrangement of space used homogenizing references to the Caribbean—Eurocentric understandings that gained hegemony through colonial conquest—and reappropriated them to the Bahamas, allowing a multinational corporation and its agents to define Bahamian identity for Americans in a space controlled by the company. For passengers, the resulting establishment could have been any bar in the Caribbean, or—for that matter—in the so-called tropics; after all, Carnival chose to name it the Tahiti Lounge in reference to French Polynesia and installed fake bamboo therein—⁴³⁵ a commodity associated with Asia and the Pacific rather than the Bahamas. It was through Carnival’s growing economic power that it gained the influence to simulate these cultural interactions for hundreds of thousands of passengers annually, lending hegemony to corporate visions of Bahamian culture rather than iterations advanced by local populations themselves.

Just as Carnival claimed to curate onboard interactions between passengers and Caribbean countries on itineraries, so too was NCL “Bringing the Islands Aboard” as it told readers in a brochure:

⁴³⁴ *Holiday*, 70.

⁴³⁵ Brown, Carnival’s New Holiday is Like a Visit to Old New York.”

“In many ports,” the document stated, passengers “don’t have to go ashore to visit the islands. Because the islands visit you” through entertainment. “In our popular Caribe Celebration, you’ll see dancers in colorful, flamboyant costumes...Actually you could even get into the act.” Passengers were told there would be “several surprising ways you may be invited to go native.”⁴³⁶

This brochure’s reduction of diverse societies to Eurocentric tropes around vibrant colors and flamboyancy shows that companies occasionally reverted to outright homogenization. Owing to NCL’s ability to reach passengers more readily than local inhabitants could—tourists interacted with NCL well before they reached a Caribbean port—the company was able to prioritize its own conceptions of Caribbean identity, which it transmitted to passengers. By suggesting that this show was a fulfilling substitute for touring the islands—authentic to the point of “go[ing] native” through participation—NCL asserted that their interpretation of Caribbean cultures was even more authoritative than those of locals themselves.⁴³⁷ In exercising its power to mediate cultures, NCL sanitized encounters with Caribbean societies for passengers, drawing on a symbolic economy of homogenizing themes and iterating those representations in westernized spaces free of any perceived negative connotations associated with the islands. Local inhabitants lost agency in defining their own cultures, while simultaneously losing tourism dollars as cruise lines encouraged clients to spend more time and thus more of their money onboard. Passengers would not have to pay local tour guides to experience the Caribbean, for NCL imported supposedly genuine but ultimately invented representations of those cultures onto the ship for

⁴³⁶ Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988, Charles McKinney Papers, 1952-1999 and Undated, Box 17, Folder, “Norwegian Cruise Line Brochures 1988,” David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

convenient and safe consumption. By inventing encounters with the Caribbean through cultural themes that appealed to passengers interested in spectacle but also to those looking for ‘authentic’ experiences, NCL appropriated passenger dollar that would have otherwise been spent at ports, thereby maximizing their own profitability.

NCL did not limit itself to offering passengers representations of Caribbean cultures. Just as the commodification of cultural identities became an increasingly lucrative marketing strategy for US-based companies, the cruise line became more ambitious in its offerings, looking internationally to countries geographically distant from those on its Caribbean itineraries to construct the “cosmopolitan city” it promised in the same brochure.⁴³⁸ The document asked readers to consider “Why your cruise to the Caribbean is like a trip around the world.” Central to the cruise line’s cosmopolitan vision was dining, for the cuisine on offer was “international... Every night, the dining salons of NCL will take you on a trip to a different country.” Waiters would be dressed “in colorful costumes” and dining rooms decorated “in the flavor of each country. Yet, the company’s conception of internationality was highly Eurocentric. Of the three locales represented in the brochure’s promise of themed dining, two—France and Italy—were European. “Caribbean Night” was the only non-European, theme. Still, NCL offered the cuisine in ways that homogenized the islands as opposed to addressing the complexities behind their unique cultural identities, replicating the tokenistic fashion in which it commodified its conception of Caribbean culture in its “Caribe Celebration.” NCL stated that passengers would “probably see more of the islands than you discovered onshore” on “Caribbean Night,” through “colorful” and “flamboyant” dishes, decorations, and outfits, once again asserting its authority to interpret these cultures for customers. Furthermore, NCL levied its control of onboard space to

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

install culinary themes that it advertised as genuine to the point that passengers only had to stay onboard to experience the region. The company used these simulated encounters that it marketed as genuine to discouraging passengers from leaving the ship, in the process siphoning tourist spending from Caribbean ports⁴³⁹

At face value, NCL's "Midnight Buffets" promised more diversity than themed dinners in dining room. According to the cruise line, those buffets were opportunities for diners to "travel to the Orient, Scandinavia, Mexico." The lack of elaboration on any of these offerings, however, implied that the experience was as tokenizing as the more carefully curated themed dinners. While these buffets generously incorporated non-European regions unlike their more formal counterparts, advancing a slightly more inclusive understanding of the previously promised cosmopolitanism, they also homogenized entire areas of the globe. Cuisines are imbued with historical and cultural differences that define nations in contrast to their neighbors.⁴⁴⁰ In representing their buffet as a means to experience the so-called Orient and Scandinavia, NCL ignored the unique characteristics of cuisines belonging to the nations comprising these regions, in turn homogenizing national identities, not to mention regional differences.

⁴³⁹ By no means was Norwegian the only company advancing Eurocentric views of international cultures in its dining rooms. Carnival incorporated similar nightly themes into its dinners by 1985. Each night there was a different theme at dinner; dining rooms were decorated accordingly, and waiters' and busboys' uniforms fit that theme. For instance, on Italian night, there was a special pasta dish and Italian music. By 1989, themes revolved around Italian, French, and Caribbean cultures, with the attire of staff matching. However, Carnival's iteration of "Caribbean Night" contrasted Norwegian's, emphasizing not colorful flamboyance but spectacle and liveliness, with waiters balancing candle-filled trays on their heads and asking female guests to dance with them. *Holiday*; Faye Rice, "How Carnival Stacks the Decks," *Fortune* (January 1989): 108-16, Brouillard Communications Vertical Files, Box 20, Folder, "Travel (Cruise Lines)—1989-1991," David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁴⁴⁰ Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine."

The buffet displayed homogenized tokens of regions but did not offer opportunities to “travel to” the countries therein as NCL promised. Indeed, even in an attempt to transcend Eurocentrism, the tenets of the phenomenon informed how NCL transmitted cultural difference dining experiences. “Most NCL chefs,” the company told readers, “were trained in the finest European cooking schools, including Escoffier and Cordon Bleu.”⁴⁴¹ Just as France gained the power to define haute cuisine in its golden age of cookery, asserting its authority through the circulation of French-trained chefs globally,⁴⁴² NCL asserted the hegemony of France as the global center for culinary knowledge production. In turn, French cooking techniques mediated how passengers understood the locales simulated in dining rooms and buffets alike.

Though its vision of internationality was Eurocentric, the supposed globality of its vacations was a central point of advertisement for NCL. The company even boasted that the *Norway* was the only vessel in the world to fly the United Nations flag. However, for all its attempts to replicate the international diversity of the UN onboard, the cruise line also emphasized the brand’s historically Norwegian identity. Its brochure stated that they were “proud of something that’s centuries old. Our Norwegian seafaring traditions. At NCL, our captains and senior officers are Norwegian. Which results in a fastidious attention to detail, both in the operation of our ships and the service to our passengers.”⁴⁴³ The staff onboard were internationally diverse. That was the logical conclusion implied when they told readers that the senior staff was Norwegian, suggesting that its other seafarers were anything but—labor hierarchies commonplace in the mass-market Caribbean cruise industry by now. However, this

⁴⁴¹ Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988. Emphasis is from the original document.

⁴⁴² Amy B. Trubek, *Haute Cuisine: How the French Invented the Culinary Profession* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

⁴⁴³ Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988.

diversity was not the point of advertisement here. Instead, in a show of nationalism constructed through Eurocentric ways of understanding the world, NCL suggested that Norwegian identity made its senior staff more fit for seafaring operations than other nationalities.

While the world continued to become interconnected at an unprecedented pace as a result of dissolving national borders, countries used nationalism to assert their unique identities in a globalized era.⁴⁴⁴ National identities—even fabricated, invented, or reinvented—were also commodified by companies wishing to turn a profit. In this instance, NCL appealed to a history of Norwegian seafaring—presumably evoking the Viking Age—to justify onboard labor hierarchies. In reality, seafarers acquired high standards of seamanship and service through their training. Nationality did not lend seafarers intrinsic suitability towards one role or another. NCL’s suggestion otherwise served to diminish the potential for seafarers of other nationalities to rise to these senior positions, subjugating them to the lower ranks that typically entailed manual labor. The implication also suggested that Norwegian cultural identity was homogenous and unchanged over centuries, when in fact cultures routinely changed in response to factors both internal and external to them.

Though NCL was not alone in its use of nationalism to advertise vacations,⁴⁴⁵ it was the simulation of cosmopolitanism that gained prominence as the dominant strategy to frame cultural otherness on mass-market Caribbean cruises, even if cruise lines sanitized, misappropriated, or invented the cultural references that they used in the worldmaking process as previous examples have shown. Royal Caribbean, too, installed globality in their dining rooms. Passengers were

⁴⁴⁴ This was but one among a range of reasons for nationalism’s continued place in a globalized world. See the various essays in *Nationalism in a Global Era: The Persistence of Nations*, edited by Mitchell Young, Eric Zuelow and Andreas Sturm (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

⁴⁴⁵ Royal Caribbean, too, drew its Scandinavian heritage to advertise its vacations, though in more subtle ways than its competitor. The naming of the Viking Crown Lounge was one example of this.

meant to feel as though they were encountering cultures from the world over as soon as they met their waiter, for a 1987 advertisement boasted that the cruise line's "dining room staff is fully international." Passengers "may have a busboy from Spain, a waiter from Italy, and a maitre d' from France."⁴⁴⁶ Though we are told of the "exciting blend of over 40 nationalities makes your Royal Caribbean cruise a truly international affair," only European nationalities were elaborated upon, ignoring the fact that most dining room staff on mass-market ships were sourced from Asia by the 1980s.⁴⁴⁷ As was the case with its competitors, Royal Caribbean's transmission of internationality in this advertisement was Eurocentric, perpetuating this ordering of the globe as intrinsic.

Eurocentric ways of understanding the world were also perpetuated in Royal Caribbean's themed menus. Most of its geographically themed menus from 1987 pertained to European countries, while the few that referenced other locales homogenized entire regions or even continents. Through the dual process of exclusion and homogenization, Royal Caribbean dining rooms were not spaces to encounter a "truly international affair" as the company had advertised.⁴⁴⁸ Instead, passengers experienced simulacra that framed global cultures through European traditions of understanding cultural difference, views that were more often than not informed by colonial conquest.

Royal Caribbean menus drawing on European themes more convincingly simulated the countries they were based on compared to non-European menus. The simulation process was multifaceted. The company began by highlighting the place of select dishes in national histories. For instance, "Spanish Dinner" elaborated on the history of "Baked Fillet of Red Snapper

⁴⁴⁶ "Display Ad 359," *New York Times*, March 15, 1987, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁴⁷ Chin, "Labour Flexibilization at Sea."

⁴⁴⁸ "Display Ad 359," *New York Times*, March 15, 1987.

Madrilene,” a “Northern Spanish dish” which decades ago “became popular in the Madrid Ritz Hotel.” By educating passengers about historical importance of these foods to national cultures, Royal Caribbean offered passengers a stake therein. “British Dinner” drew on the country’s history as colonizer to incorporate dishes and ingredients from former colonies. “Indian Relishes” probably referred to the ubiquitous chutney which had also been popular in England since at least the eighteenth century.⁴⁴⁹ “Flying Fish” was popular in Barbados, and so too was it offered as being of Barbados in the English-themed dinner. Cross-cultural exchanges were an important role in the shifting identities of both colonizer and colonized, and a substantial part of British cuisine was comprised of the fruits of empire. However, just as the contributions of the colonies to British national cuisine often went unacknowledged,⁴⁵⁰ or in other instances were claimed as a part of British cuisine in a show of tokenistic multiculturalism,⁴⁵¹ so too did Royal Caribbean ask passengers to view these cultural products as the ingredients of a “British Dinner.” Just as the British Museum—among other institutions—represented colonial artifacts as part of national history without contextualizing these objects in their pasts in order to further positive public perception of national identity (i.e. as part of multicultural projects),⁴⁵² Royal Caribbean offered dishes as “British” while erasing the coercive power relations through which these foods

⁴⁴⁹ Colman Andrews, *The British Table: A New Look at the Traditional Cooking of England, Scotland, and Wales* (New York, NY: Abrams, 2016), 531.

⁴⁵⁰ Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1986).

⁴⁵¹ Elizabeth Buettner, ““Going for an Indian:” South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain, in *Curried Cultures: Globalization, Food, and South Asia*, edited by Krishnendu Ray and Tulasi Srinivas (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 143-174; Ravi Arvind Palat, “Empire, Food and the Diaspora: Indian Restaurants in Britain,” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2015): 171-186.

⁴⁵² Stuart Frost, ““A Bastion of Colonialism:’ Public Perceptions of the British Museum and its Relationship to Empire,” *Third Text* 33, no. 4-5 (2019): 487-499; Alexandra Green, “From India to Independence: The Formation of the Burma Collection at the British Museum,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 28, no. 3 (2015): 449-463.

became “British” in the first place, thereby providing passengers with comfortable rather than accurate ways of metaphorically touring the world.

Though Royal Caribbean’s European menus tried to illuminate national histories, the “South American,” “Caribbean,” and “Oriental” menus by contrast made little attempt to do so. This would have been a tall order when each of those menus homogenized a diversity of countries into singular entities by design. The menus, and differences between representational practices between them, produced cultures along a Eurocentric axis in which European countries were portrayed as having histories worth elaborating on (albeit articulated in sanitized ways), On the other hand, the rest of the world was seen as ahistorical enough that its cultural differences could be homogenized into large groups incorporating dozens of countries at once. In any event, each articulation was a theme that served to entertain passengers in comfortable ways rather than immerse, far from the “truly international affair” that the company promised of its dining experiences.

Comparing the visual culture on European menus to their non-European counterparts contributes to this pattern. Royal Caribbean used images to celebrate the histories and cultures of the former while homogenizing those of the latter. “Norwegian Dinner” depicted a sailing Viking ship, shields mounted, and perhaps bound for one of its infamous raids.⁴⁵³ The front cover of the “English Dinner” menu depicts Big Ben and the River Thames, setting the atmosphere for the feast. Additional symbols included prominent features of British mythology, such as the unicorn and chalice. The Italian dinner menu was visually themed to evoke the nation’s roots in ancient Rome; the cover depicted ruins of ancient Roman ruins, while the interior had drawings of the same. These visualizations archaeologized cultures by using anachronized understandings of

⁴⁵³ “Norwegian Dinner Menu,” *Royal Caribbean Cruise Line*, 1987, Personal Collection.

European countries to represent those cultures in the contemporary era,⁴⁵⁴ blurring past with present and reproducing as Urry argued symbols that had already been discursively connected with those countries in a process that constructed the tourist gaze. Viking imagery had come to stand in for contemporary Norwegian culture because popular cultural representations perpetuated the association between the nation and the symbol, just as the circulation of these connections produced Big Ben as symbolic of London, or how tourists understood the ruins of Rome to mean the rusticity of contemporary Italy.

By contrast, Royal Caribbean's non-European menus contained more geographically ambiguous visuals. "Oriental Dinner" captivated diners with a depiction of Asiatic agrarianism. The scene depicted workers in attire from Asian cultures, laboring with hand tools and oxen. East Asian characters adorned the cover, with a dragon and lantern on the inside. Similarly, "Caribbean Dinner" showcased a palm tree sunset on the cover; other visuals included tropical fruits, treasure chests, and an indigenous inhabitant carrying fruits. Locals in costumes or playing instruments adorned the interior of the menu. Unlike their counterparts, the visualizations on non-European menus were difficult to narrow down to even stereotypical understandings of a specific country. Rather, just like dishes on the pages therein, the "Oriental" and "Caribbean" menus drew on symbols of regions rather than nations. Even anachronism served different purposes across these documents, depictions of which symbolized historical legacy on European menus—the strength and technological innovation of Vikings and the greatness of Roman Empire—whereas it evoked the simplicity of inhabitants on the non-European ones.

In each example, Royal Caribbean used visuality to imply that passengers would encounter new worlds. In reality, the company simply reproducing popular cultural understandings of nations or

⁴⁵⁴ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 130-32.

regions represented. Ultimately, the company created experiences that appealed to their target market. During the 1980s, American consumers demanded authenticity while being satisfied with simulations thereof.⁴⁵⁵

Though Royal Caribbean commodified cultural and geographic differences in an era when theming gained prominence as a marketing tool, contrasting these menus shows that not all cultures were leveraged equally. As mediator, Royal Caribbean differentially constructed representations of foreign societies in ways that promised maximum profitability with its mass-market American clientele. In order to install cultural difference that did not venture into the unpalatably exotic, the company constructed encounters that offered passengers carefully mediated opportunities for immersion into cultures of the Global West, while shrouding its Orient in mystery via homogenizing themes. In turn, Royal Caribbean's strategy perpetuated a Eurocentric understanding of difference that framed Europe as the continent with cultures worth differentiating between and meriting remembrance, for these were the supposed bearers of historical progress and achievement, while its peripheries were ahistorical and lacking culture—to be understood merely through themes constructed via unequal power dynamics popularized in the colonial era. Ultimately, theming carried out through menus gave the appearance of diversifying onboard offerings without actually doing so. Each iteration was produced through corporate profit models—a careful balance of novelty and comfort that was homogenized in its own right because it reduced cultures to commodities that cruise lines modified to fit their purposes before distribution to consumers. Royal Caribbean's style of cultural production promised a variety of experiences that entertained passengers while reducing passenger boredom.

⁴⁵⁵ Orvell, *The Real Thing*.

Mediating Passenger Perceptions of the Caribbean

Cultural mediation was unescapable 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 1988.⁴⁵⁶ 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 through 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 locals, imported slaves, and colonizers—but through the

⁴⁵⁶ 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 Tamara Young, “Framing Experiences of Aboriginal Australia: Guidebooks as Mediators in Backpacker Travel,” *Tourism Analysis* 14, no. 2 (2009): 155-164. 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.

eyes of former British colonizers themselves. 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 conquest, such as tours of sugarcane plantations and cottonfields.⁴⁵⁷

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 would walk “down narrow European streets” with “tiny boutiques and cafes,” evoking for readers a quaint French town—a stereotype itself 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”⁴⁵⁸ that NCL wished to convey, the company homogenized Caribbean culture 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. NCL begins 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

⁴⁵⁷ Norwegian Cruise Line, *Voyages*, 1988

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

cultural blend.” While passengers touring St. Croix would see before them the result of historical collisions between these cultures, the section on St. Croix iterated for passengers a Eurocentric variety of creolization that failed to account for the contributions of slaves from a diverse range of 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, “In the Dutch towns of Christiansted and Fredriksted, you can tour pastel-colored Victorian gingerbread buildings...Or walk the St. George botanical garden,”⁴⁵⁹ the latter being a former sugarcane plantation.

The cruise line also used homogenizing anachronisms to theme destinations in the Mexican Caribbean as distinctly Mayan. They told tourists to 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 and to be understood in contrast to the modernity of the “civilized ship,”⁴⁶⁰ 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.⁴⁶¹ In advancing this comparison through popular, anachronistic understandings of the Mexican Caribbean via association with Mayan civilization, NCL constructed an experience that passengers would recognize easily and be more likely to engage with. However, the experience did not promise a genuine cultural encounter, but

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World*.

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 emerging in the context of postcolonial identity formation, but rather via colonial histories and 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 commemorative books for various ships contained dozens of advertisements for shops in port enclaves, influencing how passengers toured the region.⁴⁶² One such advertisement for a jewelry 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.⁴⁶³ 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.

⁴⁶² Carnival Cruise Lines, *Jubilee*; Carnival Cruise Lines, *Holiday*.

⁴⁶³ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Jubilee*, 142.

However, these local representations paled in comparison to those produced by companies convincing passengers that Caribbean nations were homogenous tropical backdrops against which one should 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 actors. 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. 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.⁴⁶⁴ 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 jewelry 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 jewelers 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 passed down to customers. Owing to the economies of scale that Shane purchased in, this transnational company was able to "undersell competition in...St. Thomas," even promising a 30-day money-back

⁴⁶⁴ John Maxtone-Graham, *From Song to Sovereign* (Stamford, CT: Cruise Passenger Network, 1988).

guarantee if the passenger was not completely satisfied. redeemable at the company's stateside locations in Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco, or Seattle, or even by mail.⁴⁶⁵ 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 jewelers operating at Caribbean ports promised that customer service calls would be addressed by US-based call centers. 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 lined the pocketbooks of mass-market cruise lines with advertising dollars, it also minimized the local impact of passenger spending in the Caribbean because those funds often profited companies based in the United States and Europe.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ For the same reason, the economic impact studies commonly commissioned by cruise lines to justify their practices in the Caribbean were inaccurate.

This chapter has argued that the mass-market US-Caribbean cruise industry used cultural difference, constructed both onboard and at ports, as a point of advertisement. The industry followed in the footsteps of land-based corporations that commodified cultural symbols for consumption by the American masses—a demand intensified by the dissolution of national borders as a tenet of globalization and the increasing curiosity about other cultures that followed. However, 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. Cruise lines advanced 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 rendering invisible aspects that could be perceived as unpalatably exotic. Though the commodification of cultural difference was profitable and mass-market lines actively participated in it, cruise lines overwhelmingly shaped how passengers perceived iterations visible to them—some of which were entirely simulated—while rendering undesirable representations invisible. These curatorial decisions balanced novelty, comfort, and spectacle to attract new passengers and retain existing customers, maximizing revenue. However, the process also homogenized cultures through a corporate formula seeking to maximize profitability.

Cultural themes were physical manifestations of mediation, key to the formula. During the 1980s they appeared in mostly temporary ways—shifting dinner menus and waitstaff attire in the main dining room, as well as the activities on NCL’s Mayan Magic cruise—though in some instances as permanent, as in Carnival’s Tahiti Lounge. The next decade would see intensified installation of fixed themes as companies raced to construct cruise vacations as opportunities for passengers to discover new worlds—a process entirely grounded in cultural simulation.

CHAPTER IV: SIMULACRUM CITIES: DISNEYIZING CRUISE VACATIONS, 1990 – 2000

Royal Caribbean's *Sovereign of the Seas* was well under construction by the summer of 1986. As the latter half of the decade saw intensified shipbuilding in the mass-market US-Caribbean cruise industry, it was the *Sovereign* that commanded the most attention. Billed as the largest cruise ship in the world, the 74,000-ton leviathan accommodated 2,600 passengers when it was launched in January of 1988. However, RCL was only paying USD \$183.5 million for the ship because the French government promised to underwrite a significant part of the ship's cost, hoping that the publicity from the ship would attract further business from the cruise industry to French builders the likes of Alsthom Atlantique—the company constructing *Sovereign*.⁴⁶⁷ Royal Caribbean was not alone in accepting subsidies from foreign countries to advance its interests. In 1989 the Italian government offered Carnival Cruise Line a 58 percent subsidy to construct three cruise ships in the government owned Fincantieri shipyard.

The mass-market cruise business model increasingly relied on economies of scale to keep upfront costs low while constructing larger and more technologically advanced ships to meet consumer demands. However, many of these cost-cutting measures were accretions of economic globalization, as previously shown through flags of convenience. Offshored construction projects—occasionally funded by international actors—represented another aspect of the same process. It was through an interconnected global economy that mass-market lines were able to offshore aspects central to their business models, in turn using those savings to produce vacation packages affordable for their American middle-class passenger base.

⁴⁶⁷ "A Full-Scale Hotel on a Floating Base," *New York Times*, August 3, 1986, ProQuest Databases.

The globalization of the mass-market cruise industry came with its fair share of economic consequences.⁴⁶⁸ These companies operated in the United States and reaped American dollars, yet its practices harmed laborers and businesses from that country. Just as Congressional officials had debated the industry's use of foreign flags to take advantage of tax loopholes,⁴⁶⁹ lawmakers now argued that American shipbuilders suffered at the hands of the cruise industry's acceptance of foreign subsidies, against which local businesses could not possibly compete. Officials stated that various European and Asian nations subsidized their shipbuilding operations to support local job creation, a practice that lawmakers argued stole jobs from American citizens.⁴⁷⁰ Shipyards in Italy, France, Norway, and Germany produced dozens of vessels subsidized by European governments for the cruise industry during the 1990s.⁴⁷¹

As shown in the preceding chapter, cruise lines in the 1980s used specific cultural and geographic themes to advertise their products and adorn their ships, but those representations tended to be impermanent—changing between voyages or even night-to-night as in themed dining rooms.⁴⁷² Owing to the short-term nature of these experiences, it was logistically infeasible for cruise lines to install cultural referents that permeated the built environment, resulting in themes that were fleeting. By contrast, in the 1990s, larger and increasingly

⁴⁶⁸ An extensive literature on the social inequalities produced through economic globalization exists. Take for instance various scholars advancing a world-systems approach in commodity chain analysis. Actors in the Global South have been relegated to the least profitable aspects of the chain, reducing their chances of upgrading their positions, a benefit left for actors within the Global North to reap. Benjamin D. Brewer, "Global Commodity Chains & World Income Inequalities: The Missing Link of Inequality and the Upgrading Paradox," *Journal of World-Systems Research* (2011): 308-327. For an empirical example see John M. Talbot, "Tropical Commodity Chains, Forward Integration Strategies and International Inequality: Coffee, Cocoa and Tea," *Review of International Political Economy* 9, no. 4 (2002): 701-734.

⁴⁶⁹ "Congressional Record Vol. 116—Extension of Remarks;" "Congressional Record Vol. 139 - House," *Library of Congress*, May 26, 1993, 11256, <https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1993/05/26/house-section>.

⁴⁷⁰ "Congressional Record Vol. 139 - Senate," *Library of Congress*, May 19, 1993, 10368-374, <https://www.congress.gov/bound-congressional-record/1993/05/19/senate-section>.

⁴⁷¹ Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 49.

⁴⁷² There were some exceptions, including Carnival's Tahiti Lounge.

technologically complex ships—many of which were partially funded by foreign entities—allowed Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian to install a multitude of permanent themed environments on ships.⁴⁷³ As the decade progressed, mass-market lines increasingly purpose-built venues from the ground up with the goal of conveying a cohesive theme, on ships that were built larger to accommodate a multitude of themed venues. The principles of Disneyization (discussed in footnote below) allowed companies to use both built environment and an internationally diverse labor force to advance the selected theme.⁴⁷⁴

Cruise lines thereby transformed otherwise nationally ambiguous spaces into sanitized medleys of global cultures that came to resemble Las Vegas—a destination with which mass-market lines competed for middle-class dollars.⁴⁷⁵ However, whereas Las Vegas boosters marketed the city’s fabrication of deterritorialized internationality as a symptom of postmodernity,⁴⁷⁶ mass-market lines asked their clientele to view themed experiences as authentic. Onboard cruise ships, cultures were commodified without their original contexts and inorganically relocated or fused with one another, allowing passengers to experience the distinctiveness of other countries through western stereotypes but also homogenizing those cultures as symbols of the exotic. The implications were similar for cruise ports as the growing

⁴⁷³ “Permanent” is used to contrast those themes installed for the duration of a cruise, for instance on Carnival’s “Mayan Magic,” or those that shifted from night-to-night, while acknowledging that even those venues I call permanent were sometimes repurposed during refurbishment projects.

⁴⁷⁴ These principles were articulated by Bryman, *The Disneyization of Society*: spatial theming, de-differentiated consumption, the use of themed spaces to promote merchandise, and emotional labor. Weaver draws upon Bryman to argue that mass-market cruises were organized via the principles of Disneyization, discussing how the process allowed companies to differentiate their products from competitors in a post-Fordist economy. “The Disneyization of Cruise Travel.” However, the cultural implications of the theming process merits further discussion as I show here.

⁴⁷⁵ Cruise lines used theming to increase their profits, in turn remaining competitive. While more immersive themes incentivized consumers to purchase cruises, these motifs also increased passenger spending onboard. Klein found that themed nights resulted in more income for onboard bars, as well as savings in food costs for cruise lines depending on the motif used, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 129.

⁴⁷⁶ For the history of Las Vegas’ rise as a global tourist destination, see Geoff Schumacher, *Sun, Sin & Suburbia: The History of Modern Las Vegas* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2015).

economic power wielded by mass-market lines allowed them control of spaces in the Caribbean, and equipped these companies with the authority to iterate local cultures for passengers.

Even though cruise lines advertised themed onboard spaces as culturally or geographically spaces as immersive, the reality was different. This chapter argues that Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian physically and discursively constructed themed venues using symbols popularly (though often inaccurately) associated with a range of global cultures. In doing so, the mass-market cruise industry advanced a myth-making practice that promised passengers opportunities to discover new worlds. Themed venues immersed passengers not in culture, but in simulacra of those cultures that cruise lines designed to be entertaining rather than accurate. These interactive spaces simulated global destinations to bring variety to cruises that would have been otherwise monotonous and even redundant, encouraging repeat passengers to sail on different ships. More importantly, however, the growing number of themed spaces onboard strengthened the ship's position as a destination in and of itself. Along this vein, Geographer Adam Weaver argued for mass-market megaships as "spaces of containment,"⁴⁷⁷ but cultural themes were a key part of the story that Weaver's analysis did not capture.

As cultures were increasingly subjected to the distortionary effects of late-twentieth-century globalization—especially decontextualized travel across national borders and essentialized through mass media—corporations appropriated, reinvented, and commodified cultural representations to fit their purposes. The mass-market cruise industry used cohesively themed onboard venues to engage new and repeat passengers alike, persuading them through spectacle to stay onboard even as the ship was docked. In doing so, cruise lines appropriated

⁴⁷⁷ "Spaces of Containment and Revenue Capture: 'Super-Sized' Cruise Ships as Mobile Tourism Enclaves," *Tourism Geographies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 165-184.

passenger dollars that would have otherwise gone to port inhabitants in a decade when cruise lines advanced their growing political and economic control over Caribbean ports—influence they used to advance coercive business practices with local entrepreneurs aimed at capturing more passenger dollars.

Theming Built Environments on Mass-Market Cruises

From their inception, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian were more interested in competing against land-based destinations than one another. They certainly differentiated their products from one another but given the historically low percentage of Americans that had ever taken a cruise, these companies saw as their main competition destination cities, and were especially interested in acquiring the clientele that frequented Disney theme parks and Vegas casino resorts. Bob Dickinson, who became president of Carnival in 1993 and served in various executive capacities beforehand, even stated that Carnival’s “competition is not with other cruise lines, it’s with the greater hotel business on land—either resort hotels or hotels and sight-seeing destinations” such as Hyatt, Marriott, Hilton, and destination-cities like Las Vegas and Orlando. Though Dickinson explicated this marketing philosophy at the turn of the century, he also made it clear that Carnival had been following it since at least the late 1970s, calling it a strategy “that we implemented 25 years ago.”⁴⁷⁸ It was a marketing strategy that the three major mass-market lines had followed since their beginnings, borrowing attractions from destination-cities across the United States. Instead of advertising generic music and dance shows, cruise lines commonly represented aspects of onboard entertainment as Broadway productions, theming entertainment

⁴⁷⁸ By former Carnival Corporation President Bob Dickinson’s estimate, cruising captured 2.5 percent of the vacation market as of 2002, “Turning People on to Cruising Carnival,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Spring 2002): 37.

in ways that enticed readers who would have otherwise chosen land-based vacations in New York City. Similarly, Las Vegas style revues and onboard casinos attracted the increasingly family- friendly Sin City crowd,⁴⁷⁹ resulting in younger cruise passengers.⁴⁸⁰ In these ways, mass-market lines had since their beginnings competed with destination cities by installing their own versions of the very activities that had brought those cities fame in the first place. By constructing ships that seemingly offered something for everybody, cruise lines hoped to entice a largely untapped middle-class clientele to cruise.

By the 1990s, Las Vegas had gained notoriety as a destination for those across the country—⁴⁸¹ a growing threat that mass-market cruise lines had to address.⁴⁸² Mirroring the development of the Strip, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian constructed their ships as

⁴⁷⁹ There are countless examples of instances where mass-market lines installed entertainment options onboard based on activities popular in American destination cities, of which but a few will be highlighted here. In the early 1970s, Royal Caribbean advertised dining rooms and lounges themed after Broadway musicals, “Display Ad 426,” *New York Times*, October 22, 1972, ProQuest Databases. Norwegian promised Broadway shows and Las Vegas revues onboard *Norway* in the early 1980s, “Classified Ad 1894,” *New York Times*, April 5, 1981, ProQuest Databases. Later in that decade the company encouraged its passengers to “spend the night seeing a Broadway play or a Las Vegas revue” onboard their cruises, “NCL Advertising Proofs,” Box 77, Folder, “Norwegian Cruise Lines Proofs, n.d.,” Charles McKinney Papers, 1970-1990, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1992 Carnival asked readers to imagine their ships as “Las Vegas surrounded by the ocean,” with photographs of dancers in glitzy attire typical of shows in Vegas casino resorts, “If You’ve Never Taken A “Fun Ship” Cruise...It’s Time To Test The Waters,” Box 13, Folder “1992 T412 Cruise Ship Travel,” Competitive Advertisements T151-T431 1992, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina. The following year, NCL promised its customers “a world-class casino and the latest Broadway show,” appealing to those who may have otherwise chosen to book a vacation to New York City or Las Vegas, “Can The Caribbean’s Most Spectacular Destination Be The Ship That Carries You There?,” Box 1993-14, Folder “1993 T412 Cruise Ship Travel,” Competitive Advertisements T112-T412. Casinos were prominent on mass-market cruise ships since the 1970s, beginning simply as legal avenues to gamble when the activity was prohibited in many states and evolving by 1990s into the extravagant, themed venues resembling those found in Las Vegas.

⁴⁸⁰ By the mid-1990s, the 25-to-40 age bracket represented half of all first time cruisers, nearly double the 1989 figure, Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 170.

⁴⁸¹ Las Vegas tourism saw significant growth over the late twentieth century. The 6.7 million visitors in 1970 grew to 11.9 million by 1980. At this point, visitor numbers became increasingly pronounced—20.9 million in 1990, and 33.8 million by the decade’s end. “Las Vegas Historic Tourism Statistics (1970-2021),” *Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Research Center*, July 2022, Accessed August 20, 2022. http://res.cloudinary.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1657124125/clients/lasvegas/Las_Vegas_Historical_1970_to_2021_6daf7d31-5fd3-44b2-ad99-427bf62454ba.pdf. Mass-market lines viewed these millions of tourists as an untapped market that could be converted to cruise travel.

⁴⁸² In addition to direct advertising, mass-market lines built social capital through lobbying, fundraising, and sponsorships during this decade to gain positive publicity, which Klein discussed in *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 48-86.

deterritorialized enclaves with increasingly intense and cohesive spatial manifestations of cultural and geographic others.⁴⁸³ However, whereas Las Vegas appealed owing to its brand identity as purposefully inauthentic—as a perpetual reinventor of its own image, of which theming and retheming was but one part—Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian marketed their installations of global cultures onboard as authentic. While these spatial themes were as simulated as those found in Vegas casino resorts, mass-market cruise lines framed them as genuine interactions between passengers and the cultures represented. They reinforced their ability to show customers the world by drawing on a unique ability to transport passengers to multiple other countries in between those onboard cultural simulations, framing cruise vacations as cosmopolitan experiences although they were anything but.

In the early 1990s, themes contributed to the production of onboard spaces that were more similar to than different from the Vegas Strip. Theming was crucial to passenger experiences onboard *Carnival Fantasy*, which was launched in 1988 and completed in 1990. The ship's piano bar meant to evoke Ancient Egypt. Aptly named Cleopatra's Bar, Joe Farcus—the ship's interior designer—modeled the space on an Egyptian tomb. It contained a life-sized sarcophagus, as well as hieroglyphics and representations of Egyptian gods and goddesses.⁴⁸⁴

By lending Egypt its own space onboard the ship, Carnival aimed for cultural differentiation.

However, the simulated experience was similar to ones that tourists witnessed in Las Vegas'

⁴⁸³ "Cohesive" is taken to mean incorporated through every aspect of an experience. In the 1990s, mass-market lines worked towards installing singular cultural or geographic themes (i.e., Italian, English, Egyptian) in onboard venues, undertaken in a permanent capacity—as part of a vessel's initial construction or scheduled refurbishment projects. These contrasted the sporadic or peppered cultural representations seen in the decade prior, or ones that were fleeting (i.e., the transformation of the dining room into a Caribbean theme one night and Italian the next). Permanency allowed cruise lines to incorporate symbols of cultural others into the foundations of onboard venues and design service, labor, and consumption around that central theme, and it was this reproduction that cruise lines leveraged to promise passengers a more immersive atmosphere.

⁴⁸⁴ Shirley Slater, "Enjoying a Long-Weekend Fantasy," *Telegram & Gazette* (Worcester, MA), September 1990, ProQuest Databases.

most popular resorts. Carnival asked passengers to understand Egyptian histories through Eurocentric perspectives that had over time gained hegemony. Cleopatra Bar incorporated decontextualized symbols from across time and space, failing to elaborate on the multiplicity of cultures that actually existed in the Egyptian past. This simulated encounter with another society promoted anachronism by ignoring cultural change over time.

Theming produced an atmosphere that encouraged escapism, supported by Carnival's more standard glitzy "Fun Ship" architecture. "This is not a subtle, understated vessel," reflected one Massachusetts-based reporter, who proceeded to describe the vivid the play of neon lights, lightning flashes, and mirrors that adorned other parts of the ship.⁴⁸⁵ 12 miles of neon tubing—capable of changing colors via computer control—lined the ship in what was, at the time, the largest single installation of neon globally. The sum of these spectacles produced an "entertainment facility" according to Farcus—to give the whole family "an environment different from anything they experience in their normal life."⁴⁸⁶ In this vein, Cleopatra's Bar aimed to overstimulate passengers with symbols that contrasted with daily life—an aspect reinforced by spectacle throughout the *Fantasy* in what ultimately became a floating version of Las Vegas.

Carnival *Ecstasy*, sister ship to *Fantasy*, intensified its usage of cultural and geographic themes. The ship contained its own Chinatown with material culture stereotypically evoking that country. Passengers entering the space were greeted by a pair of Chinese guard lion sculptures. Red lantern lights surrounded the black lacquered tables within the space. A dragon adorned the

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Shirley Slater and Harry Basch, "New Cruising Monsters Floating Amusement Parks," *Toronto Star*; November 18, 1989, ProQuest Databases.

ceiling—its flashing red eyes and smoking nostrils captivating onlookers in spectacle.⁴⁸⁷ On the other hand, the bistro was modeled on a European sidewalk café,⁴⁸⁸ essentializing the rustic architecture that had become crucial in shaping the tourist gaze for the romantic charm of Italy and France.⁴⁸⁹ Farcus also chose the theme of New York for *Ecstasy* at large.⁴⁹⁰ The main promenade, “City of Light,” was adorned metallic skyscraper cut-outs as skyscraper-patterned carpeting was found throughout the ship. Many of the public rooms also reflected a New York motif. Metropolis Bar had a neon sculpture that resembled a skyscraper, while Society Bar featured a marble and wood interior with a tuxedoed man and gowned woman painted on the ceiling, evoking the classical but luxurious Manhattan nightlife.⁴⁹¹

However, just as in *Fantasy*, the themes onboard *Ecstasy* assembled hegemonic understandings of other societies into a pastiche simulating—but never actually offering—cultural encounters. These motifs contributed to what Farcus called “entertainment architecture,” elaborating, “There is a sense of romance and adventure about the sea, and that’s what I’m trying to capitalize on.” Farcus, and by extension Carnival, constructed ships that were “as unthreatening as the local mall but as exotic as a night in the Casbah.”⁴⁹² Farcus’ cultural and geographic simulations contributed to the production of escapism through spectacle—immersion in difference from home—no different from the purpose served by the Neon Bar onboard. In this regard, during the early 1990s Carnival built ships that used cultural and geographic theming much the same way that Las Vegas casino resorts did—a logical progression of the “Fun Ship”

⁴⁸⁷ Jay Clarke, “Carnival Introduces New Super Liner,” *Ottawa Citizen*, June 29, 1991, ProQuest Databases; Suzanne Davis, “Don’t Miss the Boat,” *Incentive* 171, no. 11 (1997): 87-90, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁸⁸ Regina Eisman, “Creative Cruising,” *Incentive* 165, no. 6 (191): 66, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁸⁹ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*.

⁴⁹⁰ Brook Hill Snow, “Golden Arches on the High Seas,” *Globe and Mail*, September 5, 1992, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁹¹ Clarke, “Carnival Introduces New Super Liner.”

⁴⁹² Andre Henderson, “Carnival’s Dream Maker,” *Florida Trend* 40, no. 3 (1997): 50, ProQuest Databases.

model that had long relied on superficial extravagance more so than Royal Caribbean or Norwegian to target the American middle class.

NCL's *Norway* similarly incorporated culturally themed spaces into its cruises, among which the company especially emphasized the Roman motif of its spa. A Norwegian Cruise Line advertisement from 1991 noted that it was the only Caribbean cruise to offer "Ancient Rome on its itinerary." "As your ship slowly glides through the eastern Caribbean, you find yourself magically transported to Ancient Rome" through a 6,000-square-foot Roman spa—"as opulent as any found on land." According to this advertisement, the spa's purpose was two-fold. NCL's spa had pragmatic value supporting relaxation as a central aspect to cruising; the advertisement even depicted a profoundly relaxed passenger, augmenting the verbiage that painted a ship calmly and elegantly gliding through the Caribbean as passengers relaxed in "paradise."⁴⁹³ They would leisure in ways that middle-class Americans could likely not afford otherwise—in opulence. However, the spa also had cultural connotations—its atmosphere evoking Ancient Rome to such an extent that passengers would feel as though they had been transported to a different time and place.

While mass-market cruise ships had for decades acted as enclaves separating passengers from the overly exotic as they traversed the Caribbean Sea, the spa took this distancing process to extremes by promising to immerse its clientele in Ancient Rome—a cornerstone of so-called western civilization. NCL painted its Roman spa as a space apart by discursively representing it as occidental to the "Eastern Caribbean" itinerary. However, much of this distinction was achieved during the experience itself. Passengers dressed in a Roman tunic, surrounded by

⁴⁹³ "Norwegian Cruise Line—Only One Caribbean Cruise Offers Ancient Rome on its Itinerary," Brouillard Communications Vertical Files, Box 20, Folder, "Travel (Cruise Lines)—1989-1991," David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

opulent adornments, as they partook in a ritualized variety of wealth display. Even though NCL advertised its spa experience as a genuine means to understand Ancient Rome, in reality the cruise line offered merely a shallow caricature of that culture. Though attending luxurious bathhouses was an important affirmation of class distinctions in Ancient Rome,⁴⁹⁴ the symbols that NCL chose to represent this activity simply replicated and recirculated popular cultural depictions of Ancient Rome in the late twentieth century while ignoring regional differentiation in architectural designs, the rituals within, and for that matter any understanding that bathhouse experiences evolved over time. NCL's commodification of cultural referents to produce cohesive themes shared many similarities with land-based counterparts in Las Vegas resorts, the central difference being that the cruise line asked its clientele to view its motifs as authentic representations of the cultures depicted.

Even as permanently installed themed establishments became more prominent, the more flexible variety continued to have a place in cruises.⁴⁹⁵ In addition to dinner nights with cultural and geographic motifs—a practice that the Big Three carried forward into the 1990s—mass-market lines also temporarily themed voyages to market cruises to an American middle class that was growing more diverse along racial lines. Civil rights movements and affirmative action initiatives resulted in increasing college education rates and incomes for minority groups. Newer

⁴⁹⁴ Fikret K. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1992).

⁴⁹⁵ Shifting themes continued into the 1990s, consistently appearing in menus. Carnival had Italian, French, "Island Fare," and "Taste of the Orient" menus. "M.S. Jubilee - Island Fare Menu," Carnival Cruise Line, 1991, *Johnson & Wales University*, https://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/menu_collection/258/; "M.S. Jubilee—C'est Magnifique Menu," Carnival Cruise Line, 1991, Johnson & Wales University, https://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/menu_collection/256/; "M.S. Jubilee - Viva L'Italia Menu," Carnival Cruise Line, 1991, Johnson & Wales University, https://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/menu_collection/257/; "M.S. Celebration - A Taste of the Orient Menu," Carnival Cruise Line, 1991, Johnson & Wales University, https://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/menu_collection/255/. Royal Caribbean continued to offer such menus in its main dining rooms. The company stated on its website in 1997 that "on every cruise, [passengers] experience a variety of different theme dinners" because the company "believe[s] in exploring different cultures in one of the most rewarding ways possible: their food. Royal Caribbean International, "Bon appetit! Buon appetito!," January 6, 1997, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line Website Archives, *Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19970106113855/http://www.royalcaribbean.com/onboard/todo/theme.html>.

immigrant waves of the late twentieth century encountered a society that—while not completely equitable in terms of possibility for socioeconomic mobility—was more so than in the previous decades. As racialized Americans gained access to more lucrative professional careers and in turn middle-class status,⁴⁹⁶ they also acquired the discretionary income necessary to take vacations abroad, including cruises. According to the business publication *Incentive*, marketers increasingly targeted growing populations of Hispanic, Asian, and African Americans and their growing spending power.⁴⁹⁷ “Years ago, the only African-Americans you’d find on a ship most likely worked there,” a *Black Enterprise* article from 1992 told readers. “But today, we’re taking to the seas in style.” While approximately 5 percent of Americans had ever taken a cruise, a survey by that publication found that 17 percent of its subscribers had cruised in the past three years.⁴⁹⁸

As the black market for cruises strengthened, cruise lines responded with voyages catered specifically to them through ethnic and culturally themed packages, celebrating the contributions, culture, and heritage of African Americans both onboard and at Caribbean ports of call.⁴⁹⁹ Just one of these was the Family Jazz Cruise onboard Royal Caribbean’s *Majesty of the Seas*,⁵⁰⁰ appealing to the place of jazz music in African American identity formation. It was a

⁴⁹⁶ By no means were these barriers completely lifted. As countless studies have shown, racial inequality, both implicit and explicit, continue to limit the socioeconomic mobility of racialized Americans to this day and often manifest by way of systemic racism.

⁴⁹⁷ “Cruising Toward Incentives?,” *Incentive* 168, no. 1 (1994), ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁹⁸ “Great Cruise Vacations,” *Black Enterprise* 23, no. 5 (1992): 151, ProQuest Databases. This sentiment was further reinforced by Carl Withers from J. Sales Inc., a Florida-based travel agency, who asserted that cruises were not historically marketed to black people, but also noted that this was starting to change, “Celebrating Family Heritage,” *Black Enterprise* 23 no. 2 (1992): 94, ProQuest Databases.

⁴⁹⁹ “Celebrating Family Heritage.”

⁵⁰⁰ “Great Cruise Vacations.” Given that *Black Enterprise* is a publication for black entrepreneurs, it is likely that its subscription base was middle-class or higher, meaning that the 17 percent figure is probably not an accurate sample of the overall African American population. Nevertheless, the figure does show phenomenal interest in cruising by black Americans.

celebration of cultural heritage and achievement, as well as a tool for political activism.⁵⁰¹ *Black Enterprise* also encouraged its readership of black entrepreneurs to offer employees incentive cruises onboard Carnival, Royal Caribbean, or Norwegian as a way to boost employee productivity.⁵⁰²

Carnival went to even further lengths with its theming to acquire the Hispanic American cruise market in Florida, Texas, New York, and California, renaming its cruise ship *Carnivale* to *Fiesta Marina*. Its inaugural voyage in October 1993 would offer features that would evoke familiarity for that passenger base, including a Spanish-speaking crew, emphasis on Latin music and culinary specialties, and later dining hours.⁵⁰³ This was Carnival's solution to the cultural inconveniences that Latin-American passengers were facing on its cruises, for instance language barriers preventing smooth communication with service and entertainment staff. "The comments we were hearing from our Hispanic clientele were fairly consistent," said Tim Warnock, manager of sales and marketing for Fiesta Marina. According to Warnock, the Hispanic American passenger base had grown tremendously over the past years, leading Carnival to produce a product specifically for them. It was a product that Carnival advertised through Spanish radio stations, Hispanic nightclubs, and local travel agents.⁵⁰⁴

Although Jennifer de la Cruz, Carnival's Public Relations Manager, asserted that *Fiesta Marina* made Carnival an industry pioneer,⁵⁰⁵ Royal Caribbean also announced ten-day "Latin Fiesta Cruises" to target, in part, the Hispanic American market. Royal Caribbean's cruise

⁵⁰¹ Eric Porter, *What is this Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁵⁰² "Take a Cruise on the Company." *Black Enterprise* 21, no. 7 (1991): 187, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁰³ Edwin McDowell, "Spicier Old Stops, Exotic New Ones," *New York Times*, October 10, 1993, ProQuest Databases; "Carnival Cruise Line Beckons Hispanics," *Advertising Age* 64, no. 4 (1993): 46.

⁵⁰⁴ "Cruising Towards Incentives?"

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

featured a Spanish-speaking staff, alongside menus and schedules printed in Spanish.⁵⁰⁶ Rod McLeod, RCCL Executive Vice President of Sales, Marketing, and Passenger Services, attempted to differentiate their product from Carnival's. "In the past, some companies have attempted to attract Hispanic travelers with tailor-made cruise products but these efforts have been off the mark because they utilized old ships with limited facilities, ignoring the obvious fact that Hispanics demand the same cruise experience as other travelers," seemingly contrasting Carnival's findings on the dissatisfaction of this passenger base with cruises that favored Anglo-American tastes. McLeod asserted that the cruise industry "shouldn't encourage U.S. Hispanics to seek out a substandard customized cruise," going on to acknowledge that "Royal Caribbean recognizes that U.S. Hispanics have the income and the desire to experience a quality vacation on modern ships with a variety of amenities" and pursuant to which "Royal Caribbean delivers the high-satisfaction cruise they have been looking for."⁵⁰⁷ In these ways, mass-market lines produced cruises with temporarily themed spaces, activities, and amenities that they believed would be culturally familiar to, and even celebratory of, racialized Americans as a means to acquire the patronage of those groups as they increasingly achieved middle-class status.

As the decade progressed, Carnival's competitors also installed a multitude of permanently themed establishments onboard their ships. Royal Caribbean took the concept to new heights with *Legend of the Seas*, launched in 1994, wherein the company hoped to instill an international atmosphere. *Legend* embodied globalization well before themed venues were

⁵⁰⁶ "Carnival Cruise Line Beckons Hispanics."

⁵⁰⁷ Royal Caribbean International, "Royal Caribbean Hires Advertising Agency to Target U.S. Hispanic Cruise Market," February 26, 1996, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line Website Archives, *Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/19970106105653/http://www.royalcaribbean.com/company/press960226.html>. The increasing racial diversity of American mass-market cruise passengers was evident to journalists, two of whom wrote of their Carnival *Elation* cruise in 1999 that passengers were "diverse, with every major culture and race seeming well represented." Ellen B. Klugman and Paul A. Lance, "Carnival Moves a Notch Upscale with the Elation," *Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1999, ProQuest Databases.

constructed. It was built in the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, France, thanks to USD \$316.5 million in funding from the Paris-based Banque Indosuez. It contained an integrated ship control system from Norway, and engines from Finland. Its shipping and logistics needs were met by Inchcape Shipping Services, a transnational company that served vessels across Europe, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas; Jamaica-based Grace Kennedy & Shipping Company; and Nassau-based United Shipping Company. TrioVing of Norway furnished hotel card lock system for staterooms. The primary suppliers of kitchen essentials were Swiss. SeaKing International AG designed, supplied, and installed onboard catering systems; Langenthal supplied porcelain; and ABB supplied galley equipment. Germany-based BÖWE Passat supplied laundry equipment for *Legend*, while the Swedish company Arkitektbryån AB developed the Solarium Spa concept. Royal Caribbean even outsourced onboard photography to Image of Grand Cayman. The cruise line selected companies from across the United States for remaining aspects. These included Florida-based firms provided the ship's furniture, onboard telephone system, plumbing, and some aspects of entertainment, while its freshwater generators were Pennsylvania-based Alfa Laval.⁵⁰⁸ Thus, *Legend* was a product of economic globalization from its conception to its maiden voyage.

Interior design decisions only strengthened *Legend's* connection to internationality. London Contemporary Art, designer for some of the ship's material culture, described the onboard atmosphere as a "cosmopolitan flavor," with the purpose of "imparting a well-

⁵⁰⁸ John Maxtone-Graham, *Legend of the Seas* (Miami Beach, FL: On-Board Media, 1995). Data was obtained from advertisements that these companies placed in Royal Caribbean's commemorative book for *Legend of the Seas*. Many explicitly stated that they were responsible for various aspects of the ship. However, there were other cases in which these companies did not outright connect themselves to *Legend of the Seas*. I assert that the presence of their advertisements in this book implicitly suggests that they were connected to the ship. This is all the more likely given that other commemorative books by Royal Caribbean and Carnival reserved advertising space for companies that contributed to their ships—even if those advertisements did not explicitly convey that connection.

documented international flavor throughout the vessel.” London Contemporary Art “hope[d]...to enrich *Legends*’ cruise experience by providing passengers with significant historical and geographical themes [to] lead them throughout every space on board.” It was even said that cabin corridors were laid out according to a map of Europe, and Northern nations were displayed on top decks while southern nations were further down the ship. However, from its inception, this design was based in Eurocentrism because the overall motif was voyages of discovery. Royal Caribbean’s official book on *Legend of the Seas* even promised, “As the ship sailed to exotic locations, guests chart the routes of intrepid explorers who traveled before them,” thereafter detailing how paintings, sculptures, tapestries, glasswork, and metalwork supported those metaphorical travels.⁵⁰⁹

In designing a ship with European cartography as the theme, Royal Caribbean favored western interpretations of world history rather than so-called internationality it promised. Passengers entering the ship were immediately greeted by sculpted figures from ancient Roman mythology, setting their expectations for the medley of themes dispersed throughout the ship that celebrated the achievements of western Europe. For instance, Royal Caribbean chose a Mediterranean theme for one of the corridors on Deck 6. Passengers encountered visual references to Spain and Italy, including a depiction of Christopher Columbus that implicitly celebrated the colonial conquests that brought the Italian explorer his fame. Another part of the same deck continued in its celebration of European cartography with a painting of Danish explorer Vitus Bering, alongside a nearby cabin corridor containing visual references to Denmark. References to Scandinavia continued in the Viking Crown Lounge, the glass staircase leading up to which was decorated with Viking runes. The lounge itself contained a sculpture of

⁵⁰⁹ John Maxtone-Graham, *Legend of the Seas* (Miami Beach, FL: On-Board Media, 1995), 200-204.

a long-boat figurehead on the dance floor meant to evoke “an authentic Viking Ship.” Sections of Deck 7 alluded to the cultural achievements of Great Britain, the most prominent of which was a sculpture of Shakespeare, while parts of Deck 3 advanced a Greek motif with an appropriately themed cabin corridor and a painting of Poseidon on the main stairway.⁵¹⁰

In its overall motif, *Legend of the Seas* glorified western Europe from its birth in ancient Greece to its colonial conquests in the age of sail. Focusing on the West’s knowledge and achievements was precisely the point.⁵¹¹ In fact, Royal Caribbean’s official book about the ship even stated:

The integration of artists from America and Europe echoes the ways in which the ship’s major contributors are combined: the ship’s Norwegian owners; their operators in both America and Norway; their designers from America, Britain, Norway and Sweden; and their builders in France.⁵¹²

However, the ship did contain some references to non-western nations. Especially well-represented was Egypt.⁵¹³ The cabin corridor on Deck 3 contained visual referents to that nation’s ancient history, while the Show Lounge entrance was adorned with Egyptian-inspired sculptures. The theme carried over to Deck 5, wherein the shopping mall contained artwork echoing “the colors and forms of Egyptian art.” Royal Caribbean commodified anachronistic referents to Egypt that conflated modern cultural representations from that nation with those millennia old. In every instance, Royal Caribbean used cultural essentializations to theme *Legend of the Seas*—primarily representations associated with widely circulated European myths and

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 201.

⁵¹¹ It is worth noting that many if not most American university students at this time were required to take a traditional “Western Civilization” survey course. Only with the rise of awareness and critique of the Eurocentrism embodied in that framing of history did these courses shift to a “world history” approach.

⁵¹² Maxtone-Graham, *Legend of the Seas*, 200-201.

⁵¹³ Even then, the “Western Civilization” survey course had long appropriated ancient Egypt as “Western.”

colonial narratives favoring Eurocentric perspectives. These experiences were simultaneously novel and familiar, constructed through well-known cultural forms and ultimately taking place in “the comfort and amenities of this luxury liner.” They were not genuine representations of the cultures depicted, but rather simulations. London Contemporary Art even stated that the themed spaces were meant to be “pleasurable and captivating,” rather than authentic.⁵¹⁴

While both Carnival and Royal Caribbean used essentialized referents to produce simulations of Egypt, the companies differed in their approaches. Carnival’s *Fantasy* largely limited its caricature to a designated space in which passengers encountered referents to Egypt alone. Royal Caribbean’s representations, by contrast, pervaded the entire ship and were sometimes displayed in close proximity to other geographic referents. This design strategy resulted in collisions between Egyptian representations and those of European nations. Where the Global East met the West, Royal Caribbean asked passengers to view the former through European eyes. Though Deck 5 contained extensive references to Egypt, it also showcased a tapestry of the Norwegian sailor Thor Heyerdahl depicting his own explorations of Egypt.⁵¹⁵ This mediation of Egypt through Norwegian eyes mirrored how Royal Caribbean mediated globality for its passengers onboard *Legend of the Seas*, selectively choosing—and at other times excluding—cultural references from across time and space to curate an arena celebrating the superiority of western European cultures.

Royal Caribbean diversified themed offerings across its rapidly growing fleet as the decade progressed, constructing a multitude of spaces onboard each of its ship referencing

⁵¹⁴ Maxtone-Graham, *Legend of the Seas*, 200-204.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

different cultures across time and space.⁵¹⁶ *Voyager of the Seas*, launched in November 1998, was the most cohesively themed of the company's newest ships. It, too, drew on Egyptian theming. Just as in previous ships containing Egyptian motifs, *Voyager* used a symbolic economy based in Eurocentric understandings of historical and contemporary Egypt, reproducing the homogenized and ahistorical themes found in previous ships. However, in contrast to those versions, *Voyager* marketed its conception with a degree of authenticity. Eric Mouzourides of Designteam, a company involved in designing interior spaces for *Voyager*, boldly promised that key themed elements finished "the passenger's transition to ancient Egypt." His statement suggested that Royal Caribbean was attempting to pass the simulation off as genuine. The promenade contained Cleopatra's needle, which Mouzourides described as "an ancient Egyptian Obelisk" which could "be seen rising through two decks, heralding the entrance to the Egyptian Lounge. Thereafter, passengers encountered "the 'Triad of Divinities', centurion gods of a by-gone Egyptian era, who flank the entrance to the Vestibule. Hieroglyphs embellish stone walls and portraits." The Vestibule contained so-called Egyptian artifacts such as a handcrafted Egyptian boat, but also more contemporary elements. Indeed, Mouzourides himself described the space as "a subtle mix of ancient Egypt and 1930's art deco...hieroglyphics adorn cornices and walls." The secondary lounge similarly contained references to both ancient Egypt alongside interpretations of the nation's modern culture. Seating therein was curved "serpent-like," referencing perhaps the prominent place of snake figures in ancient Egyptian mythology,⁵¹⁷ while an "awe-inspiring atmosphere" was created through the use of golf leaf ceilings, star-effect

⁵¹⁶ For instance, the cruise ships *Grandeur*, *Enchantment*, *Rhapsody*, and *Vision* contained Moorish, Indian, Egyptian, and Roman themed solariums respectively. Barb Kroll and Ron Kroll, "Age of the Mega-Ships: Floating Cities," *Leisureways* 17, no. 5 (1998): 10-15, ProQuest Databases.

⁵¹⁷ Garry J. Shaw discusses in greater depth the place of serpents in Egyptian mythology in his work, *The Egyptian Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014).

lighting, and Egyptian architectural elements. Those leaving the lounge would encounter two large sarcophagi which would leave “a lasting impression of the room,” but would walk into the adjacent Cigar Club, yet another space with an ancient Egyptian motif.⁵¹⁸

Voyager used cohesive cultural and geographic theming to entertain passengers just as its land-based counterparts did in Las Vegas. Yet, Royal Caribbean went a step further than many casino resorts by peddling its simulations as genuine. Although DesignTeam produced a series of pastiches, Mouzourides nevertheless argued, “as each artefact has an historic significance this adds an ‘educational’ aspect to the space.” In the designer’s view, Royal Caribbean’s clientele sought authenticity—they “want[ed] the experience to be as genuine as possible”—a challenge because these spaces were completely manmade. Even so, the genuine was not always entertaining; a standalone Egyptian artifact would not have captivated passengers who, for their part, wanted fantasy and spectacle. Thus, while the designer suggested that they aimed for authenticity, they installed fabrications around Egyptian artifacts to meet the standard for entertainment that passengers demanded on their cruises. DesignTeam was forthright about their strategy, noting that they achieved this balance by “placing authentic elements within these artificial environments, [constructing] an area with lasting interest and enjoyment.” In this way, a handful of artifacts served to legitimize Royal Caribbean’s power to invent cultural referents through the remainder of the room, producing an overall experience marketed as immersive—DesignTeam stated that the room supported “the passenger’s transition to ancient Egypt”—but that was a simulation of Ancient Egypt through and through.

⁵¹⁸ Eric Mouzourides, “Ancient Egypt Style on New-Vision Eagle,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Spring 1999): 137-39; Eric Mouzourides, “Waking the Spirits of Ancient Egypt,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Autumn 1999): 201-03.

Alongside balancing the supposed aim for education with entertainment, themed spaces also needed to be functional. It was the company's job to balance aesthetics and pragmatism. For instance, as part of the Egyptian theme, the show lounge contained stonework that was "embellished with hieroglyphics and Egyptian symbolism." Its stage curtain had to augment that theme but also served practical purposes during shows. In turn, it was constructed in ways that blurred boundaries between art and artefact.⁵¹⁹

In contrast to its predecessor *Legend of the Seas* which framed onboard encounters with Egypt as peripheral to representations of Europe and even through the eyes of European explorers, *Voyager* presented the same in a way that, on the surface, appeared to give due rigor to articulating the country and its history. However, though Mouzourides sought to install a cohesive atmosphere in *Voyager* that would educate passengers about Ancient Egypt through supposedly genuine representations of that time and space, this claim to authenticity was misleading because Eurocentric knowledges mediated these representations just as they had on *Legend*. Many of the spaces onboard *Voyager* fused representations of Egypt from completely different eras in decontextualized ways, rendering invisible through these historical gaps millennia of cultural evolution. "Ancient Egypt" spanned thousands of years and saw over that time vast changes in every facet of life. Instead of this complexity, *Voyager* depicted snapshots of Egypt at two temporal extremes—ancient and modern—as imagined by Royal Caribbean and its contractors through collections of symbols that rose to hegemony as representative of Egypt—things that tourists immediately recognized—because these essentialized forms drew on stereotypical understandings of the country's history constructed and recirculated through popular cultural imaginaries. Similarly, these so-called authentic spaces failed to convey regional

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

differentiation. Citizens across Ancient Egypt experienced daily life differently. Lives were shaped through cultural contact (i.e., trade), political upheaval, and other variables—diversities invisible in Royal Caribbean’s homogenized version of the country’s history. The goal for authenticity, if there ever was such a thing, could never become a reality because Royal Caribbean had sole authority in deciding how cultures would be iterated onboard. By installing cultural symbols that drew on Eurocentric articulations of Egypt, Royal Caribbean chose iterations that their clientele would easily recognize and relate to, maximizing the entertainment factor of an establishment that used imaginaries to merely touch on Ancient Egypt rather than articulating it with any meaningful depth.

As the century drew to a close, each of Carnival’s latest cruise ships contained a multitude of cohesively themed establishments from the world over. While the *Elation* boasted an overall Ancient Greek mythology motif,⁵²⁰ the ship also offered a suite of themed establishments. The casino was of a Moroccan motif. The Mikado show lounge promised passengers revues in Las Vegas style glitz in a setting that evoked Japan through décor,⁵²¹ mimicking the process by which Vegas casino resorts themed their interiors to resemble global localities. *Elation*’s piano bar was themed after New York City, even containing a model of the Statue of Liberty’s head and a scale Brooklyn Bridge model, while its promenade was “a cross between the Champs Elysées and Times Square, evidenced by “a series of bars, cafes, dance, and entertainment venues.⁵²² The Carnival *Triumph* similarly evoked “a global theme incorporating images and artistry from some of the world’s most famous cities,” as one writer noted, going on to describe the motifs of various public rooms. “Venezia Lounge...which pays homage to the

⁵²⁰ Klugman “Carnival Moves a Notch Upscale with the Elation.”

⁵²¹ “Elation Decks Out in Style,” *Travel Trade Gazette, U.K. and Ireland*, April 15, 1998, ProQuest Databases.

⁵²² Klugman “Carnival Moves a Notch Upscale with the Elation.”

timeless city of Venice, Italy; the Big Easy piano bar, reminiscent of New Orleans; the Rome Lounge, heralding the glory days of the Roman Empire; the Oxford Bar, patterned after an old English library; and the Club Rio show lounge, eliciting the excitement of Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.”⁵²³ As was true of its competitor, Carnival regurgitated symbols from touristic imaginaries about global destinations to theme its onboard spaces. By bringing essentializations to life right before the eyes of its passengers, Carnival reinforced the hegemony of these stereotypes, as well as its own authority to articulate international cultures through simulations. The world that Carnival produced on its ship was carefully curated to reflect popular understandings of major metropolises, thereby maximizing recognition and in turn passenger engagement with these spaces.

It is true that Carnival simply continued a trend already well under way with this rampant theming, albeit in a more aggressive fashion. However, the company’s latest ships also contained multiple dining establishments that, between the fare on offer and built environment, were cohesive in their cultural or geographic motifs. “Paris” was Carnival’s newest themed eatery drawing on regional flavors from the United States. It promised diners an array of Cajun-style offerings evocative of New Orleans cookery.⁵²⁴ *Triumph* featured a Viennese-style coffeehouse, using consumables and built environments in tandem to captivate passengers.⁵²⁵ Carnival’s own book on *Paradise* elaborated on the themed dining therein. Chinese cooks prepared Cantonese stir-fry live for passengers in a display that suggested the use of racialized labor to augment a cultural theme, while its sushi bar featured “a wide variety of Japanese delicacies.” Café Ile de France was marketed as a space evoking “the ambience and cosmopolitan appeal of typical

⁵²³ “Carnival Cruise Lines Takes Delivery of Carnival Triumph,” *PR Newswire*, July 13, 1999, ProQuest Databases.

⁵²⁴ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Paradise* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: PPI Group, 1998), 142.

⁵²⁵ Edwin McDowell, “Don’t Dress For Dinner,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1999, ProQuest Databases.

European cafes” in both built space and consumption. Patrons therein enjoyed food and drink common in cafes across western Europe: pastries, espresso, cappuccino, lattes, and mochas as well as cognacs and herbal grappas.⁵²⁶ Carnival even produced a cookbook with recipes for some of its these dishes, “influenced by different regions around the world,” for passengers to try after their cruises.⁵²⁷

The construction of cultural consumption through dining in a permanent capacity showed how effectively food could be used to add another dimension to marketing encounters with global cultures. Yet food was also another avenue through which mass-market cruise lines simulated interactions between cultures. This was true even of the fleeting themed dinners of decades past, wherein cruise lines selectively displayed and masked aspects supposedly indicative of the cultures represented according to the clientele’s taste. However, permanent onboard eateries imagined with specific themes allowed companies to build restaurants from the ground up with motifs ingrained into the fabric of these spaces, resulting in products with a stronger and more convincingly marketable claim to cultural authenticity. This process was not unique to Carnival, or even mass-market lines. By now, restaurants themed along essentialist lines had become a notable trend across the United States. More innovative, however, was the inclusion of multiple permanently themed eateries in a single space. This, combined with the fact that cruise ships are themselves perpetually mobile, set the mass-market cruise industry up to represent its ships as blank canvases through which passengers could experience an equally diverse range of new worlds onboard a single voyage, even if those encounters were ultimately simulations.

⁵²⁶ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Paradise*, 142-44.

⁵²⁷ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Carnival Creations: Cruise Cuisine from Carnival Chefs* (Minneapolis, MN: Tad Ware & Company, 1996), 5.

Themed dining helped construct cruise ships as destinations in and of themselves. These establishments used easily recognizable but culturally palatable symbols to engage passengers in spectacle, convincing them to stay onboard even as the ship was docked. Cruise lines used themed eateries to influence where passengers spent their time, and thus their money. Restaurants contributed to a broader range of themed establishments that the mass-market cruise industry built in growing numbers during the 1990s to appropriate dollars that passengers would otherwise have spent at ports, especially as companies increasingly attached surcharges to these experiences. Carnival's emphasis on this cohesive variety of culturally themed dining in the late 1990s foreshadowed the importance that mass-market lines would place on dining experiences as cultural simulation as the industry rang in a new millennium, when companies would use food, labor, and built environment in tandem to mediate their iterations of, and passenger receptions to, global cultures, in support of the company's bottom line.

Shaping Passenger-Local Encounters at Cruise Ports

Though mass-market cruise lines produced an array of permanently themed spaces onboard their ships during the 1990s, they could not do the same with ports of call. By now shore excursions with cultural motifs were popularly offered alongside the standard repertoire of beach and nature trips. Adam Goldstein, then Senior Vice President of Marketing and Sales for Royal Caribbean, even stated that the company looked for "ports that can add to our product in terms of cultural flavor" in deciding on new destinations.⁵²⁸ Evidently, emphasizing the cultures of host societies was profitable. Despite this, cruise lines could not install cohesively themed spaces at

⁵²⁸ Adam Goldstein, "Balanced Itinerary Development," *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (1998): 219-20, ProQuest Databases.

ports of call as easily as they did on ships because companies did not often have complete economic control over the areas in question. Ships merely visited port complexes that, while constructed for their cruise passengers, were ultimately located in sovereign nations (or in the territories thereof). Port complexes were therefore subject to the control of any applicable local laws. While cruise lines had limited physical control of those spaces, they nevertheless shaped how their passengers perceived local inhabitants by leveraging their economic and political power to encourage the emergence of more culturally palatable guest-host interactions, and by discursively representing host societies for passengers in equally sanitized ways before guests ever debarked the ship.

The mass-market cruise industry's first line of defense in support of its own profitability, as argued in the previous section, was to discourage passengers from ever leaving the ship. Themed onboard venues were a means to capture more tourist dollars,⁵²⁹ but these establishments were used in tandem with other incentives to keep passengers onboard, reducing the already limited economic benefits that cruising entailed for countries on the itinerary.⁵³⁰ As ships grew larger and allowed for more retail space, they increasingly competed with ports for passenger shopping dollars. Carnival, for instance, handed out fliers to its Nassau passengers in 1993 that encouraged them to "Shop on Board—Where value is always on sail." The document enticed passengers to buy their liquor onboard, stating that Carnival's duty-free shops offer bottles with 33 percent more liquor than those available in Nassau.⁵³¹ Royal Caribbean similarly

⁵²⁹ Weaver, "Spaces of Containment and Revenue Capture."

⁵³⁰ Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 127.

⁵³¹ Charles Lunan, "Nassau Reconsiders Relationship with Cruises," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 19, 1993, ProQuest Databases.

enticed passengers to spend their money onboard, stating in an advertisement for *Legend of the Seas* that their “Onboard Shops are Legends, too.” The cruise line elaborated:

“We designed Legend of the Seas’ Boutiques of Centrum to be the most complete, most comfortable onboard shopping experience ever. Our collection of elegant shops brings you the very best of the best, including fine jewelry, international crystal & china, designer cruise fashions, Royal Caribbean souvenirs & gifts and a wide selection of spirits...all at great Duty-Free prices! And to make purchasing those onboard selections convenient, simply charge them to your Super Charge account.”⁵³²

A photograph featuring perfume from the French designer Cartier neatly tied Royal Caribbean’s message together: shopping onboard was a luxurious and convenient experience. While the Caribbean was previously known for its duty-free shopping bargains, now passengers would not even have to leave the ship for these. They even promised “The Finest Quality Blue Topaz, Amethyst, Citrine” that they claimed was exclusively available “in Shops on Board,” further solidifying the value proposition for passengers choosing to stay and shop onboard.⁵³³

Cruise lines actively competed for dollars that passengers would have otherwise spent at ports, and the practice certainly impacted passenger spending. Elsa Brenner, writing for the *New York Times*, took a Royal Caribbean cruise onboard the *Sovereign of the Seas* to Grand Cayman, Montego Bay, and Nassau in 1994, noting that there were duty-free shops onboard with items “on sale at prices similar to those on shore.”⁵³⁴ Cruise lines had opportunities to convince passengers to spend their dollars onboard before local inhabitants even had a chance to compete for their patronage. James Hepple, Deputy Director General of Tourism for the Bahamas, even

⁵³² Maxtone-Graham, *Legend of the Seas*.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ “Checking into a Floating Hotel,” February 6, 1994, ProQuest Databases.

asserted that while the island provides “a beautiful setting...it’s the ships that are keeping the money.”⁵³⁵ Other officials echoed that sentiment in asserting that, while passenger spending at ports was declining, onboard spending was increasing significantly, attesting to the impact of cruise lines’ efforts to keep passengers onboard to control spending,⁵³⁶

Despite the cruise industry’s best efforts to keep passengers onboard, many continued to tour ports. Yet, cruise lines also found ways to reap profits from debarking passengers because mass-market cruise lines wielded considerable economic influence in the Caribbean, which allowed them some autonomy—both formal and informal—in their operations within and outside of port complexes. Much of this influence stemmed from a growing regional dependence on cruise dollars to support local economies. As Caribbean economies shifted from producer-to-service-oriented—coinciding with the arrival of cruise ships as agents of mass tourism—local entrepreneurs came to rely on passenger spending on food, beverages, tours, and entertainment to make a living. The cruise industry generated for the Caribbean USD \$4 billion in spending by cruise lines, passengers, and crew in 1995, income on which 82,000 local inhabitants depended.⁵³⁷ By that same token, ‘head taxes’ levied by Caribbean governments, meager as they often were, contributed millions annually to the coffers of administrators and were used to construct or renovate cruise infrastructure as well as to mitigate environmental damage caused

⁵³⁵ Jonathan Dahl, “Travel: Why Go Ashore When the Ship’s so Nice?.” *Wall Street Journal*, August 11, 1995, ProQuest Databases.

⁵³⁶ “Won’t Be Off for Many a Day,” *Economist* 328, no. 7818 (1993).

⁵³⁷ “CARIBBEAN: Tourist Industry,” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, April 23, 1996, ProQuest Databases. Yet, cruise line spending in the Caribbean remained relatively minimal. In 1993, FCCA member lines spent just over USD \$50 million on Caribbean supplies. \$30 million, or 59 percent, went to technical inputs: petroleum, parts, and chemicals; another \$7.1 million (14 percent) was spent on handling services (i.e., warehousing); \$13.8 million was spent on food and drinks. As a result, most supplies were obtained from outside the Caribbean region. Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 162.

by the industry.⁵³⁸ Cruise lines represented increasingly sizeable sources of income as their fleets and ship sizes grew ever larger, giving these companies power in Caribbean economies. Countries found themselves in a perpetual state of constructing new infrastructure and renovating existing facilities to accommodate ships and passengers alike. In addition to the tourism dollars they represented, mass-market lines also contributed large sums of money to infrastructural developments geared towards convenience for the cruise industry and its passengers. Carnival chairman Micky Arison stated that the company spent between USD \$10 million and \$25 million on each such port development project.⁵³⁹ Carnival's developments, alongside the many other investments carried out in the Caribbean by agents of the Global North and for the benefit of tourists, were succinct examples of Appadurai's financescapes.⁵⁴⁰ No longer just spaces for cruise ships to dock, ports became entire complexes with restaurants, bars, entertainment, and transportation hubs, engineered by foreign actors to encourage consumption. These hubs of global capital provided enough sense of difference to reassure vacationing Americans that they were far from home for leisurely purposes.

At the same time, these sanitized spaces, most of which were by now gated off to the general public, acted as enclaves to present a safe front, protecting those within its borders from cultural representations that could be perceived as unpalatable while allowing western companies to capture passenger spending before most local operators had a chance to compete for tourist dollars. Across the Caribbean, passengers debarked in complexes purpose-built for their cultural sensibilities, complete with duty-free shopping complexes, pizzerias, casinos, and such familiar

⁵³⁸ "Operators Accept Tax Imposed by Islands," *Travel Trade Gazette, U.K. and Ireland*, September 16, 1998, ProQuest Databases.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy."

transnational chains as Colombia Emeralds, Gucci, and Little Switzerland. Islands competed with one another to build the most attractive shopping experiences.⁵⁴¹ Mass-market cruise lines and other western firms invested millions into replicating enclaves across the region. Tourists shopped at transnational chains sprinkled with some referents to locality, such as island-specific charm bracelets and craft bazaars. Overall, however, cruise port enclaves served to homogenize the Caribbean because they simply used locality as a backdrop for passengers to consume luxury goods in ways that disproportionately profited foreign companies. Perhaps the strongest example of this practice is Diamonds International, which was commonly featured in mass-market cruise industry advertising literature by the late 1990s. The transnational retailer used its financial capital to open locations across the Caribbean and advertise its brand through cruise line commemorative books, onboard port lectures, shore excursion desk promotional material, and brochures handed to debarking passengers. Owing to the ubiquity of its brand name as promoted by the cruise industry, Diamonds International—and its sister company Tanzanite International—became synonymous with duty-free jewelry bargains at Caribbean ports. While immensely popular, its profits did not offer significant benefits to the Caribbean nations in which it did business because it was based in New York City. Thus, Diamonds International appropriated dollars which passengers may have spent at local jewelry businesses, harming Caribbean entrepreneurs while funneling those funds out of the region.

⁵⁴¹ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 156-57. However, because luxury chain stores were built for passengers and largely unaffordable for local inhabitants, or simply inaccessibly located in gated port enclaves, transnational retailers relied on the cruise industry for profits. When mass-market cruise lines suffered financial losses, corrective actions frequently derailed the profitability of these luxury shops. For example, as climate change made the Caribbean more susceptible to catastrophic environmental disasters, the region experienced particularly destructive hurricane seasons in the early 2000s. The subsequent reduction in cruise passengers resulted in disappointing profits for Duty Free Caribbean Holdings Ltd. (DFCH), a major duty-free retailer in the Southern Caribbean. At the same time, rising fuel costs prompted cruise lines to choose itineraries with shorter sailing distances, avoiding the southern islands and further reducing DFCH's profits. Cave Shepherd & Co Ltd, "Annual Report 2006," ABI/INFORM Databases.

With economic sway came political influence. As administrators across the Caribbean debated how to allocate funding, development for the cruise industry often emerged as a strong candidate. In a show of their political strength, mass-market cruise lines often negotiated beneficial deals for themselves by exploiting the region's economic dependence on cruising to pit countries against one another.⁵⁴² Head taxes on cruise passengers were the subject of heated debates that sparked confrontations between cruise ships and Caribbean governments, but also between countries themselves. Islands were forced to constantly weigh the benefits of raising head taxes in support of local economies or to fund cruise infrastructure upgrades against the possible negative outcomes of such actions. Most significantly, a country choosing to raise its head tax reduced its competitiveness against neighboring islands. Without infrastructure and amenities to support those higher prices, cruise lines have allegedly threatened to switch itineraries to islands with cheaper head taxes.⁵⁴³ However, countries with such amenities were in a superior bargaining position for it meant material comforts that middle-class Americans were accustomed to in daily life. For instance, when over 30 Caribbean countries proposed raising the passenger head tax from USD \$2 - \$3 to \$10 to improve port facilities and to construct retail spaces for cruise tourists, Luther Miller, a Caribbean Tourism Organization spokesman, advocated that people often took infrastructural upgrades for granted, but money was needed to undertake these operations.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Jeff Wise, "How Cruise Ships Shortchange the Caribbean," *Fortune* 139, no. 6 (1999): 44-45; Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 159-61. Actors from the world over benefited from investing in Caribbean port development. Pattullo provided some examples of this, which included a cruise ship berth development in St. Vincent funded by the Kuwait Fund alongside the European Investment Bank, 164.

⁵⁴³ McDowell, "Spicier Old Stops;" David Renwick, "Cruise - Carnival Boycotts Granada [sic] in Levy Row," *Lloyd's List*, November 15, 1999, Factiva Databases.

⁵⁴⁴ Jonathan Dahl, "Tracking Travel," *Wall Street Journal*, January 8, 1993, ProQuest Databases.

Dependence on the cruise industry influenced local laws, increasing the control that cruise lines wielded to advance more sanitized cultural interactions between hosts and guests. Countries frequently tightened laws in response to passenger complaints about crime and hassling locals. Criminal activity and aggressive sales tactics reduced the possibility that passengers would return to the ports in question, though such issues also impacted passenger spending at ports—an important means by which local government officials and inhabitants alike profited from the cruise industry. During the mid-1990s, for example, Jamaica and the Bahamas experienced a decline in cruise passengers owing to increasing crime rates.⁵⁴⁵

For the increasingly numerous countries that relied on cruising, protecting their investments in the industry was crucial. Failure to do so would result in passenger dissatisfaction, and in turn cruise lines choosing a neighboring port for subsequent itineraries. Thus, in response to passenger complaints, countries enacted stricter laws to reduce unpalatable interactions and to present a safer front.⁵⁴⁶ The Virgin Islands government reinforced safety in Charlotte Amalie, a popular cruise port, hiring more police officers and raising penalties on some crimes.⁵⁴⁷ Similarly, Jamaican officials responded swiftly to cruise passenger harassment in Montego Bay during the 1996-1997 season which resulted in four cruise lines threatening to discontinue calling at that port. Jamaican Prime Minister Percival J. Patterson described the harassment of cruise passengers as a major issue because it could impact profitability for the tourism industry. In response, fines were increased 100-fold for the harassment of tourists. First-time offense fines

⁵⁴⁵ “Caribbean: Tourist Industry,” *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, April 23, 1996, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁴⁶ Norman Bodden, Cayman’s Executive Council Member for Tourism, Aviation, and Trade stated that they were strict about the hassling of tourists in general. Laws were enacted a long time ago, Bodden stated, to prevent this, and those laws were enforced. Georoe MacFarlane, “A Day on the Cays Means No-Hassle [sic] Sunning or Shopping,” *Globe and Mail*, December 12, 1992, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁴⁷ Larry Rohter, “Correspondent’s Report: U.S. Virgin Islands Tighten Tourist Security,” *New York Times*, June 5, 1994, ProQuest Databases.

were raised from \$27 to \$2,700; repeat offender were previously fined \$41, now \$4,100. Karen Ford-Warner, Director General of the Office of the Prime Minister for Tourism, stated that a cruise director told them that there was already a positive impact by 1998.⁵⁴⁸ Jamaica also deployed soldiers in some tourist areas to deter theft and harassment; many soldiers were plain clothes, augmenting police protection earlier announced by Minister of Tourism Francis Tulloch. The presence of authorities was meant to be unobtrusive, but also obvious to local hawkers according to Spokesman Peter Martin of the Jamaica Tourist Board in New York.⁵⁴⁹

The cruise industry's impact on the legal affairs was never more evident than in 1998, when Carnival promised 300,000 visitors per annum to Jamaica over a 5-year period. That promise was contingent, however, on Jamaica successfully controlling harassment and maintaining clean resort spaces, according to Minister Tulloch.⁵⁵⁰ Receiving increased business from the cruise industry became tied directly to the enforcement of laws targeting visitor harassment, contributing to a passenger experience that was sanitized of perceived negative aspects. The cruise port "safety zones" that Jamaican administrators promised to install as a way to secure future business from mass-market lines exemplified the use of local dollars to appease the cruise industry—development not for inhabitants who were barred from these spaces by metal gates and armed guards, but sanitized playgrounds for middle-class Americans.⁵⁵¹ The cruise industry, in these ways, used their economic and political influence to transform Caribbean spaces before tourists even booked their cruises, shaping through this mediating

⁵⁴⁸ Edwin McDowell, "Correspondent's Report: Jamaica Sweeps Off Its Welcome Mat," *New York Times*, June 21, 1998, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁴⁹ "Jamaica Takes Steps to Protect Tourists," *New York Times*, March 21, 1999, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁵⁰ "Special Focus on Jamaica," *Caribbean Update* 14, no. 9 (1998), ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁵¹ "Operators Accept Tax Imposed by Islands."

process how passengers experienced local cultures even in spaces outside of the cruise industry's physical control.

This process of cultural production through mediation had important economic dimensions.⁵⁵² Cruise lines that successfully performed their role as mediators by balancing exoticism with familiarity and perceived safety saw substantial profits from the process. In response to violent crimes in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, a popular cruise port, during the 1990s, Fran Secik, Director of Public Relations for Kloster Cruises Ltd., parent company of Norwegian Cruise Line, advised that passengers “use common sense and not go off the beaten path.” In the name of safety, Secik advised passengers to take advantage of the shore excursions sold by cruise lines in partnership with local operators, instead of purchasing such trips directly from locals.⁵⁵³ These partners were local tour companies under contract with mass-market lines to service passengers who purchased shore excursions onboard. They included United Tour Guides, which had “serv[ed] the cruise line industry” with tours of San Juan since the late 1970s, as well as Dutch Tour Enterprises N.V., which “organized and conducted tours for cruise ships” in St. Maarten since the mid-1980s.⁵⁵⁴ As cruise lines received substantial cuts from shore excursions sold onboard in a process that appropriated dollars from local entrepreneurs, the industry had significant economic incentive to recommend these to their passengers.

⁵⁵² While a substantial discussion of the economic implications of Caribbean cruising falls outside of this chapter's scope, a multitude of local actors across the region—entrepreneurs, businesses, hoteliers, taxi drivers, environmentalists, and administrative officials—came out for or against cruising during the 1990s. In many instances, debates about cruising resulted in clashes between local inhabitants who had varying stakes in the industry. The cruise industry differentially impacted local economies and, in turn, responses to its role therein. Any such analysis must take an approach that is appropriately sensitive to these differences. Polly Pattullo's chapter on Caribbean cruising in *Last Resorts* is a useful starting point, as is the work of Ross A. Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*.

⁵⁵³ Rohter, “Correspondent's Report.”

⁵⁵⁴ Maxtone-Graham, *Legend of the Seas*.

Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian similarly used onboard lectures about ports of call to control passenger movements and perceptions of local cultures. During these events, companies told passengers where to eat, shop, and tour—and, equally importantly, where not to go for their safety—allowing cruise lines to retain some of their mediating power over passenger experiences even as those tourists explored spaces well outside of the industry’s complete physical control. This influence translated into economic benefits for companies, as well as the other foreign companies (many of which were transnational chains) operating in port complexes. It has been alleged that multiple cruise lines operating in the Caribbean accepted money from local shops and entertainment venues in the form of advertising revenues to suggest those businesses to passengers. Some cruise lines have rebutted that such exchanges were legitimate ways of doing business—rebuttals that, in any instance, confirm these allegations.⁵⁵⁵ Cruise companies routinely used issues around passenger comfort and safety for economic gain. This often took the form of cruise lines encouraging tourists to shop in port enclaves where businesses paid advertising fees to lines. Mass-market lines portrayed Caribbean ports with recent instances of crime as socially and culturally uncivilized compared to the Global North, but not to such an extent that they could not be toured safely with the assistance of those corporations.

⁵⁵⁵ Dahl, “Travel;” Lunan, “Nassau Reconsiders Relationship with Cruises.” For instance, many cruise lines handed out maps to passengers doubling as advertisements for so-called suggested, fee-paying shops, Patricia Bates, “Caymans move to Caribbean Rhythm, *Billboard* 108, no. 43 (1996): 56. By some accounts, fees were an upwards of USD \$100,000, Dahl, “Travel.” Travel writer Kay Showker spoke extensively to those practices noting that port talks have become “sales pitches for certain products and stores with which they have exclusive promotional agreements and in which the cruise lines take commissions or are paid directly by the stores.” She noted that passengers “receive a map of the port with “recommended” shops [that have] paid the cruise line for being promoted in port talks and advertising in the ship’s magazine that might appear in your cabin.” She elaborated that “sometimes cruise directors receive commission from local stores, even though they deny it. Hence, their vested interest could color their presentation and recommendations.” *Caribbean Ports of Call: A Guide for Today’s Cruise Passengers* (Old Saybrook, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1998), 9-10.

In addition to their influence on Caribbean port cities, cruise lines were able to exert a more comprehensive influence on enclaves under their private control. As mass-market cruise companies consolidated their control of private enclaves through increasing economic investments on infrastructural upgrades, the unique ownership structures of private ports lent cruise lines almost unilateral power to discursively construct those spaces. Royal Caribbean used its authority as cultural mediator to distance Labadee from Haiti, where the port was located. Catherine Orenstein, a journalist who formerly investigated human rights crimes for the United Nations and Haitian government, analyzed Royal Caribbean's advertisement of Labadee in 1996 and suggested that the cruise line deliberately deemphasized that it was located in mainland Haiti. Royal Caribbean's flier, Orenstein alleged, stated they were going to Labadee, and noted that the destination was in Haiti in "small letters buried in the flier's text." Further, she claimed that a Royal Caribbean reservation agent told tourists that the ships sailed to "our private island." When pressed, the agent added that "the island" is located "off the coast of Hispaniola." "Haiti was a hard destination to market to tourists owing to the media attention it gained for violence and unrest, motivation for Royal Caribbean to mask Labadee's exact location."⁵⁵⁶ The island's built environment supported Orenstein's allegations. She tells us of the thick jungle surrounding the beach, and the massive iron wall with armed guards beyond it. Many Royal Caribbean passengers did not know that over the iron wall of Labadee there were shanty towns and poverty, as well as sweatshops not far away—knowledge that would have been detrimental to the guest's ability to distance themselves from reality. A Royal Caribbean staff member even stated that

⁵⁵⁶ Orenstein, *Fantasy Island*.

Labadee was “cheap, pretty, and there’s minimal contact...Contact is disturbing to the passengers.”⁵⁵⁷

Locals had mixed opinions about Royal Caribbean’s private resort. There were always adamant voices that called on cruise lines to contribute more to the Haitian economy. Labadee was again the location of clashes between inhabitants and the cruise industry in April 1997, when Royal Caribbean’s economic contributions to Haiti were called into question. Food and drinks, even tropical fruits that were possible to acquire from neighboring islands, were instead imported from Miami. The cruise line did allow artisans to sell products near the beach, but most tourist dollars continued to be spent onboard—increasingly in onboard shops that sold Caribbean crafts and attire in competition with local inhabitants. Nevertheless, the limited economic opportunity that Royal Caribbean provided continued to be a powerful motivator for other locals. The prospect of entertaining more ships was enough to deescalate even territorial disputes. For instance, some Haitian fisherman alleged that the fish disappeared when Royal Caribbean built up its private resort of Labadee, nor could they fish on that beach anymore. One of the fishermen went too close to the beach, and a guard handcuffed him. The fisherman criticized the cruise line, but when asked what change they wanted to see, the answer was more ships.⁵⁵⁸

Royal Caribbean’s cultural sanitization of Labadee was an issue for some Haitian residents. Jacques Bartoli, a crafts and art collector from Port-au-Prince, was ecstatic when Royal Caribbean returned owing to the possibility for increased sales, but at the same time believed that the company needed to more emphatically showcase Haitian crafts. Suzanne Seitz, a hotelier and an American who arrived in Haiti in the 1960s, echoed promoting Haitian cultures, stating that

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

the country would have to call Royal Caribbean's bluff if they wanted change and to "celebrate...cultural heritage rather than disguising it." Head of Haiti's Platform for Alternative Economic Development Camille Chalmers proclaimed that he viewed modern tourists as ambassadors for cultural imperialism, arguing that Haitian culture and history should be the selling point of tourism. "We have a unique history—the site of a slave revolution that defeated Napoleon's army and became the globe's first black republic," he asserted.⁵⁵⁹ Even given the economic opportunity that Royal Caribbean represented, there were evidently locals who desired an increased stake in how their cultures were depicted for tourists—agency that the cruise line eschewed with its artificial theming of Labadee.

Royal Caribbean was surely not alone in replacing traditional cruise ports on the itinerary with privately owned spaces. Norwegian Cruise Line even advertised its Great Stirrup Cay as "Pleasure Island" for a few years, the designation alone suggesting escapism to a self-contained, hedonistic environment. There were ambitious plans to theme Pleasure Island. Company papers reveal using regional histories to advance a rustic motif. Drawing on the colonial era, plans proposed constructing houses modeled on the dwellings of early Caribbean sugar planters. These spaces would offer lectures on Caribbean history. There would also be pirate-themed places of drink, like Pillage and Plunder, Brigadoon, and Morgan's Raid, the latter referencing the historical buccaneer. Non-alcoholic drinks included the Anne Bonny, "for the fierce female pirate of the 18th century," and Planter's Punch. To advance this pirate theme, the proposal seemed to suggest inventing a connection between contemporary island residents and their

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

supposedly buccaneer ancestors from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵⁶⁰ Pleasure Island itself was in the Bahamas, but one walking into such a heavily Disneyized space would never know it. Making no connection to the nation state, these plans instead suggested the construction of a theme park that essentialized centuries of Caribbean histories, erasing how countries differentially encountered European colonialism and post-colonial identity formation.

Ultimately, however, NCL took a different approach. Sara Clemens, Norwegian Cruise Line's corporate and incentive sales coordinator, described Pleasure Island as "very pristine... There are no commercial buildings, and only a few of our staff live there,"⁵⁶¹ suggesting an anachronistic enclave all but designed to help passengers distance themselves from the rhythms of capitalism. Norwegian Cruise Line hired CKS Partners—a marketing corporation based in the Bay Area—to redesign its private island, once again renamed to Great Stirrup Cay, in support of its more broadly anachronistic vision. Dana Shields, CKS's Senior Art Director, was aiming for "a Gilligan's Island" appearance, "Kind of a shipwrecked feel, making use of whatever might be available on the island." Roofs were replaced using "thatch made of palm fronds" while surfboards were used to make hand-painted signs. Coconut shells were used to create light fixtures. An ocean theme was accomplished through the use of old fishing boats and ocean-faring equipment as decorative art. Shields stated that they took care not to make these things look overly new or shiny, suggesting that the goal was to maintain rusticity. Great Stirrup Cay was to contrast the artificiality of the theme parks against which NCL competed for its clientele. "We didn't want it to look like Disneyland," said Shields. "We wanted things to look

⁵⁶⁰ These plans were proposed by the marketing agency McKinney & Silver. "Pleasure Island: A Private Port of Call for the Pleasure Ships of NCL," May 27, 1987, Box 17, Folder, "Norwegian Cruise Lines Brand Review 1989," Charles McKinney Papers 1952-1999 and Undated, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁵⁶¹ Regina Eisman, "Private Isles," *Incentives* 167, no. 6 (1993): 127.

slightly rusted and weathered, like they had been through a few hurricanes.” Buildings were repainted in “festive northern Caribbean-style pastels” of pink, aqua, tangerine, and yellow⁵⁶² to further support the theme.

The arrangement of built space in Great Stirrup Cay is an example of MacCannell’s staged authenticity.⁵⁶³ There was nothing inherently rustic about coconuts, old fishing boats, surfboards. These associations were built through the representation of these objects in the popular media. For example, this construction process was at the fore of Corona commercials in which surfers on isolated, palm tree laden beaches, drank the Mexican beer,⁵⁶⁴ thereby associating surfing with rusticity and allowing the surfboards on Great Stirrup Cay to serve as a potent symbol of respite from modernity.⁵⁶⁵ For decades, mass-market lines had staged authenticity in these ways onboard their ships. However, the same was not previously possible to such an extent at ports owing to a lack of physical control over those spaces. As companies gained the ability to purchase entire Caribbean islands, they consolidated their control and were in a position to theme these spaces to much the same extent as they had done onboard. Yet, instead of using their power to construct cohesively themed cultural encounters as was

⁵⁶² John Flinn, “Marketing Firm Helps Package Island,” *Journal Record*, February 17, 1995, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁶³ MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity.”

⁵⁶⁴ Pilcher, *Planet Taco*, 178-180. This is but a single example, though an important one, showing how everyday objects became anachronistic. Many of these associations themselves drew on symbolic associations constructed well before. Observations in colonial travel writing were responsible for designating certain objects as premodern (i.e., thatched roofs or exotic fauna). Such associations transformed over time and were adapted by different actors to meet their own goals—in this case by a cruise line attempting to mark the space as a place for escapism.

⁵⁶⁵ As Scott Laderman has argued, far from being apolitical, surfing has long been used for political purposes, including to perform resistance against capitalist modernity. This connection became pronounced in the late twentieth century when air travel, increasingly within the reach of the masses, allowed surfers from the Global West to compete amongst one another in search of the most pristine beaches in the world, often taking them to the Global East. Modern surf culture romanticized the so called Third World in essentialized ways by portraying it as a homogenous region with untouched beaches and local inhabitants happy to be distanced from industrialized modernity. These associations were reinforced after the globalization of surfing when an influx of corporations commercialized the sport’s association with anachronism. *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

increasingly the trend on ships, cruise lines produced geographically ambiguous spaces that relied on homogenized symbolic representations to offer passengers anachronistic playgrounds. Just as Royal Caribbean passengers remained oblivious to Labadee's location in Haiti, the fact that Great Stirrup Cay was in the Bahamas was lost upon Norwegian Cruise Line guests,⁵⁶⁶ and it was precisely this deterritorialization that augmented one's reprieve from the realities of daily life.

Cruise lines promised their passengers encounters with new worlds, even if those arenas were simulated and served only to increase the cruise industry's profits. While private enclaves were a larger upfront financial investment, in the long-term they saved companies some of the head taxes that would have been paid to local administrators. Furthermore, as the concessions in these spaces were owned by the cruise line—and often staffed by its own employees—companies retained control over passenger spending. Whether onboard or at port, the mass-market cruise industry found ways to reap passenger dollars under the guise of cultural encounters.

⁵⁶⁶ Robert E. Wood, "Cruise Tourism: A Paradigmatic Case of Globalization?," in *Cruise Ship Tourism*, edited by Ross K. Dowling (Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2006), 399.

CHAPTER V: SIMULATING THE WORLD ON A SHIP: CULTURAL THEMING ON MASS-MARKET CRUISES, 2001 – PRESENT

As the United States welcomed a new millennium, interest in cruising continued to grow among Americans, seemingly undeterred even by the events of 9/11. Compared to the 1.4 million North Americans who cruised in 1980, 7.9 million did so in 2003. Nearly 100 million enjoyed a cruise over those two decades, as the industry enjoyed a healthy 8 percent annual growth rate.⁵⁶⁷ In 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic curbed growth, the annual number of North American cruise passengers had reached over 14 million, 92% of whom were from the United States.⁵⁶⁸ Emerging destinations in Asia and Australia commanded attention, but the Caribbean continued to maintain its regional dominance over the North American cruise market, consistently attracting over a third of global cruise traffic,⁵⁶⁹ translating to 10.5 million passengers in 2019.⁵⁷⁰ Through these years, the average cruise passenger has become younger,⁵⁷¹ while cruising continued to become more accessible to those in lower income brackets. Fully 58 percent of passengers sailing with Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) member lines in 2014 had household incomes less than USD \$100,000.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁷ Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association, “Cruise Industry Overview—2004,” <http://www.fcca.com/downloads/2004-overview.pdf>; Allan R. Miller and William E. Grazer, “Cruising and the North American Market, in *Cruise Ship Tourism*, edited by Ross K. Dowling (Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2006), 74-75.

⁵⁶⁸ Cruise Lines International Association, “2020 North American Market Report,” <https://cruising.org/-/media/research-updates/research/clia-one-resource-passenger-reports/clia-north-america-passenger-report-2020.ashx>.

⁵⁶⁹ Ross K. Dowling and Clare Weeden, “The World of Cruising,” in *Cruise Ship Tourism*, edited by Ross K. Dowling and Clare Weeden (Boston: CABI, 2017), 1-41. In fact, Mediterranean destinations lost some of their ships after 9/11, when destabilization in the region resulted in vessels redeployed to the Caribbean. Miller, “Cruising and the North American Market,” 75.

⁵⁷⁰ “2020 North America Market Report.”

⁵⁷¹ Dowling, “The World of Cruising.”

⁵⁷² In 2014, North American cruise passengers had an average annual household income of USD \$114,000, though this was heavily skewed owing to the inclusion of luxury lines in the analysis. Cruise Lines International Association, “2014 North American Cruise Market Profile,” January 2015, <https://cruising.org/-/media/research-updates/research/consumer-research/2014-north-american-cruise-market-profile.pdf>.

This chapter argues that Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian made concentrated efforts to market to those seeking culture in the twenty-first century. The first part of this chapter studies onboard cultural experiences, which built on the dedicated culturally and geographically themed establishments introduced in the previous decade. The expansion of these offerings resulted in a growing number of spaces that the mass-market cruise industry marketed as an avenue towards cultural immersion. Analyzing the industry's marketing of themed onboard venues reveals that companies hoped these establishments would allow passengers to metaphorically tour different spaces and bygone eras. Yet, as customers encountered countless faux cultures in safety, convenience, and comfort, themed venues worked in tandem with complementary revenue capture methods to persuade passengers to stay onboard and spend their money in spaces controlled by the cruise line rather than at Caribbean ports. These revenue capture strategies included extra-tariff restaurants, onboard amenities such as spas, equipment rentals for sporting activities like rollerblading, and alcohol. These extra-tariff products meant that mass-market lines had significant financial incentive to keep passengers onboard.

Despite mass-market lines using themed venues to keep passengers onboard, many debarked anyway—usually at 2 to 3 ports over a 6 to 8 day cruise, the most common length. For this reason, portside experiences were just as important as their onboard counterparts to the cultural experience of cruising, and to the profit strategies of cruise lines. The second part of this chapter examines the mechanisms by which mass-market lines mediated culture and controlled passenger spending at ports.

Mass-market lines mediated encounters between passengers and Caribbean inhabitants in support of their own profit strategies in numerous ways. Firstly, cruise lines shaped consumer views about Caribbean cultures through advertisements that passengers encountered before they

boarded the ship. The second method was through literature and events about ports in which cruise lines strategically advanced views about local cultures that supported corporate profits, for example by discouraging passengers from venturing past the gated walls on their own. Thirdly, cruise lines joined a repertoire of other western and transnational actors in shaping port enclave construction, both directly through funding and subversively using economic and political influence. While cultural difference was articulated in these spaces, the homogenizing presence of transnational chains largely overshadowed local representations. Finally, mass-market lines formed economically and culturally unequal partnerships with Caribbean tour guides to offer authorized shore excursions for passengers wishing to venture past port enclaves.

Throughout the duration of the cruise, mass-market lines used the promise of cultural engagement to control how passengers spent their money. In a globalized era when genuine cultural interactions were difficult to differentiate from mediated or simulated ones, cruise companies seamlessly leveraged this ambiguity to support their appropriation of touristic spending, a process that further reduced the benefits that cruise tourism held for the Caribbean. For the mass-market cruise industry, Caribbean cultures were not to be meaningfully interacted with and respected. Instead, cruise lines treated the histories and traditions of this region shaped through European colonial exploitation as commodifiable resources to be leveraged strategically in support of corporate profits.

The Twenty-First Century Cruise Passenger

Cruise vacations, just as any consumer product, were marketed and produced in ways that responded to the demands of their target clientele. It is difficult to generalize the demands of millions, for the twenty-first century target market was more diverse than ever along racial and

ethnic lines.⁵⁷³ While they were overwhelmingly White/Caucasian, cruisers increasingly identified as people of color. 14 percent of those surveyed identified as Latino/Hispanic; 11 percent as Black/African American; and 7 percent as Asian/Asian American.⁵⁷⁴ The primary point of comparison was a 2006 CLIA survey in which only 5 percent of respondents identified as Black.⁵⁷⁵ When considering this data, it is important to note that these figures do not differentiate between mass-market and luxury lines, nor any segments in between. Carnival cruises taken by the author between 2015 and 2022 suggest that percentages of racialized/ethnic Americans are significantly higher than represented here for that mass-market line.⁵⁷⁶ Royal Caribbean in particular has made concerted efforts to target the African American market since the turn of the century.⁵⁷⁷ According to the periodical *Black Meetings & Tourism*, Royal Caribbean was the only cruise line with staff in charge of African American markets through

⁵⁷³ Figures on race and ethnicity were largely unavailable before the 2000s because, as Victor Teye and Denis Leclerc noted in their study of minority cruise markets, neither CLIA nor cruise lines maintained this sort of data about their clientele. As shown here, racial and ethnic demographic data were available to a limited extent thereafter, though much of it relied on small sample sizes that did not differentiate between the type of cruise taken (i.e., mass-market/contemporary, premium, luxury, or ultra-luxury). “The White Caucasian and Ethnic Minority Cruise Markets: Some Motivational Perspectives,” *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 9, no. 3 (2003): 227-242.

⁵⁷⁴ These figures were extrapolated from a bar chart that did not include exact percentages. They were obtained by calculating the proportionality of the bars. Cruise Lines International Association, “Cruise Travel Report,” January 2017, <https://cruising.org/-/media/research-updates/research/consumer-research/2017-cruise-travel-report.ashx>.

⁵⁷⁵ Michael Bennett, “The Cruise Industry and the African-American Traveler,” *Black Meetings & Tourism* (December 2007), <https://www.blackmeetingsandtourism.com/Publications/Black-Meetings-Tourism/2007/December-2007-January-2008/The-Cruise-Industry-and-The-African-American-Tra.aspx>.

⁵⁷⁶ Americans identifying as visible minorities have tended to have lower incomes than their white counterparts. explained in large part by the social and economic barriers that historically barred minorities from achieving middle-class status. Only in the past several decades have these barriers been impactfully lifted; even then, many remain in place on a systemic basis. The median incomes for 2005-2009 households throughout the United States were as follows: White (\$66,767), Black/African American (\$41,144), Hispanic/Latino - \$48,909, and Asian (\$81,772). Studies show that over Thus, with Asians as the exception, an income gap explains why racial and ethnic minorities may have preferred more affordable mass-market cruises, necessitating research on minority cruise markets that differentiates by the type of cruise. Gloria Guzman, “Household Income by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2005-2009 and 2015-2019,” *United States Census Bureau*, December 2020, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/acs/acsbr19-07.pdf>.

⁵⁷⁷ A 2002 study analyzing the ethnic and racial affiliations of passengers onboard two, seven-day Caribbean cruises concluded that 74 percent were white, while 26 percent identified as minorities. However, the study had the same drawbacks as the CLIA statistics: the authors did not specify whether the cruise line was mass-market, premium, luxury, or ultra-luxury. Teye, “The White Caucasian and Ethnic Minority Cruise Markets.”

Dianne Williams, Director of Multicultural Markets. The company employed a multifaceted approach which included market research to address barriers that African Americans faced while cruising. Royal Caribbean also chartered cruises appealing to that demographic, for instance a voyage fundraising for organizations that support historically Black colleges.⁵⁷⁸

North American cruise travelers were also increasingly diverse by age and social class. By 2014, nearly three-quarters of passengers traveling on CLIA lines in the North American market were aged 30-39, 50-59, or 60-69, with even distribution across each group. Household incomes were similarly diverse, with an average of \$114,000. 28 percent had household incomes of \$60,000 - \$69,000; 19 percent fell between \$75,000 and \$99,000; and 33 percent between \$100,000 and \$199,000. The market could therefore be squarely characterized as middle class or upper middle class. The majority of those surveyed preferred “Large” ships with a casual or casual-elegant atmosphere, with emphasis on entertainment as the most important onboard amenities (which 80 percent rated as important).⁵⁷⁹ These factors explain the continued popularity of Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian as market leaders—each of which offered large ships with casual atmospheres and no shortage of themed entertainment meant to diversify offerings even for repeat passengers.

Yet, even across market segments, cruising had become an important means for travelers to sample the cultures of destinations to which they could return. After all, 6-8 day cruises (the most popular category at 53 percent for the North American market) typically visited 3-4 ports.

⁵⁷⁸ Bennett, “The Cruise Industry and the African-American Traveler.”

⁵⁷⁹ Cruise Lines International Association, “2014 North American Cruise Market Profile.” Note that this survey does not appear to include those 24 and under. Yet, that age group provided a significant number of passengers. Over 1 million of the 12.6 million passengers who sailed from North America in 2016 were 12 or under, suggesting that nuclear families were a key target market. Cruise Lines International Association, “2016 and 2017 Quarterly Regional Report,” February 2018, <https://cruising.org/-/media/research-updates/research/clia-one-resource-passenger-reports/clia-north-america-report-full-year-2016-2017-overview.ashx>.

Consumers generally viewed cruising as a cost-effective way to sample multiple destinations. 70 percent of study respondents highlighted “Chance to Visit Several Locations” as a key benefit of cruising, while 42 percent returned to destinations they first visited on cruises.⁵⁸⁰ Americans who had cruised tended to be more interested in cultural experiences than their non-cruiser counterparts. In fact, in another Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) survey, 40 percent of cruisers indicated that cultural learning experiences were an important factor in deciding on a vacation, compared to 24 percent of those who had not cruised.⁵⁸¹ A CLIA survey yielded similar results nearly a decade later: 66 percent agreed that cruises were better than land-based vacations for cultural learning experiences.⁵⁸²

According to the data, a significant number of those sailing US-Caribbean itineraries in the twenty-first century cruised for culture. These passengers have been termed “Cultureds.” Onboard, they were interested in learning about the cultures of the international seafarers serving them, as well as engaging with entertainment highlighting various global cultures, and at port they would take shore excursions that cruise lines marketed as offering authentic encounters with local inhabitants.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸⁰ Cruise Lines International Association, “2014 North American Cruise Market Profile.”

⁵⁸¹ This data was gathered through a FCCA survey. Specifically, this question asked, “How do you think cruise vacations compare to other vacations you’ve taken? Are cruises much better, somewhat better, the same, somewhat worse, or much worse than your other vacations in terms of ____.” Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association, “Cruise Industry Overview—2009,” accessed August 21, 2022, <http://www.f-cca.com/downloads/2009-cruise-industry-overview-and-statistics.pdf>.

⁵⁸² Cruise Lines International Association, “Cruise Travel Report,” January 2018, <https://cruising.org/-/media/research-updates/research/consumer-research/2018-clia-travel-report.ashx>. These statistics can be explained by the fact that many land-based travelers are motivated by the desire to see relatives, which is not a motivation for taking cruises because of limited time at ports. Thus, “Cultural Learning Experiences” is overrepresented as a travel motivation in cruise vacations simply by way of exclusion.

⁵⁸³ James F. Petrick and Angela M. Durko, “Segmenting Luxury Cruise Tourists Based on their Motivations,” *Tourism in Marine Environments* 10, no. 3-4 (2015): 149-157. While the authors have made an argument for the luxury cruise market, their results are not exclusive to it. The article analyzes surveys conducted by Holland

Producing the ‘World on a Ship’

During the 1990s, mass-market lines began concerted efforts to cohesively theme onboard spaces. Such motifs were meant to convince passengers of their supposed immersion in another culture or locality. The twenty-first century brought the next logical step in this architectural trend: the proliferation of these cultural simulations as the basis for cruise ship design in the decades ahead. In 2000, Designteam continued their work to transform Royal Caribbean ships. Having made ancient Egypt the focus of *Voyager of the Seas* in 1998, the company had similar plans for *Voyager’s* sister ships. Designteam’s directors planned an Indian motif for *Explorer of the Seas*, and an Oriental one for *Adventure of the Seas*.⁵⁸⁴ *Navigator of the Seas*, according to Designteam, evoked ancient Mayan civilization, with “bold colors, carved wall panels and imitation Mayan sculptures” adorning the Ixtapa Lounge.⁵⁸⁵ Royal Caribbean’s systemic theming was certainly innovative in the mass-market cruise industry, but it still had to be acceptable to the passenger profile for any ship. Designteam’s Eric Mouzourides stated, “Any concept we develop is based on the type of passenger profile expected,” implying that the cultural themes Designteam relied on were incorporated in response to a passenger demand for those fabricated encounters.⁵⁸⁶

Yet, Royal Caribbean also understood that, as important as singular motifs repeated throughout the ships were, its customers demanded engagement with a range of cultural

America Line passengers. HAL is not mass-market line, but it is also not a luxury line. Rather, it is more accurately classified as premium—between mass-market and luxury. See for instance Miller, “Cruising and the North American Market,” 82. The median household income of respondents to the survey was USD \$75,000 to \$99,999, an income bracket much closer to the passenger base of mass-market lines than luxury companies. Lastly, mass-market, premium, and luxury cruise passengers were not mutually exclusive. There was overlap between the categories—especially between the lower and middle. These results are therefore taken to mean that many mass-market cruise passengers could also be categorized as “Cultureds.”

⁵⁸⁴ “Designteam Arrives as a Major Creative Force,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Autumn 2000): 215.

⁵⁸⁵ “Designteam--the Success Story Continues,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Spring 2003): 99.

⁵⁸⁶ “Designteam Arrives as a Major Creative Force.”

experiences. Take for instance differentially themed spas across the company's fleet. The spa in one ship contained "Mayan-inspired colors and patterns," while Spanish hacienda-style décor adorned the spa in another vessel. The spa in a third ship evoked an essentialized Africa, complete with lion and elephant sculptures, while deck chairs around the pool had African motifs woven into their cloth. Service, and not just built environment, augmented those themes. Offered on the spa menu, for example, was a supposedly "Egyptian" technique combining milk and ginger to encourage relaxation, and a "Tahitian ceremony of flowers."⁵⁸⁷ Far from just offering entertainment, Royal Caribbean marketed their spas as opportunities for guests to immerse themselves in exotic cultural experiences, even telling readers that their spa experience "transports guests to the moods, ambiance and senses of a complete day in Africa."⁵⁸⁸ As in the previous decade, these motifs were largely informed by popularized Eurocentric understandings of the world such as Disney's *Lion King*, which popularized the lion as a stand-in for Africa, encouraging the use of a lion statue in the spa.

The company drew on similar strategies to invent cultural experiences through different venues across its fleet. The Safari Club onboard *Jewel of the Seas* was said to evoke "The wild beauty of Africa...through paintings, glass sculpted animal heads, fabrics and collages," another example of an entire continent reduced to untamed wilderness with material culture installed to advance that message. The same ship's Solarium was meant to represent Thailand's "exotic landscape and culture," featuring "lush tropical foliage and Thai art, such as an authentic 18th century temple bell and a traditional Thai gate."⁵⁸⁹ This can be understood as an example of

⁵⁸⁷ Celebrity Cruises and Royal Caribbean International, *Elegance at Sea: The Art and Architecture of Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises* (Miami, FL: Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd, 2001). 27, 29, 84-85, 91, 112-13.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 84-85.

⁵⁸⁹ "Royal Caribbean International's Newest Ship Makes U.S. Debut in Boston," *PR Newswire*, September 10, 2004, ProQuest Databases.

MacCannell's staged authenticity wherein a historic artifact was taken from its original context and reinstalled in a commercial setting.⁵⁹⁰ Royal Caribbean stripped the temple bell of the functionality for which it was built centuries ago, redefining it as a prop that contributed to the anachronistic setting in which the company sought to immerse passengers. Royal Caribbean presumably produced the "traditional Thai gate" and "lush tropical foliage" itself, but even those props conveyed historic importance through their proximity to the temple bell, which gave those other objects commercial meaning. The company took a similar approach with the Bombay Billiard Club on *Radiance of the Seas*, the materiality of which they marketed as "An exotic mix of swirled mahogany, figured redwood." Marketed as "British Colonial-style,"⁵⁹¹ Royal Caribbean's themed venue replicated a hill station constructed for colonial officers in the Indian subcontinent. In a land of marked cultural differences, those establishments served as familiar spaces catering to the sensibilities of British officials wherein colonizers confirmed their social affiliations.⁵⁹² The Bombay Billiard Club, by that same token, immersed passengers in Royal Caribbean's simulated of a colonial institution, transporting them to another time and place through material culture.

Royal Caribbean was not the only mass-market line betting on themed environments. Norwegian themed an array of onboard establishments, including the Stardust Theatre onboard the *Dawn*, infused with "a traditional European opera house ambiance."⁵⁹³ *Carnival Glory*, launched in 2003, epitomized the trend with an upwards of 22 themed lounges, bars, and

⁵⁹⁰ MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity."

⁵⁹¹ Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., *Elegance at Sea*.

⁵⁹² Cecilia Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 87-113. Yet, as Leong-Salobir argues, as much as British colonizers used these spaces to isolate themselves from their surroundings, they largely relied on colonial labor to sustain themselves therein.

⁵⁹³ "Norwegian Dawn to Premiere in December," *PR Newswire*, August 19, 2002, ProQuest Databases.

restaurants onboard.⁵⁹⁴ The repertoire of venues included a Polynesian themed spa with artificial foliage, teak decks, a waterfall, and other material cultural elements associated with essentialized tropicality.⁵⁹⁵ Its casino drew on an ancient Egyptian theme, presenting a pastiche fusing representations of that time and space—sculptures of jackals and camels, as well as camel heads engravings accenting walls—with modern spectacle and comfort—slot machines, colorful lights, and padded chairs. Thus, the casino evoked a Las Vegas casino resort more than it did a culturally Egyptian space.⁵⁹⁶ Mass-market lines viewed the production of spaces with cultural and geographic motifs as profitable because these venues used media-generated symbols of foreign places to engage broad demographics who had encountered those popular media representations in daily life. These spectacles differentiated spaces across ships and fleets, entertaining passengers and maintaining their continued engagement throughout the cruise and on repeat voyages.⁵⁹⁷

The proliferation of themed environments onboard mass-market cruise ships was never more evident than in dining establishments. It was the rule, not the exception, for multiple such restaurants to be offered on each ship by the early 2000s. Rudi Sodamin, Director of Royal Caribbean’s Culinary Department, stated that Royal Caribbean recently created hundreds of new dishes that were “influenced by the worldwide destinations our ships visit.”⁵⁹⁸ Many of these

⁵⁹⁴ “Carnival Cruise Lines Takes Delivery Of New 110,000-Ton Carnival Glory,” *PR Newswire*, June 27, 2002, ProQuest Databases.

⁵⁹⁵ “CLIA Fleet Continues to Grow, With New Ships Adding to Vacation Options,” *PR Newswire*, December 20, 2002, ProQuest Databases; “Carnival Cruise Lines Announces the Launch of Spa Carnival,” *Breaking Travel News*, April 11, 2003, accessed May 13, 2022, <https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/news/article/btn2000707/>.

⁵⁹⁶ Based on the author’s observations onboard the *Carnival Glory* in 2012.

⁵⁹⁷ Adam Weaver, “The Fragmentation of Markets, Neo-Tribes, Nostalgia, and the Culture of Celebrity: The Rise of Themed Cruises,” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 18, no. 1 (2011): 54-60.

⁵⁹⁸ Edwin McDowell, “Correspondent's Report: More Variety, Flexibility in Shipboard Dining,” *New York Times*, December 31, 2000, ProQuest Databases.

novel creations were then offered in a multitude of newly conceptualized themed restaurants—an intensified continuation of trends seen in the previous decade.

Peter Tobler, Vice President of Food & Beverage Operations for Norwegian Cruise Line, discussed the demand that the cruise industry was attempting to meet with its growing prominence of food marketed as ethnic, stating, “savvy guests continue to demand an ever-broadening range of international cuisine.”⁵⁹⁹ In an effort to cater to those guests, *Norwegian Sun* debuted in September 2000 with nine eateries,⁶⁰⁰ many of which contained cultural motifs.⁶⁰¹ In addition to the two standard dining rooms, there was an Italian trattoria and Le Bistro with gourmet French cuisine.⁶⁰² Its Pacific Rim restaurant, SoHo Room, had an array of cuisines from selectively chosen countries around the basin. Patrons entering the establishment were greeted by a section dedicated to Japanese fare—teppanyaki and sushi.⁶⁰³ Further into the venue was an area that SMC Design, contracted to design restaurants onboard *Sun*, described as an “east meets west” fusion eatery with “Californian, Hawaiian and Asian” influence.⁶⁰⁴

NCL seemingly intended for SoHo Room to be a contained space in which passengers could move from one themed station to another, metaphorically touring the Pacific Rim region through food. However, as the Pacific Rim region contains dozens of countries, it was infeasible for NCL to represent the entire basin in one restaurant. Patrons’ encounters with those cultures were therefore mediated, for NCL chose which nations to include or exclude in their version of the Pacific Rim. As suggested by the emphasis placed in marketing the Californian and Hawaiian

⁵⁹⁹ Mary Lassen Fiss, “Cruise Lines Create Dining Revolution,” *Foodservice Director* 16, no. 6 (2003): 36.

⁶⁰⁰ McDowell, “Correspondent’s Report: More Variety, Flexibility in Shipboard Dining.”

⁶⁰¹ “Norwegian Cruise Line Announces Next-Generation Newbuild Featuring New ‘Freestyle Cruising,’” *PR Newswire*, April 14, 2000, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁰² “A Star Is Born: Norwegian Cruise Line Announces New Ship,” *PR Newswire*, March 8, 2001, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁰³ “The Norwegian Sun,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Spring 2001): 149.

⁶⁰⁴ “A Star Is Born.”

influence while other countries on the menu were homogenized as “Asian,” NCL intended for their restaurant to offer passengers a tour of a culturally heterogeneous region filtered through Americanization. After all, even the choice of venue name—SoHo Room—evoked the elite Manhattan neighborhood, drawing on New York City’s historical influence over highbrow global culinary trends to suggest an equally high-end culinary experience highlighting cultural forms deemed worthy of consumption by wealthy Manhattanites. This cultural production process centered elite American tastes to simulate a westernized view of cultural difference for passengers. For instance, chocolate tempura appropriated the Japanese technique—which typically battered and deep fried seafood—to reinvent an otherwise familiar dessert.⁶⁰⁵ The same exoticization strategy was used in entrées. One passenger said the steak was served with an “Asian” glaze, while another described a fusion of beef tenderloin and Udon noodles.⁶⁰⁶ A variety of other dishes on the menu were more generally associated with high cuisine (as in foie gras), or middle-class status meals simulating high cuisine (surf and turf).⁶⁰⁷ Thus, diners did not sample even a fraction of the Pacific Rim’s diverse fare, but tokenistic appropriations thereof.

For mass-market lines, international seafarers—originally a cost-cutting measure part and parcel of economic globalization—were key to construction the world on a ship. Carnival stated that their staff hail from 94 nations, representing this “international group” as a “Celebration of Nations” that contributed to the globality of the cruise experience. However, their labor was commodified to theme onboard eateries in ways that passengers would perceive as cosmopolitan.

⁶⁰⁵ While now associated with Japanese culture, tempura was brought to Japan by sixteenth-century Portuguese traders. Cristina Castel-Braco and Guida Carvalho, “Closing Thoughts,” in *Luis Frois: First Western Accounts of Japan's Gardens, Cities and Landscapes*, eds. Cristina Castel-Branco and Guida Carvalho (New York: Springer, 2019), 235-38.

⁶⁰⁶ “Soho Room on the Star,” *Cruise Critic*, September 27, 2009, accessed December 16, 2022, <https://boards.cruisecritic.com/topic/1014770-soho-room-on-the-star/>.

⁶⁰⁷ George H. Lewis, “The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon: Competing Images Over Time and Social Class,” *Food and Foodways* 3, no. 4 (1989): 303-316.

For instance, Carnival intensified the perceived authenticity of their “fantastic Cantonese stir-fry” offered onboard the *Paradise* by stating it was prepared by “Chinese cooks,”⁶⁰⁸ reinforcing the constructed culinary theme using ethnic labor. Similarly, Royal Caribbean advertised the national diversity of seafarers under their hire as part of the cultural cosmopolitanism guests were meant to experience in dining rooms. Jack L. Williams, then President of Royal Caribbean International, stated that throughout its history Royal Caribbean provided passengers “with culinary pleasures from across the globe” which “reflect[ed] the heritage of our multinational culinary staff.”⁶⁰⁹ Royal Caribbean’s consumer-facing cookbook showcased this interconnection between their international dining staff and the ethnic fare they served onboard, even featuring biographies for many higher-level chefs. For instance, Royal Caribbean’s recipe for “Montego Bay Carpaccio” featured next to it a photograph and biography of Samuel Boyd, an Executive Chef hailing from Montego Bay, Jamaica, using Boyd’s nationality to produce an aura of authenticity around the dish.⁶¹⁰ While every mass-market line used international seafarers to reap economic incentives, staff were also central to the industry’s fabrication of cultural cosmopolitanism. Seafarer nationalities were just one symbolic means among an arsenal of many others for cruise lines to simulate encounters with the world for their passengers, reducing laborer identities to props for corporations to appropriate in support of profitability.

Royal Caribbean took the challenge to simulate global cultural encounters more seriously than Carnival, as evidenced by the level of theming in just one of its own establishments. In 2004, Royal Caribbean transformed the High Society Lounge on *Enchantment of the Seas* into

⁶⁰⁸ Carnival Cruise Lines, *Paradise*, 95, 142.

⁶⁰⁹ Rudi Sodamin, *Royal Caribbean International Cookbook* (New York, NY: Rizzoli International Publications, 2001), 9.

⁶¹⁰ Royal Caribbean International, *Savor: The Royal Caribbean International Cookbook* (Miami, FL: Royal Caribbean International, 2006), 14.

Boleros, a Latin-themed bar with specialty tequilas and mojitos,⁶¹¹ and incorporated the venue into *Sovereign of the Seas*. According to the cruise line, Boleros featured drinks “from Brazil, Cuba and Central America...as well as dueling piano players and live Latin jazz performances.”⁶¹² A glass dome ceiling that Royal Caribbean hoped would symbolize a Mayan sunburst served to advance the motif alongside drink and entertainment.

The alcoholic drinks found in Boleros were associated more with homogenized Latin American tropicality as popular cultural affiliations and rebranding strategies have produced them, rather than any particular national identity.⁶¹³ For instance, though mojitos gained much of their popularity owing to early-twentieth-century western tourism to Cuba—just as tequila was affiliated with Mexican national identity—these drinks came to be consumed as symbols of Latin American tropicality more broadly, helped in no small part by the conception of Nuevo Latino cuisine.⁶¹⁴ Analyzing the bar’s atmosphere further supports this assertion. While Royal Caribbean’s press release suggests that differentiating cultures to offer passengers a tour of Latin America was the goal of Boleros, in reality this was a space where Mexico, Brazil, and Cuba fell under a Mayan-themed roof—a factual inaccuracy used to strengthen Boleros’ symbolic

⁶¹¹ “Royal Caribbean International Announces Nordic Empress to Receive Major Renovations, New Name,” *PR Newswire*, February 2, 2004, ProQuest Databases.

⁶¹² “Royal Caribbean Re-Launches Sovereign of The Seas,” *PR Newswire*, December 10, 2004, ProQuest Databases.

⁶¹³ “Royal Caribbean International Goes to New Lengths to Offer Innovative, Unexpected Experiences for Guests,” *PR Newswire*, September 28, 2004, ProQuest Databases.

⁶¹⁴ As the consumption of ethnic foods became evermore popular in the United States, chefs increasingly experimented with Latin American foodways by the 1990s. Nuevo Latino restaurants were different from traditional Latin American restaurant, which tended to highlight the historical foodways of one region or nation. By contrast, Nuevo Latino establishments incorporated ingredients from across Latin America, combining them into dishes with a plating style reminiscent of nouvelle French cuisine in its lighter presentation. The cuisine was often presented as an avenue for diners to metaphorically tour of the region. However, as scholars have argued, Nuevo Latino was produced through simulacra and colonial desire, especially evident in the atmosphere of restaurants which often fused hegemonic symbols of the region from across time and space into entertaining but invented spectacles. Nuevo Latino leveraged exoticism to reinvent and even simulate Latin American cultures for the palates of increasingly adventurous American consumers. It was in this context that drinks previously associated with national histories, such as tequila and the mojito, became more strongly connected to Latin America more broadly. Vanessa Fonseca, “Nuevo Latino: Rebranding Latin American Cuisine,” *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 8, no. 2 (2005): 95-130.

connection to a homogenized Latin America through an appeal to fabricated historic claims. The company succeeded in its quest to produce a space themed after Latin America, but Boleros also exemplified an inorganic and commodified collision of eras and cultures.

The race to build the largest megaships ships became a competition to offer the greatest number of themed spaces onboard.⁶¹⁵ When *Norwegian Epic* was unveiled, the company used the “20 fantastic dining options” onboard as a central point for marketing campaigns. Many of these were eateries themed around a central culture or locale. Passengers encountered a churrascaria, an industry-first Brazilian themed restaurant,⁶¹⁶ alongside an “authentic” Japanese-style teppanyaki.⁶¹⁷ Shanghai’s Noodle Bar, which the cruise line billed as exotic Asian Fusion” eatery, offered fare from countries across the region; NCL promised its diners “exotic Japanese/Thai/Chinese cuisine.” La Cucina invited patrons to taste an “Italian menu filled with casual authentic favorites at a classic Trattoria.”⁶¹⁸ NCL offered a similarly diverse range of themed dining opportunities across its fleet,⁶¹⁹ each with essentialized motifs reinforced by material culture.

In one way or another, each of these venues made claims to authenticity that they promised to deliver through the production of spaces singularly themed around the culture at

⁶¹⁵ As argued about consumerism in American society more broadly, corporations increasingly understood that theming sold. Hannigan, *Fantasy City*; Bryman, *The Disneyization of Society*

⁶¹⁶ “Display Ad 113, *New York Times*, September 27, 2009, ProQuest Databases; “Norwegian Cruise Line Reports Results for Second Quarter 2009,” *Dow Jones Institutional News*, August 11, 2009, ProQuest Databases; “Norwegian Cruise Line Reports Results for Second Quarter 2011,” *Business Wire*, August 1, 2011, ProQuest Databases.

⁶¹⁷ Norwegian Cruise Line, “Freestyle Dining,” July 8, 2008, Norwegian Cruise Line Website Archives, *Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080708101248/http://www.ncl.com/nclweb/cruiser/cmsPages.html?pageId=FreestyleDining>.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Norwegian Cruise Line, “Our Amazing Dining Options,” July 14, 2011, downloaded from Norwegian Cruise Line Website Archives on November 25, 2019, *Wayback Machine*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110714035203/http://www2.ncl.com/freestyle-cruise/freestyle-dining>.

hand. NCL hoped that the concept would let patrons feel that they were metaphorically touring nations across the globe. Nevertheless, each eatery offered variations of dishes that many passengers were already well aware of owing to decades of widespread availability across the United States. Cultural difference was primarily rendered discursively through the wording used on cruise line websites, descriptions of menu options, or by installing material objects that had come to symbolically represent the cultures at hand as in the rustic stone, wood, and vines motif in La Cucina or the orientalist paintings in Teppanyaki.

Mass-market lines continued to produce larger and more technologically capable ships into the next decade, filling them to the brim with a multitude of themed environments. No longer satisfied with simply simulating global cultures, this extra space allowed companies to simulate the world itself for its clientele. Take for instance *New York Times* journalist Toni Schlesinger's experience onboard Royal Caribbean's *Allure of the Seas* in 2011, briefly mentioned earlier. Schlesinger characterized the ship as a "celebration of cities." She attended Rita's Cantina,⁶²⁰ intensely themed with what Royal Caribbean described as "traditional Mexican fare" and "a comprehensive selection of margaritas and live guitar music and dancing for evening entertainment."⁶²¹ In reality, Rita's Cantina appeared to offer Tex-Mex from the US-Mexican borderland area rather than "traditional Mexican." Izumi was an Asian bistro decorated using material culture that guests were conditioned to expect in a Japanese space owing to the reproduction of representations along popular media avenues. Katanas, samurai sculptures, decorative Japanese characters, bamboo, cherry blossoms, and water lilies complimented what Royal Caribbean described as "Japanese-influenced menu items created with the help of Chef

⁶²⁰ Schlesinger, "A City on the Sea."

⁶²¹ "Radiance of the Seas Delivers the Royal Advantage to Vacationers Following the Most Extensive Revitalization to Date," *PR Newswire*, June 14, 2011, ProQuest Databases.

Consultant Travis Kamiyama.” Royal Caribbean even themed uniforms, telling readers of its cookbook that Izumi waitstaff wore “traditional Japanese-inspired black-dress Kimonos from the Taisho Period (1912-1925),”⁶²² in the hopes that the inclusion of these representations would contribute to the dining experience’s authenticity. In much the same way, the cruise line used the environment surrounding diners to support their claim that Giovanni’s Table was “An Italian Trattoria” offering “Italian classics.” Royal Caribbean even stated that the restaurant drew its architectural influence from Tuscan landscapes, while Italian paintings adorning the walls reinforced that theme. Their goal was immersion, even stating that they sought to make diners feel as though they “were dining along the Amalfi Coast.”⁶²³

As much as Royal Caribbean advertised its themed venues as authentic representations of the cultures on display, Schlesinger’s characterization of *Allure* suggests that Royal Caribbean drew on a global trend towards shopping malls centered on fabricated cosmopolitanism in conceptualizing the ship’s aesthetics. Shopping malls in major metropolises adopted décor that curated hegemonic symbols of global cultures to construct spaces that shoppers would perceive as cosmopolitan. Yet, as the idea was reproduced to the point of it becoming vogue, shopping malls looked quite similar regardless of the metropole one visited, in turn replacing cultural difference with ‘international standards’ that western tourists came to expect.⁶²⁴ Along this vein, *Allure* showed clients decontextualized symbols from destinations around the world, but only the most easily recognizable ones that western audiences would intrinsically associate with the cultures evoked, often times drawn from across time and space to produce factually impossible

⁶²² Royal Caribbean International, *Carte du Jour*, 102. Additionally, the cruise line described Izumi as Japanese but also “exotic Asian-inspired” on their website. “Izumi,” *Royal Caribbean International*, accessed June 23, 2018, <https://www.royalcaribbean.com/cruise-dining/izumi>.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁶²⁴ Jennie Germann Molz, “Cosmopolitanism and Consumption,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Maria Rivisco and Magdalena Nowicka (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011): 33-52.

pastiches of localities. Royal Caribbean’s curation process left out cultural forms that passengers would have perceived as uncomfortable, unrecognizable, or unentertaining because, despite what the company claimed in marketing literature, its goal as a company specializing in entertainment architecture was to entertain with cultural simulacra rather than immerse with accuracy.⁶²⁵

Themed dining options were central to Royal Caribbean’s new Quantum class of ships, and the company was explicit about its motive for offering these experiences. Lisa Lutoff-Perlo, Executive Vice President, Operations, for Royal Caribbean International, noted that passengers “will have the opportunity to set out on a spectacular culinary journey—with each night strikingly different from the last.” Guests would enjoy “18 restaurant concepts as vast and varied as dining in the world’s most cosmopolitan cities.”⁶²⁶ By producing a multitude of themed eatery concepts onboard each ship, Royal Caribbean allowed passengers to metaphorically tour other countries as the ship traversed the Caribbean Sea. Even the buffet, traditionally an unnoteworthy event compared to specialty venues, was marketed as “a global culinary pavilion that invites guests to explore the world, dish by dish through enticing food islands.”⁶²⁷ In reality, dining onboard Royal Caribbean ships was not a performance of cultural cosmopolitanism through one’s fork, but a strategically curated tour of cultural simulacra.

By 2012, Carnival caught up to Royal Caribbean and Norwegian in its diversity of culturally themed eateries. Cucina del Capitano was Carnival’s Italian restaurant. According to the restaurant’s webpage, the dishes at Cucina del Capitano were “inspired by the recipes from [their] Italian captains’ and Officers’ childhoods.” In an era when seafarers were more diverse than ever along national lines, the heritages of select groups were commodified to lend authority

⁶²⁵ Hannigan, *Fantasy City*.

⁶²⁶ “Royal Caribbean International Debuts New Era of Dining At Sea On Quantum-Class.”

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*

to cultural forms produced by corporations. Carnival constructed an aura of traditionality around Cucina del Capitano prior to the cruise, setting visitors' expectations for when they actually dined there. Carnival also decorated the establishment "to feel like an Italian country home" by installing wooden furniture, vines, and paintings of rustic countryside settings.⁶²⁸ The red-and-white checkered tablecloth found in Cucina del Capitano had symbolized simplicity in Italian-American restaurants since the late-nineteenth century.⁶²⁹ Yet even this simulated encounter with Italy had to be balanced with material comforts, which betrayed the venue's rustic atmosphere. One would expect to find wooden chairs with rush or cane seats to complement the agrarian motif, whereas Cucina del Capitano padded their chairs for customer comfort. The padded chairs and the large, elaborately painted columns conformed to high-end hotel dining rather than a homely eatery. Despite these contradictions, each of these material artifacts reinforced the notion that dining at Cucina del Capitano was the equivalent of dining in Italy—the first stop in a sanitized tour of the world.

Carnival advertised the atmosphere in BlueIguana Tequila Bar as "laid-back Mexican-themed."⁶³⁰ The bar's emphasis on tequila-based concoctions supported its affiliations to that country owing to the liquor's connection to Mexican national identity.⁶³¹ BlueIguana was also an

⁶²⁸ Carnival Cruise Line, "Cucina Del Capitano," January 6, 2012, Carnival Cruise Line Website Archives, *Wayback Machine*, <http://web.archive.org/web/20120106104613/http://www.carnival.com/onboard/cruise-food/cucina-del-capitano.aspx>. Johnston and Baumann discuss the role of history and rusticity in the corporate construction of authenticity in *Foodies*, 76-90.

⁶²⁹ Donna R. Gabaccia and Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "'Chili Queens' and Checkered Tablecloths: Public Dining Cultures of Italians in New York City and Mexicans in San Antonio, Texas, 1870s–1940s," *Radical History Review* 2011, no. 110 (2011): 109-126; Claus Ebster and Irene Guist, "The Role of Authenticity in Ethnic Theme Restaurants," *Journal of Foodservice Business Research* 7, no. 2 (2005): 42-43.

⁶³⁰ "Carnival Cruise Lines' \$500 Million Fun Ship 2.0 Initiative to Dramatically Transform Carnival Vacation Experience with Innovative Dining Choices, New Bars, Lounges, and Entertainment Options," *Dow Jones Institutional News*, October 3, 2011, ProQuest Databases.

⁶³¹ Pilcher discusses at length tequila's connection with Mexico, including exaggerated or otherwise invented ties advanced by non-Mexicans via popular culture and advertising. These representations served to popularize the drink as a symbol of Mexico, increasing its value as a cultural commodity. *Planet Taco*, 12, 16, 170, 177-78.

eatery where patrons consumed, in the words of Carnival, “authentic, freshly made burritos and tacos,”⁶³² foods that supported the theme. However, Mexican fare had become common across the United States, especially owing to its globalization in the late twentieth century. Because a multitude of American corporations (i.e., Taco Bell) were responsible for much of this spread,⁶³³ passengers were appropriately cautious of any claims to authenticity. In an attempt to reinforce immersion within the venue, Carnival distanced their offerings from corporate affiliations by proudly proclaiming that the food at BlueIguana was produced “on homemade tortillas.”⁶³⁴ This connection to small-scale production in turn distanced the food from the capitalist affiliations of mass-production, replacing it with ties to Mexican cultural heritage.⁶³⁵

RedFrog Rum Bar, on the other hand, boasted a Caribbean motif (**Figure 3**). The theme was supported first and foremost by its specialization in rum-based drinks.⁶³⁶ RedFrog promised patrons “all that island flava you know and love” through drink, encouraging them to “Live thirsty, mon” in their usage of a stereotypically Jamaican pronunciation of “man.”⁶³⁷ However, food also contributed to Carnival’s simulation of a Caribbeanized space. Caribbean-influenced offerings in RedFrog included “Fried malanga (sweet potatoes) filled with ginger-scented pork

⁶³² “Additional Design Details Unveiled for Carnival Sunshine, Line's Largest Ship Transformation Project Ever,” *PR Newswire*, November 8, 2012, ProQuest Databases.

⁶³³ Pilcher, *Planet Taco*.

⁶³⁴ “Carnival Cruise Lines' \$500 Million Fun Ship 2.0 Initiative to Dramatically Transform Carnival Vacation Experience.”

⁶³⁵ This process of reinvention and cultural commodification is discussed by Johnston, *Foodies*; Long, *Culinary Tourism*; and Pilcher, *Planet Taco* in the case of Mexican fare more specifically.

⁶³⁶ Rum has an extensive history in the Caribbean, though also association to the region constructed in popular media representations. For example, a particularly humorous scene about rum in *Pirates of the Caribbean* has gained meme status on the Internet, alongside millions of views on YouTube. “Why Is the Rum Gone?” *Know Your Meme*, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/why-is-the-rum-gone>.

⁶³⁷ Carnival Cruise Line, “RedFrog Rum Bar,” January 6, 2012, Carnival Cruise Line Website Archives, *Wayback Machine*, <http://web.archive.org/web/20120106120846/http://www.carnival.com/onboard/bars-lounges/redfrog-rum-bar.aspx>.

and lime aioli, and pepper pot soup.”⁶³⁸ As homogenized as these establishments were in their treatment of diverse identities and histories, Carnival hoped that their cultural simulations would allow passengers to metaphorically tour countries as they bar-hopped.



Figure 3. *RedFrog Pub*. In addition to RedFrog Rum Bar on the Lido deck, some ships also included RedFrog Pub, a larger and more intricately themed establishment. Photographed is RedFrog Pub onboard *Carnival Magic*. Foreground: Faux palm trees. Background: Display case containing various artifacts that evoked a homogenized Caribbean for patrons, including bottles of rum, a model of a cannon, and figurines that appeared to be hand carved. Entering the pub, one also encountered depictions of pirates and a treasure chest with imitation gold doubloons. Photograph by the author (2022).

NCL’s newest megaships were well positioned to offer passengers a comprehensive range of themed restaurants that simulated global cultures. Just as in years past, each venue leveraged themed food, built environment, and in some cases labor to feign cultural experiences. To fabricate a metaphorical tour of the world, however, a ship needed to have space for a range of these differentially themed venues which, when taken together, could convincingly evoke

⁶³⁸ “New Dining, Entertainment Options Debut with Carnival Miracle’s Launch of Year-round Service from New York Today,” *PR Newswire*, April 12, 2012, ProQuest Databases.

globality. NCL's Breakaway-plus class, the company's latest generation of megaships introduced in 2015, were an upwards of 1,000 ft. in length and approached weights of 170,000 GT. Each ship had enough space for dozens of themed venues, the kitchens and storage spaces to service them, and the seafarers to staff them.

Of all restaurants found on Breakaway-plus ships, Food Republic most aptly epitomized the cruise line's project to produce a journey across the world through food. NCL told passengers that the "specially crafted menu...reflect[s] the cultural and culinary diversity of the world around us." Yet, the company was also self-reflexive of its mediating role in producing this experience. Passengers would metaphorically "Travel to Peru," but through "a reinvented version of ceviche." They would "Jet away to Japan and try a new kind of sushi roll," in line with the "unique additions" that NCL "specially curated" through their own processes of cultural interpretation. Though NCL proclaimed that Food Republic diners could "travel the world without ever leaving the ship," this was a tour that reflected the company's own interpretations of national cuisines. In this "fusion of foods and cultures," cultural products became commodities that NCL experimented with to produce the most profitable product. At the same time, by proposing that their representations were a means to "travel the world,"⁶³⁹ the cruise line implied that these fusion foods were genuine to the cultures they sought to represent, giving hegemony to their own views of cultural difference. In Food Republic, passengers did not sample national cuisines, but an array of foodways homogenized into a corporate conception of exoticism.

⁶³⁹ "Food Republic," *Norwegian Cruise Line*, accessed August 22, 2022, <https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/why-cruise-norwegian/cruise-dining/global-food-republic>.

Carnival's latest vessels had enough space to advertise their multitudes of dining experiences as comprehensive tours of the globe. It represented the dining experiences onboard *Vista* as "a culinary journey around the world" with "International flavors" on offer.⁶⁴⁰ Yet, no other dining concept epitomized Carnival's goal to offer a global culinary journey as aptly as Street Eats onboard *Vista*. Therein, passengers were met with "three themed kiosks" that rotated their offerings of international street foods daily with the goal of promising "a variety of global cuisines."⁶⁴¹ The appeal of street foods as a product of culinary tourism centers on their appeal to simplicity.⁶⁴² By eating street foods, one emulates the local inhabitant consuming sustenance so central to his own culture that it is available at street corners. Yet, the same venue also shows the depth of Carnival's mediating power in each of its restaurants. The cruise line singularly interpreted how people from a diverse range of backgrounds across the world ate, and it did so through a decisively Eurocentric perspective. Carnival adapted a means of cultural production that homogenized national cuisines without accounting for the diversity of foodways, and indeed cultures, in each country represented. Furthermore, as much as Carnival commodified cultural difference, in reality much of this difference was erased because passengers consumed these foods not in urban streets foreign to them, but in state-of-the-art traveling resorts.

As the twenty first century progressed, mass-market cruise line profit strategies relied increasingly on spectacle to keep passengers onboard even as the ship was docked at Caribbean ports. Themed venues were central to the production of spectacle, transforming ships into arenas for passengers to encounter simulations of global diversity. Encounters onboard continued to

⁶⁴⁰ "Carnival Vista Offers Nearly 30 Dining and Bar Venues."

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² For the connection between street food, authenticity, and simplicity, especially as it pertains to different regions, consult the essays in *Street Food: Culture, Economy, Health and Governance*, edited by Ryzia de Cassia Vieira Cardoso, Michèle Companion, and Stefano Roberto Marras (London: Routledge, 2014).

reproduce essentialized symbols that passengers would find engaging, filtering out representations that could be taken as uncomfortable or boring. By offering a simulated world in ways perceived as convenient and safe, companies discouraged passengers from debarking at cruise ports to explore culture there. Spectacle thus became a means to produce a captive audience who would spend money on the growing range of extra-tariff onboard products and services, such as spas, fee-based restaurants, and sporting equipment rentals.⁶⁴³ Alcohol sales in particular were a major source of profit for cruise lines because it was seldom included in the ticket price.⁶⁴⁴ As deterritorialized spaces,⁶⁴⁵ cruise ships retailed alcohol openly and in strategic ways that maximized purchase opportunities, for instance as complementary to food consumption, relaxation, and events such as theatre performances, comedy shows, and the ship's departure from ports.⁶⁴⁶ These extra-tariff products meant that mass-market lines had significant financial incentive to keep passengers onboard. In doing so, they captured passenger dollars that would otherwise have been spent at Caribbean ports, reducing economic opportunities for locals.

Mediating a Globalized Caribbean

Despite the cruise industry's attempts to keep passengers onboard, many continued to debark at cruise ports. However, this did not stop cruise lines from influencing how their passengers perceived or consumed cultural experiences in Caribbean nations. Nor did it deter the cruise industry from controlling where tourists spent their money. Building on the trends of the previous decades, the Global West's financial investment in port enclaves continued.

⁶⁴³ Weaver, "Spaces of Containment and Revenue Capture."

⁶⁴⁴ The Big Three allowed passengers to bring wine and champagne onboard in varying amounts: Royal Caribbean allowed two bottles of wine per stateroom; Carnival one bottle per person; and Norwegian unlimited.

⁶⁴⁵ Dallen J. Timothy, "Cruises, Supranationalism and Border Complexities," in *Cruise Ship Tourism*, edited by Ross K. Dowling (Cambridge, MA: CABI, 2006), 408.

⁶⁴⁶ Weaver, "The Disneyization of Cruise Travel," 393.

Increasingly spearheaded by the cruise industry and its affiliates, investments in port infrastructure allowed mass-market lines significant influence in producing enclaves built around the conveniences and comforts of their passengers. These spaces encouraged passengers to stay within the confines of the enclaves and spend their money there in ways that financially benefited cruise lines. It is further argued that the mass-market cruise industry's advertisement of cultural experiences at Caribbean ports, and its economically coercive partnerships with local entrepreneurs to produce some of those activities, also supported its own profit mandates.

Producing Culturally Sanitized Cruise Port Enclaves

The twenty-first century saw a decisive shift towards Caribbean tourism officials using cultural identity as a selling point,⁶⁴⁷ which was attractive to both Carnival and Royal Caribbean who looked to offer their passengers cultural differentiation at ports.⁶⁴⁸ However, coercive practices operated just beneath the surface of the cultural forms that cruise passengers encountered. As the Caribbean cruise industry grew, it gained tremendous economic and political

⁶⁴⁷ Jamaica's Port Royal Development Project, for instance, included funds for a new cruise pier alongside a complex of restaurants and museums to educate passengers about Jamaican history and culture, "Jamaica," *Caribbean Update* 16, no. 2 (2000): 13. Passengers in San Juan, Puerto Rico, would begin experiencing Puerto Rican culture as soon as they stepped off their ships, said Jose Suarez, Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, which co-sponsored a program that encouraged Puerto Ricans to welcome cruise passengers as a way of becoming involved in tourism. Locals greeted arriving guests with music and dance evoking the "rich Latin culture of the island." The Grand Cayman Department of Tourism opened a Visitor Information center in the cruise terminal that displayed representations of local cultures for debarking passengers. Among other things, it contained, "a striking mural of Caymanian photos representing the culture and beauty of the island," "DoT Opens New Office at Royal Watler Terminal," *Tribune Business News*, November 24, 2009, ProQuest Databases. Similarly, Aruba Ports Authority's new "A Day in Aruba" booklet contained information on where passengers could purchase "hand made in Aruba" products, as well as local cuisine. It highlighted island cultures by telling cruise tourists about a "typical Aruban dish" on offer described as "fresh catch of the day (fish), fried plantains, pan bati (local pan cake) or funchi (corn meal polenta) with a light local sauce." Authorities even encouraged visitors to celebrate Aruban heritage "together with the locals at the Bonbini festival, every Tuesday" in Oranjestad, "Aruba, the Ultimate Destination Experience," *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (2000): 194.

⁶⁴⁸ Janet Wilson, "Cruise with the Multitudes," *Edmonton Journal*, March 26, 1994, ProQuest Databases; Adam Goldstein, "Balanced Itinerary Development," *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (1994): 219.

influence in the region, expanding control over local livelihoods and the representation of local identities.

Though cruise lines and local actors across the Caribbean shared an ultimate goal of producing locally specific cultural encounters, their motivations differed. When cruise lines promoted such opportunities, it was to turn a profit through a process of cultural commodification. It is true that some actors in the Caribbean used local cultures to similar ends, whether they were indigenous inhabitants, companies based in the region, or tourism administrators who recognized that culture sold. But for locals, the promotion of local cultural identities to tourists was also part of a larger process. As seen in previous decades, Caribbean inhabitants wanted passengers to experience more than just sun, sand, and ocean, and called for more opportunities to share their cultures with cruise tourists. These pleas gained momentum as Caribbean nations gained independence and struggled with postcolonial identity formation. With the twenty-first century came initiatives across the Caribbean that responded to those concerns, some of which were supported by local officials.

Yet even “local” activities were filtered by touristic demands. As globalization brought the world closer together, the developed Caribbean urban areas that cruise lines frequented bore many similarities to cities elsewhere in North America. Cruise passengers found shopping malls, municipal offices, hospitals, airports, chain restaurants, and transnational hotel brands while touring Ocho Rios, San Juan, or Willemstad just as easily as they did in Miami, Los Angeles, or Las Vegas. So-called local experiences could not simply show tourists aspects of these societies with which they were already familiar. Instead, these activities had to embody exoticism to reinforce the feeling of being away from home. Although white-collar professionals and tradespeople made up large segments of each Caribbean city’s workforce, cruise tourists seldom

encountered them on tours. Rather, tourists saw artisans and small-scale food and beverage producers. Few locals in any given city made their own clothes or household goods in an era when these things were imported quickly and cheaply from the world over. Still, tours often centered artisanal production because it, more than anything else, evoked cultural difference for cruise passengers, allowing them to feel connected to local cultures by interacting with indigenous artisans. Meeting the anachronized expectations perpetuated by cruise lines (and western societies more broadly) was one of the few remaining ways Caribbean inhabitants could benefit from the economic inequality and financial dependence that the US cruise industry brought to the region.

By the twenty-first century Caribbean countries were continuously revitalizing their ports to accommodate ever-larger ships, often at the cost of millions annually,⁶⁴⁹ strengthening the dependence of these nations on the cruise industry. Cruise companies continued to funnel funds into renovating port complexes, constructing new ones, and acquiring existing ones, ultimately granting them sway in shaping activities in these enclaves (**Figure 4**). Take for instance the cruise port in Freeport, Bahamas, which would be revitalized to bring convenience to passengers in November 2000 with the incorporation of a transportation hub for buses and taxis among other aspects at an investment of nearly USD \$11 million. That funding was also used to construct a 23,000 square foot Caribbean-style shopping village, as well as a Bahamian straw market. A spokesman for the Freeport Harbour Company said that Grand Bahama Island was becoming a prime cruise destination, and they wanted to play a role in this growth.⁶⁵⁰ As this site hosted tour

⁶⁴⁹ “St Maarten Dock on Schedule,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (2000): 200; Tony Peisley, “Central American Cruise Boom Set to Continue,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (2005): 110-12.

⁶⁵⁰ “Freeport Redevelopment,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (2000): 293.



Figure 4. *Transportation Hub in Willemstad, Curacao.* These spaces for cruise passengers embarking on tours were increasingly prominent across the Caribbean. Photograph by the author (2015).

buses that took passengers on shore excursions from which the cruise industry profited immensely,⁶⁵¹ it was developed for the benefit of foreign corporations and their clientele, but at the expense of local governments.

As cruise lines entered more agreements with local governments to create private destinations, these companies gained even greater autonomy in shaping how tourists viewed the Caribbean. For example, the construction project profile for Carnival’s USD \$200 million development in Freeport, Bahamas, noted the company’s intention to construct food and beverage shopping outlets, recreational facilities, and security systems alongside the cruise pier.⁶⁵² As the project owner of record, Carnival was positioned to construct the port in ways that

⁶⁵¹ In 2002-2003, one-third of Royal Caribbean’s profits came from shore excursions according to Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 93.

⁶⁵² “CCL—Freeport Cruise Port Development—Bahamas,” June 2017, Report Code CIC215615PP, ABI/INFORM Collection Databases.

would encourage passenger spending. This included fences and guards under the guise of “security” to discourage passengers from venturing beyond the gated enclaves without Carnival-sanctioned shore excursions.⁶⁵³

Even when locals displayed their own cultural representations, the cruise industry implicitly exercised its power to shape how clients received those iterations. Aruba Ports Authority General Manager Milton Henriquez asserted that the port in Oranjestad had the advantage of being close to the shopping complex, and implied that a westernized atmosphere was key, “Visitors get off the boat, walk through the clean terminal and are in front of the main shopping area.”⁶⁵⁴ Thus, interactions with local inhabitants had to take place in environments culturally sanitized to the industry’s requirements, resulting in the self-disciplining evident in Henriquez’s statement. Without infrastructure that guaranteed some familiarity for westerners, islands became vulnerable to competition from their neighbors, especially as mass-market lines perpetually searched for the ideal combination of entertainment, innovation, comfort, and cost in developing itineraries. The industry’s control over ports developed gradually over the decades, but by the start of the new millennia was widespread across the Caribbean,⁶⁵⁵ paving the way for cruise lines to control how passengers perceived of local cultures during their shore visits.

Mike Ronan, Associate Vice President of Government Relations for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, articulated the power that mass-market lines had to mediate portside cultural interactions. Among the company’s recent collaborations with Caribbean governments to

⁶⁵³ Similarly, see the USD \$50 million Harvest Caye private island development in Belize, built with a pier, marina, restaurants, hotels, parking, and other infrastructural facilities. Private destinations allowed cruise lines to dodge head taxes while undercutting Caribbean governments for tourist dollars, instead appropriating them through these sanitized hubs of consumerism. “NCL—Harvest Caye Development—Belize,” December 2017, Report Code CIC159875PP, ABI/INFORM Collection Databases.

⁶⁵⁴ “Port Creates the Right Impression,” *New York Times*, December 1, 2002, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁵⁵ Personal communications with Ross A. Klein quoted in Christine Preble, “Imperial Consumption: Cruise Ship Tourism and Cozumel, Mexico,” PhD diss. (State University of New York at Albany, 2014), 203.

produce distinctive cultural excursions was a historical train tour in St. Kitts—part of “a push to renew the cultural/historical product elements of the destination.”⁶⁵⁶ However, for Ronan, these excursions had to take place in ‘safe’ environments. He commended the “great strides” ports made in upgrading and constructing infrastructure to accommodate larger ships and comply with international security standards. The statement suggests that the power dynamics in these partnerships was unequal, as the production of cultural experiences was mediated by the industry’s demands for security protocols homogenized to the standards of western corporations.

Cruise lines were far from the only foreign actors shaping how passengers experienced cruise ports. In a globalized Caribbean, international interests influenced every aspect of port complexes from their design and construction to their ownership and management.⁶⁵⁷

Furthermore, the amenities in port complexes—car rentals, taxi and tour services, and retail outlets—were largely controlled by transnational corporations, local elites, or expatriates who, according to the journalist Polly Pattullo, made arrangements with cruise lines to act as their agents. Chains including Diamonds International (**Figure 5**), Dufry, and Columbian Emeralds International (owned by Dufry), had a significant presence in port complexes across the

⁶⁵⁶ Mike Ronan, “The Caribbean: Product Evolution and Renewal is Underway,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (2004): 178-80.

⁶⁵⁷ A comprehensive overview of the foreign actors involved in the construction and operation of Caribbean ports is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, there are numerous examples illustrating these processes. Florida-based Feinstein Group developed a USD \$157 million port complex in Belize City. “FGC - Stake Bank Port Development - Belize,” June 2017, Report Code CIC161148PP, ABI/INFORM Collection Databases. A USD \$156 million cruise port development project in the Cayman Islands - owned by Carnival Corporation and the Cayman Islands government - was a decidedly global venture, involving consultants from Illinois and New York, and civil engineers from the Netherlands. “CGI/CCL - Cruise Port Development - Cayman Islands,” January 2018, Report Code CIC192921PP, ABI/INFORM Collection Databases. Hutchison Port Holdings Group, a port operator headquartered in Hong Kong that had interest in Asia, Europe and the Americas, invested substantial funds in the Bahamian cruise industry. For instance, Freeport Harbor Company, a “privately owned and operated, in a joint venture between Hutchison Port Holdings (HPH) and The Grand Bahama Port authority,” had a role in the revitalization of a cruise port complex in Freeport and invested an upwards of USD \$450 million in other aspects of the Bahamian tourism industry. See Richard Lapper, “Grand Bahama Gets Trade Boost from Hutchison,” *Financial Times*, December 19, 2001, 8, ProQuest Databases; “Freeport Redevelopment.” Dozens of similar examples exist.

Caribbean, impairing space for and competitiveness of local entrepreneurs (**Figure 6**). In addition, because much of the money spent in port complexes went to transnational actors and did not stay in the respective countries, the presence of these chains significantly reduced the already limited economic contributions of the cruise industry to Caribbean economies.⁶⁵⁸



Figure 5. *Cruise Port Complex in Amber Cove, Dominican Republic.* The space featured such familiar chains as Diamonds International. Similar sanitized enclaves grew increasingly prominent across the Caribbean over time and were virtually unavoidable for mass-market cruise passengers by the twenty first century. Photograph by the author (2017).

In an effort to exoticize these spaces that otherwise resembled upscale strip malls found across the United States, port complexes included vendors who sold cultural products and artists who played or performed to local tunes. However, metal gates and security guards allowed only authorized locals to enter port complexes—a controlled number of fee-paying vendors whose performances and products for sale were presumably preapproved by the owners of these complexes who, for their part, had ties to the cruise industry or were cruise lines themselves.

⁶⁵⁸ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 164-68.



Figure 6. *DUFRY in Cozumel.* The duty-free store was established in 2011 and prominently placed near the cruise pier to capture maximum passenger revenue before tourists had a chance to patronize local businesses. Source: DUFRY, “Annual Report 2011,” ProQuest Databases. Reproduced with permission.

Carnival and Royal Caribbean were especially proactive in securing deals to own or manage cruise terminals.⁶⁵⁹ Even local cultural products—coffee, chocolates, liquor, and handicrafts—were increasingly offered at transnational duty-free shops within terminals before passengers ever had opportunities to purchase those goods directly from locally operated businesses. DUFRY AG was one duty-free retailer found prominently at port enclaves across the Caribbean. The Swiss-based company even had sections of their storefronts dedicated to locally

⁶⁵⁹ Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze*, 110-114.

produced artisanal foods (**Figure 7**). By inserting themselves into these commodity chains as physical intermediaries, foreign actors such as DUFRY benefited financially from the labors of Caribbean inhabitants.⁶⁶⁰ As passengers encountered transnational chains in port enclaves well before local small businesses, Caribbean entrepreneurs wishing to profit from the cruise travel trade had to consider working with transnational corporations to display and sell their goods while giving up substantial portions of their profits to those companies. This process, which displaced funds spent in the Caribbean to countries abroad, also had cultural consequences, eroding the agency of locals to represent their own cultures. That power was granted to corporations that differentially themed products in ways that would maximize revenue by appealing to a clientele that preferred to stay in the sanitized ‘front region’ of the cruise port rather than venturing into the ‘back region’ where locals resided.⁶⁶¹



Figure 7. Local Products at DUFRY Amber Cove, Dominican Republic Cruise Port. Photograph by the author (2017).

⁶⁶⁰ Talbot argues that Global North actors disproportionately profited from commodities originating in, and even initially processed in, the Global South by claiming for themselves the most lucrative steps to adding value. “Tropical Commodity Chains.”

⁶⁶¹ MacCannell explains the tourism front/back region binary in his work, *The Ethics of Sightseeing*. See especially 13-19.

In newly planned ports where cruise lines had more influence over construction, motifs that drew on local cultures were often the result. Despite fierce opposition from local inhabitants in the nearby fishing and farming village of Majahual, as well as environmentalists, Puerto Costa Maya—billed as Mexico’s premier cruise destination—opened in 2001 on the Yucatan Peninsula.⁶⁶² It was said to be constructed exclusively for the cruise industry and was featured prominently on Caribbean itineraries for the Big Three.⁶⁶³ Just three years later, Puerto Maya was welcoming its one-millionth cruise passenger.⁶⁶⁴

The marketing strategy, as articulated by Puerto Costa Maya’s destination marketing organization (DMO), centered on the region’s history as “an ancient maritime trading post of the Mayan empire.”⁶⁶⁵ While the region does have Mayan history, its three-year construction into a tourist destination transformed the space into a theme park with simulations of the culture. Developers installed symbols that reinforced popular cultural understandings of ancient Maya, with emphasis on figureheads and carvings evoking the culture (**Figure 8**), while employees dressed in stereotypical Mayan motifs were placed throughout the space. One of the most popular attractions was Mayá, Lost Mayan Kingdom, a waterpark resembling a Mayan temple. Other symbols served to theme the space through anachronism more broadly. Palm trees were present across the port complex, strengthening the space’s connection to homogenized tropicity. Many buildings featured thatched huts, which themed the area as rustic but were certainly not authentic to the culture given that the Mayans built stone structures. Tropicity was also reinforced discursively. Through advertising, the “mysterious Mayan ruins” were connected

⁶⁶² Patricia Alisau, “The Virgin Coast,” *Business Mexico* 14, no. 4 (April 2004): 58-61.

⁶⁶³ “Puerto Costa Maya: Land of Adventures,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Autumn 2004): 188.

⁶⁶⁴ Anne Kalosh, “My Port or Yours?,” *Latin Trade* 12, no. 8 (August 2004): 56.

⁶⁶⁵ “Puerto Costa Maya.”

with “colorful jungles, exotic birds and virgin beaches,”⁶⁶⁶ a process that invented a connection between ancient Maya and invented iterations that tourism boosters have used to construct Caribbean anachronism for centuries.



Figure 8. *Essentialized Mayan Representations.* Source: JJ Cruise, “We Excursioned [sic] in Costa Maya for FREE! | Popular Western Caribbean Cruise Port in 2022 | Pool Tour,” *YouTube*, May 18, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCEP8aiA_1Y. Reproduced with permission.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

Cruise passengers at Puerto Costa Maya were certainly not touring ancient Mayan societies because modern amenities and conveniences mediated the experience through its entirety. Puerto Costa Maya's DMO explicitly pitched the port as a "modern complex." To venture "into the heart of the colonial world," passengers required transportation outside of its gated confines.⁶⁶⁷ Local administrators insisted that tourists debarking ships were met by "all of today's conveniences."⁶⁶⁸ These included free shuttles to take them to a 70,000-square-foot shopping and entertainment facility, complete with expansive entertainment options, restaurants, bars, beach clubs, and English-language signage.⁶⁶⁹ According to the DMO, shopping at the ocean-front shopping complex included "unique artisan work."⁶⁷⁰ Nevertheless, international chains were found throughout the complex, with the DMO promising "duty free products, and luxury goods at heavily discounted prices."⁶⁷¹ A local coffee shop promising "*Sabor Tradicional*," traditional taste, was forced to compete with a neighboring Starbucks, while ever-ubiquitous Diamonds International competed with locally owned jewelry stores for passenger dollars. Security gates keeping unauthorized individuals out assured passengers of their safety.⁶⁷² Material and cultural comfort also followed those leaving the port complex. Tours of the back region took place in air-conditioned taxis and buses that transported passengers on an asphalt highway built after the transformation of the region into a cruise destination.⁶⁷³

Thus, when local officials built ports from the ground-up with the interests of the cruise industry in mind, the result was a culturally themed spaces resembling the venues increasingly

⁶⁶⁷ "Adventure Awaits You at Puerto Costa Maya," *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Autumn 2005): 122-23.

⁶⁶⁸ "Puerto Costa Maya."

⁶⁶⁹ Tim Weiner, "Mexican Ports Open a Coast Weiner," *New York Times*, May 13, 2001, ProQuest Databases; Anne Kalosh, "My Port or Yours?," *Latin Trade* 12, no. 8 (August 2004): 56.

⁶⁷⁰ "Puerto Costa Maya."

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷² Alisau, "The Virgin Coast."

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*

present onboard ships. Puerto Costa Maya can be interpreted as a response by local administrators to industry demand for experiences that simulated cultural encounters to engage passengers through spectacle but stopped short of offering meaningful interaction with the societies they commodified.

Royal Caribbean financial contribution towards the renovation of a Honduran port complex gave the cruise line stake in shaping how its passengers would encounter conceptions of Honduran culture. In an agreement with Honduran administrators, Royal Caribbean promised USD \$18 million, later becoming \$30 million, to revitalize the Roatan cruise port.⁶⁷⁴ The development incorporated specialty restaurants and retail shops with Honduran crafts and chocolates,⁶⁷⁵ thereby constructing a sanitized environment wherein passengers sampled commodities symbolic of the nation without ever leaving the physical and cultural safety of the enclave. While Roatan certainly introduced tourists to representations of local cultures, much of the development here supported companies based outside of Honduras. Steps from their ships, passengers encountered Diamonds International. The substantial profits from this chain did not stay in the country, but went back to its New York based parent company Almod. Roatan also contained Del Sol, an apparel store started in Utah and found across the Caribbean.⁶⁷⁶ Passengers taking shore excursions in Roatan toured with Royal Caribbean's partner Roatan Cruise Excursions. While initially appearing to be a local company, it was actually operated by Island Marketing Ltd., a transnational company started in the early 2000s that partnered with several cruise lines to offer shore excursions in Honduras, but also in Jamaica, Mexico, Cayman Islands,

⁶⁷⁴ Larry Luxner, "English Spoken Here," *LatinFinance* (March 2007), ProQuest Databases; "Honduras," *Caribbean Update* 24, no. 11 (2008): 13-14.

⁶⁷⁵ "Honduras," *Caribbean Update*.

⁶⁷⁶ "About Us," *Del Sol*, accessed December 16, 2022, <https://www.delsol.com/about/about-us>.

Belize, Puerto Rico, Barbados, St. Maarten, and even Hawaii.⁶⁷⁷ In turn, even the limited cuts that local tour operators received from shore excursions did not stay in Honduras because the parent company was based in Grand Cayman.⁶⁷⁸ The evidence suggests that developments funded by the mass-market cruise industry favored foreign chains over local entrepreneurs.

By the twenty-first century, every major mass-market line sought to influence development in and around port enclaves, producing engineered theme parks in which interactions with locals were shaped by the presence of international chains and the ever-watchful eyes of the cruise industry.⁶⁷⁹ NCL's shopping guides, for instance, were central to its mediation of relationships between passengers and international chains. These documents, specific to various Caribbean ports, assured consumer confidence in unfamiliar countries by promising designated stores that allowed for the ability to "shop with confidence." Arrangements made between NCL and select retailers granted passengers a 30-day guarantee for purchases made at these establishments. The cruise line's guide for Belize City, for instance, highlighted Diamonds International and other designer jewelry and watch retailers as offering western standards of service and guarantees that passengers were accustomed to. According to the brochure, Diamonds International had a "Friendly and knowledgeable staff in a comfortable atmosphere." These stores sold commodities with varying certifications, including certified appraisals by expert jewelers and gemologists. Comfort continued to be important even after the purchase; many such stores promised U.S. based customer service centers. Each of these aspects, alongside the generally mediated atmosphere of the port enclave, brought an aspect of familiarity

⁶⁷⁷ "Our Company," *Island Marketing Ltd*, accessed December 16, 2022, <http://caribbeanshoretours.com/IslandMarketing.html>.

⁶⁷⁸ "Caribbean Shore Tours," *Island Marketing Ltd*, accessed December 16, 2022, <http://caribbeanshoretours.com/>. Note that Mahogany Bay, a cruise port developed by Carnival just miles away from Roatan, contained a similar mix of local vendors and multinational chains, with emphasis on the latter.

⁶⁷⁹ Pattullo, *Last Resorts*, 156-68.

to the transaction, predisposing NCL passengers to spend large sums of money in settings where they may otherwise have been uncomfortable with doing so. The offering of guaranteed shopping experiences also suggested the presence of the opposite: shops outside the port complex that passengers were more inclined to believe were untrustworthy or even unsafe simply because these locally managed businesses were invisible on NCL's map.⁶⁸⁰

NCL used its distributed literature to produce a sanitized experience for its clientele. While companies often portrayed this as a matter of safety, profits were also a motive. A disclaimer on NCL's brochure for Belize noted that "the stores listed on this map and mentioned in the Port & Shopping Presentations have paid an advertising fee to promote shopping opportunities ashore."⁶⁸¹ These arrangements between cruise lines and local entrepreneurs were prominent across the Caribbean. Though fees varied, one local shop owner in Cozumel alleged that he paid a cruise line \$10,000 and a part of his revenues to appear on their pamphlet.⁶⁸²

Private enclaves developed for and managed by cruise lines were the ultimate manifestation of western capitalist control in the Caribbean. These spaces were typically isolated to extremes—often entire private islands—giving companies almost as much control over spatial arrangement and activities taking places therein as they had on their own ships. Owing to this largely unilateral authority, cruise lines were in a position to assure passengers of their physical safety while enjoying a significant degree of autonomy in how guests interacted with iterations of local cultures. Amber Cove—a joint venture between Carnival Corporation and Grupo B&R,

⁶⁸⁰ Preble, "Imperial Consumption," 173-89.

⁶⁸¹ Norwegian Cruise Line, "Guaranteed Shops Belize City," December 1, 2011, downloaded from Norwegian Cruise Line Website Archives on November 1, 2019, *Wayback Machine*, https://web.archive.org/web/20120113141331/http://www.ppigroup.com/Portals/48/skins/ao-ppi/pdf-shopping/BZE_shopping.pdf?browser_popup=800x600.

⁶⁸² Preble, "Imperial Consumption," 258

a Dominican Company—was one example of such a development slated to open in 2015.⁶⁸³ The USD \$65 million contract to offer architectural and engineering design services was awarded to Atkins, a UK-based company responsible for providing the architectural and engineering design for 25 buildings in the complex alongside roadways and landscapes. Terry Thornton, Carnival Senior Vice President of Itinerary Planning, echoed Levis in promising that the complex would provide, “unique sightseeing, dining and cultural experiences.”⁶⁸⁴ Presumably carrying out Carnival’s cultural goals for this project, Larry Levis, Atkins Senior Programme Manager, stated that Amber Cove “will feature design themes that echo the cultural and architectural history of the nation, and particularly of the Puerto Plata region.”⁶⁸⁵ As mass-market cruise lines gained more power in the construction and management of Caribbean spaces, they envisioned culturally themed enclaves not unlike those onboard their own ships. Thus, even in foreign countries, passengers were increasingly offered experiences invented or curated by foreign corporations.⁶⁸⁶

Cultural Mediation Through Shore Excursions

Cruise lines similarly wielded a significant degree of power in shaping how passengers viewed local cultures on shore excursions that went beyond port enclaves and private islands.

⁶⁸³ Arlene Satchell, “Carnival’s Amber Cove Cruise Port to Welcome First Ship in October,” *TCA Regional News*, December 16, 2014, ProQuest Databases; Arlene Satchell, “Carnival Corp. to Open \$85 Million Amber Cove Cruise Port,” *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, October 5, 2015, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/business/fl-carnival-amber-cove-opens-20151005-story.html>.

⁶⁸⁴ Satchell, “Carnival’s Amber Cove Cruise Port to Welcome First Ship in October.”

⁶⁸⁵ “Atkins to Design New Cruise Port in the Dominican Republic,” *Progressive Digital Media Design Build News*, January 10, 2014, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁸⁶ Carnival’s project was not unique, for Norwegian advanced a similar initiative with Harvest Caye, a Belizean island destination opened in November 2016. Owned by NCL in partnership with the Belizean government, the complex included a shopping village containing local artists, as well as craftspeople and street food. Susan J. Young, “Island Time,” *Travel Agent* 351, no. 5 (2018): 39-40, 42-43. Here, too, NCL promised “authentic[ity]” while delivering simulations thereof produced through corporate assumptions about the wants of passengers, “Harvest Caye,” Norwegian Cruise Line, 2022, accessed August 23, 2022, <https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/newsroom/harvest-caye/>.

According to Ross A. Klein, the majority of shore excursions were operated by three companies: International Voyager Media, Onboard Media, and the PPI Group. These companies partnered with local tour guides, before offering programs to cruise lines. Each step added a markup to the final product.⁶⁸⁷ Local tour operators received as little as 25 percent of the price passengers paid. According to the journalist Elizabeth Becker, some cruise lines took up to 50 percent commission on tours sold in partnership with local entrepreneurs. Royal Caribbean even made a third of its profits from shore excursion sales.⁶⁸⁸ Cruise lines were thus financially incentivized to construct experiences that their guests viewed as less sanitized than port enclaves, while still maintaining the safety and comfort promised by the latter. As a result, though shore excursions were often marketed as intimate encounters between guests and hosts, cruise lines influenced many if not all of these cultural interactions. Cruise lines advanced their own understandings of local cultures before and at the time of purchase through advertising and onboard shore excursion lectures.⁶⁸⁹ They also shaped how local contractors represented their own cultures for passengers—unequal power relations in which inhabitants had to comply owing to regional economic dependence on the cruise industry, an extension of historical dependence on tourism

⁶⁸⁷ *Cruise Ship Blues*, 35.

⁶⁸⁸ *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 151. These estimates are supported by Dowling and Weeden, “The World of Cruising,” 15.

⁶⁸⁹ As Klein notes, onboard port lecturers were often provided not by local entrepreneurs, but by the same large companies that offered shore excursion programs to cruise lines. Their incomes were potentially tied to the number of excursions sold, *Cruise Ship Blues*, 36. Thus, it was in their interest to sanitize representations of port communities by including in their lectures the most attractive parts of these experiences while excluding iterations that had the potential to reduce sales, for instance depictions of poverty. However, the port lecturer’s main job, as Klein suggests, was to talk about shopping. They highlighted “approved” stores on maps handed out to passengers before they debarked, focusing on the quality and value of goods purchased from shops on the map. However, these chosen shops were primarily those that paid advertising fees to cruise lines. According to Preble, through onboard lectures and shopping maps, cruise lines constructed narratives of fear in passengers entertaining the prospect of supporting shops not on the map of approved shops. A similar practice was used to dissuade passengers from purchasing so-called non-approved shore excursions directly from local tour guides. When cruise lines advertised their approved shore excursions as safe and reliable, they implicitly constructed non-approved versions as the opposite, and in doing so they suggested that any tours not purchased directly from cruise lines were unsafe or unreliable. In both cases, passengers would undercut the profits cruise lines sought to make. *Imperial Consumption*, 174-78.

dollars more generally. In these ways, cruise lines controlled host-guest cultural interactions even in spaces outside of the industry's direct physical control.

Mass-market cruise lines diversified their cultural shore excursion offerings in the first years of the twenty-first century. While adventure tours dominated, companies increasingly produced experiences marketed as “cultural” to meet passenger demand. It was in 2005 that Mico Cascais, Director of Tour Operations for Carnival, challenged the industry to move away from replicating the same experiences across the region, instead proposing an emphasis on “indigenous” cultures to diversify excursion offerings. For Carnival's part, Cascais stated that they were “always looking for experiences that... enhance [passenger] knowledge of local culture and customs.” Elaborating upon the aspects that Carnival hoped guests would take away from their excursions, Cascais stated, “Upon leaving a particular port of call, we believe that guests should have a sense that their chosen excursion...provided them with insight into the local way of life.” Shore excursions were no longer about enjoying scenery from the comforts of a bus, the industry official said, insisting that Carnival passengers “want to fully immerse themselves in local culture and traditions while getting an up close and personal look at the magnificent ports.”⁶⁹⁰ Nor was Carnival alone in its promotion of so-called culturally immersive shore excursions. Adam Goldstein, Executive Vice President of Brand Operations for Royal Caribbean International, noted in 2004 that their “guests are explorers. They want to experience the people, landscape, history and culture of different countries.” Accordingly, Royal

⁶⁹⁰ Mico Cascais, “Keeping Options Fresh and Exciting for Today's Cruise Guests,” *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Autumn 2005), 114-15.

Caribbean's "Explorations!" program offered guests opportunities "to immerse themselves in the sights, sounds and even tastes of each country visited."⁶⁹¹

As emphatically as Cascais proposed that cruise lines and destination partners work together so guests "gain[ed] a deeper appreciation for the wide-ranging cultures of the fascinating people who make up these destinations,"⁶⁹² host-guest interactions were mediated as early destination selection, with cruise lines retaining much of the power in this process. In discussing how Carnival selected its ports, Vice President of Marketing and Planning Terry Thornton spoke to the importance of opportunities to market local cultures, "Generally, guests desire shore excursions that allow them to experience the flavor and culture of a particular destination." Even so, he conceded that experiences were to take place in "a safe and secure environment."⁶⁹³ Carnival's port selection process included steps geared towards excluding candidates that threatened the production of such an atmosphere, wherein the burden to satisfy the cruise line's requirements rested with local officials. For instance, Thornton stated that destination perception was important. Name-recognition, driven by the port's own marketing initiatives, helped potential cruise tourists gain awareness of it. Additionally, there were logistical requirements. Candidates required adequate transportation between ports and attractions; docking and fueling space; and a selection of high-quality vendors to provision goods to cruise ships as well as tour services for passengers. Additionally, promises of safety and security for guests and crew were important before a cruise line could even begin to consider a

⁶⁹¹ "Royal Caribbean International's Jewel of the Seas Named in Southampton," *PR Newswire*, May 7, 2004, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁹² Cascais, "Keeping Options Fresh and Exciting for Today's Cruise Guests."

⁶⁹³ Terry Thornton, "Expanding Options, Increasing Homeports," *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Spring 2002): 195.

port. For Thornton, candidates that did not meet these requirements were less attractive to itinerary planners.⁶⁹⁴

As Thornton's statements suggest, destinations chosen by Carnival already demonstrated a willingness to invest vast sums in the cruise industry by prioritizing development that met the company's subjective standards for modernization, convenience, and safety. Through this process, arenas in which shore excursions would eventually take place were mediated by the industry's interests well before the first passenger even set foot on the island. Furthermore, because countries wanted to recoup their investments, these concessions also produced avenues for cruise lines to forge power relations in their own favor going forward through an economic relationship wherein locals relied on the industry for income. Local entrepreneurs were particularly impacted by these coercive dynamics. In fact, Thornton even stated that in selecting local shore excursion partners, Carnival considered the operators' qualifications, reasonable pricing, and willingness to work with cruise lines.⁶⁹⁵ Control over each of these aspects granted cruise companies more influence in the daily operations of tour guides, including the attractions that local entrepreneurs included on excursion itineraries, which sights were excluded, the manner in which they conducted themselves in the presence of passengers, and ultimately how those passengers perceived local cultures.

By the next decade, mass-market cruise lines had considerably expanded their repertoire of cultural shore excursions, advertising them as opportunities for tourists to gain meaningful understandings of the destinations they toured. Carnival was at the forefront of crafting supposedly immersive experiences for its guests. The cruise line unveiled its "Only-ON-

⁶⁹⁴ Thornton, "Expanding Options."

⁶⁹⁵ Jonathan Siskin, "Itinerary Planning and Analysis is Key to Carnival's Remarkable Success," *International Cruise & Ferry Review* (Spring 2005): 132-36.

Carnival” options in some Caribbean ports that, according to the company, offered exclusive access to “unique enrichment activities that allow guests to fully immerse themselves in local culture and cuisine.”⁶⁹⁶ One “Only-ON-Carnival” excursion entitled “Eat, Drink & Dance” took place in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. According to Carnival, the trip offered guests opportunities to please their palates and awaken their senses by partaking in “Jamaica’s unique food, music and culture.” They would enjoy “traditional jerk,” thereafter visiting a beachside bar to enjoy hand-crafted Jamaican cocktails and learn how to dance reggae. There was also a self-described “walking culinary/culture tour” that included sampling island rums and learning how to make banana daiquiris, while eating “island-inspired food like saltfish, plantains...and West Indian pumpkin soup.”⁶⁹⁷ The offering was largely drive by cultural products that many tourists would already have associated with Jamaica—for instance jerk fare, plantains, reggae, and prominence of rum—either through their popularity in the United States, or through connections between Jamaican identity and those commodities produced through popular media representations.

While local tour operators were not entirely without agency in representing their own cultures, these product choices represented another means by which cruise lines influenced the production of so-called immersive experiences. Before Carnival put their company’s name beside this excursion, a negotiation process likely took place between the cruise line and local tour guides in which the corporation outlined what they wanted their passengers to see, eat, and hear. The experience ultimately received Carnival’s stamp because it guaranteed a product that they approved of—a tour that feigned immersion by touching on locality without being culturally uncomfortable. Carnival’s approved excursion reflected popular understandings of local cultures

⁶⁹⁶ “Carnival Dramatically Enhances Shore Excursion Offerings,” *PR Newswire*, July 13, 2015, ProQuest Databases.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

back to tourists while filtering out more obscure representations potentially uncomfortable to the clientele.⁶⁹⁸ Passengers generally did not see the impoverished parts of town, which would have interfered with the simulation of an essentialized paradise that the cruise line attempted to depict. The emphasis on recognizable, culturally palatable experience increased passenger engagement and satisfaction, in turn maximizing Carnival's profit from this and similar shore excursions while limiting opportunities for inhabitants to represent their own identities.

Similarly, Royal Caribbean offered an array of shore excursions through which they claimed passengers could "truly immerse themselves in the destinations they visit."⁶⁹⁹ Its "Haitian Cultural Tour" in Labadee included visiting "a typical Haitian home to learn about the Haitian lifestyle," thereafter gazing upon "a local fisherman as he finds his catch of the day." Royal Caribbean portrayed this as an opportunity to experience the country as inhabitants did, for spaces of residence and labor were both intimate and pertinent to daily life.⁷⁰⁰ However, the excursion was a simulation, and Royal Caribbean had the power to articulate the entire process because Labadee was Royal Caribbean's private destination, and thus subject to the company's direct control. Passengers viewed locals weaving clothes and baskets, cutting logs with old-fashioned saws, and cooking food over open pits.⁷⁰¹ These were activities carried out for the

⁶⁹⁸ Mimi Sheller argued similar of cruising in the early twentieth century, when companies filtered out aspects of the Caribbean that did not necessarily fit northern consumers' presumptions about the region, resulting in a homogenized impression of the Caribbean, *Consuming the Caribbean*, 63-4. Similarly, it is asserted that mass-market cruise lines drew on popular perceptions about Caribbean locales in constructing portside experiences. Companies reflected those iterations back for tourists, both through advertising and in corporate attempts to influence infrastructural development at ports.

⁶⁹⁹ "Attention Adventure Seekers: Your Ship Has Come In," *Dow Jones Institutional News*, November 4, 2015, ProQuest Databases.

⁷⁰⁰ Royal Caribbean International, "Shore Excursions: Haitian Cultural Tour at Paradise Cove and Beach Break," Royal Caribbean Cruise Line Website Archives, August 17, 2015, *Wayback Machine*, [https://web.archive.org/web/20150817133959/http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?sourcePage=shorexByPort&ProductCode=QLB0&DestinationCode=.](https://web.archive.org/web/20150817133959/http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?sourcePage=shorexByPort&ProductCode=QLB0&DestinationCode=)

⁷⁰¹ Madininafamily, "Haitian Cultural Tour at Paradise Cove - Labadee (Haiti)," *YouTube*, October 31, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGrGxMucE2A>. Consult the 1:30 and 2:17 timestamps for some examples of these anachronistic tendencies.

benefit of tourists, to reinforce their conceptions of Haiti through a popular cultural discourse that has presented the destination as premodern through a lens that archaeologized its inhabitants.⁷⁰² Anachronisms from a bygone era were presented alongside twenty-first century comforts and conveniences: ample washrooms, first aid stations, information centers, trams, and beachside cabanas.⁷⁰³ Thus, the “Haitian Cultural Tour” did not offer much Haitian culture, but a simulation thereof. It was themed along the same avenue as Royal Caribbean’s ships.

An expatriate resident of Haiti contracted by Royal Caribbean to operate shore excursions corroborated the findings of the spatial analysis, noting that he tried to display Haitian culture without impacting the spirit of tourists by exposing them excessively to reality.⁷⁰⁴ His statement suggests that Royal Caribbean hid from passenger views the impoverished slums that were just behind Labadee and even iterations of Haitian culture that passengers may have found uncomfortable. Yet, the company did not do a very thorough job of erasing poverty. In 2016, Royal Caribbean passenger Cameron Lee interviewed locals working in Labadee about their experiences dealing with the cruise line. Various locals asked Lee to bring them food from the buffet that Royal Caribbean had set out for passengers. The evidence suggests that staff working at Labadee were not fed or given water—something that Lee’s interviews further supported. Just beyond the razor wire fence, Haitian children signalled passengers for food. However, nobody was permitted to cross the fence, which an interviewed security guard confirmed.⁷⁰⁵ Overall, Royal Caribbean’s development strategy at Labadee persuaded passengers to explore and purchase in support of the company’s own profits (at concessions owned by the company, or by

⁷⁰² Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 130-32.

⁷⁰³ “Labadee, Haiti Do's and Don'ts at Royal Caribbean's Private Beach,” *Royal Caribbean Blog*, May 28, 2022, <https://www.royalcaribbeanblog.com/category/category/labadee>.

⁷⁰⁴ “Island Shopping,” *The Economist* 432, no. 9155 (2019): 37.

⁷⁰⁵ Cameron Lee, “EXPOSING ROYAL CARIBBEAN - Welcome to Labadee - Secret Footage,” YouTube, October 11, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzDYsvpMBmg>.

locals who paid Royal Caribbean fees to operate there) while ignoring the poverty that surrounded them even inside the enclave marketed as paradise.

Norwegian, like its competitors, played a central role in shaping how passengers understood local cultures through shore excursions. This process is evident in its online excursion advertisements for Ocho, Rios, Jamaica. According to NCL, the “Flavors of Jamaica” tour entailed preparing one’s own “authentic Jamaican lunch.” After picking herbs from an ornamental garden and having one’s “senses...tantalized by the different herbs and spices” on display, attendees watched Chef Irie as he demonstrated the preparation of this traditional meal, the highlight of which was one’s “own Jerked Chicken.”⁷⁰⁶ While the chef was positioned as an expert with the authority to disseminate knowledge about Jamaican foodways, he, too, answered to the cruise line, which had the final say in approving the proposed dishes to be included in the cooking demonstration. It is unsurprising that jerk chicken was in the spotlight, for both Carnival and Royal Caribbean also featured the same dish on multiple cultural tours of Jamaica.⁷⁰⁷ As argued previously, jerk chicken was prominently featured on cruise line approved shore excursions because it was the safe choice already familiar to most passengers, yet one that companies nevertheless hoped supported immersion when guests witnessed it being prepared by local inhabitants.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁶ “Flavors of Jamaica,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, 2022, accessed August 23, 2022, https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/shore-excursions/OCJ_63/Flavors-of-Jamaica%20?destination=Caribbean+Cruises&port=OCJ&sort=searchWeight&sortOrder=asc&perPage=12&startinRecord=24.

⁷⁰⁷ “Shore Excursions: A Heartbeat of Jamaica,” *Royal Caribbean International*, 2022, accessed August 23, 2022, <http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?sourcePage=shorexByPort&ProductCode=FYA7&DestinationCode=>; “Shore Excursions: Dolphin Cove and Dunns River Falls Observer,” *Royal Caribbean International*, 2022, accessed August 23, 2022, <http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?ProductCode=FY23&DestinationCode=>; “Shore Excursions: Chukka ATV Safari,” *Royal Caribbean International*, 2022, accessed August 23, 2022, <http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?sourcePage=shorexByPort&ProductCode=FY20&DestinationCode=>.

⁷⁰⁸ Norwegian Cruise Line, “Flavors of Jamaica.”

Nevertheless, even the relatively ‘safe’ offering of jerk chicken was at times further sanitized, as in another Ocho Rios excursion by NCL. Here, too, the cruise line promised “an authentic taste of the island as [they] learn[ed] to prepare and eat Jamaican cuisine.” This version of “authentic Jamaican cuisine” included jerk chicken. However, this time passengers would be preparing the dish “on a white sand beach at Jimmy Buffet’s Margaritaville,” a US-based café chain with several locations throughout the Caribbean. NCL sold passengers a supposedly genuine interaction with locals that took place in a space controlled by an American corporation, effectively sanitizing the experience. The tour satisfied even those with reservations about debarking in Jamaica owing to negative perceptions associated with crime, disease, poverty, or cultural discomfort. The tour conveniently avoided squalid aspects of Ocho Rios, instead taking passengers to a US-owned, beachside resort; Margaritaville filtered out displeasures and promised an environment that made tropicality safe for consumption by making it the subject of play. NCL even stated that, after lunch, guests would “spend hours relaxing on the beautiful stretch of sand where you may choose to relax on a lounge chair and soak up the sun or take a refreshing swim in the blue of the caribbean [sic] sea.”⁷⁰⁹

Alongside excursions focusing on cultural activities, all three major mass-market lines offered dozens of tours highlighting historical sites. Each port had at least one tour that promoted a supposedly genuine understanding of the region’s history. However, history is shaped through narratives about past events to a much greater extent than the original events themselves. Any analysis that hopes to understand historical narrative as a cultural commodity to be iterated for

⁷⁰⁹ “Jamaican Cooking Class & Beach,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, 2022, accessed August 23, 2022, https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/shore-excursions/OCJ_69/Jamaican-Cooking-Class-Beach%20?destination=Caribbean+Cruises&port=OCJ&sort=searchWeight&sortOrder=asc&perPage=12&startingRecord=24.

tourists must first address the power dynamics between actors involved in the interpretation process. Caribbean nations continued to build their respective identities in the postcolonial era, and cruise lines repeatedly promised to represent cultural aspects unique to those countries in shore excursions—although the reality betrayed that promise. Nevertheless, sites of European colonialism were unavoidable on historical tours given the centuries of exploitation across the region. Administrative and residential buildings, statues, and plantations from the colonial era remained on many excursion itineraries. Owing to the extent of these inclusions, cruise lines carefully curated advertisements for historical tours. Colonial sites tended to be described in unproblematic ways, often combined with cooking classes, art shows, or artisanal displays to maintain a benign atmosphere (**Figure 9**). Any mentions of slavery were often excluded altogether. This degree of sanitization by cruise lines, and self-policing by local entrepreneurs, was perhaps viewed as necessary to produce an experience that did not take away from the Caribbean ‘paradise’ that cruise lines advertised.

Through the above processes, cruise lines used shore excursions to construct culturally comfortable varieties of Caribbean cultures that ranged in mediation from sanitized to completely simulated. Shore excursions fell short of the cultural authenticity or immersion that mass-market lines often promised. Experiences that were truly authentic would have allowed local stakeholders the agency to showcase histories of colonial violence and exploitation. The cruise industry did not allow those representations, nor any that they deemed a threat to passenger comforts, to feature prominently in shore excursions. Iterations of Caribbean cultures that the cruise industry stood behind were not so different from the ones that they constructed onboard their ships. Largely recognizable yet essentialized views of cultures reminded guests that they were on vacation far away from home while assuring them of their physical and cultural



Figure 9. *Plaque from Shore Excursion in Basseterre, St. Kitts.* This description conveniently leaves out mention of the African slaves who colonial forces imported to extract resources for European markets—one example of sanitized colonial histories presented to cruise passengers. Photograph by the author (2018).

comfort. Highly visible signs of the Global West’s mediation—security gates, luxury boutiques, transnational chains, and brochures with ‘authorized’ shops—allowed passengers to view their portside experiences as safe; other aspects, such as the cruise industry’s influence over local tour guides, were hidden from the tourist gaze. These processes increased the likelihood that passengers choosing to disembark the ship would explore in ways that supported the mass-market industry’s profits.

Mediation practices allowed mass-market lines to control passenger perceptions of cultures on land just as they did onboard in themed spaces, but with important differences. There was no room for cultural negotiation onboard because cruise lines were the only actors with

power to shape representations that passengers consumed. In contrast, Caribbean inhabitants had the potential to resist commodifying practices so central to shore excursions. However, resistance to the mass-market cruise industry had long entailed companies removing ‘problematic’ ports from their itineraries. Owing to these coercive practices, local resistance to the cruise industry was uncommon.

Despite cruise lines outrightly or implicitly promising authenticity in cultural shore excursions, closer analysis revealed homogenizing tendencies in which passengers were presented with sanitized cultural forms that met the industry’s need to balance novelty and excitement with comfort and convenience for passengers. Nevertheless, homogenization was also present in non-cultural tours as demonstrated by zipline excursions. Today, ziplines are found at nearly all Caribbean cruise ports, just as they are enjoyed in Hawaii, Alaska, New Zealand, South Africa, Thailand, Nepal, and other global tourism destinations. However, ziplining as a form of entertainment did not appear in the Caribbean until the arrival of mass-market cruise lines. Miami-based Rainforest Adventures, started in 1994, accelerated its ziplining operations across the region by the twenty-first century, constructing zipline tours that have become popular with cruise passengers including Rockland Estate in St. Maarten,⁷¹⁰ Rainforest Adventures in Castries, St. Lucia,⁷¹¹ and Mystic Mountain in Ocho Rios, Jamaica.⁷¹² Websites for each of these attractions describe them as “Cruise Friendly,” and the major mass-market lines offer authorized shore excursions to all three, suggesting that Rainforest Adventures

⁷¹⁰ “Welcome to Rockland Estate, St. Maarten,” *Rainforest Adventures*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://rainforestadventure.com/st-maarten-top-attractions-zipline-sky-explorer-schooner/>.

⁷¹¹ “Welcome to Rainforest Adventures, St. Lucia,” *Rainforest Adventures*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://rainforestadventure.com/st-lucia-travel-tour/>.

⁷¹² “The Official Mystic Mountain Jamaica Website,” *Rainforest Adventures*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://rainforestadventure.com/mystic-mountain-jamaica/>.

partners with Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian to bring in more tourists.⁷¹³ NCL even produced marketing videos featuring Rainforest Adventures employees from St. Lucia,⁷¹⁴ suggesting that the company incentivized NCL to advertise Rainforest Adventure tours there. Furthermore, Rockland Estate and Rainforest Adventures St. Lucia both offered exclusive 20% discounts for Royal Caribbean and Celebrity passengers—both lines owned by Royal Caribbean Group (RCG)—whereas “Other” cruise passengers received 5%, implying the existence of a special arrangement between Rainforest Adventures and RCG to target the promotion of select destinations.

Discourses of verticality were ubiquitous in mass-market cruise advertisements for Rainforest Adventures zipline excursions. Take for instance NCL's statement about its Rockland Estate shore excursion. It told guests that they would be transported to “one of St. Maarten's highest elevations at 1,125 feet” for “360-degree views of the island including vistas of neighboring islands Suba, St. Eustatius, St. Barts and Anguilla,” before they “fly down the mountain.”⁷¹⁵ The excursion was, in other words, an opportunity to perform aboveness over

⁷¹³ “The Big 3: Zip, Slide & Fly,” *Carnival Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/st-maarten/the-big-3-zip-slide--fly-433105>; “Aerial Sky Explorer & Flying Dutchman,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/shore-excursions/PHI_79/Aerial-Sky-Explorer-Flying-Dutchman; “Mystic Mountain Escape,” *Carnival Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/ocho-rios/mystic-mountain-escape-425069>; “Mystic Mountains Aerial Explorer and Dunns River,” *Royal Caribbean International*, accessed January 9, 2023, <http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?sourcePage=shorexByPort&ProductCode=FYR6&DestinationCode=>; “Mystic Mountain & Konoko Falls,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/shore-excursions/OCJ_91/Mystic-Mountain-Konoko-Falls; “Ultimate Rainforest Adventure- Zip, Hike, Sky Ride,” *Carnival Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/st-lucia/ultimate-rainforest-adventure-zip-hike-sky-ride-432061>; “Ultimate Rainforest Adventure- Zip, Hike, Sky Ride,” *Carnival Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, <https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/st-lucia/ultimate-rainforest-adventure-zip-hike-sky-ride-432061>; “Aerial Tram,” *Royal Caribbean International*, accessed January 9, 2023, <http://www.royalcaribbean.com/shoreExcursions/product/detail/view.do?sourcePage=shorexByPort&ProductCode=SL60&DestinationCode=>.

⁷¹⁴ Norwegian Cruise Line, “Rainforest Aerial Tram,” *YouTube*, August 18, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txcKL4AcZF8>. Consult the 0:36 timestamp, when the Rainforest Adventures logo on the employee’s shirt is clearly visible.

⁷¹⁵ “Aerial Sky Explorer & Flying Dutchman.”

multiple countries and their inhabitants through a homogenizing gaze because it was done from such a height and distance that one could not possibly view the differences between those nations. Ziplining subsequently took place at considerable heights and high speeds—guests “go flying back down on the world’s steepest zip line”—resulting in a survey of St. Maarten that was at best a blur, and in other instances disorienting.⁷¹⁶ These ideas are even more succinctly conveyed in NCL’s ziplining advertisement for Great Stirrup Cay. The company tells readers that, though one’s “senses will be dazed with adrenaline,” bridges between ziplines allowed guests to enjoy a “bird’s-eye view of your fellow guests, the many islands to the South or the turquoise waters and their inhabitants below.”⁷¹⁷ The inherent nature of ziplining meant that passengers were already more liable to homogenize the Caribbean through the aspects most obvious to them from above—such as tropical forests, sunny beaches, and sand. By focusing on verticality, NCL’s advertisement reinforced these notions. Yet, in each of its ziplining advertisements, NCL also emphasized passenger safety and comfort, whether by promising air-conditioned transportation to and from the activity as in the St. Maarten example, or through a discussion of safety gear and mechanisms as in others.⁷¹⁸

The language NCL used was par for the course in the industry’s marketing of zipline activities, whether owned by a partner company such as Rainforest Adventures or by the cruise line itself—ziplines were increasingly being built on private islands, and on ships themselves. The recent prominence of ziplining tours homogenized activity selection across Caribbean

⁷¹⁶ Bhimull discussed verticality and speed in the colonial performance of ‘aboveness’ in *Empire in the Air*.

⁷¹⁷ “Island Zipline Adventure,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.ncl.com/ca/fr/shore-excursions/NPI_52/Island-Zipline-Adventure.

⁷¹⁸ “South Shore Zipline Adventure,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/shore-excursions/RTB_88/South-Shore-Zipline-Adventure; “Rainforest Ziplining,” *Norwegian Cruise Line*, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.ncl.com/ca/en/shore-excursions/LIO_34/Rainforest-Ziplining.

countries, for each new zipline essentially replicated the last. Often developed and operated by foreign firms, these parks took away from spaces and opportunities for locals to produce culture on their own terms. At the same time, ziplining enabled and even encouraged cruise passengers to conceptualize destinations as homogenized via the distance offered by verticality and the disorienting nature of the activity. It allowed participants to do this while operating from a perceived place of technological superiority in their performances of ‘aboveness’ over Caribbean landscapes and inhabitants.

In contrast to other developments for the cruise industry that barred local participation, either by restricting physical access to those spaces or pricing them out of experiences, Rainforest Adventures actively attempted to attract local inhabitants to their ziplining tours. The three properties above each offered deeply discounted pricing for residents. Those able to provide proof of residency in St. Maarten, St. Lucia, and Jamaica, respectively, would pay as little as one-third of the non-resident price. Across the three properties, non-residents paid an average of USD \$95.08 for the twelve experiences available to them, while residents paid an average of USD \$42.69 for the eleven activities they could book. As these properties received much of their traffic from the cruise industry, this pricing structure was necessary to generate revenue on days when no ships called for the undiscounted prices would have priced many locals from participating.

Encouraging local spending at attractions constructed primarily for the cruise industry was a double-edged sword because, regardless of the participant’s nationality, money spent with Miami-based Rainforest Adventures did not stay in the Caribbean. It is true that multinational chains within gated port enclaves barred local participation and appropriated passenger spending—funds which were funneled funds outside of the region. However, Rainforest

Adventure's more 'inclusive' model was arguably even more economically detrimental for Caribbean countries because, in addition to appropriating passenger dollars, it also channeled the spending of local inhabitants back to the United States. In this way, even attractions outside of port enclaves supported the economically coercive and culturally homogenizing practices of the cruise industry.

CONCLUSION

Since the inception of the US-Caribbean mass-market cruise industry in the mid-1960s, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian have advertised their vacations as ways for customers to encounter cultural difference, a marketing strategy that complemented a shift toward the commodification of culture in American consumerism more broadly in the late twentieth century. In the earliest days of mass-market cruising, these interactions took place onboard through tokenistic symbols of otherness. Cruise lines drew on a repertoire of essentialized cultural forms to construct their vacation packages as opportunities to escape the mundanities of daily life. These stereotypes about other cultures were formed over centuries and in some cases millennia, as people, objects, and ideas traveled the world and transmitted impressions about the culture of origin to receiving societies—impressions that were resisted and negotiated to varying degrees. The cruise industry's reliance on easily recognizable stereotypes—often rooted in Eurocentric ideologies and popularized through mass media circulation—remained a basis for cultural production during cruise vacations as the latter became more popular. However, cultural forms also evolved over the decades, as did the motivation behind their deployment. Cruise lines took advantage of the opportunities promised by economic globalization to produce larger, more technologically advanced ships while using economies of scale to keep these vacations affordable for the masses. Yet, companies needed to fill these increasingly vast spaces with entertaining activities to retain passenger engagement,

This study has shown that Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian used cultural and geographic themes to sell vacations to passengers, advertising possibilities to discover new worlds. This strategy meshed with globalizing cultural trends. Increased daily contact with banal representations of otherness in the postwar era inspired curiosity about these cultures,

increasingly inspiring the middle classes to cultivate cosmopolitan identities more open to cultural diversity.⁷¹⁹ Cruise ships—spaces that became increasingly deterritorialized—offered a nationally ambiguous canvas, and the cruise lines responded by arranging simulated onboard interactions with global cultures. Starting with tokenistic mentions in the late 1960s and early 1970s, these strategies intensified in the 1980s. The cruise lines increasingly used discourses around authenticity and immersion to market their products, expressed through themed built environments onboard. Then, as ships grew larger in the 1990s, these spaces became more numerous and complex, fusing themed architecture, labor, and products to market seemingly genuine encounters with global societies advertised as such.

However, there was a fundamental disconnect between what cruise lines promised and what they produced. As shown, whether onboard or at ports, companies favored representations of other cultures that pointed toward distant (though still temporally ambiguous and often mythologized) histories. Each theme was an illogical amalgamation of referents from different regions and eras—iterations informed by long-perpetuated Eurocentric stereotypes about the world, producing simulations that were easily recognizable as well as culturally and materially comfortable for the clientele. As cruise lines competed amongst themselves and with land-based businesses to secure an American middle class increasingly interested in cultural experiences, while also retaining repeat cruisers, these myth-making practices meant that Eurocentric ways of understanding other societies continued to be ingrained into essentially every facet of the cultural experience. The result was a complex interplay between cultural homogenization and differentiation—a process that was especially taxing at Caribbean ports as globalizing forces and

⁷¹⁹ Ulf Hannerz, “Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 7 (1990): 237-51.

passenger quests for immersive experiences made increasing demands of the resources, labor, and cultures of indigenous inhabitants.

Though mass-market lines often marketed themed experiences as authentic encounters with the societies represented, in reality these became arguably less genuine over time because certain representations—repeatedly privileged over others—gained hegemony. In any event, it has become difficult if not impossible to identify what constitutes a truly authentic or genuine representation because continuous exchange has ensured that many cultural forms no longer belong purely to one culture or another. Further, just as the structures of postwar globalization have permitted people, things, and knowledge to cross national borders at unprecedented rates, the same accretions also allowed cultural stereotypes to transmit and gain hegemony rapidly, further contributing to the problem of attributing a cultural representation to any single culture. For the cruise industry, authenticity was a useful marketing currency, just as it was for many American corporations in the late twentieth century. Simulacra produced in the name of authenticity conveniently packaged parts of cultures that western corporations deemed most likely to produce profits while excluding those aspects threatening profitability, including unpalatably exotic cultural forms, and everyday practices that may well have been authentic but simply too monotonous to entertain passengers. The final products did not treat culture as a set of evolving traditions, practices, and beliefs woven into the structure and functioning of societies. Rather, cruise companies produced superficially coherent and engaging displays of “otherness.”

As mass-market lines leveraged foreign subsidies and advances in shipbuilding technology to construct ever-larger, technologically capable ships, their displays of “otherness” became more complex and encompassing, laden with architectural and material culture elements to create experiences of immersion. This explosion of captivating spaces transformed the ships

into destinations in their own right, enticing passengers to stay onboard even when the ships docked at foreign ports of call. By the 1990s, mass-market lines were adding an array of extra-tariff amenities and services excluded from the basic ticket price. Passengers who spent more time onboard bought more alcohol, purchased more spa packages, and were more likely to pay for restaurants with surcharges, money that might otherwise have been spent at the ports of call. This situation put Caribbean ports into direct competition with shipping magnates for passenger dollars. And when passengers did disembark, the cruise industry—through investment in port infrastructures, dominance in bargaining, and ability to establish and control private Caribbean spaces (private islands)—was able to structure passenger interactions with Caribbean locals in preferred ways. Immersion was next to impossible in these contexts because the cultural interactions were constructed, shaped, or supervised by corporations with no connection to those cultures. The resulting experiences can be interpreted as potent distillations of invented authenticity.

Since the late twentieth century, the cruise industry has built its market power in the Caribbean through developmental investments, lobbying, and by using policy negotiation practices that ultimately increased the region's reliance on cruise industry dollars. This power allowed cruise lines increasingly to shape port regions and experiences therein. Companies promoted cruise port enclaves as 'safe' spaces to engage with local cultures, and these gated spaces were duplicated across the Caribbean. Each contained multinational chains and pre-approved local vendors—many of whom paid advertising fees to cruise lines.

For passengers looking to venture into 'back regions,' cruise lines partnered with locals to offer shore excursions, taking hefty cuts in the process. Often marketed as ways to genuinely engage with local cultures, these short trips were heavily mediated. Cruise lines' pre-approved

shore excursion itineraries influenced how passengers toured the country, even in spaces outside of the industry's physical control. Partnerships aimed to provide safe and comfortable cultural encounters for passengers. Just as on the ships, this balance promised cultural forms that visitors were more likely to be familiar with. Of course, there was room for local resistance to globalizing forces at cruise ports, and resistance to the cruise industry took place at each one. Despite this, and although cruise lines marketed cultural experiences at Caribbean ports as different from one another, passengers exploring those countries encountered iterations homogenized by the cruise industry's corporate vision and by the industry's understandings of passenger demands, engagement, and safety.

For Caribbean administrators and tourism operators, mass-market lines promised, on the surface, an easy way for Caribbean countries desperately in need of economic stability in the postcolonial era to generate revenue. After all, cruise lines brought thousands of tourists to ports on a daily basis. Caribbean governments invested massive sums into port infrastructure during the late twentieth century in pursuit of the burgeoning cruise industry. Much of this was funded by foreign interests, and some was subsidized by the cruise industry itself. However, Caribbean administrators saw diminishing returns on these investments as the decades progressed because the cruise industry found an ever-expanding array of creative ways to maximize their own appropriation of passenger spending, even at ports.

This study has argued that the industry's appropriation of passenger dollars relied on transmitting a narrative of fear about Caribbean societies, through which cruise lines advanced a modern variety of paternalism over passengers to 'protect' them from the supposed ills of encountering Caribbean locals without the industry's mediation, as in crime, inconvenience, cultural discomfort, or disadvantageous shopping deals. Cruise lines shaped passenger views of

locals through advertisements before they even boarded the ship. Companies also deployed literature and events about ports in which cruise lines advanced views about local cultures that supported corporate goals, for example by discouraging passengers from venturing past the gated walls on their own, or by encouraging customers to stay in port enclaves where transnational chains paid advertising fees to the cruise lines. Private enclave destinations were the most potent form of corporate control over Caribbean “contact zones,” where nearly all passenger spending went back to the cruise line. Cruise line paternalism and economic manipulation began from the industry’s inception and intensified as the lines became more economically and politically powerful, limiting opportunities for locals to profit from cruising and to represent their own cultures for passengers.

Yet there were always gaps between what cruise lines suggested that passengers would see at ports (genuine cultural interactions with locals, and at times even immersion) and the reality. As previously noted, port enclaves were homogenized across the Caribbean, with standardized features such as air-conditioned shops, duty-free retailers, high end jewelry stores, taxis, tour buses, shore excursion purchase points, and proximity to beaches. Most aspects that alluded to locality (thatched huts, locals weaving baskets and clothing, craft markets, etc.) were not truly representative of those localities, but essentializations selectively chosen because they were easily recognizable owing to their anachronism—‘timeless’ properties long ascribed to Caribbean nations. These were thus succinct, culturally comfortable ways to satisfy an interest in the genuine.

By that same token, the cruise industry’s ‘authorized’ shore excursions were carefully curated in analogous ways. When cruise lines spoke of authenticity in the shore excursions, they evoked aspects that artificially differentiated the Caribbean from the Global North such as

artisanal labor. In reality, labor force composition in many urban centers across the Caribbean was similar to those of metropolises in the United States. One would see an abundance of office workers, lawyers, accountants, tradespeople, police, doctors, and engineers, not to mention waiters and waitresses, plumbers, electricians, factory workers, and street people. Yet, these similarities were not highlighted on authorized shore excursions because cruise lines taught passengers to expect Caribbean countries to be anachronistic—a perception long recirculated in popular media cultural forms. The modern, urban Caribbean is clearly a significant part of the ‘authentic’ Caribbean today, but excursions avoided the familiar aspects that were not so different from things that tourists saw at home. Instead, the excursions presented locals weaving clothes, crafting baskets, and spinning pottery—essentializations implied to be representative of the region. At the same time, authorized excursions avoided the culturally uncomfortable. Tourists were shown relatively developed neighborhoods, while slums were hidden from view. By that same token, while historical tours acknowledged colonial pasts, they tended to avoid discussing the harsh realities of slavery and genocide.

As a case study for the impacts of globalization on cultural production, the evidence presented this dissertation suggests that “glocalization” has not been very successful, or at least that it has significant limits. The study found no evidence of negotiation for onboard cultural encounters, which cruise lines installed through a top-down approach that drew on Eurocentric historical stereotypes. Mass-market cruise lines advertised encounters with international cultures as different from one another—heterogenized—to cater to growing consumer interest in cultural difference. These companies, both products and agents of globalization, installed experiences aboard their ships that neither homogenized nor heterogenized cultures, but rather resulted in something in between. These cultural encounters were simulations fabricated through a process

of commercial essentialization that treated cultures using a formula engineered to optimize profitability: each experience offered exoticism—a sense of difference—while also being easily recognizable, comfortable, and entertaining. Thus, many of the so-called immersive encounters that passengers enjoyed on their vacations were, in reality, quite homogenous in so far as cruise lines reduced cultures to sets of simulated practices that they deployed over and over, for profit. Over time, moreover, these experiences became decreasingly genuine. Some negotiation—however unequal and limited in scope—did take place at cruise ports. Yet, the cruise industry’s dealings with Caribbean nations often resulted in cultural homogenization, as seen in thatched roofs symbolizing primitivity, signs obfuscating slavery and European colonialism, the mainly non-local shops in port enclaves, the ownership structures of these enclaves, and the growing prevalence of private islands. Negotiation with local cultures rarely took place in any formal or equitable way.

The findings of this study as they pertain to onboard experiences cannot be directly applied to non-mass-market cruise lines, for example premium companies which were a step up from mass-market lines, followed by luxury and ultra-luxury cruise options. Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian increasingly acquired many of the most 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. Premium, luxury, and ultra-luxury cruise lines were priced progressively higher on a scale, generally using progressively smaller ships, and they attracted increasingly affluent clientele as one went up the scale. Luxury-oriented lines relied on cultural and geographic theming less than their lower-end counterparts in producing experiences for a more affluent passenger base that differed in their cultural tastes. 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 interaction with Caribbean societies, is deserving of its own study.

A study of port activities for non-mass-market lines might yield more nuanced conclusions about the possibilities for glocalization, although even here we see the influence of mass-market cruise line strategies. As the Big Three acquired luxury lines, those subsidiaries shared some cruise ports with their mass-market counterparts. For example, Falmouth, Jamaica was a destination for Carnival Cruise Line (mass-market), Holland America Line (contemporary), and Seabourn (ultra-luxury), all owned by Carnival Corp. While these passengers would all debark into the same port enclave, further study is needed to analyze to what extent, if at all, their experiences differed from one another. The analysis may reveal that Carnival Corp. advertised ports and discursively constructed local cultures onboard similarly across brands, perhaps even offering the exact same shore excursions. If true, copy and pasting would have been a way for brands under the parent company to save time and money associated with producing multiple marketing campaigns and forming different partnerships with local entrepreneurs. The fact that Carnival, Holland America, and Seabourn each offer zipline tours at Rockland Estate in Saint Maarten, for example, would support this theory. More likely, however, such a study would also find important differences in how these companies marketed Caribbean ports and on-shore activities. It might reveal that upscale lines highlighted activities that promised exclusivity, for instance Seabourn's emphasis on private car tours and "secluded" or "private" destinations. The results of any such analysis would vary by the cruise lines and ports being compared, as well as the study's temporal frame.

Finally, 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 the long history of western exploitation of this region. Western exploitation of the Caribbean began with European exploratory and imperialist expeditions in the late fifteenth century, leading to conquest of the region's indigenous peoples, appropriation of the lands and their resources, followed by centuries of cultivating cash crops in these areas with slave labor, indentured labor, and local labor. 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 intense colonialism, has shaped the cruise industry's patterns of economic, political, and cultural activities in this region. Other countries and regions of the world have very different geographies and histories, both of which affect the ability of cruise companies to shape local interactions and tourist experiences. For example, one would not expect large and diverse countries like Brazil, or rich and industrialized countries like South Korea and Japan to interact with the mass market cruise industry in ways analogous to Caribbean countries like Haiti or Jamaica. It may well be that forms of glocalization in other regions would be more dominant than in the Caribbean. The Caribbean may be the region most affected by cruise-industry profit and cultural production strategies.

NOTE ON REFERENCES

The purpose of this note is to advise the reader of the reference section's limitations. The references section below contains a complete list of secondary sources used throughout the dissertation including monographs, peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, and websites. However, it deals differently with primary sources. Archives, both physical and digital, are listed by archive name only; detailed citations are available in the footnotes. The same method has been followed for newspapers, magazines, and periodicals, as well as periodical-based trade, industry and policy publications, whereas individual reports are cited in full.

Photographs included in the references are limited to those which the dissertation referenced but did not actually include in visual form. Photographs displayed within the dissertation are not listed in the references but are instead cited in full in captions. It is also important to note that, owing to complications around permissions, it was not possible to reproduce most of the images analyzed.

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