

## Cruising the Love Boat: American Tourism and the Postmodern Sublime

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### INTRODUCTION

The Love Boat  
Soon will be making another run  
The Love Boat  
Promises something for everyone.

—theme song to the popular 1970s U.S. television program *The Love Boat*

Before World War One, Movietone newsreels and Hollywood films showing images of the rich and famous setting out First Class on luxury ocean liners to cross the Atlantic were a common feature of American media.<sup>1</sup> With the advent of commercial air travel, however, the popularity of the giant liners waned. By the 1970s it was not “the crossing” from New York to Europe which people associated with ocean liners but rather “cruising:” out to sea and back to home, with a few exotic islands in between. Gone were the excitement and opulence formerly associated with ocean travel; instead cruise ships were seen as the

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province of the elderly and boring, people who preferred a vacation involving a minimum of both effort and stimulation. But on September 24, 1977, an event occurred which began a radical alteration in this image of cruising. This was the first broadcast of the television program *The Love Boat*, a one-hour comedy/drama which became an instant nationwide success. Intertwining three or four plots and subplots per episode, and featuring different guest stars each week, *The Love Boat* promoted the cruise ship experience as exciting and glamorous; suddenly, to take a cruise was to enter a mobile, never-ending party.<sup>2</sup> Filmed on two real cruise ships belonging to the Princess Cruises line, the *Pacific Princess* and the *Island Princess*, the show recruited paying passengers as extras, an effort which was so successful that every cruise to be filmed sold out months in advance. Series star Gavin MacLeod (Captain Stubing) was hired by Princess Cruises as their advertising pitchman, accelerating the popularity of cruise ship holidays.<sup>3</sup>

*The Love Boat* concept of cruising caught on like wildfire with the American public during the show's decade-long run on prime-time television. When Carnival Cruises also began an aggressive promotion of the "party-ship" concept, the stage was set for the revitalization of the cruise ship industry and a revolution in American tourism.<sup>4</sup>

Today, cruise ships are a seven billion dollar industry in the United States alone, and the overwhelming majority of their passengers are Americans (in 1995, five million passengers out of a total of six million, six hundred and twenty-five thousand were American).<sup>5</sup> Thanks to the influence of *The Love Boat* and aided by relentless promotion by the industry, 40 percent of first-time passengers are now under the age of thirty-five, indicating that the prior image of cruise ships as vacations for the elderly is changing fast. Such is the popularity of these vacations that 85 percent of all passengers say they will return to cruise again.<sup>6</sup>

Accompanying this tremendous boom in the popularity of cruising is a new line of cruise "mega-ships." As tall as the Statue of Liberty, over three hundred meters long and carrying more than three thousand passengers, the largest of these behemoths make the television "Love Boat" look like a bathtub toy.<sup>7</sup> Enclosing multiple swimming pools, shopping malls, movie theaters and huge expanses of glass and chrome, cruise ships today are veritable floating cities.

This article asks why cruise travel is so popular, and explores the implications this popularity has for American tourism (which is the institutionalization of the cross-cultural encounter). The answers to these

questions are only half concerned with the person who travels, the tourist. In the equation we must also factor those people visited by the tourist, the “toured.” The relationship between the two crosses many boundaries, not only those between nations, but cultural and psychological borders as well. I explore these border-crossings not only to investigate the leisure habits of American people; I am also concerned with the transformation of the human subject within that far-reaching global transformation which has been termed “postmodernism.”

### MUTATION

I am proposing the notion that we are here in the presence of something like a mutation in built space itself.<sup>8</sup>

This statement, from Fredric Jameson’s article “Post-Modernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” refers quite specifically to the lobby of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. His position is that the architectural elements of this structure—its multiple balconies, glass elevators and most of all enormous volume—work together to somehow represent the postmodern condition. In order to discuss the impact of postmodern architecture on human perception, I employ the distinction between “place” and “space” made by Michel de Certeau in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*. For de Certeau, “Place” indicates stability, a condition in which constituent elements of a scene are “distributed in relationships of coexistence.” By contrast, “space” results when movement, speed and time enter the picture. Elements of instability, these variables mark the entrance of the human factor. “*Space is a practiced place,*” says de Certeau. “Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers.”<sup>9</sup> By delineating a separation between environment and use of environment, these definitions of “space” and “place” will allow me to rethink the institution of travel: specifically, the relationship between tourists and their cultural Others, the “toured.”

### PLACE

The central atria of the latest cruise ships are essentially exact replicas of the de Certeauian “place” Jameson finds in the Bonaventure hotel. The architectural elements of multiple levels, huge volume and even glass elevators are all in place: in fact John Portman, creator of

the Bonaventure, also designed the *Sovereign of the Seas*, first in the string of new “megaships” to which I refer. The inevitable differences between cruise ships and hotels, both in terms of “space” and “place,” only serve to make the former more fully realized examples of Jameson’s “mutation in built space.” Due to the absence of a single grand entrance, the Bonaventure “aspires to being a total space, complete world, a kind of miniature city.”<sup>10</sup> Jameson adds that properly the Bonaventure should not have any entrances at all, for “it does not wish to be a part of the city, but rather its equivalent and its replacement or substitute.”<sup>11</sup> The cruise ship marks the realization of this hitherto impossible dream: while the Bonaventure is reduced to hiding its entrances in an attempt to minimize its connections to the world outside, the cruise ship by its very nature is able to sever them at will. The cruising industry’s philosophy of the last twenty years, contained in the Carnival Cruises’ slogan which helped launch the current boom in cruise travel, runs “The ship is the destination.” Passengers are encouraged to view the ship itself as both the means and end of their vacation travel; thus the ship is literally a complete world, embodying both the voyage and its object.

Jameson follows his discussion of the Bonaventure with a section entitled “The New Machine.” In it, he gives another example of a postmodern de Certeauian space, this one collectively represented by the constant stream of helicopters occupied by Michael Herr during his stint as a Vietnam War correspondent. In his book *Dispatches*, Herr represents the war as a series of vignettes broken continually by the sound of rotor blades.<sup>12</sup> Jameson interprets this sound and sense of ceaseless motion as constituent of the postmodern experience: “In this new machine, which does not, like the older modernist machinery of the locomotive or the airplane, represent motion, but which can only be represented *in motion*, something of the mystery of the new postmodern space is concentrated.”<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the cruise ship is no longer a mere vehicle of transportation: it is a postmodern world in motion whose function is to *cruise*. This representation upsets a variety of modernist assumptions about the nature of traveling; it also has implications for the use of this new machine, its employment and also its deployment, as (de Certeauian) *space*.

## SPACE

With his definition of the Bonaventure as a “mutation in built space,” Jameson argues by implication that the other, presumably modernist, places we inhabit are no longer reflective of conditions outside them. Are we then to assume that we enter the Bonaventure lobby unprepared for its fearfully accurate representation of the postmodern condition? This would seem to be the case:

My implication is that we ourselves, the human subjects who happen into this new space, have not kept pace with that evolution . . . we do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace, as I will call it, in part because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space I have called the space of high modernism.<sup>14</sup>

Here Jameson argues that postmodern architecture has outstripped our conceptual ability to locate ourselves within the (de Certeauian) place it creates, and by extension that our confusion inside the Bonaventure is representative of our confusion with the postmodern world in general. In a significant parenthetical aside, Jameson indicates the possibility of a practice corresponding with this new place:

(and I would want to add that to this new total space corresponds a new collective practice, a new mode in which individuals move and congregate, something like the practice of a new and historically original kind of hyper-crowd).<sup>15</sup>

“Corresponds” is an interesting word choice, for it refuses to reveal origin—when and how this new practice developed. However, it leaves no doubt that a new practice exists, and when juxtaposed with the passage I quoted before an origin is suggested: if we as individuals are unprepared to cope with this new place then the evolution of this new spatial practice must be forced upon us.<sup>16</sup> That discomfort is the result of this process is indicated at the end of Jameson’s discussion of the Bonaventure. The effect of forcing a collection of bemused individuals into a hyper-crowd is “a milling confusion, something like the vengeance this space takes on those who still seek to walk through it.”<sup>17</sup> He follows this by mentioning the despair of the shopkeepers, whose minute parts of this place are easy to stumble over but almost impossible to find again. There are two assumptions at work here. First, James-

on assumes that this place exists to be walked through; i.e. that this movement is one of the set of practices which constitute the Bonaventure as a de Certeauian “space.” Second, his comment about the shopkeepers reveals the impracticality of the Bonaventure’s desire to construct itself as separate from the city outside (where shops are easier to locate again, and thus are much more visited by shoppers).

On a cruise ship, these assumptions are invalid. Los Angeles does not call from beyond the walls, and since ship atria do not serve the everyday practical purposes of hotel lobbies—registration, telephoning, providing bellhops, etc.—there are no particular destinations which need to be found. In fact, on board a cruise ship a certain inability to locate both oneself and other things is actually desirable. It makes the space more interesting (boredom is the ultimate horror on cruise ships), and beyond that the atrium is an attraction in itself. One enters it to see it and to watch others seeing it. In this way the hyperspace of the atrium is essential to the creation of the ship as surrogate city, for insofar as it does create confusion it merely duplicates the feeling of vastness contained in all large cities, no matter how well one knows them. Lack of spatial orientation is thus transformed by ship atria into an integral part of the experience of ship as world, and the industry goes to great lengths to achieve this. Two recent ships, the *Legend of the Seas* and the *Splendour of the Seas*, have internal atria which rise ten decks or thirty-eight meters high, while the atrium of the Carnival Cruises’ ship, the *Ecstasy*, is lit by several miles of softly glowing neon tubing.<sup>18</sup> It changes color slowly, over a period of four days, so that it always looks different, new, exciting.

Earlier, I established a link between Jameson’s “new machine” and the cruise ship, both of which are examples of postmodern space because they are locatable only in motion. I’d like to extend that link now to the individual who operates within the postmodern space of the cruise ship. It is not only the atrium of the ship that is designed to facilitate an atmosphere of ceaseless movement. The placement of everything aboard is determined so that each *passenger* is also located only in motion. This is borne out in the advertising rhetoric of the cruise ship lines, as in these sentences from a Celebrity Cruises brochure: “Fine art, huge bouquets of fresh flowers and staff members with warm, smiling faces greet you *at every turn*. Lounges, thoughtfully placed in the most convenient locations, enhance *the flow of your shipboard life*” (my emphasis). Jameson’s new machine represents

postmodern space because it embodies a certain spatial disorientation. As new machines, both the ship and the individuals aboard it lose their ability to locate themselves within the space in which they move—but this loss engenders a type of euphoria of which the cruise lines are well aware. I will return to the particular pleasure they so carefully encourage later in this study; for now I will briefly explore its potential by widening the focus of this discussion of movement within postmodern space.

The transformation of individuals into a hyper-crowd is characterized by Jameson as one involving confusion and disorientation. In de Certeau's terms, it is the vengeance taken by a place on the individuals who seek by their activity to employ an outmoded praxis ("space") within it. But cruise ships are more fully realized versions of postmodern space which engender a new type of movement among their passengers. In short, it is easier to be a member of a hyper-crowd on a cruise ship. The question remains as to how this works into the larger issues surrounding postmodernism, not to mention the larger world with which the cruise ship—separate, seemingly inviolate—comes into brief contact before moving on.

According to Jameson, an individual's ability to locate him- or herself within the postmodern hyperspace of the Bonaventura is mimicked by a larger dilemma, that of "the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects."<sup>19</sup> If the spatial disorientation within the hyperspace of a hotel lobby is indicative of a larger inability to locate ourselves within postmodernity, then what are the implications of the more fully evolved practices of the hyper-crowd aboard cruise ships? Jameson determines that the postmodern hyperspace of the Bonaventure has led to a new form of transcendence: a "hysterical" sublime. However, his presentation of this hysterical sublime runs into some problems which have repercussions for the institution of travel in the postmodern era. To draw out the connection between tourism and the sublime, I will next present a brief summary of the discourse on the sublime, followed by an analysis of its connection to tourism during the age of high modernism.

## TERROR AND PLEASURE

The discourse of the sublime has been the focus of much recent theoretical attention, but its major currents were defined by Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant. Burke and Kant discussed the mental leap made by a subject confronted by something that threatened to reduce him or her to obscurity, to nothing. The power of an immense storm, the limitless vista of the ocean, a mountain which looms inconceivably high: these are classic examples of a sublime object. All create a feeling of inadequacy in the subject who faces them, a sense of the insignificance of humanity when compared to the power of nature.

The sublime occurs when the terror occasioned by the sublime object becomes transformed into a feeling of pleasure. For Kant, this occurs at the point when the subject transcends the world of the senses and gains an intuition of the supersensible realm. The supersensible is comprised of the set of conditions which structure the self-which-experiences. As such it has no existence except by definition, for we cannot know (i.e. experience) that which conditions our existence. The fearful sublime object becomes pleasurable when the self is saved by this idea of the supersensible, a “pure, self-subsistent reason” which proclaims its superiority to the terror which the self experiences during the sublime moment.<sup>20</sup> For instance, an object of such extreme size that it cannot be encompassed by the imagination (the faculty of the sensible) is threatening until the idea of infinity presents itself. Infinity comes from the realm of the supersensible—it cannot be directly apprehended by experience—yet it offers the self a way of coming to terms with an otherwise unfigurable sublime object.

## THE MODERN TOURIST

The connection between the sublime and travel in the modern age becomes clear with reference to Dean MacCannell’s book *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Writing in the 1970s, MacCannell analyzed tourism as it related to the larger issue of modernity.<sup>21</sup> His book takes a structuralist approach which offers a combination of sociology (Durkheim, Goffman) and semiotics (Levi-Strauss and the early Barthes). At times this works very well, as when MacCannell offers a semiotic breakdown of the process involved in the creation of the



“sights” in sightseeing. At other times, though, MacCannell’s study suffers from the lack of a post-structuralist approach; this shortfall becomes apparent upon examining the arc of his analysis. MacCannell’s project as a whole is to define tourism as the premier social mechanism serving to reinforce modernity. Tourists’ experience of cultures outside their own is constitutive of the “unifying consciousness” of modern society. Post-structuralist and postmodern theories, with their formulation of the split subject and analysis of the breakdown of the formative “grand themes” or meta-narratives of modernity, offer quite a different view of the operation and function of the institution of tourism. According to MacCannell, modern society is characterized by “social structural differentiation.”<sup>22</sup> By differentiation MacCannell means “the totality of differences between social classes, life-styles, racial and ethnic groups, age grades, political and professional groups and the mythic representation of the past to the present.”<sup>23</sup> This differentiation happens continually and at a speed beyond the capacity of individuals to respond, resulting in the modernist ailment of “alienation.”

MacCannell’s use of the word alienation undergoes a degree of slippage. At times he employs it in the Marxist sense of a worker’s separation from the object of his or her labor, but more often he extends its meaning to refer to the modern individual’s sense of unease, or feeling out of step with the modern world. This argues for a closer connection between the effect of modern and postmodern spaces on the individual than Jameson would like to admit. However, the means by which alienation is overcome in MacCannell’s book is one which falls firmly within the purview of modernism.

Sightseeing is a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience.<sup>24</sup>

Tourism within modernity is thus a search for the experience of the sublime, with the institution of modernism itself functioning as the sublime object. Following Emile Durkheim, MacCannell sees “differentiation” as the origin of the freedom of modern society, but also the source of contradiction, conflict and instability. All of these, as well as the (Marxist) alienation stemming from the extreme specialization and fragmentation of labor after industrialization, prevent the establishment of a “synthetic social perspective,” a unified and coherent world

view. In order to overcome this lack, tourists construct a view of their society and their place within it from a vantage point outside of that society. MacCannell's use of the word "sightseeing" suggests the nature of this construction. It is those cultural Others visited by tourists, the "toured," who offer the space outside society which enables the tourists' sublime leap to transcendence.

According to MacCannell, "For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles."<sup>25</sup> Moderns compensate for the fragmented nature of life within modernity by imagining that there is a unified, non-fragmented reality which lies elsewhere. Tourists seek out these signs of authenticity in the hope that the encounter with them will lessen their alienation: the tourist's desire is to go, to see, and to return transformed. A bullfight in Spain does not stand alone as an experience leading to transcendence. But if a tourist believes in the exotic as a transforming force, then the bullfight may take on new dimensions, become an epic battle of life and death much more meaningful than those fought back home by those false gladiators, football players. True passion and struggle have not fled the world, the tourist thinks: they are there to be witnessed in the form of the thrashing bull, the matador wiping his sword. Therein lies the potential to transcend modern alienation.

But what exactly is the "authentic" in a touristic encounter with the "toured?" Following Erving Goffman's sociological work on everyday life, MacCannell lists six stages representing increasing levels of access to the "authentic" life of the cultural Other. The first is a "front region:" a space completely created for tourists, like a souvenir shop, a "tourist trap." The second is still a tourist trap, but one which has been cosmetically altered by adding elements of a "back region," an area where the real life of the "toured" takes place (MacCannell gives the example of fishnets on the wall of a seafood restaurant as a second stage environment). Stage three is a front region completely organized to appear like a back region, stage four a back region which is open to outsiders (a tour of the White House), stage five a back region "cleaned up or altered a bit" to allow tourists a quick glance within, and the final sixth stage is an actual back region in which the true life of the cultural Other plays itself out.

The sixth level of MacCannell's back stage progression motivates all of the other stages: the souvenirs bought in a (first stage) souvenir

stand serve to evoke the exotic difference truly present only in the sixth and final back region. Each stage involves less and less mediation between the modern tourist and the authentic experience which he or she craves. Yet ultimately this search is an impossible one. In his article "Semiotics of Tourism", Jonathan Culler points out that the authentic within touristic experience is always already mediated, indeed must be in order for the experience to have meaning as authentic. "The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity, is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself, and hence not authentic in the sense of unspoiled."<sup>26</sup> In other words, the experience is perceived as authentic only if interpretation has already taken place: without the hidden agenda which accompanies the modern tourist, the bullfight may simply represent a bloody, meaningless spectacle.

MacCannell's modern tourists are aware of the presence of mediation in their encounters with the cultural Other; after all, how many tourists believe that the President of the United States actually lives in the roped-off areas of the White House they are allowed to see? Tourists are aware that truly authentic experience or knowledge of the "toured" is an always receding frontier, that one can always go farther off the beaten (tourist) track in search of the final "back region." But this search is predicated upon an aspect which goes unacknowledged by both MacCannell and his tourists, that some hint of the unknown is always necessary to the modern tourists' encounter with the cultural Other, no matter which of the six stages they attempt to access.

In my recasting of MacCannell's analysis of tourism in the framework of the sublime, the "back region" corresponds to the supersensible realm. It is the apprehension (not knowledge) of this realm that enables the tourist to overcome the alienation which is characteristic of modernity. Upon this unknowable aspect of the "toured" the tourist predicates the leap of faith which constructs the Other as possessing that ineffable cohesion, that ultimate wholeness which, lacking back home, has resulted in the alienation of modernism.

The maintenance of this core of ignorance within the tourist's relationship with the "toured" is vital for MacCannell's transcendence of alienation. But this essential unknowability of the Other creates an element of trepidation in the experience of tourism which MacCannell does not address. Accordingly, at this point I will relocate the terror of the sublime from the familiar to the strange, from the modernist aliena-

tion which MacCannell locates at home to the alienating Otherness which I locate within the encounter with the cultural Other, the “toured.”

#### BREAKDOWN

According to MacCannell, tourism revolves around the meta-narratives constitutive of modernism: the myth of lost origins, the fundamental alienation of modern society, its separation from nature, etc. But the attempt to construct a transcendent narrative from the touristic encounter is, I maintain, in continual danger of breaking down at the moment of that encounter. Mediation appears in MacCannell’s backstage progression as an inevitable trope of travel against which the tourist struggles. Yet I contend that in the economy of fear and pleasure at work within the sublime, mediation is a boundary which is actively maintained. The souvenir and slide (or video) shows which function back home as triumphant signifiers of transcendence successfully attained serve to distance the tourist from the terror of the actual encounter with the “toured” while abroad. This is the crucial point: the fear of alienation at home which functions as the sublime terror in MacCannell’s narrative of transcendence is matched while abroad by another, less familiar and thus more horrible fear: the fear of difference, of the Other.

Homi Bhabha’s article “Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism” presents a detailed analysis of the mechanisms of colonial domination. He identifies two discourses—one of pleasure and desire, the other of domination and power—which run simultaneously through Western peoples’ encounters with their cultural Others. Bhabha locates the source of this ambivalence in the Lacanian schema of the Imaginary. The subject enters into the field of the Imaginary at the moment of the mirror stage, when a child recognizes its own image, as such, for the first time. This act enables the child to begin making identifications among things, seeing sameness and equivalencies. But this is also problematic, for as Bhabha says:

The subject finds or recognizes itself through an image which is simultaneously alienating and hence potentially confrontational. This is the basis of the close relation between the two forms of identification complicit with the Imaginary—narcissism and aggressivity.<sup>27</sup>

The nature of the touristic experience may be defined through this central conflict inherent in the recognition of the Other. On the one hand, there is the narcissistic potential to use that confrontation to say something about oneself. On the other, there is an element of danger—of threat to the self—which must be faced: and this is the “alienation,” rather than MacCannell’s modernist angst, which I would locate at the heart of the tourist’s encounter with the “toured.”

If we associate danger with terror and narcissism with a certain pleasure, the connection between the Lacanian twin poles of identification in the Imaginary and the sublime becomes apparent. But the sublime involves the transformation of fear into pleasure. How is this accomplished in the experience of tourism? Edmund Burke insisted upon the importance of self-preservation during the sublime encounter. Simply put, Burke’s position is that unless the subject maintains a certain distance from the sublime object, the terror inspired by the object will overwhelm him or her and no pleasure—“delight” in Burke’s vocabulary—will occur.<sup>28</sup>

In MacCannell’s analysis, souvenirs and photographs function as mechanisms used to overcome alienation. They are fetishes to Otherness, testifying to difference successfully contacted and transcended. But the buying of a souvenir or the taking of a photograph also enables the preservation of distance between tourist and “toured.” These acts make possible a mental leap to the future which may function as the sublime mechanism which transforms terror into pleasure. If the immediate encounter with difference threatens to overwhelm the tourist, he or she begins to imagine how relatives will listen, rapt, to the telling of the tale. Snapping a picture of the scene likewise distances the present by acting to “preserve” it for the future. Either way this manipulation of time results in the pleasure of the sublime, an abrupt reversal which removes the threat of difference and transforms the experience into a pleasurable one.<sup>29</sup>

According to MacCannell, the modern tourist assigns to the cultural Other a “naturalness” or authenticity which modern societies lack. But MacCannell does not problematize the relationship between tourist and “toured,” the delicate balance of narcissistic desire and sublime terror at the heart of the American Tourist’s encounter with cultural Otherness. The tourist attempts to cope with the threat of difference by constructing cultural Others so that they represent something desirable rather than dangerous. But this also has the effect of separating, by

definition, the tourist from the “toured”—saying in effect that cultural Others are those who have what “we” lack—creating in the process the distance necessary for self-preservation and the pleasure of the sublime. In other words, the sublime for the modern tourist involves an identification with the Other which simultaneously maintains a distance between them. From this I conclude that the mediation always already present in MacCannell’s dialectic of authenticity is both necessary to and desired by the tourist in his or her search for transcendence not of modernist alienation, but of the fear of difference, of the Other. In the postmodern tourism of cruise travel it is only this fear which remains; the dialectic of authenticity—and thus the mediation—between tourist and “toured” changes in the light of the altered nature of the transcendence proposed by Jameson in his attempt at a postmodern sublime.

#### HYSTERICAL SUBLIME?

Although he hints at the postmodern or “hysterical” sublime for much of his essay, Jameson’s actual definition of it is quite brief. The hysterical sublime occurs when the content of the “new global space” of postmodernism has “moved the closest to the surface of consciousness, as a coherent new type of space in its own right.”<sup>30</sup> This definition raises far more problems than it solves, for Jameson’s choice of phrasing contains several concepts which he is at pains to modify elsewhere in his article. Early on he argues for the elimination of the “depth model” of perception, claiming instead that the “first and most evident” feature of postmodern art is “a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense.”<sup>31</sup> He likewise maintains that postmodernism presses us to change our notion of ourselves, pushing us to achieve a mutation in “what perhaps can no longer be called consciousness.”<sup>32</sup> Finally, there is that word “coherent,” strange because, as I said earlier, the sublime object is sublime precisely because it is untotalizable: it threatens us because it is unknowable, incoherent.

There is a fundamental tension in Jameson’s concept of the hysterical sublime. To him, postmodernity is a global totality which demands that we change our perceptions to fit it. The sublime, which by Kant’s definition offers a means to apprehend that which we cannot comprehend, is not what Jameson presents. He conflates apprehension and

comprehension and delegates them both to a future realm which would require an as yet unknown mutation in our concept of the subject. His hysterical sublime is further down this scale: in it we merely recognize our inadequacy to operate within the space of the postmodern. Transcendence occurs, not by overcoming this inadequacy as in Kant, but by realizing the impossibility of totalizing the postmodern, as our consciousnesses are presently structured. It is a transcendence in which we abandon ourselves to the postmodern and submit to its power over us.

### CROWD-PLEASERS

In fact, when Micky Arison, who has taken over the operation of Carnival [cruise line] from his father, talks of demographics, he sometimes slips into referring to passengers as “the audience.”<sup>33</sup>

I contend that we should see cruise ship travel in exactly Arison’s terms: passengers abandon themselves to an experience and an environment which have been created for them. On their cruise ship, the “new machine,” the passengers (“audience”) wander with purpose through the vast space of the atrium. Though its overarching glass roof reveals the sky, it looks its best on cloudy nights when thousands of tiny lights on the domed ceiling twinkle, distant galaxies for star-struck eyes. In the “Egyptian Bar,” passengers travel back centuries to surround themselves with sarcophagi and mummies. They shrink to mouse size to enter the bar “Cats,” modeled on the sets from the musical with giant thread spools as tables, enormous soup cans and laundry detergent boxes in the corner. If they become homesick from all this disorientation, they may head for “Chinatown,” a restaurant whose red dragons, gilt and jade could be in San Francisco, or Toronto, or Sydney. If they are there late enough they might run into the Norwegian second-mate, who is allowed to mix with the passengers—after midnight. MacCannell’s characterization of tourism as travel leading to transcendence no longer holds true here: what cruising promises, and what it delivers, is something completely different from “authentic” experience.

An article in *Cruise Travel* on “The Perfect Cruise” describes a city tour taken as a port-of-call activity during a cruise along the Mexican coast.

We tried the city tour . . . which includes a five-minute stop at Gringo Gulch for a glimpse of Elizabeth Taylor’s water tank and the trees hiding her house, plus a drive south along the coast past vacation homes and hotels

for a cliff-top view of Mismaloya Bay, where *Night of the Iguana* was filmed.<sup>34</sup>

The article deplores the inauthentic nature of the tour; as “serious” travelers, they were in search of the authentic. But the itinerary of the tour remains as testimony to the new position occupied by authenticity in the hierarchy of postmodern travel. With cruising, the search for authentic difference is no longer primary. Now it is a motif among motifs, still accessible but no longer foregrounded as the *raison d’être* of travel. Even the writers for *Cruise Travel* find it impossible to maintain a conception of the “toured” as those who live a more authentic existence: “Despite their worn clothes, they are shrewd street vendors who make a living hawking belts, purses, and shirts.”<sup>35</sup>

#### THE LAPSE OF THE AUTHENTIC

If tourists no longer search for authenticity with the same intensity and motivation as before, then what has replaced that desire? In other words, what is attracting Americans to cruise ship vacations? According to a poll of passengers quoted in the well-respected Frommer’s guide to cruise ships, the reasons are manifold. Poll respondents said that they enjoyed cruising because “it’s lazy and relaxing,” because “it eliminates travel frustrations,” because “it’s an escape from the telephone and stress” and because “there’s something to do every minute.”<sup>36</sup>

A non-cruise ship vacation such as a trip to Europe requires tourists to handle details of transportation, hotels, restaurants and sightseeing, all of which require dealing with schedules, bookings, tariffs and tickets. These aspects of the infrastructure of travel have something in common: they are under the control of the indigenous population, the “toured,” and thus accentuate the fear of loss of self at the heart of Tourists’ encounters with cultural Others. Package tours and guided tours offer progressively greater degrees of insulation from the Other (which is precisely why they are denigrated as “inauthentic” by the independent tourist). However, even on a guided tour there are only one or two guides assigned to mediate between the tourist and the cultural Other. Compare this to cruise ships, where the crew might number a thousand, most of whom are devoted to serving the passengers. Cruise ship passengers are thus surrounded by a multi-cultural crew required



to cater to their whims, which keeps discomfort to a minimum. With such service, why bother with the search for the authentic? For those so inclined, there's a poolside mariachi band playing every hour on the hour, or Ukranian folk dancing in the Starlight Lounge at seven, nine and twelve.

If we assume, as do Jameson and many other theorists of postmodernism, that everyone and everything is caught up within the multi-national, "late" capitalism which is indicative of postmodernity (the same attitude that defines every basket maker in the market as merely out for profit) then the cultural Other is no longer the site (sight) and sign of the authentic. Instead, the Other can trigger only a nostalgia for an authenticity which has vanished. Jameson's sublime entails leaving this nostalgia behind in order to suddenly apprehend the fact that we are all caught up in the non-authentic system of postmodernism. The pleasure in his schema comes from accessing for a dizzying moment a new mode of perception, a new ordering of reality.

I will demonstrate that the danger of Jameson's sublime is that it posits difference as that which is caught up within postmodernism (difference as commodity) and is thus figurable, or knowable. This makes possible situations such as the following: Royal Caribbean Cruise Line now has a private island. Called "CoCoCay", it recently received a seven million dollar upgrade resulting in "an all-new picturesque lagoon, complete with a special dock and walkway that offers a panoramic vista of sparkling white beaches, lush greenery and groves of coconut palms."<sup>37</sup> Royal Caribbean's complete creation and orchestration of even off-ship experiences is possible because none of its passengers expect to find anything fundamentally different on shore in a "real" (i.e. authentic) Caribbean island.<sup>38</sup>

#### THE BEAUTIFUL

Jameson's sublime and the cruise ship experience both establish difference as a commodity, and thus eliminate that central core of ignorance which MacCannell's modern tourism was predicated upon retaining and mastering. Returning to de Certeau's delineation of "place" and "space," postmodern cruise travel sees the world as pure place: stable and sterile, a series of fragments juxtaposed with no inherently significant order. The effect of cruising's manipulations of *place* is to create an erasure of *space*—the set of practices of the cultural Other. In-

digenous peoples are selectively appropriated by the cruise lines; elements crucial to the scene are added as carefully as in any kitchen recipe. The sales, service and maintenance staff of Royal Caribbean's island CoCoCay commute daily by boat to jobs in Banana Jack's Cafe and Coconut Willie's; they sell handicrafts wholesale to the CoCoCay Boathouse and Mercantile Company, then man the cash registers.

The *Mermoz* [cruise ship] becomes a floating concert hall during "Music Festival at Sea." A highlight of this year's program was a concert at the ancient Greek amphitheater at Epidaurus.<sup>39</sup>

The surrogate world of the ship extends itself, breathing space into ancient place. The music lends the old stones not meaning, but an unblemished aggregation of elements: the perfect atmosphere. This use of the amphitheater, along with the flawless architecture of the artificial lagoon on CoCoCay, are both attempts to retain the inexpressible within the negation of difference—but for a purpose quite opposite than that of the sublime.

Cruise travel, like Jameson's "hysterical" sublime, is much closer to the analytic of the beautiful than that of the sublime. The beautiful is that aesthetic category which exists in opposition to the sublime. It represents the pleasure felt when contemplating a beautiful object, sound or taste, a passive feeling which involves none of the terror of the sublime. According to Burke, the pleasure allied with the beautiful is a type of bodily languor in which the self is "softened, relaxed, enervated, dissolved, melted away by pleasure."<sup>40</sup> Cruise ships, with their stupendous meals, acres of deck chairs, and promises to take care of everything, are therefore quite successfully promoting the passive pleasure of the beautiful over the transcendence offered by the sublime.<sup>41</sup> It is on the plane of this new regime of the senses that the otherness of the Other vies with the twelve o'clock massage on the Lido Deck as the perfect way to spend the afternoon.<sup>42</sup>

*Windstar's* popular Norwegian ship officers will remain unchanged, as will its European chefs, dining room management, and wine stewards. The ship's physician will be American. The purser, hostess, and sports coordinators will be American and European . . . *Windstar's* crews will expand and feature Indonesian dining room and cabin stewards, as well as Filipino bar, lounge and deck stewards.<sup>43</sup>

The strict cultural hierarchy of *Windstar's* officer and crew register is

a not-so-subtle application of the postmodern perspective which views the world as interlocking surfaces rather than individual depths. It is a series of usages, operating within a plane of national and ethnic stereotypes signaled in various ways: through appearance, accent, language ability, etc. Norwegians belong at the helm due to their long history at sea; people with European accents know about food; when sick, a doctor from home is the most comforting; small "Oriental" people exist to serve—and Filipinos, who will have the most sustained contact with passengers, tend to have better English than Indonesians, the result of a colonial history dominated by Americans rather than the Dutch. All of this is carefully designed and managed to promote a sense of ease in which the eye slides from one person (or rather job) to the next without interference.<sup>44</sup> The sublime is always represented as a struggle; its pleasure is earned at the price of a certain risk. Aided by the destabilizations of postmodernism, cruise lines are able to apportion the exoticism of the Other in such a way that its threat is negated.

But where does this leave the cultural Other? Under MacCannell's modern tourism, the "toured" were constructed by and for the tourist. Yet this obvious oppression also maintained a sense of the cultural Other as unknowable, which afforded an opportunity for resistance. Modern tourists may have read the unknown depths of the "toured" as containing aggression or friendship, contempt or desire: all or none were possible. Postmodernism, on the other hand, entails the disappearance of the cultural Other. If difference is knowable and transcendence no longer a goal, then the "toured" may be manipulated with no sense of missed opportunities. Avoiding these extremes requires an alternative to these two positions; in other words, a relationship with the Other which avoids positing them as untotalizable to enable transcendence, or as totalizable so they might be manipulated. It demands a sublime which preserves the Other as unknowable yet does not allow a final transcendence of that difference.

#### THE NOSTALGIC COLONIAL

It is time to return to the questions posed at the beginning of this article; namely, why is cruise travel so popular, and what implications does this have for the institution of American tourism? According to the poll of cruise ship passengers, a certain laziness or desire to be pampered, which I subsequently identified with the analytic of the beauti-

ful, is one reason. The postmodern aspects of cruise travel enable and encourage this languor, which is distinct from the modernist motivations for travel connected to the analytic of the (Kantian) sublime.

But the poll respondents included a few more reasons not yet mentioned: they also said that cruise travel is “great value for the money” and “made them feel like a millionaire.” As a guide to cruise travel puts it: “On one of today’s floating resorts you can live every bit as royally as merchant princes of old.”<sup>45</sup> This desire marks the cruise ship passengers’ participation in a (constructed) nostalgia of colonialism, for part of the lure of becoming a colonial was the accompanying ability to live beyond one’s class, to have (native) servants and subordinates who would play the role of inferiors. Modernist travel, essentially a middle-class phenomenon as MacCannell says, certainly participates in this desire, but cruise travel raises it to its zenith precisely through its postmodern appropriation of the dialectic of authenticity.

Cruise travel is perfectly positioned by the industry to allow passengers to indulge in this colonialism without the subsequent fear of the eruption of the colonized Other which has always been a part of the historical colonialist experience. But there is another reason why Americans in particular would appreciate the opportunity to experience cruise ship luxury. Many Americans are aware that their families first came to the United States as immigrants, packed like sardines into the steerage class of those same ocean liners which offered such posh opulence to the rich.<sup>46</sup> Cruising now offers to Americans an immigrant’s revenge, in that the middle classes are finally able to repeat their ancestors’ humble arrival—this time in luxurious and ostentatious style. This is indicated by the exaggerated praises of cruise travel sung by the Frommer’s guide: “Ah, cruises! Instant imagery of . . . flashbulbs and champagne corks popping . . . confetti in your hair and stars in your eyes . . . chandeliers glittering, brass shining, and teak decks gleaming . . . white-gloved stewards pouring tea . . . organdy dresses fluttering in the sea breeze, dancing in the starlight.”<sup>47</sup> These images are deliberately anachronistic: flashbulbs no longer “pop;” streamers and confetti on sailing day are a thing of the past; ships the size of three American football fields rarely include teak decking; organdy is hardly found even in fabric shops. On the other hand, cruise ships today sail under the same stars and still include plenty of champagne. By mixing past and present, this quote attempts to link the modern mass-market “luxury cruise” to the glamour of a bygone era, when steamship First

Class was limited to celebrities, royalty—and the very rich.

The fact that 85 percent of all cruise ship passengers say they would like to cruise again indicates satisfaction with this form of tourism. Cruising's manifestation of the analytic of the beautiful is thus striking chords within American patterns of leisure.<sup>48</sup> I have shown how this results in the disappearance of the cultural Other. It is therefore time to see if postmodern theory might allow a recombination of the sublime and the cross-cultural encounter in order to reconfigure the American tourist's relationship with its cultural Other.

### THE POSTMODERN SUBLIME

Jean-Francois Lyotard's article "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde" provides a model for this recombination. For Lyotard, the project of the avant-garde is that of "undoing the presumption of the mind with respect to time."<sup>49</sup> Consciousness assumes control over time by analyzing what has happened and anticipating what will happen. It receives information, "what has been thought," and overcomes it through exercising judgment upon it. It then seeks the future, "what hasn't been thought." By means of this strategic employment of past and future, consciousness achieves hegemony over that which it cannot contemplate: the present, *as it happens*.

The effect of Lyotard's sublime is to destroy the organization of reality—the sense of control over time—which produces subjectivity. The subject's perception of itself as coherent and unique is an illusion; its existence outside this organization is unknowable. The apprehension of this existence is the occasion of the sublime, in which the intensity of the event provokes the dismemberment of consciousness. Lyotard's sublime retains the idea of the sublime object as untotalizable ("inexpressible"), yet does not project the status of the subject into the future. It thus eliminates the possibility of the sublime practiced by MacCannell's modern tourist, who transcends the cultural Other through the creation of stories about the encounter which will be related back home. Lyotard's sublime also offers an alternative to cruising's conversion of sublime to beautiful, for it retains the notion of the Other as unknowable.

Lyotard's sublime describes an "ontological displacement" which disrupts our sense of power and control over the world and those who live in it. But it does not continue on to offer transcendence. Instead,

Lyotard concerns himself only with the event, the “it happens.” The pleasure offered by his sublime is an “ambivalent enjoyment” which takes place in a timeless moment. When consciousness makes its inevitable return, there is no sense of accomplishment, no basking in the transcendent power of ideas, only a sense that nothing is inviolate, that “I,” the self-which-experiences and moves with confidence through time, is a very fragile construction.

How may we employ this fragility in order to decenter cross-cultural encounters? Donna Haraway’s article “Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s” provides an analysis of the construction of the subject in the postmodern world of late capitalism which suggests an answer. Haraway argues that the dualistic thinking characteristic of the Western tradition has been systemic to the logic and practices of “the domination of all constituted as *others*, whose task is to mirror the self.”<sup>50</sup> MacCannell’s modernist tourism realized this precept by constructing the Other to reflect a transforming image of the Western self. Cruising presents difference in the context of the familiar: the workers on CoCoCay, as well as the multi-ethnic cruise ship staff and crew, are contracted to embody carefully selected bits of exoticism, but the commodification of their status creates a constant point of identification/oppression between tourist and “toured.” Both MacCannell’s modern tourism and cruise travel, though, are invested in maintaining the dualism of tourist-toured, for they both require an Other who represents, on some level, difference and exoticism.

### THE NEW MACHINES

The cruise ship, which I have identified as the prototypical example of Jameson’s “new machine,” brought about the disappearance of the cultural Other, just as Jameson’s example of this avatar of post-modernism, Michael Herr’s helicopters, entailed the disappearance of the Vietnamese. Always in motion, the new machine affords the continuous possibility of escape: a retreat which may serve to keep safe the boundaries between self and Other which are threatened by the sublime. By contrast, Haraway’s depiction of the new machine makes retreat impossible: “The machine is not an it to be animated, worshipped and dominated. The machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment. We can be responsible for machines; they do not

dominate or threaten us. We are responsible for boundaries; we are they.’<sup>51</sup>

Cruise ship passengers, relaxing in restless motion, fleeing difference—the Other—become the boundaries set out for them by the cruise ship lines and promised in their brochures: much of the advertised appeal of cruising stems from their promises to take responsibility for just these sorts of decisions. It is the vanished Other, the erasure of difference, that cruise lines package along with a surfeit of caviar and white sand beaches. Reading against the text they present is a strategy made difficult by “Do Not Enter” signs, by the fixed smiles of ship staff and by the endless passive pleasures which lie waiting. The refusal of these boundaries requires a leap into contradiction, discomfort, blur. It requires the partial dismantling of a privileged identity, and the subsequent enclosure of a certain fear. At one point Kant identifies the movement of the sublime as a “vibration” between fear and delight, threat and transcendence.<sup>52</sup> In this state of vibration without final resolution, the intensity of the event merges with the confusion of boundaries, producing the postmodern sublime—and leaving American subjectivity open to rapprochement with the Other.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Marylyn Springer, *Frommer's Comprehensive Travel Guide: Cruises '95-'96*, (New York: MacMillan Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Guest stars included the likes of Raymond Burr, Pearl Bailey, Steve Allen, Jane Wyman, Don Adams, Helen Hayes and Dick Van Patten. See Tim Brooks and Earle March, *The Complete Directory of Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows 1946-Present*, 6th ed. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 612.

<sup>3</sup> One popular actor in the series, Fred Grandy (Burl “Gopher” Ives) was later elected to the US Congress.

<sup>4</sup> *The Love Boat* was also very popular abroad: it drew an audience of millions in 93 countries and was translated into 29 languages. Brooks and March, *The Complete Directory of Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows*, 237, 238.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas Ward, *1996 Complete Guide to Cruising and Cruise Ships* (New York: Berlitz Publishing Company, 1996), 49.

<sup>6</sup> Cruise ships travel to over 500 destinations each year: over the next three years, 26 new ships are due to be put into service. *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>7</sup> The cruise ship used in the television series, owned by Princess Tours, is still in operation and still refers to the show in its brochures: “Take a cruise on ‘*The Love Boat*!’”

<sup>8</sup> Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review*, no. 146 (1984): 80.

<sup>9</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

<sup>10</sup> Jameson, "Postmodernism," 81.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Conspicuously absent from Herr's otherwise remarkable book are in-depth representations of Vietnamese people. In the autobiographical persona he creates in *Dispatches*, Herr is at pains to recreate through style and content an honest representation of his experience in Vietnam. That this results in the disappearance of the Vietnamese people is a significant point which we will find paralleled in this paper's discussion of cruise travel. [see Michael Herr, *Dispatches*. (New York: Avon Books, 1977)]

<sup>13</sup> Jameson, "Postmodernism," 85.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>16</sup> Certeau's definition of space as a practiced place suggests an alternative to this dictatorial schema; I will address this at a later point.

<sup>17</sup> Jameson, "Postmodernism," 83.

<sup>18</sup> Ward, *1996 Complete Guide to Cruising and Cruise Ships*, 36.

<sup>19</sup> Jameson, "Postmodernism," 84.

<sup>20</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), 97.

<sup>21</sup> For the purpose of this article, "cruising" refers to the mass-market middle of the cruise spectrum, similar to the way that MacCannell limits his definition of "tourist" to the middle-class American. [see Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 2nd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 11.]

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Culler, "Semiotics of Tourism," *American Journal of Semiotics*, 1, no. 1-2 (1981): 137.

<sup>27</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism," *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker, et al., Proceedings of the Essex conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1982 (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983), 204.

<sup>28</sup> This idea of the importance of self-preservation may also be found in Kant, although he does not place as much importance on it as does Burke.

<sup>29</sup> This interpretation of Kant's sublime follows Thomas Weiskel's in *The Romantic Sublime*.

<sup>30</sup> Jameson, "Postmodernism," 38.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>33</sup> Peter J. Boyer, "Beyond the Love Boat," *Conde Nast Traveler*, (August 1990): 83.

<sup>34</sup> "The Perfect Cruise," *Cruise Travel*, 12, no. 2, (September/October 1990): 35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>36</sup> Springer, *Frommer's Comprehensive Travel Guide*, 2.

<sup>37</sup> "The Perfect Cruise," 35.

<sup>38</sup> Other private islands owned outright by cruise lines include: Blue Lagoon Island (Dolphin Cruise Line), Great Stirrup Cay (Norwegian Cruise Line), Princess Cays (Princess Cruises) and Royal Isle (Majesty Cruise Line). Some private islands change



names depending on what day of the week it is and what ship is in. (See Ward, 1996 *Complete Guide*, 56.)

<sup>39</sup> "Cruising Calender," *Cruise Travel*, 12, no. 2, (September/October 1990): 69.

<sup>40</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 150.

<sup>41</sup> David Foster Wallace's excellent and very entertaining article in *Harper's Magazine*, "Shipping Out: On the (Nearly Lethal) Comforts of a Luxury Cruise" indicates by its very title its attempt to locate the transcendence of the sublime in cruising. By Burke's definition the sublime is precisely something which threatens the subject with death—Wallace is therefore attempting to transform that very luxury which is intended to propel the passenger into the experience of the Kantian analytic of the beautiful into a sublime object to be transcended. From the onset Wallace sets himself up as the outside observer, bound to make meaning of the mass-market cruising experience. By default, he consigns the other passengers to the status of willing, passive indulgers in the luxuries surrounding them. His sublime transcendence is therefore successful only for himself, for it depends upon his status as a writer, holding himself above the feeding frenzy of the complacent passengers. The true threat to Wallace's subjectivity, though, is not that the comforts of a luxury cruise might be lethal, but rather his (postmodern) writer's anxiety that the production of meaning from experience might be impossible. He tries to avoid a fellow passenger who videotapes everything constantly, without regard to situation or setting, because the similarities between their obsessions with observation make him uncomfortable. Might Wallace's own attempt at commentary end up just as meaningless? [David Foster Wallace, "Shipping Out: On the (Nearly Lethal) Comforts of a Luxury Cruise," *Harper's Magazine*, (January 1996): 33–56.]

<sup>42</sup> Cruise ship decks are named, not numbered: for example the Fantasy Deck, the Galaxy Deck, the Europa Deck.

<sup>43</sup> "Cruise Notes," *Cruise Travel*, 12, no. 2, (September/October 1990): 74.

<sup>44</sup> Conditions of eyes and ease dictate another hierarchy on board: that of seen and unseen. The ship's crew—the seamen who run and maintain the engines and the ship—are so low in the social hierarchy that I found no mention of them in any cruise ship magazine. Yet they exist, inhabiting, along with off-duty personnel of the other lower (ethnic) echelons, an entirely different ship. Separate cafeterias, separate recreation rooms—even the corridors they use to move around the ship are different from those reserved for passengers: an invisible world, completely enclosed. Cruise ships gloss the surfaces and conceal the depths; the passengers embrace their imprisonment, seeing and unseeing.

<sup>45</sup> Springer, *Frommer's Comprehensive Travel Guide*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, the "tourist" class of cruise ships dates back to the passage of the Immigration Act of 1921: the loss of passengers from steerage forced the shipping lines to find ways to increase revenue. Modern "luxury cruises" cater to the American spirit of egalitarianism by offering the equivalent of First Class Travel to everyone: only the size and placement of the cabins alters the cost of a ticket. Kay Showker and Bob Sehlinger, *Unofficial Guide to Cruises* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1995), 7.

<sup>47</sup> Springer, *Frommer's Comprehensive Travel Guide*, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ward, 1996 *Complete Guide to Cruising and Cruise Ships*, 51.

<sup>49</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde," *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press, 1989), 211.

<sup>50</sup> Donna Haraway, "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist

Feminism in the 1980s," *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Weed (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1989), 96.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>52</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 97.