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“Hyperreality in Post-Tourism: An analysis of fun,
space and the experience of ‘hyperreality’
aboard Carnival's cruise ships”

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CONTENTS

Illustrations

Acknowledgements

1. <i>Introduction</i>	1
2. Postmodernism and the metaphor of the New World	7
2.1 Introducing the logic of postmodern thinking	8
2.2 Nostalgia, pastiche, aesthetic playfulness and hyper-reality	15
2.3 The metaphor of the New World	19
2.3.1 Disneyland- the myth factory	20
2.3.2 Las Vegas- a mecca of self-indulgence	24
3. Post-tourism and the floating fun factory	28
3.1 Tourism- a conceptual clarification or obfuscation?.....	29
3.2 Tourist roles and experiences.....	31
3.3 Post-tourism: the postmodern frenzy of experience	33
3.4 Time-space compression	37
3.5 McDonaldisation and Disneyization of tourist experiences	38
3.6 Carnival Cruise Line (CCL).....	41
3.7 The floating fun factory: articulating the underlying philosophy.....	42
4. Cultural Geography and the construction of place	48
4.1. Cultural geography and landscape	49
4.2 The metaphor of the New World and Carnival Magic	54
4.3 A toolkit to reading architecture	59
4.4 Themed environments: the Caribbean inspired Red Frog Pub	60
4.5 Themed environments: the Italian restaurant Cucina del Capitano.....	66
4.6 Close reading of fun facilities aboard Carnival Magic	71
5. Post-tourism and the media	80
5.1 Tourism and visual culture.....	80
5.2 Reading the fun philosophy	82
5.3 Reading fun in Carnival's ship papers.....	84
5.4 Representation of constructed reality in non-print media sources.....	90
5.4.1 Carnival commercials.....	90
5.4.2 Carnival blog discussion.....	93
5.4.3 Carnival's visual construction of experiences.....	95
5.5 Reading constructed reality in 'migrant tourism workers' photography.....	103
6. <i>Conclusion</i>	109
<i>Bibliography</i>	111
<i>Name index</i>	117
<i>Subject index</i>	118
<i>Abstract in English</i>	119
<i>Abstract in German</i>	120
<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	121

ILLUSTRATIONS

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 The four realms of experience	35
Figure 3.2 Playfulness reflected in garnishing.....	44
Figure 3.3 Towel animals	46
Figure 4.1 Carnival Magic	53
Figure 4.2 The Promenade.....	56
Figure 4.3 Carnival Magic atrium.....	56
Figure 4.4 Shopping on the Promenade - Cherry on Top Candy Store.....	57
Figure 4.5 Shopping on the Promenade - the souvenir shop.....	58
Figure 4.6 Red Frog Pub - the welcome screen.....	61
Figure 4.7 Red Frog Pub - entrance	62
Figure 4.8 Red Frog Pub - connective décor.....	64
Figure 4.9 Red Frog Pub - waiting staff	65
Figure 4.10 Cucina del Capitano - the ceiling.....	69
Figure 4.11 Cucina del Capitano - connective décor.....	69
Figure 4.12 Carnival Magic - Showtime Theatre	72
Figure 4.13 Carnival Magic - WaterWorks	75
Figure 4.14 Carnival Magic - SkyCourse	76
Figure 4.15 Carnival Magic - Books and Games.....	77
Figure 4.16 Carnival Magic - edutainment	78
Figure 5.1 Carnival FunTimes - front page.....	85
Figure 5.2 Carnival FunTimes - inner pages	87
Figure 5.3 Carnival FunTimes - left inner page	88
Figure 5.4 Carnival FunTimes - right inner page	89
Figure 5.5 Carnival Magic - official web page layout	97
Figure 5.6 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Cucina del Capitano	98
Figure 5.7 Carnival Magic onboard experience - SkyCourse.....	99
Figure 5.8 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Karaoke.....	100
Figure 5.9 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Casino.....	101
Figure 5.10 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Spa.....	103
Figure 5.11 Migrant tourism worker's experience of Carnival Magic	105
Figure 5.12 Migrant tourism workers' experience of Carnival Magic	105
Figure 5.13 Migrant tourism workers' experience of fun aboard Carnival Magic	107
Figure 5.14 Migrant tourism workers' experience of fun aboard Carnival Magic	107

List of Tables

Table 5.1 Disney's and Carnival's slogans.....	83
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1. Introduction

Raymond Williams' often cited definition of culture as 'a whole way of life' is considered to be the best one that encompasses human thought, activity, and experience. Culture can thus be seen as a huge arena of material and non-material bits and pieces, and social practices and relations, representing an inexhaustible source for diverse academic research. Being myself at the beginning of my academic writing career in the field of cultural studies, I was faced with a wide range of topic areas that seemed both highly interesting and challenging. The most important trigger to get me more involved in a particular field of interest was to find a potential gap in knowledge. Filling this gap, however, requires enormous responsibility, self-confidence, and above all, very sophisticated and planned research.

Since my pleasant childhood and adult memories always involve having unforgettable times on my travels, I decided to focus my attention on current trends in 21st century tourism. Due to my personal attachments to cruise ships, I became extremely interested in the literature dealing with how cruise ships vacations affect the way people perceive reality. Many recent academic papers in tourism acknowledge that the ever-growing cruising industry bears upon contemporary tourist behavior. Since behavior could be defined as an external manifestation of one's internal codes of values and perceptions, and is usually bound to a certain place, cruise ships prove to be a remarkably fruitful area for future research. Comprehensive studies have been done on the issues of authenticity, heritage, theming, and diversity (see Bryman 2004; Baudrillard 1994; Eco 1986; Cohen 2004; Rothman 2003; Urry 1995; Smith 2009; Zukin 1995). These are the works I take as my starting point when considering the poorly discussed issue of hyperreality. Baudrillard, for instance, understands the concept of hyperreality as a *simulacrum*, i.e. an image that overrides representation and "has no relation to any reality whatsoever" (6). Eco, on the other hand, explains the concept in terms of excessive reproduction, which then leads to disappearance of authenticity. Their perceptions considerably influence the way I apply the concept of hyperreality in this thesis. My avid interest grows

out of the way (hyper)reality is produced, negotiated, perceived and acted upon onboard Carnival Cruise Line Ships (in further text CCL ships). In other words, it is a kind of 'orchestrated fun reality' that has no relation to lived realities of everyday lives. This central research question provides an excellent point of departure for an academic study in an area that is rather under-researched from the cultural studies' perspective, more specifically from the perspective of postmodernism. The ambitious and principal aim of this research paper is to argue that hyperreality, as a probable outcome of the inherited Disney legacy of fun, is an effective strategy implemented and economically developed by the Carnival Corporation. It is certainly not a comprehensive study, but rather a personal experience of a cruise ship supported by current theories and discussions in academia. Therefore, I am not hoping to offer final answers to all the questions raised during my research, since answering all of them would override the scope of this paper. However, I do wish to lead my arguments to the conclusion proposed by my working hypothesis. More precisely, that Carnival's strategies of space construction, representation of its philosophy of fun in various media sources, and finally, its consumption engender a sense of highly orchestrated reality aboard CCL ships.

Structure

The initial stage of writing assumes a lot of decision-making. Among the possible approaches in structuring the paper, the one that combines analysis and argumentation strongly appealed to me. Since my research is a case study based on personal experience, qualitative analysis proves inevitable. The important point, however, is to aim for a valid, reliable and objective study. Given that, I needed to balance my findings with critical theory.

Thus I decided to structure my paper around four major areas/chapters, each of which consists of sub-sections so the reader can follow my line of argument more easily. More precisely, each chapter contains an introduction, four to six sub-sections, and a conclusion. A curiosity is that each chapter can be read on its own without the uneasy feeling of being left in the dark. However, all of them are interrelated, and all of them together relate to the main topic of the paper.

A Guide for the Reader

Chapter 1 establishes a theoretical framework within which the rest of the chapters will deal with their respective key topics and elements. This fundamental chapter primarily draws on Sim, McGuian, Featherstone, Jameson and Baudrillard and their understanding of postmodernism. In order to clarify what postmodernism is, the sub-sections will deal with notions of nostalgia, pastiche, pluralism, aesthetic playfulness, and hyperreality. The chapter begins with a short historical perspective, with the aim of contrasting postmodernism and modernism. After shedding light on some of the key notions, more attention is dedicated to Baudrillard's concept of *simulacra* and Disneyworld as its true prototype. Another paragon of simulacra is provided by Rothman and his *Neon Metropolis* (Las Vegas). The chapter concludes by showing that postmodernism prepared the ground for "the new experience economy [which] is highly integrated and illustrates how tourism is combined with retail trade, architecture, event management, the entertainment and heritage industries" (Lofgren qtd. in Smith 192). This kind of new tourism, which was influenced by the postmodern condition, was recently termed in academia 'post-tourism'.

Having introduced the groundwork theories and legacies of postmodernism, chapter 2 briefly introduces the perplexing definitions of tourism and tourist roles. Indicating the fundamental importance of experience, the central sub-section discusses contemporary tourism, which came to be identified as 'post-tourism' in academia. In the context of postmodernism, the sub-sections show the current trends in tourism, as well as habits and values of postmodern tourists. A separate sub-section traces the relation of postmodernism to the 21st century trends in tourism. By examining the emergence of mass tourism, escapism, and aesthetic playfulness, I wish to argue that these phenomena are highly pertinent to the cruising industry. Then I move to introduce CCL and its legacy of fun as an image of the American dream. I thereby consciously neglect to compare CCL to its competition on the seas. The closing discussion briefly introduces the market-oriented strategies of a company exclusively designed to sell fun. Commodification of fun is again thoroughly discussed in chapter 4 and 5.

In chapter 4, I adopt a culturally geographic approach to the close reading of space onboard Carnival Magic. The first sub-section introduces the approach and briefly examines its main debates and concepts which I find relevant to cruise ships. The concept of landscape lends itself perfectly to my definition of CCL ships as macro-scale simulacra. Then, I apply the metaphor of the New World to Carnival Magic and examine their shared features. The following three sub-sections provide a detailed description and a critical analysis of space organization, interior design, and the modes of their consumption. Each heavily draws on postmodern notions of theming, nostalgia, cultural appropriation and simulacra. The overall impression arising from the discussions is that a close reading of space is culturally and geographically conditioned by social practices embedded in those particular places.

Chapter 5 offers a new approach to tourism in that it examines the perplexed relationship among visual culture, post-tourism and marketing. The first sub-section briefly explains the ubiquitous role of visual culture in the world ruled by images and technology. Moreover, it acknowledges the imposing presence of visual culture in the field of tourism. Moving from visual culture concepts to post-tourism, the main focus is placed on the analysis of representation in various media sources. A brief discussion about consumer reception serves to reiterate and confirm Carnival's marketing success. The question of fun commodification introduced in chapter 2 and 3 is here further carefully explored. Photography, as one of the most often discussed legacies of visual culture, is the topic of the final sub-sections. To examine how framed experiences (as captions of 'reality') are nothing more than a simulacrum of the already simulated reality, I analyze a selection of compelling professional and amateur photographs.

Finally, the last section sums up my key arguments with the goal of proving my initial hypothesis valid. Nevertheless, the conclusion initiates further research in the field of cruising industries, especially due to their popularity among contemporary tourists. The concluding words also incite future research from a cultural studies perspective as an invitation to explore how the cruise ship trend affects gender, sexuality, and race. These topics are still under-researched in the field of tourism and should therefore animate future studies.

Review of Methodology

Given that my personal life has revolved around cruise ships for the last three years, this fact finally influenced my academic career. Furthermore, Cultural studies have opened up a favorable educational opportunity for critical understanding of the very issues that have become part of my personal life. In the first place, the course titled *Debates in Globalisation: Cultural Studies and Popular Culture* played a decisive role in choosing the topic for my master thesis. Questions raised in my paper *Disneyfication of CCL ships* have incited me to broaden my research. Having decided on my topic and writing perspective, which is postmodernism, I still had to define a clear approach that would suit my research. I had done a mini case study previously, but this major research project required elaborate preparation and careful planning of time and financial investment. Thus, I consulted a few books on research strategies in qualitative research (see Bell 1993, Silverman 2009) that would provide helpful guidelines.

As mentioned above, the paper I wrote earlier provided me with critical theory that was to be combined with my personal experience. I went on my second cruise on 1st of August in 2011, where I spent thirteen days cruising in the Mediterranean. During my stay onboard Carnival Magic I primarily used research techniques such as observation and data collection (written texts and pictures). Since it was a completely new experience for me, I did not make much effort to define the intellectual puzzle, i.e. to decide on what I was trying to find out. Defining the puzzle at an early stage of my research might be a double-edge sword: On the one hand, it provides a more focused research, but on the other hand, the focus could be too narrow. The threat of unconsciously neglecting something that could be important kept me open-minded till a later stage of data limitation. Drawing on Jennifer Mason (see Silverman 68) my puzzle seems to be a combination of all three: a developmental, a mechanical and a causal puzzle. Since my study aims both to examine how (hyper)reality is created (developmental), constantly maintained (mechanical), and negotiated by tourists aboard CCL ships (causal), I found it hard to limit it to only one. However, the last is given much less prominence since I did not conduct interviews with tourists aboard Carnival Magic. I am fully aware of the benefits

interviews could have brought to my research, but it just did not feel right to approach strangers and bother them with my questions. It is a fact of life that people do not want to be bothered while on vacation. However, once I talked to a couple who approached me, I tried to steer our conversation in an unobtrusive way to my areas of interest. To say that it was the only 'insider' information I obtained would be wrong. My fiancée and my many friends who have been working on cruise ships for years provided me with their compelling stories and informed opinions.

As Anderson notes, "[w]e are thoroughly attached to the cultural worlds we study, and as a consequence can only gain a partial and positioned view of it." (167). Thus, however objective the research aims to be, it is always subjective and reveals a lot about the researcher him/herself. Then again, positioning is conditioned by cultural, geographic, economic, and social factors. Despite the curiosity of my determinants (born in Serbia, studying cultural studies in Vienna, doing a research on Post-tourism, i.e. a case study on an American corporation's strategies, living in a long distance relationship with a fiancée who works for the above mentioned company) I believe I managed to make the best of each. This research engaged both my intellect and emotions. The nature of my study required observation and participation which "is a research method that seeks to not only explore what people say, but also what they *do*." (ibid.: 172). As Hammersley and Atkinson point out, an ethnographer adopts a role of a participant who actively collects all the data needed for conducting successful research (1). As a person on her cruise, I became a part of the "cultural group under [my] study" (Anderson 172) i.e. as a tourist I could gain an insider's understanding. However, as a student collecting her data onboard, I often felt like being on a secret mission. I already mentioned the reasons why I chose to participate covertly. For the sake of validity and reliability I consciously chose to combine several methods, which I hope have significantly contributed to my qualitative study. A possible drawback of such a decision might result in confusion while reading. Another limitation could be that the methods were not thoroughly developed, which would make the whole study seem somewhat superficial. Notwithstanding, I hope my research has lived up to my high

expectations of filling a gap in the existing literature and as such will find a proper place in academia.

2. Postmodernism and the metaphor of the New World

Introduction

This chapter will establish the theoretical framework within which my further discussion resides. The introductory sub-section provides a broader perspective of the socio-economic and political changes in the USA in the 1960s, which considerably shaped the way of thinking in academia. Undoubtedly, the recent modes of production have initiated observable and palpable changes in the way contemporary society accepts the reality of ever-growing commodification and globalization processes.

However, instead of anchoring my discussion in the field of politics and economy I wish to outline the ongoing debate about the shift from modernism to postmodernism. Whether the debates are valid, mutually exclusive, and accomplished projects, is what encourages my discussion. In order to fully understand these conditions of human thought and relations, one needs to be familiar with the goals and values of both modernism and postmodernism. Thereby, my research interest lies not so much in the thorny dilemma about whether there was a gradual shift or rather a radical change in the dominant modes of expression of human thought and in technological advances, but in the intellectual concepts developed by the very debate. Thus, the second sub-section introduces the key theoretical ideas of nostalgia, aesthetic playfulness, pastiche, and hyperreality, which are some of the intellectual concepts that have resulted from the debate.

Further on, the constructs of hyperreality and *simulacra* (Baudrillard 1994) predominate the sub-section devoted to the portrayal of the New World. The metaphor which encapsulates America with its system of values and dreams is embodied and depicted in the images of Disneyland and Las Vegas. These simulacra- landscapes will be taken up again and compared to Carnival's 'fun ships' in chapter 3.

2.1 Introducing the logic of postmodern thinking

The 1960s were precarious times in America that engendered enormous changes in politics and economy, which widely echoed changes in culture and social relations. The war in Vietnam, the Civil Rights Act, space exploration and the rise of feminism are only some of the benchmarks that greatly influenced culture and its many articulations. If we perceive culture as ‘a whole way of life’ (Raymond Williams) or as ‘the webs of significations in which humanity is suspended’ (Clifford Geertz), the logic behind it would be that there is some immanent system of significance according to which we shape our identities and interpret the world. The system as such assumes fixity, integrity and validity- notions which played an important role in modernism. Postmodernism, by way of contrast, rejects this holistic view of culture, plays down the meta-narrative, questions reality, and bestows glory upon fragmentation, disconnectedness, intertextuality, and heterogeneity (Harvey 45). All these can be traced as indirect outcomes of the progressive technological developments that were already gaining momentum in modernism but have rocketed in postmodernism. To clarify this point, I shall explain the key factors that determined the nature of these changes.

Fordism, as a dominant economic system in the early 20th century, deeply influenced people’s perception of life and our social identity. In regard to production, the policy of Fordism implied “mass production [that equaled] mass consumption, a new system of the reproduction of labour power” (Harvey 126). Although these capitalist features stimulate a great part of my study I feel that I shall briefly turn back to recent historical developments.

WWII and new information technology have drastically influenced the economy, whereby Fordism got replaced by the flexible production system. In his contemplation on the post-modern society, Kumar describes Post-Fordism as a market in which “[...] the consumers began to be viewed as different groups pursuing different goals who could be better served with small batches of specialized goods.” (Kumar 43). In other words, the new system of production and consumption changed in the sense that it became less homogenous and standardized and more flexible and specialized. He further notes that,

“[p]roduction became [...] more diverse and differentiated as organizations and economies of scale were replaced with organizations and economies of scope.” (ibid.: 52). The shift from one economic system to the other was reflected in all human activities. However, of interest to this study is its impact on the current trends in the leisure industry, a territory that will be covered and minutely discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Moving away from economy, the changes were especially prominent in philosophy, arts, and architecture. These cultural fields are closely examined by Jim McGuian whose works provide key readings within the fields of cultural politics, cultural theory, popular culture, and sociology. His book *Modernity and Postmodern Culture* yields invaluable insight into the main debates about postmodernism and, as such, can be read as an excellent literature review. Of course, to see his work only in that light would undervalue his underlying claim, i.e. that we still live and experience both modernism and postmodernism along with their respective legacies. Unlike McGuian, Stuart Sim in *Irony and Crisis* embraces postmodernism as the only dominant cultural paradigm of the West. Regardless of their clashing perspectives, both authors manage to vividly convey a cornucopia of conflicting opinions and their critical implications.

The birth of the new cultural paradigm, which came to be termed postmodernism, saw its early emergence in the first half of the 20th century only to be more widely established in the 1950s (Sim 17). While Sim perceives postmodernism both as a set of attitudes (philosophy) and a historical period (18), McGuian communicates this distinction by using two different terms. According to him, “postmodernism refers to philosophical ideas, mainly derived from poststructuralist theory, and cultural formations, especially associated with global popular culture.” (Intr. 3). On the other hand, he claims that postmodernity relates to social developments that primarily emanate from capitalism, which McGuian perceives in Giddens’s terms as “an exploitative system of commodity production and circulation” (ibid.: 4). Hence, his beliefs seem to be rather in line with Featherstone’s understanding of postmodernism and consumer culture as an inextricable unity.

McGuian and Sim generally agree that postmodernism marked an abrupt break with tradition and history and focused mainly on change and novelty (Sim, Intr. 10; McGuian 70). Furthermore, modernism asserted a profound belief in reason and its power to contribute to a general improvement of human kind, the idea of which is distinctly voiced in the 'Enlightenment project' agenda (Sim Intr. 6). This historical period, or rather, a condition or attitude was based on a deep-seated belief in political and social metanarratives and obtainable truth. Postmodernism, on the contrary, was perceived by Lyotard as "incredulity towards metanarratives" (McGuian 14). Along similar lines, Derridean deconstruction claimed the impossibility to fix meaning and truth. This idea was philosophically addressed in his book *Of Grammatology* in which he emphasizes the constant flux of meaning as a never-ending project of language. More precisely he advocates the impossibility to differentiate the elements and features of language, which otherwise engender binary oppositions (1976). These, however, lend themselves to "de-differentiation of experience" (Uriely "The Tourist Experience" 203) - a topic which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

There are numerous definitions of postmodernism that more or less holistically capture the essence of the present condition. The opinion of Sim is that postmodernism is a "challenge to the cultural assumptions of modernity" or a "theorisation of what is happening in more diffuse fashion in the general culture around us, of the incredulity that is becoming an increasingly regular feature of our daily lives" (Intr. 6-7; see also Sturken and Cartwright 241, 251-252).

The past that modernism resolutely rejected, postmodernism sought to embrace and reestablish a close relationship with it. Many see the underlying motives for such desires to lie in what Jameson understands as the 'crisis in historicity'. It means that contemporary societies fail to establish organic relationships with their history which could help them satisfy their need for identity. Moreover, it could help them understand their present realities. A general sense of nostalgia (a yearning for the past) emerged as a result of this crisis. Nowadays, it is particularly conspicuous in the leisure and entertainment industries. This concept, however, will be given more prominence in the following sub-section.

My proposition is that Frederic Jameson, a prominent American literary critic, offered probably the most compelling definition of postmodernism:

We are left with that pure and random play of signifiers that we call postmodernism, which no longer produces monumental works of the modernist type but ceaselessly reshuffles the fragments of preexistent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage: metabooks which cannibalize other books, metatexts which collate bits of other texts- such is the logic of postmodernism in general [...].

(96)

According to him, postmodernism brought about radical changes in culture and society. The invocation of rational criticism, constant questioning, suspicion, intertextuality, re-contextualization and re-signification, and blurring of boundaries between high and low forms of culture are features that all together adequately describe the new cultural paradigm of recent Western history and its present. What he emphasizes is that postmodernism is reduced to a practice of copying and combining past forms without any intension of irony. This is what he calls pastiche. On the other hand, the postmodern celebrates aestheticization, which considerably affects the economic system. Aesthetic novelty is best reflected in architecture where shopping malls epitomize this qualitative change from the previous form of cultural production. He explains this change by taking the example of the Bonaventure hotel in L.A. which he perceives as an allegory of a hyper-space that reflects the changes on the global market. To develop the understanding of the new cultural dominant, Harvey summarizes the suggested difference between modernism and postmodernism by drawing on Terry Eagleton's ideas:

'Generally perceived as positivistic, technocentric, and rationalistic, universal modernism has been identified with the belief in linear progress, absolute truths, the rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production.' Postmodernism, by way of contrast, privileges 'heterogeneity and difference as liberative forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse.' Fragmentation, indeterminacy, and intense distrust of all universal or 'totalizing' discourses [...] are the hallmark of postmodernist thought. (Part I Intr. 9)

For the purposes of this thesis, it is primarily important to examine how speculative disciplines have affected the discourse of architecture. At this point, the reader might wonder about my intention to focus on implications of postmodern theory in this particular field. To avoid an overly detailed explanation, it needs to be mentioned that the subject of this study deals with the phenomenon of cruise ships, which are, among other things, structures of architecture. My aim is to argue that cruise ships exert postmodern features which predominantly emerge from their architectural design, organization and representation of space.

Paying due respect to Jencks and Hudnot for introducing the concept of postmodern in architecture, Sim notes that the governing principle of 'aestheticization of reality' (see Benjamin Illuminations 1973b) turns into a play of 'picking and mixing' which eventually results in hybrid styles. Drawing on Jencks's definition of 'double-coding' as an aspect of postmodern architecture, McGuian suggests that postmodernism allows a multiplicity of fluid meanings (17). A further argument supporting McGuian's belief is offered by Venturi who tried to grasp the resulting complexity by saying:

I am for the richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning; for the implicit function as well as the explicit function. I prefer 'both-and' to 'either-or', black and white, and sometimes gray, to black and white. A valid architecture invokes many levels of meaning and combinations of focus: its space and its elements become readable and workable in several ways at once.

(qtd. in McGuian 16)

Unlike modern architecture, which primarily relied on modern machinery, functionality and modish styles, very often at the expense of poor aesthetics, postmodern architecture desires to cater both to lay people's tastes and to those of the architectural community. Sim openly criticizes Jencks's postmodern aspirations by arguing that postmodern architecture "[...] seems highly complicit with the power structure of consumer society [whereby] many postmodern buildings and even wider segments of urban landscape [...] cater to the tastes and lifestyles of the rich and famous" (105). Moreover, he ascribes corporate capital a major role in establishing and tailoring of new styles in architecture.

Hand in hand with this assertion goes the issue of hegemony of the elite, a claim that sparked off wider debates. In regard to aesthetics, whereas modern architecture is often seen to infringe the surroundings, postmodern commands great respect for both context and history (McGuian 19). Building on this thought and looking through Jencks's eyes, Sim notes the following:

[T]he postmodern manner- a deliberate rejection of the new brutalism, with the mix of old and new styles offering a less aesthetically alienating experience to the general public. Modernism has involved almost no concession to popular taste; radical eclecticism starts from the premise that this is an integral part of the architectural process. (190)

Sturken and Cartwright see postmodern architecture in the light of plagiarism, "quoting, and borrowing of previous and current styles" whereby authenticity is "radically called into question" (2001: 260). Hannabuss, however, adopts a more flexible and positive approach to the creative play of combination and style configuration, the practice of which he sees as liberating from the constraints imposed by modernism (ibid.: 296).

Apart from architecture, the postmodern discourse emphasized the fragile mental ability to draw a clear boundary between high and low forms of cultural activity. Along similar lines, the underlying distinction of 'what is real' and 'what is not', started deeply penetrating the postmodern mind. Suspicion and general confusion, as a silent outcry of the 1960s, voiced the tumultuous events that happened in reality. Baudrillard was one of the French poststructuralists, who ingeniously wrote about the implosion of reality. His ironic perceptions are very often seen as exaggerations and as such are highly debatable. Nevertheless, they reflect a deep and unorthodox understanding of the postmodern condition. According to him the boundaries of differentiation between reality and the imaginary got blurred to the point of non-existence.

[...] the models no longer constitute either transcendence or projection, they no longer constitute the imaginary in relation to the real, they are themselves an anticipation of the real, and thus leave no room for any sort of fictional anticipation- they are immanent, and thus leave no room for any kind of imaginary transcendence. (122)

Fundamental implications have arisen from a ceaseless flux of meanings, and shattered beliefs, which eventually affected the general perception of life. A German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, has strongly advocated these fundamental changes in his book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Acknowledging individuality and self-reflection as the prime aspects of late modernity, he critically voices the heightened anxieties of the current- age society (see Beck 1992). Along similar lines, Sim asserts that the postmodern temper “[...] provides the psychological spearhead for an onslaught on the values and motivational patterns of ‘ordinary’ behavior, in the name of liberation, eroticism, freedom of impulse, and the like” (23). These profound changes have also mapped out a trajectory of new trends in the leisure industry, the implications of which shall be minutely discussed in chapter 3 where the postmodern condition gets applied to tourism and entertainment.

The postmodern dialectic and the condition of contemporary societies have been additionally driven by the feeding frenzy of rapid technological progress. From the 21st century perspective, when technology and know-how are improving at an exponential rate, there is practically nothing that cannot be reproduced. Due to the technical possibility of limitless reproducibility, the issue of authenticity is being subjected to close scrutiny. Humanity became infatuated with mere representations or with what Guy Debord dubs ‘spectacle’. One of the possible justifications for such infatuation might be the fact that we live in a visual world, overwhelmingly dominated by images and aestheticized versions of reality, a world in which shallow sparkling performances and glitzed up representations serve as inspiring models; a world in which new dimensions of reality penetrate all pores of human activity to the point of irony. One of the main arguments in favor of Debord’s view is offered by Featherstone who perceives the postmodern dialectic as “a surfeit of images and signs which have given rise to a simulational world which has effaced the distinction between the real and the imaginary: a depthless aestheticized hallucination of reality.” (53).

Although postmodernism sought to break free from modernist boundaries and categories, the freedom of transgression and fluidity instilled an urgent desire for certain fixity. However paradoxical it may seem, this was to be found in historicism and intertextuality.

I am reluctant to claim that the above discussion has covered the richness of intellectual debates on postmodernism. What it largely aimed for was to survey and comment on a selection of conflicting understandings of changes specifically pertinent to my case study. Theoretical fluctuations reflected on everyday lives, values and patterns of behavior with an added focus on architectural styles have hopefully established a basic framework for my subsequent chapters. However, I need to say that I have by no means tried to answer whether postmodernism is to be perceived as a sharp reaction to modernism or rather as its continuation. A possible solution to the aporia could be McGuian's proposition that it not a question of 'either-or' but rather of 'both-and.' In other words, we should value the legacies of both modernism and postmodernism in order to understand the ever-growing and perplexing changes in our society.

Before I introduce the metaphor of the New World as an epitome of the postmodern condition and examine how Baudrillard's concept of simulacra applies to it, the following sub-section shall briefly outline some of the key concepts introduced by the postmodern cultural paradigm. These will be taken up again in the context of post-tourism in chapter 3.

2.2 Nostalgia, pastiche, aesthetic playfulness and hyperreality

The above consideration of a few debates has already encapsulated the main features of the postmodern condition. In a nutshell, the postmodern agenda includes plurality, diversity, relativity, ambiguity, intertextuality, self-referentiality, renewed interest in history, nostalgia, re-contextualization and re-signification, commercialization, commodification, etc.

Especially evocative of postmodernism and of particular interest to my future discussion is the emotion of nostalgia. Initially considered a bittersweet yearning for home, over the centuries the focus has been shifted from space to time. Hence nostalgia came to be perceived as a longing for an irrecoverable past. This shift seems directly contradictory to the postmodern trajectory which focuses on space rather than time. Yet, it is a past that never actually happened

in reality, a past which, from today's perspective, always appeals as more desirable. To put it into Eisenman's words, it is a "blatant nostalgia for the lost aura of the authentic" (qtd.in Sim 197). It is a longing for an idealized and embellished version of historical events or lost values. As such, it can be seen as a means to cope with the inherently unsatisfying present. Thus, it could be argued that postmodernism celebrates clamant nostalgia and takes recourse to history so as to critically comment upon the unreliable and disconcerting present. Establishing a relationship with the past breeds a re-contextualized past that is appropriated to fit the present needs. Sturken and Cartwright recognize those present needs in the light of capitalism with an overtly commercial flavor and define nostalgia as a memory of the past "packaged into easily understandable signs" (2001: 218).

When applying the pattern of nostalgia to postmodern architecture, Jameson suggests that a parallel with the so called 'nostalgia film' (the past as fashion plate and glossy image) can be established (19, 118). The past is tailored so as to be consumed as mere visual commodity, and not to inform or inspire "for the construction of future political programmes to improve the lot of humanity" (Sim 228). Thereby the visualized nostalgia as an image overrides its narrative and becomes what Kellner dubs "an intense but fragmentary and transitory aesthetic experience" (qtd. in Sim 237). Hence the proliferation of architectural structures that only superficially resemble the past while at the core they are a bricolage of different periods and styles. As such, they could be perceived to generate hybrid styles that consequentially allow a possibility of contradictory readings due to their immanent multiplicity of meanings. Very often the seeming incongruence produces an unsettling effect as a way to claim the unrestricted potential of picking, mixing, and combining, the features of which are indicative of the postmodern style. However, if nostalgic reconstructions of the past (Disney World's Main street USA) become devoid of intended criticism i.e. irony, we wound up with a blatant practice of imitation. John Belton understands pastiche as an aesthetic depletion:

In terms of stylistic practices, postmodern artists rely upon pastiche- a form of imitation of the unique style or content of earlier works that lacks any trace of the satire or parody that characterizes traditional forms of imitation. Pastiche is an entirely

neutral practice; it conveys no perceptible attitude toward the original. The artist merely adopts a preexistent stylistic mask and speaks blankly [...] in the voices of others. (qtd. in Sim 229)

However, this view cannot be upheld if we consider the postmodern fascination with aesthetics. Jameson's perspective provides a harsh criticism of nostalgia and pastiche, the ever-growing usage of which he traces to the crisis of historicity:

[T]he pastiche of the stereotypical past, endows present reality and the openness of the present history with the spell and distance of a glossy mirage. Yet this mesmerizing new aesthetic mode itself emerged as an elaborated symptom of the waning of our historicity, of our lived possibility of experiencing history in some active way. (21)

To move away from pastiche and pinpoint the paradoxical nature of postmodernism, the concept of 'aesthetic playfulness' shall be briefly explained. It directly contradicts pastiche in that it explores the aesthetic possibilities in a highly playful and creative manner. Best and Kellner note that postmodernists seek a politics of desire and pleasure which celebrates subjectivity, quite contrary to the modernist politics of rationalism (290).

When looking through the lens of architecture, postmodern aestheticism valorizes a combination of past architectural styles and usage of décor so as to derive intense sensory, emotional and intellectual pleasures. Very often postmodern architecture is perceived in the light of commodified aesthetic experience, which is very similar to what Debord dubs 'spectacle.'

Another striking legacy of postmodernism is the concept of 'hyperreality'. Much of the discussion about hyperreality within the postmodern sociological discourse pays weighty tribute to Eco (1986), Baudrillard (1994), Featherstone (1990), Lash and Urry (1993) among others. They claim that the boundary between represented reality and constructed reality became blurred to the point at which the latter takes precedence over the former. More precisely, constructed reality becomes hyperreality, a pure simulacrum, a new reality that has no reference to reality whatsoever (Baudrillard *Simulacra*). In the aftermath of technological advancements, a multitude of social and cultural discourses got permeated by the idea of simulacrum. In literature, the reader fails to tell fiction

from reality. Frenzied by high tech and image reproduction, the observer fails to tell the original from a copy. Authenticity, both in art and ordinary life, became a heated controversy.

Before I proceed to a more substantiated discussion about hyperreality as an essential ideological dimension of the New World, I wish to quote Alistar Williams who offers a comprehensible summary of hyperreality to the average reader:

Hyperreality is one of the most discussed conditions of postmodernism, and refers to the argument that reality has collapsed and has become image, illusion, simulation and simulacra (copies for which no original exists). Hyperreality refers to a blurring of distinction between the real and the unreal in which the prefix 'hyper' signifies more real than the real. When the real is no longer a given but is reproduced by a simulated environment, it does not become unreal, but realer than real, to the extent it becomes what Baudrillard [...] refers to as 'a hallucinatory resemblance of itself'. In postmodernism, with the advent of hyperreality, simulations come to constitute reality itself. (484)

To understand Williams' perception of hyperreality it is helpful to apply the theory on actual examples. One of them is inarguably Disneyworld which is a true Mecca of simulated experiences. Think for instance about the spooky tour of an ominous haunted house called "The haunted Mansion," or the fairy-tale fortress "Cinderella Castle" where one can act and be treated as royalty ("Attractions" Disneyworld.com). The question is whether this simulated experience is more authentic than the real one? As the rest of my study will prove, there is certainly no simple answer to that question and that is exactly what postmodernism tries to explain by discarding the existence of the one and only truth.

By and large, this sub-section provided a concise explanation of some of the postmodern notions that are being dealt with in chapter 3 in the context of post-tourism and entertainment industry. However, the following discussion establishes a new frame of reference- the metaphor of the New World and probes its effects on the Western mindscape.

2.3 The metaphor of the New World

This sub-section is devised in two parts, each of which focuses on one emblem of the New World. But what is the New World? What do I mean by a metaphor of the New World? What are its expected associations? And what are its implications, not only on the Western mindscape, but on global perceptions of America? In what way does this metaphor contribute to my case study?

The purpose of this sub-section is to answer these questions by engaging my multiple identities- that of a third culture child, a student of English in Vienna, and a researcher. Of course, my arguments find support in both the European and American body of critical theory. However, since each study is biased in a way and depends much on positionality, I am aware that my observations are latently shaped by my personal encounters with American cultural influences. The image that we (Europeans) as outsiders project on America becomes a kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy and potentially reveals more about our own dreams and desires. In his article “Coca-Colonization”, Wagnleitner, a European Anglophile, expresses his perception of the New World that like a prism refracts global perceptions, “To us pseudo-Americans, the United States signified an amalgam of freedom, fun, modernity, wealth, mobility, and youth rebellion.” (Foreword xiii). In the same mood, Jameson acknowledges the discrepancy between the ‘truth’ and its representation:

[T]he postmodern United States of extraordinary technological and scientific achievement; the most ‘advanced’ country in the world, in all the science fictional senses and connotations of that figure, accompanied by the inconceivable financial system and a combination of abstract wealth and real power in which all of us believe, without many of us ever really knowing what that might be or look like. (128)

Over the centuries the historic reference to the Americas as “the New World” has adopted much wider dimensions. It needs to be explored as a complex interplay of political, economic and cultural discourse. Yet, to investigate the metaphor on those multiple levels would be an ambitious project that overrides the scope and goals of this thesis. Thus, my focus will be directed to “popular harbingers of cultural postmodernism” (McGuian 33) and glossy models of

hyperreality in the sense Baudrillard understands it- as a reality that “has no relation to any reality whatsoever,” a reality that “is its own pure simulacrum” (*Simulacra* 6). Best and Kellner argue that “[i]n a society of simulations, the models or codes structure experience and erode distinctions between the model and the real” (119). This means that the metaphor of the New World with its set of assumptions, values, and beliefs constitutes a reality that is represented and consumed as realer than the real.

The following parts explore the implications of Disneyland and Las Vegas as perfect prototypes of simulacra, which create a phantasmagoria of reality that becomes perceived as America’s reality (Baudrillard 12-13). As popular sites of critical inquiry these two have inspired copious studies in sociology, geography, anthropology, ethnology, cultural studies, and architecture. The underlying motivation behind this exploration is to prepare the ground for a close analysis of hyperreality aboard Carnival’s fun ships.

2.3.1 Disneyland- the myth factory

A space within a space- a world in its own right. Welcome to Disneyland! Walt Disney had ingeniously germinated the idea of illusion and hyperreality that was later to be fully grown by Baudrillard into his concept of simulacra. Mills claims that, “Walt was determined to build a privatized, homogenous, and risk free city that embodied his version of American virtues” (qtd. in Giroux 38). It is undeniable that Walt succeeded in creating a whole mighty empire that re-creates, tailors, and promotes American middle-class values. The underlying dynamics of his materialized intention evokes the precarious issue of cultural imperialism. This phenomenon was identified originally by Schickel as ‘Disneyfication’ and later on by Bryman as ‘Disneyization.’ This recent phenomenon will be subject to close scrutiny in chapter 3.

To establish a balanced discussion I will first examine how Disneyland is perceived in a collective mind, which will be followed by a few critical theories. The way lay people experience and understand Disneyland gets layered as

they grow older, but the protruding frame of reference is 'perpetual fun'. "For children, Disney is a wish-landscape that combines fantasy, fun, and the opportunity to enter into a more colorful and imaginary world" devoid of school tasks, peer teasing, identity cruising and the monotony of everyday life (Giroux 6). Walt was clever to realize that edutainment will be a true 'oil-ridge' and vested his energy into building theme parks that were meant to be highly informative and educative in terms of peoples' history, the planet's animals, etc. However, Giroux expresses his deep concern for the collective mind by disenchanting the Disney delusion, "Disney culture offers a certain notion of history that is not only safe and middle class but also indifferent to racial, class and social conflict. As distorted as Disney's dreamscape might be, it contains a utopian element" (ibid.: 148). Building on the same perception and drawing on the author of *Vinyl Leaves*, Hollinshead systematically explores Fjellman's major concept of 'distory' ('Disney's version of history' 58-119). Kids are disadvantaged in the sense that they are too young to adopt a more critical approach to 'all that fun' and therefore just perfectly innocent enough to be dazzled by it.

For adults on the other hand, Disney's theme park is a kind of 'Zeitgeist', which safely brings them on the shores of happy childhood and innocence "[...] offer[ing] an invitation to adventure, a respite from the drudgery of work, and an opportunity to escape from the alienation of daily life" (Giroux 5). Whether the reality of the fantasyland vanishes into thin air behind its very walls or not is, according to Baudrillard, arguable. However, it is a fact of life that millions of adults visit Disneyland annually just to immerse themselves into the 'Land where dreams come true.'

Finally, I want to touch upon what Disney incorporates on a more general level. How kids and adults perceive Disney theme parks is only one side of the coin. However, there is always that other side which is less shiny. Giroux openly voiced his criticism in saying that "[c]orporations such as Disney do not give a high priority to social values, except to manipulate and exploit them. With every product that Disney produces, whether for adults or children, there is the accompanying commercial blitzkrieg aimed at excessive consumerism" (Giroux 163). It is a corporation, the strategies of which are tuned so as to downplay

“the connection between labor and capital [that eventually gets] lost in the dazzle of the spectacle” (Mirzoeff 265).

Further on, the issue of heritage has informed much of the discussion about Disneyland in critical theory. Yet, for the purposes of this study and my subsequent comparison with Carnival’s fun ships, I wish to concentrate my attention more on the notion of hyperreality. However, since hyperreality itself is a part of the inextricable web of technology, reproduction, representation, heritage, and nostalgia, these features are deemed perfectly legitimate in the following discussion.

Hyperreality in Disneyland emerges as an overarching sense produced by the interplay of authenticity and falsehood. This “tantalizing synthesis,” to use the Hannabuss’s phrase, is packaged into cinematic venues and marketable commodities which are imbued with nostalgia (297-298). Due to their fabrication and reconfiguration, it is not grandiloquent to perceive Disneyland as a myth factory. Marin’s reasoning of Disneyland and its mythic representations indicate the narrative of a “degenerative utopia” (see Louis Marin 1977) in which history is turned into an acceptable present. Another point in favor of Marin’s view is offered by Zukin who evaluates the acceptable present as “safer and cleaner” (55). Hence the themed attractions (pavilions) that celebrate past which is suitable for every age and everyone’s taste. For instance “The Canada Pavilion” features a magnificent canyon, a waterfall, carved totem poles and many other architectural replicas and services which promote Canadian folk art and a rather idyllic landscape. (“Attraction at Epcot” Disneyworld.com). Further examples of such utopian representations are the “American Adventure Pavilion,” “China Pavilion,” “France Pavilion,” etc.

Undisputedly, Disneyland excels at “pseudo-events” (Boorstin), or at what Urry dubs “staged authenticity”. This myth factory epitomizes what Eco ironically calls “the masterpiece of the reconstructive mania” (Eco 16) He suggests that Florida is as much an artificial region as Disneyland and Disney World are (ibid.: 24). Along similar lines Baudrillard provides a rather extreme vision of Disneyland and America:

Disneyland is the perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulacra. It is first of all a play of illusions and phantasms: the Pirates, the Frontier, the Future World, etc. [...] But what attracts the crowds the most is without a doubt the social microcosm, the *religious*, miniaturized pleasure of real America, of its constraints and joys.[...] All [America's] values are exalted by the miniature and the comic strip. Embalmed and pacified. Whence the possibility of an ideological analysis of Disneyland [...]: digest of the American way of life, panegyric of American values, idealized transposition of a contradictory reality. [...] Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and the order of simulation. (12)

The central argument of Baudrillard's frenzied investigation of Disneyland is that this factory of recycled phantasms no longer imitates reality, but incarnates a reality that has no reference to the real world. The 'real' world, however, emanates its reality from that incarnated reality. As an inexhaustible source of history and a hybrid site of consumption, Disneyland is "suited to the ideological task of framing the social imaginary" (Mitchell 120). This view is shared by Zukin who argues that Disneyland represents "the alter ego and the collective fantasy of the American society" (49). Thus, it could be argued that it is not America within whose framework people define themselves, their dreams and hopes. Instead, Disneyland constructs a reality which contains a pinch of the addictive lure onto which America seems to be hooked. It is a world in its own right that functions as a displaced metaphor projecting values of the American society, a society *sui generis*. Although I acknowledge Baudrillard's ideas as imaginative and entertaining, some of them are too provocative and open to doubt. Is it really the case that Disneyland reflects the reality of entire America? Many critics find this a pretentious statement that turns a blind eye to America's undersides experienced by its citizens in their daily lives. At this point it seems rational to make a digression and state that my frequent references to Baudrillard's notions of simulacra and hyperreality throughout this study assume a somewhat wider sense.

Finally, the complex implications of Disneyland's narrative produce harsh criticisms that elude the minds of its aficionados. Over the last decades

Disneyland established itself as a market leader of the entertainment industry. In his study of Disneyland, Watts describes it as “[a] work culture devoted to industriousness, excellence, teamwork, and imagination” (185). Furthermore, it came to be *the* [my emphasis added] dominant economic model for other more or less related industries. How Disneyland’s twin-sister (Las Vegas) shapes the reality of the American landscape is a question that incites my subsequent investigation.

2.3.2 Las Vegas- a mecca of self-indulgence

In order to expand the metaphor of the New World, much of my discussion about Las Vegas owes its inspiration to Baudrillard (*America* 1989), Hannigan (*Fantasy City* 1998) and Rothman (*Neon Metropolis* 2002). Fascinated by the American landscape, each of them in its own way conveys a general message- America is a landscape inscribed with postmodern features of simulation and reinvention, governed by the laws of capitalism and hedonism, reflecting the dreams and fears of its nation.

Baudrillard’s original personal insight into America impresses with its poetic language and almost imperceptible irony. On his journey through the American landscape he expresses his deep admiration for geographical and mental sense of space, speed, highways, superficial diversity, crowdedness, cinematic imagery, cutting-edge technology, etc. According to him, America is “a utopia achieved” (*America* 28). This utopia “[...] gives Americans a perception of reality different from our [European] own.” (ibid.: 84). Baudrillard understands American reality as lived, unlike European, which is only thought. To put it into simple words, America realizes the dreams dreamt by Europeans (ibid.: 97-98). How each particle of America’s landscape speaks for the whole is communicated in the following quote:

America is a giant hologram, in the sense that information concerning the whole is contained in each of its elements. Take the tiniest little place in the desert, any old street in a Mid-West town, a parking lot, a Californian house, a BurgerKing or a

Studebaker, and you have the whole of the US- South, North, East, or West. (ibid.:29)

His holistic yet disenchanting view reveals America as the “perfect simulacrum” that generates a multitude of depthless panoramic landscapes which in turn project America’s mindscape.

John Hannigan’s *Fantasy City* serves as a metaphor of the American landscape that is perfectly illustrated in Las Vegas (10). It is a city whose architecture Harvey suggests to be shaped by the principle “of play and pleasure, of spectacle of commodification, emphasizing fiction and fantasy” (qtd.in Hannigan 55). Hannigan provides six defining features of his fantasy city that hold true for a city like Las Vegas (ibid. Intr. 3-4). Theming, aggressive branding, detachment, and bricolage are some of the features which will be closely examined in chapter 3 and 4 when applied to Carnival’s fun ships. He traces Las Vegas’ success to the baby boomers and the ‘X generation’ who set new trends in the entertainment industry by giving more primacy to instant pleasures, fleeting experiences, and excessive consumption. These new consumption patterns have given birth to hybrid consumer activities meaning that shopping, eating, and education got merged with entertainment (ibid.: 89). In order not to stray from the topic, these overlaps will be subject to detailed analysis in the subsequent chapters.

Las Vegas emerged like a phoenix, in the middle of a desert, detached and doomed to self-invention. From a random railroad stop to “the very sign of tacky glitz” (McGuian 22), Las Vegas became what Soja dubbed a “gigantic agglomeration” (qtd. in Hannigan Intr. 4). A city of miniaturized replicas of the world’s most spectacular sights, which gathers all cultures within its borders; A gaming Mecca, a futuristic fantasyland that follows Disneyland’s legacy of theming. The bottom line is that Las Vegas excels at selling lived experiences besides leisure and entertainment commodities (Hannigan 200). These, however, altogether voice the commercial nature of the American values and anxieties.

Rothman’s enthralling book about Las Vegas as a futuristic world in its own right overshadows other stories about this spectacular city. To understand the

dynamics underlying the nature of the city, Rothman writes from the perspective of an insider who has witnessed Las Vegas' development *per aspera ad astra*. His passionate, yet detached portrayal of Las Vegas and its incredible popularity reveals what is behind the glitz and neon lights. His arguments are historically informed and contain a lot of facts and figures, yet he communicates his story in an easy and funny tone. Las Vegas is a true

spectacle of postmodernism, a combination of space and form in light and dark that owes nothing to the surroundings and leaves meaning in the eye of the beholder [...], the place where desire meets capital, where instincts replace restraint, where the future of a society, for better and worse, takes a form that had been inconceivable even a generation before. (Intr. 2002: xi)

From this quotation emerges a whole narrative that seems to comply with Hannigan's defining features of his Fantasy city (Intr. 3-4). As such, it embodies the clash of fantasy and reality. It is an imaginary yet palpable and purchasable world (Rothman Intr. xii). It is a Mecca of splurge in which one affirms oneself through experience. Whether this experience is fake or real plays no role. Bottom line, one feels the whole world revolves around the self. Rothman believes that quite similarly to Disneyland, Las Vegas voices the identity of the American nation (ibid. Intr. xiii).

What I find particularly startling is the newfound fame Las Vegas won with the opening of Mirage resort:

With 'fantasy become reality' as a theme and a fiery volcano that erupted hourly cooled by water in the desert locale, the Mirage embodied the essence of what Las Vegas could offer a tourist: an invented reality that occasionally demanded the suspension of disbelief. (ibid.: 25)

Just like the theme says, the Mirage was to cater to the needs of the tourists, or better, to mirror their desires. This magnificent project was followed by similar ones such as the Venetian Resort, Excalibur, Monte Carlo Resort, among others, which were built to satiate public desires. On a more general level, the city of Las Vegas possessed a chameleon-like ability to adapt not to the present, but to the future. This suppleness granted its success despite its

scandalous history of mob financing, shady business operations, and tax evasions. Due to its dangerous lure, Las Vegas provided a sense of freedom to exercise one's fantasies. The city was particularly appealing to the celebrities who could allow and afford themselves a life of indulgence. Las Vegas thrived on them. It seems that the glitz created by Hollywood actors, famous singers, and American magnates erased the infamous past of Las Vegas. This process of reinvention was especially helped by the new trends in the leisure industry in which self-indulgence and gambling came to be perceived as "a legitimate recreational pastime" (ibid.: 15). From a desert to a city of the future- Las Vegas continues to mirror America's society, its political and cultural climate, its insatiable desires, as well as its deepest fears.

Conclusion

While the first sub-section provided a glimpse into the postmodern aporetic logic that more than often surpasses comprehension, the second sub-section introduced a selection of fundamental concepts which strongly thread through the rest of the study.

Next, I introduced the metaphor of the New World which direct associations proved to have profoundly shaped the Western mindscape. From my close investigation of simulacrum- landscapes emerged a new major topic, namely that of a distinct sociological discourse which seeks to analyze tourism and its trends in the current age. The patterns of relentless commodification, diversification of entertainment activities and excessive consumerism, as the underlying dynamics of Disneyland and Las Vegas, have considerably influenced the way cultural analysts perceive tourists in the 21st century.

In what way are these new tourists different from their predecessors and how do their patterns of behavior, set of assumptions, and values shape the trends in the leisure industry will be examined in the following chapter on post-tourism. Within the established theoretical framework, a sharp focus will be given to Carnival's fun ships.

3. Post-tourism and the floating fun factory

Introduction

In the previous chapter I endeavored to cover a more common ground for my following discussion by presenting some of the conflicting views within the postmodern aporia. The fuzziness of the boundaries between periods, styles or conditions generate broader implications which will be of interest in what follows. Namely, this chapter explores the corollary emergence of post-tourism as a social and cultural response to the postmodern debates. For the purposes of this thesis, my special interest lies in the consumer/tourist experience patterns that Disneyland and Las Vegas have presaged, encouraged, and thrived on, and which have come to mark current trends in leisure industry. However, these changes have raised conflicting perspectives within sociological studies of contemporary tourism. In order to explain what post-tourism connotes, my discussion shall primarily draw on Smith (2009) and her typology of tourists with a special focus on 'the new leisure tourist.' Nevertheless, my explanations rely on the works of Cohen (2004), Urry (1990, 1995) Boorstin (1964), MacCannell (1973, 1976), Turner and Ash (1975), Bryman (1999), and Zukin (1995). Furthermore, the chapter owes a debt of gratitude to a selection of articles written by Uriely, Williams, Goulding, and Chi.

Since my investigation focuses on the construction of fun, the selected aspects which I suggest generate a sense of 'orchestrated reality,' the conceptual framework introduced in the first part of this chapter is then explicated in careful examination of Carnival's latest fun ship. After I map out the two models of corporate strategies Carnival pursues in order to commodify and sell fun aboard its ships, a brief historical development of Carnival Cruise Line is in order.

The final sub-section is dedicated to an analysis of Carnival's ideology of fun which fosters values that are in line with the "postmodern touristic ethos" (Cohen 135). In order to explain this particular phenomenon, the discussion shall draw on a few illustrative examples which reveal Carnival's representation of contrived attractions and constructed realities aboard its fun ships.

3.1 Tourism- a conceptual clarification or obfuscation?

The consumer boom in the 1950s and 1960s, which especially affected the middle- classes in North America and Europe, provoked favorable changes in commercial leisure and entertainment enterprises. As a consequence, the rate of tourist industries expansion has been spectacular. However, their rapid development and implications on social lives have been relatively later recognized in academia. It was not until the mid-1970s that sociologists and anthropologist started doing in-depth social research in the field of tourism (Cohen Intr.1). According to Cohen, a general theoretical perception of tourism goes along the following lines: “[T]ourism connotes a change from routine, something different, strange, unusual or novel, an experience not commonly present in the daily life of the traveller.” (ibid.: 22). In the same light, a tourist is usually perceived as someone who goes on a trip, experiences novelty and change usually for the sake of pleasure, business, culture and/or recreation. To put it in Cohen’s words: “A ‘tourist’ is a voluntary, temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round-trip.” (ibid.: 23). These are by no means explicit definitions and the reason for certain obfuscation resides in the exact nature of the above mentioned phenomena. Boorstin and MacCannell have devised typologies of tourist roles and experiences so as to establish a conceptual framework, but their claims proved to be either restrictive or implausible. However, more recent studies by Turner and Smith have made valuable contributions to the social study of tourism. In order to substantiate my claims I shall provide a balanced overview of their basic ideas.

Boorstin is appreciated for giving an initial impetus to critical analysis of tourism although his perceptions provoked a barrage of criticism in academia. His central argument is that the modern mass tourist thrives on ‘pseudo-event’, i.e. aberrations, contrived and illusory attractions, sites and sights. A case in point is Disney World which Turner and Ash claim to represent the “ultimate pseudo-event” (qtd.in Cohen 116). Serious reservations may be raised against Boorstin’s claim that the modern mass tourist is gullible and perfectly unconscious of the fact that he is being fooled by the tourist establishment

(ibid.: 116-118). Such claims rather voice “widely held prejudices about the nature of modern tourism” (ibid.: 116) than balanced critical argumentation.

MacCannell criticized Boorstin’s approach to tourist roles by adopting an utterly opposite position and focusing on tourist experiences. He emphasizes the importance of authenticity as a fundamental motivation of modern tourists. Moreover, MacCannell establishes a link between tourism and religious pilgrimage in arguing that “[t]he motive behind a pilgrimage is similar to that behind a tour: both are quests for authentic experiences” (qtd. in Cohen 75). What the modern tourist seeks elsewhere is the lack of meaning and authenticity in his everyday social life. (ibid.: 73-74). Similarly to Boorstin’s claims, MacCannell’s conclusions seem to be hasty and farfetched since they seem to go from one extreme to the other.

As a reaction to the two traditions and a response to the oppositional extreme views, a third and fairly valid proposition about the nature of tourist roles and experiences was expressed by Turner. He suggests that the tourist seeks otherness which contains values that are repressed in mundane life. Apart from “spontaneity, personal wholeness, and social togetherness” (qtd. in Cohen 125), Turner emphasizes the ‘ludic element’ in tourist behavior. The playful mood, however, reveals “valuable compensatory experiences of an existential or social nature” (ibid.: 125). In other words, the tourist seeks to break free from the constraints of his daily life by indulging in very often exaggerated behavior that goes against the grain of his normal behavior patterns and values (ibid.: 126). Cohen argues that Turner’s approach is neutral unlike Boorstin’s and MacCannell’s inherently biased perspectives.

In conclusion to this brief outline of the three dominant traditions, I wish to express my agreement with Cohen and suggest that all three, each in its own way, contributed to the sociological study of tourism (ibid.: 130). It would be unjust to defy Boorstin’s and MacCannell’s ideas since they initiated constructive criticism and deeper considerations which today benefit not only the academic controversies but also large scale economies of tourist and leisure enterprises.

3.2 Tourist roles and experiences

The above general introduction was requisite in order to launch a more detailed investigation into the nature of tourist roles and their experiences in the current era of tourism. However, the following analysis focuses on typologies that I deem particularly relevant to my case study and for that reason consciously disregards to explain other roles. More precisely, the emphasis will be on the ever-growing issue of consumer culture, the aspects of which are observable in the cruise industry and which considerably affect tourist behavior. Hoping that my personal experience on Carnival Magic can develop some convincing arguments I shall attempt to illuminate some of the defining characteristics of cruisers as specific tourist types, along with their expectations, values, and behavior patterns.

A general definition of a tourist implies that the round-trip is a “relatively long” one (Cohen 23). Based on duration, there is an arguably clear difference between an excursionist and a tourist. Drawing on the definition suggested by the U.N. Conference on International Travel and Tourism, excursionists are perceived as “[...] temporary visitors staying less than 24 hours in the country visited (including travellers on cruises).” (ibid.: 19). Thus, cruisers assume two interchangeable roles- that of a tourist while onboard and that of an excursionist while ashore. These two, otherwise mutually exclusive, further include “the two varieties of the tourist role, namely, the ‘sightseer’ [and] the ‘vacationer’.” (ibid.: 20). While the former is closer to a traveller who seeks novelty, the latter is perceived as a visitor who seeks change but not necessarily novelty (ibid.: 32). A further element incorporated in the above general definition expresses that the trip is “non-recurring” (ibid.: 23). Yet, the majority of cruisers take exception to the held view in that they embark on the same cruise trajectories time and again. They are then defined as “habitué” vacationers. (ibid.: 28). Finally, the cruiser assumes the role of the organized/individual mass tourist who “remains largely confined to his ‘environmental bubble’ throughout his trip [...] has a certain amount of control over his time and itinerary [but] all of his major arrangements are still made through a tourist agency [the cruising company]”

(ibid.: 39). The remaining two tourist roles (the explorer, the drifter) that Cohen proposes are not of interest to this discussion and will thus be ignored.

Having provided a viable definition of cruise travellers (in further text cruisers), let us now briefly turn to their motivations, expectations, and modes of experience. Although this topic goes hand in hand with the study of human experience, I consciously run the risk of over-simplifying the complex field of phenomenology. A thorough explanation of its elements overrides the scope of this thesis, therefore I shall refer to 'the center' as a nexus of fundamental values and meanings the individual aspires to reach while on his travel. The central argument is that 'the center' is always somewhere else, outside of individual's mundane life experiences (ibid.: 66-68). So, what is a desirable personal end for cruisers? There is no single answer to this question since every cruiser has its own center. Hence, I can only make general claims that are nevertheless supported by my observations of cruisers aboard Carnival Magic.

Cohen distinguishes five modes of tourist experiences, which range from Boorstin's idea of superficiality and shallowness to MacCannell's idea of pilgrimage and authenticity. However, I shall concentrate only on the first three, namely, the recreational, diversionary, and experiential mode of tourist experiences. A thought to bear in mind is that the first two are closer to the above outlined Boorstinian and Turnerian traditions.

The recreational mode voices the values of modern man, a tourist

[...] who 'enjoys' his trip, because it restores his physical and mental powers and endows him with a general sense of well-being [...] [Moreover] he is quite eager to accept the make-believe and not to question its authenticity. (ibid.: 70-71)

Drawing on this view, the tourist willingly participates in the construction of *other* [my emphasis added] reality. His "readiness for playful self-deception" (ibid.: 91) gets him what he wants- to forget about the reality of his daily life. This kind of experience, which grants pleasurable fun times without deeper involvement, is perceived as a way to let off steam; a yearly ritual that helps to cope with daily

life tensions. Some tourists, however, release their excessive energies somewhat unscrupulously, and thus engage in acts of hedonism such as promiscuity and “conspicuous consumption” (for explanation see Veblen *The Theory of The Leisure Class* 1899). These patterns of behavior, however, seem to have reinforced underlying trends in post-tourism i.e. tourism in our allegedly postmodern world.

Unlike recreation-seeking tourists, people travelling in a diversionary mode of experience lack both meaning in their daily life and ‘the center’. While recreational tourists experience a certain change within themselves, Cohen argues that diversionary tourism

[...] becomes [...] a mere escape from the boredom and meaninglessness of routine, everyday existence, into the forgetfulness of a vacation, which may heal the body and sooth the spirit, but does not ‘recreate’- i.e. it does not re-establish adherence to the meaningful center, but only makes alienation endurable. (72)

Finally we come to the third mode, which resembles the recreational mode but stresses a substantial difference. The experiential mode is close to MacCannell’s tradition in the sense that this type of tourist is fully aware of his alienation, and tries to “recapture meaning by a vicarious, essentially aesthetic, experience of the authenticity of the life of others” (qtd. in Cohen 73). Yet, despite his appreciation and admiration for the life of others, his involvement is neither deep nor spiritual. To conclude, the experiential tourist stays essentially the person he was before he experienced the life of others.

3.3 Post-tourism: the postmodern frenzy of experience

Given the above overview, we have seen that the socio-cultural state of our society appears to be emblematic of the postmodern condition that was hopefully clearly outlined in the previous chapter. The increasing conceptual fuzziness and relative truths allow for fluidity and diversity of meaning construction and interpretation. Within the social study of tourism, breaking down of conceptual distinctions intensified the efforts to analyze tourist roles

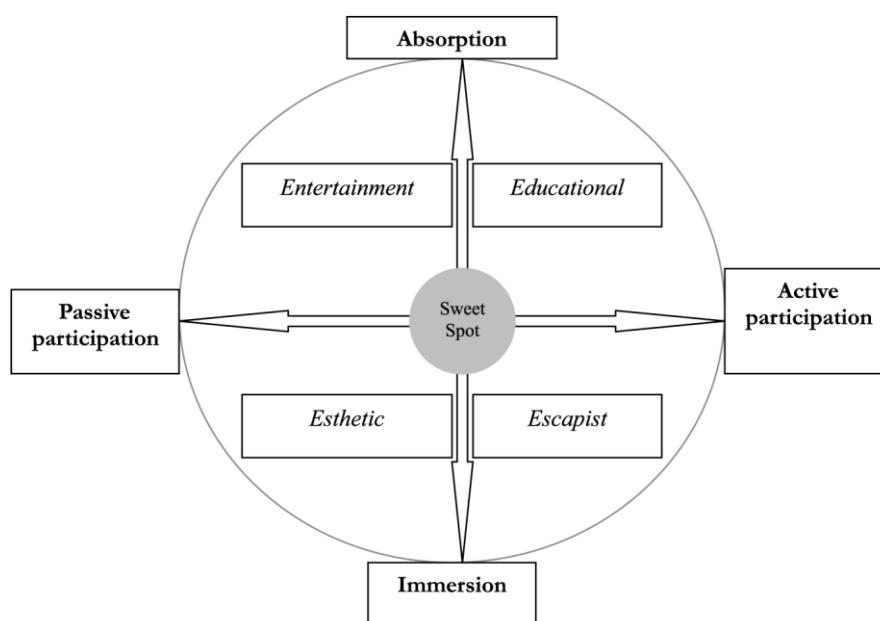
and experiences within distinctive typologies. These, however, resulted in flawed and biased perceptions. Hence, social analysts' critique shifted the focus towards more qualitative analysis. In regard to the field of tourism, postmodernism instilled new sets of values and patterns of behavior which seem to be strongly motivated by insatiable desire for entertainment and indulgence. However, the greatest change from previous trends in tourism was the acceptance of inauthenticity. This sociological discourse, also known as 'simulational,' emerges from the analysis of the 'hyperreal' in the works of Baudrillard, Eco, Featherstone, Lash and Urry and Pretes. In addition, there is a complementing theoretical framework- the 'other' that stresses the quest for the "real and point to the growing appeal of the natural and the countryside" (Uriely 1983). However, the latter does not pertain to the overall discussion and will therefore be disregarded.

One of the first to recognize these fundamental changes was Maxine Feifer (1985) who called this phenomenon '*post tourism*'. Her idea was seconded and further developed by John Urry. (Chi 70) Given these facts, post-tourism assumes a substantial shift in tourist's motivations and experiences in contemporary society in which commodification of tourism products and services mark the main dynamic behind broader economic and socio-cultural changes.

The importance of experience has come to dictate the economy in that it is "highly integrated and illustrates how tourism is combined with retail trade, architecture, event management, the entertainment and heritage industries as well as the media world under a common umbrella." (Lofgren qtd. in Smith 192). Such combinations result in hybrid enterprises that specifically spur "the experience economy" and reap huge benefits from selling staged experiences (Pine and Gilmore 97). These are seen as underlying principles of Disneyland, the most successful entertainment industry in the world, and as such are deemed to pass with flying colors. Pine and Gilmore argue that the concept of selling experiences escapes the confines of theme parks and pervades related venues and activities such as eating and shopping. Hence the emergence of *mélange* experiences dubbed 'eatertainment,' 'shoppertainment' and 'edutainment' (ibid.: 99; Hannigan 89). Indeed, Melanie Smith also

acknowledges the overwhelming blurring of the boundary between retail and tourism (Smith 193). But what makes experience such a good sell? According to Pine and Gilmore, “experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level.” (99). On the other hand, goods and services are always external and objective. Therefore, it is exactly this personal appeal of experiencing a memorable event that plays a major role in tourism, entertainment and leisure industries.

Moreover, Pine and Gilmore distinguish four realms of experiences that assume different levels of engagement and participation. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study I wish to provide a somewhat adapted version (see fig. 3.1) offered by Williams (2006).



Source: Adapted from Pine and Gilmore (1998)

Figure 3.1 The four realms of experience

While in reality the boundaries between the realms of experiences are rather difficult to define, the ultimate goal is to engage all four realms of experience and reach the so called ‘sweet spot.’ Throughout this paper I shall refer to Pine and Gilmore’s diagram (fig. 3.1 i.e. William’s adaptation) and argue that Carnival creatively exploits the four-realm experience agenda by explicitly designing venues, events and activities that efficiently sell the desired sweet

spot. With this in mind, I argue that the attainment of the sweet spot engenders a sense of reality that is substantially different from the one experienced in daily life.

Having provided an expedient definition of post-tourism, let us now consider the concept of the post-tourist. Firat and Venkatesh related the birth of postmodern consumers to ever increasing consumer culture:

The 'postmodern consumer' is commonly depicted as elusive: a free soul who darts in and out of arenas of consumption which are fluid and non-totalizing. [...] [P]ostmodern consumers are said to be unabashed hedonists, living for the thrill of the spectacle without feeling the necessity to relate such fragmented moments to a large direction of progress. (qtd. in Hannigan 67)

With this claim in mind, Hannigan perceives the postmodern tourist as someone who prefers fantasy over reality. The element of playfulness has become a necessity and, as such, has engendered a new leisure ethic that endorses self-fulfillment through simple enjoyment (Watts 374-375). Besides Watts, Turner offered a credible assertion by acknowledging the imposing presence of ludic elements in tourists' desires. Their readiness to immerse themselves despite overtly staged experiences is emblematic of postmodern playfulness which Cohen claims to be the dominant mode of experience (139). Yet, it is rather wrong to state that the issue of authenticity which was stressed by MacCannell vanishes into thin air. In regard to post-tourists, it rather becomes less or even unimportant. What the post-tourist seeks, beside generally desired change and novelty, is indulgence in more often than not irresponsible behavior that boils down to satisfaction of primal bodily appetites in a nonjudgmental environment. A number of theorists have expressed their deep concern about the implications of new trends in tourism. Given these facts, they criticized the ever-increasing lust for hedonistic delights, which they saw to induce a social malaise. Hence, "tourism was perceived as another example of cultural decadence in modern capitalist societies" (Uriely "The Tourist Experience" 208). Yet, such criticism was later on discarded as exaggerated and gloomy. To turn back to the nature of tourist behavior, Turner and Ash assume the quest for enjoyment to be close to childlike irresponsibility.

In that sense, the quest might be best expressed as the “prepacked, simplistic formula of sun, sea, sand and sex” (88). The fulfillment of these essential desires, however, takes place in a more or less controlled environment. Generally speaking, this formula applies to cruisers who can assume any of the three roles outlined above (recreational, diversionary or experiential) while the primary motivation behind their involvement is to get as many memorable sensational experiences as possible. Consequently, tourist enterprises strive desperately to construct or stage experiences “which are noticeably different from other experiences” (ibid.: 284) by a panoply of architecture, goods, services, and performances. To illustrate this point, Pine and Gilmore identify “five key design-experience principles”: theming of experiences, harmonizing impressions with positive cues, eliminating negative cues, mixing in memorabilia and engaging all five senses (102-105). These essential principles seem to underpin Carnival’s philosophy of selling experiences aboard its fun ships, the topic which shall be thoroughly developed later on in this chapter.

3.4 Time-space compression

Another key factor that determines the nature of tourist experiences is the aspect of ‘time- space compression’ (see Harvey 1990). Harvey explains this phenomenon in the light of postmodernism, which he perceives to be a cultural construct of the globalizing economy and a consequence of “the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation” (ibid.: 284). He investigates the logic behind the creation of world markets and emergence of transnational corporations as an outcome of an increased mobility and the new global communication technologies. Moreover, Smith argues that the recent technological developments greatly help in the construction of

tourist attractions (e.g. theme parks, leisure complexes and shopping malls) [which] constitute a kind of ‘tourist bubble’ suspended in time and space, isolated from any real context, and providing the tourist with an idealised environment and experience. (31)

Accordingly, I propose that Carnival's cruise ships embody the time-space compression primarily by applying the principle of theming that gives recourse to heritage and nostalgia. Secondly, by diversification of cultural meanings imbued in architecture and design, by extensive commodification of services, but above all, by gathering people of different nationalities and varied perceptions under 'one roof'. Or, put it into Harvey's words, "[...] all the divergent spaces of the world are assembled nightly as a collage of images upon the television screen" (302). Since such constriction has no true referent in the 'real' world, the cruise ship can be seen as a simulacrum. Moreover, it embodies a simulacrum that contains contrived environments and events which blend the play of fiction and the reality of trade (Eco 41) in the pursuit of profits.

3.5 McDonaldization and Disneyization of tourist experiences

Building on the economic aspect and the effect of reproduction and fabrication, it is necessary to outline some of the principles that underpin the theory of McDonaldization introduced by Ritzer (1993). By reflecting on the contemporary condition of ever-increasing processes of rationalization, Smart argues that "Ritzer wants to draw attention to the way in which modern social life has become increasingly subject to efficiency, calculability, predictability and control" (9). My aim is to examine how these properties are implemented within Carnival's multiplex operation of its funs ships. Secondly, I wish to argue that they construct only one side of a complex industrial process of '-ization.' Thus, the latter part of this brief discussion will be dedicated to the complementing theory of Disneyization (see Bryman 2004).

To illustrate how efficiency is implemented by the company, I shall refer to the way Carnival conducts commercial transactions aboard its ships. In what way this quality contributes to my topic of hyperreality shall be clearer by the end of the following discussion.

In order to avoid constant cash transactions and probably to prevent embezzlement accusations, Carnival provides its guests with a special 'sail and sign card.' It means that at the time of embarkation guests are required to pay a

deposit ranging from 100\$ to 350\$ depending on their cruise duration, the amount of which shall cover onboard purchases. In other words, whether you enjoy a luxurious spa treatment, eat at a fancy restaurant or sip cocktails by the poolside- all you need to do is either swipe your card or tell your card number and sign the bill, and all the charges will be billed to your debit/credit card by the end of the cruise. With this in mind, Carnival fosters the illusion that even the 'extra' experience is nothing but fun. However, the day before your debarkation, disenchantment knocks on your cabin doors. Another indicator of efficiency seems to be modeled after Disney's strategy to entertain the masses at relatively low costs. This is achieved by building large theaters so as to avoid queuing for attractions (Bryman 1999). Accordingly, Carnival builds magnificent theatres aboard its fun ships and offers two shows in the evening, namely, an early and a late seating, in order to prevent guests from lining for the show. But what is more important, to prevent queuing for dinner tables. This mechanism grants a smooth operation of at least three sectors simultaneously- dinning, entertainment and housekeeping services.

Predictability is one of Ritzer's proposed properties that is somewhat paradoxical when inspected through the prism of tourist motivations and expectations. As I have already argued, tourists generally seek novelty, change and unforgettable personal experiences. Aboard Carnival's fun ships, all these are imbued with predictability and control. Bryman's illustration of Disney lends itself perfectly to clarify the paradox:

You simply *know* what you are going to get before you depart on your vacation. You *know* that you will encounter a safe, litter-free, [...] immaculately landscaped fantasy world. You *know* that [Carnival] staff will be helpful and seek to enhance your vacation.
(ibid.: 107)

The guests who choose to cruise with Carnival know exactly what to expect even before their embarkation. This is achieved by the media (websites, cruise journals, TV commercials, etc.) and recommendations from friends or family. Thus, it seems that novelty is reduced to familiarity. However, by promising a memorable fun time, Carnival is just as great at blurring the line between fantasy and reality as at blurring the line between novelty and familiarity i.e.

predictability. The company excels at “completely immersing [guests] in a totally controlled environment.” (Watts 390). A more hands-on example would be the rope course called SkyCourse aboard Carnival Magic. The swinging steps and beams grant a sensational experience, yet the safety harness and Carnival staff make sure your experience is packaged “within safe, reassuring and predictable environment” (Rojek qtd. in Hannigan 71; for detailed analysis see chapter 4, sub-section 4.5) In the same light as Hannigan’s fantasy city, the rope course embodies what Nye terms a “riskless risk” (ibid.) or what DeAngelis perceives as “realistic simulation of peril” (1997).

The second model of corporate strategies that Carnival develops on its ships can be traced to Disney. Since chapter 2 already examined the social implications of Disney theme parks on American culture and middle-class family values, I shall examine how these are grasped within the conceptual framework of post-tourism and cruise ships. In merging the two paradigms, we end up with an overlap of entertainment and experience, which we have seen previously, set new trends in tourism. (Hannigan 89). In fact, “tourism has [...] always been about selling of dreams, the creation of fantasies and the perpetuation of myths” (Smith 31). It can be argued that this internal logic of Disney applies to Carnival’s philosophy of fun.

Bryman identified four features of Disneyization, a theory which could be formulated as a current trend in society emblemized by the Disney theme parks. Its key features seem to characterize Carnival’s fun ships in the sense that the company implements theming and promotes hybrid consumption, merchandising and performative labour (2005). These features will be discussed in greater detail later on. What is of equal importance is that Disneyization in post-tourism assumes creative overlaps of consumer activities and experiences. Thus, the emergence of hybrid forms i.e. shoppertainment, eatertainment and edutainment. If we consider these in relation to Pine and Gilmore’s four realms of tourist experiences (see fig. 3.1), it might be plausible to say that the hybrid forms are designed so as to reach the sweet spot i.e. the ultimate experience.

For instance, shoppertainment requires active participation, whereby aesthetic and arguably escapist realms get imbued with entertainment. One might argue that edutainment fuses education with entertainment and due to its scarcity of experiences fails to reach the sweet spot. Nevertheless, when edutainment takes place in contrived environments (e.g. theme parks or cruise ships), the architecture and design of which engage both the aesthetic and escapist realms, the panoply of experiences proves especially enjoyable and memorable. To illustrate the phenomena of edutainment, it is probably best to consider how corporate powers package and offer heritage for consumption. Whereas edutainment is embodied in particular 'lands' in Disney theme parks, Carnival employs theming on numerous social venues aboard its ships. Many of them promote architectural, historical and cultural heritage. Since the interplay of theming, consumption and merchandising will be adequately addressed in chapter 4, I wish to conclude this discussion by stating my reasons for the abrupt change of topic. My aim here was to introduce the two above outlined theories of McDonaldization and Disneyization only to facilitate the understanding of Carnival's ideology of fun, the topic of which is to be closely inspected later on. However, before that, it is appropriate to impart a few relevant facts about Carnival.

3.6 Carnival Cruise Line (CCL)

Carnival Cruise Line, operating mainly in the Caribbean, was established in the 1970s as the first cruising industry that introduced "the mass-market cruising holiday" (Weaver 346-366). From humble beginnings to one of the most successful cruise lines in the world, Carnival realized Ted Arison's vision to make "a vacation experience once reserved to the very rich accessible to the average person." ("About us" Carnivalcruiselines.at). Furthermore, the company's growth and popularity was assured with its dominant ideology of fun. Similarly to Disney which stands for "an icon of American culture and middle-class family values" (Giroux 25), Carnival depicts its image in the same light. At the moment, the fleet is comprised of twenty three ships (with another being currently built), all of which are ingeniously named to promote sensational

experiences and attract masses who crave for novelty, adventure, and entertainment. Carnival Ecstasy, Sensation, Splendor, Liberty, Dream, Fantasy, and Magic are only some of the ships' names that pinpoint Carnival's intentions. Moreover, they support Bryman's idea of theming (2005 Ch.2). The recent line of vessels, Dream and Magic, are called sister ships in the sense that they look alike, have more or less the same amenities and offer the same services with minor differences. The reason behind this mapping could lie in the already proven success of the former ship, which invites the theory of McDonaldization and its underlying principles of efficiency and predictability. Some tourists feel quite enraged by this current trend and call the sister ships 'just another clone'. However, the majority of experienced cruisers argue that Magic is certainly not a mere carbon copy of Dream. Relying on the postmodern ethos of diversification, with each new vessel, Carnival is praised for coming up with compelling ideas that create a perfect amount of differences to satisfy even the most demanding consumer/cruiser. If we accept this claim as valid and plausible, then Carnival's ships only partially relate to Ritzer's proposition about the current trend of standardization and rationalization (Smart 2-14). As a consequence, Bryman's theory of Disneyization and its key features appears to be more fitting to the purposes of this paper (2005).

3.7 The floating fun factory: articulating the underlying philosophy

Carnival's cruise ships inherited a legacy of fun that has been originally created and fostered on an epic scale by Disney theme parks. What goes hand in hand with Carnival is the adjunct 'fun ships' that best defines its coherent ideology. According to Sturken and Cartwright, ideology can be perceived as "the means by which certain values [...] are made to seem like natural, inevitable aspects of everyday life." (2009: 23). In the light of Althusser's understanding of ideology as "a set of ideas and beliefs shaped through the unconscious in relationship to other social forces" (ibid.: 70) Carnival's ideology is shaped by tourists' desires and could thus be seen to reflect a broader picture of the socio-cultural changes within the leisure industry influenced by the postmodern condition.

With the development of cutting edge technology and outstanding architectural and designer ideas, along with the highly competitive cruise industry market, Carnival's ships have become true floating theme parks. They are designed and built as spectacular sights of entertainment which tend to throw a shadow on the ports of call (Waver 346-366). Thereby the ship becomes a destination in its own right.

In the previous discussion on Disneyland in chapter 2, it has been argued that the fantasyland provokes childlike irresponsibility which assumes a desire to escape the reality of mundane life. Zukin's perception of Disneyland as "a collective fantasy of escape and entertainment" speaks in favor of such a view (55). Likewise, Carnival's policy of perpetual fun that is obtainable or better said purchasable by all its guests seems to promote "the subconscious desire to return to an egocentric world of infantile pleasure, and the conscious seeking of escape and relaxation through tourism." (Turner and Ash 91). If we refer back to the metaphor of the New World (see chapter 2) which suggests that the entertainment industry (Disney and Las Vegas) projects values and beliefs on the American society, Carnival seems to establish itself as a part of that metaphor. Along those lines, Carnival, Disney, and Las Vegas can be perceived as what Featherstone terms "the new heroes of consumer culture [which] make lifestyle a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the particularity of the assemblage goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance", etc. (84).

Since the following chapter deals with notions of theming and merchandising as integral parts of social space arrangements aboard Carnival Magic, it is in order to examine the remaining two features of Disneyization. I argue that hybrid consumption and performative labour (Bryman 2005) are essential aspects of fun production on Carnival's vessels and, as such, contribute to the construction of reality that has little or no observable parity with everyday life.

Drawing on Ritzer's claim that cruise ships operate as 'cathedrals of consumption' (1999) I wish to focus my attention on patterns of food consumption aboard Carnival Magic. Besides *in situ* observations, the brief discussion finds inspiration in O'Neill's and Finkelstein's essays on food

practices that respond to Ritzer's McDonaldization theory. We have seen that post-tourism promotes hedonism and ever-increasing levels of consumption. With this in mind, new pleasures seem to partly arise from the prevailing attitude to food which reflects an "unseasonable pursuit of abundance" (O'Neill 49) that is inscribed into American values (ibid.: 77). In line with his approach Finkelstein states that "food is more than body fuel [...] In short, the food repertoire is a synecdoche of society" (71). In addition, food has become a form of entertainment and performance. Accordingly, food is close to Debord's definition of the 'spectacle'. From what I have experienced during my cruise aboard Carnival Magic, it is only fair to admit that Carnival excels at garnishing, which fosters the aesthetic appeal of dishes. Besides items of food (see fig. 3.2), the plate offers a visual delight in playful colors and shapes.



Figure 3.2 Playfulness reflected in garnishing

Indeed, garnishing enhances the overall gastronomic pleasure. To demonstrate that the company abides by the new leisure ethic of post-tourism, which is especially intent upon a diverse selection and individual choice, a three-course dinner features the guest's choice of appetizer, entrée, and dessert. Without exaggeration, each night I and my fiancée were served by a group of four waiters. Maître d' used to take our orders, whereas one of the assistant waiters occasionally filled our glasses with iced water. Furthermore, there was a third one that brought the meals to the maître d'. The fourth one was a bar waiter who took orders only for drinks. To be honest, I felt quite uneasy about so many people around me. The idea of an intimate dinner falls flat when all you can see and hear are questions, smiles, and compliments followed by additional sets of questions, smiles, and compliments. At the end of the day, the staged friendliness pays off when the maître d' receives his gratuity. However, I

observed other guests who clearly enjoyed the 'show'. After some informal conversation with one of the guests, I learnt how important he felt for being addressed by his first name. Due to that, he was quite happy to give an extra tip for the illusion of being a VIP for the length of his dinner. Indeed, Carnival makes every effort to turn the dining experience into a memorable one. How is that achieved? Well, very simply, by adding some magic to it. The ship's magician usually approached a kids table and pulled a few tricks on them while their parents enjoyed the spectacle of laughs and smiley faces. The culmination of eatertainment is probably reached by the waiting personnel performing a rather lame one-song choreography. These are some of the means by which Carnival tries to get across its ideological message that everything you experience with Carnival is fun, fun, fun.

The indulgence in food is additionally fostered by its being ubiquitous. There is no definite time for food, or to put it in other words, there is food always and everywhere. During the day, it is common to sight people lining in buffets with their packed plates and to see them constantly munching even in the most inappropriate places. It is as if they were plunged into the "stupefied, hyperreal euphoria that [they] would not exchange for anything else, and that is the empty and inescapable form of seduction." (Baudrillard *Simulacra* 92). Yet, this seduction "only functions when it is phantasmied, reremembered, never real." (ibid.: 95). With this in mind, the American dream of limitlessness and the pursuit of abundance surfaces in the form of excessive consumption.

In line with the approach to hybrid consumption and performative labor, let us for a moment focus on the latter by reflecting on its main force. The smile is a prerequisite for becoming a member of the Carnival family. Learning from Disneyland which excels at the feeling business (Maanen 58-76), and Las Vegas whose managers "recognized that putting smiles on the faces of visitors paid well" (Rothman 18), it seems that Carnival has mastered the lesson of cheerful demeanor. Just like at Disneyland where "[f]alse moves, rude words, careless disregard, detected insincerity, or a sleepy and bored presence" (Maanen 58) are intolerable and punishable, by training and strict conduct rules, Carnival makes sure the guests are constantly greeted and served with a smile.

It is a complementary feature, or better said commodity, of all activities, goods, services and experiences aboard Carnival's fun ships.

The combination of hybrid consumption and performative labor extends into the realm of culture. It could be said that cruising has adopted a mass culture character since, as Smith suggests, “tourism managers [perceive] culture as a resource which should be made accessible to as many as possible, and one which should be made entertaining and fun.” (Intr. 4). What Carnival promotes on its ships besides leisure tourism is a “creative tourism, which involves participation in cultural activities (e.g. painting, photography, crafts, dancing, cookery).” (Smith 16). To illustrate my point I shall provide a few examples of what is termed edutainment. One of the housekeeping department’s creative activities that grants the guest a memorable fun experience is the art of towel folding. Cruise ships stewards usually greet their guests every evening by leaving a surprise on their beds. Upon returning to their cabins after dinner guests usually find an animal made of neatly folded towels (see fig. 3.3). To make the best of it, Carnival offers an origami towel seminar (at an extra charge of course) in which guests can learn the art of towel folding. Besides, the company published a book titled *Towel Creations* that reveals the secrets of the forgotten art. This book is put into each cabin and is available for purchase.



Figure 3.3 Towel animals

Along similar lines, the guests can pamper themselves in Cloud 9 Spa, self-proclaimed “one of the largest spas afloat [...] where the ultimate mental escape takes place” (Carnival.com). Additionally, the Spa personnel offer workshops (at an extra charge) where guests can learn some basics in traditional body and face treatment. One final example that articulates the underlying philosophy of orchestrated fun aboard Carnival’s cruise ships is the interactive 15-minute-pre-show event featuring Carnival Magic dancers and a dozen audacious cruising guests. The applications take place in the first days of the cruise so the dancers can teach the volunteers a short choreography which is to be mastered by the end of the cruise and then performed on stage in the Showtime Theater. This form of edutainment seems to engineer what Andy Warhol stated back in 1968, “In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes.” Hence, this example does not merely evoke escapism and fun, but also re-invention of the self.

The list is endless, and to reflect upon each fun generating activity offered by Carnival would be too detailed and redundant. However, the procuring question we might ask in relation to these examples of edutainment concerns their very nature. Does the orchestration of fun affect the quality of experiences? How far do the selected aspects of fun engender a sense of hyperreality? Although a definite answer is not possible, it is feasible to suggest that the mere fact of a wholesome experience which takes place in a ‘tourist bubble’ is enough to substantiate the sense of constructed reality. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the cultural experience is inevitably inauthentic. As Smith argues, it is “simply condensed” (119).

Conclusion

The analysis carried out in this chapter tried to depict some of the major implications of recent conceptualizations within the social study of tourism. In his insightful article on conceptual developments related to tourist experiences, Uriely sums up the shift to postmodern theorizing and the emergence of new trends in contemporary tourism in the following words:

[F]rom differentiation to re-differentiation of everyday life and tourism; from generalizing to pluralizing portrayals of the tourist

experience; from focusing on the toured objects to the attention given to the role of subjectivity in the constitution of experiences; and from contradictory and decisive statements to relative and complementary interpretation. (“The Tourist Experience” 209)

However, with the blurring of boundaries propagated by postmodern thinking, the shift is less clear in terms of conceptualization. The resulting fuzziness voices a condition “in which the tensions of modernity and postmodernity are active and present.” (Sturken and Cartwright 2009: 343). Nevertheless, the conceptual obfuscation calls for attention and initiates further research within the social study of tourism.

The discussion has hopefully proved my argument that post-tourism assumes more or less fundamental changes in tourist’s motivations and experiences in contemporary society, which emphasizes commodification of tourism products and services as advocates of broader economic and socio-cultural changes.

By way of conclusion, this chapter functions as a smooth introduction to a close analysis of fun production in regard to space and place orchestration aboard *Carnival Magic*, the topic of which requires a novel theoretical approach. Hence, in order to provide a plausible discussion, I shall ground my arguments by relying on a selected body of theory within the fields of cultural geography and social studies. They will provide the tools for a fundamental understanding of the cruise ship as a simulacrum- landscape that generates a highly orchestrated reality.

4. Cultural Geography and the construction of place

Introduction

By taking up a culturally geographic approach which puts equal emphasis on things, theories, and emotions (Anderson 166) this chapter is concerned with construction, perception, and close reading of place. After a brief introduction of cultural geography, its goals and notions specifically relevant to ‘postmodern giant floating amusement mall resorts’ (cruise ships), what follows are two sub-sections that describe and analyze particular places onboard *Carnival Magic*.

The first two are themed environments that are imbued with diverse cultural meanings. My interpretation of these 'texts' relies both on personal experience and concepts pertaining to postmodern theory. The last sub-section establishes a relationship between an ideology of fun and place, and negotiates the implications of such a relationship.

4.1 Cultural geography and landscape

It goes without saying that the social, political, and economic changes in the 1960's and 1970s that led to the development of Cultural studies have caused changes in science orientations. Culture became the focus of attention of many intellectuals regardless of their fields of interest. Given that, the past two decades have seen remarkable changes in the study of geography that resulted in the emergence of its sub-discipline - cultural geography. Many great minds boggled with the notion of culture trying to apply it to space. Whatever the preferences or limitations of various definitions of culture are, my aim here is to move away from that debate, briefly outline the goals of this fairly recent discipline, and introduce the notion of landscape, which will set the grounds for its reading onboard *Carnival Magic*.

To familiarize the reader with what cultural geography is, I will focus on Mitchell's and Anderson's understanding of it. Despite the temporal difference of a decade between the works of these writers, the perception of cultural geography differs slightly in terms of their foci. While Mitchell emphasizes the historical development of the discipline, the more recent book by Anderson is more concerned with its contemporary form. However, both credit Sauer, a German geographer, whose ideas greatly influenced the development of cultural geography in America. The death of environmental determinism (Mitchell 18) saw "[...] the birth of a particular *kind* of geography. It [was] a geography that [...] was interested most particularly in the ways that human cultures transformed the natural world to create landscapes of cultural regions." (Mitchell 26). I will return to this definition more than once in the following sub-sections.

A more recent definition of cultural geography offered by Anderson suggests that it aims to investigate the confluences of context and culture (Intr. 3). To define context in relation to geography we can refer to national, political and social determinants. Thus, Anderson's main argument is that "X [...] meaning 'cultural life' does not take place in a vacuum." (ibid.). It is clear at this point that the key element of this statement is 'take place', which marks an activity. It tries to define place as constantly changing assemblages of material and non-material traces. Anderson notes,

Traces are marks, residues or remnants left in place by cultural life[...] As traces are constantly produced they continually influence the meanings and identities of place[...] Traces [...] tie cultures and geographies together, influencing the identity of both. As a consequence of the constant production of traces, places become dynamic entities. (ibid.: 5)

The constant intersections of culture and context are clearly inevitable and, as such, are part of our everyday experience. From the quotation above, we could claim that places are subject to constant change. Thus, places can be seen as spaces imbued with continually changing meaning and identity, and as realms in which human activity produces non/material traces.

Geographical writers have tried to rethink the concept of landscape that resulted in proliferation of critical responses. Although Cosgrove offers a brilliant insight into the conceptualization of landscape from a historical perspective, for the sake of my study, I chose to concentrate on Mitchell and Anderson. These contemporary writers try to capture the essence of landscape within the field of cultural geography by bringing the discourse of culture and social relations into prominence.

In its widest sense landscape can be interpreted as an overlap of culture and nature, in which the former affects the latter (Mitchell 27). More specifically, Mitchell perceives landscape as "[...] an active agent in constituting [...] history, serving [...] as a symbol for the needs and desires of people who live in it (or who have a stake in producing and maintaining it)" (Mitchell 93-94). If we continue the line by adding values and beliefs, landscape could be seen as an

agent promoting its ideology. This brings me to Cosgrove again, since in his book *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* he makes strong claims about ideology as an integral part of the landscape discourse (15). Therefore, if we perceive landscape as propagator of an ideology, a symbol, than it clearly stands for something, or more precisely, it represents something. The key word is representation. It follows that landscape can be read as a malleable text, the reading of which is conditioned by social, political, economic and cultural practices. These multiple readings and meanings are direct off-springs of postmodern thinking, a school of thought that was critically discussed in chapter 1.

Drawing on Cosgrove who traces the concept of landscape to the Italian Renaissance, and later establishes close references to modern capitalism, Mitchell suggests that landscape offers a way of reading reality (115). To borrow his phrase, “landscape was not just a way of seeing, but rather *the true* way of seeing.” (ibid.) But what is *the true* [my emphasis added] way of seeing? Who determines it? Is it the same for me and you? These are the questions that have no single answer, but what is important and what brings me back to my previous claim is that landscape is a kind of text, and as such it can be interpreted. However, there is always something that overrides representation and consequentially interpretation, something that is beyond words (see Anderson 29-35). This is exactly what incited criticism within the field of cultural geography. A postmodern solution to the debate offers to understand landscape both as representational and non-representational. Anderson makes this point clear,

Dance, architecture, art, *may* be non-linguistic, but they are still languages of communication [...] [They] may be used to communicate non-thought through things- they may be used impetuously, impulsively, or ‘instinctively’, to exclaim or profane an experience. (33)

Before I apply this theoretical framework to postmodern cruise ships, I wish to suggest Anderson’s definition of a culturally geographic approach to place as comprehensive and fitting to the needs of this study. According to him, the

approach “[...] involves analysing and interrogating all the agents, activities, ideas and contexts that combine together to leave traces in places.” (ibid.: 35).

Moving on, Anderson also makes an interesting point when it comes to differentiation of spaces and places. The former are seen as “open, scientific, and detached” unlike the latter which are “intimate, peopled, and emotive” (ibid.: 38). Is it possible for a space to be detached? Can we then talk about spaces at all? Whatever the reverberations of such a classification, my aim is to focus on places, more precisely on a particular kind of landscape that generates a huge diversity of places.

In my discussion above, I talked about traces as remnants of human activity (cultural life) that constitute a landscape and thereby shape its very structure. Let us consider a cruise ship as a particular landscape. It is a magnificent vanguard architectural creation, constituting a symbol of post-tourism, its trends, tastes and desires. As a non-linguistic mode of communication, it still functions as a text subject to interpretation. What most of the tourists see is the mere end result completely devoid of human efforts that were put into its materialization. The landscape thus offers only a framed or partial reality. To put it in Baudrillard’s words, it is “a false representation” (*Simulacra* 6). To justify this claim the nature of this particular landscape needs to be further explored. Since a cruise ship somewhat resembles a city, which is a landscape itself, it can be argued that the ship is a recreation of a landscape. It, nevertheless, gets imbued with its own ideology that is open to negotiation but is fairly determined by its creators- the Carnival Corporation. The ship then assumes a whole new reality that I term ‘macro-scale hyperreality’. This one takes place on a macro level (a cruise ship as a landscape), while what I refer to as ‘micro-scale hyperreality’ operates on a micro level (the numerous places comprising the cruise ship).

What we see in Figure 4.1 is what Carnival (the producers in power who impose the desired meaning and reading) wants us to see. The waterslide and sports amenities visible on the top decks promote fun, and that is the fundamental experience that matters on a Carnival vessel. It is highly unlikely that we will think about those who actually maintain the perpetual fun onboard. Thus,

something that appears to be natural (in this case fun) is in Barthes' words 'a myth'- an idealized, euphemized, and aestheticized reality.



Figure 4.1 Carnival Magic

To turn away from the discourse of hegemony, I wish to focus my attention on aestheticized reality. By claiming that a cruise ship is a recreation of a city, I could be making an overstatement. It is rather a recreation of the fun part of the city ingeniously devised to cater to the tastes of post-modern tourists. The key features that govern the construction of place on a cruise ship are leisure, shopping, and entertainment. Such a hybrid landscape is comprised of replications of amusement parks, shopping malls, and holiday resorts. All these combined and set on water, suggest that cruise ships can be justifiably perceived as giant floating amusement mall resorts. An artificial landscape created by an imperial force for the sake of yielding profits. This assertion brings me to Darrel Crilley's theoretical understanding of malls. He notes that "[a mall] is like a theater in which pacified public basks in the grandeur of carefully orchestrated corporate spectacle" (qtd.in Mitchell 137). The overarching idea is that such a hybrid landscape functions as an ideal consumption site masking the social relations at work.

While consumption was discussed in more detail in chapter 3, I wish to turn now from scholarly attitude to landscape to its close reading. To do that I will consider Carnival Magic as a material and symbolic articulation of America's image. Thus, in order to provide a conspicuous interpretation, I shall draw on Baudrillard's fascination with America, a world in which history has been replaced by historical simulacra (*America* 1988). Proponents of this utopian world are a

theme park like Disneyland and Las Vegas. While these were discussed in chapter 2, the following sub-section takes up the metaphor of the New World and applies it to Carnival Magic.

4.2 The metaphor of the New World and Carnival Magic

The metaphor of the New World can be made clear by making constant references to the last two sub-sections of chapter 2. I shall now engage in a close reading of Carnival Magic by adhering to visual culture methodology.

When looking at Carnival Magic (see fig. 4.1), its architectural design is a true eye-catching spectacle. The facts and figures “1,004 feet in length, 130,000 tons of weight, and the capacity of 3,690 guests plus 1,367 crew and staff members” (Carnival.com) speak volumes of its magnificence. Its extreme dimensions perfectly fit the entrenched perceptions of America. To put that another way, the ship epitomizes megalomania- “an obsession with grandiose and extravagant things or actions” (Thefreedictionary.com). Each of Carnival’s newly built ship is larger than the previous one. One might wonder if there is a limit to it.

I return now to my previously introduced neologism, which I created in order to refer to a cruise ship as a particular kind of landscape. A giant floating amusement mall resort is a phrase that truthfully defines Carnival Magic. The ship has 14 decks of which 8 decks are specifically designed to cater to the projected phantasies, tastes, and desires of a post-tourist.

What is so conspicuous about places on this ship? In what manner are they designed? Do they represent *real* places? If the whole ship is a simulacrum, what reality do those places represent? Is the resemblance with Disney and Las Vegas an accidental imagination? Or rather an intention? What does this corporate strategy achieve? These are the questions that animate my further discussion. To analyze the construction of place onboard Carnival Magic, it is exceptionally useful to establish comparisons with the paragons of the New World. Quite similarly to Disney theme parks and their division into ‘lands’ this

fun ship is comprised of numerous themed areas. Put in Bryman's words "[t]he theme of each [amenity] is expressed in architecture, decoration, ambiance, clothing of [staff and crew] members (employees), sound, and food and goods for sale" (*The Disneyization of Society* 19).

While onboard Carnival Magic, I took the time to carefully observe, explore, and record the 'fun' that was, without exaggeration, more than overwhelming. Although I tried to keep a critical eye not to be carried away with the sheer appearances, a constant smile and a blissful look gave me away. At this point I once again refer back to my above quotation of Crilley and his perception of a mall as a grand dazzling spectacle (see Mitchell 137).

Let me now take you for a walk on the Magic. One of the main 'fun' highlights on this ship is the Ocean Plaza or 'Awesomeville.' In the virtual tour aboard Carnival Magic, the intention is clearly stated, "we built the Carnival Magic's Ocean Plaza to blur the line between indoor and outdoor" ("Carnival Magic Virtual Tour-CCL" Youtube.com). Blurring of boundaries is, as previously discussed, a legacy of postmodern thinking. Thus, we could claim that Carnival's ideology reflects broader social and cultural values of the current age. The intended blurring nevertheless echoes Baudrillard's and Eco's understanding of artificially created and replicated spaces (see Baudrillard *Simulacra* 1994; Eco 1986; chapter 2 and 3). But, is not a vacation all about leaving reality behind and immersing yourself into a whole new one? Well of course it is (this topic that was minutely discussed in chapter 3). The intention of the company is to keep you in this pseudo-paradise for the length of your stay onboard. But what happens after? The fun certainly vanishes into thin air once you debark and realize your account has been billed. To put it another way, once you realize you paid with *real* [my emphasis added] money for experiencing a reality different from what you are used to in your everyday life, (the Magic's hyperreality).

Moving on, there is Lanai, a half-a-mile promenade with its whirlpool and magnificent view, Carnival WaterWorks, a Sports Square comprised of a diverse fitness and entertainment amenities. These, however, will be paid more attention in the last sub-section with the aim to investigate the production of

perpetual fun as a strategic means which help create and maintain the sense of hyperreality onboard.

Continuing our walk, we come to the heart and economic hub of the ship. Similarly to Disney's strategy to evoke the Main Street, USA within its theme parks, CCL has used this as a matrix on its fun ships. One cannot neglect the subliminal meaning of the Promenade. Situated in the middle section of the ship, its two catwalks parted by a mezzanine (atrium) with glass elevators, truthfully recreate a mall with fancy luxury shops (see fig. 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5).



Figure 4.2 The Promenade



Figure 4.2 Carnival Magic atrium



Figure 4.3 Shopping on the Promenade - Cherry on Top Candy Store

The place reminds us of what Marin defined as a “degenerate utopia” (an ideological discourse) and is applicable both to Disneyland and Carnival’s fun ship (see Marin 1977). It is a place that rejects to mark the critical distance between the inside and the outside. To quote Harvey, “it is a happy, harmonious, non-conflictual space aside from the ‘real’ world ‘outside’ in such a way as to soothe and mollify, to entertain, to invent the history, to cultivate a nostalgia for some mythical past, to perpetuate fetish of commodity culture rather than to critique it.” (*Spaces of Hope* 166-167).

Another important feature when it comes to place construction is its location. Drawing on Agnew and Duncan, Anderson argues that architects and designers carefully plan and locate certain places at “specific nodes or points” to achieve certain goals (39). The location of the Promenade on Magic is just another case in point. Generally, after dinner, people head towards the theatre to see a show, a place which is quite *accidentally* [my emphasis added] located at the very end of the Promenade. It means that one needs to pass through the casino without throwing a coin into the slot machine, pass the shops full of sparkly Swarovski jewelry and branded wrist watches without buying a single piece of it. Then, only a few paces away you stand in front of the inevitable Carnival souvenir shop- a Mecca of commodified memories (see fig. 4.5).



Figure 4.4 Shopping on the Promenade - the souvenir shop

If you did not succumb to the temptation, you managed to get to the desired destination just on time to see the magic happen on stage. Along similar lines goes Bryman's observation of Disney theme parks, "[w]ith many attractions, visitors are forced to go through a shop containing relevant merchandise in order to exit" (59). These illustrations truthfully show how culture and place (theatre, fashion, music, food etc.) have been constructed, arranged, contested and appropriated. Furthermore, this confluence is driven by diverse strategies (consumerism, hyperreality, nostalgia, diversity, etc.) and suggests to be exactly what cultural geography investigates, namely the intersections of culture and context.

So far, I have concentrated on developing the metaphor of the New World and applying it to Carnival Magic on a macro- scale. Drawing on what I claimed, and shifting my analysis of themed environments to a micro- scale, the metaphor reaches its culmination in the following sub-sections. I thereby heavily focus on the concepts which were introduced in chapter 2 and then further developed in the context of post-tourism in chapter 3. However, before I engage in the actual reading of place I need to provide a particular toolkit which will help me express my ideas in a proper way.

4.3 A toolkit to reading architecture

The following description and analysis of place construction takes recourse in visual methodology and its terminology, while giving proper due to the importance of place. As already mentioned, architecture and interior design are non-linguistic modes of communication. More precisely, they represent a visual mode of communication. Kress and Leeuwen articulated this idea in their book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. Their main proposition fits Anderson's view that "[nothing] takes place in a vacuum" (Anderson Intr. 3). To quote them, "[v]isual language is not- despite assumptions to the contrary, transparent and universally understood; it is culturally specific." (Kress and Leeuwen 4)

The visual language of architecture and interior design can be translated by description into a verbal written text and by photography into a visually recorded text. By making use of both in my analysis I interpret "meanings [that are] realized through different semiotic codes" (a multimodal text, see Kress and Leeuwen 177). How these meanings are produced and communicated in specific social settings is what social semiotics tries to answer (ibid.: 266). Drawing on Kress and Leeuwen who modeled their approach on a language as a system of signs, I argue that each piece of furniture, décor, color, prop, etc. constitute a particular set of signs and, as such, construct a particular place. Further on, Barthes argues that each sign is comprised of a signifier (in my case an object) and a signified (meaning), whereby a signified has two levels- a denotational and a connotational meaning (see Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 29). While the signifier operates as a representation, the signified invites interpretation. The main idea is that the creation of the signifier (form, object, image) and the reading of the signified (meaning) are always motivated and never arbitrary (see Kress und Leeuwen 2006; Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 46-47). These processes are complex and assume an active role both of the producer and the receiver.

Reading and interpreting images [objects] is one way that we, as viewers, contribute to the process of assigning value to the culture in which we live. Practices of looking, then, are not passive acts of consumption. By looking at and engaging with images [objects] in

the world, we influence the meanings and uses assigned to the images [objects] that fill our day-to-day lives.

(Sturken and Cartwright 2001:42)

This was only a brief introduction into the terminology of visual communication. Additional concepts will be explained in chapter 5 which is anchored in the realm of the media and investigates how the various representations of Carnival Magic in the media create and maintain the sense of hyperreality. Having established a fairly workable vocabulary, it is time to proceed to the description and interpretation of the Red Frog Pub aboard Carnival Magic.

4.4 Themed environments: the Caribbean inspired Red Frog Pub

By close reading of place, the aim in this sub-section is to examine the agenda drawn up by the postmodern legacy of theming, heritage, and nostalgia. How these are applied to the Red Frog Pub and what they evoke is primarily based on my personal experience.

Since this bar is a themed place, a few words on what theming actually means need to be said. To put it in simple words, theming of a place assumes applying a certain theme to a particular place. It is often considered as a way of pursuing distinctiveness in a highly competitive market that is saturated with places that look alike. A theme normally provides a certain sense of place that Agnew and Duncan claim to be a crucial constituent part of the place, apart from location and locale: "Sense of place refers to the emotional, experiential and affective traces that tie humans into particular environments." (qtd. in Anderson 39).

Apart from Ritzer and Liska's suggestion that "cruise ships are increasingly becoming themed" (qtd. in Bryman *The Disneyization of Society* 51), Bryman's discussion on ethnically themed places in Disneyland (ibid.: 15-53) lends itself perfectly to CCL's theming strategy. Since the vessels operate mostly in the Caribbean, Carnival desired to create a sense of the Caribbean already aboard its newest fun ship. A novelty which definitely makes Magic authentic is the Red Frog Pub serving the exclusive and tasty house brew- "the Thirsty Frog Red [which is] specially brewed for Carnival" ("Carnival Magic Virtual Tour-CCL"

Youtube.com). The welcome sign displayed on a screen at the entrance of the bar plays on emotive and folksy language thereby creating a sense of place already before entering (see fig. 4.6).



Figure 4.5 Red Frog Pub - the welcome screen

The pub is furnished so as to resemble a typical Caribbean pub with live entertainment, table hockey in the game room, and Caribbean-inspired food.

Already at first glance, the bar evokes a lay back and cozy feeling. This is achieved by establishing a pleasing combination of elements in a whole (see fig. 4.7). The ochre wooden fence matches the tables and stools in color and material; the mosaic floor is made of goldenrod yellow, coral red and sky blue tiles matching the dark goldenrod painted walls. The color of upholstered diner chairs, booth benches, and bar stools matches the coral red tiles on the floor. The smokey topaz ceiling with scattered spot lights resembling the stars in the sky provides a delicate play of light and shade. A subtle, but still eye-catching true blue streamer with the bar's name carved out of ochre wood matching the rest of the furnishings, additionally fosters the color harmony.



Figure 4.6 Red Frog Pub - entrance

So far, nothing indicates that the bar is a themed place. But let us take a closer look. Engaging in a minute description of all the props used for decoration will hopefully lead to a deeper conceptual understanding of theming and authenticity. Apart from the screen, there is also a welcome sign at the very entrance of the pub. I refer to a handwritten colorful chalk inscription against the blackboard framed in ochre wood that caught my attention. It said, “Welcome, live thirsty.” Common sense should suggest you that the message is rather cryptic, or to put it another way, deliberately puzzling. But, if you remember what makes Carnival Magic distinct from its sister fun ships, you will know that the word ‘thirsty’ refers to the pub’s own brew (Thirsty Frog Red). The invitation directed to the tourists to consume the tasty home brew (the newest brand of Carnival Magic) serves as a great promise about experiencing a different reality. Be it a Caribbean or Carnival reality, it is commodified and sold in tall glasses, kegs, and pitchers in exchange for your signature (i.e. your real American dollars).

A somewhat surprising prop that immediately puts a smile on your face and heightens the keen sense of ‘fun-is-all-around’ is a hanging board with a face hole with two hoops on either side of it. How this prop fits into a Caribbean bar is arguable, but it certainly provides an unusual setting for making a funny holiday photo. On entering the bar, on the left side, there is a tall fake palm tree

with plates of places in the Caribbean (Freeport, Key West, Nassau, etc.) If we examine the information value of object positioning, this exotic signpost could be read as an object of contemplation, something that is “already given or known” (see Kress and Leeuwen 180). However, on the right side, there is a showcase with memorabilia displaying Jamaican bottled and canned beer, bottles of spirits, towel with insignia ‘live thirsty’, wooden figures of a mermaid, dolphins, and ‘thirsty frog’ branded coasters, caps, and t-shirts. According to Kress and Leeuwen, objects placed on the right side are perceived as new and seek “particular attention” (ibid.). Despite the fact that their reasoning is based on photography, I believe that a close parallel can be drawn to objects and their positioning in space. Again, on the left wall there is a huge fake Caribbean Sea turtle. It might represent a part of the observer’s cultural knowledge (Carnival’s fun ships sail in the Caribbean and the majority of sailing tourists are American). If so, the turtle is a “given” item. Moreover, it could represent a part of the Caribbean. What first comes to my mind is the Green Turtle Cay in the Bahamas. If we now consider that an object (sign) has two levels of meanings (denotive and connotive), the turtle and the palm tree would denote an aquatic reptile and a plant. However, these objects (signs) can be connotive, and can thus assume “a range of higher-level meanings” (see Rose 87). Drawing on Rose’s further differentiation of connotive signs, the turtle and the palm tree can be seen as “synecdochal” signs. To confirm her claim, she uses the example of the Eiffel Tower that is often perceived to stand for Paris - *pars pro toto*. Along similar lines the turtle and the palm tree can be seen to stand for the Caribbean. Additional examples that reiterate the point are the life belt, colorful lanterns and bottles in rope woven holders, a red-headed poison dart frog glued to the wall, a treasure chest, wooden posts tied with a rope, wooden water skis glued to the wall and many more (see fig. 4.8). All the objects interact and affect each other. Given that the objects represent a set of signs that communicate a certain message (the sense of the Caribbean), the architects and interior designers made an effort to make the message as transparent as possible. According to Kress and Leeuwen, maximal understanding requires minimal effort of interpretation (13).



Figure 4.7 Red Frog Pub - connective décor

However, the interpretation always depends on the observer. Since I have never been to the Caribbean, I might as well perceive the Red Frog Pub as an authentic bar, or to put it another way, as the 'real thing'. But what is real? Is reality in the visual representation or rather in the eye of the beholder? How authentic and reliable is this carefully created assemblage?

Kress and Leeuwen argue that if there is too much depth, color and detail in a photograph it becomes hyper-real (158). Drawing on them, I could I argue that the connective décor enhances the sense of the Caribbean and makes the pub 'more real than the real thing.' Even though their discussion resides in the context of photography, some parts of the analysis can be appropriated to fit my discussion. Therefore, instead of color, it is possible to account for detail saturation. Before establishing a parallel, it needs to be said that Kress and Leeuwen define modality as a degree of reality (ibid.). Thus, borrowing from them, it could be argued that minimal detail saturation equals lowest modality. On the other hand, if taken to an extreme, for example, if there is too much detail, the degree of reliability gets substantially lowered (ibid.: 160). The same reasoning could be applied to contextualization. The more contextualized an object is, the higher the modality (degree of reliability), but after a certain point (too much contextualization) modality decreases.

In his stimulating discussion about reproduction of art, history and nature, and staged authenticity, Eco sarcastically comments on the excessive abundance of

décor (23). His comment seems to strongly support the description of the Red Frog Pub. You can barely lay your eyes on an empty (not decorated) space in the pub. Bearing in mind the above description and theoretical discussions, I argue that the Red Frog Pub is rather a constructed reality than a representation of reality. In his essay on staged authenticity, MacCannel makes the same observation, “[s]ettings are often not merely copies or replicas of real-life situations, but copies that are presented as disclosing more about the real thing than the real thing itself discloses.” (“Staged Authenticity” 598-99). If I am to go a step further and draw on Baudrillard, the bar does not have a true referent in reality and can thus be perceived as a pure simulacrum (see Baudrillard *Simulacra* 1994).

So far the focus was on the connective décor which I consider to be overused and thus a rather crude attempt to claim an authentic experience. Unfortunately, the theming strategy does not end here. A step further in the context of ethnical theming is the composition of serving personnel- exclusively black waiters, most of them of Jamaican background, wearing short-sleeve shirts with a logo of the home brew and knee-reaching baggy pants. They are the only waiters aboard Magic who are allowed to wear short sleeves. To be honest, it would be quite strange and implausible to be served by a waiter with a bowtie in this kind of setting. However, there is another interesting point worth mentioning. On my first sail in April, before Magic’s European inauguration, the waiters were wearing floral shirts with a Caribbean theme. On my second cruise though, these were abandoned for unicolored shirts (see fig. 4.9). It might be that the designers had to appropriate their dress code so as to comply with the company’s image.



Figure 4.8 Red Frog Pub - waiting staff

In relation to very popular theming strategies in tourism industry, I find Eco's ridiculing comment particularly suiting to confirm the object of my discussion.

But once the "total fake" is admitted, in order to be enjoyed it must seem totally real. So the Polynesian restaurant will have, in addition to a fairly authentic menu, Tahitian waitresses in costume, appropriate vegetation, rock walls with little cascades, and once you are inside nothing must lead you to suspect that outside there is anything but Polynesia. (43-44)

This discussion has primarily focused on the notion of authenticity as an important and desired element of tourist experience. I have also explained how the lack of authenticity creates a fake reality. Thereby the discourse of the colonial past that is highly pertinent to the Caribbean has been deliberately neglected. It is beyond the remit of this paper to examine the strategy of theming in such a broad context. Had I included the historical aspect, my study would have benefited from it. For that reason, my next discussion about a similarly themed place will focus more on heritage and nostalgia.

4.5 Themed environments: the Italian restaurant Cucina del Capitano

Chapter 3 has thoroughly discussed the recent emergence of the post-tourist as a conspicuous phenomenon of contemporary tourism. Bearing in mind the quest for inauthentic experiences and satisfaction with relative truths (Urieli 1997, 2005), I argue that Carnival employs this kind of behavior to its maximum advantage. Moreover, this study intends to argue that this new trend energetically fosters the incredible proliferation of themed environments that capitalize on the association between heritage and nostalgia. The confluence of these two more than often results in an invention of tradition (see Intr. Hobsbawm 1992). How the dynamic interplay of theming, authenticity, heritage, and nostalgia affect the quality of tourist experiences and in what way they evoke hyperreality shall be more graspable by the end of this investigation. To suggest the interplay of culture and corporate strategies, I wish to uncover the legitimate reasons emerging from those patterns of interaction.

Since the vessels are always built in Italy (due to lower costs) and cruise for at least six months in the Mediterranean, Carnival came up with an ingenious idea from which it would derive great benefits. *Cucina del Capitano* with its homey décor and personal touches- like framed photographs provided by Italian Captains and officers, give a place a warm and authentic feel. It is their little slice of *la dolce vita*. One might wonder why it is important to create an authentic ambiance onboard when the ports of call offer authentic experiences. Here the ideology of CCL needs to be evaluated. One of the reasons (also mentioned in the reading of the Red Frog Pub) is that the company uses theming as a “mechanism for distinguishing otherwise identical and unremarkable venues and products” (Bryman *Disneyization* 52). The other, that I personally find more plausible, is heavily based on consumption strategies. In that respect, we could support Bryman’s assertion that a cruise ship functions as a “hybrid consumption site [which goal] is to give people as many reasons as possible for staying at the site[s]. The more needs that can be met, the longer visitors will stay and the more money they will spend.” (ibid.: 59). It follows that CCL’s theming strategy perfectly adheres to the two principles Bryman termed as the “destination principle” and “the stay longer principle” (ibid.: 75). Such claims gently remind of Boorstin’s understanding of the term ‘pseudo-event.’ He notes, “[t]hese [tourist] attractions offer an elaborately contrived indirect experience, an artificial product to be consumed in the very places where the real thing is as free as air” (99). So why bother going ashore and looking for an “authentic” Italian restaurant when you can dress up to the nines, exit your room, take the elevator to it without ever running the risk of smearing your perfect make up in the scorching heat outside in the real world.

Another plausible and quite amusing explanation is provided by Baudrillard in his perception of Americans.

Americans are people of conviction, convinced of everything and seeking to convince. One of the aspects of their good faith is this stubborn determination to reconstitute everything of a past and history which were not their own and which they have largely destroyed or spirited away. (America 41)

Now that my cogent arguments have been supported, we shall turn to a close reading of *Cucina del Capitano*, which will establish the grounds for reflection on heritage and nostalgia in the current era of tourism.

Carnival takes great pride in coming up with novelties on each of its newly built vessels. Apart from the Red Frog Pub, Carnival Magic has seen the birth of a new themed restaurant, *Cucina del Capitano* (the Captain's kitchen). Since I had already read about this restaurant on Carnival's homepage before I going on my cruise, I was truly looking forward to experiencing the sense of Italy aboard Magic. However, I was not aware you should make a table reservation like in real life. *Cucina* and the Prime Steakhouse are exclusive restaurants that require early reservations. Plus, they both offer full service-menu for an extra charge. This non-availability for a second shattered my vacation 'reality' where everything was available 'here and now'. After a successful reservation for the following day I felt even more avid to dine there. Bearing in mind my position of a researcher, I tried to be as objective as possible. Hence, I buried my expectations of 'Italianicity' and let myself be amazed by whatever there was to be seen and tasted. Yet, how is it possible to ignore the knowledge of Italy, its cuisine, tradition, music, etc. if that has already become a part of my knowledge of the world. It is exactly why the interpretation never resides only in the content. It would be amiss to ignore the cultural and social values I bring with me to my research. Moreover, an interpretation always relies on a broader context. In my case, this would be an Italian restaurant on an American cruise ship with ports of call in the Caribbean. Nevertheless, the ship does cruise in the Mediterranean for six months after it has been built. Whether *Cucina* simply emerged as a great idea to celebrate cultural diversity and preserve intangible cultural heritage or rather as a strategic move driven by prospects of huge revenues is of less importance to post-tourists. As long as their needs are met, the world is a *fun* [my emphasis added] place to live in.

The night had come. Being led by a hostess through a narrow corridor, I found myself in an architectural and designer heaven on Earth. Pardon, I forgot I was on water. The ceiling was painted as a blue sky with fluffy clouds in its corners. The clear mid-section adorned with a magnificent chandelier resurrected Renaissance in its full glory (see fig. 4.10).



Figure 4.9 Cucina del Capitano - the ceiling

Wood, marble and iron- all in perfect harmony spoke the language of elegance and decadence. A constructed *dolce vita*, or rather as Eco put it, a “kitsch reverence that overwhelms the visitor, thrilled by his encounter with a magic past” (10). On the way to our table, my eye caught a glimpse of the ship’s captain, who was sitting with a dozen of elegantly dressed people at a huge round table. Their loud conversation was quite suited to the Italian family-style dining. Having been seated, I started immersing myself in each and every detail. There was an immense assemblage of connective décor that revealed the almost desperate desire to materialize the sense of Italianicity. *Cucina del Capitano* (the Captain’s kitchen) was to resemble the Captain’s home, but what Carnival constructed was a whole new model, which I am pretty sure has no referent in real life. A pure simulacrum. Tradition turned into a consumable spectacle. To prove my point this place needs to be described in more detail (see fig. 4.11).



Figure 4.10 Cucina del Capitano - connective décor

The congenial atmosphere was created by numberless mosaic lamps, huge bottles of wine and vinegar, wine barrels, the *obligatory* [my emphasis added] checkered tablecloths, and chairs in different sizes, shapes, colors and upholstery. Allegedly, this was the way traditional Italian houses were furnished.

The atmosphere was additionally charged with nostalgia in that the walls were covered by the captain's personal family photos along with ones of other captains and officers onboard Carnival ships through the years. The images displayed Italian ports of call and memorable moments in Carnival history. This effective stimulation through visuals is what Goulding recognizes as a feature of postmodernism (837). Moreover, Zukin asserts that “visual strategies shape consumption space as a total experience” (64). In terms of color harmony, black-and-white photography projects a smooth voice so as to express sentimental yearning for the past. Our current ‘risk-society’ (see Beck 1992) where no constancies are granted by political, economic, or social relations needs to cling to traditional family values and dear memories so as to survive the day.

Hence, it could be argued that history represented in these photographs and connective décor seems to be “a way to escape from the anxieties of everyday life” (Goulding 837). Cucina del Capitano might be therefore seen as an epitome of commodified past imbued with nostalgia (see Hannabuss 298). A perfect simulacrum in which nostalgic desires are stimulated through active consumption of aestheticized images of the past. For, in the words of Baudrillard: “When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning” (*Simulacra* 6). Add to this ambiance a fairly authentic menu and you end up dining on ‘*la dolce vita*.’ I believe Eco offered a most suitable explanation of the above described phenomena, “[f]or the reproduction to be desired, the original has to be idolized” (19).

Bearing in mind Carnival’s main target audience (middle-class families), the company puts a lot of effort into construction of familiar settings that would engage a whole family into consumption of those very settings. Cucina is a case in point in the sense that it celebrates family reunions and shared memories. Moreover, this constructed place could be interpreted as a fusion of American

and European traditional values that are clearly an 'endangered species' in the lives of contemporary societies. At this point I wish to suggest that the 'staged authenticity' of those idolized and desirable values fosters a feeling of safeness and carefreeness which is finally offered for consumption for an extra charge of 10 US dollars. Given that, I wish to argue that Cucina del Capitano with its connective décor galore extensively explores the intertwined relationships among theming, authenticity, heritage, and nostalgia.

My analysis of themed environments has by now hopefully proved what cultural geography takes as its premise. Namely that the confluence of culture and geography profoundly affects the way we interpret place and the social relations imbedded in it. To give this issue a new twist, the next sub-section will examine how this confluence is embodied and manipulated by Carnival's ideology of fun, and eventually turned into a commodity. In order to do that, the analysis will often refer to the sub-section about commodification of fun considered in chapter 3. Now, the same topic is approached from a different perspective so as to appreciate the intrinsic importance of place construction and its consumption.

4.6 Close reading of fun facilities aboard Carnival Magic

Perhaps no other words than the slogan '*Fun for all. All for fun.*' truthfully express Carnival's ideology. How this utopia materializes and how it helps boost the sense of hyperreality aboard Carnival Magic are some of the questions that prompt the following discussion. Before I describe and analyze a personal selection of fun facilities, let us first consider the message the above slogan conveys. Although without a direct address, the experience of fun is a promise to all, which is clearly a delusion. Nevertheless, it is only for those who buy it i.e. who cruise with Carnival. Once you embark, Carnival (all staff and crew) makes sure you taste the fun you were promised and which you have previously paid for.

Having introduced and explained the synonym for Carnival's fun ships, the 'fun floating factory' in chapter 3, my aim here is to further develop the issue of fun production. Generally speaking, a factory is a source of prolific production of

goods. If we consider services and activities as goods, they are naturally tied to space. Once imbued with meaning it becomes a constructed place where processes of production, negotiation, and consumption come into play. I am not claiming that the previously discussed themed environments do not generate fun. On the contrary, one can have fun times while dining with family or emptying kegs of beer. However, the focus is here shifted to more interactive experiences.

There are dozens of places aboard Carnival Magic which are constructed so as to entertain and engage the cruiser. One of the highlights is the Showtime Theatre (see fig. 4.12) which literally dazzles with its sumptuous interior design.



Figure 4.11 Carnival Magic - Showtime Theatre

The stage is surrounded by seats spanning two U-shaped levels, while the balance in color composition is achieved by blending coral red delicately patterned upholstered seats and goldenrod wooden furnishings. This harmonious composition is enlivened by lustrous silver pillars and matching handrails. During my cruise, there were three different Vegas-style shows featuring performances by dancers, singers, and musicians. All performances are exclusive Carnival productions, meaning that one is not allowed to take photos or record them. One might argue that Carnival has managed to recreate the feeling of Broadway aboard Magic. If we consider for a moment that the ship is a simulacrum on a macro- level, the floating Broadway-Vegas-style theatre

would be a simulacrum on a micro- level. Despite some semblance with Vegas productions, the quality of Carnival's shows is not necessarily of the same order as the Vegas ones. Tailored to entertain the masses, the productions include tons of glittering costumes, effective audio visual, staging, and light setup. Yet, all these contextual and contributing factors determine the desired effect- that of a true spectacle which overshadows the importance of the content. In his book *Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord argues:

The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing more than 'that which appears is good, that which is good appears'. The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance. (Ch.1, Article 12)

Drawing on this quote, the show, regardless of its storyline, is effectively granted runaway success.

Since my interest lies in the aspects of fun that generate a sense of hyperreality, there is a need to direct my discussion towards the issue of experience. Referring to Pine and Gilmore's model of the four realms of tourist experiences introduced in chapter 3 (see fig. 3.1), the activity of watching a show fuses the esthetic and the entertainment realms. It assumes passive participation which eventually results in the viewer's immersion (for clarification see Chapter 3, sub-section Post-tourism: the postmodern frenzy of experience; and Pine and Gilmore 102). Magic's entertainment director managed to communicate a stimulating idea. Namely, the ship is buzzing with entertainment activities, which truthfully express the meaning of magic. More precisely, Carnival's latest production, the *Showtime* dancing and singing piece, is staged as a magician show so as to enhance the feeling of magic onboard Magic. This confluence, however, evokes ecstatic delight that blurs the boundaries between staged magic (the show put on stage) and constructed Magic (the fun ship). Given that, fun is constructed, staged, and consumed on both levels. The only difference is that, while one level seeks overt approach to fun construction, the other requires a covert approach. It could be claimed that the degree of fun staging varies according to the constructed places. For example, it is higher in

the entertainment facilities than in restaurants. Nonetheless, Carnival defies this internal logic by introducing mini shows in dining facilities. At some point during my dinner all the waiting personnel started singing and dancing which apparently, by looking at peoples' reactions, made dining a memorable and fun experience. You could see that some of the waiters were embarrassed about making fools out of themselves, but if Carnival says 'it's time for fun' they must follow the calling. This mini show happened even while we were dining at Cucina del Capitano which I found extremely odd as it literally ruined the emotional and intimate ambiance created by the interplay of theming, heritage, and nostalgia. Along similar lines, close-up magicians perform in all dining rooms, lounges, and bars, the fact of which additionally proves that fun is an obligatory and ubiquitous element of Carnival's ideological experience. The mixing of constructed places with incongruent activities might be perceived to engender what Frederick Jameson terms as 'pastiche', a bricolage without any internal logic of arrangement (64). But, the concept applies only sparingly due to the impossibility to disregard the underlying principle of fun.

To turn my attention away from constructed places mainly aimed at passive entertainment, the following examples illustrate a physically active production and consumption of fun. How constructed sporting facilities affect the experience of fun aboard Magic is a question that inspires my further investigation. The desire to stay fit even while on vacation is a transfer of urban life reality onto the ship's reality. However, it is much more than a pure recreation. Here again, the extraordinary setting gives sufficient reason to make sweating a fun experience. In order to elucidate my assertions, I shall narrow my focus on a few sporting facilities and briefly examine the quality of experiences associated with them.

Carnival WaterWorks- the elaborate kid-friendly fun zone, the Sports Square comprised of a mini golf course, table tennis, foosball, basketball court, 800-feet running track, punching bags, and fitness stations, all with a magnificent ocean view, are highly orchestrated fun amenities that require active personal engagement and thereby produce personal memory.

Apart from the recognizable funnel, Carnival's most telling and effective conveyor of its ideology of fun is the unique Carnival WaterWorks (see fig. 4.13).

Located on Deck 12 [it] is the largest water park at sea [...] with various water-spray apparatus, an industry-first 300-gallon dump bucket, and the 303-foot-long, four decks high 'Twister Waterslide', the longest at sea. ("Carnival's Social Magic")



Figure 4.12 Carnival Magic - WaterWorks

These superlative features that act as corporate strategies to claim distinctiveness in a highly competitive market, also recall the metaphor of the New World, the narrative of which has been explored on several occasions in this paper. However, the Waterworks is not a mere copy of an aqua park, but rather it “represents an improvement over the original” (DeAngelis 120). The amplification of fun and excitement is achieved by the very setting of the WaterWork- a water park on water. How fun is that? It follows that the question of how the confluence of fun and space propagates hyperreality is redundant. Having no referent in everyday reality, Carnival WaterWorks is yet another simulacrum which generates sensory experiences that override simulation.

A further example of a simulacrum and a constructed place of fun production is the rope course named SkyCourse (see fig. 4.14).



Figure 4.13 Carnival Magic - SkyCourse

Carnival Magic takes great pride in setting up a unique sporting facility for those who crave a surge of pure adrenalin.

The SkyCourse is the first ropes course at sea, a fact that Carnival loves to tout. It's located right above the sports court. Donning a safety harness, passengers can work up their courage to get up above deck 12 and walk one of two courses with swinging steps and beams. This is probably not an activity for everyone, but if you don't mind the hits, it's an interesting challenge.

(“CCL, Carnival Magic, Fitness- Sky Course 9.0”)

Referring again to the realms of tourist experiences (see Pine and Gilmore 102), doing the rope course would represent an escapist experience. Williams claims that escapist activities assume “active participation and immersion into the activities environment” (488). Bearing in mind that escapism is a practice of engaging in activities that enable one to avoid having to deal with reality, the rope course acts as a means to avoid the ship's reality. To borrow from DeAngelis and his reasoning of escapism, the rope course might provide “a highly orchestrated sense of liberation from the spatial constraints,” in my case constraints imposed by the ship's architecture (122). His inspiring analysis of roller-coasters and theme parks within the context of postmodern thinking has common ground with my example. The narrative of the roller-coaster experience as a “series of anticipations, climaxes, and resolutions” can be likewise observed in the ropes experience (ibid.: 123). You also need to wait in a line to get your sit-harness and the entertainment staff's instructions before you actually take your first step. While waiting, you can barely enjoy the most panoramic perspective of both the ship and the sea. You just keep your mind on *doing* [my emphasis added] the ropes. The fair variety of swinging steps and

beams is interrupted by posts where you can repose and take your courage in both hands before you proceed. These stops act as resolution, quite similarly to hills on a roller-coaster that offer “a period of recovery from the [previous] long descent, marked by a renewed anticipation and a more seemingly confident ability to predict what will follow” (ibid.). Being high in the sky makes you lose touch with reality. The first time I did the ropes, I trembled like leaves in the breeze because I kept looking down. However, on my second go the ground-level just vanished. It was just me and the sky. Since I barely used the safety rope, the experience was liberating, exciting and empowering, and above all, memorable. This is exactly what Carnival excels at- the selling of highly memorable experiences so as to create life-time consumers.

While the esthetic realm has been partially covered by dining and entertainment facilities, Carnival also incorporates the fourth realm of tourist experience i.e. the educational realm. For instance, *Books and Games* (see fig. 4.15) fuses two realms (edutainment), but is more than a recreation of a library aboard Carnival Magic.



Figure 4.14 Carnival Magic - Books and Games

Equipped with latest board games for both children and adults, this place acts as a back-up strategy in case you get sick and need to stay in your cabin. Carnival never lets you feel bored. I was genuinely surprised to find such a facility on a cruise ship. Why take loads of books with you when you can loan them from your ship's library?

A further example that situates the experience in the edutainment realm is the Conference Center on Deck 4. Apart from its intended use, this constructed place also gets imbued with fun during regular movie screenings and painting auctions. For instance, during my stay, there was a screening of *Destino*, a Vintage Disney Film which unveiled “a rare collection of masterpieces created through a unique collaboration of Walt Disney and Salvador Dali.” (FunTimes Flyer *Get surreal*, see fig. 4.16).



Figure 4.15 Carnival Magic - edutainment

Apart from these, there are other numerous activities that generate a sense of fun by edutainment. Some of them are dance classes, trivia competitions, and towel folding classes.

In constructing places that involve an abundance of sensory experiences, Carnival capitalizes on creating dear lifetime memories. Hence, the utopian funland becomes a desirable experience that eventually turns the cruiser into a repeater. The intertwined relationship among place, experience, and fun is embedded with social relations, and as such provides an exciting field for further research.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter tried to account for the rise of cultural studies which has considerably influenced the development of critical thinking in academia. It has been suggested that the ever-growing prominence of culture and space resulted in the rise of cultural geography, the aim of which was to explain the inextricable relationship between culture and context. Drawing on Anderson, Mitchell and Cosgrove, I have explained the concept of landscape so as to provide a close reading of space aboard Carnival Magic. I argued that the vessel itself could be perceived as a gigantic simulacrum that reflects its own reality (macro-scale hyperreality). The cruise ship then generates further simulacra in the sense of highly constructed places that emanate their micro-scale hyperrealities. Following Anderson's claim that no human activity takes place in a vacuum but is socially, economically, politically and culturally determined, I have established a legitimate comparison between the New World and Carnival's fun ship as its orchestrated paragon. Having briefly introduced a toolkit for reading visual culture, in my analysis of place construction I particularly focused on postmodern concepts of theming, authenticity, heritage, nostalgia, and hyperreality. I claimed that these considerably shape our perception of place and the nature of inherent social relations within them. In order to elucidate the issue of hyperreality, I have examined the relationship of place, fun, and experience. My discussion proved that Carnival's ideology of fun pervades all activity and thereby perverts the reality to which we are used in our everyday lives.

While this chapter primarily focused on interpretation of constructed places from a culturally geographic perspective, my next and last chapter will investigate the ever-growing implications of marketing in post-tourism. More precisely, the following discussion will provide a critical and close analysis of media representations of Carnival's ideology of fun, which was previously proved to foster a sense of hyperreality. To do that, I shall concentrate on selected visual modes of communication such as Carnival's daily newspapers, commercials, social media site, official website, and photography. Each of these will offer constructive alternatives that will eventually help the reader grasp the sense of hyperreality aboard Carnival Magic.

5. Post-tourism and the media

Introduction

The remainder of this thesis aims to provide a critical analysis of a selection of social media forms including written, audio, and visual texts. The underlying logic of a detailed scrutiny is to examine how and to what extent media contributes to the construction of hyperreality aboard Carnival Magic. Therefore, I shall focus my attention predominantly on the various modes of representation and only fleetingly account for consumer (tourist) reception. In regard to theoretical perspectives, this chapter benefits from an extensive body of literature on visual culture. My choice of methodology and terminology is indebted to Sturken and Cartwright (2009, 2001), Rose (2007), Kress and Leeuwen (2006), Banks (2001), Mirzoeff (1999), Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001). Most of their discussions centre on highbrow art, film, advertisement and photography. However, they take different approaches to visual analysis. Additionally, researchers like Crouch and Lübbren (2003) and Urry (1990; 1995) provide an excellent starting point for visual analysis in relation to tourism. Their critical interpretation of visual culture within the field of contemporary tourism lends itself particularly well to my intended reasoning with regards to representations of post-touristic practices and seductions. Before I move onto the actual analysis of the respective media forms, I wish to outline a trajectory along which visual culture and tourism intersect.

5.1 Tourism and visual culture

The previous chapters have hopefully shown that tourism is to be studied as a cultural practice. Given this assumption, tourism assumes the processes of production, distribution, and consumption. Therefore, it can be perceived as a commodity. Just like any other, it is dependent on several associated industries. In a market saturated with travel agencies, the fierce competition has been additionally stimulated by the ever-increasing technological developments. Apart from the print media (brochures, tourism journals, etc.), tourism is fostered by numerous non-print media sources including the Internet, radio, film, television, photography and so on. With this in mind, it is only natural that

tourism constitutes an important part of what is termed 'visual culture'. According to Rose, "'visual culture' refers to the plethora of ways in which the visual is part of social life." (4). Crouch and Lübbren argue that while some scholars perceive the phrase 'visual culture' as an 'umbrella term' that generally encapsulates the study of objects and categories, others are more interested in the cultural practices of looking and meaning making (Intr. 2). These practices of looking, however, shall be examined and applied in the following discussion.

Moving on, many scholars trace the relationship between tourism and visual imagery to the history of art and photography (ibid.: 3). Activities like painting of tourist landscapes and taking photos of sites and sights seem to be deeply embedded into touristic practices. Two seminal works that linked the visual to tourism and recognized "the crucial role of images in structuring tourist experiences" were produced by MacCannell and Urry (ibid.: 4). In his book *The Tourist* (1976) Dean MacCannell describes his tourist as a collector of both material (postcards, photos) and immaterial images (visions, experiences) (qtd. in Crouch and Lübbren Intr. 4). John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990) reveals a complex relationship with the tourist environment by stressing the essential role of visual perception. Either romantic, profound, and personal, or collective and superficial, the tourist gaze is dynamic in nature since it has ever since reflected the prevailing touristic trends and patterns of behavior. Urry's approach seems to be more plausible and reflexive because it recognizes the historical and sociological development of the gaze primarily encouraged by changing perceptions of time and space. In his words, the "gaze is [...] socially organized and systematized" meaning that "there are in fact many professional experts who help to construct and develop our gaze as tourists." (*The Tourist Gaze* 1). On the other hand, we as tourists consume what we see and experience through that gaze. Thus, it is never an innocent gaze, but one that is "constructed through signs" (ibid.: 3) which then convey a certain 'preferred reading' often imposed by travel agencies, hotel managers, advertisements and so on (for explanation see sub-section 5.2). In particular, signs are visual objectifications of the gaze (ibid.). The reading of those signs and their compositional structuring is what animates the final discussion of my thesis.

Furthermore, by adopting a geographic approach, Crouch and Lübbren argue that the interaction between the visual imagery and the field of tourism is fundamentally bound to concrete places (Intr. 5-13). Hence, photography is perceived as the most powerful means to “communicate the lure of the places” (Crouch and Lübbren 104). Accordingly, tourism involves consumption of both objectified and contextualized visualization. This point has already been somewhat explored in the previous chapter in relation to architecture and site design aboard Carnival Magic. Drawing on key questions that incite Crouch and Lübbren’s study, my aim in this chapter is to explore how the visual narrative (constituted by panoply of signs) affects the constructed reality of spaces and tourist experiences. Moreover, I wish to suggest that the visual rhetoric actively shapes, reflects, and caters to current touristic tastes that were evaluated in chapter 3 and 4.

5.2 Reading the fun philosophy

Urry’s differentiation of ways of seeing spells out the type of gaze that is pertinent to Carnival’s cruise ships. He puts it in the following words,

There is the carrying out of familiar tasks or activities within an unusual visual environment. Swimming and other sports, shopping, eating and drinking all have particular significance if they take place against a distinctive visual backcloth. The visual gaze renders extraordinary activities that otherwise would be mundane.
(*The Tourist Gaze* 12)

In chapter 3 and 4 I have argued that a cruise ship can be perceived or even ‘gazed at’ as a floating fun factory and as a giant floating amusement mall resort. Its extraordinariness is inscribed in its simulacrum-landscape. Hence, ordinary activities that Urry mentions above adopt a distinctive, desirable, and seductive character. I argue that such qualitative enhancements are achieved by effective corporate strategies.

To illustrate the lure of the extraordinary, a few Carnival’s snappy slogans shall be compared to some popular advertising slogans coined by Disney. Previous discussions have already proved that these two American corporations have innumerable commonalities. However, before I provide a closer look at their

'linguistic' strategy, a brief definition of an effective slogan is in order. One of the possible explanations has been offered by Sherif who claims that,

[u]sually the effective slogan is the one that appeals to a particular appetite, need, or other demand with a short-cut, simple expression whose features- such as rhythm, alliteration, punning- make its recurrence or repetition easy. (159)

Table 5.1 shows a simplified comparative study on Disney's and Carnival's slogans. This personal selection of appealing and illustrative catchy phrases speaks volumes of the two brands.

Disney	Carnival
"If you can dream it, you can do it. Always remember that this whole thing was started with a dream and a mouse." (Walt Disney qtd.in Noe et al. 167)	"Dream big. Carnival dream." "Big dreams. Big book. Big fun." ("Big Book of Dreams Event" Facebook.com/Carnival/photos)
"Remember the magic /Magic happens." ("Vintage Walt Disney World: Remember the Magic" Disney Parks.com)	"Make the magic yours." ("Profile Pictures" Facebook.com/Carnival/photos)
"There is a place where nothing is ever as it seems Where the ordinary is always extraordinary And where once upon a time, happens once upon a day Come live you're dream this year during the year of a million dreams at Disney Parks The place where Dreams come true" ("Year Of A Million Dreams" YouTube.com)	"Hopes & Dreams. This is your year to try something new. Carnival" ("Carnival's Wishing Wall in Times Square" Facebook.com/Carnival/photos) "Hey America, didja ever? There's a first time for everything. Carnival" ("Carnival's Wishing Wall in Times Square" Facebook.com/Carnival/photos) "Fun for all. All for fun." "A million ways to have fun." ("Profile Pictures" Facebook.com/Carnival/photos)

Table 5.1 Disney's and Carnival's slogans

The slogans presented in Table 1 are built around key words such as magic, dreams, and fun. These function almost as an invitation into a fairytale, a world in its own right that is emblematic of the brands under scrutiny. To be even more recognizable, Carnival's slogans and catch phrases are always written in

blue-red color combination evoking the logo of the company. This point will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sub-section.

Having clarified what a slogan is, I still need to set out the reasons why companies nowadays increasingly vest their energies and finances into slogan production. To do this, we shall concentrate on the definition of a slogan mentioned above, especially on the part ‘short-cut, simple expression’. Here, we can observe the economy of language which works along the lines ‘less is more.’ In terms of language analysis, key words in slogans function as metonymies, carrying whole narratives with them. Bearing this in mind, Carnival’s official slogan- “Fun for all. All for fun” evokes the narrative of all its fun amenities onboard, plus the associated emotions, experiences, and memories. One possible explanation for increased slogan use is not only to lure the consumers but really to tailor consumers’ lifestyles according to the implicit seductive messages. Slogans can be also seen as popular branding techniques “designed to build brand loyalty by creating positive [consumer] ‘experiences’.” (Moor 65). Moreover, they convey dominant corporate ideologies (symbols, values, ideas) and lifestyles. They function in a similar way to advertisements, which tend to directly address the consumer. This process of appellation (after Althusser) pulls us into communication with what is advertised- in the case of Carnival, it is perpetual fun.

In what follows, I wish to link my arguments about Carnival’s philosophy of fun as a marker of contrived reality with the company’s representation and promotion of fun in print and non-print media. In order to provide a valid analysis, I shall combine semiology, audience studies and anthropology.

5.3 Reading fun in Carnival’s ship papers

In chapter 3, I mentioned that the ship stewards tend to surprise their guests by leaving a towel animal on their beds. However, they also place ship newspapers next to it so the guest can plan his/her day in advance. Generally speaking, the papers consist of four pages of which the inner two feature the main events for the following day. Focusing on “the role of layout in the process of social semiosis” (Kress and Leeuwen 179), I wish to suggest that Carnival, in this case

as a text-producing institution, uses advertisement-like strategies to promote its dominant ideology. The familiar pattern of fun emerges already from the title of Carnival's ship papers- FunTimes (see fig. 5.1). The title evokes the name of the British daily national newspaper, namely The Times, which was (although under a different name) first published more than two centuries ago. Given this fact, it seems that Carnival wanted to establish itself as a company with a long tradition, which grants trust, integrity, and reliance. On the other hand, the part 'fun' in the title conveys a message that tradition with Carnival is never dull.



Figure 5.1 Carnival FunTimes - front page

The following analysis finds inspiration in the issue of information value, a topic that was thoroughly explored in *Reading Images* by Kress and Leeuwen. Let us start with the vertical axis (see fig. 5.1). The title is placed in the upper section of the paper, which according to Kress and Leeuwen stands for the 'ideal'. In contrast, the lower section with the text 'The CARNIVAL MAGICsm Team' represents something that is "more informative and practical" (ibid.: 186). In between the two text sections is the image of a funnel- a symbol of Carnival's fun ships. Hence, it could be argued that the funnel functions as a connective

element that links the “consumer’s supposed aspirations and desires” (ibid.) - here the tradition of fun, within the realm of the ‘real’ that is Carnival.

The sense of connectedness is additionally reinforced by the use of “visual rhymes” i.e. repetition of colors. Kress and Leeuwen claim that color is a “key connective device, often used in advertisements to stress the connection between the ‘promise of the product’ and the product itself” (ibid.: 204). The dominant color used on the front page is red, which is then alternated with blue, sky blue, black and white. Those three- red, blue, and white- perform the ‘ideational function’ of color. Namely, “corporations increasingly use specific colours or colour schemes to denote their unique identities.” (ibid.: 229). My understanding of color harmony might not be right, but since I believe that meaning is produced, negotiated, and communicated by the viewer, I will try to provide plausible arguments. Drawing on the works of Malevich, Mondrian, Kandinsky and others who experimented with color symbolism, Kress and Leeuwen define color as a mode that depends on context and viewer reception (ibid.: 227-228). Red is usually perceived as a color of blood. Therefore, it may stand for ‘life’ (ibid.: 227). Blue, on the other hand, is usually associated with water. Further on, white stands for innocence and could thus be associated with childhood, play. and fun. Additionally, the intensity of colors i.e. saturation carries a note of adventurousness (ibid.: 236). Given these premises, we could read the front-page visual rhyme as a text that says- with Carnival, life on waters is full of fun and adventures. Another analogy could be established with the colors of the American flag. All in all, the message overrides the scope of visual design in that it becomes a representation of a unique lifestyle and a distinct ideology. The use of two basic colors in the logo (the funnel), the central location of the logo, and the titles might suggest that Carnival is likewise at the core of the cruising industry. Building on that thought, a bold statement could express that Carnival (i.e. cruising with Carnival) is inherent to the American way of life.

Let us now turn to the compositional interpretation of the two FunTimes’ inner pages (see fig. 5.2). The focus shall be predominantly on the issue of fun, whereas other less relevant elements shall be disregarded. Before I start my reading, a brief definition of compositional interpretation is in order.



Figure 5.2 Carnival FunTimes - inner pages

According to Rose, “[c]ompositionality refers to the specific material qualities of an image or visual object. When an image is made, it draws on a number of formal strategies: content, colour and spatial organization, for example.” (13). Even though the inner pages are comprised exclusively of written text, key components of compositional analysis provide helpful guidelines for my interpretation. The uppermost section contains a catchy phrase that spreads onto both pages. Against a vivid red background, the bold white letters say: ALL IN A DAY’S PLAY. The headline is then stylishly underlined with a blue line. Bearing in mind the visual rhyme of the front page, the headline here does the same trick. The color combination not only resembles the ship’s funnel but it conveys Carnival’s implicit philosophy of perpetual fun that was mentioned earlier. This time, I am structuring my perception of spatial organization along the horizontal axis. The left page (see fig. 5.3) contains the day’s top ten events in the form of a list, while the right page features two main evening entertainment events and activities that involve interaction and active consumption. In terms of information value, Kress and Leeuwen argue that what is on the left side is usually something that is given. In this case the list of top ten events represents items of information that are offered for contemplation.

On the other hand, the text on the right side (right page) is framed and, as such, requires special attention. Accordingly, the key information is something that is new and “demands that the viewer enter in some kind of imaginary relation with [the text]” (Kress and Leeuwen 118). The right side (see fig. 5.4) contains an extended foldable part which summarizes all the activities suggested on the left and right pages. This part has a perforated side so that it can be easily ripped off and carried in a pocket as a useful reminder. Switching back to the vertical axis, the right side proves that it displays the most important information. Namely, the text in the upper section is bordered with red lines which give due prominence to the offered events. So these function then as the ‘ideal’ or what Kress and Leeuwen also call ‘on demand’ (ibid.: 179).

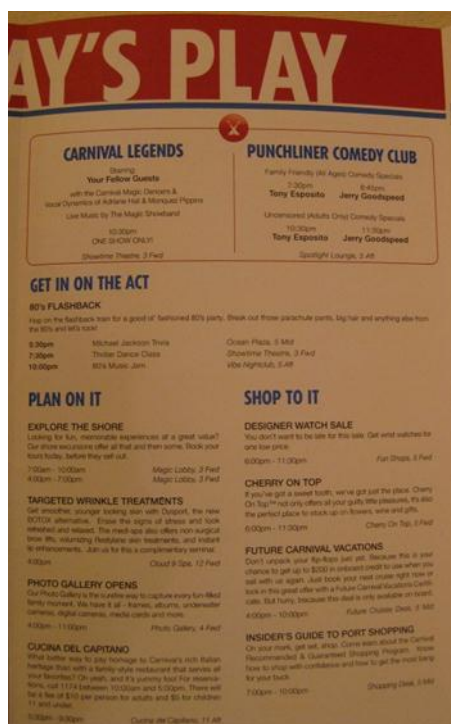


Figure 5.4 Carnival FunTimes - right inner page

By further deconstruction the constructed representation of fun shall be revealed and proved as Carnival's effective promotional strategy. In order to achieve that, a brief content analysis is in order. Leeuwen and Jewitt claim that "content analysis, by itself, does not demonstrate how viewers understand or value what they see or hear. Still, [it] shows what is given priority or salience and what is not." (26). Even though they illustrate their methodology by evaluating an image, their approach is relatively applicable to my written text sample. Moreover, "content analysis allows researchers to make quantitative generalizations about visual and other forms of representation, on the basis of reliable classification and observation." (ibid.: 34). With this in mind, I have focused my attention on the salience of expressive content i.e. repetition of emotive words within the text. After reading the two inner pages of FunTimes, the post-touristic ethos (see chapter 3) immediately came to my mind. The ultimate cruising experience, memorable experience, choice, fun, let us teach/pamper you, luxurious, challenge, win, family, low price, pleasures, perfect place etc. are words that truthfully express what post-tourism is about. On a deeper level, they reinforce Carnival's philosophy of perpetual fun and convey a sense of constructed reality, namely hyperreality.

Besides the already analyzed visual rhymes (color harmony) of the headlines and text bordering, the majority of headlines directly address the readers and call for their active engagement. The headlines themselves are structured around distinct experiences. So for instance, the headline GET YOUR GROOVE ON (see fig. 5.3) features activities that involve music and dance. A further example is the headline SHOP TO IT which is mapped after its left headline PLAN ON IT (see Figure 5.4). The short effective phrase summarizes the shopping opportunities aboard Carnival Magic. Since these items of information are presented on the right page it follows that they are given more prominence. This, however, might suggest that the whole fun phenomenon, which is textually materialized and represented in Carnival's papers, is highly consumer-driven.

5.4 Representation of constructed reality in non-print media sources

Now that we have seen how the fun aspect was constructed and represented in Carnival's print media, this sub-section will present a close analysis of three non-print media sources. The first is a comparison of two short video advertisements for Carnival cruises. The second undertakes to briefly evaluate a blog discussion on Carnival's Facebook page. Eventually, the last one focuses on a selection of photographs displayed on Carnival's official homepage.

5.4.1 Carnival commercials

To do a close analysis of the two video ads on YouTube this sub-section will rely on the terminology used for compositional interpretation of moving images suggested by Rose in her book *Visual Methodologies*. Drawing on Monaco, she proposes that the analysis should be structured around the spatial (*mise-en-scène*) and temporal organization (*montage*) of a film. To explain these concepts she quotes Monaco who suggests that “*mise-en-scène* is a result of decisions about what to shoot and how to shoot it, while *montage* is how the shots are presented.” (qtd. in Rose 51). Before I apply the rather complex

terminology, a brief summary of the two commercials is in order. I decided to make a random choice of two commercials for Carnival that were put on YouTube. Yet, I wanted to have at least a twenty-year time span between them so I can pinpoint the change in advertising strategies that reflect broader social and cultural changes.

The first one was shot in 1989 with Kathie Lee Gifford who is an American theater actress, singer, and a talk show host. Sturken and Cartwright suggest that “the use of celebrities in ads [...] to sell products can be seen as an intertextual tactic.” (2009: 321). By the end of the analysis it should be clear that intertextuality as an indication of the postmodern style has influenced the construction of visuality in my examples. The scene opens by showing the cruise ships cutting the waves, the Carnival logo slides in while the background music introduces the voice of Kathie Lee Gifford who sings: “If they could see us now, out on the deep blue sea, underneath the moon and stars, just you and me” (“Carnival Cruise Line Commercial (1989)”). The next scene makes use of a medium shot of Kathy in a black elegant gown adorned with flowers, standing with her back next to the piano player. There are some guests at the bar in the background. The medium shot is followed by a head and shoulders shot, which also changes the focus of the shot. Monaco calls it a shallow focus in the sense that something or someone in a scene “is more in focus than others” (qtd. in Rose 53). In this way the camera adopts the so called “third person” point of view which separates it from the characters shown in the commercial. The head and shoulders shot of Kathy fades out and the third scene fades in showing a couple standing in the breeze on an open deck with their backs to the setting sun. In the meantime there is a voiceover saying: “On your next vacation, take a 3, 4 or a 7-days cruise on Carnival- the most popular cruise line in the world.” (“Carnival Cruise Line Commercial (1989)”). The last scene is similar to the opening one in that the cruise ship is shot aside from a high angle against the sunset. The song is still playing in the background while the voiceover is followed by a brief text (cruise on offer for low price) and Carnival’s logo. One might argue that this description lacks more details and explanations in terms of terminology, but my aim here is to show how the Company reacts to current trends in contemporary tourism. Hence, the first example, the narrative structure

of which was fitted into a brief sixteen seconds suggests that a cruise is to be perceived as a romantic experience. This kind of mental representation evokes the narrative of Saunder's novel titled *The Love Boats* which was later adapted into a romantic TV series.

Quite contrary to the rather explicit romantic narrative in the first commercial, the second one under scrutiny here inverts the visual rhetoric. Sturken and Cartwright claim that "[m]any ads imply that their product can alleviate [the] state of dissatisfaction." (2009: 275). This is exactly what the commercial for Carnival shot in 2011 within their campaign "land vs. sea" represents ("New Carnival Roller Coaster Commercial- CruiseGuy.com") The first scene shows the three lines of text- the first is "land vs. sea" followed by "summer vacation" and the last line contains Carnival's logo. One can hear environmental sounds in the background (see Rose 55). The next scene is introduced by an editing technique called jump cut i.e. it is introduced with an unrelated image. We see the upper section of a rollercoaster where eight people in their seats get stuck and hang upside down. There is a growing noise coming from the rollercoaster as if it is going to collapse. The moment the crack gets louder, we see a long close-up shot of a bold middle-aged black man wearing spectacles. He is clearly scared but tries to remain calm. We can hear the wailing emergency service sirens in the background when the camera shows a short close-up of a middle-aged black woman exchanging looks with the person (probably her husband) hanging next to her. Again, we see a short close-up shot of the man who mumbles "I am sure that was nothing." The next scene makes use of a jump cut technique and we see two kids standing on top of the waterslide waving and screaming "mooom...daaad!" This is followed by a scene showing their parents (the persons shown in the scene with the stuck rollercoaster) lying in the breeze on deckchairs. The mother is holding a book in her hands while the father waves back to the kids screaming "Come on, go for it." There is a short scene in which the boy lets himself down the waterslide while his sister screams "goood" in genuine excitement and makes a gesture with her arms that shows her contentment and pleasure. The last scene makes a jump cut again and shows the cruise ship from the front side at a higher angle on an open sea. The text (cruise on offer) is placed over the image in the upper section as

something that that is ideal and desirable. However, the lower section contains a disclaimer notice, which suggests the item of information to be real (see Kress and Leeuwen 186). The penultimate scene features jingle-like background music and a female voiceover saying “everyone deserves a little more fun time, everyone deserves a better vacation.” Simultaneously the camera slides on water and shows the cruise ship from the side with a clearly visible Carnival sign. The last scene shows the Carnival logo which is followed by a loud cruise ship horn.

This somewhat extended description of the second commercial suggests that the advertising strategies have clearly undergone immense changes. It might be a bold statement, but I argue that they reflect the current situation in a highly competitive leisure, tourism, and entertainment industry market. These two commercials pinpoint a shift in terms of the nature and quality of sensational experiences aboard Carnival cruise ships. While the first commercial is built around the sense of romance, which is promoted as the ultimate cruising experience, the second adopts a broader narrative. It indirectly suggests that cruising with Carnival grants a safe vacation full of fun, excitement, and family time. To sum up, both reveal constructed realities aboard Carnival’s ships, which might be seen to reflect temporal and spatial changes within society, as well as the changing pattern of values and desires within the field of leisure and tourism.

5.4.2 Carnival blog discussion

Let us now briefly turn to how tourists (past and potential Carnival cruisers) perceive a vacation onboard Carnival’s fun ships. To illustrate this, I have used an excerpt from a blog discussion posted on Carnival’s Facebook wall. When it comes to ethics, I do not feel that I am violating peoples’ privacy since the page is open to the public. However, I am reluctant to claim that these are reliable and valid comments, although they generally convey an overt message, namely that cruising with Carnival is all about fun. Before presenting a personal selection of the most telling comments, it needs to be explained how the blog discussion works. Carnival’s Facebook page administrators post every day open statements i.e. sentences that are to be finished by those who comment

on them. Nevertheless, it needs to be mentioned that no corrections in terms of grammar and punctuation were made in the example presented below.

I would pick a Carnival cruise over any other vacation because _____.

[MrsBrathwaite Blessed King](#) you always have something to do... never a dull moment..
#TEAM CARNIVAL!!!!

[Kathleen Lavallee Budgell](#) It's the most fun you can have under 1 roof!! (or should I say SKY?) Leaving in 17 days on the Legend!! woo hoo!!!!

[Ramona Khillawan](#) It's a worry free vacation and I'm treated like a VIP

[Jill Janice Gravois](#) Carnival is Mardi Gras all the time!!

[La'Wain Reed](#) The food, fun and adventures are all included.

[Johnna Hall](#) Because it is the most relaxed vacation u can have. U don't have to clean up after yourself, u can have fun in the sun, drink, eat , gamble , dance, laugh, swim, watch some great shows and never have to drive anywhere. And can't forget its a great value!!!

[Theresa Durante Theis](#) There's never a dull moment!

[B Denise Hollis](#) I would pick a Carnival cruise over any other vacation because I get to experience multiple countries and cultures in one sailing.

[Linda Leggett](#) they make me feel pampered for an affordable price.

[Jada King](#) i luvvvvvv carnival,its like a floating resort:):):)

[Linda Blankenship](#) It is being treated like royalty, step on board and forget your worries, plenty of food, great entertainment, as much lounging as you want, being cleaned up after and not to forget the ice cream!!!

[Sammie Blythe](#) No cooking, or cleaning for seven days. Everything is done for you, and the cruise ship staff treats you as if your one of their family.

[Rene Collis](#) it's the only cruise line that makes you feel like part of the family. They clean your room and feed you better than going to grandmas house and they take you to see better sights than if mom and dad put you in the car for a sightseeing trip.

[Maggie Quigley](#) Because its a week away from reality and its all for fun and fun for all!

[Shelbie Rochel](#) Im away from reality and nothing matters but relaxation.

[Vicki Martin Breitenfield](#) it's all inclusive, you get to see new countries, make new friends, or do absolutely nothing! The value cannot be beat!!

[Melanie Lamb-Paesani](#) It's the only way to travel nowadays that's affordable! Your transportation, food, accommodations, and entertainment is all right there! Plus you get to explore multiple locations you probably would never get to see!!!! Love to CRUISE!

[April Demaree Duff](#) They have THE best employees anywhere!! Its great to be called by name and treated like a queen!

[Landia Person](#) I love it! No worries , no stress. Just a boat load of fun, fun.

(“Wall” Facebook.com/Carnival/Wall Oct. 19 2011)

Generally, what people praise is the quality of experiences at an affordable price. Their comments seem to recapitulate the values of post-tourism discussed in chapter 3 and 4. Availability of a broad selection of services under one roof, a sense of belonging, and self-importance appear to be more valued than the actual act of travelling and sightseeing. As a conclusion to this brief discussion, I wish to suggest that cruisers comments confirm Carnival’s success in constructing a reality aboard its ships that overrides the reality ashore.

5.4.3 Carnival’s visual construction of experiences

By now, it should be clear that exhilarating sensations and memorable experiences play a major role in post-tourism. How Carnival represents and offers such sensations for consumption is the central question which inspires this chapter. So far, I have relied both on print and non-print media sources in order to gain sufficient insight into the corporate strategies of representation. This section is devoted to critical analysis of Carnival’s photographic representation of onboard experiences. Since the remaining part of my case study focuses on photography as a visual representation of hyperreality aboard Carnival’s fun ships, the reader needs to be acquainted with some useful concepts and theories pertinent to photography. It would be too ambitious and verbose to trace the development of photography and its changing perceptions through time. For that reason, I shall consider its present perceptions. My reasoning about digital photography was mainly shaped by Banks, Mirzoeff, Leeuwen and Jewit, Sturken and Cartwright, and Rose among others.

As a necessary prelude, the reader needs to be reminded of Debord and Baudrillard, who have emphasized the momentousness of a spectacle i.e.

image. A photograph seems to be a perfect means that can capture and mediate the *reality* [my emphasis added] of the spectacle. However, as Debord argues, “[t]he spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation between people, mediated by images.” (qtd. in Mirzoeff 264). Hence, images (i.e. photographs) are not mere imprints of a “reduced and flattened” 3D world (Leeuwen and Jewitt 100) that act as “objective renderings of the real world [and] provide unbiased truth.” (Sturken and Cartwright 2009: 17). Since the invention of photography in the mid- nineteenth century, there have been many debates about the mythical truth-value of the photography. The imbroglio over this issue has reached its climax with the development of digital photography. Today, photography is perceived as a visual means of representation and mediation that reveals social relationships embedded in both its internal and external narratives (context) and expresses selective and subjective truths about the world.

Ever since its invention, photography has been a fundamental practice in tourism. In his book *The Tourist*, MacCannell argues that tourists travel in order to collect objective and material replications of their experiences. On the other hand, travel agencies and tourism managers have used photography as a means to “communicate the lure of the places” and promote their tours. (Lenman 104). Nowadays, tourists themselves perform that role in that they act as true cultural ambassadors. Sandle has expressed his perception of tourist photography in the following words,

In the visual culture of tourism, photography has a significant role both in the representation of the tourist gaze and in providing objects for its consumption [...] The tourist photograph is a representation of the present for the future consumption of the past. At the moment of its conception, the tourist photograph has already become both a memory, and a reconstruction, of the tourist gaze. As such it provides for a nostalgic reminiscence and a private and public testimony the holiday other, that self-remembered that both disrupts and confirms the mundane self of the everyday. (Sandle 191)

It is important once again to stress that images are never neutral but highly selective (see Urry *The Tourist Gaze* 98) and imbued with preferred meanings that reveal the constructed visual organization of the tourist gaze.

Now that I have outlined how photography is generally perceived in tourism, I can embark upon a critical interpretation of a personal selection of commercial photography displayed on Carnival's official homepage with the aim to promote fun through visualizing experiences aboard Carnival Magic. The images under scrutiny are grouped according to onboard experiences which include Dining, Entertainment and Activities, Bars and Clubs, Casino and Gaming, Spa and Fitness (see Carnivalmagic.com). Each of these categories contains from six to fourteen images bearing subtitles such as "24 hour room service," "signature dining," "stage shows," "jogging track" and so on. In regard to the homepage composition, these images are displayed in the upper section of the page. If we remind ourselves of what Kress and Leeuwen suggested in terms of information value, we know that the "top section [represents] the realm of the consumer's supposed aspirations and desires." (186; see fig. 5.5). This compositional strategy supports Rojek's claim about tourism often being promoted as a seduction process (1995).

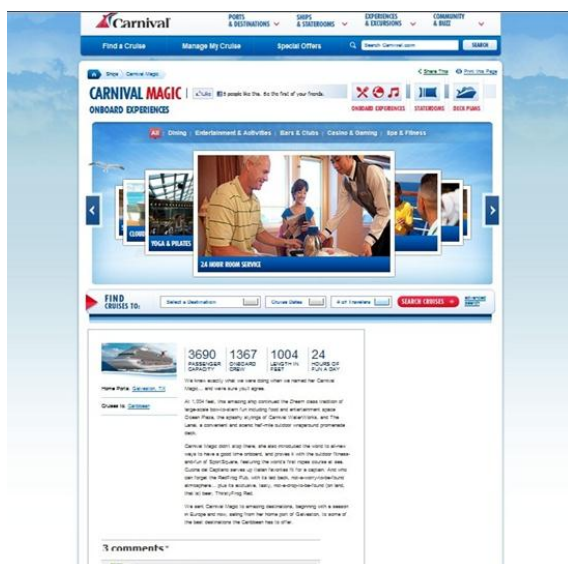


Figure 5.5 Carnival Magic - official web page layout

In my case, the seductive images promote onboard experiences. To substantiate my proposition that Carnival constructs hyperreality by visual

representations of sensational experiences aboard its ships, I shall analyze one image per category. They seem to express what even detailed and vivid descriptions fail to do. Along those lines, Edensor's claim seems particularly fitting and illustrative,

Photographs are never merely visual but in fact conjure up synaesthetic and kineasthetic effects, for the visual provokes other sensory responses. The textures, the tactilities, smells, atmosphere and sounds of [what is captured] can be conjured up by visual material. (qtd. in Rose 248)

Let us now closely look at the image which is titled *Cucina del Capitano* (see fig. 5.6). It is a photograph of an attractive blonde woman in her thirties eating in a restaurant. It seems that she has just licked her finger. The position of her head and the upward direction of her gaze suggest heavenly enjoyment in her food. The creator of the image relies on our social and cultural skills to read her body's expressivity (see Lister and Wells 79).



Figure 5.6 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Cucina del Capitano

Moreover, everything in the photograph starting from luxurious furnishings, large bottles of wine, soothing golden colors, and the woman's facial expression and body posture appeals to sensory qualities, which accordingly affect the modality i.e. credibility of the photograph (see Kress and Leeuwen 164). The image makes use of what Kress and Leeuwen describe as "sensory coding

orientations, which are used in contexts in which the pleasure principle is allowed to be the dominant” (ibid.: 165). On its own, i.e. without the external narrative, the image reflects its denotative meaning (see chapter 4 for explanation). However, if we remind ourselves of the description of the Italian restaurant aboard Carnival Magic provided in the previous chapter, the image adopts an array of associative meanings. As Lister and Wells argue “[t]he context influences how we look at the image through constructing certain expectations.” (65). Hence, some of the connotative meanings, in addition to delicious food consumption, are consumption of Italianicity, tradition, heritage, family values, romance and so on. Finally, the exhilarating sensations emanating from the photograph seem to blur the boundary between represented reality and constructed reality.

The second image being examined here belongs to the category titled Entertainment and Activities (see fig. 5.7). We see a full figure of a young woman dressed in sports attire doing the ropes at the highest point on the ship with an open sea in the background.



Figure 5.7 Carnival Magic onboard experience - SkyCourse

Her figure is centrally positioned, which immediately draws our attention to her facial and body expression. With her open arms and downward look, she is trying to keep her balance while walking on a swinging beam. If we consider the description of this unique and innovative recreation area aboard Carnival Magic

(see chapter 4, sub-section 4.5), we can observe the Barthian idea of meaning layering in this photograph. Along DeAngelis' perception of escapism, the rope course provides "a highly orchestrated sense of liberation from the spatial constraints" (122). Given this, what the photograph connotes is an extreme experience of liberation, excitement, individuality, and self-empowerment. Being positioned on the same level with the woman, we, as image viewers, might equal our experience with hers. In other words, by looking at the photograph, we are already invited to participate in her experience. To conclude, this photograph pinpoints the constructed nature of experience available aboard Carnival Magic.

Moving on to the category titled Bars and Clubs, I chose to examine a photograph bearing the caption Karaoke (see fig. 5.8). The image displays six young white adults singing into one microphone. The gender ratio is perfectly balanced in that the group is comprised of three girls and three boys. None of them are looking into the camera, which might suggest that they have completely immersed themselves into the act of singing.



Figure 5.8 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Karaoke

However, what is interesting about this photograph is the effect of the close-up shot (head and shoulders or less) which positions us as viewers into a certain relation with what is displayed within the frame (see Jewitt and Oyama 145). The underlying logic of close-ups is to create a sense of familiarity, intimacy,

and individuality. It is as if we are part of the singing group sharing the same experience with them. The majority of faces are displayed frontally which conveys a high degree of involved engagement (ibid.: 135). However, if we look a bit closer and pay attention to vertical angles, we notice that our point of view is slightly lowered, namely that we are looking at the group from below. Leeuwen and Jewitt claim that the vertical dimension reveals a relation of symbolic power. More precisely, they argue that “[i]f you look up at something, that something has some kind of symbolic power over you.” (ibid.) So, in this photograph we are looking at the group from a subordinate position but are offered to attain symbolic equality by consuming the same experience i.e. by booking a cruise with Carnival. Therefore, we could argue that this mode of representation serves as an effective strategy that “points to the way in which seductive or persuasive means are employed to make an argument or to convince us to see things a certain way.” (Lister and Wells 86).

A further category titled Casino and Gaming with the caption Blackjack depicts a usual scene in a casino (see fig. 5.9).



Figure 5.9 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Casino

The people displayed in the photograph are at the same eye-level with the viewer, who seems to belong to this group due to the close-up shot showing people’s heads, shoulders, and arms. At the level of compositional structure, there are a few telling elements that shape the representational meaning of the

image. On the left, the side of which, according to Kress and Leeuwen, stands for something given and usually offers information/goods and services (118-119, 179), we see a Filipina in her uniform (notice the nametag) smiling at the guests gathered around the gaming table. At this point, it is probably useful to mention the fact that the majority of the crew and staff working on the cruisers are Filipinos. On the right, the side of which stands for something new and demands special attention from the viewer (see Jewitt and Oyama 148) we see two frontally positioned Latinas. Since they are smiling/ laughing we are invited to enter into a relation of social affinity with them. However, they are not looking at us which in a way lessens our engagement. Furthermore, the side shots of the three persons on the very right side in the image (two white middle-aged women and a man between them) leave the viewer socially distant. Hence, according to Jewitt and Oyama, “the viewer literally and figuratively remains on the sidelines.” (ibid.: 135). Based on their facial features, the group on the right might be American. If we remind ourselves that Carnival is an American corporation providing cruising services to a global population but primarily operating in the Caribbean, then I could claim that the reality of the photograph is highly constructed. If taking a step further in the analysis, the dealer on the left could be seen to represent Carnival who offers services to Mexican/American consumers. Nevertheless, the smiles in the photograph “produce the illusion of an extraordinariness of experience, or what Ritzer and Liska, following Baudrillard, term an ecstasy of experience” (Rojek and Urry 12).

Finally, we shall briefly analyze the Spa and Fitness category which is also the last category of visual representation of onboard experiences on Carnival’s homepage (see fig. 5.10). At first glance, we see three women wrapped in white towels sitting in a sauna with an open sea in the background as its central element. The shots of full-figured women on the sides act as marginal elements that are connected via experience of tranquility with the sea (see Jewitt and Oyama 149). Moreover, tranquility is achieved by rhymes in color (white, sky blue, light wood) and form (crossed legs, wooden beams).

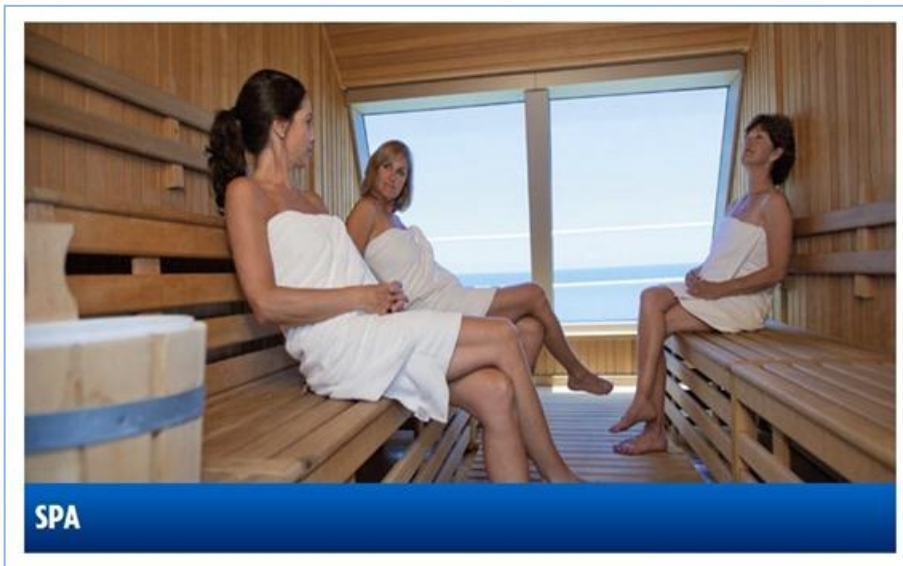


Figure 5.10 Carnival Magic onboard experience - Spa

Hence, we could say that the atmosphere seems in total accord with the visualized experience. Quite similarly to the photograph with the caption Karaoke (see above), the power inequality is expressed in the point of view. Namely, the viewer looks at the three women from a slightly lowered position which metaphorically marks the experience as desirable and empowering. However, the fact that none of the women looks at the viewer leaves him/her again on the sidelines. Consequently, we as spectators are socially detached from the group but are still invited to feed the illusion that we can become a part of the group by purchasing the experience. Such marketing strategies are highly consumer-driven and are less concerned with the issue of authenticity. What is of utmost importance is the efficacy of these photographs to convey the message of fun and enjoyment that is at the core of Carnival's philosophy.

5.5 Reading constructed reality in 'migrant tourism workers' photography

Now that I have analyzed the way Carnival represents and advertises memorable experiences available on its cruise ships, the last sub-section is dedicated to amateur photographs, which besides Carnival's professional photography, act as global advertisements. My proposition is that "migrant tourism workers" (see Uriely "The Tourist Experience" 204) promote Carnival's ideology of fun in their personal photographs which are then uploaded to their Facebook accounts. The reason why I find this phenomenon peculiar and

interesting to my own study is that their photos truthfully reflect the aestheticization of their reality which is in line with the constructed reality aboard Carnival's fun ships. Their photographs as alleged captions of reality blur the boundary between tourism (the imaginary) and work (the real). This blurring of boundaries was previously outlined as one of the features of the postmodern condition. It is thought-provoking that migrant tourism workers almost never take photographs of themselves and their colleagues looking dead tired after twelve-hour shifts. Quite contrary, they are always dressed fashionably and adorned with inevitable smiles, the images of which lack any trace of arduous toil. In that sense, the image replaces reality. On a more general level, the analysis suggests that migrant tourism workers adopt Carnival's representation of constructed reality as their lived reality which is then transcribed in their photographs. Eventually, their promotion of a desirable lifestyle grants Carnival great favors in terms of global marketing.

Photos under scrutiny in this sub-section are used as documentary evidence to illustrate my above proposition and they closely relate to other visual materials which have been discussed earlier in the chapter. They perform what Rose called a supplemental function in social science research (Rose 239), or in other words, such photos validate and confirm what has been suggested in the analysis. Additionally, a few words about the question of research ethics are in order (*ibid.*; 251-254) before I turn to my actual examples. Since the photos are made of people (primarily my friends working on Carnival's ships) I felt obliged to ask for their permission to use their photos as my research material. I stressed that I was particularly interested in the social effects of the images and not in their personalities. Therefore, I will deliberately ignore their names, age, and other personal data. Since none of them had anything against it, I browsed through their albums and selected a few telling photos which are critically interpreted in what follows.

The photos on their Facebook profiles are grouped into albums which are often titled "crazy times," "fun times," or even 'irresponsible times.'" It seems that Carnival's philosophy of fun transgressed the boundary of a working policy and became a lived experience both for the tourist and the migrant tourism worker. Since it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze and compare photos made

by different people who work on Carnival cruise ships, for the purposes of my study I chose to interpret four amateur photos that I divided into two groups. The first group belongs to the representation of Carnival as a symbol of pure pleasure and fun from ashore, while the second group represents the constructed reality of fun aboard the cruise ship.

Let us now consider the first group and look at Figures 5.11 and 5.12.



Figure 5.11 Migrant tourism worker's experience of Carnival Magic



Figure 5.12 Migrant tourism workers' experience of Carnival Magic

Figure 5.11 shows a profile shot of a full-figured young woman sitting on a beach armchair against the crystal blue waters of the Caribbean Sea. What is captivating besides the beautiful azure water is the Carnival's cruise ship in the background. Being displayed in the middle of the picture, the figure of a woman connects all marginal elements into a coherent whole. The ship is in the line with her gaze which is hidden behind dark sunglasses. Nevertheless, it seems

as if the ship is the object of her contemplation. If we remind ourselves of what Kress and Leeuwen argued in terms of compositional structure and information value (186), we see that the ship is displayed in the top section on the left side in the image. Hence, we could argue that the ship is something that is given i.e. an item of information. The upper section, however, marks the realm of aspirations and desires. To conclude, the image could be read as a text that conveys that Carnival is a desirable company to work for since it grants you pleasurable and fun times. In addition, Figure 5.12 confirms and validates my claim. Here, we see a group of young people (two men and two women) lying and squatting in shallow crystal blue waters of the Caribbean Sea. The woman on the left has stretched her leg above the water while the man who is supporting her back has made a grimace. Moving further right, the woman with sunglasses on her head is clearly laughing out loud since the man on her left (our right side) is gnawing at her ankle. The overall impression is that they are having fun. Moreover, that fun is compositionally connected to Carnival since the ship is displayed centrally in the top section. Given these facts, we interpret the photos the way the person behind the camera wants us to see them. They communicate not only the lure of the Caribbean but also the lure of lived experiences that are available when working on a Carnival fun ship. In addition, both photos are staged constructions trying to express “a way of life that other want to join.” (Zukin 50). Along those lines, such photos exert powerful impact on the viewer who gets dazzled by the spectacle and craves for the experience depicted in the image.

Finally, we come to the second group which reveals the representation of likewise staged reality of migrant tourism workers aboard the ship. Carnival’s managers have recognized the importance of its workers’ well-being as well as the significant impact of social networks where those workers can exchange their experiences (mostly through photos) and simultaneously advertise the positive image of the company. In that respect, each month one department is in charge of the crew/staff activities which include themed parties, poker tournaments, DJ nights, Wii nights, movie nights and so on. To illustrate this Figure 5.13 shows a birthday party with a “Barbie” theme. The inscription on a pink background paper “Barbie House” and the fake long blond hairs point out

that the task was to dress up as Barbie dolls, or as their male friends Ken and Blaine. We see a group of fourteen people, mostly young women, who are clearly posing for the camera.



Figure 5.13 Migrant tourism workers' experience of fun aboard Carnival Magic (theme of the party: Barbie)

Each of them is looking directly at the camera which invites us as spectators to engage with their gazes and smiles. Although we do not know how long they have known each other, their closeness of their bodies, hugs, and touches convey that they are quite intimate. I am reluctant to begin an investigation on the internal relations among the people depicted in the image since that prolific topic overrides the scope of this study.

Another example of a themed party, namely the “Toga party” is shown in Figure 5.14. Here, we see a group of people dressed as the Ancient Romans posing against a painted background that resembles Roman Columns.



Figure 5.14 Migrant tourism workers' experience of fun aboard Carnival Magic (theme of the party: toga)

Quite similarly to the previous image, the body postures and position of hands evoke a sense of intimacy and warm friendship. As Filipucci argues, “[c]arnevale celebrates leisure as a state of body and mind that flows from ‘within’ people towards others, and so also fun as an eminently sociable quality of shared time and space.” (86). The final upshot of these two photos is that the company, through such themed parties, promotes the fun in sharing memorable experiences, but above all, and what is deeply embedded in its philosophy of fun, is that those experiences are staged and performed.

Conclusion

This chapter continued what chapter 4 has begun. The aim was to explore how the visual rhetoric represented in print and non-print media sources shapes the reality of spaces and tourist experiences and reveals their constructed nature. Having provided a short comparative study of a selection of slogans in the light of effective corporate strategies which perform the function of advertisements, I have argued that Carnival successfully addresses and attracts consumers (tourists) by fostering its philosophy of perpetual fun. In addition, the visual analysis of Carnival’s papers has proved the whole fun phenomenon to be highly consumer-driven.

A large part of the discussion was dedicated to deconstruction of two commercials posted on YouTube with the aim to reveal the temporal and spatial changes within society as well as the changing pattern of values and desires within the field of leisure and tourism. This was followed by a brief investigation of consumer reception of Carnival cruises, which suggested that cruising with Carnival is all about fun. A later section was devoted to critical analysis of Carnival’s photographic representation of onboard experiences where I did a close analysis of photographs assigned to six different categories. Each of these purported that Carnival constructs hyperreality by visual representations of sensational experiences aboard its ships.

The last sub-section analyzed amateur visual representation of constructed reality aboard Carnival’s fun ships which was revealed in their being staged and performed. I argued that the aestheticization of their (migrant tourism workers)

reality blurs the line between tourism and work and constructs the 'Carnival experience' as positive and desirable.

6. Conclusion

Since each chapter in this thesis shared a similar structure: introduction, sub-sections and a conclusion, there is no need to draw grand conclusions at this point. Instead, by following the same chronological structure of the thesis, I shall briefly reiterate the issues each chapter addressed in order to test the initial hypothesis.

Even before reading the vast body of literature listed in the bibliography, I hypothesized that Carnival's strategies of space construction and representation of fun and memorable experiences in various media sources engender a sense of hyperreality aboard Carnival's cruise ships. The central four chapters, each taking a different approach, explored how this sense of hyperreality relates to broader social and cultural changes.

The second chapter evaluated the implications of the postmodern condition with a special focus on architecture. Disneyland and Las Vegas were inspected as paragons of the New World, which were argued to reflect the values, dreams and fears of contemporary society. These architectural phantasmagorias instilled simulation, hybrid consumption patterns, and relentless commodification, which proved to be extremely fruitful for operation of cruise ships.

Chapter 3 introduced and developed the recent phenomenon of post-tourism, the aspects of which were applied to Carnival Magic in chapter 4. The substantial shift in tourist's motivations and experiences was revealed in the two dominant processes of McDonaldization and Disneyization, only to be further explored in detailed descriptions of themed environments and fun staging amenities aboard Carnival Magic. The central argument was that the confluence of culture and geography profoundly affects the way we interpret place and the

social relations imbedded in it. Focusing primarily on the quality of experiences, the discussion tried to show how Carnival constructs place aboard its cruise ships and stages its services so as to comply with its dominant ideology of fun. The result of these strategies was proved to engender a perverted and constructed reality i.e. hyperreality.

By changing the foci, the final chapter continued the analysis that was started in chapter 4. It explored how Carnival represents its rhetoric of fun and sensational experiences in various print and non-print media sources. The detailed descriptions suggested that Carnival's modes of representation act as highly consumer- driven strategies which actively shape, reflect, and cater to current touristic tastes. However, the chapter also stressed that the images (photographs) reveal the constructed visual organization of the tourist gaze and therefore fail to act as truthful representations of reality which, in itself, is already constructed.

Finally, the value of this research lies in a rather practical exploration of the somewhat neglected issue of hyperreality in the leisure industry. Of course, it does not claim to be an academic revelation. Instead, it should initiate and possibly help further research in social and tourism studies.

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Name index

- Anderson, 6, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 57, 59, 60, 79
- Baudrillard, 1, 3, 7, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 34, 45, 52, 55, 65, 67, 70, 95, 102
- Boorstin, 22, 28, 29, 30, 32, 67, 111
- Bryman, 1, 20, 28, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 55, 58, 60, 67
- Cohen, 1, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 112
- Crouch, 80, 81, 82
- Eco, 1, 17, 22, 34, 38, 55, 64, 66, 69, 70
- Giroux, 20, 21, 41
- Goulding, 28, 70
- Hannigan, 24, 25, 26, 34, 36, 40
- Harvey, 8, 11, 25, 37, 57
- Jameson, 3, 10, 11, 16, 17, 19, 74
- Kress, 59, 63, 64, 80, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 93, 97, 98, 102, 106
- Leeuwen, 59, 63, 64, 80, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 106
- MacCannell, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 81, 96
- McGuian, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 25
- Mitchell, 23, 49, 50, 51, 53, 55, 79
- Pine, 34, 35, 37, 40, 73, 76
- Ritzer, 38, 39, 42, 43, 60, 102
- Rojek, 40, 97, 102
- Rose, 63, 80, 81, 87, 90, 91, 92, 95, 98, 104
- Rothman, 1, 3, 24, 25, 26, 45
- Sim, 3, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17
- Smith, 1, 3, 28, 29, 34, 37, 40, 46, 47
- Sturken, 10, 13, 16, 42, 48, 59, 60, 80, 91, 92, 95, 96
- Turner, 28, 29, 30, 36, 43
- Uriely, 10, 28, 34, 36, 47, 66, 103
- Urry, 1, 17, 22, 28, 34, 80, 81, 82, 97, 102
- Williams, 1, 8, 18, 28, 35, 76
- Zukin, 1, 28, 43, 106

Subject index

- aesthetic playfulness, 3, 7, 15, 17
- authentic experiences, 30, 67
- authenticity, 1, 13, 14, 22, 30, 32, 33, 36, 62, 64, 66, 71, 79, 103, 106
- compositional interpretation, 86, 90
- connective décor, 64, 65, 69, 70, 71
- conspicuous consumption, 33
- constructed reality, 3, 17, 47, 65, 82, 89, 90, 99, 103, 104, 105, 108
- consumption patterns, 25
- content analysis, 89
- Disneyization, 3, 20, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 55, 67
- eatertainment, 34, 40, 45
- edutainment, 21, 34, 40, 41, 46, 47, 77, 78
- floating theme parks, 43
- four realms of tourist experiences, 40, 73
- hyperreality, 1, 3, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 38, 47, 52, 55, 56, 60, 79, 80, 89, 95, 97, 108
- intertextuality, 8, 11, 14, 15, 91
- landscape, 3, 4, 12, 21, 22, 24, 25, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 79, 82
- McDonaldization, 3, 38, 41, 42, 44
- modernism, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15
- New World, 3, 4, 7, 15, 18, 19, 24, 27, 43, 54, 58, 75, 79
- nostalgia, 3, 4, 7, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 38, 57, 58, 60, 66, 68, 70, 71, 74, 79
- pastiche, 3, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17, 74
- philosophy of fun, 47
- Post-Fordism, 8
- postmodern architecture, 12, 13, 16, 17
- postmodern touristic ethos, 28
- postmodernism, 7
- post-tourism, 3, 4, 15, 27, 28, 33, 34, 36, 40, 44, 48, 52, 58, 79, 89, 95
- pseudo-event, 29, 67
- representation of onboard experiences, 95, 102, 108
- shoppertainment, 34, 40, 41
- simulacrum*, 1, 4, 17, 20, 25, 27, 38, 48, 54, 65, 69, 70, 72, 75, 79, 82
- simulated experience, 18
- slogan, 71, 83, 84
- themed environments, 49, 58, 66, 71, 72
- theming, 1, 4, 25, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 60, 62, 65, 66, 67, 71, 74, 79
- time- space compression, 37
- tourist behavior, 1, 30, 31, 36
- visual culture, 3, 4, 54, 79, 80, 81, 96
- visual representation, 64, 95, 102, 108

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the various strategies Carnival Cruise Lines pursues to meet the desires of contemporary tourists (post-tourists) and promote its philosophy of fun.

The main argument of the thesis is that the underlying principles of Carnival's strategies engender a sense of highly orchestrated reality (hyperreality) aboard Carnival's cruise ships. The poorly discussed issue of hyperreality in contemporary tourism studies (a reality which has no relation to lived realities of everyday lives) initiates a reasoned discussion, the aim of which is to help better understand the recent cultural and economic changes in the cruising industry influenced by the postmodern blurring of boundaries between the imaginary and the real.

The thesis adopts a postmodern approach to reality and space as social and cultural constructs only to be further developed within other cultural sets of perspectives such as contemporary tourism, cultural geography, and visual culture. Since it is a qualitative research, the discussions draw upon personal experience i.e. observation, data collection, and participation. The final phase of the thesis involves a visual analysis where I identify the market-oriented strategies behind Carnival's fun ideology. Apart from close reading of space aboard Carnival Magic, I used the ship's daily papers, commercials, and photographs to prove my initial hypothesis valid. This allows for more individual consideration of various modes of representation in different media sources.

Generally, this thesis highlights the importance of social studies within the ever-growing cruising industry, which considerably shapes our perception of reality. The findings may be useful both to tourism studies students and to a broader, less specialized audience, and will hopefully initiate further research.

Zusammenfassung in deutscher Sprache

Das Ziel dieser Dissertation ist es, die verschiedenartigen Strategien vorzustellen, die Carnival Cruise Lines verfolgt, um den Konsumwünschen der zeitgenössischen Touristen (Post-Touristen) zu entsprechen und um ihre Unternehmensphilosophie des Spaßes zu bewerben.

Das Hauptargument der Arbeit ist, dass die zugrundeliegenden Prinzipien der Carnival Strategien ein Gefühl der konstruierten Realität (Hyperrealität) an Bord der Carnival Kreuzfahrtschiffe erzeugen. Das unzureichend diskutierte Thema der Hyperrealität in den zeitgenössischen Tourismus-Studien (eine Realität, die in keinem Zusammenhang mit den Lebensrealitäten des Alltags ist) initiiert eine begründete Diskussion, deren Ziel es ist zu helfen die aktuellen kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Veränderungen in der Kreuzfahrt-Industrie besser zu verstehen, die durch die postmoderne Verwischung der Grenzen zwischen dem Imaginären und dem Realen beeinflusst werden.

Die Dissertation unternimmt eine postmoderne Annäherung an die Wirklichkeit und den Raum als soziale und kulturelle Konstruktionen, und wird dann aus anderen Perspektiven wie zeitgenössischem Tourismus, Kulturgeographie und visueller Kultur weiterentwickelt und betrachtet. Da es sich um eine qualitative Forschung handelt, beziehen sich die Diskussionen auf persönliche Erfahrungen, d.h. Beobachtung, Datenerfassung und Teilnahme. Die Endphase der Dissertation beinhaltet eine visuelle Analyse, wo ich die marktorientierten Strategien hinter der Carnival-Spaßideologie identifiziere. Außer der detailreichen Interpretation der Räume an Bord der Carnival Magic, habe ich die Tageszeitungen, Werbespots und Fotos verwendet um meine anfängliche Hypothese als gültig zu beweisen. Solche Interpretation ermöglicht eine individuellere Betrachtung der verschiedenen Arten der Darstellung in unterschiedlichen medialen Quellen.

Im Allgemeinen zeigt diese Dissertation die große Bedeutung der Sozialkunde innerhalb der ständig wachsenden Kreuzfahrt-Industrie, die unsere Wahrnehmung der Realität wesentlich prägt. Die Ergebnisse können beiden, den Tourismusstudenten und einem breiteren, weniger spezialisierten Publikum, nützlich sein und werden hoffentlich den Anstoß zur weiteren Forschung geben.

Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

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| 3/2010 - 3/2012 | MA Anglophone Literatures and Cultures:
Media and Cultural Studies
University of Vienna, Austria, Department of English |
| 11/2003 – 6/2007 | BA English Language and Literature: Translation
University of Novi Sad, Serbia, Department of English |
| 1998 – 2002 | Grammar school “Svetozar Markovic”, Subotica, Serbia
Social Studies and Languages |

WORK EXPERIENCE

- | | |
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| Public relations
04/2010- present | <i>PR- NGO</i> Serbian Cultural Forum, Vienna, Austria
Restoring, cultivating and maintaining a strong and positive image of Serbian culture in Vienna. Organizing events such as concerts, book readings, theater, and dancing shows. Writing post-event reports for the webpage, keeping regular correspondence with the media, and sending out information about the NGO's activities. |
| Translation
05/2009-02/2010 | <i>Translator/ interpreter/ secretary</i> PHIWA d.o.o., Subotica, Serbia (German company)
Consecutive interpretation of business meetings in three languages: English-German-Serbian |
| Teaching
09/2007-09/2008 | <i>English and German teacher</i> Primary School “Matko Vukovic”, Subotica, Serbia
Instructing English and German to classrooms of up to 30- 5th, 6th and 7th grade students |

ADDITIONAL

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Language skills | Serbian - Mother tongue;
English, German, and Hungarian – fluent written and spoken |
| Computer skills | Microsoft Office, Photoshop, Corel- graphic design software |
| Interests | Travelling, Contemporary dance, Visual Culture, Writing |