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# Megaship Economies and Transnational Maritime Performance

ANITA GONZÁLEZ

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*Maritime performance inherently links to economies of commerce. Its history and practices reorient theatre within broad frames of transnationalism. Maritime performances – theatre, music and dance activities on ships, along shipping routes or within port environments – immerse participants in interactive cultural play. This article uses the lens of the cruise industry as a microcosmic study of identity formation through maritime performance praxis. Performances at sea enable roleplaying of passengers and crewmembers, activating all sectors of the ship. Collectively sea acts pass time, provide a forum for recognition of talent, and allow for cultural exchanges across social boundaries. The maritime subject considers the port as a temporary layover point before the next long journey. For maritime performers, notions of voyage and destination invert. Knowledge travels in circles when performers ride ocean currents and old histories resurface within contemporary practices. Megaships support performance economies where the voyage dominates even as economies of power persist.*

A mega cruise ship leaves a Caribbean port with close to five thousand people on board. On its journey, an international mélange of travellers, some passengers and some crew, will participate in dozens of scripted and unscripted activities. Maritime acts are performances at sea – theatre, music and dance activities on ships, along shipping routes or within port environments. Because ships travel through international waters, maritime performances supersede language boundaries, privileging gesture over text and literature. Narrative emerges through interactive role playing. In maritime settings, performers play with cultural difference. Sea performance inherently links economies of commerce, valuing moneymaking through individual talent rather than serving aesthetic principles of high art. Today I use the lens of the Caribbean cruise industry as a microcosmic study of maritime performance praxis.

Commercial Caribbean cruise tourism began with bananas. Sailor Dow Baker first imagined transporting bananas in 1878 when he brought a load of bananas to Boston and resold them for a profit. Recognizing a business opportunity, he formed the Boston Banana Company with partners. Later, the United Fruit Company acquired the business, introducing the Great White Fleet in 1907. To improve business efficiency and to prevent fruit from rotting, the corporation installed air-conditioned holds on their vessels and innovatively marketed a ‘Tropical Fruit Steamship’ company that could transport both bananas and passengers aboard air-conditioned vessels. Although transatlantic passenger trade was well established by the second half of the nineteenth century, the notion of cruising through warm waters for the experience of the ocean was a unique innovation of the banana industry.<sup>1</sup>



FIG. 1 (Colour online) The arrival of a cruise ship signals the transformation of local Caribbean economies. Photo by John R. Diehl.

Economic frames for extracting wealth from the Caribbean have changed little across centuries. The labour of black workers has sustained a sugar-based industry that now aggregates around tourist activities centred on jewellery sales and rum drinks. Then and now captains navigate ships owned by foreign investors who profit from Caribbean resources. The enterprise of the sea blurs national boundaries and negates national laws. Ships operate without territorial boundaries so that entertainment and artifice are part and parcel of the 'game' of working the ocean. Skilled entertainers or entertainment enterprises capitalize on voyager expectations so that they can deliver the exotic as either experience or artefact. Both voyage and port are a part of tourist economies.

For about a decade I have been a destination lecturer for Royal Caribbean and Celebrity cruise lines. On these commercial boats I play a liminal role of both port expert and passenger as I provide information about Caribbean history and culture. The position involves mingling with passengers and delivering short talks about the destinations. Even though I eat meals offered to the guests and circulate through public areas, each night I sleep in a special crew cabin outfitted for entertainment staff. My position is one of many guest entertainment positions that run the gamut from playing-card 'bridge' experts to 'distinguished gents' (staff who dance with single women in club venues). We are not contracted cruise ship workers; rather, we function as temporary on-site enrichment staff for paying guests. The position offers complementary travel and meals only.

In the context of the ship, performance has multiple professional modes. The highest tiers of performers are those engaged to activate the main stage for evening shows. Each cruise ship supports a proscenium stage, equipped with motorized lights and moveable platforms for staging review-style acts. An ensemble of performers is hired on six-month



FIG. 2 (Colour online) Special guest musical artists perform in the main-stage theatre, the largest venue on the ship. Photo by John R. Diehl.

contracts for each ship. They perform a repertory of shows designed and choreographed off-site. The revue-show ensemble take pride in their association with their vessel and performers know one another intimately because of the unique close work environment that supports them. The vessel's dancers and singers are visibly recognizable to passengers as entertainers and the head of all entertainment activities is the cruise director.

The cruise director runs the passenger experience on board. Like a skilled master of ceremonies s/he orchestrates activities in the ship's multiple venues. Her role parallels that of the ship's captain in terms of responsibility because the cruise director's entertainment roster must complement the safety and destination requirements of the vessel. Everyone involved in on-board passenger experiences – theatre performers, specialty guests, lecturers, entertainment staff, technical workers and sometimes below-board staff doing public presentations – all report to the cruise director. The beauty of her position is that she is able to transform any venue into theatrical space. The shopping plaza can be a parade ground, the bar a lecture site, or the swimming pool a belly flop contest. I have seen the ice rink converted into a game show venue. When it rains outside all of the passengers can join the cruise director at an indoor barbecue. She becomes the public face of the pre- and post-destination cruise experience. All of the cruise directors I have



*FIG. 3* (Colour online) Cruise Director Sue Denning with 'Beyond the Podium' speaker Anita González on a Celebrity Summit 2012 cruise. Beyond the Podium speaker is the trademark name for destination lecturers on Celebrity ships. Photo by John R. Diehl.





FIG. 4 (Colour online) Smaller cabaret venues host intimate acts like this solo entertainer with her back-up ensemble. Photo by John R. Diehl.

worked with have originated from the United States, Australia or the United Kingdom and each brings a special type of show personality to the position. The position requires a persona that will captivate and hold the attention of the guests.

Live performance acts saturate every corner of a cruise ship. Directly assisting the cruise director is a team of at least a dozen activities staff who set up spaces, remove equipment, and lead sideshow activities such as 'line dancing' or 'sing-a-longs'. They keep activities moving as events shift from space to space. Most cruise ships have dozens of venues available for programming, and keeping them filled requires careful scheduling.

Events designed to appeal to a variety of interests take place at hourly and half-hourly intervals. From the perspective of the staff, the pleasure of their job is to manage and fill each venue with sensorial entertainment. A three-storey, well-equipped main theatre hosts large-scale musical events ranging from 'cirque du soleil' spectacles to Las Vegas musical revues. Technicians enhance main-stage acts with light shows, video screenings and moving risers. During the day, activities staff play bingo and sell products within this same venue. Architectural shapes offer spectacular spaces. Clubs and bars tend to resemble caverns or dens where passengers immerse themselves in the anonymity of the dark. Coffee shops replicate Italian cafes, and the most elevated lounges (on the



*FIG. 5* (Colour online) A steel pan musician plays near the pool, creating a Caribbean atmosphere for passengers sunning on the deck. Photo by John R. Diehl.

fourteenth floor) contain spacious cloth chairs for observing musical ensembles in a casual environment.

The pool deck accommodates fun and active shows like zumba or Caribbean dance lines and an almost ever-present Caribbean ensemble play upbeat island tunes near the



FIG. 6 (Colour online) Activities staff on a cruise ship lead a variety of performative events that engage passengers in collective play. Photo by John R. Diehl.

pool whenever passengers are likely to be sunning outside. Collectively, entertainment staff activities deliver core cruise experiences to audiences from first light until well after dark.

Land-based entertainments tend to privilege indoor professional performances over spontaneous or amateur acts, yet this is not the case on a tourist cruise. The journey is the destination and all passenger/staff encounters amplify the illusion. Cruise directors aim to offer complete immersive experiences where the passenger can choose from a variety of entertainment modes. To create this effect, all of the players participate in multiple active performances. The dancer who appears behind the proscenium in a review act on one night can be seen posing as a pirate on the dock the next morning. In his new role as a costumed pier-usher the entertainer appears more approachable and becomes a co-adventurer with the passengers. Later he might join the guests in a champagne toast to celebrate their return to the utopia of the ship. Because commerce and sales keep the vessels financially afloat, events connected to commerce, like bingo or the art auction, have a higher priority than pure fun entertainment. For example, entertainments that occur near or within the bar are more highly valued than activities where sales potential are limited. In one instance, I delivered a destination lecture in the ship's saloon. The cruise director for that voyage correctly assumed that offering the lecture in a bar would boost both attendance and bar sales.

Not all cruise ship employees are allowed to interact with paying guests. Many, such as laundry workers and ship maintenance engineers, stay below deck. Consequently,



each staff member who comes into contact with paying passengers works from a prescribed script, and trains in public performance of service. Customer service staff – hotel reception and retail clerks, for example – are precise and friendly, offering services upon request. Waiters, bar staff and above-board maintenance workers have a closer relationship with passengers because they have to provide personal services. Throughout the day workers repeat small acts of deference towards passengers. Part of the spectacle of leisure cruising ensures that passengers feel like upper-crust guests with a retinue of servants, so workers are trained to respond with phrases like ‘my pleasure’ when fulfilling guest requests. Many service industries emphasize this type of customer-oriented behaviour; however, cruise ship workers generally come from Third World countries and the conciliatory posturing tends to reinforce racial stereotyping. Because cruise ship companies recruit internationally, they can hire cheap workers without legal restrictions. In my journeys, I have found that laundry personnel usually come from Asia, cabin or housekeeping personnel from the black Caribbean, dining room staff from South East Asia or Eastern Europe, and the engineering crew from Greece. Hotel staff, entertainment staff and spa staff are often British, Canadian, Australian or American. The industry promotes the international origins of crewmembers and encourages each staff member to wear their countries of origin on their nametags; however, the international atmosphere does little to mask ethnic and racial layering of service personnel.

Three categories of performance are practised within most commercial cruise ships: performances for guests, performances that engage passengers and staff in collaborative play and performances shared among the permanent crew staff. Each type of onboard theatrical performance serves purposes quite familiar to most theatre practitioners: they help to pass the time, they form community bonds, they provide a forum for recognition of talent and they allow for cultural exchanges across social boundaries. As a temporary above-board enrichment staff member, I am not privy to performances shared among long-term contracted staff members; my contract stipulates that I not venture into staff areas. However, later in this essay I share descriptions of lower deck antics described in *Cruise Confidential*.<sup>2</sup>

Performances for guests predominate after 4:00 p.m. The most auspicious theatrical events are the evening shows held on formal nights. On these special nights guests dress in gowns or tuxedo suits for the evening meal. Their ostentatious outfits set the mood for an evening that will culminate in a proscenium musical revue event. Formal nights boost cruise ship income by offering opportunities for passengers to pay to dress up. Appointments for spa treatments and retail sales of bags and scarves increase significantly on formal nights. Non-theatrical staged activities serve as a prelude to the official theatrical event. Photographers take pictures of guests posing in front of elaborate backdrops that will reappear in the photo shop store as buyable mementos of the day. Before or after the photo sessions, the dining room serves a special dinner that generally includes lobster and/or steak.<sup>3</sup> Bars open all along the promenade that stretches from the dining room to the ship’s theatre so that passengers arrive at the show well fed and well intoxicated. This type of all-inclusive ship performance is typical within the contained space of the cruise. Because cruise directors work with a finite audience, they are able to orchestrate activities throughout the journey. For example, a carnival parade theme



FIG. 7 (Colour online) Passengers pose in front of painted backdrops for photographers to take their pictures. Their images will be available for purchase in the ship's photo studio the following day. Photo by John R. Diehl.

with a suggested Hawaiian shirt dress code can dictate an entire day's spectacle, dining, commerce and performance activities.

Most of the paid entertainers on the ship are musicians engaged in performing rotating musical acts for guests. If a ship has a dozen nightclub or restaurant venues, then each will host a different genre of musical act. A typical roster of groups would include a jazz band with a lead singer, a barbershop quartet, an R&B group, a folk singer, a classical chamber ensemble, and a golden oldie piano player. Some ships have roaming specialty acts such as jugglers or clowns who add variety to the mix. These individuals can perform on the main stage as well as in smaller venues, and many have shorter contracts than service workers or hotel staff. Because cruise operators aim to offer a variety of shifting entertainment options, limiting the contractual terms of the pick-up musicians and specialty acts makes sense.

Sports arenas and craft venues host another category of staff engaged in performances for passengers. Some vessels contain ice rinks or climbing walls where professional athletes demonstrate their skills. Ice shows compete somewhat with main-stage theatre shows and, on Royal Caribbean ships, a well-scheduled venue management timetable enables ice rink performers to work as stage crew for the theatre revue on their off nights. In exchange, the dance artists help the ice show staff to deliver their show.<sup>4</sup>



FIG. 8 (Colour online) Galley tours invite cruise ship guests to watch the staff demonstrate their expertise. Photo by John R. Diehl.

Supportive professional exchanges encourage camaraderie between artists working the same vessel. Large-scale arenas like the ice rink contrast with smaller specialist venues like glass-blowing studios or craft rooms where passengers receive more personal demonstrations, and artists are able to sell their wares. Small-scale presentations allow for engaging dialogue with guests as well as ‘question-and-answer’ sessions. My own destination lectures are an example of this type of highly engaged edutainment activity.<sup>5</sup> Demonstrations also provide an opportunity for ship staff to perform.

The loudspeaker announces a special event for this afternoon’s voyage. The captain (or the cruise director) invites everyone to walk below deck and see how the kitchen is able to serve thousands of meals every day. Passengers are to meet in the dining room to receive tickets that will allow them to go below deck and see the kitchen staff at work. This excursion into the lower depths could be called slumming, but for the cruise industry it enables guests to appreciate the efficiency of the enterprise and it keeps the galley staff engaged. Culinary staff, generally hidden from passenger view, will demonstrate their professionalism and receive accolades that boost self-esteem as they see how much the guests appreciate their services. Undoubtedly the presence of passengers in the galleys creates more work for the staff even as they receive special attention during the kitchen tours.

While the kitchen tour shows represent small-scale demonstrations of staff expertise, cooking shows held in the main-stage theatre unite passengers and guests on a very large public stage. At these popular performances, audience members volunteer to cook a



*FIG. 9* (Colour online) Each cruise has a night when representatives from key areas of the ship introduce themselves to the newly arrived passengers. Events like Dancing with the Stripes or the cooking show bring passengers and staff members together. Photo by John R. Diehl.

meal with cruise ship chefs in front of as many as a thousand people. The event is designed to replicate television cooking shows where contestants prepare meals on the spot. Television cameras capture the ingredients from multiple cameras and project all aspects of meal preparation to the house. First, the galley staff prepare a mobile cooking set and transport it to the front of the stage. Then a cornucopia of ingredients is placed on a table upstage of the cooking area. Finally, the activities staff, working with the cruise director, select audience members who want to cook with the best ship chefs. Since everyone has been eating top-notch meals for days, there are plenty of volunteers.<sup>6</sup> The timed cooking begins and as the meal unfolds the audience support their favourite team with calls and cheers. After the bell rings, new audience members are selected to taste and judge the meals. The entire sequence takes about an hour before the winner is announced. Like many cruise activities, the cooking show brings land-based activities to the ocean and helps to pass time on a sea journey.

One of my favourite on-board events uniting passengers with staff members is called Dancing with the Stripes.<sup>7</sup> At this popular spectacle, passengers and crewmembers compete in an all-out dance competition. The cruise director invites stage-worthy staff members to leave their below-deck stations and come to an upper-level passenger lounge where they can partner with a guest and challenge other teams. Staff members can come from any sector of the ship community and this is one of the few events where I have seen workers from the engineering team perform. This performance replicates structures from *So You Think You Can Dance* or *The Voice*; a panel of judges selected from the staff and audience chooses winners after each round of dance performance. During each mini-competition, 'mixed' couples consisting of one staff member and one guest



passenger dance to different genres of music – tango, hip hop, waltz or ballet. The panel of judges eliminates teams until a winner emerges. As they dance, the couples are encouraged to be ridiculous; arms fly wildly, legs kick high, tiny men lift big women and sweat flies all over the floor of the top-of-the-ship nightclub. Passengers view this as an extension of the big vacation party provided by the cruise ship, while staff members utilize this performative moment to express a non-servile aspect of their personality. Dancing with the Stripes provides perks for crew, entertains guests and creates a carnivalesque space where everyone can break out of hierarchical roles and enjoy corporeal excess at sea.

All of this silly, madcap entertainment seems contrived for today's middle-class passengers seeking a getaway, yet maritime role playing has persisted since the medieval era. Performance equalizes voyagers trapped on a boat seeking respite from the monotony of the ocean. At the same time it allows people from differing class, national or ethnic backgrounds to collaboratively negotiate identity associations within a transitional space. One of the most documented types of onboard performance is the 'Crossing the Line' ceremony. Sailors both historically enacted, and in the current day still enact, these rituals when a boat passes over the equator or the Arctic Circle. The performance practice originated as a maritime ceremony that would match the initiation practices of medieval guilds. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ceremonies had become more codified and elaborate. Crossing the Line activities inaugurate younger crewmembers into ship culture and hierarchies. Essentially, the practice is a hazing ritual with prescribed dramatic personae.<sup>8</sup> As recently as 1997 the Navy was asked to publicly defend the persistence of the practice.<sup>9</sup>

In older versions of the ceremony, the ritual begins when a senior sailor bedecked like a sea god appears on deck one morning playing the role of King Neptune. An entourage of senior officers dressed as members of the court accompany him. Neptune the King, as an officiator of the ritual, invites pollywogs or novice sailors to participate in pranks: they are thrown into a saltwater bath, beaten while moving through a darkened space, shaved in salt water with a dull blade, or perhaps asked to lick egg yolks off or one another's bellies. Race and gender are commonly inverted in these ceremonies so that men dress up as mermaids while lowly cooks or stewards can become a part of Neptune's 'court'. The ceremony incorporates myths and legends from various nations (such as witches, mermaids or turtles), severs ties with the homeland and instates a maritime culture where gender roles can shift. After enduring the series of tests and trials, the pollywogs or novice sailors will be able to earn their way into the ranks of the 'shellbacks' or veteran sailors – they will have 'crossed the line' both metaphorically and physically.<sup>10</sup> Contemporary merchant and Navy ships have toned down the ceremonies and adapted them to include female participants. The ritual persists as a valued component of contemporary maritime culture.

Cruise ships, however, are not Navy ships and any Crossing the Line activities remain hidden deep below deck in areas of the ship where destination lecturers may not venture. Nevertheless, other ship workers describe dress-up antics of similar kinds. Brian David Bruns narrates the details of a Carnival Cruise Christmas party where staff workers imitate popular cultural icons:

Now nearly 2:30 in the morning, we impatiently waited for a Filipino housekeeper to finish his crooning of a Jon Secada ballad. Finally the cruise director announced that his next act was from Truffles . . .

The lights remained low, and a spotlight faded in to reveal Xenia on her knees in prayer. She wore a blue hooded robe and carried a candle. The opening of the song was respectful and solemn, with all attention on the solitary figure in candlelight . . . When the tempo picked up her melodrama began.

From the shadows came the First Temptation. Leaping in . . . was a creepy man wielding a spear capped with feathers. Wearing a white toga that contrasted sharply against his dark brown skin, he rushed around the stage poking at Xenia who swooned dramatically in response to the danger.

I recognized the First Temptation as Nestor from Guatemala.<sup>11</sup>

Dress-up role playing among ship workers provides an outlet for reimagining the vessel as a transformative space. Men and women confined with a contained mobile transport unit like a ship cannot escape one another. Performance breaks daily routines. Workers as actors learn new things about one another within sanctioned spaces of dramatic play, and maritime culture has always brought together a collective of individuals from diverse cultural spaces. Being 'at sea' implies disconnecting from norms of the land and the clarity of grounded thought. Voyagers, whether they are above or below deck, take advantage of 'at-sea' performance opportunities to subvert and invert quotidian shore roles. One by-product of maritime performance is that when the ship lands, the port extends the play into a new economy where social orders and cultural encounters remix.

Whereas land-based scholars view the shore as a departure point, maritime people view the port as a temporary layover point before the next long journey. Ports, an extension of ship culture, provide a space for travellers to spend limited time ashore, usually with associates from the ship. Once ashore, performance frames shift as local artists participate in the consumer space. Today's current economy of corporate empire transforms port cities into currency exchange zones capable of revitalizing national economies. The port presents itself to international tourists as a carefully constructed spectacle that highlights points of sale. Concentrated wealth comes to the island when each ship docks and islanders respond by developing businesses that entrap dollars. A port like Phillipsburg in St Maarten offers back-to-back streets lined with jewellery stores advertising diamonds, emeralds, gold and Rolex watches. Individual proprietors hawk souvenirs or offer tourist services; all are involved in selling some aspect of island resources. This port trade differs little from port activities of earlier centuries. Instead of slaves and sugar, contemporary ports offer island delights and rum.

When an island becomes a cruise port, transport services, small businesses and housing industries adjust to the schedule of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. stopovers. If a single ship docks, then two thousand or more people join the island. If there are several vessels in port then more than ten thousand people can disembark within a two-hour time frame. As a result, everyone on the island knows when the next cruise will arrive and

tour operators collaborate with local businesses to keep the spectacle of cruising alive onshore. Passengers purchase island excursions before they land at the destinations. The best and brightest of the local tour agencies are able to transport and entertain large groups of cruise ship passengers as they explore local sites. Local guides add a different kind of spice to the island experience and they are able to explain the nuances of history and culture. Sometimes the ship's enrichment and entertainment staff will accompany the guests on the excursions to ensure continuity of the on-board experience. The most common excursions are to beaches or sailing trips; however, bus or adventure tours are also popular. Cruise companies are concerned about how passengers are treated once they arrive at the destinations and some, like Royal Caribbean, build simulacrum islands. Labadee, on Haiti, exemplifies this set-up. The 'island' is really a peninsula located on the northern shore of Haiti where all of the amenities of the ship are available onshore. When passengers disembark in Labadee, the same cruise entertainers that performed on the boat move to the corporate-owned *palapa* to play steel drums while guests waterski within the protected bay.<sup>12</sup> The waiters who are working that day have an opportunity to spend time outside setting up a beach barbecue and serving drinks as the passengers collect their food from the buffet. As a gesture to the local culture, the cruise company invites a troupe of sanctioned Haitian dancers to present a fire show in the *palapa*. But the cruise companies cannot completely control the way that passengers interact with local cultures. At some ports, local islanders even perform ethnicity before passengers step ashore.

Roatán, Honduras. The pilot boats have finished guiding the ship into its slot at the extended pier in Coxen Hole. This island, once an extension of Honduras's banana coast, now markets scuba-diving and snorkelling trips along the barrier reef. Its cruise pier, partially owned by Royal Caribbean, opened in 2008. Because the cruise ship company owns the pier, it controls access to the island. Today, as the passengers disembark, a collective of dancers dressed in traditional Garinagú regalia greets the guests by playing drums and dancing shuffling steps slightly reminiscent of ceremonial Punta dancing that characterizes Black Caribe culture. The Garífuna,<sup>13</sup> originating from St Vincent, were one of the earliest settlers of the island of Roatán.

In the new millennium, dancing Garífuna port performers differ little from predecessors who might have entertained these early tourists. A Great White Fleet advertisement from 1927 depicts black people carrying baskets of fruits on their heads as they welcome passengers landing in dinghies from a great white ship. Today the Garífuna dancers similarly carry baskets on their heads as they demonstrate ethnic artistry. I can easily see through the artifice of the performance. The dancers execute the more energetic steps between 9.00 and 10.00 a.m. as the bulk of the passengers disembark. They collect tips in a painted red pail. If anyone wants to take a picture, they pay more. The ensemble includes two or three women and a couple of men so that the performers are able to trade off. No one wants to exert herself too much in the midday heat. Later in the day, the local performers will sporadically hit the drum once or twice if it looks as if a returning passenger might be inclined to donate. This performance is a dutiful staging of imagined Caribbean lifestyles to accommodate port trade. Maybe next week the performers will be in New York helping an aunt or uncle manage another business. Maritime economies

are managing the ebb and flow of their performances. Once they leave the scene, they are ordinary workers, not employed on the ship.

Once I meet a Garífuna cabin worker on board a cruise ship. He is cleaning my room while I prepare a lecture about transatlantic voyaging and I decide to make small talk. His nametag indicates he is from St Vincent and he is of African descent so I ask if he is Garífuna. When he says yes, I think to impress him by telling him about the African Grove theatre, a company founded in 1821 by Afro-Caribbean stewards who were probably from St Vincent. He is unimpressed. I provide more history. ‘They did a play called *King Shotaway*’, I declare. He responds with silence and then a laugh. ‘Shotaway?’ he asks. ‘You must mean Chief Chatoyer, then. He was a great Garífuna king who fought against the British. You must come to my island and learn about him.’

There is an intoxicating circular pattern to the roles we play in this exchange. We are both on the ship – working – and we are both performing roles that circulate and intertwine as he performs service and I perform knowledge and we perform complementary understanding of Caribbean lives and lifestyles. We are both travelling in ships without destinations against the background of the sea, yet in this moment we exchange information that references real histories of transatlantic journeys. The ocean blue highlights the vacuity of the exchange. This intimate encounter has in some way gone sour. I have lost the artifice that ocean cruising affords and somehow have been forced to remember that terrestrial economies of class and power remain undisturbed. After all of the cavorting and playful acts during my week at sea, I can walk off the boat. Still we smile and nod and I make sure to leave an extra large tip when I step off the vessel after my week of play. After all, US dollars travel everywhere.

## NOTES

- 1 Elizabeth Doyle, ‘Banana Boats: A Missing Link in the Rise of the Cruise Vacationing 1881 to 1958’, unpublished manuscript shared at the 2012 Mystic Seaport, Munson Institute, National Endowment for the Humanities America and the Sea symposium.
- 2 Brian David Bruns, *Cruise Confidential* (Palo Alto, CA: Solas House, Inc. 2008).
- 3 Dinners of cruise ships are generally served in two seatings, one at 6.00 p.m. and one at 8.00 p.m. This allows guests to select their eating preference and distributes the workload of the staff. Usually an alternative cafeteria-style dining room allows guests to eat whenever they want to. In this alternative space they can elect to be non-performative and wear casual attire.
- 4 Interview with Ryan LeVeille, Royal Caribbean’s Mariner of the Seas, 2005.
- 5 ‘Edutainment’ is the preferred word used by the cruise industry to describe the performance style that they prefer for enrichment staff. We are to enrich the passenger experience during the cruise, and we are asked to do so in an entertaining manner. My agency recommends speaking in an upbeat fashion, establishing rapport, and stepping away from the podium. Although these behaviours may come naturally to trained theatrical performers, emphasizing presentation is important for enrichment staff coming from other disciplines.
- 6 Cruise directors plan event sequences within each sailing voyage to correspond with rising and falling guest moods. At the beginning of a journey there is excitement about simply being on the ship and enjoying its amenities. Towards the end of the journey activities like cooking shows and participatory programming keep guests involved in ship play culture.
- 7 This is a special event on Celebrity cruise lines. I am not sure if other companies also offer this activity.



- 8 J. Welles Henderson and Rodney P. Carlise, *Jack Tar: A Sailor's Life* (Woodbridge: Antique Collector's Club, 1999), pp. 183–5.
- 9 Simon J. Bronner describes Navy Secretary John H. Dalton's defence of the practice in *Crossing the Line: Violence, Play, and Drama in Naval Equator Traditions* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 5–6. Current naval policies are clearly articulated on the Naval History and Heritage website at [www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq92-1.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq92-1.htm), accessed 24 May 2014.
- 10 Bronner, pp. 8–26, 46.
- 11 Bruns, pp. 327–8.
- 12 A *palapa* is an open-sided palm-covered hut.
- 13 Garinagú refers to the culture of the people while Garífuna refers to the people. This ethnic community migrated to the coast of Honduras in 1797 when they were ousted from the island of St Vincent after joining with Taíno islanders to rebel against British rule. Garinagú culture is one of the few black cultures of the Americas that maintain an indigenous language. During a 1992 Fulbright fellowship I spent several months living and working with Garífuna artists. The folklore of the region reflects a matrilineal society and the Punta dance, now widely regarded as a popular club dance, originated as a fertility ritual performed by women when a relative died.

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