

**The Culture of Cruising: Post-War Images From the
NMM's Film Archive**

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Abstract

The Culture of Cruising: Post-War Images From the NMM's Film Archive

This thesis examines a film collection held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and seeks to establish the historical, cultural and aesthetic legacy of the post-war promotional cruise film. The textual and contextual analysis reveals the cruise film's unique reflection of an era of ideological, social and stylistic change.

The thesis establishes an institutional and aesthetic history of the cruise film, focusing on the output of Orient Line, P&O, Union Castle and Cunard. The circumstances surrounding production of promotional material are explored, along with the ideological, commercial and stylistic legacy of the British Documentary Movement and British Transport Film initiative. Prototypical pre-war examples of the form are foregrounded and compared to the films produced through the 1960s.

Alongside the cruise film's commercial and aesthetic origins, the thesis explores the image of the ship itself, as an eternal signifier of progress, divinity and nation. The cultural history of the ship as a signifier is traced alongside the visual discourses used to picture it within the cruise film. The 1960s cruise ship and its filmic representation is examined as a floating microcosm of emergent hedonistic and capitalistic tendencies. In an era of empowerment, liberation and increasing individualism, the cruise film balanced the traditional with the contemporary in its sometimes conflicted portrayals of life at sea.

The final chapter of the thesis is devoted to the cruise film's reflection of fading British colonialism. As the British Empire fragmented and political liberalism spread throughout a new generation of young people, the cruise film's latent traditionalism and nationalism became anachronistic. Yet, beneath its swinging '60s aesthetic, the post-war cruise film continued to market its product as an implicit emulation of the colonial process. In conclusion, light is shed on the cruise film's paradoxical position, as advertisers sought to retain the allure of the ocean voyage in an era of mainstream jet travel.

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0.0 Introduction

This project primarily centres on the representation of the post-war oceanic cruise through examination of a number of short, mostly promotional films held within several archives in the UK. Throughout this thesis I will refer to the ‘cruise film’, a term which I have chosen to most efficiently allude to broadly analogous film material I have discovered throughout the course of my research. As a collective phrase, ‘cruise film’ is both useful and problematic. While it allows for the discussion of concepts and ideas which relate to a perceivable filmmaking tradition, it also implicitly suggests that this tradition is in some way homogenised. In reality, the short promotional films sponsored by British shipping lines in the post-war years are a largely disparate collection of works made by a diverse set of individuals under a whole host of different economic and creative remits. My chosen definition of the phrase therefore relates to any short film which features a representation of the cruise and possesses some form of commercial sponsorship.

Alongside this commercially produced film material, I refer to amateur film footage found on newsreels, posters, photographs and a whole host of ephemeral items. These have been sourced from a number of locations across the UK including the National Maritime Museum, the Liverpool Maritime Museum, Liverpool University, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and The National Archive. These items form a useful basis for imagistic comparison. However, due to the sheer volume of material produced by shipping lines and the limited selection retained for public consumption, I am able only to engage with a representative sample. I will discuss my analytical methodology of material later in this introductory chapter.

I seek not to write a history of the cruise or of cruise-related film material in this thesis, but instead endeavour to analyse and historicise the *representation* of the cruise through visual media. By combining historical findings, analytic techniques and theoretical concepts, I will establish how the image of the cruise developed into a symbiotic emulation and reflection of the changing post-war age.

This introduction is divided into three main sections. The first will introduce the cruise as a culturally enlightening leisure pastime which evolved through a market-driven consolidation of ocean travel. As companies used burgeoning technological advancements shrewdly to improve their craft, they were able to offer quicker and more luxurious services to the traveller. I will focus on the cruise in the post-war period, when, faced with the competitive challenge of jet travel, shipping lines began to see dwindling passenger numbers and decreasing profits for the first time. The second part of this chapter will deal with the methodological techniques I will employ when analysing film, poster art and ephemera items. I will call upon the theoretical writings of David Bordwell, Edward Branigan, Tim O'Sullivan *et al* and Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. I will also discuss my rationale for and potential problems in using mass-media artefacts as the focus of such close analysis. Finally, I will outline my broader aims and objectives throughout the following five chapters.

0.1 The Cruise

As Philip Dawson surmises, the development of the ocean liner has been tied closely to technological advancement:

The age of the ocean liner began as steam propulsion created the possibility for ships to be operated on a regularly scheduled basis, no longer at the mercy of the winds. With mechanical propulsion came also the iron and steel hulls that in turn made possible larger ships and higher standards of accommodation and onboard creature comfort.¹

With the power of the steam engine effectively consolidated, in 1843, the British Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) began a paddle steamer service on a round trip from London to the Black Sea. British travel operator Thomas Cook offered the first commercial cruise to Egypt, the Middle East and Greece in 1894.² In 1896, a Hamburg-based ship owner offered a world voyage in a large sailing vessel with the aim of ‘promoting the safety, the comfort, the entertainment and the instruction of the passengers.’³ Cruising, as we define it today, came into existence before the beginning of the 20th century. The movement of passengers from one place to another as an exercise in leisure, as well as practical transportation, had been born.

Yet, the ‘cruise ship’ was still yet to fully develop. The phrase itself is difficult and problematic to define. A cruise ship represents something more than a utilitarian means of travel and instead defines itself within a self-conscious tradition of sea-

¹ Philip Dawson, *The Liner: Retrospective & Renaissance* (London: Conway, 2005), p.10.

² Peter Quartermaine and Bruce Peter, *Cruise: Identity, Design and Culture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2006) p.33.

³ Philip Dawson, *Cruise Ships: An Evolution in Design* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 2000), quoted in Quartermaine and Peter (2006), p.33.

faring that would develop slowly over a number of years. Whilst the steam liners which roamed foreign coastlines at the turn of the century possessed the technological prowess to complete epic voyages comfortably, they were simplistic versions of the grandly realised ships which would later come into being. The design aspects of the cruise ship related to and driven by technological progress need to be seen also in the context of the aesthetics of ship design and the interior décor of passenger vessels.

Dawson states:

Towards the end of the 19th century, there emerged an ocean-going architecture, born out of the belle époque's Grand Hotel formality. Indeed, César Ritz's own house architects were to turn their creative hands to some of that era's most notable and memorable ocean-going interiors. With the ships of this era, there emerged for the first time an ocean going lifestyle in its own right.⁴

The self-conscious aesthetic control of the cruise ship interior was therefore born early, but it would (as with the technological aspects of the cruise ship) develop as a *changing tradition naturally over time*. It was this convergence of technology and design with a proud, nationalistic maritime legacy that led to the existence of the modern ocean-going liner. However, the appeal of cruising itself had its root in more than just the thrill of being aboard a technically advanced, beautifully furnished vessel. The cruise experience can be seen to tap into a deeper romance found within a narrativised, historically loaded attitude to the sea:

⁴ Dawson (2005), p.10.

Modern cruising must be understood historically in the context of its natural element – the sea. Yet, in many ways, the very notion of ‘cruising’ runs counter to any traditional role of the sea and seafaring in history, literature or art. Traditionally, to ‘go to sea’ was both unpleasant and dangerous, a considerable and calculated risk taken only for such compelling reasons as fishing, trade, essential travel – or escape from poverty or persecution.⁵

The cruise denied this historically traumatic association with the sea, and obscured the dangerous aspects of nautical endeavour with a distinctive brand of homeliness and luxury. This transformation could only successfully occur in an age when maritime technology and design allowed for the safe, successful and consistent movement of large numbers of passengers over a great distance. Roland Barthes in *The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat* suggests that the ship’s homely aspects transcend the dangerous appeal of voyage on the high seas:

An inclination for ships always means the joy of perfectly enclosing oneself, of having at hand the greatest possible number of objects, and having at one’s disposal an absolutely finite space. To like ships is first and foremost to like a house, a superlative one since it is unremittingly closed, and not at all

⁵ Quartermaine and Peter (2006), p.25.

vague sailings into the unknown: a ship is a habitat before being a means of transport.⁶

Barthes' notion of the 'floating home' is compelling and helps to sum up part of the cruise's success and appeal. Yet, his ideas fail to interrogate the aspirational and transcendent aspects of the ship which place it in a middle ground between the comforts of home and the excitement of a world beyond it. The ship allows for a unique transplantation of 'home' to the far corners of the world. The surreal and transgressive act of stepping outside the 'front door' into a world of inherent otherness, is something the cruise is unique in providing. Foucault describes this kind of realm as a 'heterotopia' and calls upon the ship as a primary example:

Brothels and colonies are two extreme types of heterotopia, and if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a space, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilisation, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development... but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In

⁶ Roland Barthes, 'The *Nautilus* and the Drunken Boat' in *Mythologies* (London: Paladin, 1988), p.66.

civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.⁷

Foucault presents a dichotomy that informs a central part of this thesis. The cruise and the cruise ship on one hand represent both a symbol and ‘instrument of economic development.’ The ship has played a pivotal part in the power relations of empire and the defence of the Mother Land throughout the ages. It is a craft that is bound up with the latent aggressiveness and ambition of humanity and its desire to explore and expand. Yet, on the other hand, the ship also occupies a figurative and physical position as what Foucault describes as ‘the greatest reserve of the imagination.’ In the words of Anne Wealleans, it ‘symbolizes society and nations as they would like to see themselves.’⁸ The ship has become a signifier of the broadest kind. Not only does it conjure the physical image of its outer form and interior detail, but it is invested with the aspirational thoughts and dreams which constitute a heterotopia. Within this thesis, I wish to interrogate the manner in which a developing attitude to the ship and the cruise is represented in a fledgling visual form. This notion of the heterotopia is central in the capturing of the cruise ship on film. The medium lends itself adeptly to the visual projection of a utopian realm. Attention is consistently drawn to the convergence of stylish but comfortable ship detail and the exotic allure of the foreign landscape.

It is worth emphasising that the focus rests predominantly on the post-war period in this project. While I will refer to a number of pre-war texts throughout, this is purely

⁷ Foucault quoted in Anne Wealleans, *Designing Liners: A History of Interior Design Afloat* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.1-2.

⁸ Wealleans (2006), p.2.

as a means of exploring the origins of the cruise film as seen after the war. The post-war cruise was something of a 'restart'. The 'golden age' that shipping lines had experienced in the 1920s and 1930s was shaken to a halt by the beginning of conflict in 1939. Many vessels were commissioned as troop carriers and had to be re-fitted and re-equipped as a result. As Philip Dawson implies, this was the beginning of an era of change for the shipping industry:

Onwards into the twentieth century, the demographics of travel were significantly altered by two world wars that relied heavily on liners for mass trooping operations, and later by the airborne challenge of the jet age.⁹

Cunard was particularly swift in returning to its passenger service. In July 1947 the *Queen Mary* once again took to the waves as a passenger vessel, and was seen by many as a brave statement of, as Dawson puts it, 'winning the peace, lifting the burden of post-war gloom and austerity at home, and showing the rest of the world that Great Britain was recovering and returning to normality.'¹⁰ Yet the world of travel that Cunard, P&O, Orient Line and Union Castle ships returned to was a changed one. Initially, the outward modernity of the 1920s and 1930s was replaced by a contemplative, modest austerity. The war had shaken the world and, while shipping lines began to re-initiate their liners as iconic, defiant symbols of a recovering society, the positive national mood of previous decades had been lost. By the time the British economy and collective mindset began to improve, the focuses of the international stage were realigning. As Dawson explains:

⁹ Dawson (2005), p.11.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.151.

Passenger liners no longer inspired the awe and held the wonderment of their Victorian predecessors. The public gaze was cast more upwards to the world's conquest by commercial aviation and to the Sputnik, the 'Space Race' and President John F. Kennedy's promise to put a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s. At sea, the greatness of the express ocean liner was being challenged by super-tankers, bulk carriers and container vessels.¹¹

Dawson partially contradicts an assertion made earlier in his book that, 'through all this the classic image of the great ocean liner, with black hull, white superstructure and traditional funnels has flourished as one of the most powerful and enduring icons of human civilization and accomplishment.'¹² However, the 1950s and 1960s were indeed a challenging time for those attempting to sell the spectacle and grandeur of the cruise experience. Technological advancement had meant a dilution of the visual power of the cruise ship. 1958 marked the crossover point when the numbers of passengers crossing the Atlantic began to decline. While in 1957 over one million individuals were sailing the Atlantic aboard liners, by 1965 this had declined to 650,000. Meanwhile, airline passenger volumes had quadrupled from one to four million over the same time frame.¹³ Alongside this, the segregated class structure aboard vessels began to break down as emigrant trade increased in the post-war years. P&O's *Canberra* was built with its machinery and funnels specially positioned so as

¹¹ Ibid., p. 171.

¹² Ibid., p.11.

¹³ Ibid., p.171.

to provide an uninterrupted placement of passenger accommodation.¹⁴ The class segregation of the pre-war years was being jettisoned in favour of a more pragmatic and lucrative single-class focus. With this democratisation of the cruise process also came a dilution of its exclusivity and its aspirational lure.

These social and cultural changes had followed a number of important international events in the immediate post-war period, which would have marked ramifications for the shipping and cruise industry. The Dominions of India and Pakistan were created in 1947, while independence was granted for Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma the following year. As a result, P&O and Orient Lines would lose a significant part of their traditional role of transporting troops, government officials and mail items to and from the Mother Country. Meanwhile, Australia was looking beyond its colonial relationship with Great Britain and was developing commercial enterprises of its own around the Pacific Rim. P&O and Orient Line were both anxious to sustain and develop their own trading positions and take advantage of newly enfranchised markets.¹⁵ The optimism invested in these seemingly lucrative avenues of business played a significant part in P&O's ambitious decision to invest in larger and faster ships. These would reduce the time taken to complete a round-trip and would allow for the transport of a greater number of passengers at a time. The *Oriana* and *Canberra* were launched in 1959 and 1960 respectively, and represented two truly modern vessels. When the latter made a promotional voyage to North America's eastern seaboard in 1962, it was boarded by *The Today Show* in front of an audience of 12 million. In the words of Dawson, 'Both inside and out she was every much of her time, an ocean-going symbol of the elegant 1960s, the jet age and even the space

¹⁴ Ibid., p.171.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.181.

age.’¹⁶ The modern liner was thus seen as an affectionately viewed object fitting of a fast-moving era of change. Yet the contemporary style and technology invested within these ships was not enough to stop the dwindling numbers who travelled aboard the ocean liner. Whilst the launch and initial voyages of the *Oriana* and *Canberra* marked a period of optimism for P&O, it was an optimism framed within a wider, unspoken acknowledgement that the ‘golden age’ would never quite be re-attained.

The story of cruising in the post-war period is therefore framed by a growing sense of fundamental change. The glamour and grandeur of vessels like the *Oriana* and *Canberra* disguised a growing sense of dislocation and downturn. The shipping lines, that had grown into vast, unwieldy organisations (furthered by various mergers which took place during these years in response to increased competition between companies), found that the process of change was a challenging one. As the years passed, the visual media produced by shipping lines during this period was an interesting and enlightening indicator of how a new and vibrant era was in some cases embraced and in others denied. It is through this creative output that we are able to witness a representation of this uneasy period and view how shipping lines projected a certain view of themselves in the face of adversity.

0.2 On methodology

The type of texts analysed in this thesis present possible methodological challenges which I feel are important to acknowledge. I also wish to outline how I intend to

¹⁶ Ibid.

approach these texts in an effort to draw meaningful and useful conclusions. Examples cited come from a diverse and disparate range of origins. Some films were exhibited at film festivals, while others languished unscreened and unseen. Several of the films I cite are products of a rather cynical set of principles and follow a rigid, manipulative framework, while others show concession to experimentation and genuine artistic endeavour. Elsewhere, some films, such as P&O's *A Career at Sea* (1956), were made with crew recruitment in mind. Others, such as *Suez Canal* (1966), were designed and created for public use within educational establishments. However, examples like Cunard's *Magic Ride* (1969) straddled an interesting but problematic line between promotion and experimental storytelling.

In *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*, Tim O'Sullivan *et al* suggest that there is no such thing as a single, accurate interpretation of a text because all signs are polysemic. The term 'polysemic' alludes to the existence of multiple meanings within signs.¹⁷ Umberto Eco takes this idea further and claims that there exists a divide between what he terms 'open' and 'closed' texts.¹⁸ Closed texts tend to exhibit one, 'preferred' reading and usually originate from the mass media. Open texts, in contrast, 'tend to be high brow, high culture.'¹⁹ O'Sullivan *et al* suggest that the analysis of closed texts presents the danger of 'aberrant decodings'. These are readings which run contrary to the preferred reading which is due to 'differences between social positions and/or the cultural experience of the author and the reader'.²⁰

¹⁷ O'Sullivan, T, Hartley, J., Saunders, D., Montgomery, M, and Fiske, J. (Eds.) *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.239.

¹⁸ Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), pp.3-9.

¹⁹ O'Sullivan *et al* (1994), p.239.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

The main texts I refer to in this thesis fall under the umbrella of ‘mass media’ and are therefore – by this logic – ‘closed texts’. Yet, alongside the fixed, ‘dominant code’ associated with closed texts exists a so-called ‘negotiated position’ which recognises ‘legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations’, but also possesses the ability to make ‘its own ground rules’ and adapt the reading to the specific social condition of the reader.²¹ Within my reading of these texts, I am interested in both their dominant code and their negotiated position. Whilst I concede that many of the films, posters and ephemera articles I call upon possess a dominant set of significations based around their advertising remit, I believe they also reflect meanings which exist outside of these overtly conscious or contrived creative decisions. They implicitly reflect something of the era and society which produced them within their means of representation. Within my close analyses I maintain an awareness of the danger of engaging in aberrant decoding, but I believe that the true value of these texts only comes to light through a deconstructive analysis of the texture of their composition. This accepted, it remains important that, while I observe links between texts and attempt to align them to a ‘tradition’ when possible, an awareness of the disparate nature of their creation is maintained to avoid aberrant decoding.

0.3 Poster and ephemera analysis

In *Post-Modernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson writes, ‘everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to practices and

²¹ Ibid.

to the very structure of the psyche itself – can be said to have become ‘cultural’ in some original and yet untheorized sense.’²² This broad definition of culture helps to legitimise an analysis of the products of mass media, in a quest to reflect the concerns and ideological positions found within society. Edward Said supports this idea in his suggestion that, ‘[w]e live of course in a world not only of commodities but also of representation, and representations – this production, circulation, history and interpretation – are the very elements of culture.’²³ The commodified poster and ephemera items I have used in this thesis represent products designed and created by artists, yet commissioned by marketing departments. Their main function is to advertise a particular experience by employing inherently manipulative visual techniques. These techniques will associate a symbolic image or linguistic slogan with a desired emotional response. As Iain Ramsay states, ‘[a]dvertising generally works by drawing connections between the signifier (the object) and the signified (e.g. beauty, erotic satisfaction).’²⁴ Some may argue that the deconstruction of a low-brow, mass produced item such as a menu is banal and futile. Yet, I would claim that there is particular academic worth in the isolation of creative consistencies in these commodified items which are hastily ignored in the face of their primary utilitarian purpose. They occupy a disparate but critical position as reflectors of the mass of culturally codified signs that make up our environment.

In an effort to deconstruct and decipher a ‘dominant code’ within the advertising material I have chosen to analyse, I have called upon the theories and techniques of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual*

²² Fredric Jameson, *Post-Modernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993), p.48.

²³ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Books, 1993), p.56.

²⁴ Iain Ramsay, *Advertising, Culture, and the Law* (London: Sweet and Macwell, 1996), p.48.

Design. Kress and van Leeuwen create a useful model which helps to explain the power and meaning behind visual design and focuses particularly on the dissemination and articulation of ideological positions through physical realisation.²⁵ The specifics of the visual grammar they construct are extensive, but broadly analyse the means by which physical positioning, colour, angles, lighting and other such elements can have a profound impact on the ideological projections of an image. The symbolic power of angle, for example, is of particular use when analysing poster, brochure and menu images. The specific angle chosen can relate to the perspective given to the spectator and to the individuals who actually occupy the images. Kress and Leeuwen write that '[a] high angle, it is said, makes the subject look small and insignificant, a low angle makes it look imposing and awesome.'²⁶ In addition to this, the interplay of the oblique and frontal angle creates affinity or detachment. Whilst a horizontal angle is said to provide 'involvement', the oblique angle says, 'what you see here is *not* part of our world; it is *their* world, something we are not involved with.'²⁷ Both these ideas have particular relevance when discussing the power of the ship image in my third chapter and the treatment of the colonial 'Other' in my fifth chapter.

0.4 Film analysis

The close analysis of film material forms a significant part of this thesis. Although several names could be put forward as contributors to the wider grammar of

²⁵ Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.14.

²⁶ Kress and Leeuwen (1996), p.140.

²⁷ Kress and Leeuwen (1996), p.136.

deconstructive film criticism, my techniques of closely reading film have been greatly informed by the writing of David Bordwell. In *Film Art*, Bordwell isolates three separate areas of analysis which constitute a film as we perceive it. The first involves the construction and content of a single shot and foregrounds ideas associated with cinematography and mise-en-scène. The second relates to how shots work together in sequence, and the third involves the interplay of image and sound.²⁸ Within my film readings, I touch upon all three of these areas. I have chosen to focus upon specific still images (which are embedded within the text) and sequences (that constitute a number of embedded images which run consecutively and can be found on my accompanying 'clip reel') and discuss the use of music and spoken word narration in relation to their reflection of a particular atmosphere or nationalistic impulse. I believe close analysis of these films is vital in decoding the manner in which the cruise was represented and in establishing how it has been historicised in collective memory. The post-war period, and the 1960s in particular, represented a moment in which the true power of media and advertising was becoming clear. The cruise industry's attempts partially to define itself within the contemporary discourses of cinema is only accessible through a close reading of the films which were created at the time.

Throughout this thesis, I call upon numerous examples from the British Documentary Movement. The Empire Marketing Board's *Liner Cruising South* (1933), which became a prototypical cruise film of the pre-war age, drew on the financial, artistic and social standards of the movement. As I outline in my first two chapters, while the cruise film developed beyond the simplistic remit of *Liner Cruising South*, both in an

²⁸ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill)

institutional and aesthetic sense, the tenets of the documentary tradition continued to inform the heart of the cruise film into the post-war period. Edward Branigan suggests that '[d]ocumentaries... can really tell us only about the aims and attitudes of their sponsors and their producers.'²⁹ I agree that the endeavours of sponsors and producers are often visible upon the surface of such works. I discuss, in my first chapter, the manner in which filmmakers and shipping lines interacted and the relationship they held with one another. However, a close analysis of the content of both the British pre-war documentary and the cruise film can reveal significant creative influence by an individual or group. Documentary works such as *Industrial Britain* (1933) or later cruise films such as *World At Three* (1966) and *Magic Ride* (1969) clearly reflect the creative whims of artistic forces behind the camera.

Branigan also hints at the transcendent influence of the British documentary. He claims that there was a 'dangerous fallacy' that 'documentaries embodied a purer, higher truth.'³⁰ In my discussions of the documentary movement and its influence on the cruise film, I maintain an awareness of the privileged manner in which such works were often treated and remembered. The cruise film was never an acknowledged part of the documentary movement, but its techniques, aspirations and subject matter often overlapped and blurred with this tradition.

0.5 Objectives and Outline

²⁹ Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.5.

³⁰ Ibid.

The first two chapters of this thesis are structured so as to provide an outline of the genesis and development of the cruise film. The latter chapters take three separate areas and use films and other visual material as a means of exploring their representation. Images of the ship, the development of postmodern consumer culture and the relationship between colonialism and the cruise, are each treated separately. Although certain ideas interact and overlap, I wish to keep these self-contained for reasons of coherence and conciseness.

Chapter 1 attempts to place these films within a wider institutional context. Associated with film companies, newsreel distribution organisations and shipping lines, the cruise promotion film would frequently form part of a wider advertising initiative. Whilst I have endeavoured to shed light on the means and circumstances around the production of these films, in many cases primary material remains patchy and incomplete. The chapter therefore takes the form of a brief history of the advertising practice of the four main UK shipping lines (P&O, Orient Line, Union Castle and Cunard), and calls upon information concerning film material that was recorded and has survived. I have used journal synopses of these films where necessary, as not all are available for viewing. My institutional history of the cruise film is not exhaustive, but rather anecdotal and effective in highlighting the external and internal stimuli which were affecting the business of shipping and the production of cinematic material. This chapter is divergent from subsequent chapters and actively refrains from close analysis. It instead offers an important context in which to frame my subsequent discussion of the content of the films.

Chapter 2 will discuss the aesthetic origins of the cruise film. Particular emphasis is placed on the work of the Empire Marketing Board, General Post Office and British Transport Film units in creating a set of aesthetic principles which would have a profound effect on the look and feel of the cruise film. Ideas of ‘aesthetic patriotism’ found within these national images are established and particular reference is made to the manner in which numerous filmmakers fetishise and twin the instruments of the ship and the working men who are aboard. The development of a poetic tendency within the treatment of the cruise experience is also examined. I explore the moments in which the creative whims of the film’s director appear at the surface of the narrative, despite the need to retain the structure and content imposed within the sponsor’s remit. These foregrounded poetics are linked to Jo Stanley’s notions of ‘the exceptional and auratic’ found within romanticised and exaggerated sea-faring narratives.³¹ I explore the manner in which this historically-bound phenomenon is evident within the aesthetic treatment of the cruise. Finally, I explore the divergent rise of the contemporary cruise film with a case study of Frederic Goode’s *World At Three* (1966) and Don Higgins’ *Magic Ride* (1969). Both films display a propensity for filmic experimentation and are predominantly informed by the film, art and music of the 1960s. They represent the post-war cruise film’s arrival at its most conspicuous and, I would argue, most interesting aesthetic point.

My third chapter seeks to interrogate the manner in which the image of the ship is treated throughout the cruise film. This was a chapter inspired by a consistent awareness upon viewing these cruise films, that there was an inherent respect and awe

³¹ Jo Stanley, ‘How Did This Come To Be In Stewardess Scherazade’s Sea-Chest of “Memories”?’ Exploring the Exceptionalised and Auratic Sea Through Inter-War Seawomen’s Oral Testimonies, *Diegesis: Journal of the Association for Research in Popular Fictions*, 9 (2006), 24-31.

invested in both the ship's physical appearance and its symbolic meaning. I seek to interrogate the origins of the ship as an all-encompassing metaphor for nation, love, death, success, failure and a number of other human associations. Alongside examples originating from Roman writers or Shakespeare, I examine the impact of the war on our collective attitude to the ship and call upon examples (such as Noel Coward's *In Which We Serve*) which demonstrate the discourse in which it was represented. I plot the manner in which these complex and sometimes divergent meanings are articulated in the cruise film alongside a number of other mediums including poster art, literature and the feature film.

Chapter 4 offers a discussion of the manner in which the cruise film both reflects, and was a product of, a postmodern age of consumerism. As a floating microcosm of the hedonistic and capitalistic tendencies of a consumer age, the cruise ship, and the manner in which it was marketed, represents an area of focus that helps us to understand the aspirational and individualistic tendencies of the era. I firstly outline the social and cultural changes experienced during the late 1950s and 1960s. In reference to the cruise ship and the cruise experience, James Obelkevich's focus on the 'growing significance of the home'³² is treated alongside Eric Hobsbawm's suggested 'privatisation of working-class life.'³³ I then explore the manner in which the cruise ship facilitated consumption on a broad scale, calling upon theories of touristic consumption by John Urry and Don Slater. Breaking this down to the categories of the body, objects and the 'tourist experience', I examine the numerous ways in which the cruise film represents the consumer process in its rendering of life

³² James Obelkevich, 'Consumption' in James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall (eds.), *Understanding Post-War British Society* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.144.

³³ Eric Hobsbawm in Ian Proctor, 'The privatisation of working-class life: a dissenting view', *British Journal of Sociology*, 41, pp. 157-80.

aboard. The cruise film's treatment of food, the sun tan and the female body is compared to examples found within ephemeral items, whilst Susan Sontag's theories of the photographic consumption of the touristic experience are explored within the numerous cruise films which use cameras to legitimise and commodify the cruise. In the face of a changing attitude to women, their use within the cruise film is shown to be problematic. While social revolutions were occurring at home and in the workplace, the cruise film's objectifying gaze played upon the increasingly liberal attitude to censorship. Finally, the cruise as a purveyor of dreams, aspirations and the imagination is explored. Colin Campbell's theory of 'Self-illusionary hedonism' informs a discussion of the cruise as a partial realisation of the consumer's fantastical and insatiable desire for new and unique objects.³⁴

My final chapter explores the cruise as an emulation of the colonial process. In an age when Britain's once-great empire was swiftly disintegrating, the cruise occupied an awkward position which appeared to straddle two distinct ideological positions. Shipping lines wished to exude a traditionally potent brand of colonial patriotism alongside a consolidation of the contemporary 'cool' of a new age. The chapter uses an incident of colonial power relations at its point of entry. *Liner Cruising South* sees a well-dressed woman hurl a coin into the ocean below from a raised position upon deck. As the coin hits the surface of the water, an Island resident leaps into the water to retrieve it. The first part of the chapter therefore examines the emulation of the colonial process which is perceptible within the cruise film's representation of

³⁴ Colin Campbell, 'The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism: reflections on the reception of a thesis concerning the origin of the continuing desire for goods' in Susan M. Pearce ed., *Experiencing Material Culture In The Western World* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997), p.37.

indigenous culture and the passenger's interactions with it. The second section examines the treatment of the colonial image. Linda Nochlin's theories of the 'orientalizing' of certain subjects is used in a series of close readings of both poster art and cruise film material. Finally, the chapter examines the gendered treatment of both the colonised female and the colonising female. Links are made with literary and sociological examples in which colonial females are shown to be approachable symbols of the Other, while western females are portrayed as being particularly susceptible to an engagement with it.

While these five chapters each take a distinct approach to the cruise film and deal with a series of separate ideas and themes, they ultimately attempt to form a holistic interrogation of the cruise through its visual representation. In the post-war years, as the cruise became increasingly anachronistic in an age of change, I aim to show the manner in which the promotional cruise film projected a conflicted image which both attempted to adapt while retaining fundamental, traditionally-bound tenets. Through an analysis of a changing institutional, cultural and imperial landscape in Britain, alongside aesthetic changes in film stylistics and the treatment of the ship image, I aim to build a thorough picture of the cruise film's place in both the history of shipping lines and within modern British history.

1.0 The Institutional History of the Cruise Film

The post-war cruise film, in all its varied and evolving forms, came about through the interaction of the filmmaker and the businessman. Whilst a stylistic evolution would be steered partially by culturally receptive artists behind the camera lens, it would also be driven by those who both commissioned and funded the promotional works of the four main shipping lines on which this study focuses.

In this chapter, I will attempt to plot an institutional history of the cruise film. Using notable, early examples of such works, I will examine the circumstances in which these originally came into being. Particular emphasis will be placed on the importance of John Grierson's Empire Marketing Board Film Unit in creating the prototypical cruise film, *Liner Cruising South* (1933), and establishing a successful and inspirational filmmaking business model that underpinned promotional works of later years. In addition to this, I will consider the cruise film as part of a broader tradition of travel documentary (most notably those produced by Edgar Anstey's British Transport Films), which in turn were associated with and influenced by the pre-war documentary work of the Empire Marketing Board and General Post Office. Although privately rather than publicly funded, the cruise film was partially born out of a rise in popularity of the travel film as an escapist and aspirational form of entertainment.

An institutional history of the cruise film will cover a period beginning with the pre-war release of Orient Line's *Liner Cruising South* (1933), and ending with the creation of Cunard's unreleased *Magic Ride* (1969), made several decades later and under a set of very different circumstances. Such analysis sees the cruise film develop from public information documentary (originating from the endeavours of a governmental institution), to a promotional form presented alongside entertainment feature films in large auditoriums. Although shipping lines continued to produce material throughout the 1970s and beyond, these works were mainly created for the television, and possess a distinct and separate set of social and creative values. For reasons of conciseness and focus I therefore limit my study to this period. Throughout my discussions, I will outline the real-world usage of some of these cruise films, and give examples stretching from passenger screenings to film festivals.

1.1 The Early Years

British cruise advertising in the inter-war years was innovative in its use but aesthetically unadventurous compared to the vibrancy on show in the post-war period. While it is difficult to generalise due to the sheer volume of ephemeral material produced by all four main shipping lines, stylistically motivated logos and typefaces were deployed, but they were often inconsistent in style, bearing little visual relation to other material produced alongside them. While striking art deco aesthetics were sometimes deployed on posters and larger profile hoardings, brochure material was frequently quite flat and traditionalist in comparison. Most material was rather 'safe',

being used purely as a means of raising awareness of products and services and not yet engaging with notions of brand identity or the creation of aspirational fantasy.

The film medium was largely ignored in the inter-war period. In the eyes of advertising departments, whose budgets were mostly filled with newspaper coupon initiatives and bulk brochure runs, film was an expensive extravagance which was yet to appear cost effective in its reach to the average consumer. Regardless of this, there are some notable if rare exceptions in the years prior to the 1960s. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, a number of short films would be made to commemorate the launch of four Union Castle ships. These films, produced by newsreel company *Movietone News*, depicted the *Kenya Castle*, the *Bloemfontein Castle*, the *Braemar Castle*, and the *Pretoria Castle*, as they were prepared for launch. Each film consists of a series of exposition shots that introduce the liners, followed by footage of the ship in question sliding into the sea from various angles and coming to rest within the water. Some of the films possess a narration track, while others, perhaps by intent or subsequent problematic storage and transfer, remain silent. These works are not adverts for the cruise experience that was to take place aboard these liners, but instead exist as a celebration and commemoration of the collective efforts necessary to produce them. The existence of a business relationship between Union Castle and Movietone News is doubtful, especially when considering the newsreel was something of a neutral form, and an enthusiast-led activity led by a desire to provide a primary source of information for the general public. While the cruise film of later years was very much commercially motivated, the newsreel was not. Yet, the exclusive coverage of Union Castle liners in this set of shorts, and the vested interest and advertising potential the material appears to contain, represents an early manifestation of some shrewd and

opportunistic marketing on the part of a shipping line. This implicit, hidden advertising existed within a public, cinematic service, quietly conjuring patriotically charged images within the viewer's mind. Whilst the contrived, fervent desire to promote was missing from the business agenda in these early years, powerful images of the ocean liner such as this would inevitably inform advertising decisions of the future.

The four films which constitute the set follow a distinct and rigid formula. They each begin with shots of the ship from a variety of angles that frequently include workers busying themselves aboard. The ship's size is consistently emphasised, while the magnitude of the construction task is also foregrounded. Each film labours on the excitement and tension of the launch process, consistently drawing attention to the human element involved, before the ship is captured moving for the first time and then settling, with much fanfare, upon the water. The repeated and formulaic nature of these works is evident within the cruise film of later years. Shot sequences, juxtapositions of images and even certain pieces of stock footage, all find a place within future examples. Union Castle's launch films therefore set a precedent for structural repetition and a deployment of a ubiquitous visual discourse associated with images of the ship.

Holiday Afloat (1951), that captures the maiden voyage of the Union Castle ship, sits as a companion piece to *Launch of the Pretoria Castle* (1951).³⁵ The film was produced directly for Union Castle by Lewis G. Jonas and photographed, according to the film's credits, by G. Bovill. After the *Pretoria Castle*'s launch, the film takes up

³⁵ In the NMM film archive, *Holiday Afloat* shares a reel with *Launch of the Pretoria Castle* and follows on directly. The film also goes under the title *Into The Sun* (1952).

the story, as the narrative seamlessly follows the ship on its maiden voyage. The film is a simple and straightforward portrait of an ocean cruise, following passengers as they take part in different activities and enjoy both life on the ocean waves and in the communities they visit. *Holiday Afloat* also possesses a narration track, which introduces the amenities that are made available to the passengers concisely and provides a fleeting description of various port towns. The film's close association with its launch film means that a sense of celebration runs through the ship's visual treatment. It is frequently pictured standing tall upon the water, free of the scaffolding and other assorted paraphernalia that surrounded it while berthed at the shipyard.

Union Castle's structured approach to the cruise film was potentially inspired by *Liner Cruising South* (1933), which was made the previous decade. Produced by the Empire Marketing Board and sponsored by Orient Line, the film follows the *SS Orford* as it sails to the West Indies. The film is a crucial pre-war document, a prototypical cruise film which would be important as both the purveyor of certain types of aesthetic preoccupations (which will be discussed further in my next chapter), and of a new type of business relationship which would permeate the cruise advertisement film for decades to come.

Liner Cruising South, like *Holiday Afloat*, focuses primarily on shipboard life and the activities of some of the passengers who traverse the ocean waves. The film splits its narrative between the passengers and the sailors who man the ship. These scenes are presented silently, though intertitles are used to explain the meaning and relevance of some of the images that are shown. While the film is simple, it is crafted with skill

and an eye for the aesthetic beauty of its surroundings. Unlike Union Castle's at times uninspired and formulaic attempts at informative documentary, *Liner* shows a flair for shot construction and technique which is fitting of the credentials held by those behind the camera. This flair had its origins in the Empire Marketing Board and, more specifically, the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit, which was headed by 'Godfather of British Documentary', John Grierson.³⁶

1.2 'A cruise liner is the devil for that sort of work' (Basil Wright): The Empire Marketing Board Film Unit takes to the Seas

The Empire Marketing Board was a government-sanctioned organisation set up to promote the activities of the British Empire to its citizens back home. Directed by Sir Stephen Tallents, the EMB ran a series of promotions, including posters designed by Charles Pears, which depicted the exotic landscapes of far-flung locations such as the Suez Canal, and attempted to highlight and glamorise the people and trade that existed there. The primary purpose of this multimedia advertising initiative was to stimulate purchasing interest within the general public, while increasing awareness of Britain's imperial acquisitions. Paul Swann explains the economic circumstances by which the EMB originally came into being:

[I]nstead of the introduction of tariffs, the Empire Marketing Fund was created. The Board was intended to administer this fund to improve Empire trade. It was particularly concerned

³⁶ Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.95.

with stimulating the sale of Dominion products in the United Kingdom.³⁷

As a result of depressed but interlinked economies, The Board became a government-sanctioned advertiser designed to stimulate consumer demand and increase trade between Britain and the nations that constituted her Empire. Until this moment, the EMB was without precedent. Never had the United Kingdom seen such a machine of publicity operated by a governmental department outside of wartime.³⁸

As part of the Empire Marketing Board initiative, the EMB Film Unit was formed in 1928, upon the insistence of member John Grierson. Grierson, who would go on to become one of Britain's most influential filmmakers and theorists, would lead the organisation throughout its five year life. For Grierson and his dedicated followers, films had to be socially useful and informative, providing an entertaining glimpse at the processes that underpinned modern society itself.³⁹ Grierson's own patriotic preoccupations sat fairly comfortably with his EMB remit, even if his left-leaning tendencies on the surface flew in the face of the Board's role. His interest in the power of propaganda largely manifested itself in a foregrounding of the working-man as the principal component of industry. He perceived the worker as the backbone of the nation and as a force that would toil collectively and endlessly to sustain the very structures which predicated modern British life. Grierson wished to shed light on a stratum of society he saw as both crucial and under-represented. As head of the EMB's film arm, he could reflect this alongside his imperial commitments.

³⁷ Paul Swann, *The British Documentary Film Movement: 1926-1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989), p.21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.22.

³⁹ Forsyth Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p.15.

The EMB would disband with the formation of the General Post Office (GPO) in 1933. The GPO Film Unit would take on largely the same role as the EMB unit, and the personnel would remain largely the same. Under similar circumstances, in 1940, the baton would be passed to the newly formed Crown Film Unit. There remained an emphasis on socially conscious documentary that was presented in an engaging and poetic manner. Government-sanctioned film units in their various guises raised awareness of British filmmaking in an unprecedented way. They gave dedicated filmmakers a place to make money from their craft, but also placed British film into the minds of audiences nationwide. Alongside the institutional framework they established, British documentary film units predicated a philosophical tradition and climate of filmmaking from which the cruise film took its lead.

Films of the Empire Marketing Board included *Drifters* (1929), which followed the day-to-day movements of British trawlers, and *Industrial Britain* (1931), which focused on manual labour undertaken by the working classes in its portrayal of various British industries. As Scott Anthony claims, the EMB worked effectively as an experimental film school, offering opportunities to talented filmmakers, who would have otherwise potentially been wayward, directionless, or plain out of work.⁴⁰

Liner Cruising South possessed little grandiose theorising or conjecture and was instead primarily developed as a means of physically transporting one of the EMB's filmmakers from Great Britain to the islands of the West Indies. 'L.G.J', the primary

⁴⁰ Scott Anthony, 'The Empire Marketing Board Film Unit (1926-1933)', <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/513720/> [Accessed 27/07/09]

source of correspondence with EMB-head Stephen Tallents, outlined the EMB's shrewd plan in a series of letters:

It occurred to me on the 20th November that it might be possible to arrange for one of our Film Unit to get a free passage on the forthcoming Orient cruise to the West Indies on condition that he made a film for the Company as well as securing material from the number of West Indian islands which the S.S. "Orford" is to visit.⁴¹

Notably, Orient Line was not responsible for the conception of the film, and was instead approached by the EMB, who could clearly see a filmed voyage making mutual business sense. The active attitude to film advertising that Orient Line would exude in the 1950s and 1960s, was at this stage absent from their business practice, and instead far more perceptible within the hands of the EMB and their proactive promotion of the Empire. The forward-thinking, multimedia, highly influential advertising approach of the EMB sits at odds with Orient Line's passivity. The Board, in their diverse deployment of promotional styles, acknowledged and embraced a broad and dynamic attitude to advertising as early as the late 1920s.

It was decided that Basil Wright would direct the as-yet unnamed film, (as 'the most suitable E.M.B. representative to send').⁴² This was a decision made by Grierson and based on Wright's dedication to the EMB's previous endeavours. Wright had been the first to be recruited for the EMB's film unit at Grierson's request, and had worked

⁴¹ L.G.J., in letter to Steven Tallents, EMB Correspondence, National Archive, CO 758/98/3

⁴² Ibid.

successfully on a number of films in a collaborative capacity. These included *Conquest* (1930), *The Country Comes to Town* (1931), and *O'er Hill and Dale* (1931), all short films which focused on a positive and affectionate vision of Britain. Wright was therefore a popular choice in 1933, and was given the responsibility of 'making films which were entirely his own, shot, edited and made by him directly.'⁴³ Yet, the trip that resulted in the shooting of *Liner Cruising South* was in fact part of an initiative to capture footage for a number of different projects, including *Windmill in Barbados* (1933), which was also produced from footage taken during the trip.

Wright's best-known work, *Song of Ceylon* (1933), also came about as a result of the director's journey upon the *Orford*. The film consisted of a patchwork of images and scenes captured on the island of Sri Lanka (formally Ceylon), where the young filmmaker was able to take full advantage of his ocean voyage. The resulting work was a poetic ode to the island, and featured unconventional uses of image and sound to create a film memorable for its daring experimentation. The artistic and critical success of *Song of Ceylon* would help strengthen the film unit's reputation for aesthetically interesting, modernist works. It would also stand as a further testament to the Board's skills of negotiation and opportunism.

During the actual voyage aboard the *SS Orford*, footage was shot 'dealing with the cruise itself', and it was decided that £50 should be requested from Orient Line to cover the cost of stock and editing. Yet, before the voyage took place, there were concerns from Orient Line that both White Star and Canadian Pacific Line were also thinking of making films of their West Indian cruises in the winter of 1933. Gerald

⁴³ Rachael Low, *History of British Film* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.60.

Noxon, who had previously worked with the EMB, was, according to correspondence, put in charge of 'discussing matters' with the Canadian Pacific Line. There were fears that a rival film would provoke dissatisfaction on the part of Orient Line, who placed emphasis and importance on the uniqueness of the Board's footage.⁴⁴ Noxon's role as liaison, which is foregrounded in these letters, is interesting in itself. As Paul Tiessen writes, his history with both Grierson and the Empire Marketing Board was one of contention and conflict:

[Noxon] contributed to Grierson's documentary film units at the Empire Marketing Board and the General Post Office. Noxon often clashed with Grierson who, he thought, took a politically and dramatically alien, a sentimentally romanticized, approach to his subject. Partly because of their differences over questions of approach and tone, he was twice fired by Grierson during this period, and once again later, in Canada.⁴⁵

The choice of Noxon as apparent mediator is therefore strange. He is described as 'ex-EMB' in correspondence between Tallents and other EMB staff, which begs the question of why he would be sent to smooth relations with a rival film-making company and shipping line. The ambiguity of the situation could even suggest that a disaffected, disgruntled Noxon, recently fired from the EMB, was in fact talking over the prospect of a rival and disruptive filmmaking opportunity with The Brunner Film

⁴⁴ Stephen Tallents, EMB Correspondence, National Archive, CO 758/98/3

⁴⁵ Paul Tiessen, 'From Literary Modernism to the Tantramar Marshes: Anticipating McLuhan in British and Canadian Media Theory and Practice', *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol 18, No 4 (1993), (: <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/775/681> accessed online 22/08/08)

Company and the Canadian Pacific Line. Unfortunately, no record of a rival film exists (or, at least, has as yet been traceable), so it appears the EMB successfully quelled any potential 'overlapping' which may have occurred.

With finance an issue in Depression-era Britain, as soon as production of the as yet unnamed 'Ship Film' was confirmed, the Board began to conceive of ways in which it could make money and help to sustain other areas of the EMB's output. In a letter to Tallents' office, a plan to sell the film to passengers was suggested:

Sir Stephen's idea of selling 16 mm copies of the Ship Film to passengers is a bright one, but should be considered very carefully. It might undoubtedly bring back a little money, but on the other hand, it might be difficult for the producer to prevent prospective buyers from crashing the camera. In other words, nothing which is liable to cramp the style of the director or in any way associate him with the five-for-a-shilling profession at the seaside, should be permitted. I think the best method will be to announce the 16mm. idea at the end of the cruise.⁴⁶

Although there is no record of a successful realisation of this plan, it does suggest that Wright possessed facilities not only to shoot his film aboard the *Orford*, but also to develop and edit it in some way. Of course, whether these 16mm versions of the film were to be replicas of the final cut given to Orient Line is again open to question. The

⁴⁶ Stephen Tallents (1933), *EMB Correspondence*, The National Archive, CO 758/98/3

holiday reel planned for passengers would most probably have been a roughly cut section of sequences that would have then been assembled later to produce the official Orient Line film. Notable in the discussion of this idea is the insistent suggestion that Wright should not be made to look like a sea-side, holiday photographer. The impression the Film Unit gave and the respect it wished to command is evident. The home movie and the documentary film were perceived as two very separate entities that were not to be confused. The Board was keenly aware of the worth and value of its finely crafted product as well as the professionalism it sought to exude.

The experience of actually making *Liner Cruising South* turned out to be something of a problematic one for Wright. Writing to Grierson on February 20th 1933, he noted:

I am sending 7,000 or so back on the 'Orford' when she leaves Barbados tomorrow. Of this roughly 5,000 is Orient. There are rather too many things left undone – including two sequences when I'm afraid it's too late to obtain, and another one which I may be able to squeeze in to-day. I am not frightfully pleased with myself over it although I've worked pretty hard on the job. A cruise liner is the devil for that sort of work.⁴⁷

Wright's honesty hints at his close relationship with Grierson, admitting his miscalculations and mistakes before footage had arrived home. His displeasure also suggests the high standards the EMB set themselves, even for a cheaply-made travel

⁴⁷ Basil Wright (1933), *EMB Correspondence*, The National Archive, CO 758/98/3

film such as *Liner*, which was essentially a commission designed to get Wright abroad for as little money as possible.

This was not the end of *Liner Cruising South*'s troubled conception. Upon the finalisation of shooting, the film reels themselves were transported back to the British Isles by both sea and rail. After arriving into the country, the film was refused passage by the railway service on account of its wooden casings that were too large. Regulation metal cases had to be dispatched by the EMB so the film could be successfully transported home.

With the *Orient* film completed, Wright was able to concentrate on the work which most interested him. Now in the West Indies, he began to approach possible subjects with a letter of introduction from Tallents. The letter itself gives some insight into the desires of the EMB's filmmakers:

We are anxious to get some new material, showing the West Indies and their products for the library of Empire Films, which we maintain, and which is used extensively by various educational and social organisations throughout the United Kingdom. Mr. Wright will be able to give you details.⁴⁸

Wright began by shooting material at Trinidad College, while Tallents contacted the relevant sources both to ask for permissions and to arrange deals to secure mutually beneficial business partnerships. Like his dealings with Orient Line, Wright's

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Trinidad footage was offered to Trinidad's 'Governing Body' as a comprehensive record of the day-to-day running of the college. Using the unique and novel appeal of the moving image, Tallents knew such an opportunity would most usually sell itself.

If the EMB could sometimes be labelled idealistic in their artistic attitude to film, they were most definitely businessmen when it came to the appeal of their material. By shooting with skill and efficiency, they could both fuel their primary endeavour to build a library of sequences which documented the workings of the Empire, while offering the same material to institutions and government bodies along the way. This allowed the EMB to sustain itself as an important advertising company in a non-commercial environment. Its brief was in many ways rather abstract and non-profitable, but the foresight and vision of Tallents made it, at least, a sustainable venture. The influence of the Board's pragmatism cannot be underestimated. It was a highly visible organisation that was essentially forging shrewd advertising relationships. Whilst its partnership with Orient Line and the production of *Liner Cruising South* was undeniably influential on the style and structure of film material produced in future years, the successful and prolific trade of film material by Tallents helped to illuminate the viability of celluloid as a traded currency.

The Board's growing power was further evident as Wright's trip continued. Next on his tour of the West Indies was Jamaica, thanks to a free passage from banana producer Elders & Fyffes. Upon arrival, the director quickly befriended Sir Arthur Farquharson, head of Jamaica producers, who would not only place his entire organisation at Wright's disposal and provide him free transport, but would also offer to pay all expenses on the agreement that the Film Unit representative would stay for

longer than the original fortnight allotted. Passage home on a Jamaican fruit boat was also promised and shooting rights granted. As a result, Wright would have been presented with the opportunity to achieve some supplementary shots for *Liner Cruising South* which did not include the ship or specific and identifiable pieces of land. In a number of items of correspondence, shooting rights are requested and, judging by Wright's displeasure at the incomplete nature of his original footage aboard the *Orford*, it is likely that the Board, and the director himself, were anxious to obtain any additional material at sea that was required.

The success of *Liner Cruising South* for Orient Line is confirmed by the existence of a second collaborative effort between the EMB and Orient Line. Paul Rotha's highly stylized *Shipyards* (1935) was another GPO documentary with a primary aim of foregrounding both the industry of Britain and its close links with trade and Empire. The film follows the construction of the *SS Orion* at Barrow-in-Furness and, going beyond the remit of Union Castle's launch films of later years, follows the liner from early moments of its construction to its launch. The film is a work of a filmmaker in tune with the visual and audible power of the cinema. Full of images of fire, steam, sweat and clashing steel, the soundtrack matches it with clangs, unintelligible shouts and the ferocious sound of hammers on rivets. *Shipyards*'s truly striking document of the *Orion* has made it one of the lasting examples of the British documentary movement of the 1930s. Although it does little to foreground Orient Line above any other shipping company, and fails truly to advertise any kind of seafaring experience, its celebration of the human toil necessary in the construction of a liner and the ultimate majesty of this achievement, is quite clearly presented. The distinct sense of

national pride the film taps into and foregrounds, would be exploited by shipping lines in the following years.

1.3 A continuing influence: The British Transport Film

Immediately after the war, the continuing British documentary tradition would be borne by the Crown Film Unit, which took on the role previously held by the General Post Office Film Unit. Although the organisation eventually disbanded in 1952, films produced were, as in the pre-war period, intended for the entertainment and education of the British people and contained the writing and directing talents of some of Britain's foremost filmmaking minds. Subject matter, however, swiftly began to shift from the Empire-promoting outlook of pre-war works, to material that sought, in some cases, to engage with the issue of a nation battered by conflict, and in others, material that actively attempted to escape and deny it. Films ranged from Humphrey Jennings' war-focused works *Diary for Timothy* (1945) and *A Defeated People* (1946), to the innocuous and comforting *Instruments of the Orchestra* (1946). However, as Grierson outlined in a report published in 1946, all was not well within the heart of the organisation:

It is clear, however, that much which was defensible [within the film unit] under the special conditions of the war may no longer be defensible in peace time, and that the time has come to direct a colder eye on the procedures and relationships,

often makeshift and sometimes haphazard, under which work has had to be carried on.⁴⁹

This call for a more disciplined approach to government film-making was never heard and the Crown Film Unit closed in 1952. Although films were still made by independent producers under the auspices of the Central Office of Information, the Crown's failure ultimately led to a greater emphasis placed on the British Transport Film Unit, which was established in May 1949 and was primarily designed to offer promotion of Britain's travel network. Paul Smith even moves as far as to suggest that, 'had the Crown unit headed by Grierson in the post war years been allowed to be more effective as a communication medium, the need for BTF... may not have been required.'⁵⁰

Led by Edgar Anstey, who had himself worked closely with John Grierson throughout the 1930s in both the EMB and GPO, British Transport Films was an amalgamation of film units belonging to privately-owned rail companies which were nationalised in 1948 as part of a major governmental initiative. As Smith explains:

Their [the BTF] purpose was the making of travelogue films that promoted destinations in town, country and seaside resorts throughout the British Isles and promoted rail or associated transport as the best means for people to travel to the destinations represented on screen. Another successful

⁴⁹ John Grierson, quoted in Paul Smith, *British Transport Films – The First Decade*, (Unpublished thesis, London College of Printing School of Media, 2000), hosted on <http://www.britishtransportfilms.co.uk/> [accessed 04/02/09]

⁵⁰ Paul Smith, (2000), p.2.

vein was the production of films that represented the nationalised transport workforce and the part they had to play in rebuilding the country.⁵¹

For Edgar Anstey, the BTF was a continuation of the British documentary tradition in every respect. Aware of the organisation's raised importance thanks to the faltering of associated units, and bolstered by encouragement from Grierson and his acolytes, the BTF was a self-conscious attempt, on the part of Anstey, to maintain the ongoing conception and construction of Britain's own indigenous cinema. This was, to all intents and purposes, a continuation of the values and attitudes inherent within the EMB, GPO and Crown:

The opportunity offered in 1949 was to practise Grierson's creative interpretation of actuality in the area of public transport and bring it alive on the screen. As [Stephen] Tallents phrased it, "[using] the spirit that must animate any public service".⁵²

With this positive attitude in place, the British Transport Film Unit began to produce film material in earnest. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s much of the Unit's output was divided between a quaint and traditional rendering of a familiar British landscape, and a celebration of modern technology and the feats it allowed the nation to achieve. Many of the films produced were travelogues, which

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Edgar Anstey in Smith, (2000)

focused on a party of passengers as they embarked on a day trip to an interesting or beautiful point of interest. Such films would be punctuated by images of the transport in question, traversing picture-postcard landscapes and drawing into bustling stations. Notable 1950s examples included, *The Heart of England* (1954), *The Lake District* (1954) and *Three is Company* (1959). A particularly compelling example entitled *Ocean Terminal* (1952) depicts ocean liners as they arrived at Southampton. While the film took place at the docks and featured no footage taken aboard the ships themselves, it was notable for its depictions of liners as a central part of a broader, character-driven narrative.

The British Transport Film would establish a tradition of travel documentary within Britain and help to promote the compelling spectacle of travel on film. Sponsored by an institution with a specific set of values in mind, the Transport Film's attempts to glamorise the act of travel were identical to the main remit held by cruise film producers of later years. For Paul Smith, the creative endeavour of the Transport filmmakers was potentially compromised, like the EMB's earlier work, by the commercial structures that propped it up:

[...] the expenses of the unit were paid for by either state or private industry. This raises the question over the extent to which films and their directors were independent of the sponsor's control.⁵³

⁵³ Smith, (2009)

The questionable creative position of the transport film is one directly emulated by the cruise film. Sponsored by shipping lines and often produced by small, independent teams, the cruise film would share the same inherent conflict as the Transport Film unit under Anstey. Such was the strength of commercial awareness within Anstey's leadership, that he would be forced to fire individuals who exercised too much creative desire. After it was announced that the tram was being taken off London's roads in 1953, director John Krish insisted on making a film to commemorate the historic vehicles. *The Elephant Will Never Forget* (1953) was shot under the guise of 'library footage', though Krish had secretly and swiftly written a script. The film was made in the final two weeks of the tram network's existence and was suitably elegiac in tone and aesthetic. Although the film was entirely Krish's own, he had disobeyed orders and gone against the tightly-focused vision of Anstey. As a result the director was sacked, even though the film was later made available and became one of the most memorable and affecting works of the movement. Anstey even put his name on the film as a producer, despite the fact that he had played no part in its conception or construction.⁵⁴

After a period of success in the 1950s and 1960s, in which many such films were used as preludes to cinematic releases, practical changes in distribution and projection led to a rapid decline in viewing figures for the British Transport Film in the 1970s. Smith outlines the methods by which the Unit attempted to remain afloat:

[...] the unit's fortunes mirror that of the decline in short cinema documentary films and the cinema newsreel. Another

⁵⁴ *Nation On Film: The British Transport Films*, BBC 4, [transmitted 23rd October 2008]

avenue of exhibition that still existed in the late '70s was the private showing of films to local societies. This service provided a projectionist who brought with him from London, not only the programme of films, but all the resources required for the screening, and all for ten pounds.⁵⁵

The cruise film shared the changing fate of the British Transport Film. Though being screened as part of newsreels in cinemas and at private events, the works of Orient Line, P&O, Union Castle and Cunard would attempt to tap into this broad tradition of the travelogue with varying results. Although privately funded, the cruise film would project a similarly nationalistic image of transport. Just as the Transport Film would preach British ownership of the rails and roadways, the cruise film would extend this to the seas. Crucially, these cruise films typically defined themselves not as cynical advertising pieces, but as part of a legitimate tradition of British self-promotion upheld by the documentary movement as a whole. My discussion and analysis of the cruise film therefore positions it as a part of this tradition. As Paul Smith suggests in the introduction to his discussions of the British Transport Film, 'the work of the documentarist is not seen on its own, but as part of a thriving sponsored film sector, with the hope of a part to play in British mainstream cinema.'⁵⁶ The British cruise film can be viewed in similar terms.

1.4 A return to film: Orient Line in the Post-War Era

⁵⁵ Smith, (2009)

⁵⁶ Smith (2009)

Whilst *Liner Cruising South* stands as Orient Line's most widely noted pre-war promotional film, it would not be until the post-war years of the mid-1950s that circumstances allowed for film advertising properly to resume.

Throughout the early 1950s, film proposals were met with negative responses. An Orient committee meeting held on 22nd November 1950 saw a suggestion by some representatives that a film be made documenting a Durban and Mombasa round trip which the company offered. Although interest was sparked, 'It was felt that this form of publicity at present would prove rather expensive but might be considered at a later date.'⁵⁷

Similarly, a further committee meeting held on 28th November 1951 saw a suggestion by an individual named Mr Digby-Smith that he might produce a film for the B.I. Company entitled *East Africa*. It was decided that this 'would be too costly and also when it was produced there would be few facilities available for showing it.'⁵⁹

After the advertising struggle of the early 1950s, Orient Line's interest in the film medium was raised by Terry Ashwood's *The Way of a Ship* (1954). The film was produced by Howard Thomas and took the form of a twenty-minute travelogue aboard a Mediterranean cruise. In the words of an unknown archivist at the Santa Cruz County Public Library in Arizona, 'The film shows the crew's activities as well as the passengers sight-seeing in Majorca, Rhodes, Istanbul, Athens, Naples, and, most

⁵⁷ Orient Line Collection Committee Meeting Minutes, National Maritime Museum, BIS/36/12 / MSS77/081

⁵⁹ Ibid. In fact, in the early part of the decade, even a slide show, which was commissioned for four cinemas at a highly discounted rate, only came to fruition due to a forced and hasty decision made by Orient Line's Durban branch.

especially, Sorrento.’⁶⁰ The film possesses a poetic and celebratory narration track written by A.P. Herbert, which sought to reignite a sense of national pride and patriotism after a sustained period of post-war austerity and disaffection. The film would be submitted and screened at the Venice Film Festival in 1954 and received a certificate of participation from the festival organisers.⁶¹ This critical recognition gave the film a higher profile and, like the effect of *Liner Cruising South*’s EMB associations, placed it within a discourse of legitimate, worthwhile cinema associated with Europe and film festival culture. Production and distribution came from Associated British Pathé Ltd., which offered the film a significant release (as part of pre-film newsreels).⁶² *The Way of a Ship* originally cost £7911 to produce, but was screened for more than four years as part of various newsreel packages, from May 1955 to December 1959. Although demand for the film began to dwindle as the 1960s approached, its consistent use within newsreels and screenings evidences its success and popularity.

After the successes of *The Way of a Ship*, Orient Line commissioned *Across the Pacific* (1956) and *Voyage to Pleasure* (1956). The first title, in an effort to emulate the successes of the earlier film, was again produced by Associated British Pathé. The film cost £13,475 to produce, and twenty-four copies were originally made and shipped around the country. Extra versions were sent to Australia, one to the USA, and several to ‘the East.’⁶³ In April 1960, forty-four extra copies were made more

⁶⁰ Synopses found in catalogues of Santa Cruz County Public Library, Nogales, Arizona, USA

⁶¹ P&O Company Records: Venice Film Festival: ‘The Way of a Ship’ Diploma of Participation (1954), The National Maritime Museum

⁶² Orient Line financial document, National Maritime Museum, OSN/4/31

⁶³ Orient Line Collection Committee Meeting Minutes, National Maritime Museum, BIS/36/12 / MSS77/081

than three years after the original run, suggesting something of a resurgence in the film's popularity or, at least, an increase in opportunities to screen it.

Voyage to Pleasure marked a departure from Orient Line's associations with Associated British Pathé (who were already working on *Across the Pacific*) and instead was supplied by J. Jeffrey and United Motion Pictures. The film appears to have been made on a smaller scale than the British Pathé creations, costing only £1000 in payment to J. Jeffrey and £419 in initial processing costs. Twelve prints were produced in August 1956, while three further copies were made in 1959, again pointing to a replacement of old versions of the film and a sustained (if small) demand for screenings.⁶⁴

Screenings themselves came primarily from British Pathé's extensive links with cinemas thanks to its production of newsreel material. Yet, by mid-1956 production of such reels began to dry up. Perhaps in response to Pathé's dwindling scope and power or a change in relations between the two companies (which coincided with the production of both *Voyage to Pleasure* and *Across the Pacific*), Orient Line conceived of a number of events throughout the 1950s, in which spaces and projectors were hired, and cruise films were screened. Records suggest the existence of shows in a whole host of British cities, including Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Blackpool, Glasgow, Brighton, Bournemouth, Cardiff and London.⁶⁶ The existence of these screening events offers an interesting glimpse into the manner in which these films were consumed. An invited, captive audience

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Promotional material was produced for these events, including letters and invitation cards. These were sent to interested members of the public or passengers involved in the cruises that were featured in the films.

offered a sense of occasion and importance, but it also demonstrated the confidence Orient had in the films they were helping to produce. These events offered a dedicated space designated for the appreciation of Orient Line's work, marking these films as worthy of criticism and consumption beyond the usual realms of pure promotional material. This was a mindset substantiated by the previous success of *Liner Cruising South* and *The Way of a Ship*'s inclusion on a film festival billing.

One final Orient Line film was produced before its merger with P&O in 1959. Although the film was released in 1960, it was presumably made some years before. *I Am A Passenger* (1960) is formulaic in structure and offers a passenger-centric illumination of the cruise process. However, for the first time it offers a contemporary character-driven central narration that revolves around the phrase of the film's title. Very few records appear to have remained which document those responsible for the film's creation and even the BFI's exhaustive listings possess no information on personnel or production credits. The turn of the decade was a tumultuous time for Orient Line and the company's impending merger with P&O may explain the loss of material relating to the film.

1.5 P&O: The *Ocean Liner Holiday* advertising drive and 'trying' times

The merger between Orient Line and P&O would see a convergence of their advertising departments. The main repercussions are evident within the company's 1959 annual financial report. The move effectively saw an end to Orient Line's own advertising, as it was swiftly subsumed within P&O's own business structures. The

1960s were difficult for the newly created P&O-Orient Line advertising department, as it juggled its new collaborative role with the demands of an increasingly aggressive marketplace. Advertising budgets were projected and calculated using figures gathered from the previous year, yet fuelled by a need to propagate a distinctive and focused image specific to the demands of the new age, costs began to escalate beyond these projections.⁶⁷

In the 1950s and 1960s, the shipping industry underwent significant change in the face of competition from airlines. Its role was shifted from a swift and functional mode of transport to a slow but entertaining one. In the words of the P&O's head of advertising in the company's 1959 annual report, 'I must say at once that this first year has been a "trying" one in more senses than one.'⁶⁸ Those who simply desired to get to a destination at speed naturally chose flight, so shipping lines had to place themselves as an alternative for prospective tourists wishing to break free of the increasingly hectic lifestyle of the modern Briton.

The advertising department's spend in 1959 was £388,896, a figure covering promotion in a whole host of nations and via a number of different paper mediums.⁶⁹ By 1964, this figure had more than doubled to £834,779, thanks to increases in printing costs, and more extensive advertising opportunities.⁷⁰ Yet, while commercially and culturally things were changing with increased rapidity, in 1964 P&O maintained their position in creative terms:

⁶⁷ Advertising Annual Report (1961), National Maritime Museum, P+O/4/74

⁶⁸ Advertising Annual Report (1959), National Maritime Museum, P+O/4/73

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Advertising Annual Report (1964), National Maritime Museum, P+O/4/78

We saw no reason to alter our creative policy which seemed to be producing the right results. Our advertisements both in copy and illustration, have been built round the magic of the sea, the freedom from worry offered by shipboard life and the fascination of the ports at which we call.⁷¹

This unambiguous and straightforward attitude to promotion was something that P&O had exhibited in the past. This attempt to capture the ‘magic of the sea’, shipboard life and the various ports of call visited by the cruise ship, sounds like a direct description of *Liner Cruising South*’s familiar narrative. In their dealings up until this point, P&O consistently maintained that the simple documentation of the cruise process was all that was required to appeal to prospective passengers.

However, in 1966 P&O would introduce a new and unique advertising initiative that would draw together its different media arms and offer an unprecedented level of consistency and focus. The new project was based around the ‘Ocean Liner Holiday’, a phrase that was used within brochures, hoardings and other paper material. While its advertising remit followed the principles of successful and ubiquitous techniques, it represented a consolidation of both established and new ideas, and a conscious decision to apply principles of advertising with a sense of consistency and longevity. It was a move sparked by competition from, amongst others, the more contemporarily-minded Cunard, and the growing realisation within all commercial sectors that advertising was of lasting and increasing worth.

⁷¹ Ibid.

A film was made in 1966 which carried the *Ocean Liner Holiday* title, and took the form of a passenger's narrated slideshow. The series of still photographs featured images of both the destinations offered on the cruise and the newly commissioned *Canberra*. The vessel had been launched in 1960 and swiftly took on the primary function of cruising. It was a consciously contemporary craft full of new technology and equipped to house patrons in great comfort. The design and appearance of the *Canberra* further reflected P&O's changing attitude to their primary function as a company. The vessel was a cruise ship in every way, and shifted emphasis further from transport towards luxury.

The 'Ocean Liner Holiday' campaign would last around three years, and was based on a phrase that P&O hoped to render synonymous with this new brand of seafaring holiday that placed the cruise ship at its heart. Text in brochures was kept to a minimum, with emphasis placed squarely on the presentation of colourful images, mostly of ships, ocean scenes and attractive passengers. The advertising scheme saw a marked departure from the functional advertising of the past, and signalled a desire to embrace the image-led, consumer-orientated world of the late 1960s.

These changes did not come without a difficult period of transition. P&O's 1968 annual financial report begins, 'Without doubt this has been the most difficult and laborious year we have ever experienced.'⁷² It moves on to outline the tightening of restrictive deadlines, the changing of staff and reshuffling of departments and even mistakes by individuals lacking in experience. There is also the suggestion that

⁷² Advertising Annual Report (1968), National Maritime Museum, P+O/4/82

‘Passenger advertising has become increasingly complex with the wider and varying forms of opportunities which call for promotion.’⁷³

By this point, television advertising was also an issue for P&O, which needed to be addressed if it was to be successfully employed. Relations with TV companies began tentatively, and in 1967 a ‘test package deal’ was signed with ITV, with £3000 allocated to six one-minute spots on Northern, Midland and Southern regional television. In response to the challenging times experienced in 1968, television advertising was restricted to ITV’s Midlands service only, although a keen awareness of the potential of TV advertising is clearly visible within the report.

Upon this backdrop of changing attitudes and approaches, several films were supported by P&O during the 1960s which reflect this time of transition. Whilst some examples marry *Liner Cruising South’s* tried and tested paradigm of documentary image with zealous and inspiring narration, others reflect the growing concern of a company aware of the changing attitudes and emphases of the 1960s, and the need for experimentation and diversification. P&O’s film commission therefore represented a middle point between the new and the old. Film had been a unique and extravagant medium that was outstripped by paper advertising in terms of scope, but offered something more immediate and engaging than a brochure or pamphlet. Yet, in the face of TV’s potential to command the attentions of the masses like no other medium, it also occupied a space that was soon to be obsolete.

⁷³ Ibid.

It is perhaps telling that of the numerous P&O end of year reports available at the National Maritime Museum, none records the commissioning, budgeting or production of any film. Paper advertising is laboriously noted, with many pages dedicated to the fluctuating successes and costs of every coupon scheme or new brochure initiative. Two major and potentially contradictory conclusions can be drawn from this. The first is that the film part of P&O's advertising department was handled either externally or was recorded elsewhere in a series of inaccessible documents. The second conclusion is that these films were underrated to such an extent, that they were simply not recorded or budgeted.

However, a document located within the P&O ephemera collection at the National Maritime Museum suggests the unreliability of the second conclusion. The pamphlet [Fig 1] entitled 'P&O Films available on free loan' offers synopses of five short films that are available to travel agents and other establishments free of charge. The document suggests that film-related business was handled by The Group Public Relations Division at P&O, and explains the Advertising Department's failure to account for film material within its records.

The pamphlet further suggests that P&O positioned some of their film material not as scheduled advertising, but as a resource available upon request. Films were available on free loan and had to be actively sought out by their audience. Travel agents, education establishments and other such institutions were targeted and encouraged to borrow these reels and exhibit their contents to patrons, customers or students. Regardless of whether such films were employed to entertain, inform or persuade, their use foregrounded the P&O cruise and the broader P&O brand. However, the

large-scale dissemination of the company's product was inevitably stunted by the limited scope of this distribution method. Emulating the model of the public information film was effective in its subtlety, yet it lacked the spread of a newsreel or feature-film companion.

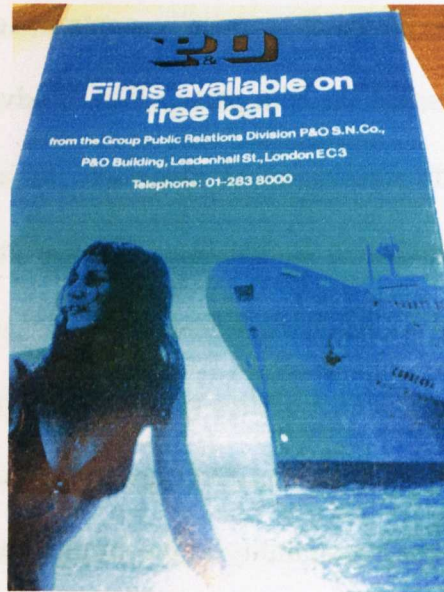


Fig 1 – P&O film loan advertisement (1960s)

Little written information has survived which documents P&O's pre-war film material, although three prints have recently been housed at the Wessex Film Archive in Winchester under the guidance of the P&O archive. These titles are *BL to East Africa* (1935) (in fact sponsored by the British-India Steam Navigation Company who would merge with P&O), *A P&O Cruise to the Mediterranean and India and the East*.⁷⁴ Films made in the late 1930s are notable by their absence. The imminent threat and onset of war led to a sharp decrease in the number of services offered by shipping lines during this period. Many cruise ships were also employed as troop

⁷⁴ Exact dates of production for *A P&O Cruise to the Mediterranean and India and the East* remain unknown.

carriers, which, for obvious reasons, rendered them out of action for passenger requirements.

Once the immediate effects of the war had dissipated, P&O's post-war output was fairly extensive, but tended to follow a sporadic pattern governed by the financial ebb and flow of the advertising and PR departments. *Make Sure of the Sun* (1955) was possibly P&O's first post-war cruise film. Shot aboard the newly-launched *Arcadia*, the film was a colourful portrait of seafaring life produced by the Macqueen Film Organisation. 1956 saw the release of a two-part, twenty-minute recruitment film entitled *A Career at Sea* (1956) that sought to attract the interest of potential sailors, engineers and on-board staff. *Holiday with Everything* (1958) was directed by Bernard Till and produced by Associated British Pathé. The film followed the *Arcadia* as it visited Naples, Pompeii, Dubrovnik and Lisbon, and began with an introduction from A.P. Herbert. Herbert, an established British novelist with strong maritime links, was a notable presence and had provided the narration for Orient's Venice Film Festival success, *The Way of A Ship*. *Holiday With Everything* was featured in both the *Monthly Film Bulletin* and *The Film User* journal. Both gave the film positive reviews and mentioned, in particular, its impressive use of colour.⁷⁵

1958 also saw the release of *Men of the Ships* (1958), directed by George Sewell and produced by the Film Producers Guild.⁷⁶ In contrast to *Holiday With Everything*, *Men of the Ships* took a look at the P&O vessel from the perspective of those who worked aboard, discussing methods of ship control and maintenance. According to its

⁷⁵ Anon., *Monthly Film Bulletin* v26.n303 (1 Apr 1959), p.49. and *The Film User* v13.n157 (1Nov 1959), p.584.

⁷⁶ Although George Sewell was involved in a number of projects, he remained an amateur film maker throughout his career.

synopsis in *Monthly Film Bulletin*, *Men of the Ships* was mainly intended as a curtain-raiser to a film made the same year entitled *Horizons Unbound* (1958).⁷⁷ This shared the same production crew but possessed a more specifically character-driven narrative. The film follows a young man who decides to start a career with P&O as an engineering officer. After obtaining necessary qualifications and experience, the man gains his Second Engineer certificate. Both films primarily serve as recruitment adverts for P&O, yet were released through public channels. The *Monthly Film Bulletin* saw through the company's cynically targeted campaign, stating: 'Both films will serve their sponsor's purposes, and so it is in vain to regret the pretentious scripts and the predictable presentation. One gets the impression that the fault lies with the sponsor; the producers have done their best.'⁷⁸

The 1960s saw a continuation of P&O's sporadic release pattern. *Last Voyage* (1962) was a commemoration of the successful service of the *Oronsay* and the *Orcades*. Both were originally ships belonging to Orient Line but, after the merger, had become property of P&O. The film was shot in black and white and was produced by Adrian Kent (TWW Production). 1962 was perhaps most notable for the production and release of John Reeve's *A Great Ship* (1962). Produced by Rayant Pictures, the film featured narrations by both Tim Brington and Patrick Magee, and documented the construction of the 45,000 ton *Canberra* in Belfast. The film employs a character-driven narrative in its portrait of a crane driver, while a direct comparison is made between the development of the ship and the changes within the young family man's life. Emphasis is placed on the happiness and fulfilment the man is able to obtain through the consistency offered by his P&O job and the presence of the ship-building

⁷⁷ Anon., *Monthly Film Bulletin* v25.n294 (1 Jul 1958) p.93.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.93.

industry in the local area. Reeve's film owes much to Rotha's *Shipyard* in its treatment of the ship's construction, but is also particularly notable for its command of a character-centric narrative that would become increasingly popular within P&O films of later years. *A Great Ship* was shown as part of the Edinburgh Film Festival of 1962, and received a Certificate of Participation from the festival organisers. In the brochure for the festival, the film is described as:

A highly polished documentary film dealing with the building of Britain's largest liner for 20 years. The story is told in terms of individuals all over the world whose lives were affected by this great project.⁷⁹

Following the critical success of *The Way of a Ship*, *A Great Ship* was the second cruise film considered worthy of a film festival screening. As in 1954, the film's success saw an increase in film production within P&O, with such a positive response generating a renewed interest in the power of cinema to inform, entertain and advertise.

Oriana (1963) documented the building stages of the ship of the title and was issued in two segments as part of P&O's film lending initiative. The film reflects another staple of the cruise film form, in its narrative arc that follows the vessel from design and construction to entry into service. *Oriana* featured a specially-written music score and a narration by Maurice Denham which speaks of the ship in grandiose terms as it is pieced together onscreen. All such films, which feature sequences of ship

⁷⁹ *Edinburgh Film Festival Brochure*, (1962). The film was shown on Thursday 30th August 1962 at 3:00pm

construction and launch (as noted with *A Great Ship*), owe a large debt to the poetic narration formulated by Paul Rotha in *Shipyards*. Rotha's powerful and almost violent representation of the ship's physical construction (which I will address further in this thesis) is identifiable in the style of *Oriana*. The patriotic and affectionate way in which the vessel is then presented upon the water further emulates *Shipyards*'s proud but melancholic conclusion that sees workers gazing out at their finished project. As a companion piece to *Oriana*, 1963 also saw the release of *Welcome Aboard* (1963). Produced by Positive Film, *Welcome Aboard* featured footage taken aboard the *Oriana*, *Canberra* and *Orsova* and was a fairly conventional document of three separate voyages. The film is most notable for its exclusive footage from the *Canberra*, which had entered service two years previously.

1965 and 1966 were the most prolific years in terms of P&O's filmic output. Coinciding with the company's three-year 'Ocean Liner Holiday' advertising initiative, money that was pumped into the production of glossy, colourful brochures also found its way into the budgets of film producers. *Showcase '65* (1965) saw the release of a P&O cruise film aimed squarely at travel agents based in the USA. Prompted by Cunard's continued success within the American market, the film outlined P&O's travel services and drew attention to its growing fleet of ships. *Runaway To Sea* (1965) was produced by Athos Film Productions, featured a score by Christopher Gunning, and a commentary by Paul Hollongdale. The film, which was directed by short-film maker Ken Fairbairn, takes images of exotic landscape and life aboard ship and weaves them into a flashback narrative that follows a young female passenger's experiences. The film's narrator is a man named Jonathan, who begins the film staring longingly out to sea. The main part of the film then sees Jonathan

recounting the experiences of this unnamed female passenger, before deciding to embark upon his own trip aboard the P&O vessel, in an effort to pursue the mysterious object of his affections.

Runaway To Sea clearly reflected the ideological shift in advertising and PR policy of P&O's 'Ocean Liner Holiday' concept. While playful, colourful and at times aesthetically experimental, the film remained predominantly informative and instructional. *World At Three* (1966), made the following year, emulated Fairbairn's bold aesthetics but broke almost entirely from a conventional cruise film narrative. Directed by Frederic Goode, who was responsible for a number of low-budget British films in the 1950s and 1960s, the film featured unnarrated footage from several cruise ships that was then cut to a musical score by John Dankworth. Featuring songs sung by Cleo Laine, the score altered to suit the various locations which were visited. *World At Three* is P&O's most ambitious film, holistically realised and bound by its ambitious music score, but jarring and unpredictable in its visual narration. Cuts are unexpected, juxtapositions sometimes entirely random, and the film's narrative is led exclusively by image and sound.

Public reactions to *World At Three* are difficult to gauge, although a reviewer writing for *Film User* was rather underwhelmed:

Scenes of holiday makers on P&O-Orient cruises and ordinary sailing all over the world at the same moment in time. A pleasant and enticing travel-promotion film, well produced

apart from an awkward but short dialogue scene and a slow-motion episode that wasn't really worth the effort.⁸⁰

In addition to *World At Three's* experimentation, *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966) presented a unique perspective on the cruise film. Composed of a narrated set of slides, the film is accompanied by a voiceover by a recent cruise passenger. This technique is simple yet effective, and personalised by the passenger's whimsical, nostalgic narration. The film prioritises this poetic narrative above any attempt to convey information, and its content is dictated by the static photographs presented onscreen. The film demonstrates a further willingness to experiment with the cruise film paradigm, but also draws attention to the cost effective methods employed by P&O. *Ocean Liner Holiday* is essentially a slideshow using a set of photographs purchased or even borrowed from a holiday-maker. It represented a notable reversal of the role previously held by a 'holiday photographer', and latched onto a growing trend of passengers capturing their own version of the experience.

Throughout the 1960s, P&O continued to pursue the education market alongside passenger-orientated representations of the cruise. *Suez Canal* (1966) was an educational film designed for schools and other learning institutions. Directed by W.Hugh Baddeley and produced by Gateway Film Productions, the film combined narration, footage and animation to explain the history and continued significance of the Suez Canal as a major shipping lane. Although the film was featured in P&O's list of free rental films, the *Visual Education* publication listed the film at a price of

⁸⁰ Anon., *The Film User* v19.n227 (1 Sep 1965), p. 524.

30s 0d for hire and £51 for purchase. Writing in *Visual Education*, the *Oldbury Teachers' Film Group* would suggest:

This film [*Suez Canal*] is appropriate for Secondary education at all its stages, and for upper Juniors. The beginning, giving a brief glimpse into the historical background, is effective, interesting and adequate for an explanation of the development of this waterway. The photography is good, providing vivid illustrations of the journeys made by ships and of the one-way convoy of ships along stretches of the canal.

Some members of the group felt that, as well as being shown the pilot's activities, more people could have been shown at their different tasks along the canal. However, this was considered to be a helpful, interesting and educational film.⁸¹

P&O's production of film material for schools was a shrewd decision. On one hand, they were able to provide a socially responsible public service that called upon their experience and expertise to disseminate knowledge. The Suez Canal was crucial to the company's success and used consistently throughout the year. P&O were in an informed position to explain its contemporary relevance and colourful history. On the other hand, the infiltration of schools allowed the P&O brand to seep into the minds of receptive youngsters. Not only was it beneficial to foreground the pleasures of cruising, but it also raised awareness of the occupation of sailor and engineer. Like

⁸¹ Anon., 'Suez Canal Review', *Visual Education* (1 May 1965) p. 24.

many cruise films, *Suez Canal* glamorises the cruise experience through its capture of exotic scenery, unfamiliar landscapes and sense of adventure. P&O, alongside their social commitments to education, had shown within their recruitment films of previous years that they were well aware of the power of such images on the imaginations of the young and impressionable.

P&O would continue to produce films of various kinds throughout the late 1960s and into the 1970s. These belonged to the three main types of cruise film I have highlighted: pieces that foreground the cruise experience and advertise the luxury available aboard, those which sought to recruit personnel of various types, and those which appeared to convey educational information.⁸²

1.6 The Union Castle cruise film: Launch films to Sid James

Union Castle came into existence through a merger of Castle Shipping Line and Union Line in 1900 and continued, throughout succeeding decades, to provide mail routes from Southampton to Cape Town. In the inter-war and post-war decades, the company began to provide cruises around Africa, with emphasis placed on various South African ports with which the company held professional relationships. Union Castle would merge with Clan Line in 1955, which had been its only real competitor

⁸² Films included, *Holiday to the West Indies* (1968), *Sea Is For Cruising*, *Sound of the Sea* (both 1960s), *Uganda Cruise* (1968), *First Time Round* (1970) *Starting as Strangers* (1970), *Latitudes of Leisure* (1971) *Where In The World* (1973), *Wish You Were Here* (1974), *Henry The Navigator* (1977), *The Sea Is Our Business* (1977) *Alaska Ahoy*, *Cruises With A Difference*, *Gangway To Paradise*, *The Magnificent Adventure* (all without solid release or production dates).

in South Africa. The company advertised predominantly in the UK and South Africa until its disintegration in 1977.

Of the four main shipping lines, Union Castle was the most prolific and sustained in terms of its film output. As previously mentioned, in the 1940s and 1950s, the company was involved in the production of a series of films which commemorated the successful launches of the *Kenya Castle*, the *Bloemfontein Castle*, the *Braemar Castle*, and the *Pretoria Castle*. This set of short films was produced by *Movietone News* and marked evidence of an early relationship with producers and filmmakers. The films also demonstrated a willingness to experiment with the film medium as a method of intuitive and engaging advertising.

As with most shipping lines in the immediate post-war period, Union Castle largely relied on newspaper advertisements as its main source of publicity. According to a series of minutes recorded at meetings held by managing directors in late 1946, Union Castle's chairman granted the promotions department £2681 to spend on newspaper advertising for the year of 1947 and £2505 for 1948. In addition to newspaper pieces, posters, maps, calendars and menu cards were all approved for production and distribution by the chairman, although frequent amendments or caveats were applied to the proposals.⁸³ With the difficult financial climate of the post-war years, promotion was tightly controlled from the top, with all major advertising initiatives running through a higher authority. When it came to the launch of the *Pretoria Castle* in 1948, however, a run of 'Prestige' advertising was hastily agreed upon at a cost of

⁸³ *The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Co. Ltd Managing Directors Meetings Minute Book No.4*, National Maritime Museum, October 1946 – March 1950, UCM/3/4 - Changes to designs were often requested, including, in one instance, a call for black and white to be used instead of colour within a calendar (a tellingly early proposal which would have undoubtedly been challenged a few years later when cruise promoters discovered the effectiveness of colourful visuals).

£522 in the UK and £250 in South Africa.⁸⁴ It is worth noting that *Movietone News*'s film of the ship's launch goes unmentioned within Managing Director's Reports of the time. This suggests that Union Castle's financial contributions to the production were too small to warrant submission to the company's weekly decision-making body. In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that Union Castle lent any financial sponsorship to *Movietone News* for the films. It instead appears likely that the shipping line simply gave shooting rights to the production company and allowed them to create a piece which was in the interest of the viewing population and would therefore generate its own source of revenue. The ship was, after all, seen as something of a public possession, an investment of such time, effort and money that it belonged to the community itself. A ship launch was also pure spectacle. The sight of an enormous vessel sliding from its berth was undoubtedly an entertainment that bore the weight of filmic repetition. In the 1940s, Union Castle's sanctioned film material was not active promotion, but stood as a public service.

Union Castle's proactive attitude to film is also evident elsewhere in the decisions of the company's managing directors. In a meeting held in 1948, the installation of Cinematograph equipment in a number of its vessels was proposed. In the words of one particular minute report:

Memorandum by the Management dated 12th April 1948, was submitted recommending the provision of cinematograph equipment in the Company's Intermediate passenger vessels. It was decided that approved equipment should be installed in

⁸⁴ *The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Co. Ltd Managing Directors Meetings Minute Book No.4*, National Maritime Museum, October 1946 – March 1950, UCM/3/4

the intermediate vessels engaged in the Round Africa service, but not at present in Intermediate vessels turning at Beira. The Chairman expressed his preference for the performances to be given on deck where possible.⁸⁵

The cinematograph's ability both to shoot footage on film and project it onto a screen made for a convenient combination. 'Performances' could be offered to passengers who wished to view film footage whilst aboard, while the camera also allowed for filming to take place. This could in turn be sold to passengers or potentially used within promotional material. Union Castle's early adoption of the film medium helps to explain their later penchant for film advertising, and the prolific nature of their output. It is unlikely that cinematograph cameras provided any of the footage seen in the company's films (mainly due to rapid improvements in technology in the following decades). However, procurement of this equipment shows that Union Castle were ready to take the film medium very seriously in the post-war period.

As the company entered the 1950s, the subject of filmmaking reappeared on the agenda held by the managing directors. On 4th January 1951, the following passage was captured by a minute-taker present at the meeting:

The Chairman agreed to an application being made for the film 'Into The Sun', made for the company by Mr L G Jonas at a total cost, including fares etc, of £856 4s 0d, to be publicly exhibited in the U.K. and authorised the Secretary to

⁸⁵ Ibid. meeting held 7th July 1948

make the statutory declaration required in this connection under Section 24(3) of the Cinematograph Films Act 1938, as amended by the Cinematograph Films Act, 1948.⁸⁶

Into The Sun, as I have previously discussed, was an identical release to *Holiday Afloat*, a film which in one notable incarnation was released on the same reel as *Launch of the Pretoria Castle* made several years before. Its simple depiction of the *Pretoria Castle's* maiden voyage marks an early and paradigmatic example of many of the cruise film's staple narrative and aesthetic elements. It was, as the minutes above suggest, also one of the first cruise films to fall within the initiatives set out within the Cinematograph Films Act. This was an act passed in Britain in 1938 (and later amended several times) that was designed to stimulate the ailing British film industry by making British cinemas lawfully obliged to show a certain quota of British films over a ten year period.⁸⁷ The stipulation imposed upon *Into The Sun* points towards the fact that it was, at least in official bureaucratic terms, treated as a piece of cinematic entertainment in the same way as any British feature.

By 1951, Union Castle's advertising budget had grown significantly. For the year of 1952, £13,138 was allocated for the UK market and £17,318 for advertising in South and East Africa. Not only were these allocations far larger than anything seen a few years earlier, but there was also a clear shift in impetus towards promotion within Africa itself. As the years progressed, a more holistic approach to advertising was beginning to emerge, with more money invested in the creation of a brand that

⁸⁶ *The Union-Castle Mail Steamship Co. Ltd Managing Directors Meetings Minute Book No.5*, March 1950 – January 1953, UCM/3/5. Meeting date, 4th January 1951

⁸⁷ Robert Murphy (ed.), *The British Cinema Book* (London: BFI, 2002), p.31.

transcended national boundaries and reacted to the changing cultural landscape of the mid-1950s and beyond.

Increased financial investment was inevitably spurred by Union Castle's merger with Clan Line in 1955 which, contributing sixty percent of the newly formed company's fleet, would take on the Union Castle name and benefit from an exchange of cargo and routes. More than doubling in size with this change, Union Castle's advertising requirements would increase significantly, which partially explains the proliferation of the company's promotional film material during the 1960s.⁸⁸

Whilst the preservation of Union Castle's visual material has been partially successful thanks to the National Maritime Museum's film archive and the work of the National Library of South Africa, surviving information concerning the production of the films is limited. The company's dissolution in 1977 has meant that paper records relating to advertising and public relations dealings are fragmentary and incomplete. Solid dates of production and release, as well as listings of cast and crewmembers, are in some cases irretrievable.

Alongside the well-documented release and distribution of *Into The Sun* in 1951, Union Castle produced a film called *Southward Bound* (1950), which consisted of a familiar introduction to sea life, complete with depictions of passenger comforts, meal times and port visits. Whilst the film's production date is listed as 1950, it is likely that it was made as part of the same 'prestige' promotional drive which followed the completion of the *Pretoria Castle*.

⁸⁸ Anon., <http://www.oceanlinermuseum.co.uk/History%20of%20UnionCastle%20Line.htm>, [Accessed 04/12/08]

After the successes of these initial cruise films, 1952 saw the release of *Warwick Castle Cruise* (1952), a film without sound but shot in colour. Colour cinematography is used to depict foreign shorelines and the spectacle of the *Warwick Castle* itself. Although detail on the personnel behind the camera is limited, its unadventurous style and haphazard editing mark it out as both an early iteration of the cruise film, and the product of a film crew with limited experience or creative vision.

To Africa East of Suez (1954) was a more ambitious and fully formed project. Running at a lengthy thirty-one minutes, and again focusing on activities aboard ship and within the ports visited, the film employs music and a voiceover narration to give it a far more focused narrative structure. Rather than the crudely juxtaposed, silent footage found in *Warwick Castle Cruise*, *To Africa* places the spectator within the world of the passenger, declaring one particular sight ‘the photographic opportunity of the voyage so far.’ It possesses not only a desire to foreground and project stock footage of the journey, but an awareness of the need to present content in a varied and engaging way. Whilst it dwells upon the playful aspects of life aboard ship, the camera – and by extension the spectator – places particular emphasis upon the urban and rural landscapes that pass by. *To Africa East of Suez* therefore represents what is perhaps Union Castle’s first fully formed cruise film in its presentation of the cruise as a holistic tourist package. The experience is presented as a series of eclectic photographic opportunities with a voiceover that calls upon exotic images to conjure up a distinct atmosphere. The emphasis placed on an identifiable product, sees the beginnings of a transition within the cruise film form from simplistic documentary to manipulative promotion.

By the mid-1950s, the benefits rooted in the immediacy of the film medium were becoming increasingly clear. *Escape To Sunshine* (1955), which was shot aboard the *Edinburgh Castle* as it journeyed to the Cape, was a fairly standard introduction to the Union Castle cruise. It was followed by *Islands in the Sun* (1957), which was produced by Jack Archbald. Breaking from Union Castle's usual depiction of South African ports and cities, Archbald's film focused on Madeira and the Canary Islands as destinations that frequently formed stop-off points for those heading to Cape Town. *Film User* observed that 'The commentary is to the point and the music is restrained. Good for general audiences and of value as background material for geography lessons.'⁸⁹ Along with P&O, Union Castle would take advantage of their appeal to the education sector. Stock footage of foreign nations was sought after, and particularly useful in teaching about the British Empire. A film such as *Islands in the Sun* gave an immediate, audio-visual impression of a location in full, vivid colour and helped to foreground the Union Castle brand.

Voyage Around Africa (1958) was a film that explicitly advertised Union Castle's unique association with a single nation. Thanks to the Clan Line merger, Union Castle had now largely monopolised British sea travel to the African region (evident in the bold statement offered on the promotional poster in Fig.2). Such titles drew attention to this newfound confidence and helped to render the Union Castle brand synonymous with an entire continent. Produced by Tunnel Films and directed by Harold Weaver, *Voyage Around Africa* is perhaps best described in the words offered by an issue of *Film User* originating from the time of the film's release:

⁸⁹ Anon., *The Film User*, v11.n127 (1 May 1957), p. 214.

A pleasure cruise on two liners, one sailing from the Cape *via* St. Helena and Las Palmas and the other from London *via* Cairo, Aden and Zanzibar. Glimpses of life aboard are mingled with short visits to places *en route*, make an uneventful but acceptable film.⁹⁰

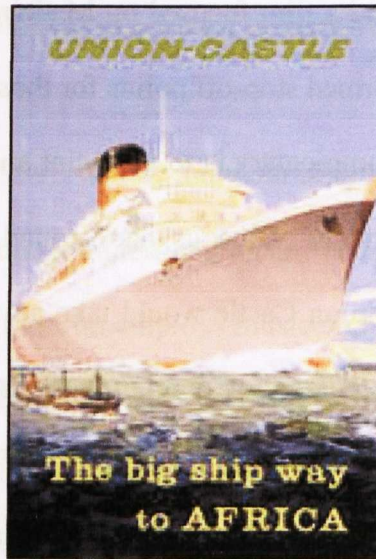


Fig 2: Union Castle poster (1950s)

The film's lukewarm reception from critics is perhaps testament to its lack of development in form, or particular creative spark. The film borrows stock footage from *To Africa East of Suez* and, like the previous film made a few years earlier, follows a very familiar structure of a narrated set of material, which dwells most extensively on the untainted beauty of the African landscape. As South Africa descended into political and social turmoil, Union Castle's simultaneous shift towards depicting an idyllic and idealised landscape is conspicuous. Intent on the protection of their product, we see an increasing endeavour to deflect any negative

⁹⁰ Anon., *The Film User*, v13.n148 (1 Feb 1959), p.74.

associations with South Africa by using imagery which accentuates a simple and natural beauty. In retrospect and, perhaps, at the time, such imagery sat rather awkwardly alongside knowledge of the nation's political climate. This is an aspect of the Union Castle cruise film that I will discuss more extensively in a later chapter.

The beginning of the 1960s saw the production of another commemorative film, *RMS Windsor Castle: The Story of a Ship* (1960). The *Windsor Castle's* construction, launch and maiden voyage are captured, with flashback employed so as to create an explicit juxtaposition between the stark utilitarian nature of sea travel in a bygone era and the luxury of the modern day. As this temporal manipulation suggests, *Windsor Castle's* structure is more ambitious than any cruise film before it, with an audio narration which juggles numerous time frames and types of visual media. This narration is also consciously poetic and portentous, in one breath quoting Kipling and in the next personifying the ship as a character that 'creeps towards the sea'.⁹¹

Trudi (1961) further developed the character-centric narrative hinted at in *Voyage to the Sun*. As the *Film User* advertisement in Fig.3 suggests, the film follows a young Swiss girl who travels from South Africa aboard the *Pendennis Castle*. *Trudi* displays an attempt to foreground the perspective of a child, suggesting an appeal to a younger audience and, perhaps, another move on the part of Union Castle to consolidate its entrance into the growing education market. The film was free to rent and (along with 'other films' which were available) was sold as both a compelling story and an informative introduction to various foreign locations and methods of travel.

⁹¹ Rudyard Kipling, 'The Ship That Found Herself' in *The Day's Work* (London: Penguin 1990), p.93.



Fig 3: *Trudi* advertisement

Fig 4: *Terminus* (1961)

Trudi's focus on the perspective of a child was perhaps influenced by John Schlesinger's *Terminus* (1961) made the same year [Fig 4]. Produced as part of Edgar Anstey's British Transport Film initiative, *Terminus* captures a day at Waterloo station and foregrounds the stories that unfold there. Ewan Davidson would suggest that it:

[...] combines two kinds of documentary filmmaking: a sort of *cinema verité*, a 'true' record of life passing by, and little stories that emerge, vanish, then reappear later in the film.⁹²

Terminus features a prominent sequence in which a child is shown lost amidst the chaos of the busy station. The spectator is drawn to the plight of this young character, whose journey forms a central story in the film's narrative. This child-like focus and combination of different documentary discourses is emulated in *Trudi*'s eponymous character and foregrounding of a travel network.

⁹² Ewan Davidson, *Terminus* synopsis, *Screen Online*, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/520921/index.html> [Accessed 23/02/09]

Castles of the Sea (1964) followed a few years later, and offered a less focused overview of the Union Castle experience. The film features footage taken from Johannesburg, Durban and Rhodesia, but is perhaps most notable for the involvement of Associated British Pathé. Pathé also produced newsreel material for Orient Line and P&O, and was effective in its ability to distribute content on a large scale throughout cinemas nationwide. As the 1960s progressed, there was a sense that visual material was broadening in its appeal and scope. There was an ever-increasing host of opportunities for shipping lines to spend money and reap advertising benefit. Union Castle's relationship with British Pathé was one of a number of relationships forged with film production companies, and showed a particular willingness to embrace the new opportunities that were beginning to emerge.

Along with these developments in distribution, the mid-to-late 1960s would see the release of a number of films that experimented with narrative tone and perspective. Clearly influenced by the 'swinging '60s' and its distinct revaluation of ideological, cultural and aesthetic preoccupations, *The World is Your Oyster* (1965) hinted at the escapism and opportunity apparently offered by sea life, and saw a return to a balanced foregrounding of both activity aboard ship and upon land. The film's appropriation of a style associated with the era can best be attributed to director Richard Lester, who had directed the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) the previous year. *The World is Your Oyster* shares a projection of hedonism and unalloyed happiness, whilst similarly foregrounding music within sequences and montages. The film was produced by James Garrett and Partners, and follows a central female character named Vicky as she embarks on various activities and social engagements with a number of acquaintances. Not only is the portrayal of a female

protagonist particularly notable and a sign of the changing times, but the film's appropriation of a character-driven narrative is perhaps its largest concession to a popular and accessible filmic form, which was beginning to permeate cruise film narrative.

38a to Cape Town (1966), which followed a year later, took this reliance upon character-centred narrative to its most developed conclusion. Directed by John Karie and produced by Benn Productions, the film follows a bus driver voiced by the ubiquitous Sid James. Most famous for his role in the *Carry On...* series of films, James' character is established within the bustling London streets of his home before being transferred, via a Union Castle vessel, to the quiet and sedate streets of Cape Town. The main bulk of the film gives a familiar introduction to life aboard ship, with James' narration offering the cockney asides we may associate with his more established characters. Upon arrival, the red London bus is transferred to the streets of Cape Town, gliding serenely down lengthy boulevards and coastal roads. After showing off the landscape with a tour of the surrounding area, the film concludes with James' return to the United Kingdom and his job as a bus driver. Our expectations of a classical narrative are satisfied in the film's circular structure. Within an otherwise formulaic cruise film, we see Union Castle branching into a concept narrative that sparks the spectator's interest with a foregrounding of character and plot device, and moves away from its documentary roots.

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the production and release of *No Siesta for the Sun* (1968) and *A Friendly Ship* (1970). The former was produced by Harold Weaver and was made in association with British United Airways. The film marked an

important and symbolic moment of collaboration on the part of Union Castle. Aware of the airline industry's inevitable dominance of topical travel, the company would negotiate deals and discounted flights for its passengers seeking both the cruise experience and the rapidity of a flight home. *A Friendly Ship* was again produced by Pathé and returns to a celebration of the cruise as a 'real holiday', and an experience in which the traditions of sea travel are indulged alongside other cultures and ways of life.

Elsewhere during the late 1960s, Union Castle would collaborate with Satour (The South African Tourist Board) on *The Voyage Home*. The film was directed by Harold Weaver, featured photography by Sven Persson, and featured Dick and Norah North, a real life couple aboard a Union Castle voyage home from Cape Town. The film's credits contain no reference to Union Castle, suggesting the company did not contribute to the production side of the enterprise. However, the vessel upon which the couple sail is identifiably part of the Union fleet, and the film follows a similar structure to many of the other cruise films discussed here. Like the early launch films of the 1940s and 1950s, *The Voyage Home* was another piece of opportunistic marketing for Union Castle. The shipping line shared the goals of Satour in their glamorisation of both South Africa as a nation, and the cruise ship as a means of travel.

1.7 Cunard

The post-war era was a trying time for Cunard, as it was for Britain's other shipping lines. Yet, due to the company's extensive consolidation of an affluent American passenger base, Cunard avoided the full brunt of a period of grim, post-war austerity which for others had led to unspectacular profits. Air travel was of course a great concern, yet attitudes remained positive and forward thinking. In a financial report of 1959, one employee wrote:

Developments in the Air come so fast that it is at times hard to keep up with them but I am now even more convinced that the sea should be complementary to rather than competitive with the Air.⁹³

This attitude held firm, and in 1962 Cunard purchased a share in the British Overseas Airways Corporation, renaming it BOAC-Cunard and operating services between the UK and the Americas. Although this operation would dissolve in 1966, and BOAC would ultimately merge with a number of other companies to form British Airways, the move points to Cunard's positive and proactive attitude to air travel's imminent dominance of the travel market.

Advertising formed part of the company's modern and forward-thinking commercial outlook. Along with brochures and other assorted ephemera, Cunard would release a set of promotional films throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s that were primarily

⁹³ Cunard Reports and Accounts (1960s), Liverpool University Cunard Archive, D42/PR12/5/6

aids for travel agents and were obtainable through ‘Cunard’s distributors, Movies U.S.A., or any Cunard office.’⁹⁴ The release of a number of these films is documented by a set of press releases available at Liverpool University, that form part of a Cunard archive housed there. However, these mainly cover films that were made available to the American market (although there was frequently crossover between the films shown in the UK and USA). One of Cunard’s earliest works was in fact a film designed for a British audience, entitled *Cunarders At Southampton* (1951). Possessing a documentary-like aesthetic reminiscent of the Empire Marketing Board films of the 1930s, *Cunarders* follows the arrival of the *Queen Elizabeth* into Southampton, with footage of maintenance and cleaning, placed alongside the sombre departure of the *Aquitania* for the breaker’s yard. In the words of the *Film User*, ‘These giants of Southampton make excellent material for the screen; an interesting film, well-photographed, for use with all audiences.’⁹⁵

In America, Cunard’s public relations department announced *Caribbean Sunshine Cruise* (1955). The film is described in glowing terms in the article’s opening paragraph:

A new 16 mm. color and sound film entitled “Caribbean Sunshine Cruise”, produced for Cunard Line by John Bransby Inc. and portraying the delights of a West Indies Cruise in the famous 36,000-ton *Mauretania*, is being given premiers throughout the U.S.A. The film, running approximately 32 minutes and happily reflecting the spirit of *Mauretania*

⁹⁴ Cunard Press releases, October 13 1955, Liverpool University, D42/PR12/24/1

⁹⁵ Anon., *The Film User*, v5. n53 (1 Mar 1951), p.56.

cruising, is available for the use of travel agents who wish to show it to groups of cruise prospects.⁹⁶

Cunard's focus on the American market is particularly evident in this release. There is a lack of evidence to suggest the film was even released to the UK. The 'premiers' described in the press release most probably took place to captive audiences, yet demonstrate a confidence in presenting these films as works in their own right. These films move beyond any suggested label of advertising and instead form cultural artefacts enjoyed by an increasingly movie-savvy general public.

Yet, during the 1950s, Cunard's filmic output was fairly slim. While Orient Line was garnering publicity with a fairly diverse selection of informative promotional works, the Liverpool company remained tentative when it came to the exploration of film. In a shrewd move in 1957, Cunard put out a press release that informed the media about the Orient Line film *Across the Pacific*. This release stated:

The Orient Line's new film 'Across the Pacific', was shown to New York travel agents and members of the press at a special screening in the Terrace Room of the Plaza Hotel on Tuesday, June 4th.

Over 250 guests attended the New York pre-view of the 28 minute, color film which depicts the cruise-like pleasures of a

⁹⁶ Ibid.

voyage from the Pacific West Coast to Australia and New Zealand in the Orient Line's 29,000-ton Orsova.⁹⁷

Cunard's support for a competitor's commercial product demonstrates the unique attitude both companies held towards publicity films. The screening of *Across the Pacific* included a 'reception and cocktail party, arranged by the Cunard Line, [and] general agents for Orient Line in the U.S. and Canada.'⁹⁸ This collaborative effort suggests an open and mutually beneficial attitude to advertising that seems anachronistic in today's deeply insular and competitive business world. Such films were seen not simply as adverts for a company's brand, but instead as informative and illuminating documents of cruising as a pastime and as an entertainment. Cunard's press releases of the 1950s and early 1960s are in fact scattered with references to other shipping lines. Most reference the construction of a new ship and frame such occasions as part of a shared British history. While advertising would grow more competitive and specific to each shipping line in the following years, this collaboration hints at a unique treatment of the promotional film as a document beneficial to the industry as a whole.

Filmmaking and the so-called 'Cunarder' vessels which made up Cunard's fleet would make a reappearance in the company's press release schedule on June 2nd 1960 with the American opening of *Next To No Time* (1958). The film, directed by Henry Cornelius, frames its theatrical action aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*. Filming was conducted exclusively aboard the *Queen Elizabeth* as it embarked upon a round-the-world voyage. Cunard's participation in the project again shows an element of

⁹⁷ Cunard Press Release, Liverpool University, 1957, D42/PR12/24/3

⁹⁸ Ibid.

commercial shrewdness on the part of the company. Not only did the film act to foreground the ship as a place of romance and excitement, but, thanks to the stars who frequently made the transatlantic trip aboard, it also played a significant part in Cunard's continued association with the glamour of Hollywood.

It was not until 1962 that Cunard's public relations department saw fit to publish the news of another cruise film. In January 1962, *Caronia Mediterranean Cruise* (1962) was announced for use by both travel agents and for 'group showings.'⁹⁹ The film runs for a full forty five minutes, takes place aboard the *Caronia*, and follows a familiar treatment of both life onboard and amongst various ports and locations of interest.

The success of *Caronia* once again boosted confidence and faith in the motion picture as a form that bred excitement and, importantly, purveyed a sense of pomp and occasion reminiscent of the cruise itself. As a company, it was Cunard who, in its film work, most successfully understood and realised the inherent sense of occasion that the cruise exuded. This was undoubtedly bound up with the company's glamorous association with both America and, more specifically, Hollywood.

Call of the West Indies (1964) was released two years after *Caronia*, and was again made with travel agents and group showings in mind. Produced by John Bransby Productions Ltd., the film was shot onboard the *Franconia* and *Carmania* and followed a very familiar structure. Whilst on the surface it was yet another example of an informative work which followed a pattern familiar to audiences, its

⁹⁹ Cunard Press Release, Liverpool University, 1962, D42/PR12/24/8

cinematography and general artistic success meant that in 1965 the film won a Cine Golden Eagle Award.¹⁰⁰ The award was presented in Washington DC to the sponsors and producers, and led to the film's submission to a number of European film festivals. *Call of the West Indies* was Cunard's greatest critical success and, like *The Way of a Ship* and *A Great Ship* before it, went some way in positioning the cruise film within a critically respected framework.

Cunard's use of film advertising increased towards the end of the 1960s to coincide with the launching of the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2. As the company's earlier vessels began to lose money in the face of increasing competition from airlines, the *QE2*, which was downscaled in size compared to Cunard's pre-war ships and would predominantly be used for cruising, was an \$80 million gamble.

In 1969, production of two films was initiated by Cunard to commemorate the successful construction, launch and maiden voyage of the newly commissioned liner. Both attempted to tie the *QE2* as closely as they could to an exciting sense of modernity which ran through the 1960s. *Tomorrow Today* (1969) takes the form of a public information film. Its format consists of a narrator discussing the modern technological aspects aboard ship, encouraging the spectator to 'ignore the glossy fantasy of shipboard life and see what the passengers don't see.' What follows are several depictions of the luxuries enjoyed by those aboard, juxtaposed with the clicks, beeps and flashes of the modern gadgetry which underpins the smooth operation and navigation of the liner itself. This is reminiscent of *Liner Cruising South's* juxtaposition of the mechanical workings of the ship and life aboard, but in *Tomorrow*

¹⁰⁰ Cunard Press Release, Liverpool University, 1965, D42/PR12/24/11

Today levers and dials are replaced by computers and electronic gauges. The spectator is encouraged to appreciate the planning and hard work which takes place 'behind the scenes' so as to ensure their comfort and safety. *Tomorrow Today* frames itself as pure documentary, and marks a departure from the style and amenity-orientated work which fills most cruise promotion films. Unlike the advertising material produced by other companies, this wholly technological stance taken by Cunard is a testament to their desire to appear modern in the eyes of the public. This was a bold move in the face of the staunchly traditional and patriotic discourse which underpins a lot of cruise media.

Magic Ride (1969), a Cunard film produced in the same year as *Tomorrow Today*, deals exclusively with the hedonistic excesses of the cruise experience from the perspective of a young woman. Written and directed by Don Higgins, the film, as recalled by lead actress Anna Bentinck, was primarily produced by the now-defunct Augusta Films.¹⁰¹ The main production credit, however, goes to James Archibald and Associates, a company prolific in its production of short films created as support for larger cinema-released feature films. The company's other films produced in the same window as *Magic Ride* included *For the Community* (1969), *Island of Rainbows* (1969), *Sweet Thames* (1970) and *The Science of Farming* (1970).

A surprising but notable production credit is given to Universal, who display their logo in the film's opening seconds. This, however, appears to be as far as the company was involved with the making of the film. Instead, this is best explained by the fact that the film was originally planned as a nationwide supporting picture for

¹⁰¹ Anna Bentinck, Email interview with the actress, 8th September 2008.

Universal's Clint Eastwood vehicle *Two Mules for Sister Sarah* (1970). In the recollection of jazz and film composer Graham Collier, who created the music for *Magic Ride*, 'a distributor's strike meant it didn't go on national release with a major film called, I think, *Two Mules for Sister Sarah*.' He adds, 'Which meant I didn't make the money I had expected to make.'¹⁰²

For those, such as Collier, involved in the making of *Magic Ride*, it was something of a commercial disaster. Languishing unreleased due to political issues within the film's distribution company, it was consigned to Cunard's archives, never to see the light of day on the cinema screen. Footage from the film has recently been resurrected in a documentary, which recounts a history of the *Queen Elizabeth II*.¹⁰³

The film is starkly cinematic and stands out as one of the cruise film's most developed moments. The narrative follows an unnamed girl (Anna Bentinck), as she travels from her home to embark on the *QE2*'s maiden voyage. As she stands before the colossal vessel, she is suddenly transported back in time, transformed (via a disguised cut) into a school girl. What then follows, for the film's first third, is a flashback scene in which Bentinck's character finds her way inside the ship's hull as it is constructed a number of years earlier. As she wanders around this bare shell, she is confronted with trailing wires and sparking welders that cause her to run in fright. Finding herself deeper and deeper within the ship's maze-like interior, her surroundings begin to resemble the hellish industrial construction site of Paul Rotha's *Shipyard* (1935), complete with metallic clangs and sparking rivets. After several

¹⁰² Graham Collier, Email interview with the composer, 11th February 2009.

¹⁰³ *QE2: The Final Voyage*, Dir. Michael Wadding, BBC 2, 28/02/09

frenetic shots of horror-like evasion, the girl finds herself on the ship's unfinished bridge, where ship captain Commodore W.E. Warwick stands, poring over the ship's plans, surrounded by a number of colleagues. His warm smile indicates an end to the tense trauma of the sequence and we are propelled back into the present day. Bentinck's character boards the ship, her fears dispelled.

The remaining part of the film takes the form of a hazy montage of sequences and images which portray the girl's voyage aboard the ship. Outdoor sections are shot so as to accentuate the sun-drenched weather patterns experienced throughout the voyage, while lavish fades and psychedelic textures are used to establish a dream-like visual discourse which sustains the narrative. Music sequences (featuring the Applejacks and a song performed by Sandy Denny and written by Manfred Mann), are woven together with a loose romance narrative involving Bentinck's character and a man aboard the ship. The couple spend time together gazing out to sea, dancing to the performing bands and generally enjoying their romance upon the ocean waves. Their relationship both sustains the spectator's continued interest and furthers notions of the implicit romance and aura consistently attached to the sea.

Aside from the film's contrived introduction, which combines horror film tropes with the glamour found in contemporary European art films such as Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960) or British 'swinging 60s' works like *Darling* (1965), *Magic Ride* takes the form of a subjective and experimental documentary which follows Bentinck and her companion on a genuine trip aboard the *QE2*. The film's psychedelic visuals inevitably owe a debt to the photography of Ian Wilson, a cinematographer who would go on to work on Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (1992) amongst other high-

profile releases. In the year prior to *Magic Ride*, Wilson would work on *The Committee* (1968), a semi-improvised abstract work directed by Peter Sykes and featuring a central performance by Paul Jones of Manfred Mann. *The Committee* was a self-conscious product of its era, containing experimental sequences and challenging visual techniques. Its disorientating fades, shots and pans are reminiscent of some of the photography featured in the Cunard film. The desire to create a film exhibiting a similar sort of aesthetic experimentation is therefore clear.¹⁰⁴

Bentinck's tales of youthful exuberance aboard ship are successfully mirrored by Higgins' direction and Wilson's photography. After following a rigid and formulaic narrative during its initial minutes, life aboard the ship itself is shot with lucidity and begins to take on an entirely freeform structure, which is disorientating but suitably dream-like. *Magic Ride* demonstrates Cunard's changing attitude to film advertising in the 1960s. Perhaps spurred on by awards and film festival submissions, the film possesses a distinct level of experimentation unlike any cruise film that was made before or after. While a film like *Tomorrow Today* is strictly and staunchly informative, *Magic Ride* shows a definite appreciation of the power of style and the benefits of tapping into the zeitgeist of the time and implicitly but forcefully linking it to the service at hand. *Magic Ride* is a genuine product of the 1960s, a film that bears the hallmarks of filmmakers interested in the styles of both New Hollywood and Europe.

¹⁰⁴ Bentinck's memories of the filming of *Magic Ride* follow the subjective rendering that appears on the screen. After shooting the initial exposition scenes, the cast and crew simply enjoyed their time aboard, shooting footage of their experience as it happened. The Applejacks, who were a Northern 1960s beat group inspired by the successes of the genre, were genuinely aboard and are captured in the film performing live. Bentinck also claims that both Ringo Starr and George Harrison of The Beatles were travelling on the QE2, and that the DJ inexplicably refused to play an advanced copy of the new Beatles record.

1.8 An Institutional History of the Cruise Film

By plotting the advertising and filmmaking history of the four main shipping lines based in the UK, I have hoped to offer insight into the wealth of material produced from *Liner Cruising South* in 1933 to *Magic Ride* in 1969. As noted in my introduction, I decided to limit my coverage to works made prior to 1970. I did this for reasons of conciseness and focus, and to reflect the type of material available in the National Maritime Museum's film archive. As the proliferation of TV skyrocketed, interest in cruise film that was hired, screened and accompanied feature films, dramatically decreased. The cruise film's popularity was limited to an era when the vibrancy of film was called upon, but technology was yet to render it ubiquitous.

The films I have discussed in this chapter were often products of advertising initiatives, budget decisions and climatic reactions. Yet, as is notable in the number of creative individuals involved in these productions, the cruise film was an enterprise built using the stylistic tenets of cinema. Shipping lines responsible for the sponsorship of these works realised the power invested in celluloid. While it was the decisions of men in boardrooms and finance meetings that provided the means to produce such works, the vibrancy, accessibility and persuasiveness of film was forged via the craft of those who made them. With the means and manner of their production now established, I wish to move on to discuss the aesthetic origins and consistencies of the cruise film.

2.0 The aesthetic origins of the cruise film

In my previous chapter, I attempted to give an overview of the means and circumstances of the numerous cruise films that were produced in the post-war period by four mainstays of Britain's shipping industry. Orient Line, P&O, Union Castle and Cunard each managed to sponsor a significant number of cinematic works which both promoted the act of cruising and perpetuated and influenced the trajectory of advertising practice throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. During the chapter, I emphasised the importance of filmic material that was derived from the interwar period. A number of examples from the British Documentary Movement were used to convey the extensive and important changes in thought and practice that went on within the British filmmaking tradition and within prototypical advertising practice. Shipping lines used the ubiquitous and popular image of ocean liners to encourage the production of works that celebrated ocean travel as a national and industrial feat. By tapping into this newly formed documentary tradition, that sought to foreground our collective achievements and draw attention to the dearth of human endeavour at their heart, shipping lines were able to advertise in surreptitious, yet effective ways. They achieved success in raising awareness and formulating a kind of brand identity that came not from earnest, straight-forward advertising, but was instead intrinsically bound up in grand, national celebrations of ships typified, for example, by the royal launch of liners and their triumphant arrival into port. Therefore, Britain's pre-war filmic output had a profound impact on the business and marketing side of the cruise film. Such films demonstrated to companies that they could make certain associations (implicit or otherwise) with documentarians, talented filmmakers, and various long-held associations with the sea, the ship and the exotic foreign land. This often took

place with sufficient subtlety that cruise films maintained an air of innocent public information, largely thanks to their pre-war associations with documentary and the traditions of the British Transport Film.

In this chapter, I am going to continue my exploration of the origins of the cruise film within a discussion of its aesthetic aspects. As a medium that would become increasingly popular and prevalent throughout the 1960s, advertising departments and filmmakers began to perceive the true power and worth of film in engaging with the spectator on a level more profound, detailed and direct than any static, paper medium. Returning to Grierson, the documentary movement, the British Transport Film and the feature film, I will attempt to demonstrate how the stylistic tendencies of the inter-war and pre-war period, pervaded cruise-related newsreels and short films which were available for rent and private screenings in the post-war period.

I will return to Basil Wright's *Liner Cruising South*, a film which, as I have outlined in my previous chapter, was largely responsible for pioneering a relationship between shipping lines and a group of filmmakers more frequently associated with documentary or the feature film. Here, I will examine its aesthetic legacy and, in particular, the various paradigms it established in its photographic style and treatment of narrative. As a product of Grierson's documentary movement, the cruise film fitted into a canon of work that focused repeatedly on a politicised, nationalistic vision of the working class male. I will attempt to deconstruct the aesthetic discourse with which this British figure is latently mechanised and linked to industry, and will endeavour to show the impact this process had on the post-war cruise film. The British documentary, the British Transport film and Wright's paradigmatic *Liner Cruising*

South also employed a number of poetic, aesthetic tendencies which I will attempt to foreground and interrogate.

I will move on to explore how aesthetic experimentation began to inform the works of the late 1960s, making particular reference to P&O's *World At Three* (1966) and Cunard's *Magic Ride* (1969). Of particular interest here is an aesthetic dichotomy, which begins to emerge and is inherent within two separate approaches to the cruise film. On one side lay filmmakers intent on projecting a portrayal of the sea that relied on the documentary aesthetics synonymous with a traditional, patriotic view of sea life. On the other were those willing to embrace the cultural changes of the 1960s and the visual experimentation that was beginning to impact profoundly on art and entertainment of the time. The two appear binaries, with the stuffy traditionalism of the former stifling the aspirational creativity of the latter. In a sense, this was a creative conflict informed by a generational divide. The established, patriotic traditions of the older cruise passengers were under threat from a younger set of potential customers: individuals riding a wave of political, social and cultural optimism, who were actively shaking off the meanings and associations which were expected of them. Shipping lines had to entertain the idea of changing with the times and appealing to a younger audience who craved an experience more attuned to the era in which they now lived. As the march towards commercialism continued, advertising was forced to become increasingly visual, deliberate, memorable and emotionally engaging. No longer was there room for simple information and straightforward documentary. Instead, style and aesthetics would move to the foreground, and with them advertising which promoted a lifestyle and set of aspirational ideals. Film construction, as a result, became far more complex and manipulative. It was contrived

to provoke desires and reach the heart of a new generation hungry for what they were beginning to see on billboards and glossy magazines. A filmmakers' ability to conjure up these reactions and associations was becoming increasingly clear and seen as a highly-prized skill.

The aesthetic development of the cruise film was therefore linked inextricably to both the changing cultural preoccupations of British society as a whole, and the creative desires of those who found themselves in a political and financial position to make films. It is important to bear in mind that the cruise film's relationship with culture is ultimately symbiotic. While the style of such a film would borrow extensively from the myriad of cultural signifiers, which began to surround the populace as a whole, it would also feed back into them, subtly forming a small part of the very cultural landscape by which it was informed. As I shall explore, the cruise film was on one hand constructed from a set of self-perpetuated structural and aesthetic tropes bound by the specific and familiar visual discourse that preceded it. On the other, it sought to find a relevant niche within a wider network of contemporary cultural artefacts.

2.1 Underpinnings: The Legacy of Grierson, and the British Documentary Movement

The pre-war British Documentary Movement would have a profound impact on filmmaking as a whole. Crucially, the movement combined the functional with the aesthetic. It produced films, which were on one hand instructional and apparently objective, full of information that was presented with a utilitarian, earnestness of tone that demanded seriousness and consideration. Yet on the other these films were

accessible and vibrant, made to entertain and affect, and to explore the techniques of filmmaking that generated a genuine and sometimes abstract response in the spectator.

The Empire Marketing Board Film Unit was made up of individuals who shared a collective vision and were interested in the construction of the cinematic image at its most fundamental level. Particular importance was placed on the power of documentary in its carefully contrived juxtaposition of image and sound, and the accessible, straightforward manner in which it was able to convey information. Grierson himself would write that documentary:

...gives generous access to the public. It is capable of direct description, simple analysis and commanding conclusion, and may, by its tempo'd and imagistic powers, be made easily persuasive.¹⁰⁵

For Grierson, even cinema at its most basic was a form that was engaging, manipulative and easily steered and controlled. To begin with, the Documentary Movement was positioned in direct opposition to the Hollywood film machine. As Robert Murphy suggests:

[...] initially, the movement was promoted as a heroic struggle by gifted and principled film-makers against both the banality

¹⁰⁵ Forsyth Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p.14.

of the commercial industry and the interference of corporate bureaucrats.¹⁰⁶

This struggle, as reflected by the output of the Documentary Movement itself, was opposed to the aesthetic and ideological tropes projected by Hollywood. It also attempted to exude a sense of responsibility befitting the growing acceptance of cinema's undoubted potency as an agent of social criticism, commentary and social change. It endeavoured to produce a cinematic product that was reflective of Britain itself. As Andrew Higson suggests, there was an:

ideological struggle taking place on the terrain of cinema: the struggle to establish an authentic, indigenous national cinema in response to the dominance of Hollywood, or rather, to the idea of Hollywood as an irresponsible cinema of spectacle and "escapism."¹⁰⁷

The output of the British Documentary Movement was originally termed by Grierson 'social not aesthetic'.¹⁰⁸ His emphasis lay on a socio-political illumination of the British working class that painted it as a vital social and economic force. He was intent on shedding a genuine and objective light, whilst using filmic contrivance and manipulation to foreground something he saw as important and largely neglected.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Murphy (ed.), *The British Cinema Book* (London: BFI Publishing, 2001), p.63.

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Higson, 'Britain's Outstanding Contribution to the Film': The documentary-realist tradition in Charles Barr (ed.) *All Our Yesterdays – 90 Years of British Cinema* (London: BFI, 1996), p.34.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Rotha, *Documentary Film* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936), p.105.

Yet, despite Grierson's own declarations to the contrary, the output created with this mission statement in mind, inevitably straddled this social/aesthetic dichotomy. In an effort to distance itself from Hollywood and illuminate the British working class, Grierson's fellow filmmakers would set about formulating their own stylistic discourse which best suited an unadorned, British portrayal of the working classes. As Charles Barr describes:

Although Grierson in retrospect talks of the 'quite unaesthetic purpose' of documentary, it is clear that his earlier and highly influential definition of documentary as 'the creative interpretation of actuality' depends upon a strong aesthetic sense and purpose: this is no naïve 'window-on-the-world' conception of documentary realism as mere record. On the contrary, it is an acknowledgement that it is aesthetic principles which determine the particular combination of sounds and images that make up a film, and which produce one desired view of the social world rather than another.¹⁰⁹

The promotional works of shipping lines may appear a far cry from the earnest and politicised basis of the British Documentary Movement, yet the products and theorising of the Grierson era would form the foundation of a British cinematic tradition. While this would later multiply into a diverse set of branches with a critical emphasis on the cinematic feature, the movement gave British filmmaking an identity and confidence that had previously been missing.

¹⁰⁹ Barr (1996), p.76.

For the cruise film specifically, the Documentary Movement also helped to establish a set of aesthetic rules that would allow industry and the products of industry to be perceived with beauty. It also allowed, within sponsored filmmaking as a whole, some kind of reconciliation between the needs of the sponsor, and the desires of the filmmaker to create something fulfilling on an artistic level. As Grierson himself asserted:

When it came to making industry not ugly for people, but a matter of beauty, so that people would accept their industrial selves, so that they would not revolt against their industrial selves, as they did in the late 19th century, who initiated the finding of beauty in industry? The British government - as a matter of policy.¹¹⁰

With the EMB and GPO, Grierson transcended this creative-commercial dichotomy by, as Erik Barnouw observes, 'putting himself firmly between sponsor and artist.'¹¹¹ He believed in the social policy of the government and, as a result, found a natural, aesthetically appropriate discourse, which satisfied both impulses.

Night Mail (1936) is perhaps the most famous product of the British Documentary Movement, and, while it was directed by Harry Watt and Basil Wright, it was produced, aided and partially narrated by Grierson. The film therefore adheres solidly

¹¹⁰ Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1993), p.91.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

to his general vision. It also deals with a travel service, designed, like the British Transport Films that followed, to highlight and glamorise the national rail network. The film was made a few years after Wright's own *Liner Cruising South*, but is particularly useful as a critically lauded, paradigmatic comparison piece that would set a number of lasting filmic precedents.

2.2 International Nationalism in *Night Mail* and *Liner Cruising South*

Night Mail follows the journey of an express train as it snakes across the nation, delivering and receiving mail packages. Consisting of external and internal shots, the film captures both the dedication of the staff aboard the train and the complex and often thrilling mechanics of the high-speed mail acquisition process. A rough chronology of the train's journey is presented, along with snatches of diegetic dialogue. Whilst the film is accompanied by a voice over, it reflects a high level of attempted visual actuality throughout. This sits rather incongruously with a poem that is read over the film's conclusive sequence. W H Auden's verse, which is entirely informed by the train's journey, is frenetic, rhythmic, and celebratory. It imbues accompanying images with a patriotic fervour that is accentuated by the poem's rhythmic pace. *Night Mail*'s marriage of documentary with this literary narration would, as I shall discuss later in this chapter, find its way into the filmic repertoire of many cruise films. In the short term, this early integration of the documentary and the literary, demonstrates the willingness of the EMB filmmakers to experiment beyond the limits of pure actuality footage and stray into something, which satisfied a desire for the entertainment of poetics alongside the objectivity of documentary.

Within its documentary aspirations, *Night Mail* exudes an obsessive desire to expose and foreground the intricacies and details of these everyday, national processes. Interestingly, in doing so, the film rather problematizes its patriotic, nationalistic message. Like the cruise film, which constantly seeks to strike a balance between a specifically British discourse and a particular brand of multi-culturalism implicit in its consistent depictions of the foreign, *Night Mail* faces a ‘paradox of nationalism and internationalism’ in its portrayal of an international process.¹¹² In furtherance of this dichotomy, Auden’s verse makes several references to foreign nations that conjure up images of a global enterprise: ‘And gossip, gossip from all the nations...Notes from overseas to Hebrides / Written on paper of every hue.’

Forsyth Hardy suggests that this internationalism results in a dilution of the film’s imperial endeavour and lessens the effectiveness of its attempt to consolidate and foreground Britain’s robust transport infrastructure.¹¹³ I would suggest that within the meeting of binaries we perceive in this paradoxical agenda of internationalism and nationalism, a celebration of the hypernational qualities inherent in the Imperial are brought to the fore. The Empire, by its very definition, is an international force that seeks to exert nationalist influence on an international scale.

The very same argument can be applied to the latent paradox which lies at the heart of the cruise film form. Possessing the desire and means to explore the world within sailing craft and ocean liners is a celebration of the spoils of imperialism. As evidenced within many images within the travel film, the cruise passenger may take on

¹¹² Hardy (2001), p.18.

¹¹³ Ibid.

some of the visual and behavioural traits of the people they visit, but these are tokenistic gestures imbued with an implicit and conscious sense of the proprietorial. Essentially, embarking on a cruise abroad inevitably heightens our personal and collective sense of national identity by presenting us directly with the Other. Only as ‘foreigners’ do we become acutely aware of the national and cultural traits that shape, define, bind and distinguish us.

Yet, some of the EMB’s output would problematise this sense of British pride via an implicit but heavily loaded representation of the British landscape. In Basil Wright’s Empire Marketing Board-produced *Liner Cruising South* (1933), the film begins with the intertitle ‘Winter in England is sometimes rather grim.’ [Fig.5] This statement is followed by a number of static and intentionally bland shots of grey fauna and foliage. In Fig.6, a tree stands silhouetted against a grey sky, indistinct shadows enveloping the base of the frame. This is followed by a series of panning shots (emulating the spectator’s train journey towards the coast) that depict endless chimney pots and dark stone walls [Fig.7]. These briefly open out to reveal a scene of British industrialism. A factory front is shown to the right along with a number of small houses to the left [Fig.8]. The vista is far from picturesque and emphasises the brutal, utilitarian grimness of industry and its effects on the day-to-day residential existence of the population at large. This initial image of Britain is resoundingly negative, being specifically framed and juxtaposed so as to create a grim vision that will contrast with the rolling waves and palms of the Caribbean (featured later in the film). It is worth noting that the visual discourse deployed in these examples runs directly at odds with the beautifully framed, luscious depictions of the British countryside found in Edgar Anstey’s British Transport Film initiative. These films, which were responsible for an

important tradition of travel documentary that I will move on to discuss, sought to glamorise and advertise Britain as a holiday destination. Wright's film, in contrast, would use it as a symbol of the banal and the everyday, not a destination but a point of departure.



Fig.5: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.6: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

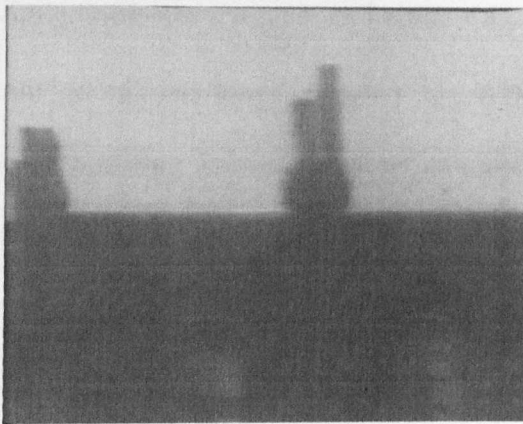


Fig.7: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.8: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

This short initial sequence is followed by a grand introduction to Orient Line's *Orford*, which is the main setting for the rest of the film. The spectator's troubled view of British industrialism is realigned, justified and legitimised by the existence of this towering symbol of modernity that cuts through the ocean waves. While the spectator has briefly witnessed the drab and desolate industrial landscape, this is quickly forgotten when presented with the iconic spectacle of the ocean liner.

Wright here uses Britain's perceived grimness in a rather conflicted way, both gesturing towards its unassailably negative aesthetic position and celebrating the fruits of its output. *Night Mail* exhibits a similar dichotomy, in a sequence that is near-identical to *Liner Cruising South* in its shot construction. As the train barrels across the British landscape, we are presented with a set of industrial images; greying locales that feed into one another. Meanwhile, the narrator reads out the names of a series of industrial towns in a monotone, instantly tarring them with the same dreary association Wright conjures up at the beginning of *Liner Cruising South*. Yet, again, this apparent negativity is simply another means of drawing attention to a national service of the highest quality. The sheer number of towns listed emphasises the length of the train's journey, while the homogenised nature of the footage that plays beneath it, is an aesthetic, subjective concession to this same sense of endlessness. As seen in the title of Humphrey Jennings' film, *The Dim Little Island* (1948) made more than a decade later in a time of post-war depression, the Documentarists were not afraid to play upon Britain's widely bemoaned aspects in their creation of a broadly affectionate portrait.

Within *Liner Cruising South* and *Night Mail*, we can discern a distinct aesthetic construction of two nationally bound processes. Important to my argument is the manner in which we see Wright and Watts sew a distinct thread of nationalism into the fabric of the images that are presented. In each film, the ship and train respectively are the focal points of the spectator's attention and the aesthetic narrative's celebration. This inherent, if sometimes problematic, nationalistic treatment of the industrial object is one of the documentary movement's most powerful legacies. There is a sense that this celebration is concentrated on the very municipal structures which underpin

British society. This would be further confounded in times of war, as people sought solace and collective security in the importance of industry.

Yet, it was not just the machine that came to represent Britain's celebrated industrial endeavour. The man who worked within industry, surrounded by the brutal mechanics of his craft, came to represent a grit and determination that was synonymous with the EMB's version of Britain as a nation. The cruise film, with its treatment of shipbuilder, sailor and vessel, would foreground this collective vision of Britain.

2.3 The face of the machine: The Documentary Movement's patriotic aesthetic

The film output of the 1930s documentary movement sees the construction of an aesthetic and metaphysical link between the British working man and the inanimate product or receiver of his toils. The filmic vocabulary created by Grierson and other British documentarians in the visual figuration of man and machine, would filter into a broader discourse evident in later years. Cruise films by all four shipping lines contain a foregrounding of a relationship between the human and the mechanical. This visual marriage is inherently nationalistic, and something that was first developed within the work of the Documentary Movement. I will discuss further the development of the ship as a figurative entity in a later chapter (and, more broadly, its interaction with its passengers and crew).

Like the train in *Night Mail*, the ship in Wright's *Liner Cruising South*, is portrayed as a 'powerful symbol of modernity.'¹¹⁴ Wright juxtaposes the introductory sequence of flat, sombre images of the British countryside with a series of shots of the *Orford* that foreground its size and magnificence. Initially, the ship's funnel is presented [Fig.9], with steam billowing forcefully, as the metal structure bursts out of the confines of the frame. Next, the ship's engine telegraph is manipulated [Fig.10] and the ship departs. Both the steam's escape and the man's simple act give the spectator a firm visual signal of the ship's movement and the beginning of the film's narrative. The man responsible for the manipulation of the telegraph's lever remains obscured, his hidden face rendering him dehumanised. Wright then cuts to a side shot of the *Orford*, which is evidently photographed from a craft trailing the ship as it leaves port [Fig.11]. The camera struggles to contain its entire form within the frame as the vessel cuts through the ocean waves.

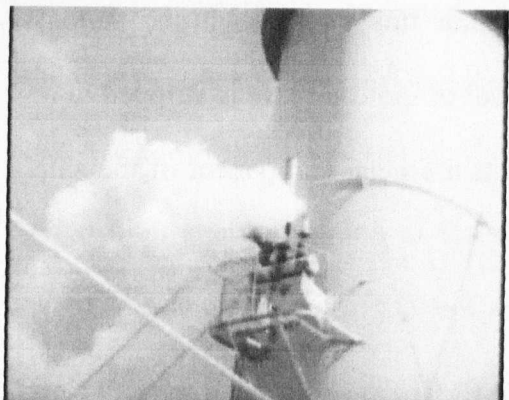


Fig.9: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

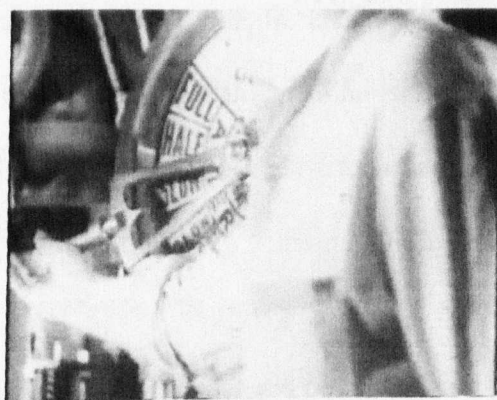


Fig.10: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

¹¹⁴ Ian Aitken, Review and Analysis, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/530415/index.html>, [Accessed 14.5.07]

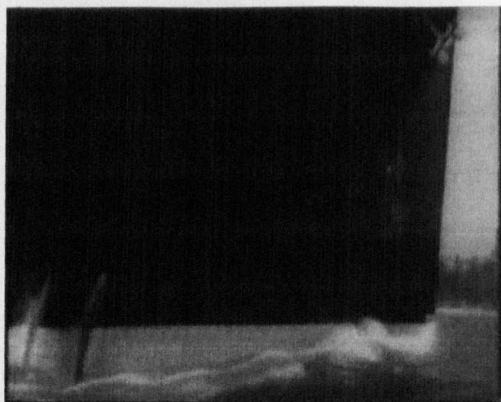


Fig.11: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.12: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

The images within this sequence contain our first glimpse of a human character within the context of the ship's departure. The sailor, whose face is hidden by the camera's tight framing, is responsible only for the movement of the telegraph. He is rendered purely as part of a larger machine, another component in a complex mass of moving parts. During this sequence, Wright treats the mechanical and the human in the same aesthetic terms. The stylistic consistency between these two entities predicated wider Griersonian ideals of the British worker. Within this simple act, the sailor is introduced as an efficient and uncompromising tool of industry. He is stripped of any human characteristics, but he is also celebrated as a crucial component of the ship's successful movement.

This idea is served elsewhere in the output of the EMB. Directed by Robert Flaherty, *Industrial Britain* (1931) depicts the workings of various grass-roots British industries. Mining, glass manufacture and precision aeroplane engineering are all explored, with consistent emphasis placed on both the men who doggedly complete the practical tasks at hand, and the machines with which they complete them. The depiction of the men is frequently experimental and divorced from the actuality evident in other areas of the

EMB's output. For example, during a sequence of the film which examines glass manufacture, one particular individual is shown skilfully blowing glass into shape [Fig.13]. The men involved in the act are, like the *Orford* in *Liner*, pictured in such close-up that they are decontextualised, and divorced from their environment.



Fig.13: *Industrial Britain* (1933)

The camera angles used within this sequence are unconventional and the act is arresting in appearance. As the man blows through a pipe his cheeks balloon outwards while his eyes remain focused and concentrated. The entire scene takes place against a black backdrop that lends the spectacle a theatrical air. The result of this aesthetic composition is a celebration of the physical spectacle itself, which is fetishised by Flaherty's camera as it maintains a series of close-ups. In Andrew Higson's words, 'the male body becomes the focus of this celebration, seen at its simplest in the countless close-ups of the male body at work.'¹¹⁵ For Higson, there is a perceivable dedication to the portrayal of the working man as a hero, and as symbolic of the British nation at its best.¹¹⁶ Yet within these images there is also a marriage of the man with the machine or implement that he manipulates. *Industrial Britain's*

¹¹⁵ Higson (1996), p.43.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

glassblower is fused to the pipe through which he blows, and – like *Liner*'s sailor – depicted only as a highly skilled and efficient worker, devoid of any other human characteristics.

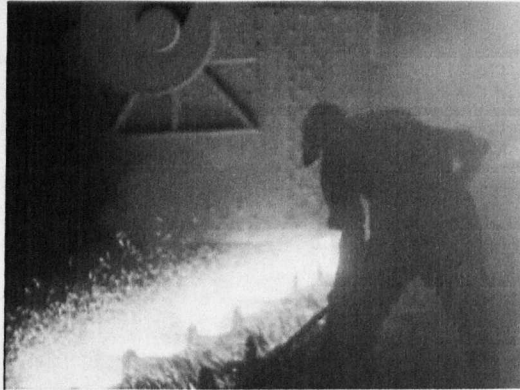


Fig.14: *Industrial Britain* (1931)

The contrived visual manner in which the working man is presented continues throughout the various occupations explored in *Industrial Britain*. As a steel worker forges a piece of metal [Fig.14], sparks fly around him as his physical form is silhouetted against the backdrop. Within Flaherty's striking composition, the man is juxtaposed with the flames and molten steel before him. He is twinned with the gritty and frightening aesthetics of the forge, and implicitly mechanised in this snapshot of action. Flaherty's composition is again conspicuous and predicates a version of the British worker engaged in toiling, repetitive action. We are made to confront and appreciate the physical, dehumanising reality of the industrial process.

Paul Rotha's *Shipyards* (1935) exhibits a further consolidation of this striking aesthetic approach to industry and the men that worked there. As I have argued previously, *Shipyards* sought to draw attention to Britain's shipbuilding industry and marked another collaborative project by Orient Line on the part of the EMB. The film

documents the construction of an Orient Line vessel at Barrow-in-Furness (although two identical vessels were in fact shot, allowing Rotha footage of what seemed like the same ship at different stages of completion).¹¹⁷ It is full of the diegetic sounds of workers (performing a similar function to those in *Night Mail*), alongside the clangs and sparks of industry. Steelwork is pummelled into shape, and rivets are wrestled into place by soot-encrusted men who sweat and toil against backdrops of licking flames and billowing smoke. Like *Industrial Britain*, the working man is fetishised amongst the artefacts of industry, and framed in close-up while engaged in acts that are physically synonymous with the relentless toiling of a machine. Aesthetically, Rotha uses an even greater level of stylisation than Flaherty. In one particular shot [Fig.15] two men are photographed from behind, the edges of the frame obscured by the shadow of industrial apparatus which surrounds them. Our view of the action is intentionally limited, and their act of interior fitting obscured. The shot is claustrophobic and set as if deep within the bowels of a machine.



Fig.15: *Industrial Britain* (1931)



Fig.16: *Industrial Britain* (1931)

¹¹⁷ Tim Boon, Comment and Analysis, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/560369/> [Accessed 27/05/09]

Along with renderings of man and machine, Rotha frequently isolates the working man, dwelling upon human features that are a picture of intense, unremitting concentration [Fig.16]. As in Flaherty's *Industrial Britain*, these close-ups are at odd angles, in frames designed to recontextualise and fetishise the human form within this brutal realm of metal and fire.

Alberto Cavalcanti's *Coal Face* (1935) also employs the aesthetic discourse found in *Industrial Britain* and *Shipyards* and is perhaps the most effective example of the EMB's idealised, mechanistic portrait of the British worker. Its presentation of coal workers is highly fetishistic. As Higson discusses, Cavalcanti moves away from a documentary portrait and instead lingers upon the human form as 'shape':

For example, in *Coalface*, a film in which the human being is so often displaced by the machinery to the margins of the frame, the only sustained close-ups are of semi-naked miners. Such celebration may also help to explain the (very common) preference for dusk/dawn shots in which the worker's individuality is effaced and he is seen – like the machinery he serves – as shape.¹¹⁸

These romanticised portraits of the British working class display a number of important similarities. Each depicts their characters using the same visual terms as the machines that are manipulated alongside them. There is a denial of the simple point-and-shoot techniques of straight-documentary or the character-driven needs of a

¹¹⁸ Higson quoted in Brian Winston, *Claiming the Real: The Documentary Film Revisited* (London: BFI, 1995), p.46.

Hollywood narrative. Instead, there exists a definite attempt to convey a profound sense of the national importance of these men. This importance is expressed through the use of a consistent visual discourse that frames the mechanical movements of these individuals within a poetically realised mise-en-scene. The patriotic celebration at the heart of these depictions is expressed through this distinctive aesthetic style.

Although an earlier and less conspicuously stylised example of the government-funded documentary film, *Liner Cruising South* displays its own brand of patriotic aestheticism. In one particular sequence that takes place upon deck, the captain of the *Orford* greets an emerging crewmember. The first shot [Fig.17] shows a sailor who enters from the left of frame, stands and then salutes. He is conspicuously positioned and never breaches the second two thirds of the frame. To his right are ventilators and two of the ship's funnels. This is echoed by Fig.18, in which both the sailor and officer converse for a few seconds. The camera takes a low angle so as to capture the images of both men and the funnel of the ship that towers above them.

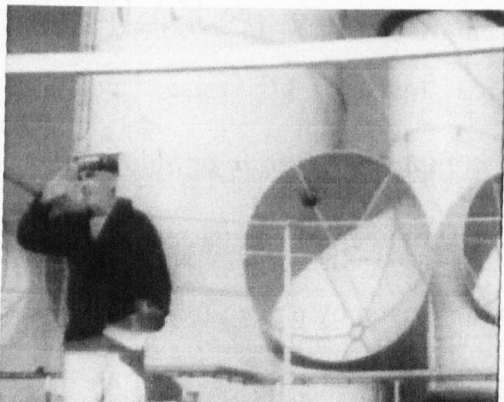


Fig.17: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.18: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.19: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

In the next shot, a low camera angle is employed as we are shown the officer steering the *Orford* [Fig.19]. The shot places the spectator down a companionway and amongst the ship's metal handrails and struts.

The functional structures of the ship are foregrounded in all three of these shots. Their composition is entirely governed by an aesthetic desire to present the film's human characters as an inseparable part of their surroundings. In the second shot, the captain even seems to melt into and converge with the bright white paintwork of the *Orford's* towering funnel, while in the third we can barely see him behind a companionway handrail as we gaze upwards towards his raised position. Aesthetization is less conspicuous in *Liner* than in *Industrial Britain* or *Shipyard*, but it constructs a *mise-en-scene* which is informed by certain consistent aesthetic decisions. Angles, composition and shot content are driven by a need to juxtapose the sailor with his craft in order to emphasise control and supreme efficiency. As in the striking shape of a steel-forged, or altered features of a glass blower, it is through these aesthetic decisions that the film's latent patriotism is primarily conveyed.

2.4 A continuing tradition: The British Transport Film and the rise of the travelogue

Edgar Anstey's British Transport Film initiative continued a tradition of British documentary filmmaking which celebrated the sights and sounds of home alongside the vehicles and municipal networks that allowed access to them. These films played upon the broad images of Britain created within the work of the EMB and GPO, and injected them with a sense of post-war collectivism engendered by the traumas of conflict. The work of the BTF was consistently affectionate, and most notably constructed formative and reassuring images of people enjoying life together as part of a group or family. If the EMB and GPO created a picture of the British worker engaged in a day's graft, the BTF endeavoured to foreground their leisure time. There is a distinct sense that in an age of recovery after the hardship of war, the images created by these films were popular in their ability to comfort by drawing attention to the simple, escapist beauty of the picturesque.

The rail, road and ferry network provided the practical means with which to achieve the act of travel at the heart of the BTF's numerous representations. Filmmakers frequently travelled aboard with the passengers they were filming, shooting footage as they passed across the landscape. As with the depiction of British industry in *Industrial Britain* or *Coalface*, these transport networks were explored in order to educate and inform. Yet, many of the films produced throughout the BTF's thirty-three year existence also contained a clear desire to celebrate and entertain. The travel film - or travelogue as it came to be known - shared much with a particular brand of cruise film which tended to follow a voyage from start to finish. Both foregrounded a journey by a group of people bound by a collective desire to derive enjoyment and

satisfaction from the act of travel. Crucially, the cruise film shared the travel film's tight control of the representation of the means of transport and the environment through which it journeyed. In my following analysis, I have highlighted a number of significant aesthetic consistencies between the British Transport Film and the cruise film. I refer to them here as a means of acknowledging the cruise film's role within a wider tradition of travel documentary making, and to suggest that the BTF represented a formative influence on the aesthetic decisions made by cruise film makers. I will draw attention to several stylistic trends that the Transport film exhibited, and attempt to frame these alongside similar moments in the commercial, cruise film space. The first of these trends involves the idea of visual framing and the relationship between the natural environment and the industrial icons of the ship and train. The second explores the notion of 'othering' and the concept of the dream within the spoken narration of these films. The third interrogates a renewed sense of affection for the municipal public services in the post-war period, and the fourth examines some of the more experimental techniques used in both film types. Intentionally, I have remained brief in my treatment of these ideas in relation to the cruise film, as they will each be further interrogated in later chapters. At the heart of these numerous consistencies is a furtherance of an aesthetic patriotism and affection that has its origins in the Griersonian documentary and which would be passed on to cruise films of all types.

The train was frequently pictured as an organic part of the idyllic, rural landscape in the British Transport Film. Explorations of populated points of interest were often punctuated with footage of the train on its journey between destinations. In such examples, the landscape is rendered as empty but beautiful, drawing attention to the huge expanses of rolling countryside spread across the nation, and allowing our gaze

to wander to the unstoppable progress of the train. In Sid Sharples' *West Country Journey* (1953), the camera captures footage of the sea from within a moving train [Fig.20]. The angle of the camera means that the train itself is pictured as part of the shot and stretches forward at the right of the frame. This composition serves to place the locomotive directly within the picturesque environment through which it journeys. Similarly, in George Lloyd's *A Letter From Wales* (1960), the camera finds the train nestled amongst foliage and rock faces as it ascends the sharp incline of Snowden [Fig.21]. In contrast to *Liner Cruising South* or *Night Mail*, which use footage from a train as a method of contrasting the grimness of the British landscape with that available on foreign shores, the British Transport Film celebrates this rural space by placing the train in its midst. The landscapes captured are vibrant and beautiful rather than monochrome and desolate, and they draw attention to a natural beauty which is not ruined by mechanisation, but benefits from it.



Fig.20: *West Country Journey* (1953)



Fig.21: *A Letter From Wales* (1960)



Fig.22: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)

The travelogue-style cruise film possessed a similarly simple structure to the work of the BTF, and was most widely used by Union Castle and P&O. Films by both companies would capture the ship in a range of different surroundings, and – like the BTF films – drew attention to the scenic. However, these films were shot abroad rather than at home. While the train consolidated a British landscape, the image of the cruise ship would implicitly but inevitably exert a sense of ownership upon foreign spaces. In *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966), the P&O liner *Canberra* is shown at the Port of Aden against a striking mountain vista [Fig.22]. This image, as in the British Transport Film, frames the object consciously and artfully within its surroundings. Use of such a shot gives the travelogue a sense of progress and emulates the journey it seeks to capture. Like the train, the ship is here used as an intrinsic, quasi-organic symbol of British industry and weds a method of transport with natural beauty so that both exude a comparable sense of worth and value. Yet, by using the same aesthetic terms as the British Transport Film, the travelogue cruise film slips into a problematic colonial discourse. As a symbol of maritime tradition, the ship looms over its surroundings rather than simply being part of them. Associations drift from neutral concerns of aesthetic beauty and power, to historically rooted proprietorship.

Aside from linking their craft to the surroundings through which they journey, both BTF and the cruise film shoot the train and the ship as pure industrial spectacle. This would be important in the creation of a visual discourse which built on an attitude to these objects as irrefutable industrial icons. Geoffrey Jones' *Snow* (1963) [Fig.23] contains numerous examples of a train approaching the camera, its trajectory accompanied by torrents of snow flung sideways as the wheels slide across the tracks. The train is fronted by a pointed mask-like panel which gives it a brutal and striking appearance and is indicative of a tendency to inflect it with a masculine, aggressive energy. The ship, which cuts through the ocean as the train through snow, is frequently rendered with a similar kind of foreboding, aggressive visual discourse. For example, in *Windsor Castle: The Story of a Ship* (1960), the eponymous vessel is in one shot depicted from a low angle, towering before us against the backdrop of the sky [Fig.24]. Such framing draws attention to the colossal size of the ship and places the spectator in a submissive position. Both shots of train and ship also render their subjects with an implicit sense of militarism. These vehicles, by virtue of their appearance and angle of capture, appear potent and dangerous. At the root of their presentation is an endeavour to draw attention to the brutal appeal of their design and a celebration of their industrial achievement.

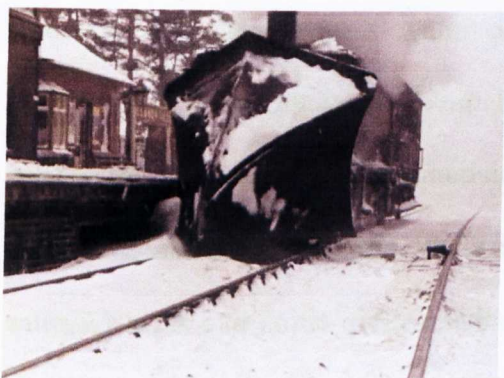


Fig.23: *Snow* (1963)



Fig.24: *Windsor Castle: The Story of a Ship*

The poetics that inform the visuals of the BTF extend to the spoken narration that accompanies them. Here we find another enlightening link to the travelogue cruise film. In crafting an appealing portrait of the British landscape, the voiceover narration frequently employs a discourse which, rather paradoxically, evokes both comforting, nostalgic familiarity and a sense of othering. *West Country Journey* contains the following passage:

You will find exhilaration in the surf that breaks and drags on the Atlantic shores. You will find the sun's magic on the sands of the west. If this were the only magic, if these would be the only mysteries, they would be enough. But this is only the edge of the land and this is only the fringe of the mystery.¹¹⁹

A familiar image of the tide's endless rise and fall leads into, by way of the 'sun's magic', a suggestion of the land's mysteries. This contrasting juxtaposition combines the simple beauty of spectacle with a promise of further, unseen and unspoken elements. The word 'mystery', uttered as characters onscreen are shown clambering towards a coastal cave, draws attention to the image's otherness. The location presented is British, yet it is suddenly attributed the allure of the foreign. As I will move on to discuss in my chapter entitled 'Colonialism and the Cruise', the cruise film would employ a very similar, exotic discourse of otherness in its treatment of the foreign landscape. It is of particular note here that, within films like *West Country*

¹¹⁹ *West Country Journey*

Journey, this othering was prevalent within travelogues of all kinds, be it those based abroad or at home. The intention behind the use of exotic discourse in the cruise travelogue is thus clouded by its existence in the output of the BTF. While I will argue that exotic othering was used as an implicit means of selling the cruise as a colonial emulation for prospective passengers, its existence within the British holiday discourse of the BTF suggests that it was also employed within a wider discourse of travel writing and filmmaking.

As part of this wider travel discourse, the BTF travelogue endeavoured to capture the British holiday experience and the act of travel in figurative terms. Movement and leisure evoked something beyond the parameters of actuality and became articulated by poetic language and metaphor. In Tony Thompson's BTF film *Elizabethan Express* (1954), a Gresley *Silver Fox* locomotive is shown journeying from London to Edinburgh on a non-stop service. Close to the end of the film, as the train is reaching its final destination, the narrator reads:

The loud hiss of steam
As the train seems to slow
To the pace of a cloud
Breaks the afternoon task
And disperses the dream. (*Elizabethan Express*)

This passage is both descriptive and poetic. It marks a moment when the train seems to pass from the abstract and re-enter the realms of reality, as the 'dream' is dispersed. The act of travel is figuratively compared to the otherworldly flickerings of the

unconscious. To travel is to dream; to enter a realm of fantasy and suggestion that is in some ways divorced from the banality of regular consciousness. Again, this is an aesthetic notion that would be extensively deployed in the cruise travelogue in both narration tracks and the images used. For example, P&O's *Runaway To Sea* (1965) employs a flash-back dissolve during the film's introduction, while *Ocean Liner Holiday* features a hazy, image-led narration which recalls information purely from memory. Both films connote a dream state and attempt to pull the representation of the travel experience away from its literal moorings into something suggestively abstract.

Throughout the 1960s, this sense of abstraction would develop into a highly stylised approach to filmmaking which indulged the creative whims of the artistic minds behind the camera. *Snow* features a narrative which is led purely by the film's minimal, highly rhythmic soundtrack. As the rhythm section builds a groove, shots are tightly controlled and cut directly to the beat. This results in a series of rapid changes of pace, as the speed of cuts fluctuates along with the music. The film's introduction takes the form of a series of static images, but as the train and music gather pace, shots become so frenetic that their content cannot be easily identified.

The experimental editing style found in *Snow* is consistent with a growing sense of aesthetic experimentation in the film material sponsored by cruise companies. As I will move on to discuss, P&O's *World At Three* (1966) and Cunard's *Magic Ride* (1969) both experimented with this rhythmic editing in an effort to capture the vibrancy of their travel experiences.

Elsewhere in the BTF's output poetic visuals and narration were used to evoke something different. *The Elephant Will Never Forget* (1953) is a eulogy to the London tram network, and was written, shot and edited during the final days of the network's operation. Characterised by heavily loaded and melancholic language, the film features footage of the crowds of people who sought to pay their respects to the much-loved tram. In fact, its capture of this fervent affection for a municipal, public network is its greatest legacy. In its gathered crowds and smiling passengers, it perfectly sums up the spirit of collectivism that existed in immediate post-war Britain. People found collective meaning in the shared services that had represented something important during the days of wartime. This lasting spirit inevitably coloured and further reinforced the country's attitude to travel networks. There was a sense of real public ownership of these services and an awareness of the part they had played in Britain's successful war effort. The strength of patriotic spirit located within *The Elephant Will Never Forget* helps explain the respect vested in such icons of British industry within works of later years. While the 1960s would see the pervasion of consumer individualism within society, the affection and respect for travel services were by this point deeply ingrained within collective consciousness and British film culture. The consistent humanisation of the industrial object would continue within the work of cruise film makers.

2.5 Redeployment of style: The cruise film's aesthetic traditionalism in the face of a new age

I have spent significant time considering the visual trends found within the work of Britain's government-sanctioned documentarists. Many of these focus on the persistent tendency to attribute the human to the mechanical, or at least glamorise and celebrate it as if organic and living. In contrast to these documentary works, the cruise film's remit was different. In an era of increasing commercial concern, there was a growing awareness, as the years passed, that cruise promotion could not rely on traditional representations alone. In the post-war period, we are presented with a dichotomous combination of the traditional alongside the initial, tentative exploration of the contemporary. In the following, I will explore the manner in which the established, patriotic aesthetic consistencies that I have alluded to were retained, but began to adapt subtly with time. Particularly notable is a continuing and repeated appearance of sequences which serve to tie the figure of the sailor with the machine he controls.

The Orient Line-produced *I Am A Passenger* (1960) is in some ways a direct relation of Wright's *Liner Cruising South*. Although production credits on the film appear to have been lost, it would be the final film Orient Line would sponsor before their merger with P&O. The sequence which introduces the ship's crew in *I Am A Passenger* is markedly similar in construction to that found in *Liner*. In particular, a patriotic marriage of the human workforce and their instruments is retained.

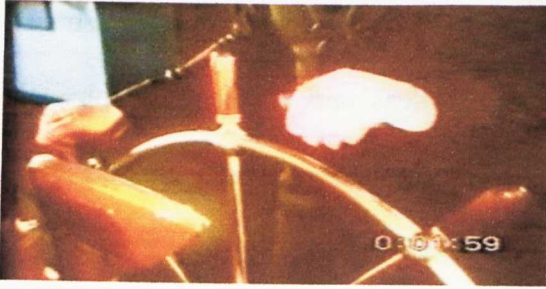


Fig.25: *I Am A Passenger* (1960)



Fig.26: *I Am A Passenger* (1960)



Fig.27: *I Am A Passenger* (1960)



Fig.28: *I Am A Passenger* (1960)

In the first shot [Fig.25] we are shown a ship's wheel being rotated. Like the opening shots of *Liner Cruising South*, the man responsible for the wheel's movement is partially concealed, only his hands visible upon its gleaming circumference. The shot draws specific attention to the instrument, and in particular, its smooth movement and appearance. The director then cuts to a close up of a sailor's face [Fig.26], his expression a picture of intense concentration. We linger upon this image for a number of seconds, no longer privy to the act in which he is engaged, but instead forced to gaze at his still features. The pace and separation of this sequence makes little sense in terms of providing the spectator with a clear and accurate picture of the act of navigation at hand. There is no following shot of the ship's trajectory to solidify the consequences of this action, and instead we are presented with a close up of a gleaming, gold instrument [Fig.27]. These close-ups perform a fetishising function, both imbuing the ship's instruments and the sailor himself in an affectionate golden

glow. The gleaming dial and wheel are shot using the same tight framing as the man's intense features. Each emphasises a simple, effortless and aesthetically pleasing efficiency, conjuring up the confident mechanics of a well-maintained machine.



Fig.29: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)



Fig.30: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

Richard Lester's *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965), which was produced by Union Castle, contains a sequence which is almost identical to that found in the Orient Line film. The first shot depicts a sailor manning the ship, his gaze locked to the instruments as he rotates the vessel's wheel [Fig.29]. Lester's camera then cuts to the dials in question, and shows the sailor's blurred reflection visible in the gleam of the circular object [Fig.30]. The man and his instruments are fused in this moment. They literally occupy the same physical space on the screen and are visually combined to form a single entity. By virtue of Lester's composition, the sailor and his machine physically converge before our eyes.

A year later, Frederic Goode's ambitious *World At Three* (P&O 1966) saw a more playful take on a similar navigation sequence to the two discussed above. One particular series of images begins with a sailor crouched over an instrument upon a backdrop of the *Oriana's* funnel [Fig.31]. The composition of this shot is reminiscent

of Wright's conspicuous placement of his officer subjects in *Liner Cruising South*. Unlike Wright's film, *World At Three*'s officer wears a pair of sunglasses as he goes about his business. Goode then cuts to the sailor's walk into the ship's main Bridge area, where he busies himself with a map and ruler, with the sunglasses remaining clamped to his face [Fig.32]. The backdrop here is less familiar and draws attention to the technology at work behind the scenes.



Fig.31: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.32: *World At Three* (1966)

Both of these shots draw attention to an aesthetic dichotomy that runs through the heart of *World At Three*. We see a continued use of the iconography found in Wright's film made three decades earlier, within the sailor's uniform, the instruments used and the ship's explicit and familiar framing as a backdrop. However, alongside this run two examples of a contemporary image synonymous with the 1960s as a decade of forward-thinking change. The sailor's sunglasses are conspicuously placed as a simple accessory which entirely realigns the cultural signification of the sailor's uniform. Associated with Britain's maritime past and a set of traditional, deeply rooted values, the uniform is reappropriated as a kitsch series of familiar images, stripped of their original meaning and redeployed in an affected manner. Whilst the

convergence of man and machine is still on display in the sailor's unremitting and focused work, the presence of the sunglasses places him within a contemporary context and subverts the seriousness of this idea which is found within the earlier work of the Documentarists. Additionally, the banks of technology on show behind the officer strengthens this sense of modernity, yet further retain a juxtaposition of the human and the machine. The treatment of this aesthetic idea by Frederic Goode exemplifies the dichotomous nature of the post-war cruise film. Traditionalism is maintained, yet the icons of the contemporary era begin to creep to the surface.

All three examples I have alluded to illuminate one particular strand of traditional visual discourse which runs through several examples of the post-war cruise film. While this kind of promotional film is diverse in origin and style, and has been drawn together here by virtue of shared subject matter, it is within the construction of these repeated moments that the post-war cruise film seemingly seeks to align itself as a tradition.

2.6 The Beautiful, the Real and the Safe – Motivations behind the Cruise Film's Aesthetic Flourish

There is some contention amongst critics when discussing the long-term intentions of the key players in the Documentary Movement. On one side, the EMB's mission statement and Grierson's own view as a propagandist, revolved around the power of cinema as a persuasive, political tool. On the other, there was a seeming desire to create art, 'poetic documentary' as Grierson put it, that somehow went beyond the remit of image capture, and created something with the power to possess a weight of

meaning and importance within the very texture of its construction.¹²⁰ Most agree that along with the onset of economic depression in the 1930s, there was a discernable ‘shift in emphasis from aesthetic to social purpose’ within the work of these filmmakers.¹²¹ Early dreams of poetic experimentation were tempered by a greater need to capture the spark of a Britain which was, after the war, fading in its own sense of self, battered by years of conflict and stagnating in a global depression. Paul Rotha, filmmaker and contemporary critic of the movement, would mention this ideological shift in his discussion of Grierson’s early film, *Drifters* (1929).

The interest of those of us who first became involved in British documentary, who joined Grierson after the making of *Drifters*, was at the time an aesthetic one. It was only later, through the thirties, because of the whole economic and social background of this country plus the rest of the world as a result of the Wall Street crash, the fantastic growth of unemployment, the Spanish Civil War, and so on, that we grew alive to the political significance of what was happening in the world. I think we tried then to express our point of view towards what was happening.¹²²

Rotha, as a voice from inside the Documentary Movement itself, emphasises this shift in approach, but also highlights the self-conscious nature of the group’s ‘aesthetic’ endeavour. Whilst there is a suggestion that the 1930s saw this interest in

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary: The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson* (California: University of California Press, 1976), p.80.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* p.79.

¹²² *Ibid.* p.80.

experimentation and aesthetics disappear in the face of a greater political and social concern, I would argue that, within the output of the EMB, GPO and BTF film units, there existed a consistent, if largely secondary, preoccupation with the nature and means of filmmaking itself. Through a distinctive aesthetic style and approach, the concerns of the movement were more effectively expressed.

In an exploration of this idea, Grierson's 'poetic documentary' concept becomes particularly useful. There is a perceptible and growing realisation that within the documentary - and in later years the cruise film - content and style had to converge for the greatest successes to be realised. In cruise films especially, a discernable style, palpable within the presentation of events onscreen, began to take on a heightened importance within the entire endeavour. Yet, there remained a sizable weight placed on the realism of the images used. The cruise film was first and foremost a filmic representation of an achievable touristic experience. Documentary remained at its heart, but this was undoubtedly rendered as 'poetically' as was acceptable. Poetry, in the cruise film at least, would eventually become synonymous with the alluring and the exotic, along with the romantic and the dream-like.

Night Mail's treatment of 'poetic documentary' combined actuality footage with real poetry. W H Auden's verse is frenetic and rhythmic, heightened by the sound of wheels on rails and footage of the British countryside as it passes by at speed. According to co-director Harry Watt, narrator Stuart Legg would read the poem until he ran out of breath, with multiple takes spliced together so that there were no pauses or rests.¹²³ This technique was experimental, formulated with stylistic ideals in mind.

¹²³ Ibid., p.76.

It marks a moment when the film moves beyond the remit of pure documentary, and instead makes concessions to audience engagement on an emotional level. This strain of creativity seemed to stem largely from Auden himself. Basil Wright claims ‘He tended sometimes to make verbal images which were too violent for the pictorial content.’ Wright highlights the poet’s inappropriately visceral or confrontational lines, which were later scrubbed from the final cut.¹²⁴ What we get from *Night Mail* is something we largely get from the cruise film too: a compromise of the artistic and the functional, a poetic tendency ultimately subordinated to the needs of what would later develop into an advertising discourse. Auden’s words, their relentless rhythm, their imagistic power, serve primarily to glamorise and to heighten the vitality of the train’s utilitarian role. Whilst images and narration offers pure education and information, poetry provides emotional accessibility.

In *Liner Cruising South* – which I again use as a formative and paradigmatic example of the cruise film - the visual poetics on show ultimately follow a similar set of rules. Visual motifs, compositions, and elements of the mise-en-scene are each partially governed and dictated by a desire to show a life aboard ship that would reflect positively on the experience offered by the film’s sponsors. This is not to say, however, that Wright had no interest in the simple beauty of the footage he was adopting. *Song of Ceylon* (1933), was produced the same year as *Liner Cruising South*, and was probably the most notable and critically recognised product of Wright’s Orient-sanctioned voyages across the Mediterranean. The film is full of experimental sound and image use, yet was made with money from the Empire Tea Bureau and ultimately sought to draw attention to some of the processes involved in

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.72.

the tea industry while documenting the customs and traditions specific to the people of Ceylon (later Sri Lanka). However, what Wright created was ultimately an ode to the beauty of the nation and its people using techniques that effectively emphasised the nation's exotic otherness. Disparate but potent images fade into one another while sounds and music merge on the film's soundtrack. The experimental, unfamiliar nature of the film discourse that is created is juxtaposed directly with the strange customs of the indigenous people on screen. We are made to associate the two, as Wright's divergent technique seems to connote a divergent culture. As spectators, we are left with a film that moves beyond the remit originally placed upon Wright. *Song of Ceylon* blooms into a work which exists on its own terms, is led by a unique and engaging set of aesthetic principles, and somehow manages to fulfil both the needs and desires of its sponsors and Wright's own creative preoccupations.

While *Liner Cruising South* is far more restrained in its execution than *Song of Ceylon*, we see a similar balance struck between the loose requests of its commercial sponsors and the artistic desires and whims of Wright as a filmmaker. This balance is one that would inform the conception and execution of many such short works of later years (including those created by the *Free Cinema* movement in the 1950s and 1960s) and, in particular, the post-war cruise films commissioned by P&O, Cunard, Orient Line and Union Castle.

As the *Orford* is first introduced in *Liner*, one of the film's many intertitle's announces, 'On a big liner there is room to do anything – or nothing' [Fig.33]. This statement is purely informational, containing a sentiment which advertises the luxurious, relaxing nature of oceanic travel. Wright propounds the discourse of Orient

Line itself, relaying a message that might appear in a brochure or other piece of promotional literature. However, juxtaposed alongside this statement is a static shot of what appears to be some artfully draped lines which secure a lifeboat in place [Fig.34].

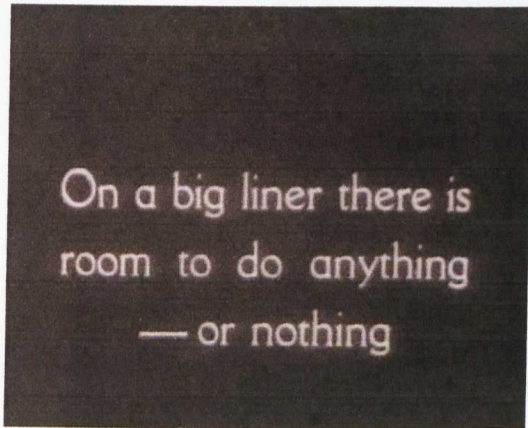


Fig.33: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

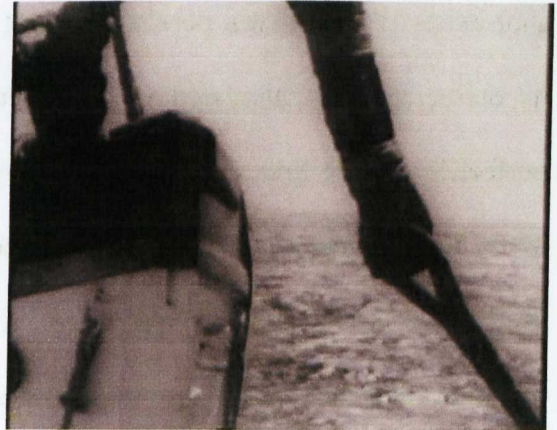


Fig.34: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

As a light breeze shakes the rigging, in the background we are shown the swelling, glistening ocean. The shot's primary function is to make visual the preceding statement's offer, introducing a sequence that depicts passengers enjoying comfort and luxury. However, this moment also represents a visual digression that moves away from the film's predominantly straightforward use of imagery. The different objects in the frame are photographed in such close up that they cannot be properly recognised, and are too obscured to be conventionally appreciated. The boat, rope, and sea are instead decontextualised, abstracted from their recognised forms by a shot that uses them as aesthetic objects rather than functional ones. We are reminded here of the glass blower in Flaherty's *Industrial Britain*, whose fetishised, aesthetically foregrounded representation begins to detach him, for a moment, from the social, instructional meanings of the film's primary narrative concern.

A static shot is again used a few frames later [Fig.35]. Again, our perspective remains completely still except for the light swell of the sea, which causes the camera to rise and fall lightly. The shot represents a conspicuous moment of calm alongside the depiction of frenetic deck games, which precede it [Fig.36]. In a sense, within such a shot exists Wright's own personal pursuit of art within film. The image is striking in its deliberate and calculated version of aesthetic beauty. The line of boats cuts a perfect, sweeping line down the centre of the frame, and separates the dense, complex metal shapes, handrails and davits to the left and the endless simplicity of the ocean to the right. Like the lifeboat shot in Fig.34, there is no discernable, practical function to this shot, and instead it attempts to capture the atmosphere and aura found within a contemplative, quiet walk along the ship's deck, or a thoughtful look out to sea.

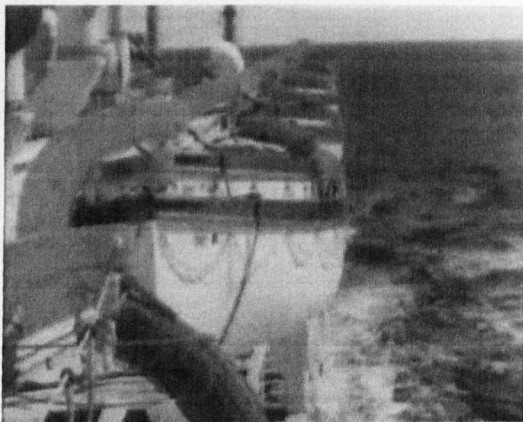


Fig.35: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

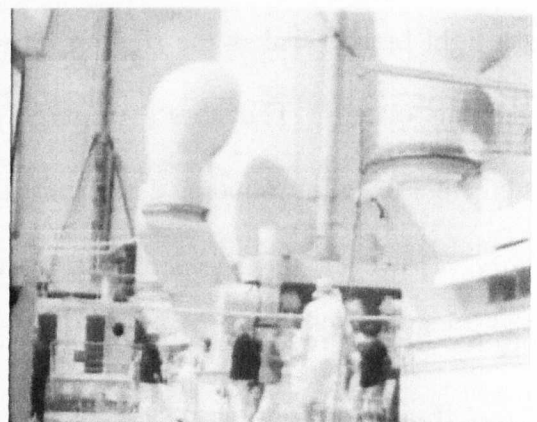


Fig.36: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

Yet, within this rendering of simple, oceanic beauty exists a dual purpose. The lifeboats are a quiet reminder of the safety measures in place that allow for the carefree, playful scenes on show in the following shot. The ship is a place of security born from a rigid and uniform deployment of technology. Lifeboats stretch as far as the eye can see, framed so as to emphasise their quiet but ubiquitous presence around

the ship. This shot therefore represents both an artistic flourish and a forceful attempt to quell the latent fear generated from high profile maritime catastrophes. *Liner Cruising South* stresses that on an Orient Line vessel, there *are* enough lifeboats.

The dichotomy of practical reassurance and poetic, seafaring aura informs many of the post-war cruise films I will move on to discuss. This is perhaps best typified by Cunard's release of *Technology Today* (1969) and *Magic Ride* (1969). While the former was a heavy-handed, sobering look at the technology that lay behind the successful navigation of the *Queen Elizabeth II*, the second portrayed a psychedelic trip aboard the same vessel on its maiden voyage in which fun and hedonism are the only focus.

This dichotomy reaches a point of full, visual convergence in *The Voyage Home*, which was funded by the South African Tourist Board (Satour) and was associated with Union Castle. In a short sequence, director Harold Weaver constructs a visual narrative which epitomizes the cruise film's attempt to fuse the instructional with the aspirational.



Fig.37: *The Voyage Home* (1960s)



Fig.38: *The Voyage Home* (1960s)



Fig.39: *The Voyage Home* (1960s)



Fig.40: *The Voyage Home* (1960s)

In an interior shot, three individuals are shown seated at a table, enjoying the luxuries of shipboard life. Two passengers sip champagne while enjoying the company of the ship's captain [Fig.37]. The shot is face-on, framed in a simple but effective way so as to capture the faces, body postures and actions of the three individuals involved. The indoor sequence, of which this is the final shot, is accompanied by an upbeat piece of music designed to emulate the party atmosphere of the establishment in which the characters find themselves. This music suddenly stops mid-bar, and the camera cuts to a static shot of the exterior of the ship [Fig.38]. In the centre of the image hangs a solitary lifeboat, framed by both its moorings and foregrounded by a dual-tone backdrop of blues created by the sea and sky. The shot is both striking and reassuring, the sea symbolic of nature's quietly ferocious beauty, and the lifeboat a practical reminder of humanity's efforts to quell its destructive rage. The sharpness of Weaver's cut hints at the sober reminder at the heart of *Tomorrow Today*. In *The Voyage Home*, the contrast we are faced with forces us to remember endeavours and foresight behind the scenes, and the quiet plans in place for a potential disaster no one wants to think about.

Yet, Weaver's construction is subtle, drawing attention to the beauty that surrounds the boat and cutting to an empty shot of the sea as seen over a railing [Fig.39]. As the camera lingers on the water, two figures emerge from the left hand side of the frame and gaze thoughtfully at the horizon [Fig.40]. The characters seen in the initial shot reappear, now cast upon the backdrop of the glistening ocean. Unlike their standardised representation in Fig.37, their silhouetted forms are here abstract, poetically photographed as shadow, disrupting our ability to perceive details. It is a shot that connotes romance above anything else, the silhouetted pair blending into the natural surroundings they gaze upon.

As an accompaniment to this sequence, the film's narrator states:

There's a special sort of romantic quality about a tropical night at sea which is difficult to describe. But I remember that on this occasion, I was more aware of the ship and the men who sailed her.

This statement matches the concerns expressed in the sequence's visual narrative. The romance of the night is tempered by a respect for and reliance on the ship itself.

2.7 The aesthetics of Romance: the 'exceptional and auratic' in the cruise film

The 'romance of the sea' is a broad concept often attached to sea travel and cruising, which also forms a fundamental aesthetic consistency that underpins the cruise film in

the post-war period. First broached by shipping lines in the form of brochure advertising and other paper promotional material, it is a long-term and highly appealing idea that would find a natural home within the film medium. For advertisers, this ingrained concept was quickly exploited as one of the unquestioned features of sea travel. It allowed them to pitch the cruise as a method of transport that possessed an irresistible but unquestioned magic brought about by the beauty of the sea, and the romantic opportunities such social confinement brought. Films began to adopt a visual discourse, which reflected this romance within framing and mise-en-scene.

In pursuit of the aesthetic origins of the cruise film, an attempt to trace the root of and reason for this assumed romance is useful. Jo Stanley offers one such discussion in her theories of the 'exceptional and auratic' found within sea-faring narratives. In her definition of these terms, 'exceptional' refers to the construction of 'something radically unlike the norm, the usual', and 'aura also refers to the attribution of desirable, even spell-binding qualities to something.'¹²⁵ Stanley's primary concern is with the testimonies of female workers who worked and travelled aboard various forms of nautical, commercial transport. These narratives were often couched in a consistent and recurring rhetoric that sought to glamorise the sea to those back home. In Stanley's words, testimonies were often characterised by phrases such as, 'we had a great time', or 'you wouldn't believe what we got up to at sea.'¹²⁶ This was a sentiment that combined the self-satisfaction and boastfulness of the ubiquitous 'wish you were here...' postcard statement with a kind of alluring, exceptional mysticism

¹²⁵ Stanley, Jo, 'How Did This Come To Be In Stewardess Scherazade's Sea-Chest of "Memories"?' Exploring the Exceptionalised and Auratic Sea Through Inter-War Seawomen's Oral Testimonies, *Diegesis: Journal of the Association for Research in Popular Fictions*, 9 (2006), p.24.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

reserved for those who had experienced sustained life aboard a ship. These testimonies owed much to the narratives of popular fiction, seeking to glorify sea travel as a backdrop for stories filled with adventure and intrigue, a secret club that revelled in the isolation and vague, distant threat of danger that sea travel seemed to connote.

Stanley's recognition of an antecedent popular fiction discourse within some of these accounts exposes their conscious manipulation of the stylistic elements of narrative, in an effort actively to accentuate or embellish recounted incidents. Not only does this hint at the tendency towards exaggeration within travel writing as a form, but it also points towards the pervasion of style as a means of perpetuating it. Nowhere is this idea more vivid than in the cruise film, with its use of poetic dialogue, music and artistic, affected visuals to create a cohesive and consistent world full of sun-drenched decking and tumbling surf.

The sense of 'aura' that Stanley identifies is therefore at the heart of an interrogation of the cruise's perceived romance. It exists within the very texture of the cruise's representation, dictated by lighting, mise-en-scene, sound, narration and any other stylistic aspect of the narrative. The cruise's 'aura' would become a priority for filmmakers, especially approaching the 1960s, when notions of aesthetics and style moved to the fore. Yet this deep sense of the romantic and auratic also has its roots in a more distant past and ultimately came from a kind of 'othering' generated by both those who went away to sea and those who remained on land. For individuals who watched their associates sail off towards a distant horizon, their activities were

genuinely a product of 'another world' full of mystery, a floating microcosm all of its own, devoid of the banalities of normal life.

Along with the otherness of foreign, sea-based travel (and as I will move on to discuss more extensively in a later chapter) the ship as a literal and figurative entity has long connoted a whole host of human characteristics bound up both in the labour behind its construction and the human feats it has been critical in achieving. Shakespeare would use the ship as a metaphor for love in *Romeo and Juliet*, of the sadness inherent within separated partners driven apart like a ship from the land and cut loose to sail alone. Representations of the cruise latch onto this inherent romance, but subvert the idea, isolating passengers not from each other, but from the banality of the everyday. Now part of a communal, 'othered' state that gazes back at the everyday from afar, passengers enjoy a collective, binding experience that is closer to fantasy than reality. The ship takes on a transcendent role that offers opportunities for romance and bliss in equal measure.

The ship and the cruise have therefore retained their associations with escape, fantasy, love and, more broadly, with a human force inherent within sailor, passenger and shipbuilder alike. As with the BTF travelogue's visual treatment of the industrial vehicle, part of this 'aura' also exists within the ship as a symbol of achievement, of pride and of unerring endeavour. We are made to associate the ship and the ship's journeys with the human forces that created and sustain it. The voice over narration found in *RMS Windsor Castle*, conveys this idea in rather grand terms:

Whichever way her bows may point, for some it is towards, towards the future, waiting friends. And for others, it's away, a sailing from the past. From such thoughts and feelings in the hearts of people a big ship draws her sustenance, absorbs in some mysterious way the aura of the people who surround her. Not forgetting those, now far away, who built and launched her. (*RMS Windsor Castle*)

An analysis of the rhetoric and diction used in this concluding passage is useful in drawing parallels across all stylistic elements of the cruise film. A cruise film's narration (whether expressed via intertitle or soundtrack) is often crucial in both providing narrative direction, and giving meaning to the images onscreen. In utilitarian terms, the passage is merely presenting the idea that some passengers are setting off away from home and others are returning. The self-consciously poetic discourse deployed is purely for auratic ends, used as a means of glamorising the cruising process by associating it with such grandiose notions. Images of the ship at sea form the backdrop for this brief speech, framed from contrasting angles. Each is bathed in the orange glow of sunset [Fig.41 & Fig.42]. No passengers are shown as the camera gazes at the deep blue of the sea and the whites of the wake created by the powering vessel. An attempt to match the tone of verbal narration and image is conspicuous and undeniable.



Fig.41: RMS Windsor Castle (1960)

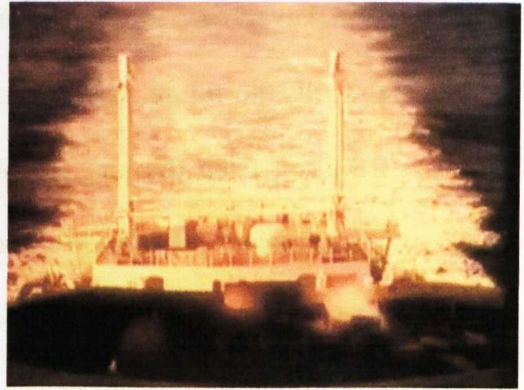


Fig.42: RMS Windsor Castle (1960)

The narrator's use of the past, attributions of humanity and employment of particular words and phrases, are of special note here. Firstly, the phrase 'sailing from the past' is imbued with a kind of unspoken tragedy reminiscent of Shakespeare's use of the ship metaphor in *Romeo and Juliet*. In basic terms, the 'past' merely refers to the state of normalcy the passenger is leaving behind at home, but this is undoubtedly a loaded, auratic phrase also designed to connote feelings and emotions of loss or nostalgia. The ship is personified, drawing its energies and sense of identity from both the people that sail aboard it and, again connoting the past and those who played a part in its original construction. Our attention is drawn to the ship as some kind of organic vessel made up not of rivets and steel, but of the attentions, desires and passions of those who have come in contact with it. The words 'hearts', 'mysterious' and 'aura' each add to a strictly figurative image, feeding this picture of the cruise through a filter of poetic language that creates a sense of longing, beauty and mystery.

As early as Wright's *Liner Cruising South*, the portrayal of a distinct 'aura' can be witnessed within some of the language and imagery used. One intertitle announces the presence of 'Cloud Capped Caribbean Islands', a statement idyllic in its alliteration. Similarly, aforementioned shots that gaze out to sea, taking in perfectly aligned

lifeboats, are auratic in the sense that they quietly and artfully capture something exceptional and unique to life aboard ship. However, the aesthetic construction of the cruise film often hits upon a dichotomy between objective documentary and this abstract presentation of the exceptional and auratic. There existed a constant desire to both represent the practical reassurances of amenities and activities alongside a rendering of the cruise as consistently and seductively beautiful. As a consequence of this, an aesthetic conflict emerged.



Fig.43: *Holiday Afloat* (1948)



Fig.44: *Holiday Afloat* (1948)

Union Castle's *Holiday Afloat* (1948) provides an early example of these distinct styles. Whilst some shots are purely informative, others strive to convey a more abstract, emotional set of associations. For example, one particular shot depicts a number of passengers in the ship's gym, engaging in exercise of various forms [Fig.43]. The sequence is framed conventionally so as to depict the frenetic activity from a number of different and informative angles. In contrast, one of the film's closing shots contains a man sitting upon the Cape of Good Hope, staring down towards the sea below [Fig.44]. The shot is conspicuously long (diverging from the frenetic cuts of the exercise scene) and composed from an angle that provides not straight-forward information, but conjures shapes, shades and the natural, jagged beauty of the surroundings. The identity of the individual who gazes downwards is

unclear, yet we are privy to a period of quiet contemplation, a private moment conveyed through the shot's artful composition.

In later decades, a convergence of styles began to emerge as filmmakers evoked greater consistency within the images they presented. Ken Fairbairn's *Runaway To Sea* (1965) strove for an aesthetic style that was perceivable within its use of imagery. The artful order found in a line of deck chairs [Fig.45] that disappear from sight down the ship's edge, is matched and emulated by an otherwise mundane picturing of a line of women beneath hair dyers [Fig.46]. The ordinary suddenly takes on the aesthetic order of the exceptional and auratic. One image connotes something serene and the other something banal and comical.



Fig.45: *Runaway To Sea* (1965)



Fig.46: *Runaway To Sea* (1965)

This dichotomous (but ultimately convergent) construction typifies the post-war cruise film's awkward combination of advertising and entertainment, documentary and art. It also calls upon the greater confusion found at the heart of the cruise promoter in the post-war period, as jet travel quickly seduced frequent globetrotters and the profusion of contemporary culture began to encroach on the long-held traditions of shipping. In an era of change, shipping lines found a need to balance their primary, historically-rooted appeal with the playful aesthetics of a contemporary age. Much of the output

of the post-war period is defined by attempts to reconcile these dichotomous approaches.

2.8 The Seduction of Style - *World at Three*, *Magic Ride* and a changing Britain

Both Frederic Goode's *World at Three* and Don Higgins' *Magic Ride* were products of a legacy left by promotional cruise films of the past. Both predominantly take place aboard a cruise ship and seek to foreground the pleasures involved in the experience. Yet what differentiates both films as striking examples of the form are the signifiers of the tumultuous, changing decade in which they were produced. Created with a clear intention in some way to reflect the era in which they were made, they would represent the most radical promotional moment of P&O and Cunard respectfully. I have chosen to isolate these films as the most artistically conscious products of a loose tradition of filmmaking. They are the culmination and convergence of the many aesthetic influences that I have isolated in this chapter and are amongst the most developed and well-realised examples of the cruise film.

On the surface, *World At Three* follows the loose narrative of the 'traditional' cruise film, and follows passengers aboard the *Canberra* as they engage in a number of ship-based activities and excursions ashore. However, there is no spoken narration, and instead the film frequently juxtaposes its images with an arbitrariness close to free-association. On a larger, structural scale, the film's narrative is led by its unique soundtrack, which serves to provide both a distinctive atmosphere and a loose narration. Composed by John Dankworth and performed by Cleo Laine, songs were

especially written to reference images onscreen. When passengers are taken to Hong Kong, for example, the soundtrack integrates lyrics related to the city. Dankworth and Laine were both associated with the burgeoning lounge jazz movement of the time and (as a result) the film's music reflects this. Their involvement demonstrates a broad desire to reflect the cultural trappings of the era. Such music was associated with a particular style and aesthetic, and possessed links with liberal, youth culture values that looked firmly to the future. Jazz scores of this kind were increasingly used in British feature films. Tony Richardson's *Look Back In Anger* (1958), in 'a more deliberate appeal to the idea of an international "youth"', cast its lead character as a jazz trumpeter.¹²⁷ Jimmy Porter (Richard Burton) is the film's 'angry young man', yet he finds solace and liberation in the freedom of jazz musicianship. Dankworth himself would, amongst many others, score *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), *The Servant* (1963), *Darling* (1965) and *Accident* (1967). Each projected a vision of Britain that reflected a preoccupation with youthfulness, and a changing sense of British identity. Frank Griffith, in an interview with Dankworth, underscores the contrived but fitting manner in which filmmakers took on this new style of music:

It was not surprising, then, that at the end of the 1950s, when a new wave of contemporary urban realism hit Britain, directors there too looked for modern sounds to match the mood and drama of their films. And what better music to underscore

¹²⁷ Stephen Lacey, 'Too Theatrical by half?' in eds. Ian MacKillop and Neil Sinyard, *British Cinema in the 1950s: A Celebration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2003), p.166

this reality than jazz, with its cachet as the music of the oppressed?¹²⁸

Goode's narrative is led by Dankworth's vibrant score and, as a result, jettisons some of the more conventional stylistic principles found elsewhere within the cruise film. While many of the regular amenities and activities are presented, and the locations of ship and port broadly familiar as repeated motifs, images are never narrated or explained.

The interaction of music and image therefore sits at the heart of *World At Three* and the aesthetic discourse that is created. This precedent is set during a section of the film's opening in which the ship's ballroom is depicted. As a jazz band play upon stage, a number of passengers dance around the room along to the upbeat music. Goode's editing is conspicuous here, as he deploys a series of shot-reverse-shots to move between the band and those who dance [Fig.47 and 48]. The cuts become quicker as the music crescendoes, and are timed to coincide with the rhythm of the song. Furthermore, the camera is in constant motion, echoing both the movements of the dancers and the pace of the jazz band's music. Close-ups of instruments punctuate the sequence, and serve further to increase the movement and variety of this interconnecting imagery [Fig.49]. Music leads this scene on a number of levels, both informing the movements of the characters, and Goode's shot choices. Music takes the place of an audio narration, with notes and rhythm leading and crafting the images in place of spoken descriptions. In *World At Three* the film's visual narration is not

¹²⁸ Frank Griffith, 'Jazz in 1960s British New Wave Cinema: An Interview with Sir John Dankworth', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, Volume 3, Issue 2, Nov 2006, p.2

subservient to an overarching requirement to present clearly and informatively. Instead, the film's construction becomes conspicuous, as when our view of these dancers becomes deliberately obscured. The music playing above this opening is the most powerful narrative force at work.



Fig.47: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.48: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.49: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.50: *World At Three* (1966)

In addition to this unconventional opening, conventional visual cues and motifs are actively subverted by Goode in his construction of *World At Three*. A notable example of this recurs throughout the film when the ship's passengers engage in conversation. These moments happen sporadically and are entirely independent of one another. There are no consistent characters that run throughout the film, and this tends to add to its disparate and fragmented narrative. In one such incident, a couple are

shown at a travel agent and appear to be engaged in a polite conversation with the member of staff behind the establishment's desk. Dubbed over the visuals is a conversation between the couple which has apparently happened at another time:

WOMAN: But you said we'd have a real holiday this year. You said we'd go on a cruise, too! You said we could go round the world. You said we could lie in the sun and see a lot of places-

MAN: I said, how is it you never care what I say?

This conversation feels private and uncomfortable, and is particularly jarring when set against the public realm of the travel agency. The sequence is intentionally disruptive and explicitly interrogates the idyllic image of the 'holiday couple' that many other cruise films espouse. The image of romance is entirely subverted when juxtaposed with the uncomfortable reality of a private argument. We witness the darker, private side of this relationship for a fleeting moment within a sequence which undermines the wholesomeness of established romantic imagery found elsewhere in the cruise film.

As the couple's conversation concludes, Goode cuts to a horse race and a male spectator who turns away from the camera. Again, we are made to question whether what we see and hear are connected and whether the individual pictured is involved in the conversation. The narrative is intentionally disrupted with sounds that lack a signified image. Instead, all elements are conspicuously separated and we become acutely aware of both their artifice and their dispartateness.

Another over-dubbed exchange intentionally disrupts a romantic visual composition as a man and a woman converse in the ship's lobby:

MAN: We're getting under way.

WOMAN: It must be wonderful to know how a ship works. You were an officer yourself weren't you Reggie?

MAN: Oh, there's nothing like the sea.

WOMAN: What kind of an officer were you, Reggie?

MAN: Oh, ah ha, I wasn't admiral of the fleet (laughs nervously), but let's not talk about me. Let's talk about you. You're more important than the sea could ever be.

WOMAN: *I don't believe he was an officer at all. Silly little man. Officers don't look like him.*

The man's attempts to flirt are cruelly shot down by the woman's damning internal monologue. Again, the artifice of surface human interaction is here exposed with the revelation of a divergent inner-thought process on the part of the female character. The director's deconstruction of these staple cruise film images (and the use of romance to sell the experience) are surprising and seem to fly in the face of his promotional remit from P&O. His ship is apparently full of characters loathing the company of their fellow passengers, and wrestling with an inner conflict between the true self and its projection. The perfection the cruise film so frequently espouses is missing in this example, and being replaced by a kind of postmodern interrogation of human interactions around and within the holiday experience.

Within the presentation of experiences aboard and ashore, Goode is more forgiving yet retains a desire to deconstruct and draw attention to the processes of consumption and fetishisation rife within the holiday film. An overly-long slow motion sequence featuring a bikini-clad female is knowingly gratuitous. Similarly, the rendering of passengers snapping images in San Francisco depicts them with cameras clutched to their faces in a rhythmic sequence which coincides with the beat of Dankworth's score. Their overt consumption of the world around them draws attention to its lack of reality and its fleeting nature. In another moment, which takes place in a theatre aboard ship, a group of dancers are shown performing upon a stage. As we become absorbed within their movements, the camera suddenly pans back to reveal a cinema screen as the source of the action. Again, the film is intent on peeling back the boundaries of our reality and exposing it as false. In all these moments a postmodern artifice is exposed. The experiences are glamorised and retain their appeal, but the cynicism of the age, and of the film's director, consistently rises to the surface.

Magic Ride shares the same emphasis on music as its P&O-produced counterpart. Graham Collier's score is largely derived from jazz, yet is accompanied by contemporary pop songs from both the Applejacks and Mike Hugg of Manfred Mann. The film, while not as overtly transgressive as *World At Three*, is similarly reflective of the era of change in which it was produced.

Magic Ride begins with its lead character (played by Anna Bentinck) asleep, while dissonant chords play over several close-ups of her [Fig.51]. This is reminiscent of the opening scenes of Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) [Fig.52], in which Bonnie (Faye Dunaway) is introduced in bed, framed and posed in a very similar way.

Penn's film was influenced by the French New Wave and played particular homage to Jean Luc Godard's *Au bout de soufflé* (1960) in a number of its aesthetic flourishes.



Fig.51: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.52: *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967)

In fact, the film's fetishisation of its female lead is symptomatic of a trend perceivable throughout European and American cinema of the time. The 'New Hollywood' movement of the 1960s sought to embrace the sexualised female, while European art cinemas attempted to experiment with and subvert aesthetic notions of sexuality with strong but beautiful female characters (flying in the face of traditional Hollywood tropes of the helpless female waiting to be rescued by the powerful male). Meanwhile, British cinema audiences were being seduced by female icons such as Julie Christie, whose move from the grim north to London in *Billy Liar* (1963), was directly emulated by her assumption of roles in films such as *Darling* (1965). Such films foregrounded the hedonistic, liberated environment of 1960s London as an area in which women could exert themselves upon their surroundings.

By contrast, Bentinck's introduction exposes her vulnerability and brings into doubt the strength of her surface, consumer confidence expressed in the following scene.

Images of Bentinck waking are juxtaposed and cross-faded with decontextualised, and rather ominous images of a ship [Fig.53 and 54]. She is seemingly plagued by thoughts or dreams and, like Bonnie's imprisonment within the bars of her bed, is trapped amongst these cyclical visions.

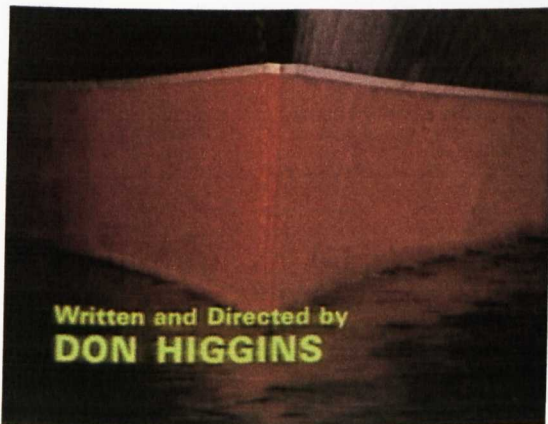


Fig.53: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.54: *Magic Ride* (1969)

As Collier's dissonant chords are heard over the top of the images, a hook appears to hang over Beninck's sleeping face, jagged, threatening and hinting at the horror scene to follow. The girl's serene, feminine beauty is juxtaposed with the aggressive might of the ship's metal form. The conflict of these images foreshadows the narrative transgression and disruption that is to follow.



Fig.55: *Darling* (1965)



Fig.56: *Magic Ride* (1969)

As she exits her London apartment, Bentinck is firmly established as a young, affluent and independent woman in the mould of swinging '60s icons such as Christie [Fig.55 and 56]. Wearing an elaborate fur coat, the unnamed girl climbs into a silver sports car and heads for the coast. The rain which spots the windscreen and the policemen who smile as she passes, are iconic and conspicuously British. Both form surroundings that are contemporary and are coveted happily as the symbols of an optimistic, affluent, post-war nation.

As Bentinck reaches her destination, the film shifts in time a number of years to a period before the ship's completion. This takes the form of a disguised cut in which our lead character transforms into a school girl as a car rolls in front of the camera. In hat, pigtails and school uniform, Bentinck finds herself within the industrial wasteland of a shipyard. The camera's perspectives become more distanced during this sequence, with a number of aerial and low ground shots employed. These isolate the young schoolgirl upon a desolate backdrop of warehouses, and the industrial complexity of a crane [Fig.57 and 58]. We are returned to a narrative which explores the relationship between Bentinck and the ship to which she is mysteriously drawn.

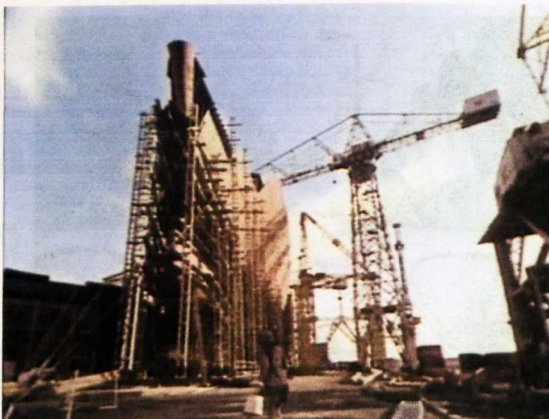


Fig.57: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.58: *Magic Ride* (1969)

Within these long, open shots of warehouses and courtyards, industrial iconography is demonised by Higgins' camera. Bentinck appears tiny amongst it, consistently dwarfed and vulnerable. The visual narrative elsewhere seems to sanction the middle-class symbols of the 'swinging '60s', with its attractive clothes and expensive vehicles. In contrast, these industrial landscapes are a visual transgression and serve to create an atmosphere of suspense and fear. This treatment of industrial space is founded within attitudes established in previous decades. *Liner Cruising South's* claim that 'Winter in England is sometimes rather grim' is followed by footage of passing chimneys and factories [Fig.59]. These locations, we learn, are to be escaped via the cruise ship, even though they are paradoxically celebrated as the sites of the vessel's construction.



Fig 59: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

Bentinck's interaction with this industrial space is further problematised when she enters the ship itself. The deeper she journeys within its unfinished interior, the more forcefully she is rejected. Her ascent in a lift to reach the main deck of the ship is like a playfully reversed decent into hell, with a sense of claustrophobia that is emphasised by Higgins' subjective, point-of-view camera angles.

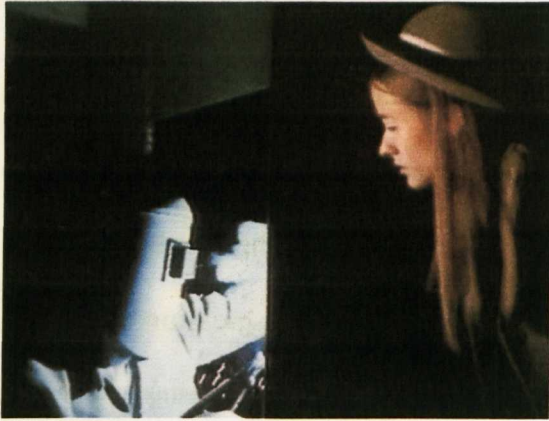


Fig.60: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.61: *Magic Ride* (1969)

The scene builds to a tense peak in the form of a series of static frames through which Bentinck moves, before the narrative gives way to a full horror film aesthetic. As the schoolgirl creeps down some stairs, a man in a welding mask is suddenly illuminated by the light from his own flame [Fig.60]. This moment, accompanied by a dissonant and startling chord stab, acts as a release of the spectator's tensions. Bentinck is sent into a spiralling panic as terror takes over from her innocent inquisitiveness. The camera begins to frame shots in an entirely subjective way, including one in which a worker's approach is distorted by Higgins' acute focus [Fig.61]. The figure appears humanoid, but so blurred and indistinct as to become monstrous. We share Bentinck's desire to escape as she charges past flummoxed workmen [Fig.62]. The pace of cuts increases dramatically and our attention is drawn to sharp metallic objects. In one particular shot (which is reminiscent of a moment in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974)) a hook is suspended in the foreground while Bentinck struggles in the background [Fig.63].



Fig.62: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.63: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.64: *Magic Ride* (1969)

The girl's frantic run is finally halted by a group of men wearing suits and bowler hats who huddle around a section of the ship's interior [Fig 64]. These men are of noticeably higher class, their clothes contrasting markedly with the overalls worn by the workers in the previous scene. This meeting marks an escape for Bentinck and a transportation back to the present day for the spectator. The white-bearded figure is revealed to be the ship's captain (played by the *QE2*'s actual captain Commodore W.E. Warwick.) Our fears and anxieties generated via the working-class realm of the unfinished ship are quelled by this middle-class presence. The captain represents the ship in its contemporary finished form, as a structure that successfully glosses over the

working-class endeavours at the heart of its construction. We are back to a stable narrative, complete with visions of comforting affluence.

In one sense, this sequence is largely redundant when taken in the context of the rest of the film and exists as pure entertainment. Higgins creates tension and unease simply as a means of hooking in his audience and establishing a central character, a central location, and a flimsy 'back story'. Yet, the clear demonisation of industrial iconography and the working class ship builder is startling but symptomatic. This sequence offers a self-conscious rendering of the *past*, full of the rough edges, sparks and ragged workers that the 1960s cruise goer ultimately sought to deny. For a vibrant, liberated, consumer-conscious woman such as Bentinck, a return to this drab state of post-war austerity was a threat. The film sanctions her denial via her sports car, fur coat, sunglasses and lavish ocean cruise. She remains far more comfortable on the sparkling surface of the ship, free of the threat of its working class origins. Yet, ultimately she overcomes her fears by returning to the QE2 and engaging with its workforce. This is evident during one symbolic moment in which she aids a worker with some last minute preparations before the ship's embarkation [Fig.65]. As Bentinck secures a screw in place, her left hand remains clasped around a white beret (which here takes on the appearance of a captain's hat). The headwear is a reminder of Bentinck's class security and, although she engages in this symbolic gesture, she remains dressed in the uniform of an affluent middle-class female. The class divide is distinct and her gesture, ultimately, only serves to widen the gulf between the ship's creators and those who ride aboard it.



Fig 65: *Magic Ride* (1969)

The film's second half follows a far more conventional travelogue paradigm in its focus on Bentinck's experiences aboard ship. In a similar manner to *World At Three*, the film possesses no discernable dialogue and instead relies heavily on its music score. The film's stark cinematography is its most notable feature, frequently employing rapid and jarring cuts to create a psychedelic effect. Ian Wilson was responsible for the film's photography and had worked on *The Committee* (1968) a year before. This experimental British film relies heavily on a foregrounding of these distinct and disorientating visuals and the influence of this is evident in *Magic Ride*. This psychedelic style was fashionable at the time and drew on the experimentation found within film, music and art.

Both *World At Three* and *Magic Ride* represent a moment of convergence between the cruise film's consistently dichotomous presentation of the traditional and the contemporary. Both films undermine the weighty importance placed on the patriotic symbols of Britain's maritime heritage and reconcile them with the popular discourses of the time. Frederic Goode's deconstruction of the cruise film's idyllic romance and Don Higgins' incorporation of the horror film narrative into the industrial

underpinnings of the ship, re-shape the aesthetic assertions of previous examples of the form. The patriotic aesthetic legacy of the Documentary Movement, British Transport Film and early travelogue cruise film, was perceivably deconstructed and reappropriated for the tastes and desires of the contemporary spectator and holidaymaker. This deconstruction also proves that, by the end of the 1960s, the cruise film had developed into a conscious tradition.

3.0 The Image of the Ship

From the late 1920s and until the mid-1950s, amateur filmmakers Sydney and Howard Preston (sons of Joshua Preston, Stockport's Mayor between the years 1927-1929), would work on a set of local newsreels entitled *Glengarry Topical News*. In 1933, the twelfth of these newsreels would document the completion of the *Warwick Castle*, Union Castle's latest edition to its steam ship fleet.¹²⁹ While other stories in the same reel contain informative intertitles and a series of rapid, revealing cuts, the item which introduces the ship simply consists of a single shot interrupted by one brief cut. The camera, which takes a raised perspective, glides smoothly around the perimeter of the ship. The shape and detail of the vessel's exterior is revealed, yet the camera's sweeping move is completed remarkably slowly. Implicit within this simple, indulgent movement exists a meaning that is not attributed to any of the other people or objects in the newsreel. This measured, deliberate camera movement, which is entirely at odds with the rapid, engaging editing exhibited throughout the rest of the sixteen minute piece, is saved for a ship which sits, inanimate, in a harbour.

Within the texture of the Preston Brothers' visual narration exists an unspoken adoration for the ship which can be extensively and consistently witnessed within the photography of the cruise film, the feature film and within static manifestations of the ship (posters, paintings and other ephemera). The Prestons' silent, graceful sweep of the *Warwick Castle* perfectly encapsulates the way in which the ship, as an evocative object, is treated with a kind of unerring, implicit respect.

¹²⁹ The Preston Brothers were amateur filmmakers who ran their own home cinema. It is important to note that their work was almost certainly motivated by their own interest in film rather than any kind of commercial exploitation. There is no evidence to suggest that the brothers did business with Union Castle, for example.

As I touched upon in my previous chapter, the cruise film of the post war period would employ a similarly discernible and deconstructable visual discourse in its presentation of the ship. This discourse originates from a number of historically rooted attitudes which were in a state of constant evolution and refinement. In my exploration of the ship and its positioning within the cruise film, I will explore three main areas which I believe inform its meaning and representation.

The first is typified by the Preston Brothers' indulgent, amorous sweep, and takes the form of an awe-struck presentation of the sea faring craft which is associated strongly with the history of human civilisation itself. This is an enduring, endlessly purveyed image which finds its origins in ancient wall carvings, Biblical passages, and Roman texts. It relies on the human importance placed on the ship and on the powerful opportunities sea travel has presented historically. Writers throughout the last five hundred years have perpetuated this attitude within figurative language and poetic discourse. The ship would be used as a symbolic object, universally understood as a vivid and confident allusion. Illustrative of this development, to cite one example, was Shakespeare's adoption of the ship metaphor. In *Romeo and Juliet*, he would equate the ship with the passage of love, rendered particularly effective as a result of the vessel's dual association with success and failure, voyage and wreckage. Walt Whitman, John Masefield, Joseph Conrad and many others, would use the ship as a direct symbol of national virtue and an embodiment of a distinctly British assertion of colonial control. Therefore, within this enduring conceptualisation of the ship exist connotations of nation, love, spirituality, faith and power.

A second influential element in the grammar of the ship's portrayal came about as a result of the Industrial Revolution and shifting attitudes to man-made creations. As the design and construction of the liner became more ambitious and impressive, it brought with it a sense of spectacle which had, until that moment, been unprecedented. While the ship had always connoted progress, prowess and a means to travel and conquer, the sheer size of these modern vessels changed the manner in which they were depicted visually. There was a desire to interrogate and capture the subjective, emotional impact of the ship alongside an authentic rendering of actuality. Visual forms such as film and poster art were used in an attempt to capture this spectacle.

The third treatment of the ship is one brought about by both the war and the postmodern turn of the 1960s. The appropriation of commercial passenger vessels by the Navy during wartime, alongside a filmic treatment of the ship as a beacon of integrity in the face of human corruption, had significant effects. Conversely, as the memory of war faded, the ship's renewed role as a purveyor of conspicuous consumption saw a re-appropriation and reinvention of established maritime associations which were reshaped for a contemporary age. Brought about by changing attitudes, a post-war bleakness and an infatuation with style and aesthetic, the ship's established, traditional image would be transformed by the colourful promise of consumerism and the pervasive role of advertising discourse.

In this chapter I will explore the meeting of these approaches to the ship, and, in particular, plot the conspicuous treatment of it within visual culture. Initially, I will briefly explore the ship's physical and figurative use, with particular emphasis placed

on its enduring place as a metaphor within literature. I will then examine formative images of the ship found in poster art of the pre- and post-war period. Within these posters, an important precedent in the ship's visual treatment is set by a number of artists interested in its physical power and the opposition of conceptual 'high art' and widely disseminated material. In these renderings, we see an innovative use of colour, manipulative use of angle and a paradoxical convergence of realism and abstraction. This appropriation of the avant-garde would later be replicated by the cruise industry as a whole, and these posters would be mimicked and adapted by British cruise companies in the post-war period. Alongside poster designs, the distinctive styling of the Pop Art movement of the 1950 and 1960s would begin to seep into the promotional ephemera of companies such as P&O. This aping of the avant-garde was widely representative of the cruise industry's attempts to garner the aesthetics of the art world while disposing of any of its accompanying ideology.

The 'launch film', which was used in the immediate post-war era as a means for shipping companies to draw attention to their new constructions, will then be explored with these visual precedents in mind. A particular set of films produced by *Movietone News* using Union Castle ships, frames the vessels in question with a nationalistic, rousing discourse found upon the film's narration track. The films project a visual style which is inherently nationalistic, and exists as a proud record of a ship's successful launch. They deploy compositional elements found in pre-war poster art, yet also foreground a visual deconstruction and fetishisation of aspects of the ship's form and place these alongside a human element integral to the vessel's existence. Like the poster's formation of a static visual discourse, the launch film would help to

formulate a filmic discourse of the ship which would be passed on to the post-war cruise film of the 1960s.

The liner's role in the Second World War will then be explored, along with its treatment in the British feature film. The war would once again foreground the ship within the collective consciousness of the populace. Several films made in the following years would celebrate it as an icon of national virtue in an era of disaffection. Re-commissioned liners would perform wartime roles just as British workers did back home. This added further to the humanising, national spirit often attributed to the ocean going liner.

Although the ship's role in the war would deepen its importance as a national symbol, it also led to a conspicuous hiatus in commercial traffic for Britain's shipping lines. In an effort to reinitiate interest in sea travel following the post-war austerity of the 1940s and 1950s, cruise companies would have to reappropriate and reinvent the image of the ship in an attempt to appeal to their newly enfranchised customer base. The final part of this chapter will therefore explore the treatment of the ship in the post-war cruise film. With this diverse visual legacy in mind, I will examine the means by which filmmakers presented the ship as a comforting, national symbol that continued to be relevant within a changing cultural landscape.

3.1 The Ship: An Enduring Image

The ship was a prominent image within the physical and linguistic development of human civilisation. As a craft that has allowed military defence, colonisation and trade, it has remained crucial in the evolution of nations. Yet, to explore the development of the ship image, is also to understand its medium, the ocean. The ocean was a source of great mystery due to its vastness and the logistic implications of exploring its depths. As Krista Thompson writes:

Scientific research into the ocean and its inhabitants [...] did not begin in earnest until the 1940s. While colonists and imperialists in the first decades of the twentieth century could claim to have traversed and ‘civilised’ even in the farthest recesses of the earth, they could not make similar claims about their exploration of its oceans...The ocean appeared ‘completely inhospitable to domesticating and civilising forces.’¹³⁰

The ocean had always represented the planet’s largest source of otherness and mystery. Inherent in the ship’s function is therefore a dichotomy of heroic bravery and foolhardy over-ambition. To traverse the ocean meant to contend with the assumed horrors that lurked at its depths. An interrogation of the development of the visual discourse used to treat the ship is therefore bound up with this lingering attitude to the ocean. The ship was an object which allowed humanity to accomplish greats

¹³⁰ Krista A. Thompson, *An Eye For the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 185.

feats in the face of fear and peril. This dichotomous, conflicted idea is at the heart of its historical and figurative power.

The use of the ship as a physical, typographic symbol can be traced back as early as 1600BC. As Chris Ballard writes,

The ship is the dominant element in the visual culture of the South Scandinavian Bronze Age, appearing in several different media, including rock carvings, decorated metalwork and above-ground monuments.¹³¹

These physical renderings of the vessel's symbolic form were universal and suggest a widespread uptake and understanding of it as an enduring symbol. Jonathan Adam suggests the ship's symbolic meaning is even more abiding than the cultural artefacts it was used to carry:

In so many cultures, ships and boats have acquired such a prominent symbolic profile, it might be argued that they are even more potent carriers of meaning than the pots they so often transported.¹³²

As a religious symbol, the ship began to gain a transcendental, spiritual importance. Noah's Ark and the Ship of Galilee are two prominent examples of the ship's use in

¹³¹ Chris Ballard; Richard Bradley; Lise Nordenborg Myhre; Meredith Wilson, 'The Ship as Symbol in the Prehistory of Scandinavia and Southeast Asia', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Seascapes. (Dec., 2003), p. 385.

¹³² Jonathan Adams, 'Ships and Boats as Archaeological Source Material', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 32, No. 3, Shipwrecks. (Feb., 2001), p. 292.

the Bible, while an image of a sail was sometimes used as a means of disguising the cross in times of religious persecution. In other instances, the ship itself was used as a symbol of the church. As Ralph Wilson notes:

The ship (bark or barque, barchetta) was an ancient Christian symbol. Its is the Church tossed on the sea of disbelief, worldliness, and persecution but finally reaching safe harbor with its cargo of human souls.¹³³

While the ship symbolised the church, the sea connoted the aggressive, disbelieving forces of persecution or conflicting faith. The ship is deeply rooted in our history as a divinely privileged man-made structure which, as I shall explore in its visual treatment, connotes both an affinity with the struggles of humanity and the transcendent quality of a divine force. The dichotomous combination of danger and security that the cruise evinces has, as I have suggested, its historical roots in the ship's role in attempts to tame and conquer the tempestuous sea.

The singular treatment of this ship/church dichotomy was shown to be broadened by metaphors used by both Aeschylus and Sophocles, who relate the ship directly to the state. Both the 'shipwreck of state' and the 'well-steered ship of state' became sweeping metaphors for endeavours on a national scale.¹³⁴ These are figurations which emulate similar dichotomous tropes within the collective consciousness of contemporary society. The use of these metaphors suggests that they were widely

¹³³ Ralph F. Wilson, <http://www.jesuswalk.com/christian-symbols/ship.htm> [Accessed 05/06/09]

¹³⁴ D. C. Allen, 'Donne and the Ship Metaphor', *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 76, No. 4. (Apr., 1961), p.309.

understood allusions which were accepted and adopted on account of their universality. Again, the ship's protective, comforting properties are emphasised in the phrase 'well-steered ship of state.' However, the 'shipwreck' imagery plants seeds of discontent and distrust, both in the benevolence and competency of the State, and the abilities of the ship to withstand the full force of God's onslaught. We see here the paradoxical treatment of the ship image that will inform the cruise ship's romance almost two thousand years later. The ship pertains to protection and danger, solidity and fragility. To the Romans the ship represented human kind's attempt to tame the oceanic realm of God, an endeavour which was bold, brave and virtuous, yet was ultimately wracked with peril.

Along with the symbolic rendering of the State, the subject of love was expressed using maritime imagery within a number of works by Roman writers. An anonymous poet writing as part of the *Anthology* describes his soul as drowning in the 'Cyprian wave', and asks his beloved to save him from 'land ship-wreck by taking him to her port' (V, 235). Similarly, in Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (*Art of Love*), the story's central lover character represents himself as sailing far from the long sought port (II, 10), isolated from female affection.¹³⁵ Both use the ship to connote the perils and passage of love, again evoking the drama, spectacle and tragedy of a shipwreck in their allusions.

Shakespeare, some centuries later, would call upon the ship and shipwreck as a metaphor for love in *Romeo and Juliet*. Writing of the extended metaphor evident within the play, Robert Walts writes:

¹³⁵ Both quoted in D.C. Allen, 'Donne and the Ship Metaphor' in *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 76, No. 4. (Apr., 1961), p.310.

One of the first indications in the play that Shakespeare had in mind certainly Romeo and perhaps Juliet as ships tossing upon the sea of love comes in the ninth line of the 'Prologue', where the Chorus looks to 'the fearful passage of their death-mark'd love', 'passage' here being in the present reading equivalent to the word 'voyage'. This reading is confirmed by the reference of Prince Escalus very near the end of the play to 'their course of love' (V. iii. 287), 'course' also being a word associated with the path of a ship.¹³⁶

In addition to this, Romeo's life is compared to a 'voyage under the control of a celestial helmsman and impelled by a sail', while 'Romeo himself is ambiguously a ship or the captain of the ship.'¹³⁷ The actual expression of love itself also relies upon a maritime image:

I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far

As that vast shore wash'd with the

farthest sea,

I would adventure for such merchandise

(II. ii. 82-84)

¹³⁶ Robert W. Walts, 'The Felicity of the Marine Imagery in Romeo and Juliet', *The South Central Bulletin*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Studies by Members of S-CMLA. (Winter, 1962), p.16.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p.17.

Here, the 'merchandise' to which Romeo refers is Juliet. This association of possessive love with colonial notions of conquest and plunder is again one directly related to the ship. These colonial and romantic connotations were developed by poets in the following years. 'Aboard at a Ship's Helm' (1900) by Walt Whitman saw a return to the virtuous and colonial notions associated with the maritime image:

The beautiful and noble ship, with all her precious wealth,
speeds away gaily and safe.

But O the ship the immortal ship!

O ship aboard the ship!

O ship of the body – ship of the soul – voyaging, voyaging,
voyaging.

The ship's 'precious wealth', as with Shakespeare's 'merchandise', alludes directly to economic connotations associated with colonial import. Importantly, however, here the ship possesses none of the dangerous, unpredictable elements of Romeo's shipwrecked vessel, but instead speeds along happily and safely, untouched for an indefinite period of time. The ship is attributed human characteristics in the shape of its emotional state, its direct link to both the body and soul and its incessant, blindly determined attitude to exploration ('voyaging, voyaging, voyaging'). Yet, it also reaches beyond the stretch of humanity. Its immortal status gives the ship a sense of God-given timelessness which transcends the human passage of years. Whitman is describing the immortality of the ship's image itself here rather than the panels and struts which make up its form. It represents a set of values so deeply engrained into popular consciousness as to take on an eternal, unmoving position of importance.

Whitman's hint of (albeit American) nationalist figuration is furthered by John Masefield in his work 'Ships'. The following are two isolated couplets from the poem:

I touch my country's mind, I come to grips –
With half her purpose, thinking of these ships...

They mark our passage as a race of men.
Earth will not see such ships as those again.

In Masefield's poem, ships are said directly to connote Britain's colonial purpose. Alongside this, such vessels 'mark our passage as a race of men.' The ship is used as a symbolic rendering of the successful toils and developments of humankind, and as objects which allow us to progress, further ourselves and conquer other parts of the world.

Within twentieth century, postmodern thought, the ship has continued to signify meaningful concepts. Contemporary ideas have positioned the ship as a symbol of increasing complexity. In *The Nautilus and the Drunken Boat*, Roland Barthes interrogates the ship as a place of solitude and closure. While it so often connotes departure or escape, it also encloses the passenger and entraps them within it and upon its surface. For Barthes, this enclosure is to be celebrated. He describes the ship as 'like a house', and foregrounds its function as a habitat. The ship is positioned as an icon of social and private comfort. It is symbolic of home and a reminder of the

place of departure, but it also represents a private, individualistic space which offers the privilege of enclosed borders.

Barthes' ship as 'habitat' links with Michel Foucault's use of the ship as an example of what he termed a 'heterotopia.' Tobin Siebers describes the concept:

'[...]it represents the postmodern vision of utopia, where community is based on the inclusion of differences, where different forms of talk are allowed to exist simultaneously, and where heterogeneity does not inspire conflict. It is a vision of "Heterotopia," of mixed places and themes... Heterogeneity is the dominant characteristic of postmodern utopian thinking, and its ubiquitous presence here suggests... a vision of utopia for the postmodern age, an age desperate for community but distrustful of the means by which it has been frequently conceived.¹³⁹

This notion of a diverse utopian space is one which is effectively realised by the modern cruise liner. While its tokenistic appropriation veers towards Orientalism, the liner consolidates multicultural ideals (at least in terms of the cultural artefacts and experiences it appropriates) and attempts to provide a lifestyle which offers both a mirror of the comforts of home and an opportunity to consume the foreign. In the Orient Line film *The Way of a Ship*, this marriage of creature comfort and foreign consumption is typified in a description of the *Oronsay's* shopping facilities by the

¹³⁹ Tobin Siebers, *Heterotopia: Postmodern Utopia and the Body Politic* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp.20-1.

film's narrator: 'Here, if you liked, you could get souvenirs from a dozen countries without ever going ashore. Cheaper probably, too.'

Additionally, the ship connotes a utopia in its projection of a perfect social realm which is ultimately unsustainable and temporary. Foucault writes of the ship as a 'heterotopia par excellence' and as a transcendent realm which physically represents the limitlessness of human imagination.¹⁴⁰ It has continued, even in a postmodern age of disparateness and individualism, to connote something meaningful.

The treatment of the ship throughout history, from its carved, symbolic rendering upon walls, to its use in the poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is consistently elevated in tone. Yet, while it pertains to transcendental, spiritual ideas within Biblical passages, and is used to connote the State as an amorphous, yet articulable structure in Roman texts, it is always closely linked to humanity. Through the ship's treatment as a multifaceted sign within literature exists an implicit celebration of its encompassing values of human accomplishment, exploration and general advancement. The ship is used as a symbol of modernity, of the emotional, national, and theological ideas we associate with moving beyond a primitive state towards a moment of enlightenment and civilisation.

¹⁴⁰ Foucault quoted in Anne Wealleans, *Designing Liners: A History of Interior Design Afloat* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.1-2.

3.2 Poster Art, Ephemera, and the Aesthetic Legacy of Jean-Marie Cassandre

Promotional ephemera produced by steam ship companies before and after the war reflects changing trends within art, design and architecture, and aids an attempted construction and interpretation of the modern ship image. The poster itself is an object which has long become a familiar sight of day-to-day existence. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the poster has grown increasingly popular in articulating a number of persuasive ideas to the urban population. Its power of communication partially lies in its prominent positioning as part of the scenery. In the words of Margaret Timmers:

In its function, a poster is essentially a product of communication between an active force and a re-active one. Its originator (individual, institution, business or organization) has a message to sell; the recipient, its target audience, must be persuaded to buy the message. The interchange takes place in the public domain.¹⁴²

To Timmers, the poster's increased prevalence throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its growing power and influence, largely had its origins within three separate areas. Firstly, the poster's ability to convey certain basic emotions, reactions and aspirations through imagery and typography was undeniable. Certain shapes, colours and images brought with them powerful connotations. Secondly, the emergence and resulting prevalence of high-speed printing by colour

¹⁴² Margaret Timmers, *The Power of the Poster* (London: V&A Publications, 1998), p.7.

lithography, which was instigated by prevalent poster designer and creator Jules Chéret, allowed posters to be viewed by millions for the first time. Lastly, the poster's physical deployment had a major effect on its potency and power. Streets, underground stations, shops, factories, cinemas and theatres were prime positions. The poster became the scenery of the day-to-day, infused within the visual grammar of the mundane and the banal in a way that film could not be. These locations were particularly effective in the transmission of an aspirational discourse associated with the holiday. Commuters waiting unhappily for their underground train were, as they continue to be, a perfect demographic for an escapist holiday advertisement.

The poster had the ability to appeal on a number of separate levels due to its contrived aesthetics:

[...] through the distillation process which is part of their creative form, they [posters] have the ability to embody complicated thoughts and messages with a concentration of imagery akin to poetry. They have a broad popular appeal, and yet specifically target the individual who is alert to decode their deeper meaning.¹⁴³

The poster therefore exemplified a meeting of the artistic and the functional. It tackled the subjects of politics, art and the consumer product, yet each was framed within the same limited and standardised parameters. The poster, as with a film, possessed a

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.8.

visual language in which manipulative techniques, could be called upon to persuade and inspire.

Much of the maritime poster art of the pre-war era espoused a similar industrial aesthetic as that seen in the launch film, and outwardly celebrated the progressiveness of such astonishing feats of engineering. A Cunard-commissioned poster by C.H. Calder, for example, advertised the presence of the *Queen Mary* in Southampton docks and framed the ship from a low angle so as to emphasise the spectacle.

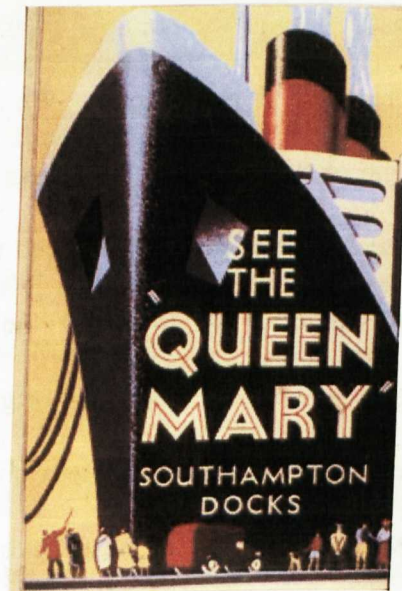


Fig.66: See the 'Queen Mary' Cunard Poster (1934)

Rather than advertise specific fares or ticket offers, the poster draws attention to the presence of the ship as an attraction in itself. Lorraine Coons and Alexander Varias allude to the poster in their book *Tourist Third Cabin: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Years*:

Its unmistakable metallic sheen, the white area by the bridge protruding in a geometric manner and the receding funnels releasing blue-hued smoke all convey a strong modernism and connect us to the euphoria over technology found in many artistic circles. Rather than the floating, wood-panelled manor, the *Mary* is unabashedly profiled here as a product of the industrial age.¹⁴⁴

Within its art style and composition, Cunard's poster depicts the ship as an emblem of modernism and human progress. There is, for example, an implicit sense of awe found within the low angle from which the ship is framed. We share the gaze of the tiny figures found at the base of the giant structure. As Coons and Varias suggest, there was a certain 'euphoria over technology' that, as I alluded to in my previous chapter, was also attributed to representations of trains in the British Transport Film. Although the propagation of this affected treatment originated from such posters, commemorative films made for the launch of certain ships would later employ a series of abstracted and low angle shots so as to achieve the same euphoric effect. Additionally, similar images of liners produced by German, Italian and French artists of the era would frequently opt for jarring perspectives and unfamiliar angles, giving, in the words of Coons and Varias, the 'would-be-passenger a true sense of industrial awesomeness.'¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Lorraine Coons and Alexander Varias, *Tourist Third Cabin: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Years* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), p.154

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.155

Elsewhere, Cunard took on a realist, militaristic aesthetic approach to framing the ship and again employed a low angle perspective.

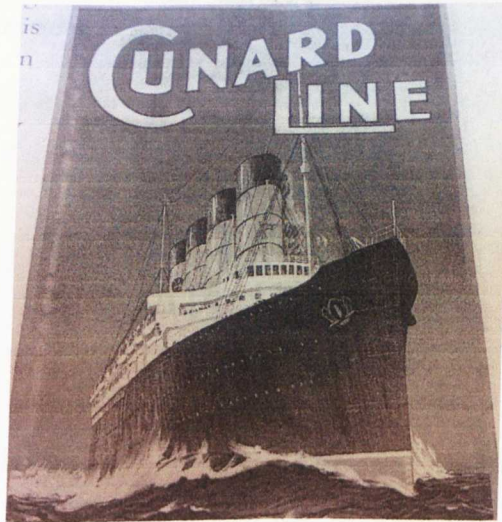


Fig.67: Cunard Line Poster (1930s)

In the poster seen in Fig.67, a realistic image of the ship is shown crashing dramatically through the waves. The style that is adopted is reminiscent of traditional paintings of naval battleships such as *The British Navy Guards the Freedom of Us All* by Frank H. Manson [Fig.68]. These craft appear powerful and menacing as they surge forward, and connote an aggression we associate with militaristic power. Cunard's image therefore possesses something of the invincible too. Within the angles, lines and perspective used, there exists an aggression which is most frequently synonymous with wartime renderings of battle ships.



THE
BRITISH NAVY
guards the freedom of us all

Fig 68: *The British Navy Guards the Freedom of Us All* by Frank H. Manson

Russian artist Jean-Marie Cassandre, who studied in Paris, would offer his services to a number of French steamship companies in the 1920s. His poster designs proved both hugely successful and influential, and had a profound impact on the way the passenger vessel was drawn and filmed in later years. Cassandre felt he was positioned awkwardly between the bourgeois elitism of ‘high art’ and the egalitarian homogeneity of applied art. He sought to bridge the gap between the avant-garde and the popular in a way which could restore ‘artist-craftsmen to the status they held in medieval society.’¹⁴⁶ Embedded within Cassandre’s desires to embrace high art was an engagement with the ideas and techniques of Cubism. Although these were tempered within his commercial work, Cubism’s multi-perspectivism was a worry for companies who had previously seen ‘Cubist disassembling of liners into parts.’¹⁴⁷ In C. R. W. Nevinson’s 1914 painting *The Arrival*, for example, Cubist collage techniques were applied to the image of an approaching ocean liner [Fig.69]. The

¹⁴⁶ Coons and Varias, p.161

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p.162

result was a painting which presented the viewer with a fragmented and abstract ship of parts which required reconstruction. The visual abstraction and disassembly associated with Cubism would influence the style of poster and film work of later years. As I will move on to discuss later in this chapter, *Movietone News*' launch films would, in part, picture the ship as a number of disassociated parts.

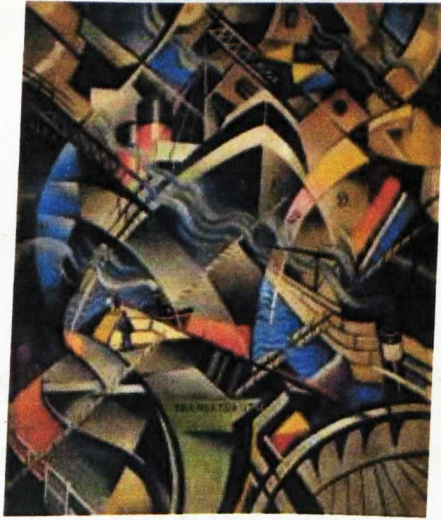


Fig.69: *The Arrival* by C. R. W. Nevinson

Cassandre successfully managed to avoid the extensive and unmarketable experimentalism of Nevinson in his commissioned pieces, yet retained an underlying drive to play a part in the successful union of the avant-garde and the mainstream. He therefore retained a sense of altered perspective within his work, but fused this with a recognisable reproduction of the iconic ship image. Cassandre's most famous maritime pieces include *L'Atlantique* (1931) and *Normandie* (1935). Both establish a low-angle perspective and particularly emphasise the bow of both ships.

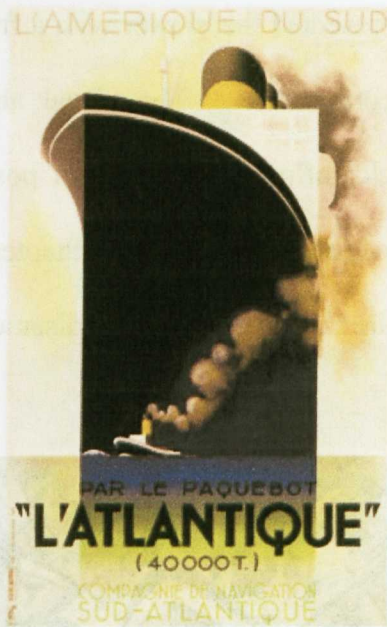


Fig 70: *L'Atlantique* by Jean-Marie Cassandre

L'Atlantique demonstrated this keen balance of modernist artistic techniques alongside the realist pressures of the artist's commercial remit [Fig.70]. The rectangle which forms the ship's bow, extends to both the sea and the typography below, giving the liner's physical form a near-Bauhaus sense of industrial abstraction.¹⁴⁸

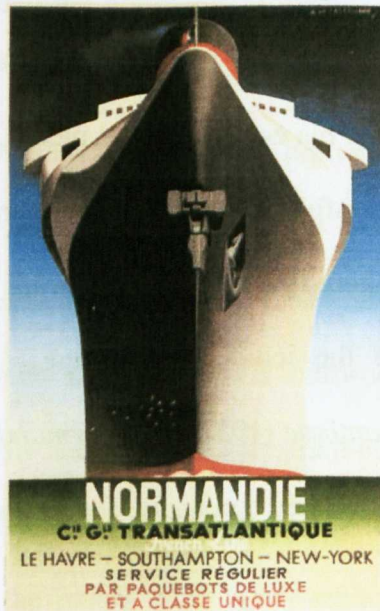


Fig 71: *Normandie* by Jean-Marie Cassandre

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Yet, it was Cassandre's depiction of the *Normandie* that would have the most profound impact on the poster artist's techniques [Fig.71]. The poster is striking in its symmetry and fusion of detail and simplicity. Its pastel shades and curvaceous lines celebrate the ship as a real work of modernist art. Like the set of *Movietone News* launch films I will examine later, the structure is depicted as simple yet beautiful shape which connotes something of the organic and natural alongside the industrial. Coons and Varias state:

Cassandre's image of the *Normandie* was not only in harmony with modernist and mechanical ideals but seemed to beckon to the future. His direct frontal view of the surging bow and front smokestack in metallic colors brought to mind the views of architects like Le Corbusier, who described ocean liners as the most concrete examples of modernistic design. The image was so simple and impressive that it gained overnight familiarity among both the maritime and artistic crowd.¹⁴⁹

The pre-war poster art of Cassandre associated ideas of sea travel and cruising with the avant-garde and with a sense of the cultural zeitgeist. The elevation and instant recognition of such an image meant that it bridged the gap between popular culture and elite culture, and found a middle ground which was both appealing and aspirational. The avant-garde was distilled into something digestible and replicable, yet was simultaneously able to retain a sheen of exclusiveness and self-conscious

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p.165.

artistry. This endeavour directly reflected the marketing of the oceanic cruise as a lifestyle and consumable product in later years. A voyage upon a liner was, as in *Ocean Liner Holiday* or *World At Three*, framed with a similar level of style which appealed to the aspirations of potential passengers.



Fig.72: Cunard Line Poster

Along with Calder's poster of the Queen Mary in Southampton docks, Cunard would ape this modernist style in its own poster art [Fig.72]. A piece by an anonymous artist which depicts a liner complete with Cunard's iconic red and black funnels, was another example of a poster design aimed at the French market. The geometric shapes reflected in the sea, like Cassandre's work, follow the ship's own lines which, paradoxically, appear both angular and curvaceous. The cloud shapes upon the image's backdrop are caricatured and exaggerated, and begin to hint at the cartoon styling of pop artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, who would come to the fore of the modern art world in the 1960s.



Fig.73: *SS France*, French Line (1962)

Such was the potency and impact of both the *Normandie* and *L'Atlantique* designs, that Cassandre's iconic Art Deco style would have a far reaching influence over poster design in the post-war era. Fig.73 advertises the newly constructed and launched *SS France*, French Line's flagship vessel put into service in 1962. The ship was, at the time, the longest passenger craft ever created and was seen as a 'ship of state' (similar to Britain's *RMS Queen Mary*). Designed with the much-loved *Normandie* in mind, the *France* shared many of the design features of the older craft. Along with the aesthetic similarities of the two ships, the design aesthetic deployed to advertise the vessel is a clear *hommage* to the work of Cassandre. Perspective is again lowered and the ship appears to tower above us, the hull rising impressively from the water's surface. As in the poster advertising *L'Atlantique*, a tug is pictured alongside the vessel which further serves to emphasise its massive size. Similarly, as in Cassandre's work, the ship lacks realism and detail, yet appears both recognisable and strangely abstract. The use of block colours and thick black lines lends the image a simplicity and draws our eyes to the craft's extensive hull.



Fig.74: French Line Promotional Poster

Fig.74 shows another French Line advertisement from 1957. Here the perspective of Cassandre is aped, yet it is combined with an impressionist aesthetic which is used to depict both the tugs which surround the ship and the people who wave enthusiastically from the harbour. The integration of diverse artistic styles would take place increasingly in the post-war years. I will explore this later in this chapter when looking at advertising ephemera produced by shipping lines.

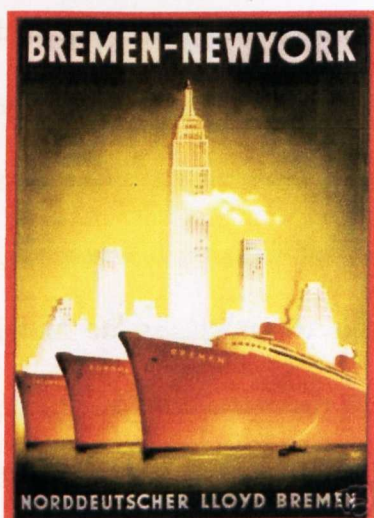
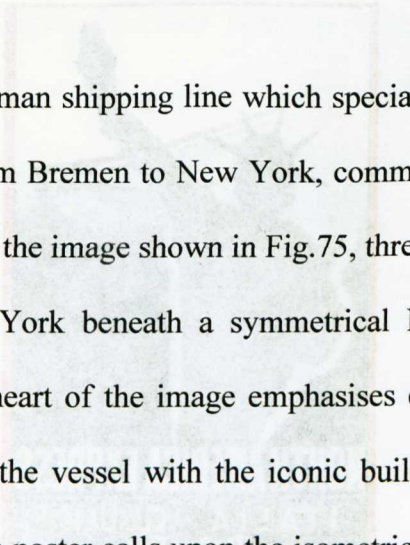


Fig.75: Norddeutscher Lloyd Promotional Poster



Norddeutscher Lloyd, a German shipping line which specialised in the transportation of cargo and passengers from Bremen to New York, commissioned the above poster to advertise their service. In the image shown in Fig.75, three liners are depicted side-by-side, anchored in New York beneath a symmetrical Manhattan skyline. The compositional order at the heart of the image emphasises efficiency and juxtaposes the design and elegance of the vessel with the iconic buildings which stand in the background. Artistically, the poster calls upon the isometric shapes of Cassandre, yet re-frames them in profile, while block colour, graceful lines and simplified, Art-Deco-inspired details follow familiar tradition. A tug is again used alongside the foregrounded ships to emphasise their size, while the orange sunset casts a painterly glow which evokes the *Canberra's* tropical treatment in *Ocean Liner Holiday*. Although the poster's vessels sit in New York harbour, the orange hues of both sky and hull evoke a kind of exoticism which is otherwise synonymous with colonial locations such as the Caribbean and Africa. The visual discourse of the cruise is here employed to romanticize the ship within a foreign, urban locale. The iconic Empire State Building accentuates the glamour of New York, but it also directly positions the ships as a comparable architectural marvel.



Fig.76: Italian Line Promotional Poster

In a similar aesthetic decision, an Italian poster which advertises Italian Line's North American voyages, equates the Statue of Liberty with the ship [Fig.76]. Unlike the German poster, the liner is here consigned to the background and an emphasis is placed on the iconic statue. The poster encourages us to share the statue's gaze upon the ship which steams beneath it. The liner's speedy trajectory (emphasised by the smoke trailing from the funnels and the bow wave) is legitimised by the Statue of Liberty's watchful pose. Through the poster's composition, we are made to equate the ship with a sense of empowerment, freedom and liberty.

European posters of the immediate pre-war era exhibit a kind of artistic experimentation which was lost in the years following the Second World War.

Writing about British art in post-war Britain, Jamie James writes:

The enormous cost of rebuilding after the horrific destruction of the war meant that there was widespread rationing, and any

sort of luxury, including colour printing, was looked down upon as frivolous and even unpatriotic. The arts in Britain in the post-war period had an almost defiant drabness.¹⁵⁰

This drabness sat incongruously with the leisure cruise. As an activity of sustained luxury, it rather flew in the face of the frugal values of post-war austerity. Promotional material produced by shipping lines of the time, however, did tend to exhibit concessions to the era, with a return to actuality, simplicity and monochrome photography.



Fig.77: P&O Brochure (1950)

P&O's brochure art of 1950 [Fig.77], for example, sees the photographic reproduction of a liner. Its raised angle and black and white aesthetic contrasts markedly with the colourful modernism of Cassandre's pre-war poster art. The framing of the image harks back to the realist depictions of vessels seen in early Cunard advertising.

¹⁵⁰ Jamie James, *Pop Art* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), p.6.

3.3 The Influence of the Avant-Garde

Whilst in Britain the war was restricting mainstream and 'high' art, the United States was booming both commercially and culturally. Internally, it had remained largely untouched by the ravaging effects of military conflict, and as a result, industry was expanding and a new type of popular culture was on the rise. As James notes, 'American magazines were big, colourful and glossy, in striking contrast to the essentially monochrome British ethos.'¹⁵¹ The mass production of colourful, higher quality material was both technologically possible and economically viable.

Alongside this was the rise of powerful, colourful, iconic figures within the cultural industry. Elvis Presley and Mickey Mouse were gaining a weight and power within society which had made them as recognisable as politicians. In partial response to the perceived artistic redundancy existing in post-war Britain, the Independent Group was formed in London in 1952. The group consisted of writers, thinkers and creative practitioners such as Richard Hamilton, Eduardo Paolozzi and William Turnbull, who yearned to embrace the exuberance and excitement of American popular culture.¹⁵² The Independent Group's endeavours culminated in 1956 when they mounted an art exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London. Appropriately calling the show *This Is Tomorrow*, it incorporated a large number of images which would later become labelled as Pop Art.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p.6.

¹⁵² Anne Massey, *The Independent Group*

<http://www.independentgroup.org.uk/contributors/index.html> [Accessed 10/06/09]

Pop Art would see an appropriation of the icons of mainstream culture into high art. Like Cassandre's seizure of the avant-garde for his poster designs, the Pop Artists inverted this idea and used the imagery of popular music, film, food, drink and other products as part of contemporary art pieces. Richard Hamilton, who designed the *This is Tomorrow* poster, would sum up Pop Art's theoretical rationale succinctly:

It is the Playboy 'Playmate of the Month' pull-out pin-up which provides us with the closest contemporary equivalent of the odalisque in painting. Automobile body stylists have absorbed the symbolism of the space age more successfully than any artist. Social comment is left to comic strip and TV. Epic has become synonymous with a certain kind of film and the heroic archetype is now buried deep in movie lore. If the artist is not to lose much of his ancient purpose he may have to plunder the popular arts to recover the imagery which is his rightful inheritance.¹⁵³

Within Pop Art's inherent ethos thus existed an implicit respect for the designers and commercial artists who worked on products of the time. This indirectly includes those who created the sweeping lines of the modern ocean liner, an object now lauded for both its enlightened, modernist sense of spectacle and its pure aesthetic design. High art was suddenly taking its cues from the functional mass of consumables that surrounded everyone. The modern ocean liner, whose designers had pursued the

¹⁵³ Richard Hamilton in Jamie James, *Pop Art* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), p.7.

principles of art within its outer and inner design decisions, was now a focus of inspiration itself.

As Pop Art began to infiltrate galleries, exhibitions and the columns of art critics with its reappraisal of the flat, reproduced imagery of mainstream culture, the advertising and branding it frequently borrowed from began to borrow back. Within steam ship and cruise promotion, we see a discernible move from a drab 1950s aesthetic (as embodied within P&O's 1950s brochure) to a colourfulness and playfulness induced by the rise of Pop Art. Along with this appropriation of the movement's bright, buoyant aesthetic, we also see a similar fetishisation and foregrounding of the banal, as well as a sense of jarring juxtaposition.



Fig.78: Image from P&O Brochure (1960s)

In an image taken from a 1960s promotional brochure introducing the *Canberra* [Fig.78], we see several children playing on a seesaw. The original image's monochrome aesthetic and portrayal of childish fun is a knowing nod to the drab aesthetics of post-war British austerity. However, the strips of colour which overlay the photograph are seemingly a self-conscious nod towards Pop Art's colourful manipulation of imagery and a transgressive, highly visible act of modernism. This

effect is particularly reminiscent of Andy Warhol's (and later Deborah Kass's) repeated silkscreen images of famous American stars such as Marilyn Monroe and Jacqueline Kennedy. Although the repetition of these Pop Art images is missing in the P&O photograph, its appropriation of the surface aesthetics of the movement is particularly striking. Here, a traditional image of cruising comes into direct conflict with the pop styling of the avant-garde. The image seems to interrogate the dichotomy facing cruise advertisers in their desire to appear culturally relevant, while perpetuating the nationalistic, traditional values inherent within British seafaring.



Fig.79: P&O Information Booklets (1964)

The influence of contemporary art can also be seen in P&O's lesser pieces of publicity. Here, the image of a ship is shown from different angles upon two information booklets dating from the 1960s. The influence of Pop artists such as Roy Lichtenstein is evident in the use of block colour along with thick, black outlines. The ship is given a cartoon-like appearance, while the silhouetted stick figures which occupy the pictures further solidify this comic strip aesthetic. The image of the ship presented here, just like Pop Art itself, occupies a middle ground between high artistry and low-brow mass culture. The 1960s represented a unique moment when

irony and self-replication began to take hold of the art world in such a way that the culture industry could become a complicit part of it. P&O's Pop Art-inspired pieces were a natural consequence of the movement's own essential tenets. In the movement's emulation of the avant-garde, the regurgitation process was taken a step further, and culminated in the artistic imitation of popular culture within popular culture itself.

Along with this appropriation of the avant-garde, ephemera of the 1960s also called upon modernist art styles of previous decades. The economic improvement and cultural liberation of the 1960s is palpable within the diversity of techniques and art styles used within promotional material.



Fig 80: P&O Brochure (1961)



Fig 81: P&O Brochure (1960)

In these two examples from P&O material, Impressionist technique and watercolour are used to represent the ship. While the deconstruction of the image seen in the pre-war era has gone, these views also represent a lesser emphasis placed on the technical aspects of the ship. The aesthetic appeal of these images is a far cry from the postmodern, Pop-Art inspired, self-consciously contemporary aesthetics of other P&O ephemera. Instead, these images deploy an enduring, modernist rendering of the ship which connotes sophistication and taps into the ship's enduring signification of romance.

3.4 The Ship in Film

In the modern and postmodern age, the ship – as both image and physical structure – has inevitably altered and become further problematised in the collective mind. While the spectacle of a huge, incomprehensibly complex structure floating upon the water retained its simple, striking power, the prevalence of air-based vehicles diluted the awe and wonder of this simple visual image. Transport via complex, mechanical machines became everyday and even mundane.

Yet, as I have shown, throughout our history the ship's striking visual power has been harnessed to express the figurative and the metaphysical. The potency of the ship's iconic image is deeply rooted and conjures an emotional reaction despite its ubiquity. In the post-war period, poster artists created a striking visual discourse with which to display the ship and infused it with the same values it has historically connoted. In addition to this, cruising itself perpetuated the grandiose terms by which poets,

playwrights, novelists and visual artists had alluded to the ship throughout history. Traditions of Royal naming and launching (to which many cruise films allude), emphasised the close links between the ship, Church and state. This was furthered by the prevalence of Royalty aboard ships and the so-called 'Golden Age of Cruising' of the 1920s and 1930s. Images of Royal Family members waving from aboard vessels, or interacting with passengers, were integral to the continued currency of the cruise's distinctive iconography within public consciousness and the furtherance of certain core, historicised values.

My following analysis of the contemporary exploration of the ship image on film is informed by both this ever-present awareness of the ship's historically-rooted social importance, and the legacy generated by poster artists in the pre-war years. Within shot construction, mise-en-scene and the juxtaposition of certain frames and sequences, the affectionate poetics of a much-loved national symbol are placed alongside the visual discourse created by the likes of Cassandre.

3.5 The Union-Castle Launch Film: A Continuing Visual Discourse

A set of *Movietone News* films of the 1940s and 1950s captured the launches of four Union castle vessels: the *Bloemfontein Castle*, *Kenya Castle*, *Braemar Castle*, and *Pretoria Castle*. As I have previously noted, the last of these films, *Launch of the Pretoria Castle*, was followed by a film entitled *Holiday Afloat* (also known as *Into The Sun*), which outlined the ship's maiden voyage. Although they share inevitable similarities in terms of shot construction and structure, each of the Union Castle

launch films possesses subtly distinctive stylistic traits. A close analysis of the shot construction of these films is useful in establishing a stylistic discourse repeatedly deployed when shooting the ship.

In *Launch of the Bloemfontein Castle* (1949), we are presented with a moment which is directly reminiscent of the Preston Brothers' single, arcing camera sweep that pivots around the ship. From a low angle, the camera glides around the vessel's stern and focuses on the enormous propellers which jut out of its underside [Figs.82 and 83]. The fairly swift cuts that make up the majority of the film's content render this particular shot conspicuous in its length and style. It acts as a punctuating pause that calls implicitly for a level of aesthetic appreciation on the part of the spectator. Our rotating, changing gaze offers a thorough and comprehensive vantage point from which to engage in this purely aesthetic spectacle.



Fig.82: *Launch of the Bloemfontein Castle* (1949)



Fig.83: *Launch of the Bloemfontein Castle* (1949)

In *Launch of the Kenya Castle*, our perspective is initially confined to the deck of the ship. We are presented with the final stages of the craft's actual construction, as men labour on the placement of steel pipes and the welding of surface panels. We are then shown close-ups of riveting and painting, before launch preparations begin [Fig.84]. The pace of the film's cuts increase rapidly and we are shown, for the first time,

images of the completed ship. These are juxtaposed with shots of working men's faces as they gaze up at their finished work [Figs.85 and 86]. They wear expressions which are part pride, part melancholy, as they prepare to watch the product of hours of labour slip away to sea. This acknowledgement of the human element which drives the construction of such sea craft is one observed by each launch film and filters into the discourse of the cruise film in later years. While these men are shown to be responsible for the ship's existence, their moment of separation evokes a mix of sadness and subservience. They gaze skywards towards a structure that has grown beyond them and looms above them. The ship is a benevolent, comforting force, but the workers' skyward gazes contain an implicit accentuation of the ship's latent power and hints at the transcendent, spiritual value attributed to the vessel.



Fig.84: *Launch of the Kenya Castle* (1952) Fig.85: *Launch of the Kenya Castle* (1952)



Fig.86: *Launch of the Kenya Castle* (1952)

Launch of the S.S. Braemar Castle (1952) is brief in length and offers a handful of establishing shots of the ship before the beams which hold it in place are removed and the launch process commences. Most striking is a shot of the vessel's bow that appears abstract in both its shape and lack of context [Fig.87]. The bow is photographed at a steep angle which renders it distinct and distanced from a more conventional and iconic representation of a ship's outer form. The low angle seems exaggerated and conspicuous, and – like the raised eyes of the men in *Kenya Castle* – draws attention to our lowered, weakened perspective. The impressive spectacle of the ship's height is emphasised within this aesthetic choice.

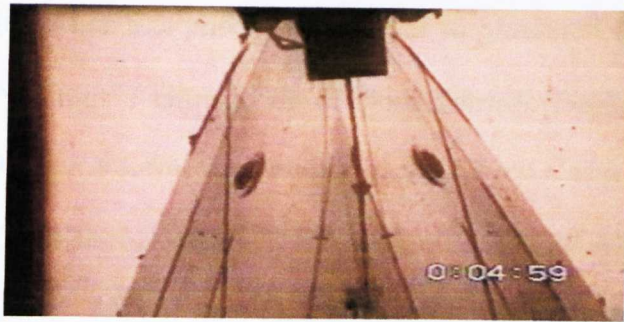


Fig 87: *Launch of the S.S Braemar Castle* (1952)

Although all four of these launch films observe a similar structure which culminates in the ship's initial moments upon the water, *Launch of the Pretoria Castle* is perhaps the most striking in its visual style. The film experiments with shot construction and aesthetic techniques that were in many ways prototypical of the manner in which liners would be photographed in subsequent years. The logistical problems of picturing such a colossal structure were great, along with the financial limitations which inevitably restricted the scale of such endeavours. However, *Launch of the Pretoria Castle* is highly distinctive and displays an intrinsic treatment of its subject

which perpetuates the same implied respect that the Prestons' panning camera expresses.

The film's initial shot depicts the scaffolding and cranes associated with the ship's construction. The bow is then shown from a very low angle [Fig.88], its metallic curves rising to meet the sky like a modernist building. The image we are presented with is clearly part of a ship, yet it is taken out of context, rendered unfamiliar, and isolated against an empty backdrop in a similar style to that used in the picturing of the *Braemar Castle* a few years later. The aesthetic elements of the colossal liner are foregrounded, yet simultaneously abstracted as a result of this consciously alien and unfamiliar shot choice. This marks an attempt by the filmmaker to diverge from an entirely conventional rendering of the ship in a complete and recognisable form, by instead using such close, abstract shots to deconstruct a familiar and recognisable image.

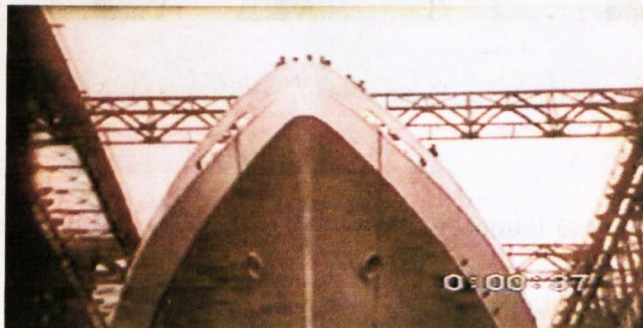


Fig.88: Launch of the Pretoria Castle (1948)

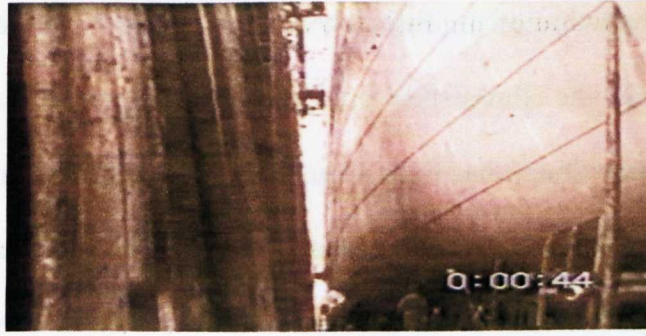


Fig.89: *Launch of the Pretoria Castle (1948)*

The next shot depicts the side of the ship complete with the words '*Pretoria Castle*' emblazoned across its metallic surface. This is a return to an establishing shot of sorts, but the ship again engulfs the entire frame. The base of the vessel is then pictured on the right of the shot, with a wooden scaffolding structure holding it in place pictured to the left [Fig.89]. Down the centre is a segment of obstructed sky and below the ship we spy workers going about their last-minute preparations, and appearing tiny below the enormous structure. Like *Kenya Castle*'s gazing workmen, the composition of this shot emphasises the human endeavour which lies at the heart of the ship's existence. We are then presented with a reverse shot, emphasising the horizontal scale of the ship as it disappears into the distance, while the vertical parts of the structure extend far beyond the top of the frame. These establishing shots are then followed by closer depictions of minor aesthetic details, before the launch itself takes place. At no point during this short sequence are we privy to the ship as a singular, unified structure. Instead, before its launch at least, it is pictured as a collection of parts which appear to lack context and are at times abstracted to the point of appearing barely recognisable.

This fragmented projection of the ship echoes that seen in Noel Coward's *In Which We Serve* (1942). In the film's short opening montage, we are presented with the vessel's construction before it has fully taken form. As its rivets and panels are fused together, its conception and subsequent existence become closely tied to the earnest human endeavour at the heart of the process. This industrious opening is crucial to the film's humanist heart and the strength of relationship between man and machine which is subsequently espoused. The ship's image begins as a set of pre-constructed parts which must be fused to form a coherent sense of identity. Only as a whole does the vessel begin to take on the visual form which is universally recognisable and associated with its virtues and figurative connotations. Coward's opening echoes the dichotomous Roman treatment of the ship by Aeschylus and Sophocles ('well-steered ship of state' and 'ship-wreck of state'). Within Coward's opening exposure of the ship's constituent parts there exists an appreciation of its affirming solidity and firmness alongside the fragility inherent within its construction. By exposing, within the film's opening frames, the ship laid bare and open, we see beneath the surface of its deceptively cohesive and impenetrable exterior. The ship's destruction and sinking near the beginning of the film explicitly draws attention to this sense of fragility. The film's use of extensive flashback allows the spectator view of the ship in all its seafaring glory, yet this is tempered by the knowledge of its ultimate demise. In both *Launch of the Pretoria Castle* and *In Which We Serve* (which itself emulates footage present within earlier documentary films such as *Shipyards* (1935)), the fragmented, industrial image of the ship is exposed and creates with it a sense of projected humanity.

This exposure is in one sense synonymous with the potential existence of frailty and weakness, yet in another connotes a kind of humanity that the outward, familiar and iconic image of the ship cannot encompass. The sense of cohesion and human investment which we gain from the portrayal of the ship's construction is symbolic of the sense of national unity required and found in the nation's people in wartime. In Rudyard Kipling's nineteenth-century short story 'The Ship That Found Herself', a vessel's construction is rendered anthropomorphically, with each component given a distinct voice and role to play within the voyage. The ship's apparent identity is found beneath its exterior structure and exists within its constituent parts. Kipling's story follows the squabbling ship components as they engage upon their maiden voyage and eventually learn the importance of unity. 'The Ship That Found Herself' is ultimately a parable underlining solidarity and team-work in the face of unsympathetic adversity (in this case nature itself). Like the visual discourse evident in the launch film, the presentation of the ship is fragmented yet humanised. It is a portrait which reads as a quest to unite the disparate elements of the self into a unified whole.

3.6 Increasingly Human: The Ship And The War

Coward's *In Which We Serve* was one of several naval war films which would use the ship to espouse a sense of national pride and British resilience. Along with portrayals of the British Naval forces, the importance and role of the Merchant Navy was also emphasised within output of the wartime period. Charles Frennd's *San Demetrio London* (1943) follows the endeavours of a crew aboard the oil tanker of the film's

title. Exterior shots of the ship's movement upon the waves are accompanied by a burst of triumphant music. As the *San Demetrio* comes under fire from a German battleship, its crew are forced to abandon ship and take to lifeboats. After two days without rescue, the band of men stumble upon their unmanned vessel that remains afloat as fires rage on her decks and water pours into holes in her hull. Re-boarding the ship, the crew manage to restart the ailing craft's engines and sail back to land. The grit and determination of both the crew and the ship are rendered side-by-side. The ship's refusal to bow to the blows of the German warship that attacks, marks it as transcendent and defiant. It manages to convey a human spirit within its resilience as well as a divinity in its 'miraculous delivery.'

In the post-war years, while portrayals of human characters grew increasingly bleak and morally dubious, treatments of the ship would retain this sense of national pride and virtue. Ealing Studios' *The Ship That Died Of Shame* (1955) presents a useful comparison to Kipling's parable and moves beyond Coward's humanised treatment of the ship. The film, directed by Basil Dearden, follows a trio of ex-navy seamen who turn their hand to smuggling with the use of their decommissioned war ship '1087'. As the imported cargo becomes increasingly sinister, the ship begins to express its distaste through numerous mechanical failings. As the crew's money laundering is brought to light, for example, the ship's engines inexplicably give out, emitting a raw, animal-like growl of anguish. Similarly, after the men unwittingly aid the flight of a convicted child-murderer, their attempts to escape to Portugal are thwarted once again by the ship's own protests. At the film's climax, in the midst of a heavy storm, control is lost when Hoskins (Richard Attenborough) and Randall (George Baker) fight on the ship's bridge. At this point, the ship appears to take on a life of its own,

bludgeoning Hoskins overboard with a lifeboat before running itself aground. Although Randall and the hapless Birdie (Bill Owen) survive their ordeal, they are saved only by their own repentance and regret. Like *The Ship That Found Herself*, the vessel is given a consciousness, and a conscience. It is ultimately presented as a beacon of scrupulousness and sound morality in an otherwise bleak world filled with disaffected characters twisted by war and personal trauma. The ship's ultimate destruction (or rather 'death' as offered in the title) is the film's final tragedy and is presented as an act of suicide. As a shrewd reversal of Kipling's tale of unification, the articulation of the ship's inherent human spirit is expressed through its regression; a disintegration and separation into constituent parts and components.

Dearden's film, while perpetuating this humanised version of the ship, also renders its image emblematic of the virtues and figurations found within my opening analysis of literary allusion. '1087' is consistently feminised, both repeatedly referred to by way of the feminine pronoun (in fact, its status as a mere object is never mentioned), and strongly linked to Helen, the love of Randall's life who is killed in an air raid close to the film's outset. The ship is treated like a rival for Randall's affections and is privileged with more sweetly romantic strings and images of the 'dreamlike picaresque' than Helen is.¹⁵⁴ The words 'beauty' and 'honey' are used when referring to the ship, while the painting of the vessel upon the crew's reunion prompts the flippant statement, 'marvellous what a facial will do.' This feminisation is something frequently associated with the nation. Like the ship, the feminine pronoun is used when alluding to a country or state. As a result, Barr's reading of the film as a loss of decency and pride which is ultimately located in 'Bill's confused and impotent male

¹⁵⁴ Jim Cook, 'The Ship That Died of Shame', in Charles Barr ed., *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*, (London: BFI, 1986), p.363.

sense of the loss of “her”, can be understood on a number of levels.¹⁵⁵ In one sense, his loss is purely that of the companionship of his wife. In another, it is his loss of the ship and its crew in the post-war years; the re-discovery of which is cruelly superficial and short-lived. On another level, his loss of ‘her’ can also allude to his disengagement with Britain herself following the war, and encompass his eroded sense of national identity. Randall’s patriotic service within the naval forces is replaced by a devious and decidedly unpatriotic bout of smuggling which serves to undermine the values synonymous with British virtue. The ship’s retention of these values acts to bolster it as both an image of the feminine and of national integrity. This direct pairing with the nation again conjures up these Roman notions of the ‘ship of state’, in this case warning of its poor steerage and ending in an Aeschylus-like ship wreck. Along with the ship’s moral strength, its inherent fragility is exposed. The scenes which conclude the film mark the ship as virtuous and self-sacrificial. Along with these human-like deficiencies (particularly in expression of emotion), it also transcends human control, and takes on properties akin to a spiritual, supernatural force. In this way, the ship also exhibits associations with its biblical usage, something which is further connoted within the unremitting sense of adoration and even worship that it appears to garner. The film ends with an image of the ship magically restored to its former wartime glory. Its honour and selfless martyrdom becomes the message we take from the film. Dearden uses the enduring image of the ship to gesture towards and contrast with humanity’s failings. While war has left the human characters jaded, disaffected and morally bankrupt, the image of ship shines on as a beacon of eternal integrity.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

The Ship That Died of Shame therefore acts as a helpful contemporary example of the multi-faceted nature of the ship image. It brings together the dichotomous and sometimes paradoxical way in which the ship is treated throughout history. The film gestures towards the Second World War as a crucially influential factor in a contemporary treatment of the ship in wider social consciousness, particularly in its embodiment of positive, patriotic traits associated with the nation.

Along with these changing attitudes to the ship which were represented in popular films, the steam liner's physical involvement in the war would have an effect on Britain's collective attitude. Just as men and women were expected to turn all hands to the war effort, the liners of the pre-war era were similarly recruited to perform naval tasks during wartime. The *Pretoria Castle*, for example, was converted into an armed merchant cruiser, then an escort aircraft carrier and renamed the *HMS Pretoria Castle*. After its time as a Royal Navy ship, it was then converted back to a passenger liner where it continued to perform its original function.

The *City of Benares* was another passenger steam ship recruited for wartime function. In 1940 it was engaged in the transportation of juveniles from Britain to the Canadian ports of Quebec and Montreal. Late in the evening on 17th September, the ship came under torpedo attack from German U-boats and was sunk. 248 people were killed in the attack, 77 of whom were children who were part of the band of evacuees. The incident marked a tragic early moment in the war and foregrounded the fragility of the liner in the face of the perils of conflict. The ship's name has since become synonymous with the suffering and pain its destruction caused, and has resulted in retrospective accounts such as Tom Nagorski's *Miracles on the Water*. The following

is an excerpt from Nagorski's story which is made up of a collection of survivor testimonies. Particularly enlightening is its description of the ill-fated vessel:

Adolf Hitler's air force had pummeled Liverpool in the days before the *Benares* set sail from that same port; the children and their escorts had watched the bombs as they fell. Now their home was an eleven-thousand-ton luxury liner, clean and elegant, comfortable and richly stocked. Onboard meals were feasts—heaping buffets of meat and chicken, fresh fruit in large baskets, limitless ice cream for dessert—served by Indian waiters in bright blue and white uniforms. The ship's decks were a virtual playing field, the playroom a huge and colorful space where imaginations might run, and memories of war recede. ¹⁵⁶

The liner is presented by Nagorski as a safe-haven from the horrors of a war-stricken nation, a utopian realm free from rationing, bombings, restriction and repression. It is depicted as an environment which allows its passengers a return to a kind of human dignity and luxury the war had eroded. The *Benares* incident undoubtedly tightened the links between the ship and its national purpose. Already an emblem of the nation, its tragic, merciless demise in the call of duty was one which further romanticised the ship and demonised the enemy. The incident saw the blurring of lines between the virtuous and victorious Naval war ship, the essential and functional merchant vessel and the simple civilian liner. The aiding of the war effort by ships such as the

¹⁵⁶ Tom Nagorski, *Miracles on the Water* (London: Robinson Publishing, 2007), p.2.

Benares lent them an even greater sense of humanity in their emulation and perpetuation of a homogenous, national wartime attitude. The ideals of collectivism and unthinking altruism which pervaded this era extended to, and were embodied by, the ship. The destruction of the *Benares* once again exposed the ship's fragile interior. The tragedy inherent within its demise was borne from a vulnerability it shared with its human passengers.

3.7 A Fragmenting Perspective: The Ship and the Cruise Film

The cruise film of the post-war period, informed by the commercial liner's heroic involvement in the war effort, would, in some cases, continue a preoccupation with the construction of the ship. Arguably, this was an attempt to reassure audiences and would-be passengers of the solidity of ocean-bound craft, alongside an endeavour further to humanise such vessels. However, in other examples of the post-war cruise film, the ship would be placed exclusively within the context of the exotic cruise experience. The following analysis of the ship's image in the cruise film is therefore broad in its conclusions. Some films strove to preserve the *Cassandra*-like, awe-inspiring image of the ship through low angles and upward gazes, and by drawing attention to the panels and rivets that made up its construction. Others attempted to re-align the ship's image in the context of a contemporary, post-modern age. In the latter case, actuality was denied in favour of a poetic projection of the ship as a reappropriated object of an aesthetic age.

Like the early launch films featuring Union Castle vessels, the opening of *In Which We Serve*, Kipling's anthropomorphic parable, and *The Ship That Died of Shame*, some cruise films would tie the ship's construction to the men responsible for manning or building the vessel. These films would also possess an attitude to the ship which was distinctly post-war, and demonstrated an implicit yet newly replenished adoration for a vessel crucial to the success of the British war effort. Such films continued the documentary tradition of placing the pursuit of actuality at their heart.

A Great Ship (1965), for example, depicts the planning and construction of the *Canberra*. This was a liner which became iconic within P&O's post-war line and would be recruited to play an important role in the Falklands campaign of 1982. Amongst the extensive depictions of practical labour undertaken by shipyard workers in Belfast, the film focuses on one particular individual who controls a crane. Along with a portrait of the man's day-to-day working life, we are shown his new family and recently purchased home. While on one hand this draws attention to the virtuous creation of jobs within the city by P&O, on the other the sequence pits the man's 'new life' alongside the ship's own transformation. This distinctive parallel acts further to humanise the ship via the depiction of its construction.

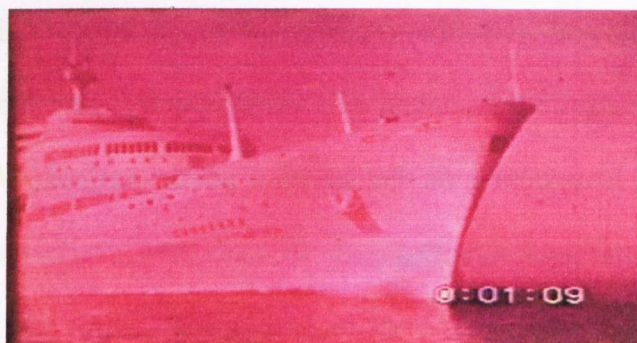


Fig.90: *A Great Ship* (1965)



Fig.91: *I Am A Passenger* (1960)

The ship in its completed form is photographed from a low angle [Fig.90] and calls upon the visual discourse frequently deployed in both the launch film and poster art of the pre-war period. Alongside this image, we hear both triumphant brass lines and the narrator comparing the vessel to a ‘mountain peak’. The ship’s treatment is traditionally rooted and calls upon the rousing, nationalistic discourse of wartime. P&O’s *I Am A Passenger*, is comparably conventional in its depiction when the ship is onscreen. Shots of the liner are recorded from a fairly low angle and from a mid-distance perspective [as in Fig.91]. The music which accompanies such images is also orchestral and dramatic.

However, elsewhere in the post-war cruise film, there a distinct divergence in the representation of the liner. The nationally-rooted visual discourse perpetuated by the likes of *I Am a Passenger* and *A Great Ship* is replaced by a desire to position the ship within a contemporary environment and amongst the artefacts of the world it inhabits. It becomes less the subject of and instead the backdrop upon which a holiday discourse is formed.

Cunard's *Magic Ride* is a film which bridges the gap between these two approaches. Its first half follows a young girl as she explores the interior of the *QE2* which is under construction. Although this sequence is framed as an entertaining horror mini-narrative, the ship is laid bare and its construction is foregrounded. Shots of the ship take a familiar low-angle perspective, while cranes and scaffolding bring to mind the utilitarian and industrious .



Fig.92: *Magic Ride* (1969)



Fig.93: *Magic Ride* (1969)

However, the film's second half diverges entirely. Suddenly transported back to the present day, our main character has grown up and is embarking on the *QE2*'s maiden voyage. The ship shifts from its demonised role in the film's first half to that of a utopian backdrop in the second. Anna Bentinck, playing the film's unnamed female lead, is shown enjoying herself aboard, amongst musical montages and footage taken from various destinations. As with the ship's changing role, its visual treatment entirely divergent. While the *QE2* is photographed from a lowered perspective in the film's opening moments (adding to the sequence's tense build-up and the ship's demonic treatment), later it is shown from high above, with the sun's beams creating a pool of golden water through which it speeds [Fig.93]. This conspicuous shift in

perspective helps to highlight the power of visual composition in attributing meaning to the ship itself. While the film's earlier shot of the *QE2* helps to convey the sinister and the frightening, the second simply revels in the beauty and opportunity the ship can provide.

The World At Three features the *Canberra*, now completed, as it embarks on a lengthy cruise across the world. The ship's introduction onscreen is preceded by a sequence which depicts a model of the vessel [Fig.94]. This mock-up serves to emphasise and draw attention to the aesthetic presence of the ship and, in particular, its status as a piece of design. The long and aerial shots which are used throughout the rest of the film frame the giant liner against impressive backdrops such as San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge [Fig.95]. Passengers, in contrast, are shown fleetingly, from afar, or even cover their faces with cameras when depicted in close-up. Even in comparison to some other cruise films of the 1960s, *World At Three* offers us no sustained characters. Instead, it is the ship which is repeatedly shown in context, and explicitly engaged in the act of a 'holiday'. The *Canberra* therefore becomes our emblematic, consistent focal point (or character). The ship is humanised implicitly via its visual placement within the environment and the distanced treatment of the film's human presence.



Fig.94: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.95: *World At Three* (1966)

World At Three also presents us with a treatment of the ship which marks an evolution of the enduring, romantic images which are culturally and historically associated with it. While the visual grammar by which the *Canberra* is photographed possesses similar celebratory traits to that of wartime naval films or the Preston Brothers' newsreel footage in its aerial photography, the ship itself begins to take on characteristics which instead reflect the contemporary moment of the 1960s. In this film, the *Canberra* is not an object solely synonymous with lingering national traits or affirming maritime dominance, but instead appears a bold purveyor of consumerism and postmodernity. The ship is photographed in its sun-drenched, Technicolor glory, a far cry from the monochrome austerity of the pre-war ship image, or even seen in *Movietone News*' Union Castle launch films. Cuts are swift in rhythm and move away from the long, awe-struck pans of earlier work. Aboard, we are shown the cosmopolitan, multinational surroundings which make up the ship's interior. Girls in sunglasses and bikinis move in slow motion across the ship's deck, its railings and panels are bright and bleached white in the background. This whiteness is symptomatic of a concerted reflection of a contemporary age as a blank canvas upon which the fragmented emblems of conspicuous consumerism can thrive. The ship's

use as an historical emblem in *World At Three*, has lost its central meaning and has instead been reduced to a fragment in a disparate, postmodern image.

As part of this realignment of the ship image, Frederic Goode obsessively re-frames the *Canberra*. In one particular sequence [Figs 96-100], consecutive shots show the vessel from a number of different angles and in a set of different locations. These do not represent conventional continuity editing, but instead take the spectator out of the chronological progression of the film and into a montage with the ship as its subject. Our gaze, at least during this sequence, finds its focus exclusively positioned on the ocean liner as spectacle. It is reflective of the time and of Goode's attitude to his film that these shots seem disparate and emphasise a kind of discourse of fragmentation which was symptomatic of the age.



Fig.96: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.97: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.98: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.99: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.100: *World At Three* (1966)

Alongside this sense of fragmentation, the image of the ship in *World At Three* is synonymous with the consumer holiday discourse of exotic escape. An aerial shot of the ship from afar [Fig.101], which takes on a distanced perspective, emphasises not the spectacle of the craft itself, but rather the endless ocean which surrounds it and the sun's orange reflection upon its white exterior. The ship is part of a broad utopian holiday image, synonymous with the sense of escape that is accessible via the cruise. A second shot shows the ship from a low angle, the camera bobbing on the surface of the water as it presents the ship to the left of the frame and an exotic island destination to the right [Fig.102]. The ship possesses the same warm orange glow and is again distanced and consciously framed as part of its environment. Unlike the images in the

Union Castle launch film, the ship is presented in its recognisable, iconic form, and is not the sole focus of the camera's gaze. This is further developed in a third shot which is taken from aboard the *Canberra* [Fig.103]. The functional, industrious iconography of railings and lines is not fetishised in close up as in *Launch of the Pretoria Castle*, but is instead rendered in context and drenched in a sunny orange glow. The camera then pans to the left, showing the island destination towards which the liner sails and again offers context.



Fig.101: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.102: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.103: *World At Three* (1966)

Ocean Liner Holiday uses the *Canberra* in a similarly contextual way. The film takes the form of a number of static images which are narrated by a holiday-maker. As the

slide show progresses chronologically, our view of the ship and its changing surroundings are entirely dictated by the whims of the photographer and narrator. The tone in which the photographs are narrated reflect the visual style in which these images are captured. Both are markedly poetic and full of implicit affection. As the ship is first introduced, it is described:

She was just a white speck on the horizon and then the tugs are rushed out to meet her and fuss around her like little chicks around a hen. She got bigger and nearer until she was the biggest thing in Fremantle harbour. Big and beautiful.
(Ocean Liner Holiday)

The photographs used in the film possess an artistry which draws attention to the beauty of the ship and its surrounding scenery. Both are framed with an eye for composition, colour and the interplay of shadows. In one shot, the liner is framed from afar and the green tinted sky forms an effective and vivid backdrop for the sun-drenched *Canberra* [Fig 104]. Not only are the colours unusual and striking, but the photograph also gives the illusion that the ship rests in the middle of a field. This moment is captured from a known vantage point that offers this strange perspective as ships pass through the Suez Canal. Its effect imbues the ship with a touch of the supernatural. Its capture alludes to the transcendental and spiritual qualities of the ship attributed to it throughout its past.

Another shot in the collection depicts a group gathered upon the ship's bridge [Fig 105]. Silhouetted against a sunset sky, the passengers can only be seen as a black

shadowy mass, while the shape of the ship is entirely lost. Rather than illustrate the vessel in a way which foregrounds its actuality, the photograph is intentionally abstract and ethereal in its intention. Similarly, an image taken from the ship's deck captures a passenger lounging in a chair, gazing out to sea [Fig 106]. To the left of the passenger rests a life belt. The composition of the shot is self-consciously poetic, encapsulating two dichotomous aspects of the ship both in the safety espoused by the ring and the luxury of the deck chair. The photo's emphasis again lies on the ship as part of a romantic, utopian vision. The 'holiday discourse' which is generated has its roots in abstraction and fantasy rather than actuality. At the conclusion of the film, as the sky darkens and the ship glides away from port, its recognisable form becomes a row of distorted lights. The blues of the sky and ocean enshroud the departing vessel as the narrator melancholically announces, 'There she goes, our home for three weeks'. Our recognisable image of the ship dissolves before our eyes and regresses to an attractive blur on the horizon.



Fig.104: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig.105: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig.106: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig.107: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)

Ocean Liner Holiday marries the established, enduring visual treatment of the ship with a contemporary set of stylistic elements which are led by the need to create something desirable and consumable. The narrator's lens captures the *Canberra* in its colossal glory, streamers cascading from its sides as it leaves port, its funnels towering towards the sky from a lowered perspective. Within these shots is the same simple level of awe and respect found within launch films, newsreels and much literary allusion. This power of this visual treatment is emphasised by the film's voiceover in which the narrator gives his own impressions of the ship's size and presence. However, imposed upon these images is a degree of contemporary style and aesthetic concern which moves further than that of earlier renderings. The sun-drenched lighting, treatment of abstract shadow and eye for form and composition tell of an increasing awareness of the inherent power existent within the right type of photograph. The images in *Ocean Liner Holiday* are as heavily affected as the narrator's dreamy tone and diction. Rather than articulations of actuality, they represent attempts to re-frame the ship and conjure the exoticism of the cruise experience via visual means.

Within this chapter, I have attempted to plot the growth and development of a visual discourse used as a means of representing the cruise liner. Beginning as a primitive

and religious symbol, and evolving as a metaphor for human emotion and divine power, the ship's figurative weight has forever shaped its representation. The work of pre-war poster artists, such as Jean-Marie Cassandre, helped to establish the beginnings of a mode of representation which encompassed some of these enduring notions. The submissive, lowered perspective taken by these posters emphasised the divine might of these ships and concretised their status as national symbols. The Second World War brought ships into focus on an international scale. Liners were requisitioned, and some were sunk, but victory was finally gained. The status of the ship as a virtuous human symbol was solidified by filmic depictions of the war which were made in subsequent years. Ships were humanised, but shown as less corruptible than their fallible crew. Their vulnerable, riveted exteriors were a marked contrast to the impenetrable spectacle of art deco poster art of the pre-war era. Yet their vulnerability served to provide a more marked sense of humanity than was evident in pre-war representations.

The depiction of the ship in the post-war cruise film often represented a knowing culmination of these historicised traits and values. In the postmodern cruise film of the 1960s, the ship was celebrated as a global gateway and a purveyor of consumer opportunity. It remained a focal point for the camera's gaze, but it was reframed and re-imagined in the spirit of a new age. In the following chapter I will further explore how the ship's traditional treatment was affected and challenged by contemporary cultural and political change.

4.0 'Back aboard to compare bargains...' The Post-War Cruise of Consumption

Before I return I shall buy you a duty-free something. The shops onboard are like miniature department stores full of the most adorable things. Nearly everyone wears a daring little hat. Morale is high of course, but a hat gives it an extra little boost. (*Runaway To Sea*, 1965).

As a form which combines the artistry of filmmaking with the shrewd, persuasive narrative of advertising, the cruise film offers a unique commentary on the society and culture to which it belongs. The 1950s and 1960s were decades of great change throughout the western world, and the British cruise film provides a reflection of this from onboard liners and within the foreign lands that were photographed. While the camera's gaze provides a direct window into the sights, sounds and styles of the experience of cruising itself, the way in which this gaze is constructed in turn offers insight into the popular cultural and aesthetic modes which were used to paint such images. Two useful modes of reflection therefore exist within this collection of films. The first finds its root within the discourse of the works themselves and follows the attempts of filmmakers to capture the cruise as an experience. This offers portrayals of the activities, clothing, food, and day-to-day social behaviour synonymous with these decades. The second mode of reflection comes from a more detached perspective, and relies on our beneficial ability to place these films within a historical context. Here the primary concern is not *what* is represented, but *how*. Exploring stylistic qualities alongside wider theoretical concerns of the time allows for a more fruitful exploration of how the cruise was both seen and saw itself. As I have already

touched upon in previous chapters, the imagery of the cruise film borrowed from the avant-garde, the French New Wave film movement and the contemporary British zeitgeist of the time, to help construct an image of a sea-faring experience which complemented sun drenched, orientalist, and exotic renderings of foreign landscapes. Yet, while the cruise film sought to embrace the cosmopolitan facets of a contemporary age, it maintained a sense of its own Britishness epitomised by the sight of great white ships steaming proudly across the ocean. In this chapter, I will explore the commodification of both nationalism and contemporary 'cool' related to the ship and the touristic endeavour. I will position the cruise film as a perfect product and symbol of a burgeoning sense of post-war consumerism and faux, collective affluence which came into being, somewhat artificially, in the mid-1950s. By comparing the cruise film's intrinsic, earnestly self-conscious reflection of a changing era, with these extrinsic, indirectly reflective qualities found within the texture of their construction, a unique and fruitful portrayal of the 1950s and 1960s can be obtained. The majority of the cruise material found in the NMM archive originates from the 1950s onwards, and although there are a small number of examples from earlier years, the cruise film would coalesce, in an artistic and economic sense, within the two decades synonymous with political liberalism, aesthetic experimentation and the onset of widespread consumerism.

In the following discussion and analysis, I wish to present the cruise film as a document that reflects changing attitudes to the self in this transitional, cultural period, in which homogenised, collective, family-centric culture was beginning to disintegrate in the face of a more personal, individualistic quest to define oneself through consumption and materiality. However, there existed a conflict between the

collective and the individual in representations of this era that was never fully resolved. As I will highlight, the plight of the consumer was on one hand regarded as a search for meaning through private interactions with objects and products. This is reflected within aspects of the cruise ship itself, and the manner in which the cruise film begins to favour specific characters and individualist narratives. On the other hand, consumerism is a concept which relies on the social symbolism of the objects and services which are purchased. This symbolism is rooted in a collective culture of status through comparison. The perpetuation of a consumer society is partially founded on the social status inevitably attached to the possession of the best car or the sharpest suit. Although this individual/social dichotomy is inherently paradoxical, the cruise ship, with its continued embodiment of a strong collective camaraderie, is microcosmic in its presentation of a postmodern consumer realm. The cruise film was the most direct, vibrant and engaging method of advertising this perfected consumer experience to the would-be passenger. Film content from the likes of P&O, Cunard and Union Castle was designed to inspire a consumer envy which was growing in the post-war years. In the words of *Film User* magazine in its summary of Harold Weaver's *Voyage to the Sun* (1959): 'This is one of those travel-promotion films which make the viewer yearn for the time and cash to respond.'¹⁵⁷

Within my examination of the aesthetics and sociology of the cruise film, I wish to explore the problematic positioning of the cruise itself, as both an aspirational activity and one which was becoming increasingly outmoded as a result of the proliferation and reduced cost of jet travel. In the 1950s and 1960s, as post-war austerity began to fade and the working and middle classes found themselves in an increasingly

¹⁵⁷ Anon., *The Film User*, vol 13, n148 (1 Feb 1959), p.74.

consumer-orientated world, we see a marked shift in advertising practice. Cruise companies such as P&O began to sell their service as a distinctive product. This product took the form of a commodified experience which relied on certain established collective conceptions of identity, class and nationality, which I will attempt to deconstruct. Of particular interest and importance here, is the cruise's obsession with image, and I wish to focus on its employment of particular aesthetic and cinematic techniques in its treatment of emblematic figurations of consumerism, such as food and women. We can recognise the shrewd channelling of a 'holiday discourse', as photography used in advertising material began to take on the properties of a hazy, dream-like aesthetic collectively associated with holidaymaking and the exotic lands this encompassed. The act of photography itself would become the language by which the holiday was consumed. To take a picture was to possess a physical artefact of the experience which both sanitised the otherness of an exotic foreign scene, and allowed the passenger to return home with a social, viewable reminder of experiences.

In these post-war decades we witness the representation of the cruise moving beyond a pleasurable, physical act of leisure and instead projecting itself as a symbol of the novel, the ethereal and the aspirational. I will argue that its shifting representation and evolving cultural role is directly relatable to a set of changing social and consumer behaviours which were symptomatic of and unique to the era.

4.1 A Time of Change

The post war years marked an era of great change within all aspects of British society. A major cultural shift in the nature, function and expectations of the family had occurred in Britain during the 1950s, and would continue throughout the 1960s and beyond. As the era progressed, concepts of family became less rigid as children were increasingly born outside of wedlock, separation and re-marriage rates increased and contraception (particularly the birth control pill first marketed in 1963) became far more widespread and accepted.¹⁵⁸ The evolution in the shape and structure of the family unit was indicative of the power and magnitude of this cultural shift and symptomatic of the era's collectivised willingness to challenge unmoving, unquestioned social paradigms.

Another crucial shift, and one relatable to changes in attitudes towards the cruise as a leisure pursuit, can be found within Edward Royle's suggestion that 'changes in the pattern of household formation have been of enormous significance for the extent and nature of consumer spending.'¹⁵⁹ As families became smaller (often only containing one or two children), disposable income increased along with higher rates of pay and modern expectations of fixed jobs and salaries.¹⁶⁰

Alongside these familial changes, new technologies reduced the pressures of day-to-day, menial chores, which in turn provided more free time and opportunities for casual spending. The Holidays with Pay Act of 1938 allowed people to extend and

¹⁵⁸ Edward Royle, 'Trends in post-war British social History', in James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall (eds.), *Understanding Post-War British Society* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.10-11.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

diversify their leisure time activities, and by the 1950s 25 million people in Britain were spending a few days away from home on holiday each year.¹⁶¹ In 1946 Heathrow Airport was opened, and in 1958 the first jet-propelled air service was provided across the Atlantic. As the years passed, means of travel became more financially accessible for the average family. As Royle claims, 'In 1951 about 2 million people took their holidays abroad; by the early 1970s this had reached 7 million.'¹⁶²

Notions of gender, class and race also became more fluid in post-war Britain. Liberated from their exclusive roles of child-rearing and aided by the proliferation of time-saving technology for daily, domestic tasks about the house, women became a far greater asset to the British workforce and contributed significantly to increases in consumer spending. Meanwhile, while the nation experienced an influx of foreign labour, both illuminating the lands beyond the UK's waters and offering greater insight into the cultural existence of others, ideas associated with ethnicity and identity became increasingly debated. Although the gap between the highest and lowest paid members of the population actually widened, there was an important, if premature, sense in the academic sphere, that Britain was becoming a classless society. Many working class people who would have once described themselves as 'poor' no longer did, while some claimed to belong to no class at all or that they were working class at work and middle class at home.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p.12.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ James Obelkevich, 'Consumption' in James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall (eds.), *Understanding Post-War British Society* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.149.

This is reflected in the public perception of cruising. Leisurely sea travel in the pre- and inter-war years possessed an aura of affluence and high status, and was frequently connected to members of the Royal Family and the upper middle-classes. Sarah Edington's recent book, *The Captain's Table*, contains photographs of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor onboard the *Queen Mary* in the 1930s, while Roydon Freeman, notable for his overtly romantic treatment of the sea and cruising, wrote a book entitled *Sea Travel* in 1930 which contained descriptions of the Prince of Wales mingling with other passengers.¹⁶⁴ However, while cruising in the 1930s was an activity to aspire to, by the 1950s and 1960s it was within reach of the majority, regardless of class or background.¹⁶⁵ The cruise, although retaining part of its association with the pursuit of high-class luxury, became, like many modern products and services, financially and socially available to new strata of British society.

4.2 'Whatever Happened to the Southampton Beat Scene...?': Cruising as a conduit.

James Obelkevich claims that the war was the root of a new-found penchant for possessions that the British people exhibited when the shroud of austerity began to lift in the 1950s.

The 1930s had meant hardship for millions; rationing and shortages had been a fact of life not just during the war but for

¹⁶⁴ Sarah Edington, *The Captain's Table: Life and Dining on the Great Ocean Liners*, (London: National Maritime Museum, 2005) p.16 and Roydon Freeman, *Sea Travel: the Serious Side and the Humorous Side* (London: St Catherine Press, 1930), p.3.

¹⁶⁵ Cruise ships have historically transported a whole plethora of different classes, though life in steerage (or 3rd / 4th class) was hard and only provided the bare minimum of service. It was only in the 1950s and 1960s that the luxurious qualities of the cruise became available to all those who were aboard.

years afterwards. But when the economy recovered and the last controls were finally lifted, in the mid-1950s, the result was a long-delayed explosion in consumer spending, the first wave of what later would be called mass 'consumerism'.¹⁶⁶

Quite simply, the people of Britain suddenly found themselves with more money to spend than ever before, while luxurious items and pastimes in life quickly became far more financially accessible. Meanwhile, consumables associated with the USA such as records, modern clothes and time-saving amenities, first made their way overseas onboard ships which constantly traversed the Atlantic from ports such as Southampton and Liverpool. Cunard, who possessed bases in both Liverpool and New York, employed many local people as sailors and stewards aboard these ships. Working class Liverpoolians found themselves on the sidewalks of Manhattan, a contrast to the post-war austerity of Britain's cities. Inevitably, as Mike Morris' recent documentary *Liverpool's Cunard Yanks* (2007) explains, New York's conspicuously presented brand of consumerism proved irresistible to these young men who worked the ships. 52nd Street, which was in close proximity to Cunard's own New York base, was the heart of the jazz and modern art worlds. As the documentary's voiceover explains, 'young British seamen were being exposed to a cultural explosion, a cultural explosion for the post-war western world, and it would be foolish to say that they didn't suck in some of that ambience.'¹⁶⁷

As these seamen absorbed their surroundings, American accents began to replace Scouse ones, fashionable trilby hats took the place of flat caps, and factory overalls

¹⁶⁶ Obelkevich (1994), p.141

¹⁶⁷ *Liverpool's Cunard Yanks*, Morris

became sharp Italian suits. The aptly-named 'Cunard Yanks' unintentionally became a major catalyst for the Americanisation of popular culture in Britain. This was a change to which mid-50s Britain proved receptive due to the end of rationing and the general improvements in Britain's post-war economy. The British people were primed to accept this influx of modern produce, because not only were they now beginning to possess the money to buy it, but they were also intent on leaving the difficult barren years of the late 1940s and early 1950s behind them. Ten streets in Manhattan became not only the cultural heart of the United States but of the UK as well. Records found their way across the ocean which were heard by the likes of The Beatles, while young seamen were given shopping lists by those at home, consisting of guitars, clothes and even fridges and washing machines.

Cruise ships therefore became some of the initial channels of this American brand of consumerism which would seep into British culture in an increasingly rapid and influential way. The Americanisation of Cunard crew members began to change the culture of life aboard the ships themselves as well as that of the mainland. While the deck games and sunbathing continued, under the surface, the ships' cultural makeup was undergoing a shift which would shortly be appropriated by cruise companies within their promotional methods. The American 'cool' of the 1950s, which became synonymous with the lifestyle promoted by Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* (1957) or the jazz and rock 'n' roll bands which had begun to permeate the cultural identity of many cities, would later become the discourse by which the cruise was implicitly sold. As the marginal became the popular, cruise companies would not forget their unintentional but vital contribution to the rapidly changing cultural identity of Britain.

While increased disposable income inevitably led to a higher rate of foreign travel, this does not fully explain why the cruise remained a viable or even attractive option within a world of rapid jet transportation. The post-war cruise was forced to shift its emphasis from pleasurable, civilised long distance movement, to the exhibition of a homely brand of luxury which placed just as much importance on the process of travel as on the destinations which were visited. This led to a marked change in the way cruise ships themselves appeared, changing from the large ferry boats found in *Liner Cruising South* (1933), to the vast floating hotel of the *Canberra*, in *World At Three* (1966). The design of these ships began to combine the pragmatic services of home with the luxuries of a hotel. This notion fits closely with Obelkevich's suggestions that 'one post-war trend that stands out above all the rest is the growing significance of the home.'¹⁶⁸ If we accept that the hotel is an attempt to recreate at least the amenities and security of the home, these two personal, familial spaces can be equated. As families began to change in shape and composition, so did their attitudes to the spaces that they occupied. Greater significance was attributed to the products which began to fill the home. An emphasis on consumer items had the side effect of making homes more dispersed, cellular, and geared to individual gratification.¹⁶⁹ This can be observed in cruise ship design as well as within these representative cruise films which were attempting partially to recreate the experience.

Cruise ships themselves became similarly 'cellular' in their layout, which was reflected in the individual cabins which replaced the communal areas of earlier, low-class sections of such ships. Films of the 1960s, such as *Runaway to Sea*, *The World Is Your Oyster*, *38a Bus To Cape Town* and numerous others, depict the post war

¹⁶⁸ Obelkevich (1994), p.144.

¹⁶⁹ Obelkevich (1994), p.148

cruise experience through a loose narrative framework, and introduce the ship as a compartmentalised series of areas which each fulfil an important function. The films stress the separation of age groups, with adults, teenagers and young children possessing their own designated areas. Figs 108-110 show a number of scenes from *Runaway to Sea*. Pictured is a crèche area for children, a night club for the ship's youth and a sophisticated cocktail bar for the grown-ups. All age demographics are advertised to and catered for, and they are given a space which reflects their needs and desires.



Fig.108: *Runaway To Sea* (1965)



Fig.109: *Runaway To Sea* (1965)



Fig.110: *Runaway To Sea* (1965)

This sense of separation fits with notions of the 'privatisation of working-class life' espoused by Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm suggests that post-war British society saw the working classes becoming more privately communal, family-centric and less

willing to engage with people in their social grouping.¹⁷⁰ While members of towns and cities had previously displayed qualities of community-wide collectivism across broad areas of their social lives, this was breaking down and becoming more focused on home life and the family. Ian Proctor resists this notion and cites a post-war study of a Coventry suburb which displayed the opposite effect, and appeared to suggest a continuation of community interaction.¹⁷¹ The consistent popularity of the cruise in the initial years after the war suggests that both notions contain an element of truth. While a post-war cruise ship undoubtedly possessed a strong communal element amongst its passengers and crew, its compartmentalised design suggested a shift from a purely collectivised experience, to one which ensured the privacy and individualism of its passengers.

The cruise as both a physical experience and an idea/ideal therefore shaped itself around changes and shifts in post-war British life. It was also contributing to these changes itself in a symbiotic exchange. As families became more insular, structures of class and gender unstable, and products suiting every need and whim began to flood the market, the relationship between 'consumer' and 'consumable' became more distinct and far more influential in our understanding and interpretation of social and cultural behaviour. The consumable product increasingly became consciously associated with notions of status and identity. In Obelkevich's words, 'What people consume – a favourite argument of cultural theorists – is not the product but its images and meanings.'¹⁷² The utilitarian, practical function of a product or item is dominated and ultimately rendered less important, by the meanings which people

¹⁷⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life* (London: Abacus, 2003), p.69.

¹⁷¹ Ian Proctor, 'The privatisation of working-class life: a dissenting view', *British Journal of Sociology*, 41, pp. 157-80.

¹⁷² Obelkevich (1994), p.150.

attach to that product outside of its realm of functionality. In other words, a product possesses a crucial social value which is separate from its function, and this inevitably causes it to take on an emblematic meaning synonymous with a socially-determined set of signified qualities. Although this is a contemporary idea, Obelkevich suggests that pre-war Britain was perhaps even more susceptible to what he terms 'spending for show': the procurement and implicit exhibition of such inanimate items with an awareness of their latent social symbolism.¹⁷³ He draws on examples of traditional, working-class parlours which were rarely used as family areas, and were instead arranged purely for the idle, prying eyes of neighbours and passers-by. These rooms were essentially used as barometers of social status, as home-owners placed their most prized possessions on display to be judged by those around them. However, as soon as television arrived, the purpose of such rooms changed from 'show to use, the very opposite of what we would expect from the "consumerist" thesis.'¹⁷⁴ While Obelkevich's suggestion of pre-war consumerism 'for show' is compelling, the proliferation of practical consumer products also points towards a more private acquisition of meaning. Using the continued culture of cruising as an example, the post-war period saw an individual quest to define the self through a direct engagement with products and services, which existed alongside a desire to exhibit consumables and experiences as a badge of honour.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p.151

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.152

4.3 Consumer Culture and the Postmodern Self

Theoretical writings on material culture and consumerist, postmodern identity are extensive yet crucial in informing my readings of both post-war cruise films and their associated ephemera. In my following discussion, I hope to show that the cruise as theoretical concept and as *represented* through a number of diverse types of media, gives a tangible glimpse into a debatably 'post-tourist', super-consumer society of its own, contained by railings and an endless, moving ocean.¹⁷⁵ As the cruise ship grew into a realm of luxurious excess and grandeur, it came to represent a microcosm of the relentless, insatiable desire for *things* which had become part of the contemporary consumer. While, as I have noted, consumerism was not a new concept, and had existed in some form in the Western world throughout the modern period, the middle of the twentieth century saw important developments in the relationship between the consumer and a shifting consumer environment. Using the theories of a variety of scholars, I hope to establish a set of principles which aid in an explanation of the cruise as a vivid symbol of this unique period in the consumer age. Of particular interest and relevance are John Urry's and Susan Sontag's writings on tourism, consumer society and photography.¹⁷⁶

As Don Slater notes, 'consumer culture is a story of struggle over the everyday partly because it connects up with the social fields of "ethics" (in Foucault's sense), identity and the nature of the self.'¹⁷⁷ A study of consumer culture is thus also a study of those

¹⁷⁵ 'Post Tourist' relates to John Urry's theories on consumer culture and tourism. It specifically notes the growing self-consciousness and self-reflexivity found within tourists, and their ability to acknowledge and accept the fallibility and inherent falseness within the idea that the tourist experience is a genuine gateway to other nations and cultures.

¹⁷⁶ John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.129-151.

¹⁷⁷ Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p.5.

who consume it, create it, and form it. Slater is emphatic about the ‘profoundly *social* nature of consumption’, a concept which sits at odds with the privatisation of the family unit and the breakdown in collective, social behaviours which were seen in post-war Britain.¹⁷⁸ Yet, consumption is based on the attempted satisfaction of need, something which is ultimately centred on the individual. Slater argues that such ideas ‘obscure the fundamentally social nature of needs.’ Instead, he suggests that ‘consumer culture has tied the intimate world inextricably to the public, the social, the macro and (as many charges against it recount) allowed these to invade the private to a considerable degree.’¹⁷⁹ This social/individual dichotomy is one which frequently appears as a point of contention within theoretical writings on consumerism, and I will return to this in my discussion of Colin Campbell’s theory of autonomous, self-illusory hedonism.

However, Slater’s suggestion that the post-war consumer is essentially rooted in an inherently public, social and visual sphere of existence, is one which remains crucial to explaining behaviours, shifting priorities and the changing way in which such consumers were addressed by contemporary advertising. At the root of this social aspect to consumerism is the symbolic nature of objects, and the way in which they provide the individual with a sense of collective meaning. Susan Pearce suggests, ‘Objects, like words and bodies, are not “themselves”, but symbols of themselves, and through them we are continuously at the game of resymbolising ourselves.’¹⁸⁰ Consumer culture is therefore based on a semiotic network of cultural signs, which each possess their own set of cultural meanings. In turn, this meaning is transferred to

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Slater (1997), p.4.

¹⁸⁰ Susan M Pearce (ed.), ‘Foreword: words and things’, in *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997), p.10.

the individual who consumes this object or service, and absorbs meaning (and is absorbed *into* the meaning) by pure virtue of this act of consumption. Pearce describes this symbolic network as ‘a perpetually interlinking sequence of transferable metaphors drawn from the physical nature of our surroundings, particularly objects, food, and bodily activity.’¹⁸¹ As I have touched upon, purchasing a television or a car is thus not simply an act of practical need, but also one of social symbolism.

An endless stream of desirable objects therefore forms the base upon which this consumer culture is formed. The cruise ship represents a complex consumer object which, during the post-war years, grew into a role which typifies helpfully both a microcosmic, heavily-developed consumer society which was aping and exaggerating the changes found at home, and a consumable in itself. The cruise ship is packed with objects, foods and services, all of which possess their own social semiotics and from which, while aboard, there is literally no escape. The passenger is a sea-bound consumer aboard a floating version of Foucault’s heterotopia, surrounded by both the items of the everyday (newspapers, snacks, basic household items) and the exotic (food and produce of foreign nations visited). In the following section, I examine how the cruise film’s representation of food, the body, photography, and purchasing can be read through theoretical ideas of the post-war consumer. Pervasive throughout certain works by P&O, Cunard and Union Castle is a conspicuous tendency to position the cruise as a perfected, idealistic theatre of consumption within which the whims of the post-war individual can be successfully sated.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.9-10.

4.4 Consumption of the Body

Bodily experiences, as I wish to define them here, represent any object, experience or service which has a direct effect on the body. The body is the central purveyor of the self to the outside world. While objects may represent affluence or a certain social status, the body can in turn symbolise a specific lifestyle or set of aspirational ideals which are inextricably linked to the very form of an individual. The post-war cruise film, in its attempts to represent the holiday, frequently strives to highlight the physical as a means of articulating both its material, surface offerings, along with a more abstract, almost spiritual experience.

4.5 'There's only one thing that'll clear the decks: FOOD' (38a to Cape Town): Food and the Cruise Film

As part of the cruise's microcosmic reflection of postmodern consumerism, the consumption of food aboard the ocean liner can be viewed as a figurative absorption of consumer produce into the physical form. Practically, meal times also brought a defined and rigid sense of domestic order to the day at sea, which was otherwise dictated by little more than idle activity. As Sarah Edington writes, eating 'gave the long day at sea a structure, a timetable for living', as passengers were ferried from one meal to the next.¹⁸² The life of the passenger was therefore built around this physical act of consumption, which was itself an overtly social practice and provided a sense of collective identity for all of those involved. Of particular note is the idea of the

¹⁸² Edington, p.11.

'captain's table', in which guests would be invited to sit, eat and converse with the ship's captain. This was an honour which possessed the strange pretence of being open to all, yet was simultaneously associated with notions of social worth. To sit at the captain's table was both to fraternise with a symbol of power and to gain proximity to the semi-omniscient force in control of the ship. A unique, aspirational social routine was played out through the consumption of food.

The representation of food within the cruise film is one of its most consistent elements. Frequently used as part of a montage of amenities and features, its aesthetic representation is standardised throughout the form, with both preparation and restaurant scenes a particular staple. Fetishised, tantalising close-ups are consistently employed, while attention is drawn to the multicultural diversity of the offerings.

In *38a to Cape Town*, one particular sequence features four close-ups of different meats being cooked. Juxtaposed with each are shots of passengers enjoying time spent in the sun. As the food sizzles on a grill or pan, we are prompted to make a direct link to the roasting skin of the bathers. As one woman applies suntan lotion, for example, we are shown a piece of chicken being marinated [Figs.113 and 114]. In another, a line of bathers is paralleled by a line of fish on a griddle [Figs.111 and 112]. On one level, these close associations are played for comedic effect. The similar composition attributed to both sunbather and food draws similarities between the two and provokes amusement, especially alongside Sid James' assertion of 'while we're cooking up here, they're cooking down there.' Similarly, the closeness of these juxtapositions suggests that these images of food are subjective renderings or daydreams experienced while the passengers lie back in the sunshine, waiting to be

fed. On another level, this sequence plays to the punctuating role of food Sarah Edington writes of in *The Captain's Table*. Sunbathing and eating are the two main activities of what James describes as the ship's opportunity for 'unadulterated idleness.' The explicit visual link made between the twinned images suggests a temporal connection between the preparation of food and the passengers' bathing. Their obvious idleness draws attention to the simple and aspirational luxury they enjoy by expending no effort in the pursuit of food.



Fig 111: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 112: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 113: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 114: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 115: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 116: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 117: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig 118: 38a to Cape Town (1966)

Yet, on a further level, *38a to Cape Town* uses these juxtapositions to draw a figurative as well as physical link between food and the body. As Deborah Lupton suggests in her book *Food, the Body and the Self*:

Food and eating are central to our subjectivity, or sense of self, and our experience of embodiment, or the ways that we live in and through our bodies, which itself is inextricably linked with subjectivity. As such, the meanings, discourses and practices around food and eating are worthy of detailed cultural analysis and interpretation.¹⁸³

In this sequence, the link between food and body is visually articulated and the subjectivity of the passengers foregrounded. The food which is photographed provides the passengers with meaning and motive on a practical level, but it also reflects something of their own experience. The film hints, for a moment, at a sense of simplicity and regression. The passengers are motivated purely by food and even

¹⁸³ Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self*, (London: Sage, 1996), p.1.

become *like* food in their behaviour. The sunbathers are the ultimate consumers, existing only to eat and absorb. James' voiceover emphasises the process: 'And talk about food! The more you eat, the more you want to eat! Never in the history of human transport was so much eaten by so many, so often.' The cruise is essentially described as an exercise in sanctioned gluttony; an unfettered and endless opportunity to consume. Yet, rather than appearing a negative experience, this process of consumption is presented as an unparalleled opportunity for the spectator. Through food, the cruise is represented as a utopian realm of consumption free of the consequences of weight gain or financial difficulty. Instead, everyone in *38a to Cape Town* is beautiful and brown, cleansed by the sun's rays and the ocean air.



Fig 119: P&O Menus (1960s)

Alongside food's bodily associations, it also became symbolic of the multicultural contrivance of the ship, with concoctions created which were similar in content and standard to those in high-class, trans-national restaurants. Physical menus themselves were consumables, with many ships producing a document for each specific mealtime. On P&O liners, these menus became collectable items, each possessing a distinct and unique piece of artwork. The National Maritime Museum's ephemera

archive has retained many of these menus, several of which are used in Sarah Edington's *The Captain's Table*, which functions as both a showcase of some of this eclectic artwork, and a record of the recipes used aboard cruise liners of this era. Of specific note is a collection of fruit menus produced for a P&O cruise in June 1962. Seven different fruits are emblazoned across the covers, and it is noted that the menus are 'designed by Edward Burrett and drawn by Asgeir Scott', emphasising the positioning of these objects as pieces of legitimate, consumable art. The fruits, which include the custard apple (pictured), papaya, mango, durian, carambola (pictured) and litchi, are each 'foreign' in the sense that they are not native to the United Kingdom and are instead associated with some of the 'exotic' cruise destinations. Each illustration retains the same visual structure, with the fruit pictured vividly in the foreground and a locale of some description pictured hazily in the background. These backdrops depict archetypal renderings of colonial or foreign lands and include Caribbean beaches and rustic, wooden structures. By foregrounding consumable objects (in this case food), which attempt to familiarise the passenger with the exotic using art style and informative description, these pictures act so as to appropriate these items of otherness into the collective consumer discourse of the ship itself. Connections are made between the fruit, their point of origin and the familiar aesthetics with which they are rendered. This acts to appropriate and symbolise them as disarmed, semiotically de-mystified objects which fall into a comfortable and unthreatening tourist discourse.

4.6 'Unsure of other responses, they take a picture...' (Susan Sontag)

In a number of ways, the illustrations that adorn these cruise ship menus possess an aesthetic similar to that of a photograph. They are composed with an obvious foreground and background, and contain a depth of field effect similar to that of which a camera might create. Such ephemera items therefore serve to propagate a type of visual 'holiday discourse' within which the consumer's experiences are both captured and rendered physical in a series of 'snapshots.' This technique represents an attempt to articulate the holiday experience in a visual way which is immediately familiar to us. These snapshots most obviously take the form of photographs taken by holidaymakers themselves, and are like frozen memories, fragments of the tourist experience which are rendered as objects. In a sense, these frozen moments form a discourse by which the unique and unfamiliar locales of a holiday are both internalised and processed for an individual, and externalised and commodified for wider, recognisable social consumption. The word 'picturesque' or well-known phrases which contain similes such as 'it was like a picture postcard', are often used when describing a particularly striking view or rendering of an exotic location. The photograph therefore provides a kind of visual narrative framework by which the consumer can understand and retain the unfamiliar visual stimuli with which they are presented. The reproduced image is so deeply ingrained into our collective consciousness as an unambiguous, useful structure, that it becomes the very language by which the tourist may process, and derive meaning within the unfamiliar cultures, practices and vistas before them.

Yet, the holiday photograph is more than just an object by which abstract experience can be given physical form, or the manner in which touristic experience is structured, compartmentalised and processed. The tourists' own act of photography is a form which allows them to take control and possession of a given situation. In Susan Sontag's words, a tourist's rendering of the world as a photograph is, 'to take possession of space in which they are insecure.... The very activity of taking pictures is soothing and assuages general feelings of disorientation.... Unsure of other responses, they take a picture.'¹⁸⁴ The camera therefore becomes a source of comfort through its renegotiation of power. A photograph allows the tourist to re-image a daunting sprawl of unfamiliarity as a series of segmented, structured and meaningful images. Sontag describes the photographic act as a kind of appropriation in which the tourist emulates a process of knowledge acquisition:

[...] to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed....

It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge – and, therefore, like power.¹⁸⁵

Steven Garlick reads Sontag's theories on photography as a kind of anxiety control therapy which, through its properties of empowerment, gives the tourist a sense of control and validity within the situation:

Sontag claims that tourists use their cameras as a means of taking control of spaces, of possessing the places that they

¹⁸⁴ John Urry, (1995), p.4.

¹⁸⁵ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1977), p.4.

visit, and that this serves to allay anxieties about their presence in an unfamiliar situation. The camera mediates reality for the tourist, it gives shape to his or her experience, and significantly, as Sontag notes, it conveys the appearance of participation in the situation – ‘having a camera transforms a person into something active, a voyeur.’¹⁸⁶

The cruise advertisement – be it based around static photography or film – appropriates these empowering associations within its representation of the touristic experience. In doing so, the cruise films attempts to bridge the familiar/exotic dichotomy of foreign travel by offering images of Otherness which are either digestible through photographs, or include a foregrounding of the act of photography itself. *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966), for example, takes the form of a series of still photographs which progress in a loosely chronological fashion. The ‘snapshots’ we are presented with capture the holiday experience in a series of frozen moments. There are no moving sequences in the film, though the still images progress as a slideshow and are narrated by a genuine passenger recently returned from a cruise aboard the *Canberra*. The man’s voice-over contrasts with the formal, scripted narrations of other cruise films and remains conversational. His identity is never given, and his legitimacy as an actual passenger, due to P&O’s involvement, is perhaps a little questionable. His tone is affected and literary and he labours on the texture of things, the colour of a sunset, or the smell of the sea air. At moments his words are laconic and, at others he drifts into a wistfulness and detachment brought about by the potency of his memories. The content of the photographs themselves is

¹⁸⁶ Steven Garlick, ‘Revealing the Unseen: Tourism, Art and Photography’, *Cultural Studies*, 16(2) 2002, 289–305.

consciously artistic and features images which are at times iconic and always aesthetically beautiful. These are photographs taken with an eye not just for documentary, but for the selective, knowing haze of visual memory.



Fig 120: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig 121: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)

Ocean Liner Holiday therefore epitomises a visual discourse of tourist consumerism by attempting to preserve an abstract set of memories in a static, physical form. Yet, these are also images which were captured with the intent of later obtaining a lasting memory by virtue of striking aesthetic compositional, content or colour. While this slideshow offers an opportunity of fond recollection for its narrator, from a marketing perspective, it creates a sense of aspiration and anticipation in the spectator. By showing us the final, *consumable* product on offer (photographs as memories), the advertiser is able to move away from a problematically indistinct projection of the cruise as a set of conceptual emotional responses, and instead reduce it to a series of smartly consumable parts which are in essence products in themselves. The photographs in this slideshow, rather than offering a retrospective record of an event, actually *construct* the experience as we expect it. As John Urry explains, the anticipatory gaze with which we consume the foreign is partially constructed through the 'non-tourist practices' used to capture it:

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze.¹⁸⁷

Alongside using photographs and the techniques of photography within their construction, the post-war oceanic cruise film also foregrounds and fetishises the camera itself as a means to process and consume the tourist experience. This is part of a broader, postmodern sense of foregrounding the construction and consumption process, but it is also used as a source of comfort and familiarity. *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965) follows the character of Vicky as she partakes in her first cruise. The film primarily acts as an introduction to both ship life and leisure activities upon the islands visited. The camera's gaze is frequently trained upon the young girl as she partakes in deck games, the consumption of food, and tourist activities at the stop off points of Gibraltar, Tangiers and a number of other former colonial outposts. The attention of the director's camera is mirrored by Vicky's fellow passengers who clutch a variety of photographic apparatus and snap at our lead character as much as they do the surrounding landscapes.

¹⁸⁷ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), p.3.

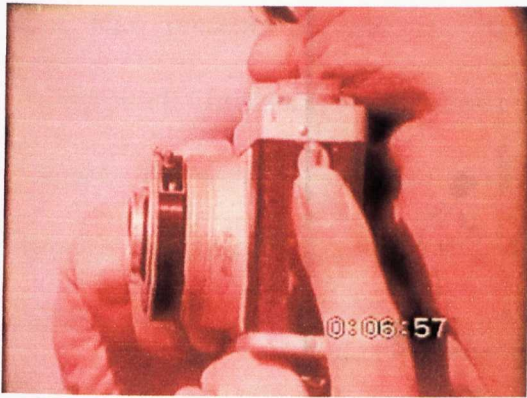


Fig.122: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965) Fig.123: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

The film's focus on Vicky gives it a sense of the personal, yet, like *Ocean Liner Holiday*, its central narrative calls upon the aesthetic of the holiday photograph in its articulation of the cruise experience. The repeated use of certain images and characters, and its punctuation with portrayals of the act of photography itself, employ the photograph as a means of commodifying, consuming and understanding the holiday [Figs.122 and 123]. The primacy of photography is an idea perpetuated within the film's voice-over. As Vicky wanders the streets of Tangier, interacting with market traders and consuming the sights and sounds of the city, the narrator comments, 'Every angle, alley and archway makes a perfect backdrop for a picture.' The statement is met with the sight of Vicky capturing two of her companions in an archway as a woman in a white veil scuttles by in front of them [Fig.124]. Vicky noticeably pauses, snapping her photograph only when the indigenous female is between her two friends. The authenticity and potency of her chosen image is seemingly sealed by the presence of a 'real' member of the city's community.



Fig 124: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

The camera's fetishisation in close up and the acts of photography which constantly take place punctuate and accentuate the landscapes of Otherness which surround *The World Is Your Oyster's* British characters. Their viewfinders act like a shield from the unknown around them, making sense of the unfamiliar shapes and local people by giving them something to hide behind while they capture the scene for future reference. For spectators both viewing the film and visible on-screen, the familiar act of photography and the empowering, masculine sight of the camera is enough to implicitly comfort and soothe in the face of the cultural other.



Fig 125: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965) Fig 126: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

This is further represented during a scene in which Vicky and her friends visit Segunto, and they are surrounded by excitable locals eager to meet foreign visitors.

One shot presents a street scene in which a narrow lane skirts uphill in the background. In front of the camera is a group of gathered locals who surround a woman. The woman, who remains still but pivots from right to left, surveys the scene through the lens of a camera [Fig.125]. Our view of these gathered people is therefore shared and partially obscured by this unnamed passenger. Her own gaze, like ours, is being filtered through the viewfinder of a visual aid. The camera acts as a figurative and literal barrier for both spectator and passenger and this is articulated through the shot's conspicuous composition. True engagement with these figures of otherness is prevented through the camera's use as a separation point between the local people and the cruise passengers. As in my previous analysis of a similar scene of photography, the camera is here used as an object of both consumption and protection. As Susan Sontag reiterates, to photograph is also to exert power:

[...] to photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.¹⁸⁸

However, the next shot shows Vicky positioned in front of her friends and visibly engaged with the local people [Fig.126]. She possesses no camera and plays happily with some gathered children. As I will move on to explore in more depth in my next chapter, Vicky is used as part of a wider tradition of feminine interaction between the touristic coloniser and colonised. She is shown without the symbolic protection of a camera and functions as a further means of sanitising the uncertainty and danger

¹⁸⁸ Sontag (1977), p.14.

within the colonial other. However, compositionally her safety is guaranteed by the masculine presence of the camera in the previous shot. As it surveys the scene, it implicitly protects Vicky from the potentially corrupting otherness which surrounds her via its figuration of western appropriation and consumption (and, in practical terms, its threat of photographic evidence). Held like a gun, it guards the area and even moves as if on the look-out for potential incident.

This aggressive, gun-like use of the camera is also visible elsewhere. *Aweigh To The Sun* is a comprehensive chronicle of a family's trip aboard a liner to visit their daughter who is residing in Cape Town. After an initial section of exposition aboard the ship, the film (which was produced by Union Castle in association with South African Airways), essentially becomes an exploratory advertisement of South Africa's sights and sounds. In one short sequence, which serves the primary purpose of a comedic interlude, the father of the family observes a pack of lions as part of a safari across an African nature reserve. As the car sits stationary on a dirt track, the man points a camera out of the car's window, capturing the movements of a lioness and her cubs. While the man's camera remains trained on the animal, another lion, agitated by the human presence, charges at the car. Visibly stunned by the animal's sudden provocation, the father sits back and hurriedly closes the window in an effort to protect himself from the lion's advance. The final shot of the sequence sees an elderly male lion gaze onward with quiet aggression.

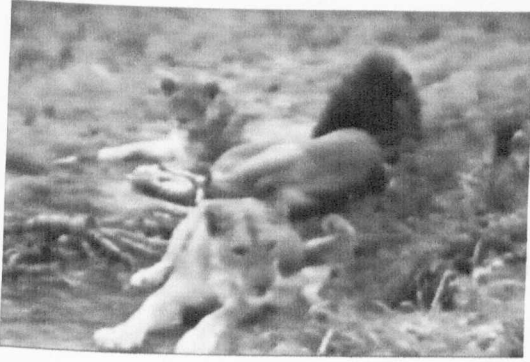


Fig.127: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.128: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.129: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.130: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.131: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.132: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)

This moment is fittingly symbolic of the natural world's dangerous power, yet strangely critical of the camera's abilities to demystify the unknown. The lion, like the African landscape, is untamed by a British gaze, and is shown as dangerous and unpredictable. The camera, used to capture and sanitise such fearful moments, here becomes an icon of antagonism, and one which appears to affect the environment as well as simply capture it. The 'camera as protective barrier' idea we see in both

World At Three and *The World is Your Oyster*, is here shown to be entirely fallible in the face of the natural aggression of wildlife. As a prime example of Sontag's theories, the man takes a sense of safety and confidence from the camera's ability to exert a sense of ownership over the landscape. This is ultimately shown to be a dangerous fallacy.

The camera's ability to affect as well as capture is further interrogated later in the film when a safari park is revisited, and we are presented with two close-ups of individuals pointing cameras through the windows of vehicles.



Fig.133: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)

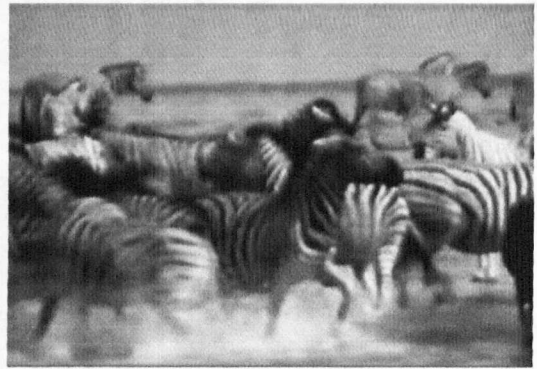


Fig.134: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.135: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)



Fig.136: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)

The movements of these tourists are consciously slow and covert, and the act of photography is depicted from a distance that accentuates its voyeurism. Both of these shots are juxtaposed with footage of a group of zebras drinking from a river. In the first, the man's picture-taking seems to lead to the animals scattering in fear as if under threat. Either through a strange quirk of editing or by intent, the director creates a moment which is divorced from reality and drifts into the realm of subjectivity. The camera, for two juxtaposed shots at least, takes on the properties of a firearm which is discharged and causes anxiety amongst the gathered animals. This shifts the camera's meaning and purpose from one of consumption, to one which not only affects, but appears potentially to *damage* the subjects it is capturing. As a historical realm of colonial subjugation, the South African wilderness holds further connotations of ritualistic hunting and foreign control. In this example, it is the click of the camera's shutter rather than the explosive trajectory of a bullet, that causes anxiety and panic. James Ryan writes of the links between hunting and photography:

[...] despite the wealth of this photographic record, in published accounts, official records and private albums, the place of photography within the ritual of colonial hunting has barely been considered.¹⁸⁹

With the photography of hunting in mind, it is interesting to note the further, more symbolic link that Ryan and Sontag describe. The camera emulates physically the processes of the gun:

¹⁸⁹ James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), p.99.

In twentieth-century Western society, where taking photographs consists of 'loading', 'aiming' and 'shooting', the camera has become what Susan Sontag has described as 'sublimation of the gun.'¹⁹⁰

Aweigh to the Sun interrogates directly the link between the gun and the camera, the tool of colonial enterprise and the tool of tourism. The western tourist is made to feel empowered and protected by the camera, just as the explorer seeks safety from a firearm. Both of the moments I have highlighted use cameras as a means of reinforcing the empowerment of the western touristic experience. They also explore a continuing British or western gaze which is loaded with a casual sense of influence and control. The British tourists presented in this film resist the often passive characteristics associated with the words 'tourist' or 'passenger'. Instead, these moments of control and influence (represented by the scattering of the zebras, the agitation of the lion) bring to mind the more active, challenging definitions of 'traveller' or even 'explorer.' The tourist's dichotomous positioning as both passive and active is reinforced in a moment in which the film's voice-over takes on the supposed words of a 'performing' ostrich:

I wonder what the birds think of these strange humans. 'Oh, we put on a good show really. Now girls, there's one of those button pressers, better give him my best smile. [sock put over head] Oh, what a *beastly* thing to do just when I was looking my best. You know really, these tourists are very strange

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

creatures. They just come and sit and gaze, and just because I've got a sock over my head they think I don't know they're looking at my finery.'

To the ostrich, the tourists simply 'sit and gaze', and are mere 'button pressers' (alluding to the camera) who stand back and watch experiences unfold before their eyes. Yet, this personification of the ostriches by the narrator and the performance they are forced to offer as a result of the tourists' presence, again represents an articulation of western, touristic influence and control. The animals are forced to perform against their will purely because of the presence of these 'button pressers'. The camera, although capturing a scene from afar, causes it to happen by virtue of its presence and the need for its user to be satiated.

Additionally, the silent ostrich is given a voice, but it is a British one couched in an ironic, comedic and camp tone. In such moments as this, we become explicitly aware of the expressions of authority presented in the narrative itself. As spectators, we are part of a uniquely *British* gaze, and one which, like the passenger's camera, seeks to exert an implicit dominance, ownership and power. *Aweigh To The Sun* is thus at pains to depict the British tourist as civilised and proper, but simultaneously seeks to deny the implicit passivity associated with the holidaymaker.

The self-reflexive foregrounding of the camera is found elsewhere within the work of cruise filmmakers. In P&O and Frederic Goode's *World At Three* the camera is used both as a point of comfort and as part of the film's contemporary, music-driven narrative. As a group of passengers disembark from the *Canberra* in San Francisco,

rather than an initial exposition of the city's points of interest, the director instead points the camera back at the ship's passengers. In one striking moment, we are presented with four successive shots of passengers clutching cameras tightly to their faces, actively engaged in the process of capturing the environment around them. Goode cuts these images rapidly with John Dankworth's contemporary jazz music score, so that they each occupy a mere fraction of a second upon screen. This creates a short, strikingly stylised sequence which punctuates rhythmically the passengers' hasty arrival and causes the images themselves to take on the appearance of still photographs: photographs of nothing but the process of photography itself. This moment of conspicuous self-reflexivity again presents photography as a central part of the touristic process and one which is here absorbed into the texture and rhythm of the film narrative.



Fig.137: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.138: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.139: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.140: *World At Three* (1966)

While, as Obelkevich suggests, pre-war Britain exhibited trends in social consumption and ‘spending for show’, there was an undoubted shift in its representation in the 1950s and 1960s. *Liner Cruising South*, along with 1940s examples of the cruise film made aboard Union Castle ships such as *Holiday Afloat* and *Into The Sun*, each project a simple gaze which foregrounds landscapes from an outward perspective. We almost exclusively share the gaze of the passengers we see onscreen. However, In *World At Three*, *The World Is Your Oyster*, and *Aweigh to the Sun*, the camera is turned back towards the ship’s passengers as they absorb their environments, and an emphasis on the process of consumption is foregrounded. These films stare *at* the ship rather than *from* it and begin to highlight the camera as a primary point of engagement for the tourist and the central object in the construction of a tourist gaze. The camera itself, as I have shown, is frequently used as a consistent focal point in the cruise film. Offering comfort, familiarity and protection, it also foregrounds the passenger’s own opportunity to observe and capture.

4.7 'We were all getting very brown...' (Ocean Liner Holiday)

The camera's objectification of the holiday experience within cruise promotion is mirrored by an increasing appreciation of the potency of the iconic image and its ability to reflect and exaggerate the preoccupations of contemporary society. As attitudes to the role women held in society were becoming more greatly liberal in the 1950s and 1960s, cruise companies would attempt to reflect this in their renderings of female characters and the feminine form. Vicky, the lead character in *The World Is Your Oyster*, befriends both men and women on her voyage, yet remains free from any controlling patriarchal presence. Importantly, she is our primary point of identification. Her gaze is frequently shared by the spectator, and the film's narrative is rendered subjectively from her viewpoint. We are offered both point-of-view shots which emulate her perspective directly, and scenes which depict her interaction with the varied facets of the ship and the residents of foreign towns. Cunard's *Magic Ride* (1969) foregrounds a similarly emancipated middle-class female. Anna Bentinck's character overcomes fears generated aboard the *QE2* during her formative childhood years to become a headstrong and affluent young woman. Her life aboard ship begins alone until she seeks the company of the film's male lead (Murray Head). Importantly, like Vicky, Bentinck is intentionally positioned as part of a new generation of independent young women for whom the cruise presents a fittingly open and liberal environment.

Alongside a foregrounding of the 1960s liberated female, cruise advertisers began to embrace a looser attitude to the use of the female form in both advertising and the media. As a result, renderings of women were characterised by contemporary

aesthetic tendencies and objectification. On a narrative level, the woman became synonymous with the mystical, othered elements associated with colonial landscapes or empty, ocean scenes. *Ocean Liner Holiday*'s affected narrator pauses or sighs noticeably every time a woman is onscreen as part of one of the film's static photographs. These pauses force the spectator to linger on the still images, while the narrator apparently struggles to form fitting words to describe the object of perfection before him. These women are treated as spectacle. They are objects – like the sea views or sunset evenings – which are subject to an intensely masculine gaze. This is a gaze, however, which attempts, somewhat unsuccessfully, to avoid sexism through the ship's implied egalitarianism. The homogenised culture of the touristic photographer legitimises the voyeuristic objectification of fellow passengers. At one particular moment, *Ocean Liner Holiday*'s narrator notes that his camera was trained on specific individuals because he found them attractive.

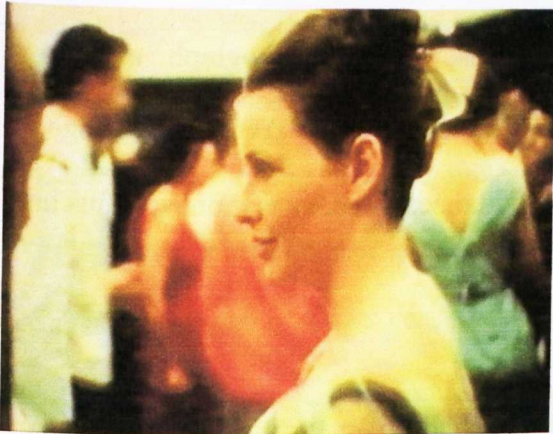


Fig.141: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig.142: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig.143: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)



Fig.144: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)

This sense of equality is neatly figured within the 'brown bodies' of those aboard ship. The narrator's suggestion that 'we were all getting rather brown...', points to the homogenising properties of the sun, which alter the appearance of skin. There is also a sense that – for the photographer at least - brownness equates to exhibitionism and thus legitimised voyeurism. The flaunting of darkened skin both provokes sexual desire and a sense of homogenised, bodily liberation. The suntan exists as a main draw of any foreign holiday and is one which is, like the photograph, used as a consumable product to take home at the conclusion of the trip. The tan is a badge of honour like the BMW or the tailored suit. At a glance, it connotes money, status and health.

Richard Dyer discusses the figurative aspects of the tan in his book, *White*:

The most conscious association of tanning is with healthiness, a belief in the beneficence of the sun's rays (doing for the skin what they do for the fruits of the earth), of the outdoor life, fresh air, exercise. It is also associated with leisure, with time

not devoted to work and the necessities of life, with travel and living away from home, and therefore, in connection with all of these, with money.¹⁹¹

As Dyer suggests, the darkening of the skin has become symbolic of an experience devoid of the grey skies of home. The tan is, like the photograph, a commodity which can be used to connote affluence to peers and associates. It is also an element of the cruise experience which points to Slater's *social* explanation of consumerism. The tan has undoubtedly become a social tool with which we understand and rate the leisure pursuits of others. The greater the tan, the more leisurely the experience; the more leisurely the experience, the greater implied affluence and status.

While the foregrounding of the liberated female and the acknowledged proliferation of the suntan represents a means by which cruise companies could establish the cruise as something contemporary, physical and consumable (as in *Ocean Liner Holiday*), the female body was also used throughout the 1950s and 1960s as an increasingly confident symbol of the romance and sexualisation of the cruise. The P&O ephemera archive contains several pieces of publicity literature emblazoned with the image of bikini-clad females. These women are frequently pictured with iconic, loaded signifiers such as sunglasses and iced drinks. Such images echoed the cultural and sexual revolutions which were taking place both in Europe and the United States.

¹⁹¹ Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.49

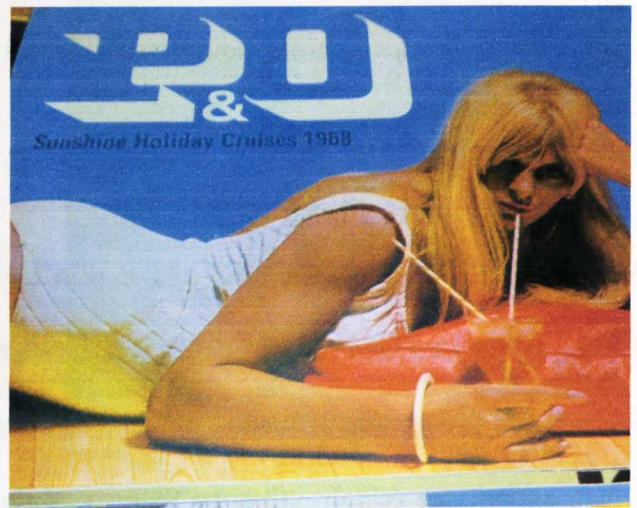
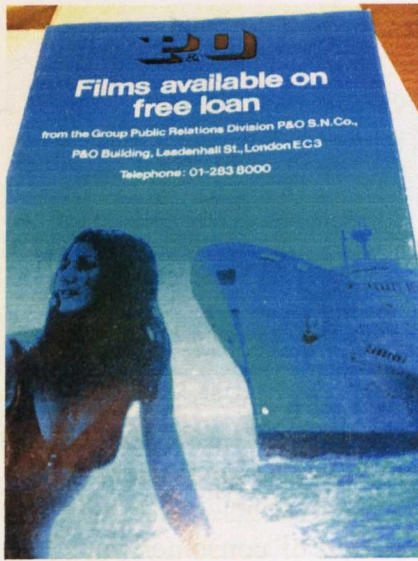


Fig 145: P&O Film Loan Leaflet (1960s) Fig 146: P&O Brochure (1968)

The primary P&O brochure for 1968, for example, features a blonde woman lying seductively across some decking [Fig.146]. Gone are the simplistic maritime signifiers which dominated ephemera of previous years, to be replaced by this playful but provocative image of sexual allure. The wooden decking at the bottom of the photograph is the only traditional object which connotes the ship. The brochure's bold styling represents an attempt to create a set of new cultural signifiers for the cruise. The sun-drenched, sexualised female and her iced drink are – like Cunard's affluent, self-assured female in *Magic Ride* – new signifiers for a cruise experience trying to align itself with liberation and the contemporary.

Yet, while this kind of cruise promotion attempted to tap into the power of female emancipation, it mainly used the female as an object of simple, sexual attraction. The image from P&O's 1968 brochure is divided into two halves. The first (pictured here) shows the woman's face and most of her body. However, the reader is able to turn the document over to see her lower half. The body is therefore partially decontextualised, and rendered as two objectified parts. By separating her body into

these fragments, the woman's identity and character is placed a firm second to her fetishised projection as a series of body parts.

The pre-1960s cruise film contained representations of women which were typically less outwardly sexualised. However, the objectifying gaze of the camera was in evidence. *Into the Sun* (1948), which follows the maiden voyage of Union Castle's *Pretoria Castle*, at one point depicts a group of sailors posing with sextants [Fig.147].



Fig 147: *Into The Sun* (1948)



Fig 148: *Into The Sun* (1948)

As the men point their instruments towards the camera, the director cuts to a female sunbather in a swimsuit [Fig.148]. The film's voiceover announces: 'Now, what would they be doing with their sextants? Might they be watching for this kind of thing? Mmm, anyone might. But no, it's more serious in this case.' Although the gratuitousness of the cruise film's voyeurism would increase in the 1960s, *Into the Sun's* playful and jokey foregrounding of this act of male-to-female observation shows that the cruise ship was already associated with this sort of behaviour.

Yet, other earlier depictions of the cruise demonstrate that, while sexuality inevitably had its place aboard the pre-1960s cruise ship, the use of it as a visually articulated

selling point had not yet filtered into the discourses of promotion. *Weekend Cruising on SS Vienna* (1945), for example, contains a brief moment in which passengers are seen happily sharing an onboard shower facility in bathing costumes and shower caps [Figs.149 and 150]. As members of both sexes play together under a torrent of water, the camera's gaze is, compared to later 1960s examples, conservative and restrained. There is also less of a specific emphasis on the female form, with men also joining in the fun.



Fig 149: *Weekend Cruising On SS Vienna* (1945)



Fig 150: *Weekend Cruising On SS Vienna* (1945)

In an example from the 1950s, portrayals of sexualised women are even more restrained. *Warwick Castle Cruise* (1952), which depicts a trip that takes in a number of fading colonial outposts such as Gibraltar, begins with images of older individuals in deck chairs and moves on to show extensive games and pastimes. Scenes of apple bobbing and sack racing hark back to a child-like realm of innocent, sex-less play. Bodies are white, covered up and retain a sense of austerity and restraint evident in films of earlier years (such as *Liner Cruising South* and *Holiday Afloat*).

In contrast, the 1960s cruise film places far greater emphasis on its aesthetic properties, and foregrounds the feminine form with an implied sense of sexuality. *World At Three* contains a sequence which depicts a woman as she rises from sunbathing, jogs around the perimeter of the ship's swimming pool, and then athletically jumps into the water. The sequence is presented in slow motion, giving the viewer no choice but to gaze upon both the woman's body and her movements. The spectator grows conscious of this sexualised gaze by virtue of the sequence's duration and the isolation of the bather in the centre of the frame. Its primary function is undoubtedly its exhibition of a distinctive, and somewhat gratuitous, style. Unlike *Warwick Castle Cruise*'s informative and instructional approach, which takes its cue from the Grierson-era documentary canon and early cruise films such as *Liner Cruising South*, *World At Three* is bound up in stylish spectacle which exists purely to conjure associations with lifestyle and image as opposed to a simple and objective recreation of the tourist experience. The use of slow motion draws particular attention to the cruise experience's newly-sanctioned voyeurism. The conspicuous nature of this type of stylistic technique has a legitimising effect on the male-to-female objectifying gaze. The slow motion emulates visually the act of staring, the camera's

horizontal pans to keep the woman in frame emulating the movement of a head. The woman's playful movements and enjoyment of the camera's attention go some way in balancing what is otherwise a gratuitous display of female objectification.

The use of slow motion alongside a depiction of a female, also renders the scene subjective and dream-like. This heavily stylised filmic construction attempts to capture something outside of the realms of the objective documentary and instead seeks to articulate *aura*. Jo Stanley's observation of the romance and exaggeration inherent within sea narratives is here captured in the 1960s advertising discourse of Frederic Goode.



Fig 151: *World At Three* (1966)

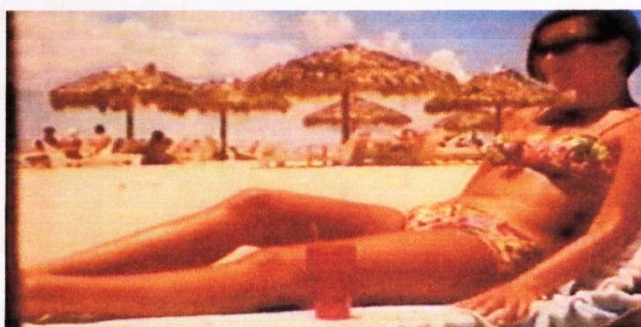


Fig 152: P&O Brochure (1960s)

The image of the feminine form, both pictured on brochures and used within the cruise film, also marked an explicit adoption of the aesthetics of contemporary media, particularly that of European (and by extension some post-classical American) cinema of the time. French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard would portray women as sexualised objects of ceaseless male attention in work such as *À bout de souffle* (1960). His experimental style was influential upon artists and advertisers across the world, and was particularly visible in films produced throughout the 1960s. In Hollywood, Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), featured Faye Dunaway as a voluptuous bank robber on an ill-fated burn across the United States. Her appearance was reminiscent of Godard's females, while her aggressive, fearless personality was a stark contrast to the generic, subservient feminine characters associated with Classical Hollywood cinema of old. Meanwhile, in Britain, Michelangelo Antonioni directed *Blow Up* (1966), a portrait of a fashion photographer's hedonistic lifestyle and unintentional involvement in a murder mystery. Antonioni's European art cinema style is projected upon the streets and parks of an otherwise 'swinging' London, while his women (rendered here, in contrast to Penn's Bonnie, as sycophantic groupies obsessed with David Hemming's photographer character) possess similar, Godardian aesthetic traits. Like Antonioni's London, Goode's portrayal of the city which appears at the beginning of *World At Three* breaks from tradition and convention. Big Ben and the Thames are bathed in neons, while the film's jazz score gives this sequence of shots a self-consciously cosmopolitan feel. The sailors aboard the *Canberra*, who are shown manipulating navigational equipment, all wear sunglasses (reminiscent, for example, of Jean-Paul Belmondo's Michel in *À bout de souffle*), while Goode's film contains several jump cuts and unexpected zooms and pans.

The image of the woman, as with the use of photographs, food, the city and even editing itself, came to be used in cruise promotion as a means of commodifying and codifying the leisure experience into a contemporary discourse of consumption. In doing this, cruise advertisers in the 1960s shrewdly appropriated the aesthetics of the cultural zeitgeist of the time. This, at least in theory, infused their product with a sense of social importance and 'cool' which would appeal to an audience recently awakened to the power and importance of style. The women in *World At Three*, for example, act as aspirational figures who have been anointed with the desirable effects and products of the cruise. Like Bonnie in *Bonnie and Clyde*, or Jean Seberg's Patricia in *À bout de souffle*, they take on the characteristics of liberal, hedonistic, liberated females who exist purely for acts of pleasure and relaxation. They are browned and beautiful, human signifiers of both the cruise's tangible effects and connotative meanings.

4.8 The procurement of objects and the cruise as autonomous, self-illusionary hedonism

Colin Campbell writes of the human desire for objects as one perpetuated by the constant novelty of such items.¹⁹² He cites the fashion industry as an example of a self-perpetuating industry fuelled from the seemingly insatiable desire of humanity for new and unique objects. The focus of his thought is 'placed on a distinctively modern form of pleasure-seeking, one identified as autonomous, self-illusionary hedonism.'¹⁹³

¹⁹² Colin Campbell, 'The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism: reflections on the reception of a thesis concerning the origin of the continuing desire for goods' in Pearce (ed.), 1997, p.37.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

He therefore moves away from a social explanation of consumerism and gravitates towards one which is dictated by an individualistic, personal set of factors. Campbell's theory is particularly pertinent when attempting to deconstruct the shift in emphasis which is perceived in the representation of the cruise experience. When writing of consumers, he states:

[...] they conjure up scenes in their imagination that effectively cause them to experience a chosen emotion and it is then this emotion which yields the stimulation that in turn provides the pleasure. This is self-illusory hedonism, or day-dreaming, an activity that enables the individual to experience pleasure at any time and place, and is thus quite independent of the nature of the real environment.

Campbell therefore places great importance on our tendency to construct fantasy from our own unconscious, which then, as a result of idle thoughts, predicates a desire for novel items. As Don de Lillo states: 'To consume in America is not to buy; it is to dream.'¹⁹⁴ This notion fits closely with the function and role that a holiday plays in the mind as a dream-like break from the banal realities of everyday life.

Day-dreamers tend to live in two worlds, the real one and a perfected version of it, and it is the tension between these two worlds that generates longing. It is the presence of this sense of longing – a longing to experience perfected pleasures, or at

¹⁹⁴ Don de Lillo, *Americana* (First published 1971) (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), pp.431-432.

least more nearly perfect pleasures, in the real world rather than simply in imagination – that is really the critical consequence of this form of hedonism... since the gap between the real and the imagined can never actually be closed (no matter how good the reality one can always imagine a more nearly perfected vision), a consumption of the novel merely serves to create a need to consume more novelty.¹⁹⁵

The cruise represents a convergence of the two binaries Campbell identifies. Not only can it be experienced as the fantastical, idyllic escape from reality to a realm of comfort and pleasure, but it also attempts to create a physical rendering of this fantasy via its very separation from the shackles of ‘real life’. Crucially, while the cruise ship cannot technically provide total fulfilment of this fantasy (as Campbell states, the reality can never quite match the daydream), it proposes to do so. The cruise seeks directly to indulge these notions of modern hedonism within an enclosed and controllable world, which is as physically separated as it can be from the signifiers of reality.

Of primary importance in the construction of the cruise’s fantasy realm is the way in which it is advertised. As Campbell suggests, ‘that...dominant institution, advertising, functions to draw the consumer’s attention to the promise of new experiences which, it is suggested, novel products can offer.’¹⁹⁶ It is within the aesthetics of these films and ephemera items that the seeds of fantasy are first planted

¹⁹⁵ Campbell (1997), p.97.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

in the consumer. On a broad level, the filmic techniques of the fiction film are harnessed to create a familiar rendering of the subjectively pleasurable and serene. As early as 1933, Basil Wright used shot-to-shot fades to articulate the exoticism inherent within the island locales featured in *Liner Cruising South*, while the aforementioned use of slow motion in *World At Three* gives the image of a woman a dream-like perfection which taps directly into the aesthetics of these fantastical daydreams. The techniques possible through the manipulation of the film camera are therefore able to offer a version of reality which is affected and fantastical. As I have examined in my discussion of the aesthetic origins of the cruise film, directors employed a number of stylistic techniques as a means of articulating this sense of the dream-like. The ‘pillow shots’ in *Liner Cruising South*, which take place upon the deck, use depth of field effects to render an inanimate object stark in the foreground and the seascape abstracted and blurred in the background. *I Am A Passenger* isolates the interplay of shadows on the ship’s decking in its opening moments, their lack of context and visible source giving them an ethereal visual sense, which again taps into associations with the dream. Meanwhile, *The World Is Your Oyster* sees the character of Vicky shadowed by the camera’s gaze at every turn. Her constant, emblematic presence upon screen infuses the short film with narrative elements familiar to the fiction film viewer. She is a definitive ‘character’, a narrative conduit within which the spectator can invest. Vicky brings together the cruise ship’s realm of fantasy with that of its reality and implies there is little difference between the two halves of the binary.

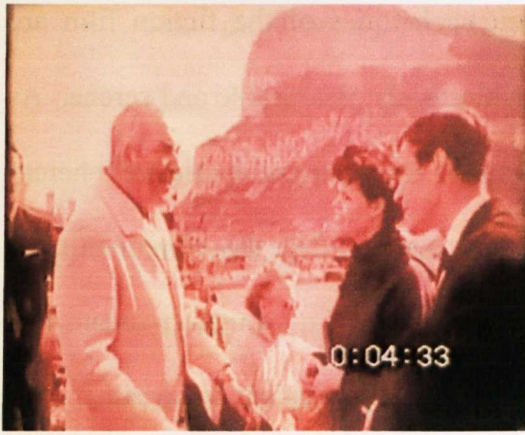


Fig.153: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965) Fig.154: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

The reality of *The World Is Your Oyster* is one which heavily indulges Campbell's notions of self-illusionary hedonism. The film is full of concessions to the act of purchasing and the consumption of items, clothing and food, which in turn implies an appetite for the pursuit of novel products. We are consistently shown Vicky's trips around market stalls and her attempts to barter with local sellers [Fig.153]. Meanwhile, the narrator's claims that 'it beats shopping on the high street any day', are met with Vicky's beaming face as she observes the items laid out before her. In one short scene, Vicky is pictured gazing at her own image in a mirror as she models a headscarf recently purchased from an Algerian market stall. As she stares into her own eyes, she wraps the scarf around her head and feigns a dance, as though emulating the traditional movements of the indigenous Algerians. Although this is a typically patronising moment I will explore further when examining representations of cruising and colonialism, Vicky's self-reflexive dance also represents the foregrounding of a private, personal moment of consumption away from the throng of social activity. The film's director consciously chooses to depict this quiet moment of reflection as a part of the cruise ship experience and, in turn, the consumer process. It

represents an acknowledgement of the importance of the self during an act of consumption.

The suggestion of narcissistic individualism which appears to follow Campbell's denial of a collectivised, social reading of postmodern consumption, is not unchallenged within the cruise film. Milena Veenis suggests that the sense of longing generated by this desire for consumer goods possesses properties of unification. Citing the reunification of East and West Germany, she states that there was considerable longing within many East Germans for the goods which were readily available in the West. This created a sense of disillusionment when this longing was eventually satisfied, but when the desire remained, it acted as a social adhesive based around something mutually shared by the populace. To draw parallels, in the 1960s, the cruise ship was sold as both a unifying social service and a vessel consisting of compartments of personal space. People aboard a cruise ship are bound together by a collective longing and a collective sense of camaraderie, but – as with Vicky in *The World Is Your Oyster*, they are also allowed these moments of individual gratification. In this sense, both Campbell and Veenis' theories can be applied to the cruise ship. The act of tourist consumption appears an individual and social experience. The cruise is explicitly shown partially to satiate the need to consume, yet – due to the rapidity of change that it offers – what is offered is perpetually novel. The cruise ship is a theatre of consumption that constantly offers the passenger a string of novel desires.

4.9 'Here, if you liked, you could get souvenirs from a dozen countries without ever going ashore. Cheaper probably, too' (*The Way of a Ship*, 1954). The Cruise ship as a tourist haven.

In this chapter I have discussed the tourist experience and its relation to consumerism in terms of photography, the body, food and desirable, novel items. I have argued that the post-war cruise can be understood – and is sold via promotion - in terms of what it offers the postmodern consumer. This consumer process is effectively reflected and dressed within the content and texture of the cruise film.

As I have suggested, the cruise ship itself is a useful and obvious microcosm of postmodern consumerism. John Urry's concept of 'consuming places' helps to explain the social function of the ship. For Urry, leisure travel is a crucial means by which individuals place themselves within social groupings. He writes of 'resort hierarchy' as a mean of individuals locating themselves within a system which defines itself within ideas of social status and affluence. In a similar way to emblematic signifiers like the photograph, food or the suntan, the holiday itself can become a direct symbol of a person's location within such a system. In fact, Urry moves beyond this in his statement that, 'being a tourist is one of the defining characteristics of being "modern" and is bound up with major transformations of paid work.'¹⁹⁷

While to travel was therefore to exude a modernity fitting of the time, the cruise ship also represents a microcosmic realm of multiple cultures, products and purchases. Urry's notion of 'time-space compression', which he uses to describe shopping

¹⁹⁷ John Urry, (2000), p.132

centres and world fairs, seems to fit the cruise liner perfectly. The concept he describes is similar to Foucault's notion of the heterotopia:

[...] people are encouraged to gaze upon and collect the signs and images of many cultures – to act as tourists, in other words. This is made possible by the most extreme form of “time-space compression”, what one might term global miniaturisation.¹⁹⁸

This ‘time-space compression’ mirrors the cruise ship’s attempts to present its passengers with a whole selection of international influences. By confronting the passenger with the signs of multiple cultures within such an enclosed environment, it seeks both to frame the passenger as a tourist in both a literal and figurative sense. The ship is both the method of transit with which to locate and access a consumable destination, and one in itself. This is perfectly typified by Terry Ashwood’s Orient Line film *The Way of a Ship* (1954), whose narrator in one moment describes the *Oronsay*’s shopping facilities: ‘Here, if you liked, you could get souvenirs from a dozen countries without ever going ashore. Cheaper probably, too.’ The cruise film’s emphasis on the consumer elements of the tourist experience can be partially explained by the threat which jet travel presented. While, as Urry notes, travelling itself was becoming an essential trait of the modern individual, the cruise offered a haven to indulge in the consumer process hedonistically within a floating heterotopia. In the 1960s, the cruise ship may not have been the fastest way to travel, but advertisers attempted to maintain that it was the most satisfying.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.149.

5.0 Colonialism and the Cruise

In Basil Wright's Empire Marketing Board film *Liner Cruising South* (1933), there is a sequence which is arresting in its explicit figuration of the colonial power relations harnessed within the cruise ship and captured in the cruise film. The sequence of shots occurs towards the end of the promotional work which follows the *SS Orford* on its travels around what is purported to be the Caribbean, and involves the interaction of a female passenger and some indigenous members of the island community. The sequence takes place within what Mary Louise Pratt would term the 'contact zone.' She describes this as:

[...] the space of colonial encounters, the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.²²⁵

The ship's destination is first introduced as a location from afar, the spectator sharing the gaze of those aboard who stare through telescopes and binoculars at what the intertitles describe as a, 'cloud-capped' realm. The point of view shot we are offered [Fig 156] emphasises the abstraction and otherness with which this colonial landscape is initially treated. The image is indistinct and intentionally obscured, the framing of the shot favouring the blank sky over the hazy, white-tipped land. Bookended by an image of an excitable bugle player [Fig 155] who triumphantly broadcasts the

²²⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.7.

imminence of landfall with a flourish of nationally-bound, traditional melody, the spectator's initial engagement with the physical landscape is entirely and intentionally indistinct and otherworldly.



Fig.155: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

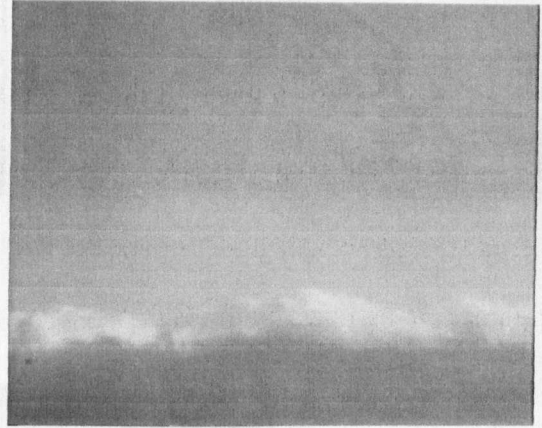


Fig.156: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

The tourists' actual interaction with the island residents, however, forms a sequence which broadcasts unabashedly the implicit and assumed colonial power relations which I wish to argue form a latent part of the cruise experience in this period. A well-dressed woman stands against the railing on the ship's deck. Below her, we are shown a small rowing boat which bobs upon the unsettled water at the side of the colossal ship [Fig.157]. This boat is then joined by a number of others, all of which move in a similarly chaotic fashion. Their obvious earnestness, and our heightened perspective, cause them to appear manic, swarming and intent on the completion of a mysterious mission. After shouting down words of encouragement for the gathered islanders, the well-dressed woman launches a coin from the side of the vessel which lands in the water beside one of the rowing boats [Fig.158]. The camera, trained from above, captures the enthusiastic and athletic dive of one of the islanders, as he propels himself head-first into the ocean to obtain the coin [Fig.159].



Fig.157: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.158: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)



Fig.159: *Liner Cruising South* (1933)

This sequence is laden with colonial connotation and is filmed by Wright in a way which creates a distinct othering of these island people, and perpetuates a colonial discourse which separates their behaviours and actions from the British individuals who exist above them. The implied dominance of the British over these colonial subjects is unquestioned and informed by a distinct visual separation. The steam ship itself towers above the islanders, and those aboard are granted a position of unreachable height by pure virtue of the craft on which they reside. The vessels themselves contrast markedly, as the primitive rowboats of the islanders are dwarfed

by the emblematic, technologically superior symbol of British maritime prowess. Additionally, Wright's juxtapositions emphasise the differences in physical appearance between the islanders and those aboard. The fur coat, hat and ornate scarf worn by the British woman is a world away from the animalistic, near-naked diving islanders. This is a contrast which seeks to consolidate the gulf in civilising properties, yet also interrogates the perceived 'noble savagery' of these men.²²⁷ Within this sequence there exists not just a sense of superiority, but also one of detachment and awed respect. These are men who are admired and envied for their physical dexterity and skill, yet simultaneously seen as simple and primitive.

Terry Ellingson argues that this manner of representation finds its root within literature and colonial endeavour:

The "Savage" and the "Oriental" were the two great ethnographic paradigms developed by European writers during the age of exploration and colonialism; and the symbolic opposition between "wild" and "domesticated peoples, between "savages" and "civilisation," was constructed as part of the discourse of European hegemony, projecting cultural inferiority as an ideological ground for political subordination.²²⁸

²²⁷ The phrase *Noble Savage* originally appeared in John Dryden's play *The Conquest of Granada* (1672) but came into wider use in the second half of the 19th century, where it developed negative, colonial connotations.

²²⁸ Terry Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (California: University of California Press, 2001), p.xiii.

While Ellingson's statement is useful in understanding the historicised nature of subjugating visual discourses such as this one, if we take his terms 'Savage' and 'Oriental' as signifiers of otherness, it is important to bear in mind Jan Nederveen Pieterse's notion that "'[o]thers" are plural.'²²⁹ He writes:

[...] the point is precisely that there is no 'the other': for 'the other' would imply a stable 'we'. There are *others* – they are many, and their identities vary according to time, location, and the status, gender, relationships and so on of the labelling groups. To generalize and pontificate about 'the other' means losing sight of this multiplicity and complexity, homogenizing the process of othering, introducing an essentialism of otherness, and creating a static dualistic relationship between Self and Other, us and them.

Therefore, an awareness of the specific historical and social background of these islanders is an important part of understanding the nature of *Liner Cruising South's* moment of subjugation and the visual discourse it subsequently helped to create within the wider traditions of the cruise film. The West Indies had, until 100 years before, been a slave colony. The United Kingdom's abolition of slavery in 1833 meant that images of confinement and control were beginning to disappear from the nation's visual register. However, as Pieterse writes:

²²⁹ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White On Black: Images of African and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (London: Yale University Press, 1992), p.233.

Abolitionism promoted new stereotypes for blacks – the movement humanized the image of blacks but also popularized the image of blacks as victims.²³⁰

The bestowing of the coin itself directly seeks to project the huge gulf in wealth between these two people, and in turn, reinforces the position of the indigenous islander as the begging victim Pieterse identifies. To the woman, the coin is merely an object with which to instigate the act of retrieval, yet to the islander the coin has real economic value. Ellington's 'Savage' is also projected in the movements of these men. The act of diving is dehumanising, animalistic and inherently subjugating, both emphasising the physical prowess of this indigenous resident, but also implying an intellectual inferiority and a lack of civilised dignity. To those aboard, these begging island residents are like performing scavengers, desperate to pick up the discarded scraps offered by such an indulgent, powerful purveyor of wealth and luxury. They also appear as children, the grateful and excitable receivers of a token of currency traditionally thrown into the waiting hands of children by a wedding party or in some church congregations.²³¹ Yet, what we also see developing in this moment is the collision of the colonial and the touristic. Mixed in with the subjugating connotations of this act is a romanticisation of poverty and primitivism which would move on to form a main tenet of the touristic gaze.

The specific act of coin throwing seen in *Liner Cruising South* has its roots in previous centuries. Writing in 1826, George Robert Beauclark describes a scene reminiscent of the one shot by Wright:

²³⁰ Pieterse (1992), p.60.

²³¹ Unknown Author, <http://www.electricscotland.com/weddings/tradition.htm>, [Accessed 12/08/08]

They have little boats just big enough to contain one person, which they propel with two little sculls or oars, and sometimes even a sail: in these they approach unperceived the bows of vessels lying at anchor, and cut away whatever they find hanging from the ship. They remain completely naked all day, always ready to dive for any thing that is thrown overboard. So expert are they in this practice, that I have seen a thin silver coin thrown into the water, and caught by one of them before it reached the bottom.²³²

These accounts describe something of a phenomenon which had become commonplace and even traditional amongst travellers arriving upon foreign shores. *Sunshine Breezes and Strange Places* (1933) is a film featuring a Cunard ship, made in the same year as *Liner Cruising South* and produced by George Warburton.²³⁶ Within the film, which was likely to have been made predominantly as a means for Warburton to capture his own personal holiday experience, we witness a Cunard ship embarking on an early 'cruising holiday'. After trips to both Barcelona and Palma, the city of Algiers is visited. The intertitle announces: 'Next morning the ship arrived at Algiers – in North Africa / Before she was tied up, the diving boys were calling for sixpence.' What then follows is a similarly constructed sequence to that seen in *Liner Cruising South*. At first the spectator is presented with two boys treading water beside the ship. The director then cuts to a more distanced shot of six boys who

²³² Monier Monier-Williams, *Modern India and the Indians* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.24.

²³⁶ George Warburton was an amateur film making enthusiast. His work was almost certainly made for personal use and there is no evidence to suggest he was financed by Cunard or any other shipping line.

continue to gaze expectantly up at the vessel which rises beside them. This juxtaposition of perspectives gives the illusion that the boys are somehow multiplying, gathering in rapidly increasing numbers and engulfing the areas beside the ship. The ocean around them becomes a shower of white water as each boy dives frantically in an attempt to retrieve a coin. Unlike the teamwork and collective control we see as part of the graceful dive from the boat in *Liner*, the boys are here fending for themselves alone. Their movements are like those of scavengers, each fighting for survival on their own terms. Also in contrast to *Liner*, there is no well-dressed female passenger who propels the coin overboard in *Sunshine*. Instead, with no individuals visible, the ship itself is implicated in the act.

While the tropical Caribbean of *Liner Cruising South* is perhaps far enough away for the ‘savages’ to appear noble, colonial North Africa, seen here in *Sunshine Breezes and Strange Places*, has historically been presented in markedly different terms. Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan writes of the portrayal of the North African as ‘degenerate, untrustworthy, and phylogenetically defective.’²³⁷ This is a notion at least implied by the adapted treatment of the colonial other in *Sunshine*. Unlike the graceful dive of the islander in *Liner*, which is distinctly portrayed as an act of skilful and refined teamwork, the Algerian boys are here shown as selfish scavengers with little thought for each other or the world around them. Further to this, Richard Burton’s conception of the ‘Sotadic Zone’, which encompassed Arabic North Africa, asserted that there was a distinct geographic area in which the notion of pederasty was particularly prevalent and tolerated. To the west, this would imbue the image of young Arab boys with an uneasy and unfamiliar sexual charge unfitting to their age. While *Sunshine* in

²³⁷ Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression: Path in Psychology* (New York: Springer, 1985), p.230.

no way suggests a direct sexual undercurrent in its use of these indigenous boys, to a 1930s audience, this perceived association with Burton's concept would have led to a heightened level of unfamiliarity and wariness. Within this act of retrieval, we see an early discrepancy in the visual treatment of these two sources of otherness by virtue of location. As Pieterse implies in his suggestion that '*Others are plural*,' a tourists interaction and reaction to the colonial other is partly dictated by a historically informed set of values and attributions. It is through Warburton's composition and construction of *Sunshine Breezes and Strange Places* that the geographic and historical difference of the colonial other is foregrounded.

The practices caught on film and within these early memoirs suggest that the propulsion of coins and other articles overboard was both an act of charity, and an act of entertainment. The British travellers depicted and described were purchasing and consuming a tourist entertainment from the comfort of the ship in which they were sailing. As early as the mid-19th Century, a prototypical version of cruise tourism was therefore taking place; a tourism which fed off the desperation and need inherent within the people of the under-privileged locations which were visited and played upon ingrained attitudes to colonial communities.

These moments fit with a postcolonial perspective Mary Louise Pratt terms 'anti-conquest.'. In defining the phrase, she writes:

[...] by which I refer to the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European

hegemony. The term ‘anti-conquest’ was chosen because, as I argue, in travel and exploration writings these strategies of innocence are constituted in relation to older imperial rhetoric’s of conquest associated with the absolutist era. The main protagonist of the anti-conquest is a figure I sometimes call the ‘seeing-man,’ an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess.²³⁸

In this chapter I will attempt to equate these moments of anti-conquest with the larger phenomenon of cruising and cruise tourism. I will argue that, in an emulation and perpetuation of the colonial process, cruise tourism represents the commodification of indigenous culture for easy consumption by a contemporary version of Pratt’s ‘seeing-man’. Using examples from a variety of cruise films dating from the 1930s to the 1960s, as well as poster art and ephemera items, I will argue that the cruise’s emulation of the colonial process, sees a familiar retrieval and consumption of the unique products that exist within foreign lands.

As Britain entered a post-war era of increasing liberalism and decolonisation, assertions of Imperial dominance were not as outwardly or openly emphasised as they once were. Yet, the sense of national, economic and moral superiority held by passengers continued to be one of the major appeals and effects of the cruise. I will argue that the tourist experience, and its associated consumption of indigenous culture, re-establishes colonial notions of western supremacy, and forces indigenous

²³⁸ Pratt (2003), p.7.

populations to rely submissively on a series of imposed and unmoving structures. In addition to this, and as I have explored in a previous chapter, the ship itself is a metaphor pregnant with colonial connotation. The 'ship of state' is also the 'ship of empire', on one hand carrying colonizers and on the other acting as an imposing and aggressive symbol of dominance and oppression. The ship plays both a literal and figurative role in the colonial process, transporting both the possessor and the souvenir.

My discussion will be divided into three sections, each of which will call upon visual representations of colonial landscapes or people in both film and static forms. The first will discuss the cruise as a perpetuation of the colonial process through its emulation of the physical acts and discourses associated with it. Here, I will discuss both the colonised and the coloniser, and, in particular, the symbiotic relationship between the desires of the tourist and a cultural dilution apparent within a resulting tourist industry. Emphasis will lie on the shrewd marketing of a colonial exoticism which lies not in the realities of the Caribbean, Africa, or the streets of Algiers, but instead calls upon the abstracted, mystical, fictional discourses employed by Kipling, Conrad and Haggard. My interest has its root in the transferral of these fictive renderings of the 'Other' into written and visual promotional material. Within such materials, a discernable balance is struck between anxiety and compelling, alluring mystery (something also perceivable in travel journalism and photography) and this results in a tamed, often dream-like advertising discourse which paradoxically seeks to present an image of a relaxing and safe holiday, alongside a promise of dangerous, simmering Otherness.

My second section will examine the debt owed by cruise films to pictorial depictions of colonial landscapes and their people within visual art. Linda Nochlin's theoretical readings and deconstruction of images by nineteenth-century artists such as Gérôme, as well as the writings of Beth Fowkes Tobin, inform my own reading of advertising images found in film, poster design and other assorted ephemera. In particular, Nochlin's notion of the 'orientalising' of the subject or landscape points further towards an ingrained, affected and subjugated treatment of the colonised which is crucial in informing shipping-line advertising discourse in the pre- and post-war period.

Lastly, I will examine the conspicuously gendered treatment of the colonised within cruise advertising, examining the role of both the colonised, indigenous female, and the colonising, western female. Returning to *Liner Cruising South's* feminised point of engagement with the imperial landscape, I will examine further occurrences of this in other films, within advertising generally, and within literature such as the travel writing of Mary Kingsley, E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Of particular interest here are John Marx's ideas concerning the 'gendered imperial landscape' and a traceable suggestion that women possess an ability to experience the intangible 'Other' physically in a way in which men cannot. Additionally, I will explore Tobin's ideas of 'colonial cross-dressing' and Ryan's many theories concerning the historical sexualisation of the colonial female.

5.1 The Cruise as Colonialism

The ship as an object and emblem has always been closely linked to the colonial process. Beginning with the maritime explorations of the 15th century, the ship was integral in the formulation of European empires. Combining exploration and a sense of military dominance, it would become synonymous with both discovery and conquest. Due to its size and shape, the ship would allow for both the imposition of objects and people upon foreign lands, and the appropriation and consumption of the materials and produce available within these colonised nations. This prototypical sense of trade would hint at the foundations of a modern global economy. Those who controlled the ships would ultimately control the wealth.

The cruise ship would be conceived as a direct and natural outgrowth of this process of colonisation. Under a guise of casual leisure and entertainment, the cruise would perpetuate this imbalanced commercial relationship in its imposition of westernised behaviour and value, and the consumption of local culture by tourists and visitors. Tourism and the cruise would therefore reinforce and recapitulate the imperial dynamic at the heart of Western foreign policy. As Nathan Tobey suggests:

Tourism bears a nearly direct lineage to perhaps the first arbiter of the first/third world dynamic globalization: colonialism. This is most obvious in that nearly all tourists come from the first world, notably Europe and the United States, and are also the primary owners of the tourist infrastructure.²³⁹

²³⁹ Nathan Tobey, <http://www.journalism.emory.edu/STUDENTS/NTOBNEY/Chap11/chap11.html> [accessed 5/3/08]

Tourism therefore evolved in parallel with colonialism. It is a practice carried out only by those who control its processes and have the power and foundations in place to spread the web of consumerism onto lands owned by others. It is also true that tourism's growth has undoubtedly been accelerated and, in some cases, brought about by imperial successes in previous years. It is no coincidence that ocean liners belonging to certain nations would journey to far-flung regions which were part of their own empires.

Tourism's effects on nations are also similar to those of colonial enterprise. Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles write of the colonial realms being 'tamed' at an early stage in the cruise's development. They describe a specific anthropological cruise in New Guinea in the 1930s in which objects and artefacts were collected:

This cruise, although it visited the southwest coast of New Britain, said far more about the perception of New Guinea 'back home' than about the anthropology of the region. It makes apparent that New Guinea had become a place that it was possible to visit, to take a 'cruise' to and that it had been 'tamed.' These travellers were not going to risk their lives in the territory. The town of Rabaul was an established colonial capital offering all the amenities.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles, *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change* (Oxford: Berg Publishers 2001), p.144.

Reports of the voyage therefore reflect the ‘civilising’ effects of colonialism, yet also hint at the cruise’s perpetuation of this. It is Gosden and Knowles’ implication that a port of call must in some way be ‘tamed’ before a cruise can successfully take place. Colonialism has a priming effect, which when complete, can allow the spread of tourism to begin in earnest. Reports of the cruise to Rabaul also emphasise colonialism’s influence on the landscapes and communities it had touched, and suggest that these were profoundly civilising and westernising. Familiar amenities were facilitated by a need to accommodate colonisers who wanted to retain the comforts of home. In an emulation of this, the modern cruise ship, which is more greatly associated with pleasure-seeking tourists, possesses a similar need to accommodate its passengers. Ross Klein in *Cruise Ship Squeeze: The New Pirates of the Seven Seas*, argues that the cruise ship is akin to a modern day pirate vessel, plundering what it can and changing the essence of the places it visits. Although Klein discusses a modern cruising which was larger and more developed than that in the 1950s and 1960s, the beginnings of the process he describes were in evidence:

When cruise ships invade, the texture of a port or an island changes. These changes are good for cruise ship day-visitors who want quick and easy access to sites, clean streets, and an absence of poverty, and also want to see a place as they think it should be – often much like home – rather than the way it actually is.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Ross A. Klein, *Cruise Ship Squeeze: The New Pirates of the Seven Seas* (New Society Publishers, 2005), p.1.

The changing texture of these tourist destinations therefore leads to a sanitised version of community and culture. The commodity sold by the tourist industry or by the leisure cruise business is one which offers something distinct and different, but is ultimately safe and in possession of some semblance of familiarity. Yet, this reading of tourism as a direct, sanitising, demystifying emulation of colonialism is reductionist and fails to tackle the conflicting elements of promotional, touristic discourse. Along with a need for familiarity and comfort, there also exists an opposite desire, a yearning for a kind of abstract mystery which is ripe with the thrill of the unknown. David Nicholson-Lord attempts to articulate the human need for this abstract ideal:

It's partly because humans are naturally inquisitive and exploratory but also, and more significant, because we need the unknown, what historians of religion call "otherness," to lend our lives significance. So we conceive of ideal worlds--Paradise, the Golden Age, Heaven, Atlantis, Shangri-La--and dream, sometimes, of attaining them.²⁴²

This quest for 'otherness' is perceptible within tourist literature and film between the lines and narrative tracks which otherwise list amenities or portray civilised cocktail parties aboard ship. We catch glimpses of otherness in certain images of landscapes or people, the shadow of a doorway with unfamiliar architecture, or the framing of a mystical castle through the trees. Before I discuss the formulation of this discourse of

²⁴² David Nicholson-Lord, 'The Politics of Travel: Is Tourism just Colonialism in Another Guise?', http://www.emily.net/~schiller/pol_trvl.html [accessed 5/3/08]

otherness, it is important to define the parameters and origins of what many critics term 'the exotic'.

5.2 The Colonial Exotic

Notions of paradise and alluring, mysterious otherness are largely referred to as 'the exotic' or 'exoticism'. The term finds its root in the distinctly westernised framework by which the first world conceives of colonial or postcolonial cultures. To many critics and theorists, the exotic is largely based within and informed by images of the colonial other. These images inspire a yearning desire to believe in the full, alienating otherness of other cultures so as to lend the individual's life further potency and mystery, and simultaneously, an underlying sense of implicit superiority. An understanding of our relationship with the other is crucial in informing a reading of the exotic. The other is both seductive and affirming, allowing for an individual's belief in the limitlessness of possibility alongside the mundane safety of the everyday. The self therefore exhibits a duality here, defining itself in contrast to the other, in an effort to both support its superiority and to in some way accept the distinct absence of something in one's own life and acknowledge it in that of another. Colin Davis, in his introduction to the writings of Emmanuel Levinas, helps to define what Levinas saw as a widely perceived reading of the other:

In Levinas's reading of the history of Western thought, the Other has generally been regarded as something provisionally separate from the Same (or the self), but ultimately reconcilable with it; otherness, or alterity, appears as a temporary interruption to be eliminated as it is incorporated into or reduced to sameness.²⁴³

However, Levinas himself possesses a more ethical reading of the other:

For Levinas, on the contrary, the Other lies absolutely beyond my comprehension and should be preserved in all its irreducible strangeness; it may be revealed by other people in so far as they are not merely mirror images of myself, or by religious experience or certain privileged texts. Levinas's endeavour is to protect the Other from the aggressions of the Same.²⁴⁴

In the marketing of the exotic, these two definitions of the other interweave to form a somewhat paradoxical reaction. While it relies on the notion of the other as 'irreducible strangeness' to market the experience, in the reality of the touristic exotic, the commodification and exhibition of the other ultimately pulls it into a realm and a discourse in which it is subsumed into sameness.

²⁴³ Colin Davis, *Levinas: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p.3.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p.3.

Malcolm Crick emphasises the tourist industry's acute control over the potency of exotic discourses:

So, it is the task of the industry image-makers to create a place which is exotic but not alien, exciting yet not frightening, different but where they speak your language, so that fun and relaxation, untroubled by the concerns of the real world, are possible. Such a space, of course, requires sweeping most of social reality under the carpet.²⁴⁵

Indeed, the root of exoticism's power in terms of its importance to tourism lies in its ability to create a limitless world of intrigue, adventure and mystery which is, beneath the surface level of actuality, entirely safe and comfortable. The exotic relies upon the fictionalising and narrativising of other cultures. This is a narrative which possesses only a slim sense of the real, emphasising fabricated elements which relate to what Edward Said terms an 'imperialist system of representation.'²⁴⁶ This system of representation informs the tourist industry's visual marketing of these places of unfamiliarity into what Graham Huggan calls 'a commodified relation to the [cultural] "other".'²⁴⁷

The commodified version of this cultural other relies upon the creation of an entirely fictional space, a realm which can be controlled and formed by those who either yearn

²⁴⁵ Malcolm Crick cited in Graham Huggan, *The Post-Colonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge 2001), p.178.

²⁴⁶ Said in Ruth Mayer, *Artificial Africas: Colonial Images in the Times of Globalization* (New Hampshire: UPNE, 2002), p. 19.

²⁴⁷ Huggan (2001), p178.

to believe in its romantic existence, or companies who simply wish to market it as a product. Huggan describes this as an ‘exoticist “elsewhere”’, a space which defines itself with nostalgic myths and skewed truths.²⁴⁸ Ruth Mayer is similarly visual in her articulation of the exotic. She describes its main manifestation as the ‘cultural imaginary’, defining it as a site of imagined meanings, and a repertory of images, affects, and yearnings which stimulate an individual’s own imagination and sense of desire.²⁴⁹

These exotic spaces therefore form a reinterpretation of the people and lands which they seek to represent and mould them into a discourse which reflects ‘the “timeless essences” of indigenous cultures.’²⁵⁰ Ultimately, they find their root within what Mayer describes as ‘narratives of cultural contact’, which are ‘invariably reflections on the powers and failures of communication.’²⁵¹ These western interactions with indigenous cultures are defined by a lack of understanding on both sides, a fundamental breakdown in the normalcy of communication and the everyday discourses associated with this. Through this, the ‘cultural imaginary’ is born. This is a set of discourses used to articulate the existence of other cultures which are rooted in guesswork and the simple allure of the unknown.

The development and perpetuation of these narratives owe large debts to literature which explored the exotic through the adventures of characters occupying foreign environments. H. Rider Haggard, Joseph Conrad, and Rudyard Kipling were three such writers infatuated with the romance and mystery found within far-flung, exotic

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p.179.

²⁴⁹ Mayer (2002), p.11.

²⁵⁰ Huggan (2001), p.17.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p.179.

locations thousands of miles from the comforts of home. Kipling's description of a desert scene in *From Sea to Sea* is particularly germane:

If you look long enough across the sands while a voice in your ear is telling you of the half-buried cities, old as Time, and wholly unvisited...[you] will be conscious of a great desire to take one of the lolling camels and get away into the desert, away from the last touch of Today, to meet the Past face to face.²⁵²

Kipling's diction is heavily affected with romantic vernacular and plays upon the mystical, spiritual associations of communities little-known to the west. Images of half-buried cities and the personification of the past, divorces the passage from reality. Instead, the account is vaguely surreal, and conjures a set of images more closely associated with the firings of the imagination or the unconscious.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* tells of a man's anguished journey up a river recognisable as the Congo, during which he witnesses savage scenes of brutality and incomprehensible chaos. The narrator, a sailor named Marlow, recounts his tale for the duration of the novel and in one moment states:

It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream – making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and

²⁵² Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea: Letters of Travel*, (London: Cosimo, 2006), also accessed online, <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/k/kipling/rudyard/marque/chapter13.html> [Accessed 29/09/09]

bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams...²⁵³

Here, like Kipling's ethereal picturing of a desert, Conrad's character evokes the dream as a means of emphasising the abstraction inherent within his narrative. This is a device frequently used by the tourist industry and, in particular, the cruise film. The hazy, dream-like manner in which a holiday is traditionally recalled is consistently evident in the films' visual discourse, yet this is also tied to the picturing of the foreign shores to which the ship travels. In Ken Fairbairn's P&O-sponsored film *Run Away to Sea* (1965), our perspective is centred around the thoughts of Jonathan, the film's main character and narrator, who daydreams about a passage upon an ocean liner. Fading back to the beach upon which the film begins, the narrative concludes with the implied onset of an identical reality in which the cruise begins all over again. In Wright's *Liner Cruising South*, the 'cloud capped Caribbean Islands' the ship reaches are treated with a series of shots which slowly fade into one another. This is a technique Wright further employs in *Song of Ceylon* (1934), a film sponsored by the Empire Tea Marketing Board, which consists of abstract shots of landscapes, traditional music, and a markedly poetic voiceover narration. Fades are used to mark the exotic, to divorce the subject matter from actuality, and house the juxtaposed images within a discourse which is most commonly equated with the dream. In *Liner Cruising South* particularly, these fades are entirely at odds with the conventional cutting used in the early section of the film in which life aboard the ship is photographed. The nationally-bound shipboard atmosphere is directly opposed and

²⁵³ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin, 1994, first published 1899), pp.27-28.

placed at odds with the sublimity of the othered landscape. The division between these two locales is emphasised by their markedly different visual treatment.

The exotic therefore lies in the diction, rhetoric and visual terms which writers and filmmakers employ to articulate their distinctive representations. The highfaluting, grandiose language used by Kipling, or the portentous dream imagery of Conrad's Marlow, set a precedent for the expression of these unfamiliar environments which can be seen in cruise imagery of different forms. While seemingly besotted by the abstract allure of colonial landscapes, such writers consciously sought to dispel the hegemonic and subjugated manner in which these colonial lands were treated. However, they in turn perpetuated a sense of intentional, exaggerated otherness and mysticism through the style in which they wrote. All seemed to hold something fundamental in common which they also share with the tourist: an express desire to believe in a realm which was distinctive and profoundly different from their own.

The exotic is therefore an aestheticisation of the colonial, a system of signs within which, in the words of John Frow, '[a] place, a gesture, a use of language are understood not as given bits of the real but as suffused with ideality.'²⁵⁴ I will now attempt to deconstruct this visual discourse using a number of representations of the colonial as produced by shipping lines. Each relies on a standardised, exotic discourse which takes on a number of forms.

5.3 The Visual Discourse of Colonialism

²⁵⁴ John Frow in Huggan (2001), p.180.

In her essay 'The Imaginary Orient', Linda Nochlin outlines a method of close analysis which is useful in its deconstruction of colonial images and its express foregrounding of western authorial intent. Her work focuses most specifically on nineteenth-century art and, in particular, on the work of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), a French painter most famous for his depictions of Middle Eastern locations and people. While Nochlin's work is centred on what she problematically terms 'great art', she concludes her article with the suggestion that her style of analysis can be applied to examples more commonly referred to as products of 'mass culture':

Works like Gérôme's, and that of other Orientalists of his ilk, are valuable and well worth investigating not because they share the aesthetic values of great art on a slightly lower level, but because as visual imagery they anticipate and predict the qualities of incipient mass culture. As such their strategies of concealment lend themselves admirably to the critical methodologies, the deconstructive techniques now employed by the best film historians, or by sociologists of advertising imagery, or by analysts of visual propaganda, rather than those of mainstream art history.²⁵⁵

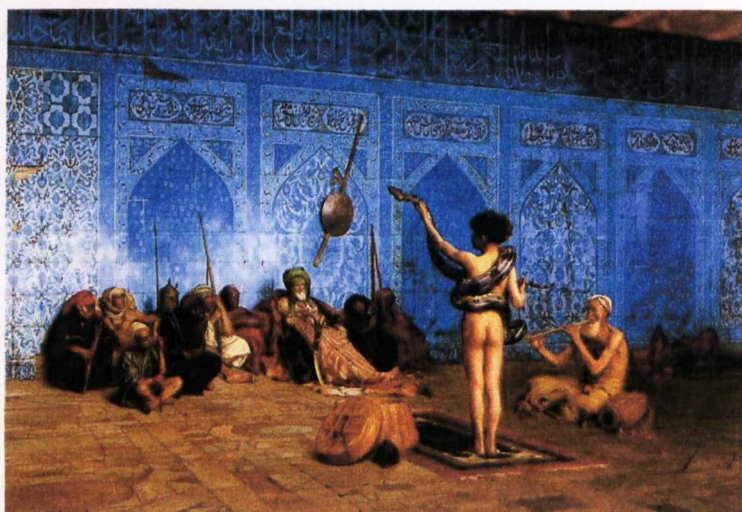
Within this section I will therefore use Nochlin's method of analysis in an effort to deconstruct the exotic, colonial images found within travel promotion of the twentieth

²⁵⁵ Linda Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p.57.

century. This methodology largely centres on the image's denial of certain elements which would otherwise provide it with more context or sense of actuality. This denial is equated with the unfamiliar nature of the acts depicted, acts which reside uneasily within the textual framework of a realist visual style. This idea of denial is supported by Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his suggestion of 'absence' found within 19th century painting like that of Gérôme:

The icon of the nineteenth-century savage is determined by the *absences*: the absence, or scarcity, of clothing, possessions, attributes of civilisation.²⁵⁶

An attempt to draw parallels between images of the colonial exotic (both in art and marketing material) is useful in understanding the standardised, consistent nature of many of these representations. The legacy of this established visual discourse would remain perceivable within the cruise film of the post-war years and in related poster and brochure imagery.



²⁵⁶ Pieterse (1992), p.35.

Fig.157: *The Snake Charmer* (1870) by Jean-Léon Gérôme

Fig.157 shows Gérôme's *The Snake Charmer* (1870), which depicts a gathered crowd with their backs to a 'ferociously detailed tiled wall,' watching a performance by a man and child.²⁵⁷ The members of the watching group are 'as resolutely alienated from us as is the act they watch with such childlike, trancelike concentration.' The painting's spectators are as much part of the image as its spectacle, the group framed in a huddle against the wall which seems to gleam with incomprehensible intricacy. People and architecture are immediately equated, both deeply complex and seemingly meaningful, but also abstract and unknown. The boy himself is striking in his state of undress, yet also turned away from us, facing the internal spectators' gaze which we fail to share. We are therefore denied the full spectacle which is absorbed by those who look, and are instead left to ponder the unknown intricacies of the undertaking upon which they stare.

To Nochlin and Pieterse, the painting is defined by what it intentionally fails to contain. Along with its denial of perspective, it possesses an 'absence of history. Time stands still in Gérôme's paintings, as it does in all imagery qualified as "picturesque".'²⁵⁸ It possesses no sense of the past or historical placement and is instead timeless, rooted in a realm which is free from the processes of the tumultuous era of change in which it was conceived. The painting also lacks any acknowledgement of an explicit white, western presence. In Nochlin's reading, the controlling Western gaze is ever existent regardless of its visual absence and is found within the very perspective by which the painting is rendered. In this way, we, as

²⁵⁷ Nochlin (1994), p.35.

²⁵⁸ Nochlin (1994), pp.35-36.

spectators, are implicated in this western gaze – we form part of the unseen presence which allows for this window upon a scene. Yet, at the same time, the implication is that there is no bringing into being, that such renderings offer simple ‘reflections’ which – added to their realistic aesthetics – have pretensions which essentially strive for the achievement of some kind of scientific exactitude which reflects the direct realities of a pre-existing Oriental reality.²⁵⁹ This brings us to Gérôme’s final denial: that of art itself. As Nochlin puts it:

A ‘naturalist’ or ‘authenticist’ artist like Gérôme tries to make us forget that his art is really art, both by concealing the evidence of his touch, and, at the same time, by insisting on a plethora of authenticating details, especially on what might be called unnecessary ones.²⁶⁰

To the undiscerning eye, Gérôme’s absences culminate in a painting which appears timeless, mysterious and realistic. Yet, ultimately, the reality it purports to project is entirely fictional, a manifestation of the exotic which is rooted in these heightened, idealised notions of what colonised spaces contain and how they appear. This results in a painting which tells us far more about nineteenth-century attitudes to these cultures than to the cultures themselves. Twentieth-century renderings of tourist locations in the poster, advertising brochure or promotional film rely on similar absences and skewed projections of colonial reality to create images which, rather

²⁵⁹ Nochlin (1994), p.37.

²⁶⁰ Nochlin (1994), p.38.

than competing for approval within an art community, appeal to a mass audience and play upon their attitudes to the exotic.

5.4 The Poster

Unlike film or photograph, the poster can be most easily linked to Nochlin's method of analysis as it is, ultimately, the direct product of an artist's preconceived brush strokes and is not necessarily based on a scene of actuality. Fig.158, for example, shows a small boy upon a donkey as part of an Orient Line advertising poster from 1910. The poster's overall aesthetic is similar to a cartoon, with many block colours and vivid lines. Its depiction of a colonial landscape is therefore caricatured, the oranges which fill the boy's basket perfectly spaced, the palm trees equally aligned and the sky a vivid shade of blue. The boy's clear 'look to camera' gives the poster a staged feel, yet also implicates the spectator. The attempted heightened realism inherent within Gérôme's painting is missing, yet the poster manages to at least reflect some sense of reality, albeit colourful and sanitised.



Fig.158: Orient Line Poster (1910)

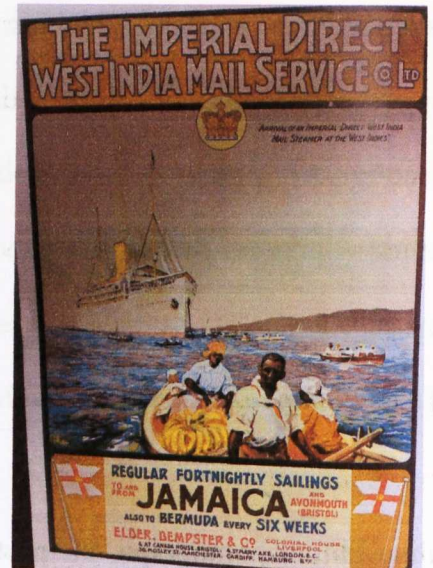


Fig.159: West India Mail Service Poster

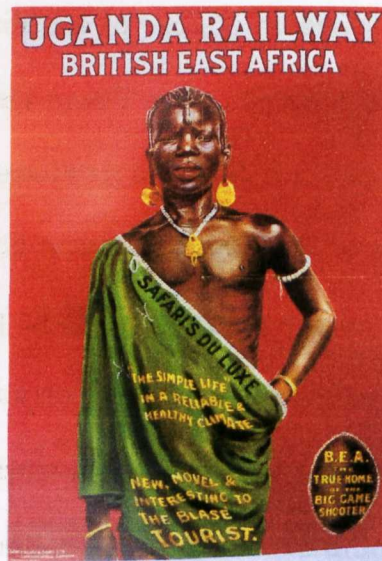


Fig.160: British East Africa Poster

Fig.159 depicts a rowing boat containing three people, a British steamship looming in the background and a landscape visible in the distance to the right of the image. Unlike the image depicted in Fig.158, the art style found in this poster is more akin to Gérôme's attempts at reality. Like Fig.158's boy, the occupants of the boat in Fig.159 transport fruit. They are immediately equated with a consumable product which is synonymous (at least in the minds of the West) with the land upon which they reside.

Also like Fig.158, the Jamaican man in the foreground stares forward in an address or invitation, bringing to attention the contrived nature of the image. While the poster draws attention to its own status as fabrication, the realism inherent within its style implies that it is at least striving for a sense of actuality. Fig.160 possesses a similar attempt at realism, but is isolated and clearly emblematic. The poster shows a Ugandan man dressed in traditional clothing upon a stark red background. The man is entirely divorced from his surroundings and stands, half covered, hand on hip. This image is the most arrestingly 'other' in terms of its choice of subject matter (the man appearing strikingly 'different' in his part-nakedness and choice of dress). However, in an explicit instance of colonial appropriation, we see that the man's flowing garment has been used as a means of transferring the message of the rail company. The text which follows the folds and contours of the material reads, "The Simple Life" in a reliable & healthy climate. New novel & interesting to the blasé tourist.' Fig.160 therefore juxtaposes an image of the other with a sentiment which both implies its primitivism ('the simple life') and markets it as an experience which is new and novel. We are presented with the strange combination of a marked attempt at realist artwork alongside its subject being used as a human billboard. The poster's realism is entirely undermined by its promotional requirements. Here we see the African man consciously used as a sign: a symbol of his nation who performs the function of representing its latent mysticism and intrigue to the 'blasé tourist' (a version of Pratt's 'seeing man.')

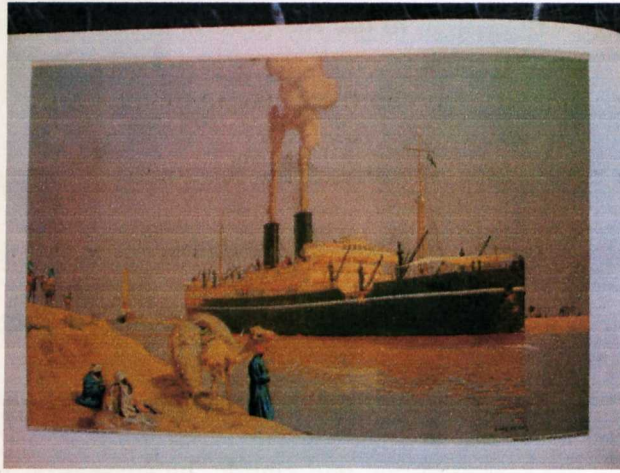


Fig.161: *Suez Canal* by Charles Pears

Fig.161 shows an Empire Marketing Board Poster designed by Charles Pears in which a steam ship is depicted travelling down the Suez Canal. While the other posters explicitly advertise a specific service, the Board's use of advertising material was more indirect. They would produce posters and films (*Liner Cruising South* being one) which would simply highlight the existence of the various nations of the British Empire, and emphasise their importance in terms of trade and transport. Pears' poster is free of the text, logos, or symbols noted within the other material, and instead simply depicts a ship as it steams down the canal. This poster is closest to Gérôme's painting in terms of realism and intent, with both a style which feigns actuality, and an absence of a central figure. Yet, Gérôme places an incident of intrigue and unfamiliarity at his painting's centre which serves to accentuate unease and otherness. In contrast, a steam ship engulfs the central part of Pears' image, an object at once familiar, comforting and British. A small gathering of men with a camel are instead the objects of otherness in this image, gazing calmly at the sight of British industrial prowess that glides towards them. They take the role of the gathered townfolk in Gérôme's work, the land to the left of them cut off from our view, obscured and left to the spectator's imagination.

Each poster I have highlighted here confronts the colonial image in a different way. From the Orient Line poster's caricatured, cartoon aesthetics, to the explicit pursuit of actuality found within Pears' *Suez Canal*, these representations all hold a number of Nochlin's 'absences' in common. Bearing Nochlin's problematic definition of art in mind, all deny 'art' to some degree. They remain endeavours to recreate a recognisable image of the colonial other that, due to their primary function as mainstream marketing, possesses an investment in realism and direct reflection, not a pursuit of artistry or the abstract. Secondly, all possess an absence of history or time which can be derived from the colonial subjects present. Each of these images is innocuous in its content; whether it be a boy sitting happily on a donkey, a rowboat transporting bananas, or a small group of indigenous people observing a passing ship, there is a distinct absence of conflict, struggle, or change which can lead to their placement within a specific moment. In fact, it is the western elements within these posters that give a sense of time and an imposition of a western time structure upon a sense of colonial timelessness. Importantly, it is the ship in both the West India Mail Service poster and Charles Pears' *Suez Canal*, which offers this kind of 'timestamp'. The detailed and accurate depiction of the ships in both posters allows us to place them immediately as products of the twentieth century. The apparent spiritual, transcendent timelessness of colonial culture which the West seeks to preserve is clearly evident in these posters. Yet alongside this, the colossal presence of the steamship (acting as an emblem of western power and dominance) offers marked juxtaposition in terms of primitivism versus civilisation, and creates a kind of ownership within the image. The ship's prominent position within the poster's frame is calm and watchful. It is a transcendental presence which inoculates the fearful,

unknown elements of the colonial other. While the fascination with these peoples remains (including a foregrounding of the physical, consumable produce which they offer), it is an allure carefully controlled using the image of the ship. The ship embodies ideas of trade, travel and control.

While such posters exhibit many of the characteristics evident within Nochlin's reading of Gérôme's *The Snake Charmer*, their main diversion is the inclusion of a western presence which renders them comparatively unthreatening. Gérôme may imply a western gaze in his use of perspective, yet these posters contain a physical, identifiable western presence in the form of text which surrounds the image, and the use of the ship as a symbolic, domineering force. Ultimately, however, they perpetuate this fictionalised rendering of colonial culture which remains divorced from reality and can be placed firmly within Said's 'imperialist system of representation.'

5.5 Film and Photography

While the painting or poster is the explicit product of an artist's imaginative mind (and therefore implies some kind of fallibility or fiction), the photograph, be it moving or static, might be regarded as implying a greater documentation of truth and an immunity from the subjectivity inherent within painting or drawing. Yet, in the words of Nochlin, '[p]hotography itself is hardly immune to the blandishments of Orientalism, and even a presumably innocent or neutral view of architecture can be

ideologized.²⁶¹ In her essay, Nochlin compares a ‘commercially produced’ photograph of the Bab Mansour at Meknes to a photograph she herself has taken. She notes the ‘dramatic angle’ by which the gate is caught, the conspicuous contrasts of light and shadow which play upon its surface and the surrounding urban landscape. Evidence of the city’s ‘contemporaneity and contradiction’ - inherent within its modern and traditional elements – is suppressed by the ‘official’ photograph, which plays upon the donkeys and horses that roam the streets and neglects to depict the cars and buses which also flood the city.

Photography’s assumed objectivism had its roots in paintings which were informed by a scientific self-righteousness perceivable within the work of Gérôme. Writing of late-eighteenth century picturesque artists such as Williams Hodges and Thomas Dariell, James Ryan states that they:

[...] explicitly related their work to colonial exploration and natural philosophical inquiry. What is interesting then is the way in which British landscape photographers of the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s disguised their dependence on pictorial convention in order to promote photography as an objective record of sight, in the process reinscribing imperial landscape as a natural way of seeing.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Nochlin (1994), p.39.

²⁶² James R. Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), p.47.

The role of photography within anthropological and sociological study as a means of objectively recording events, therefore gave it a greater weight and social importance. But, as Ryan suggests, photography relied on a deeply historicised set of pictorial conventions which were rooted in a single-sided, colonial gaze.

Nochlin supports this in her suggestion that within photographic depictions of 'foreign' nations, there exists a suppression of actuality as a result of the primary needs sought by the photograph. A touristic depiction of a nation's people or architecture, for example, may well seek to emphasise the exotic elements inherent within its imagery. With the ideas of Nochlin and Ryan in mind, this process can happen both consciously and unconsciously. While the promotion of the exotic is advantageous within advertising discourse and therefore deployed knowingly, it also forms part of an implicit, *unknowing* manner of representation. It is this affected treatment of the exotic and the other which is of particular interest when applied to photography and, visual forms which are so often associated with objectivity. In the following section, I examine the way in which three cruise films treat the colonial and foreign image, with particular emphasis placed on the visual techniques, emblems and juxtapositions employed to create this highly manipulated, touristic view.

5.6 *Runaway To Sea* (1969)

Ken Fairbairn's *Runaway To Sea* was produced by P&O and, like Frederic Goode's *World At Three*, possesses a filmic narrative which is at times self-consciously 'cool' and contemporary. Cuts are often sharp and camera angles are frequently unexpected

or unconventional. Fig.162 depicts a cathedral framed from its base, the camera gazing up at a steep angle, isolating its contours and strange, ethereal shape. The cathedral rests on the Italian island of Elba, which is most frequently associated with Napoleon. The film's narration makes humorous reference to the French leader's failed retention of the island (thwarted by Wellington's victory at Waterloo). Elba therefore retains an importance in Britain's history of colonial expansion and, while it does not possess some of the direct colonial connotations of other locations featured in the film, its associations are strong enough to affect its visual discourse. The cathedral is pictured so as to emphasise its striking and unusual architecture, the camera's angle artificially accentuating its size and suggesting a menacing presence. Its framing resembles Monet's *Rouen Cathedral* series of paintings (thus possessing a further French connection to Impressionism) and shares the Impressionistic viewpoint which foregrounds subjectivity rather than an attempt at projecting some sense of actuality. This gaze is implicitly informed by the visual narrative of an art style most closely associated with the French, lending the shot a further, if under-explored and largely implicit, subtext of French colonialism.

Fig.163 shows another building on Elba, yet frames it from a more conventional angle. However, to the left of the pillared structure is a hill which rises into a misty sky. This gives the effect of altitude but also, like *Liner Cruising South's* 'Cloud Capped Caribbean Islands', a sense of the ethereal and the unknown. Fairbairn's choice of shot is here loaded with a sense of the exotic and taps into notions of the dream-like and the fantastical. The distinct absence of people in this shot, or of any object or article which points to any discernable era, also gives the structure a sense of

timelessness. It becomes an ancient building caught in a hilltop time warp, far from the civilising elements of real life.



Fig.162: *Runaway To Sea* (1969)



Fig.163: *Runaway To Sea* (1969)



Fig.164: *Runaway To Sea* (1969)

The camera then cuts to a courtyard surrounded by a pillared passageway which skirts its perimeter [Fig.164]. The contrast caused by the shaded pillar section and the sunlit courtyard is accentuated by the camera's positioning. As a result, the pillars appear entirely in shadow, as shapes which vertically cut down the centre of the frame, fragmenting the sun drenched scene outside. This image is again devoid of people, lending the scene a sense of eeriness, while the shadow diminishes the detail on the surfaces it envelopes.

Runaway To Sea treats these images (which are essentially photographs cut together in short sequences) in a very specific and affected way. Like Nochlin's promotional photographs from the Bab Mansour gate, these images of Elba's striking architecture are 'ideologized'. By choosing certain angles, time of day and contrasting light and shadow, Fairbairn is able to create a contrived and accentuated effect which we associate with the exotic. These objects appear even more unfamiliar in this aestheticised form than they actually are, while their apparent isolation, remoteness and timelessness lends them an eerie allure. This sequence foregrounds the employment of a touristic discourse which, to use James Ryan's phrase when describing photography of India, 'enraptured but never threatened.'²⁶³ Although these shots generate a sense of the exotic and capture an 'imaginative geography', they are touristic in the sense that they remain entirely free from threat or peril.²⁶⁴

5.7 38a to Cape Town (1966)

John Karie's *38a to Cape Town* was produced for Orient Line as a promotional piece designed to advertise one of the company's South African cruises. The film possesses a voice over narration by Sid James, familiar to audiences from the *Carry On...* films, and here playing a cockney bus driver escaping the monotony and routine of his daily life by embarking on a trip aboard a cruise ship. The film begins by depicting the hustle and bustle of London at rush hour, complete with the blaring of car horns, the polluting smog which emanates from exhausts, and the endless rotation of traffic-light patterns. This opening paints a distinctive picture of industrial civilisation at its

²⁶³ Ryan (1997), p.61.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p.11.

height, the nation's capital rendered as a hectic realm of billboards and transportation methods. The three opening shots of the film pan sideways as they depict chaotic intersections, cars and buses filtering amongst one another as they file endlessly across lanes and through narrow gaps. As in Fig.165, our view is intentionally obscured by a silhouette of one of the supporting pillars at the front of the bus, leading both to a claustrophobic viewpoint which emphasises the relentlessness of the city's road systems, and allows us only a restricted view of the surrounding urban landscape.

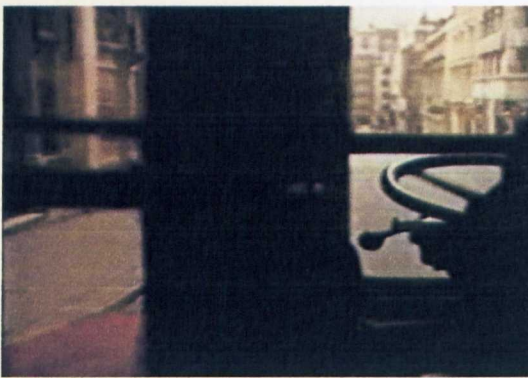


Fig.165: *38a to Cape Town* (1966)



Fig.166: *38a to Cape Town* (1966)

Similarly, as in Fig.166, the only other shots which punctuate this opening sequence take the form of rapidly cut images of vehicles which are pictured in extreme close up. This again performs a similar function of pointing towards the aggression and chaos evident upon London's streets, but also entirely restricts our view of the city.

In contrast, arrival in Cape Town is initially marked by a first person perspective from the ship which emulates the gaze of the passengers aboard [Fig.167]. In the shot's foreground are parts of the ship itself, while in the background we see Table Mountain as if rising from the sea. The landmark is iconic and striking, its shape

prominent upon the horizon and a marked contrast to the ship's latent industrialism perceivable within the white metal struts and poles which rise at angles across the frame. This shot is also a contrast to the cramped and claustrophobic depictions of London streets which occur during the film's opening sequence.



Fig.167: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig .168: 38a to Cape Town (1966)

In Fig.168, a flag of the South African union flies at the top right of the ship's mast, flying alongside two signalling flags and a modern version of Union Castle's House Flag.²⁶⁵ ²⁶⁶ Initially, this juxtaposition lends the approaching scene a sense of ownership, but is also problematised by the film's historical placement. Within many examples of the cruise film, the initial witnessing of land is frequently met with a foray of activity and excitement, and a tendency to exhibit a patriotic impulse. A P&O brochure from 1959 contains a highly patriotic passage written by A P Herbert. Addressing the passengers who sail aboard P&O vessels, he writes, 'You have helped, by your presence, to carry the flag of Britain into foreign ports. You have seen the skill and shared the splendour of a British "ship of the Line."²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Rob Raeside, <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/Flags/gb-hfuv.html#ucl>, [accessed 18/08/08], Timothy Wilson, *Flags at Sea*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1986), p.35.

²⁶⁷ A P Herbert, *All About Cruising*, P&O/96/11, P&O Archive, Greenwich Maritime Museum

Herbert's highly affected language gives context to the stark juxtaposition found within *38a to Cape Town*. While James' colloquial narration is a far cry from Herbert's lofty language and tone, the film's organisation of these loaded shots seems to give a similar sense of national pride and, importantly, a visual sign of colonial ownership. Yet, the film was released in 1966, six years after Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd declared South Africa an independent Republic. Whilst the nation had endeavoured to remain part of the Commonwealth and had created an application for submission at the Prime Minister's conference in March 1961, this was swiftly retracted when other nations began to threaten to leave due to the new Republic's continuing Apartheid laws. By May 1961, South Africa's status as a Commonwealth member had ceased.²⁶⁸ This may explain why there is no Union Jack flag visible on the ship's mast (although Union Castle's House Flag bears a striking resemblance to it). This sequence instead appears to represent a continuing portrayal of maritime and national tradition in the face of change and progression.

Although South Africa was free of British ownership and rule, *38a to Cape Town's* visual narrative perpetuates the established visual discourse of landfall and implies a sense of ownership which no longer exists. This helpfully encapsulates the cruise film's frequent post-war positioning as an attempt to maintain the romance, power and promise of the gestures of colonialism in the face of a crumbling empire.

Assassinated by a white parliamentary messenger on 6th September 1966, Prime Minister Verwoerd was removed from South African politics the same year *38a to*

²⁶⁸ Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), p.417.

Cape Town was released. Whilst he left no apparent political vacuum in parliament, Verwoerd's assassination was clearly telling of the bloody nature of South African politics at that time.²⁶⁹ The aggressive, fiercely independent South Africa of the mid-1960s was one entirely absent from Karie's promotional film. Instead, we see a production intent on perpetuating a vision of both relative normalcy and a historic otherness free of the complex political volatility of the present moment.

The film's portrayal of the landscape possesses a sense of Otherness which is largely a result of a consistent, repeated and historic trope of landfall which the cruise film frequently deploys. Foreign lands are consistently introduced from afar, as abstract shapes on the horizon, pictured like realms untouched, discovered for the first time. The historical connotations of these moments brings to mind the fanfare of colonising expeditions and helps to explain Karie's use of nationalistic images directly alongside others which introduce the South African coastline. We can discern a distinct emulation of the romance of the colonial process within the cruise in this sequence of landfall. Due to the detached perspective we are initially presented with (which itself mirrors the engagement with South Africa that the passengers experience) we are also provided with a view of the foreign landscape which is indistinct and abstracted.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p.424.



Fig.169: 38a to Cape Town (1966)

As the ship moves closer to the land, the detail of it begins to increase [Fig.169] and the buildings of Cape Town are visible beneath the colossal natural landmark of Table Mountain. Our gaze upon this foreign shore is distinctly western, with the ship's visibility conspicuous in the foreground as it points towards its destination. We begin to see the hallmarks of modern civilisation which the film's previous shot (in which only Table mountain was visible) moves some way to deny.



Fig.170: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig.171: 38a to Cape Town (1966)



Fig.172: 38a to Cape Town (1966)

Cape Town itself is explored using the loaded and established visual signifier of the London bus, which drives around the city streets as James compares the open, relaxed manner of travel to the hectic relentlessness of London's rush hour experience. The bus itself is primarily used as a consistent visual element which playfully ties together the film's narrative. Its appearance on the streets is immediately comparable to the opening exposition which establishes James and his bus as the down-to-earth (if rather quaint and stereotypical) symbols of Britishness to which the film's audience can directly relate. The shots used in this sequence are crucial in emphasising the differences between London and Cape Town. While both share the presence of road systems, buildings which rise into the sky and an explicit sense of the city, the manner in which both environments are shot diverges hugely. London is pictured in a frequently obscured set of rapid cuts, many of which originate from the bus itself. Our perspective is frequently restricted or blocked by a constant swarm of cars, buses and vans which vie for space upon the city streets. Cape Town, in comparison, is shot from outside the bus and frequently from an aerial perspective, which serves to accentuate the city's openness in direct opposition to London's inherent restriction. Fig.172 shows the bus cruising along a coastal road, while in Fig.171 it disappears

into a dramatically cast shadow in the background. Both are lengthy shots which pause to connote the idle passage of time and intentionally conflict with the rapid claustrophobia at work during the London sequence.

The film's shift in the way it approaches the representation of these two cities helps to accentuate the contrast in lifestyles emphasised by James' narration. Yet, alongside this explicit deviation from the film's opening, the Cape Town sequence also exhibits a broadness of shot which plays a further role in the city's explication. Fig.170 shows the red London bus moving from left to right, a lightly coloured tower block visible in the background. Fig.171 depicts a street bathed in shadow in which the bus moves from the foreground to the background (dissolving into the city as it disappears from view), the prominent natural presence of Table Mountain clearly visible in the shots background. Alternatively, Fig.172 shows the bus move from left to right along a coastal road, the urban visible on the left of the frame in the form of the white buildings which skirt the road, and nature visible on the right within the ocean which crashes onto a sweeping beach. The diversity of these shots connotes a unique meeting of the civilised with the natural, the familiar with the Other. Our perspective is freed, and we are allowed to perceive the full extent of Cape Town's natural beauty.

The familiar urban elements inherent within these shots are reinforced by the explicit presence of the bus as it cruises along the city's streets. Its vivid colouring contrasts with the washed out, sun-drenched appearance of Cape Town, while it figuratively contrasts too, as a stereotyped symbol of Britishness which is here ripped from London's streets and placed directly within a foreign environment. The presence of the bus in one sense gives this depiction of Cape Town a fantastical element. Its

incongruous placement taps into a dream-like, surrealist discourse of mismatching juxtapositions and further relates to the dream metaphor used by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*. Our engagement with this post-colonial realm is therefore heavily coloured by this uneasy meeting of realist depiction and subjective fantasy.

The bus plays a further role as an object of Britishness which is absorbed into the landscape unchallenged. Like the ship, which within many films of this kind is pictured towering above foreign ports, the bus connotes a kind of colonial ownership by its very presence. Its inclusion in every shot of Cape Town's sun drenched streets is conspicuous and, like the ship moving down the canal in Pears' *Suez Canal*, is an explicitly *British* presence.

38a is not the only film which depicts a British vehicle being transferred to the streets of South Africa. *Aweigh To The Sun* [Fig.173] shows a car being lifted by crane from ship to land upon the vessel's arrival at Cape Town. Although this movement possess stronger practical connotations than the bus' fantastical journey, the vehicle's emblematic, possessive properties are shared by the car by pure virtue of its status as British (the car is possibly a Rover) and its similar suggestion of a kind of freedom to roam which is associated with home.



Fig.173: *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)

Unlike Nochlin's readings of 18th century painting, 20th century tourist material, such as *38a to Cape Town*, places a physical emblem of the west at its heart. A dangerous, mysterious sense of otherness still lies atop the vast Table Mountain which looms above the city, yet it is pushed into the background by the incongruous but iconic sight of a red London bus which becomes our point of contact. Yet, as I have discussed, the bus's presence serves a number of functions, one of which is simply to appear so incongruous as to provoke notions of fantasy and the dream, tying into the fictionalisation of imperial representation, and accentuating Cape Town's sense of unfamiliarity and exoticism. Ultimately, the bus represents the central paradox of touristic postcolonial discourse: it both connotes familiarity and safety and the unfamiliar. It lies at the heart of this film's explicitly touristic depiction of postcolonial lands, its role navigating a difficult balance in its attempts to sell something new, novel and exotically alluring while relying on the familiarity inherent within its signified form.

5.8 *World At Three* (1966)

World At Three, in contrast, takes on a different approach to the colonial image. Made in the same year as *38a to Cape Town* as a promotional piece for P&O cruises, the film plots the journeys of a whole host of holidaymakers from across the world. The fragmented nature of the film's narrative means that footage of ex-colonies is interspersed with visits to western cities such as San Francisco. Tourists are shown riding the city's famous cable car service and the cameras with which they use to capture images of their surroundings are emphasised as their primary means of consuming and experiencing. The passengers are absorbed by San Francisco's bustling streets as they are thrust, via bus, into its centre. The familiar and rather tentative 'approach shot', which is used frequently elsewhere, is here jettisoned. San Francisco's western setting is accompanied by a more relaxed visual discourse that neglects the 'us and them' sequences used elsewhere.



Fig.174: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.175: *World At Three* (1966)

In contrast, the ship's visit to Lisbon is depicted in far more exotic terms and features an approach shot that visually separates the ship from its point of arrival. The

sequence begins with a shot [Fig.174] which portrays the sun-drenched *Canberra* to the left of the frame and a tip of land to the right. The landmass is distanced and unidentified, while the ship's presence in the frame plays a similar role to that of 38a's bus. Although it has not explicitly infiltrated the city streets like James' symbol of Britishness, the ship's positioning places it at odds with the land, and lends it a sense of ownership over the surrounding landscape. The second shot in the sequence [Fig.175] pans from right to left and is taken from aboard the ship itself. The *Canberra's* bow appears in the foreground, before disappearing from view, as Goode pans steadily to sweep the land which we approach. The treatment of foreign landscape is distanced and unidentifiable, in a near-identical replication of 38a's approaching shot of Cape Town. From afar, the natural, arid nature of the landscape is emphasised, while the signifiers of civilisation are visible only at closer proximity. The consistent reproduction of this physical approach to land is a direct emulation of the journey undertaken by the tourists aboard the cruise ship. Inherent within this emulation, however, are a set of elements which solidify a broad visual discourse of the colonial (although in possession of no colonial links with Britain, Portugal was effectively under a military dictatorship so was something of an other within Europe). The ship's prominent placement within this approach sequence infuses it with a sense of implied, confident and nationalistic ownership of these foreign landscapes.



Fig.176: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.177: *World At Three* (1966)

Yet, while *38a to Cape Town* sees the infiltration of South Africa's streets and guides the spectator's consumption of the foreign through a familiar image of home, *World At Three* is conspicuous in the gaze it employs as a means of treating the novel cultures it introduces. Figs.176 and 177 follow on directly from Goode's sweeping pan of the surrounding landscape and depict residents transporting fish from boats onto the harbour side. As with Nochlin's reading of the eighteenth-century paintings of Gérôme, these images possess distinct absences common to her model of exotic representation. There are no light-skinned Europeans featured and the sequence plays upon the otherness of tanned Southern Europeans in its absence of familiar passengers. The indigenous residents photographed are also equated with the manual labour which they undertake. In Fig.176 the large number of people packed together gives the impression of a chaotic rabble, while in Fig.177 the desolate, grey image of the port in the image's background contrasts markedly with the dark skin tones and coloured clothing of those who work in the foreground. While there is no western presence in these stills, the gaze we take on as spectators is, as Nochlin has pointed out in relation to 19th century painting, inherently western and implies a level of control and possession. Fig.176 is shot from above and, with the western presence

behind the camera, gives this gaze a level of hierarchical discrepancy. This altered perspective means that the gathered individuals are looked down upon from a position of dominance and appear detached, while the spectator hovers above proceedings, and is separated from the fetishised activity of those below. While in Fig.177 this heightened perspective is less distinct, a woman carrying fish in a basket upon her head is followed by the camera's gaze as she moves up a ramp. Her starting position is again lower, the camera cutting away as she reaches an equal physical height.



Fig.178: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.179: *World At Three* (1966)

As the film continues, the camera moves from the harbour and ventures deeper into the city. Like the ship's initial approach, the film's structure directly emulates the tourist's progressive engagement with a foreign environment. Fig.178 depicts a set of steps which are closely framed by a row of sand-coloured buildings. We briefly see a man dressed in white ascending some steps, while the walls and doorways that surround him emphasise the city's multiple gradients and distinctive local architecture. The time of day chosen to film results in distinctive colours and shadows, and again foregrounds the exotic. The man's white clothing is conspicuous

against the sandy, closely positioned walls which skirt the edges of the frame, while his swift ascent is left unexplained.

Fig.179 demonstrates a further development of this emulation of the tourist perspective. The camera ventures further from the security of the ship, delving into the hills which surround the city of Lisbon and finding what appears to be the Castle of São Jorge. The image itself is self-consciously exotic, playing on the spectator's conception of fairytales by framing the castle through a circular formation of trees. The deployment of these organic elements, and the interplay of light and shadow within the image, lends the castle an ethereal and abstract beauty. Aesthetic elements within the frame inform the signified meaning which this castle connotes. It is stripped of its historical, militaristic connotations and instead stands as a monument to a secret and abstract realm which exists outside the city and within a natural environment surrounded by organic growth. As these images are displayed, a song is delivered by jazz singer Cleo Laine:

High above the streets of Lisbon / There's a world for you to
share / This could be your World At Three / Your very special
castle in the air.

The language employed here complements the metaphorical nature of these images. The 'castle in the air' line lends the structure a mystical and exotic element which exists outside the realms of the physical and begins to connote a dream or fantastical vision. Again, this notion taps into the rendering of the foreign exotic as a product of collective fantasy and aspiration, especially within touristic, consumer discourses.

The castle takes on a position, through both its photographic rendering and words attributed to it, of a structure which transcends pure physicality and begins to promote a state of mind. It represents the heightened sense of experience which the tourist seeks when engaging in the consumption of such foreign environments. It is the fictionalised, alluring fairytale which is promised and heavily perpetuated by such promotional material, but is never truly achievable in real life.

Lisbon, like Cape Town, is painted as an exotic location which relies on a carefully controlled visual discourse to create an overarching sense of otherness. Interestingly, while South Africa possesses the far greater colonial connotations (especially from a British perspective), within these cruise films it is Cape Town that is presented as *whiter* than Lisbon, a European city. In *38a to Cape Town*, the presence of the bus, the emphasis on the city streets, and the film's open comparisons with London, displays an implicit desire to play down the tumultuous political events of the time. The otherness within South Africa was not one which fitted with the advertising remit of filmmakers. In contrast, the visual othering of Lisbon, its landscape and its people, helps to show how the discourse of the colonial exotic had filtered into broader travel and touristic discourse. The markedly abstract rendering of the city's castle, for example, is a testament to Goode's attempt to create a colonial-like realm of exotic fantasy. The spectator's journey to the castle is presented as a deepening of the experience, and brings to mind Marlow's voyage into the heart of the Congo (without the danger and fear). The darkness associated with the abstract and the other is inverted, instead making it appear part of an attractive, if mysterious fairytale.



Fig.180: *World At Three* (1966)

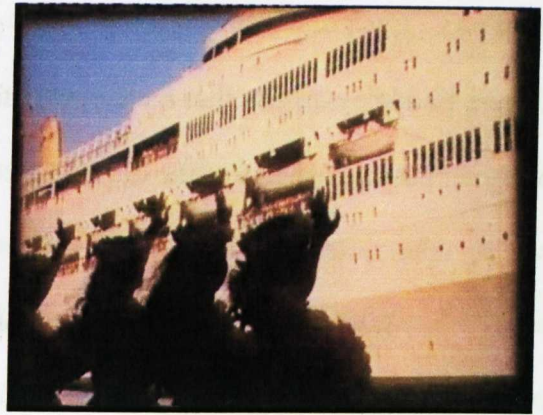


Fig.181: *World At Three* (1966)

Elsewhere in *World At Three*, we witness the ship travelling to Hawaii, a nation of frequent colonial activity which ultimately concluded with the island becoming part of the United States of America in 1959. Interestingly, the stock ‘approach shots’ we see evident elsewhere in the film and in other promotional cruise films, are here inverted. Rather than being presented with the foregrounded ship as it steams towards the shores of a foreign destination, in Fig.180 and 181 we see the ship approach the island in the distance and its arrival into port. This explicit inversion sees the spectator’s gaze uniquely subsumed by the colonial force within the visual narrative. Unlike other moments in the film, the source of this emulated gaze appears in the foreground. The women who wait for the approaching ship are dressed in flowers and colourful boas and gaze out to sea before waving as the cruise liner approaches. The removal of this touristic emulation is jarring (as is Goode’s rapid cutting during this sequence) yet it places the spectator in the position of the colonial female. The female is here equated with the western spectator in a unique way denied to the colonial male. While the male is frequently personified as the aggressive and dangerous aspect of the colonial unknown, the female is comparatively unthreatening (as seen here in our emulation of the female perspective).

Oriana Baddeley argues that the colonial female is somehow bound up with the more positive, passive aspects of the other:

While the harsher aspects of this “other” world could be defined by the perceived attributes of the Oriental male, the women, as both peasant and odalisque, become the passive embodiments of the allure of the exotic.²⁷⁰

With this in mind, I will now turn to a discussion of the gendered aspects of imperialism as related to touristic discourse and the promotion of colonial excursions. The cruise film (and associated ephemera) calls upon images of the female both as a western touristic force and, as in *World At Three*'s female greeting party, as a passive and unaggressive emblem of the exotic which retains the alluring aspects of otherness which appeal to western sensibilities.

5.9 Gendered Colonialism

In an attempt further to interrogate the female's importance and treatment, in relation to a representation of the colonial within these touristic depictions of foreign

²⁷⁰ Oriana Baddeley, 'The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse' in *The Oxford Art Journal*, (7:1, 1984), p.70.

landscapes and people, I will divide this discussion into two separate parts. The first, as I touched upon in my discussion of the Hawaiian greeting party from *World At Three*, will relate to the indigenous, colonial female. I will discuss her use as a point of engagement with the western tourist as an unthreatening personification of the exotic which remains free from the masculine aggression of the colonial male. This will call upon examples from the promotional travel film, the travel poster and from ephemera art. The second part of this discussion will focus on the western female as a unique and historical emblem of colonial engagement borne out of a shared sense of subordination and oppression. While the colonial individual is inevitably subjugated by the imbalance in the relationship between colonizer and colonized, I will argue that the western female shares this sense in her imbalanced position of power within the patriarchal society to which she belongs.

5.10 The Colonised Female

In terms of both gender and nationality, the colonial female is at the bottom of the power structure found within both gender and colonial power relations. Abena Busia (cited here in Alison Blunt's discussion of the relationship between travel, gender and imperialism) suggests that the colonial female is side-lined throughout novelistic representations of colonialism:

[...] scant notice is taken of the practical non-existence of African *females*, I here maintain that this analysis is strictly one of the 'othering' of the African *male* as the reverse of his

European counterpart. Thus, where it could be said that in the colonial novel the colonized male encounters not himself but his antithesis, the colonized woman encounters only erasure [and] sees herself only in silent spaces. The unvoicing of the black woman is literal, and her essence projected only as a void.²⁷¹

The colonial female's overlooked status does not extend to the promotional cruise film, as I have highlighted in reference to her relationship with the spectator in *World At Three*, yet this perceived 'unvoicing' is perceivable in a still from Laughton's *Ocean Liner Holiday* (Fig.182). The outline of a female island resident can be seen in the foreground against a backdrop of the Negombo shoreline. Square-sailed boats are visible on the horizon, while the blues of both the ocean and sky are particularly rich and exotic in their striking colouration. The woman appears fully silhouetted, a black outline against this colourful scene, and only her shape is visible. Amongst the shadowy, alluring and mysterious qualities of this silhouetted form, the 'black woman' Busia writes of is exactly that: a woman in shape only who appears as shadow. She is indeed 'projected only as void', as an empty, dream-like, outlined suggestion against a backdrop of sun-drenched, exaggerated reality. She possesses none of the traits we might equate with humanisation (facial features and expression, details of clothing) and instead occupies an empty, blackened feminine shape that is isolated upon a contrastingly colourful backdrop.

²⁷¹ Abena Busia in Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (London: Guilford Press, 1994), p.27.



Fig.182: *Ocean Liner Holiday* (1966)

Yet Blunt, after using Busia's words to suggest that colonized women were all but ignored, writes, 'colonized women were identified with the land itself.'²⁷² This is also supported by this image from *Ocean Liner Holiday*. The serene and exotic backdrop, and the lack of detail given to the feminine figure by the contrast of light and shadow, gives the woman a sense of affinity with her surroundings. Although her rendering as 'void' is explicit, she is confidently centred both in the middle of the frame and within her environment.

Ella Shohat suggests that the colonial female comes to 'allegorize the Western masculinist power of possession, [and] that she, as a metaphor for her land, becomes available for Western penetration and knowledge.'²⁷³ Within her affinity with the land is the suggestion that the woman is subsequently a figurative receiver of the aggressive, violating properties of the colonial process. If the female is the land, then the male is the dominating colonial force sent to take and control the land. Indeed, Roland Hyam in his book *Empire and Sexuality* makes strong links between sex and

²⁷² Blunt (1994), p. 29.

²⁷³ E. Shohat, 'Gender and Culture of Empire: Towards a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema,' *Review of Film and Video* 13 (1991): 45-84; p.57.

land in his discussions of the sexual motivations which historically sustained colonial endeavour:

[...] if sex cannot explain the fundamental motives behind expansion, it may nevertheless explain how such enterprises were sustained. It is relevant not so much to the question why empires were set up as to how they were run. Empire provided ample opportunity for sexual indulgence throughout the nineteenth century.²⁷⁴

With Hyam's ideas in mind, gender and race are tightly associated through the inherent similarities between colonial and sexual power relations. The woman, as victim of literal rape, dominance and penetration, is the source of the figurative terms by which the violation of the colonial land is described. The two therefore come to share and borrow the characteristics of one another in the way they are treated in the discourses of the colonial.

The colonial female's sexuality is inevitably used within the cruise film and the travel poster as a means of selling the colonial exotic to the inquisitive tourist. For James Ryan, sexualised imagery is 'symptomatic of a wider currency in sexualized imagery of the colonial exotic.'²⁷⁵ He suggests that:

²⁷⁴ Roland Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p.2.

²⁷⁵ Ryan (1997), p.53.

[...] such images found their greatest expression in the salacious and pornographic photographs of the colonial harem manufactured by European commercial photographers, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East.²⁷⁶

The writings of 19th century travellers such as Richard Burton did much to promote an alluring discourse of the colonial female as highly sexual and further Hyam's suggestions that sexual gratification was one of the perks of foreign exploration and expansion. Burton wrote frequently of the sexual lives of the inhabitants of the communities he visited, and his high profile meant that this filtered into wider social consciousness.²⁷⁷

In the work of 20th century travel poster designers and cruise filmmakers, the woman's foregrounded sexuality is appropriated as a part of her exotic allure. It is used as a simplistic yet basely effective method of generating interest in travel to foreign climes.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

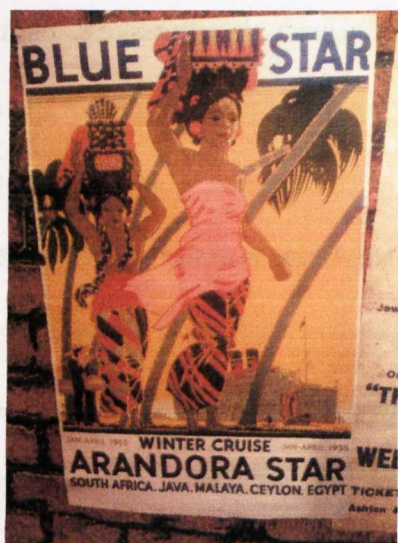


Fig.183: Blue Star Promotional Poster (1935)

Fig.183 depicts a Blue Star poster for a cruise which took in the ports of South Africa, Java, Malaya, Ceylon and Egypt. The piece depicts two women adorned in shawls and dresses walking into the foreground, palm trees skirting their path and the *Arandora Star* visible in the background. They carry some kind of covered merchandise on top of their heads which the woman in the foreground balances skilfully with only one hand. This image is exotic but safe, both the prominent female inclusion, and the presence of the ship in the background, dispelling any of the tense or dangerous elements associated with the exotic.

However, while danger might be missing, sex is undoubtedly present. The women in this image are slender and shapely, their clothes hugging their figures, their postures upright and confident. The pink shawl of the woman in the foreground wraps tightly around her figure and moves lightly in the breeze. The women found in this image are equated with the exoticism inherent within the idyllic palm trees and orange, dusk-light glow which surrounds them. Yet, their presence also sexualises this scene, rendering it alluring in a way which places the exotic in direct engagement with a

kind of mysterious, sexual appeal which feeds off both the women's racial and aesthetic novelty.

Blunt points towards a consistent sexualisation of the colonial female, and suggests that this possesses a side effect of exoticising definitions of sexuality in European culture. Exotic, foreign landscapes and people find a shared base with the unspoken allure of the sexual:

However, the sexual desire projected onto other people and places also influenced constructions of sexuality at 'home' in Europe. For example, the intermingling of constructions of racial and sexual difference meant that there could be a 'sexualization of western definitions of these non-western societies, and an exoticization of definitions of sexuality in European culture.'²⁷⁸

Blunt's argument centres on both the close relationship found between the exotic and the sexual, and the female's strong figurative links with the foreign landscape. Fig.183 supports her suggestion that in a time before the sexual liberation of women in the west, sexuality was sometimes projected upon and experienced through the colonial female.

In the post-war decades of the late 1950s and 1960s, this sexualisation would be continually apparent in the promotional cruise film. Important here, however, was

²⁷⁸ Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (London: The Guilford Press, 1994), p.29.

that the western female was also being objectified and aestheticised in direct response to the liberalisation of media and advertising. In both *Ocean Liner Holiday* and *World At Three*, the sun-browned woman is used as a promotional emblem of the allure of the cruise experience. The former possesses several photographs of females with a narration track which contains repeated odes to their beauty, while the latter, as I have alluded to previously, possesses a rather gratuitous slow-motion scene in which a woman runs around a swimming pool before leaping athletically into the water. The brown skin possessed by the women in these scenes is a direct result of the tropical weather and leaves behind a foreign mark upon their bodies. In a sense, these western females are absorbing the appearance of their surroundings, adapting so as to project not a white, western image, but one which reflects their othered surroundings. They exhibit a sexualising kinship with the colonial female in moments when they share location.

Along with these aspirational western females, colonial women are also sexualised in the post-war cruise film. Like the women in the poster shown in Fig.183, the indigenous female is used as a comforting sexualised signifier of a foreign other.



Fig.184: *The Friendly Ship* (1970)



Fig.185: *The Friendly Ship* (1970)

Fig.184 and 185 are stills from *The Friendly Ship* (1970) produced by Union Castle and Associated British Pathe as a promotional piece designed to advertise a cruise aboard the *Transvaal Castle* cruising towards South Africa. Fig.184 shows two 'flower girls' in Las Palmas, both of whom clutch flowers and smile broadly at the camera. The women wear white clothing which contrasts markedly with their tanned skin tone, and they are framed upon a backdrop of palm trees. Close-ups of flowers and caged birds are juxtaposed with images of the women as they approach, and the film's narrator announces their ethnic descent. Through these moments of conspicuous composition, these women are linked to the natural products of their surroundings. They are othered, but in a safe, wholesome and organic way.

In Fig.185 (which is taken from the film's following shot), one of the women pins a flower to a male passenger's jacket. As he stares at her, she glances cheekily at the camera. This moment possesses a comedic tone of titillation, emphasised by the presence of the male passenger's wife who stares at her husband's reaction. The composition of this shot is intentionally conspicuous, with the indigenous woman playing a part in a contrived moment of sexual tension which is nullified and rendered humorous by the western woman who oversees the exchange. While this sequence plays upon the colonial female's apparent sexual allure, any genuine threat to the domination of the western female is removed as a result of the shot's light-hearted sentiment and the presence of a stronger, dominant western female.

The Friendly Ship and *The Voyage Home*, which contain an almost identical sequence involving a flower girl and a western couple, exhibit a manipulation of the colonial

female's sexuality, here used in a playful manner which serves to foreground the strong links between the exotic and the sexual. Ultimately, however, what is emphasised is the power inherent within the western female as a force of casual and quiet dominance, especially when juxtaposed with the subjugated colonial female. The colonial woman's sexual power is trumped by the western woman's national status.

The colonized female is treated conflictingly within the cruise film. While Busia's suggestion that she is rendered as a 'void' is present within *Ocean Liner Holiday's* striking aesthetic emptiness, in other films this void is replaced by a strong, sexual presence which renders her synonymous with the exoticism of the land. Ultimately, however, this sexualisation is restricted and regulated by the films' nationalistic narrative which seeks to preserve the distinct power relations inherent within representations of the colonial subject. The colonised women in both touristic poster and film art are essentially vessels through which the allure of the exotic, foreign land is further articulated.

5.11 The Colonising Female

Historically, the European female has been associated with the colonial savage by virtue of a shared position of social inferiority. Tobin writes of her perceived positioning:

[...] European women and New World savages were less rational and self-disciplined than European men; in short, they were less civilised and occupied a lower rung on the ladder of cultural evolution.²⁷⁹

Additionally, in 18th century painting, so-called male ‘savages’ were feminized in their appearance, with emphasis placed on their body decoration.²⁸⁰ Examining more recent material, William M. O’Barr in his exploration of *Culture and the Ad*, describes the colonial other as both ‘feminine and submissive.’²⁸¹ The female sex was therefore consistently related to the otherness inherent within renderings of the colonial.

Yet, the European colonising white female also performed a similar function to the colonised female in her apparent ability to traverse the boundaries between civilised life aboard the cruise ship, and the lands to which the tourists journeyed by representing a point of engagement where the two binaries met. The ‘coin toss’ moment in *Liner Cruising South*, which I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, sees a western woman throwing a coin into the ocean near a group of islanders in boats. This loaded moment is one which helpfully encompasses the strong sense of colonial superiority assumed by the cruise passenger within promotional material. However, the fact that the individual engaging with these islanders is a woman, is

²⁷⁹ Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth Century British Painting* (USA: Duke University Press, 1999), p.60.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ William M. O’Barr, *Culture and the Ad: Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), p.8.

conspicuous and helps to define a natural link between the western female and the colonial exotic.

Throughout travel and novelistic writing of recent centuries, the western female is painted as devoid of an ability to decode the complex and unfamiliar nature of the colonial other. In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, for example, Marlow suggests that women frequently lapse into abstraction when engaging with the natural world, and lack the practical grounding found within a male conception of the environment:

It's queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there had never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset.²⁸²

Yet, contrastingly, eighteenth-century travel writer Mary Kingsley would suggest that it is only the practical and the 'concrete' that women can understand successfully; the other and the abstract too complex for the female mind to grapple with successfully:

I am only a woman and we ladies – though great on details and concrete conceptions – are never capable of feeling a

²⁸² Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1995), p.27

devotion to things I know well enough are greater[,] namely
abstract things.²⁸³

However, it is perhaps the artistic, romantic connotations of this established association which has rendered the western female particularly ripe for specific moments of illogical or unexplainable colonial engagement which cannot be justified or rationalised via a ‘masculine’, scientific attempt at explanation. E.M. Forster’s *A Passage To India* (1924), which takes place in India against the backdrop of the British Raj, possesses a sequence in which young, British school mistress Adela Quested is taken on a trip to the Marabar Caves with a number of other individuals. Within the caves themselves, Quested experiences a strange and unexplained episode which is never fully revealed within the novel’s narrative. Whatever the experience is, its profound potency causes her much distress, as she escapes from the caves, leaving her Indian guide and friend Dr. Aziz alone and confused. Quested later claims to have been sexually assaulted by Aziz, a suggestion that, due to the narrative’s closeness to the doctor, surprises and even outrages the reader. Quested’s experience within the Marabar cave therefore possesses a strong sexual connotation. There is a suggestion that she is raped by the natural landscape itself, violated by a force she cannot successfully define or articulate. Forster inverts the commonly used metaphor of the colonizer violating the colonial land, and instead sees the land exerting sexual power upon the colonising female. Importantly, it is the female, regardless of her contrasting national power relations, who – like the *colonised* female - is again the figurative emblem of physical subjugation. Unlike the male, the female

²⁸³ Mary Kingsley in Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*, (London: The Guilford Press, 1994), p.29.

comes so close to the colonial land as to be penetrated, infected and infused with its exotic and unknown presence. The parallels between national and gender power discrepancies are here once again explicitly highlighted.

Despite the perceived limitations of the female mindset and disposition as outlined by Kingsley's self-deprecating statements and Conrad's Marlow, the colonizing, western female is, in fiction and travel writing, frequently used as a point of engagement with the colonial other. While she apparently lacks the critical faculty with which to decode and understand the alienating strangeness of the colonial exotic, she – unlike the male's anthropologically separated, detached relationship with the other – possesses the ability to *experience* it.

This idea is interrogated by John Marx, who, in an article entitled 'Modernism and the female imperial gaze', draws a gendered distinction between the way colonial territories were represented by both men and women, particularly in populist writing of the 19th century.²⁸⁴ Using responses to India as his main example, he suggests that whilst men largely endeavoured to engage with such land using the principles of science and quantification, women approached similar stimuli from a so-called 'picturesque' perspective, which in Marx's words employed a discourse that 'appointed itself caretaker of the beautiful details science chose to reject as backwards and impractical.'²⁸⁵ Female writers therefore became known for projecting a colonial rhetoric which dwelt upon the aesthetic, surface elements of the other that, to some, appeared unimportant and superficial in establishing any kind of true and lasting

²⁸⁴ John Marx, 'Modernism and the Female Imperial Gaze', in *A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (Autumn, 1998), pp. 51-75.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.52.

understanding. Yet the perspective described by Marx is one which, particularly from a contemporary viewpoint, appears to meet and address the latent abstraction inherent within deciphering meaning from something which is entirely other. This so-called feminine perspective did not attempt to decode and understand other cultures via scientific methods, but instead accepted their differences and evidently attempted to appreciate them on an aesthetic level which was accepting of difference.

Marx's exploration of the female imperial gaze therefore perpetuates this notion of successful colonial engagement by western, colonising women. Like Wright's coin-throwing woman in *Liner Cruising South* or Adela Quested's violating cave experience in *A Passage to India*, Marx's citation of female writers engaging with colonial landscapes again shows that there was a belief in a distinctively feminine view of the other which encompassed an engagement distinct from a standard masculine perspective.

Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel go even further than this in their exploration of western women and imperialism. Whilst examples I have cited so far represent colonial engagement on either a distanced or figurative level, Chaudhuri and Strobel recount the story of Mary Hall, who would become the first woman to cross Africa from south to north in 1905. As part of her trek, she frequently coexisted with indigenous members of numerous tribal communities.²⁸⁶ Of particular interest is a story in which an altercation with a sultan is recounted. Displeased and suspicious of Hall's presence, the sultan became aggressive and increasingly hostile. Yet, in the face of such a display of heated masculinity, Hall was ultimately able to diffuse the

²⁸⁶ Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992), p.29.

situation through her powers of negotiation and reasoning. Where her male counterparts' interactions (whose stories are also partially recounted) had previously ended in violent or aggressive encounters with indigenous tribesmen, Hall was seemingly able to find a mutual affinity and understanding with her potential aggressor. For Strobel, the calm and reasonable conclusion Hall and the tribesman were able to reach was as a direct result of their shared position of subjugation and oppression. While the sultan's oppression was a result of the hierarchical politics attached to his religion and culture, Hall's was rooted in the social power (or lack of it) attached to her gender. The two share a common sense of inferiority which was explicated in their ability to interact without a dangerous manifestation of imbalanced power relations taking place.

This sense of cross-cultural interaction and engagement on the part of women, is one partially shared by the promotional cruise film. In the Union Castle Line produced *The World is your Oyster* (1965), director Richard Lester (responsible for Beatles films *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help*) foregrounds Vicky's tale as a narrative contrivance formulated to snare prospective cruise-goers with a character who inspires affinity and understanding. Women had become increasingly liberated as consumers in the post-war years and the cruise was a place to express their social and financial independence. However, Vicky's presence also promotes a further link between the western female and the colonial other.

At various points in the film Vicky is photographed interacting with local merchants and enjoying the urban and rural landscapes she visits. This touristic glimpse of such foreign shores shares the possessive, colonial gaze I have previously discussed, yet

here a holiday-maker is herself used as our point of entry to this foreign landscape. Vicky's gender affords her a sense of vulnerability which is implicitly present but never challenged by her surroundings. As a woman, she dispels the dangerous and fearful elements of the otherness around her by virtue of her apparent comfort and safety. Lester's foregrounding of Vicky's independence and self-confidence evokes Mary Louise Pratt's idea of the 'feminotopia.' In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, she describes the existence of feminotopias as 'episodes that present idealized worlds of female autonomy, empowerment and pleasure.'²⁸⁷ In *The World is Your Oyster*, our perception of the ship is through the eyes of a female and is thus projected as a place of female autonomy.



Fig.186: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

Within this feminotopia, Vicky takes on the mannerisms of the colonial other. In one particular sequence, our protagonist readies herself in front of a mirror for a party aboard the ship. As she gazes at her own image, she in one moment puts a necklace around her head and appears to emulate the head movements of some indigenous dancers she has witnessed performing some scenes previously [Fig.187]. While this

²⁸⁷ Pratt (2003), p.7.

moment only lasts a matter of seconds, Vicky's appropriation of these gestures positions her, on one hand, as engaged in a vaguely patronising display of playful lampooning and, on the other, as taking on and engaging with another culture. It is worth noting that this moment occurs when Vicky is alone and, notably, separated from male counterparts. This fits keenly with the notion that men are more often pictured as observers, passive and truly touristic in their distanced gaze. In *The World is Your Oyster*, it is a woman who is chosen as both the film's main 'character' and the spectator's figure of western engagement with the indigenous culture on screen.



Fig.187: *The World Is Your Oyster* (1965)

This moment can also be seen as an incident of what Beth Fowlks Tobin describes as 'cultural cross-dressing'. Tobin, who explores the images of colonial subjects in eighteenth-century British painting, draws attention to a phenomenon of British gentlemen pictured wearing items of traditional colonial dress. She writes:

Given the colonial context of the British officers' cultural cross-dressing, we must consider whether the Britons are engaged in a form of appropriation of native culture that

parallels other kinds of European appropriations of native resources – of land and labor, for instance.²⁸⁸

Tobins' suggestion, that the appropriation in evidence within these moments of cultural cross-dressing is symbolic of a larger concession to colonial impulse, is compelling. Vicky's necklace and her emulation of a dance move demonstrates, on one hand her use as a gendered point of engagement with the forces of colonial otherness. However, on the other hand, her cultural cross-dressing reinforces a deeply-rooted and historicised discourse of western consumption of the colonial.

Frederic Goode's *World At Three* is far less character-driven in its approach to the promotion of both the cruise ship and the experiences on offer in the lands which are encountered. However, the film explicitly highlights moments within which the ship arrives proudly in port. These moments are frequently positioned prior to explications of the land and its people. In Fig.188 we see a shot chosen by Goode from aboard the *Canberra*, the camera pointing downwards and gazing at the numerous small boats which fill Hong Kong harbour. This heightened perspective creates an inevitable imbalance of perspectives, while the woman's positioning to the right of the frame implies that we are meant to share her elevated, privileged gaze. The spectator's initial view of these colonial people is seen through the eyes of a woman. Although she is not shown in an act of direct engagement and instead holds a position of distance and passivity, her sex again implies the existence of these feminised moments of colonial engagement.

²⁸⁸ Tobin (1999), p.81.



Fig.188: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.189: *World At Three* (1966)



Fig.190: *World At Three* (1966)

Elsewhere in the film, this is supported by Fig.189, which occurs a few shots later when the camera and passengers have disembarked from the ship and taken to the busy city streets. Here, a western woman carefully cradles some kind of Chinese ornament which she seeks to purchase. The transferral of the item (and the hand which can be seen to the left of the frame) clearly denotes a moment of physical engagement. The previous shot [Fig.190] marks a contrast. Here, a male passenger gazes passively at a woman's arm as she tries on a bracelet. Her activity is contrasted markedly with his passivity. While this moment clearly has a playful undertone regarding a stereotyped female joy of material consumption, such an act of conspicuous consumerism is also an act of colonial engagement. Both the

passenger's initial interaction with the colonial land and this direct, physical experience, is lived and filmed through the eyes and actions of a woman. As in the other examples I have cited, the female is something of a disarming presence, yet her consistent use in such situations supports the notion that the western female has a perceived affinity with these lands of otherness and the people who reside there.

Other films which possess such moments include *A Friendly Ship* [Fig.191] which shows a western woman gazing down at some dancers who perform in front of her, and *Runaway To Sea* [Fig.192], which uses an establishing shot of a woman looking out to the ocean that cuts to a shot of a foreign shore. Both moments filter our gaze through that of a female perspective whose physical position is heightened and possessive.



Fig.191: *The Friendly Ship* (1970)



Fig.192: *Runaway To Sea* (1969)

Both colonial and colonising women therefore share a role as an engagement point for the consumer of exotic, foreign experience, be it within novelistic encounters or that found in promotional tourist material. The exotic is romanticised, mystified and sexualised by the use of the colonial female, yet it is also rendered approachable and safe. The colonial female perfectly encapsulates the difficult dichotomy at the heart

of such travel promotion. Whilst on one hand she is alluring and represents the unpredictable nature of the land upon which she resides (appealing to the touristic thirst for experience which challenges the mundane of the everyday and the expected), on the other she possesses none of the physical threat of her male counterpart (representing the safety ultimately required of the touristic experience).

The western female is used as a mediator between cultures, a disarming presence who seems to possess a natural affinity with the other due to a shared history of oppression and subjugation. While in literary examples she is sometimes a victim of this closeness, at others she is triumphant in her ability to communicate and diffuse moments of potential danger in scenarios where men have failed. In travel promotion, and within the cruise film in particular, the western female is a controlling force, frequently leading the spectator's line of sight and demonstrating the ease with which one can experience and interact with foreign cultures.

5.12 'Driving out into the vastness of this untamed space' *Aweigh To The Sun* (1960s)

The cruise's relationship with colonialism and the exotic is one which remains complex and sometimes contradictory. Harold Weaver's *The Voyage Home* contains the following lines spoken by the film's narrator:

The striking of the ship's bell seemed a friendly 'all's well,' a reassuring sound, very different from night sounds of the African Bush where most wild sounds mean danger or death.

Yet, alongside this demonization of the foreign landscape, the film also contains moments of smiling colonial interaction. As I have emphasised, the cruise film frequently projected a conflicted image of the colonial exotic as both dangerous and inhospitable, as well as safe and entertaining.

What I have tried to foreground in this chapter are promotional representations of the exotic and their relationship with historical examples from painting, literature, photography and memoir. All, whether intentionally or otherwise, exhibit a rejection of actuality when representing the colonial or post-colonial environment, and a deployment of the exotic: a part-fictionalised accentuation of the colourful and the different which appeals to our sense of mystery and the thrill experienced when presented with the unknown. This chapter is therefore purely about *representations*, perspectives which come tainted with a history of colonial rule and a rising sense of the manipulative power of aesthetic choice. Inherent within all visual projections of the touristic experience comes a latent awareness of colonialism and the power relations bound up in this process. Whether it is the colossal steamer that towers above a dwarfed set of indigenous scavengers, or the visual power garnered by the historically oppressed female as she thrives amongst those sharing a similar sense of subjugation, a colonial discourse can frequently be found within depictions of the cruise.

This discourse is one which runs through the visual narrative of film, poster and ephemera items. It is informed by established literary explorations of the colonial experience, and finds itself at a problematic and paradoxical point between exotic,

mysterious and sometimes dangerously alluring qualities associated with otherness, and the safety and comfort of the passenger which must also be offered and projected. The cruise is indeed about offering the opportunity to drive 'out into the vastness of this untamed space', but it is a space which cannot touch those doing the driving.

To return to the beginning image of this chapter, *Liner Cruising South's* coin throwing motif remains highly emblematic of the cruise's colonial representation. As spectators, we share the gaze of a female who, as part of her tourist experience, demonstrates her power over the indigenous residents who dive for the coins she throws to them. The cruise is itself reinforcing these power relations which underpin the relationship between the West and its distant neighbours. Yet, the power here is within Wright's manipulation of the visual: our shared affinity with the woman through close up, our heightened, distanced view of the diver and the juxtaposition of a triumphant bugle player as he announces the imminence of landfall. These each form part of a highly manipulative, touristic discourse which can be found to varying degrees in the output of shipping companies throughout the 20th century.

6.0 Conclusion

In my discussions of the development, history and cultural reflection of the post-war cruise film, I hope to have shed light on a neglected tradition of filmmaking that provides us with a useful and unique insight into the cultural turn of the 1960s. Beginning with the pre-war origins of the form, I have attempted to place the films I have found and viewed in a context of the history of shipping line publicity and British filmmaking. Throughout this thesis, I have placed emphasis on the importance of the British Documentary Movement, the art-deco travel poster and the success of early, prototypical examples of the cruise film, in forging the foundations of a filmmaking tradition that had its roots in the pre-war era but would come to prominence in the 1960s.

Although, as is important to emphasise, writing of the cruise film as a 'tradition' has its dangers, its disparateness can at important moments give way to aesthetic or thematic cohesion. Frederic Goode's *World At Three* (1966), for example, is a film of such creative impulse that at first glance it stands on its own as a rare example of individualistic, liberated filmmaking. Its rhythmic cuts, jazz score and subversive, self-reflexive dialogue seems a world away from, for example, Basil Wright's Empire Marketing Board film *Liner Cruising South* (1933). Yet, despite the earlier film's simplistic structure, monochrome visuals and intertitles, it created a set of structural and aesthetic principles that are clearly perceivable in the later film. In both works, shots of hazy, othered landscapes taken from the ship emulate the passenger's approach to unknown ports. The foreign is intentionally mystified from the comfort of the floating home-from-home. Similarly, fetishising close-ups of maritime

instruments are featured in both films. Engine telegraphs, clocks and dials are each recorded in gleaming close-up, while sailors are pictured alongside them, manipulating these mechanical devices as if they themselves are cogs in a machine.

At its heart, and consistent throughout the examples I have highlighted, the cruise film sought to glamorise the experience of sea travel. The emphasis and direction of this glamour was crucial in the face of fierce and destructive competition from airlines. To consolidate and foreground all that was alluring about cruising, filmmakers called upon both tradition and contemporary zeitgeist to render powerful and persuasive associations. The British Documentary Movement, for example, and the government-sanctioned organisations associated with it, promoted values of nationalism and respect for the workforce. The Empire Marketing Board and General Post Office foregrounded the importance of British industry and introduced the public at large to the work of those in British colonies. All creative content was produced with a positive, nationalistic visual element akin to propaganda. The cruise film, in its aping of documentary and, in particular, the British Transport Film, took on these patriotic visual tendencies in its rendering of Britain's maritime endeavours. Cruise ships were photographed at low angles which emphasised scale and spectacle, while former colonial ports and the iconic Suez Canal took on exotic visual elements similar to, for example, Charles Pears' Empire Marketing Board posters.

Alongside this, the affectionate traditions and values associated with the ship itself had a profound impact on the way it was represented in the cruise film. As I have noted, the angles and composition used to shoot the vessel came from an historically loaded set of visual signifiers. A low-angle perspective of the bow or stern connoted

and evoked the awe and respect with which such symbols of national achievement were treated, while a sun-drenched backdrop tapped into romantic associations the ship has held historically within literature and popular narrative. The ship's perceived, privileged place within our collective hearts and minds was therefore consistently articulated using an affected visual discourse. Again, the cruise film pulled in these historically loaded, manipulative associations to create a representation of the travel experience which was aspirational in what it connoted. To be associated with the ship was to be associated with important moments of history, empire and modernity.

In its focus on social, aesthetic and cultural aspiration, the cruise film, paradoxically, also sought to covet the immediately contemporary. The 1960s was a time of great social, cultural and aesthetic change. The cruise filmmaker was, at least at first glance, seemingly forced to decide between the representation of staunch, conservative tradition and liberal-minded, exciting, 'cool', contemporary culture. However, in many of the examples I have covered, the expression of the zeitgeist sits alongside the traditional elements of shipping and seafaring. In Cunard's *Magic Ride* (1969), the maiden voyage of the *Queen Elizabeth 2* is documented in true swinging-60s style. Don Higgins' psychedelic visual techniques are complemented by Graham Collier's jazz score and a performance by a popular band of the time, The Applejacks. The film's gonzo-like document of the experience of a young woman aboard ship is conspicuous in its liberal, freeform structure and reflection of the contemporary era. Yet, alongside the 1960s hedonism the film projects, it also preserves a definite respect for the assumed national importance of the ocean liner. Present are low-angle, awe-struck shots of the *QE2*, while footage of the ship's triumphant launch forms a

sequence near the end of the film. This traditional-contemporary dichotomy informed many of the cruise films of the post-war period, as shipping lines attempted to consolidate their uniquely celebrated, patriotic position in the face of pressures to conform to an image-centric modern era.

One of the most challenging traditional associations with the cruise was that of colonialism. The ship was an icon of national prowess and connoted what was once considered the spread of civilising modernity to primitive cultures. Yet, the liberal stance of the 1960s was beginning to unsettle dominant popular thought. As the British Empire began to disintegrate, so did the status and pride that was invested in it. In the 1960s cruise film, we see the lingering remnants of the sea voyage's colonial connotation alongside a projection of liberalism and modern semblance. The ship's very trajectory from Britain to the Caribbean or to Africa emulates directly the passage of explorers and the harbingers of colonialism itself. In *38a to Cape Town*, Sid James narrates wittily over images of a Union Castle Liner's approach beneath Table Mountain's ominous gaze. The idyllic, empty landscape sits at odds with the bloodshed and turmoil taking place off-screen, as a nation violently sought its own independence. Yet, the cruise film tends to actively perpetuate its imperial associations. At its core the act of tourism covets the sights, sounds and products of a foreign land just as colonialism does. To look down from a great white ocean liner towards the indigenous residents of an island below is inherently subjugating. Cruise filmmakers understood – while they would probably refuse to admit to it – that 1960s holidaymakers continued to seek implicitly the thrill and power of colonial emulation. The cruise, with its physical reproduction of the motions and habits of the privileged

Briton, was positioned perfectly to straddle a paradoxical line between the liberalities of the modern era and the unspoken traditions of a time gone by.

While drawing conclusions about the actions and motivations behind creative decisions visible in promotional material, it is important to retain an understanding of just how uncertain the future was for the shipping lines in the 1960s. As I have repeated, the threat that jet travel presented was a very real one. Philip Dawson states:

The great problem was to find alternative ways of making passenger shipping attractive and commercially viable against the new competition at a time when there was no viable business modes, service precedents or reference ships for developing alternative or new types of service. Nobody then knew what the full impact of commercial aviation might be, nor whether there were enough people still preferring to sail rather than fly to make the continuation of service worthwhile, even with reduced schedules, smaller ships and less frequent sailing.²⁸⁹

What we see in the 1960s was, partially, shipping lines tracing an uncertain path with limited confidence, and attempting to hedge their bets with a new generation of tourists alongside the loyal, regular sea travellers of old. The traditional-contemporary dichotomy which informed so much post-war promotional work

²⁸⁹ Philip Dawson, *The Liner: Retrospective and Renaissance* (London: Conway, 2007), p.193.

ultimately stemmed from a crippling sense of uncertainty concerning the best direction to take. The consolidation of swinging '60s consumerism and modern technology is juxtaposed with a colonial undertone, maritime tradition and the aesthetic legacy of the pre-war British documentary.

In the face of such troubled times, Cunard's *QE2* was launched in 1969. It was hoped that the ship would be a testament to the continued potency of the ocean liner as a cherished symbol of national importance. During the planning stages of the ship, debate raged concerning which designers, architects and artists would be let loose to create its inward and outward styling. There was a concern that Cunard's latent traditionalism would stifle contemporary, cutting edge design. The perceived importance of this decision was a direct result of the ship's symbolic power and its potency as image. There was a sense that, in these uncertain times, this ship had to once again prove the viability and legitimacy of the ocean liner as a national export.

Dawson writes:

Architects, designers and others in related fields were questioning the likelihood of the new ship demonstrating to the world at large the true and just impression of the very best that modern British design could offer.²⁹⁰

Yet, the *QE2* proved its critics wrong. It was launched to great public reception and remained in service until 11th November 2008, when it left Southampton for the final time. Despite the increasing prevalence of enormous aircraft and ubiquitous

²⁹⁰ Dawson (2007), p.207.

skyscrapers, it seemed that the ocean liner continued to be the object with which a lasting sense of national pride was associated.

Despite the QE2's positive reception, the popularity of British cruising dwindled in the 1970s. Meanwhile, 'the USA led growth in the cruise industry in the 1970s and 1980s, with new companies being formed each year.'²⁹¹ For Roger Cartwright and Carolyn Baird, one of the main influences in the unexpected upsurge in American cruise popularity was the runaway success of *The Love Boat*, which aired on ABC between 1977 and 1986. The TV show, which took place aboard the P&O-owned Princess Cruises' *Pacific Princess* and *Island Princess*, caught the imagination of the American viewing public with its mix of comedy and romance. In an early 1990s financial press release, P&O Lines emphasized that *The Love Boat* had probably generated over a billion dollars in revenue for cruise lines.²⁹² In a sense, it was *The Love Boat* that proved the true, promotional effectiveness of the ship on film. Essentially the show performed the same function as the cruise film in its provision of a narrative upon the backdrop of a sea-bound holiday experience. Its emulation of the cruise lifestyle and its foregrounding of the ship microcosm as a narrativised stage for romance and drama, was exactly what many of the cruise films from the 1960s had attempted to do.

Thanks to the huge boom in the American cruise industry, UK cruise lines have enjoyed a similar resurgence in popularity in the last two decades. In 2008, an estimated 1.5 million UK residents embarked on a cruise and it is thought that, despite

²⁹¹ Roger Cartwright and Carolyn Baird, *The Development and Growth of the Cruise Industry* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999), p.38.

²⁹² Ibid.

the economic downturn, this number will continue to increase.²⁹³ Alongside the continued popularity of the cruise, the ship itself has remained a unique point of affection for many. The *QE2* had its final voyage during my work on this project and I was lucky enough to see it as it visited Liverpool for a final time on 3rd October 2008. The public were actively encouraged to say their goodbyes to the *QE2*, while its final tour garnered national press coverage along with a BBC Timewatch documentary entitled *QE2: The Final Voyage*, which aired on BBC 2 at 8:00PM on a Saturday. Language used when referring to the ship is of particular note. In an article from the *Daily Mirror*, journalist John Honeywell mentions the ship's appearances in *Coronation Street* and *Keeping Up Appearances*, two shows that are held firmly and affectionately within a shared public consciousness. The text begins with the paragraph: 'Festooned with flags, and feted by thousands of fans, a special lady will leave Britain tomorrow for the very last time.'²⁹⁴ The alliteration in this opening sentence foregrounds a conspicuous poetic discourse. Its lofty, literary associations are sanctioned and legitimised by their appearance in a national newspaper. The phrase 'special lady' employs the oft-used feminine pronoun, while the use of the word 'Britain' imbues the story with a specifically national focus. The affectionate, patriotic discourse used to describe and visualise the ship lives on in the twenty first century. I have hoped to show that this discourse underpins a large number of the aesthetic and thematic decisions of the cruise films I have covered.

In current cruise line advertising, the legacy of this discourse, and of the cruise film as

²⁹³ Michelle Perrett, *UK Cruise Industry Has Record 2008*, <http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/Articles/2009/03/16/30496/uk-cruise-industry-has-record-2008.html> [Accessed 23/07/09]

²⁹⁴ John Honeywell, *The QE2's Last Voyage*, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2008/11/10/the-qe2-s-last-voyage-115875-20884639/> [Accessed 23/07/09]

I have defined it, continues to be visible. P&O's *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005) is an eight-minute film designed for use by travel agents and within the company's recent online advertising initiatives. The promotional piece opens with a series of artistically framed vistas, all from exotic locations around the world. Each shot is accompanied by a contemplative, whimsical question ('How high?', 'what does it mean?', 'what does that feel like?') and is backed by Handel's 'Zadock the Priest'. The orchestral dynamics of the music gives the images an aesthetic and philosophical weight fitting of the dialogue's near-existential premise. These images are 1960s tourist discourse taken to its logical conclusion. They are so manipulated and colour saturated that they appear almost false or staged, and take on the aesthetic of a particularly contrived holiday photograph or brochure spread. Additionally, the shots of indigenous residents which are included depict them catching sea creatures or engaged in tribal dancing. Their existence as *consumable* parts of the tourist experience is rendered even more explicit by the brochure-like aesthetic of the sequence.



Fig.193: *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005) Fig.194: *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005)

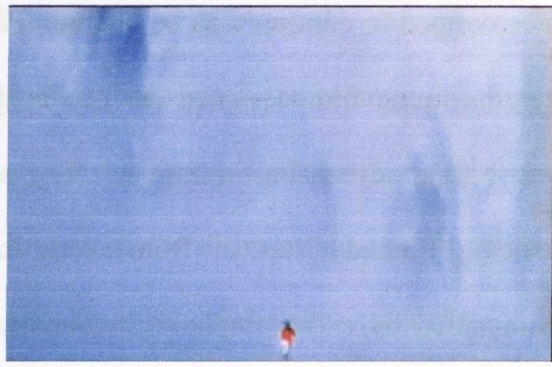


Fig.195: *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005)

Fig.196: *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005)

As shots of the ship are introduced, the film's soundtrack bursts into dramatic life. The vessel is presented as the answer to the questions posed moments before, as helicopter shots show it barreling through the ocean waves. One shot appears to be from the ocean surface and, like the visual work of Cassandre, distorts the ship's bow from a particularly low angle. The *Oriana*, *Aurora*, *Oceana*, *Artemis*, and *Arcadia*, which are all featured in the film, are photographed with a sense of pure celebration. The awe-struck, national pride attached to the ocean liner continues, unironically, in the postmodern age.



Fig.197: *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005)

Fig.198: *Experience P&O Cruises* (2005)

Experience P&O Cruises is a testament to the lasting legacy of the post-war cruise film. Now to be found on shipping line websites and YouTube channels as opposed

to newsreels and cinema screens, the cruise film continues to exist and to reflect the inherent historical, socio-political, cultural and aesthetic discourses of our age.

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Own Material

Email interview with Anna Bentinck, 8th September 2008

Interview with Graham Collier, 11th February 2009

Primary Material

National Maritime Museum Caird Library

P&O/96/2 Promotion material – Advertising and publicity

P&O/96/11 Brochures (bound in hard backs)

- *3 P&O ways to save on that trip to Australia*
- *P&O Sunshine cruises 1959*
- *All about Cruising* by Sir Alan (AP) Herbert
- *Century of Service* booklet
- Booklet which commemorates the collaboration between P&O and Japan.
- Crossing of the line commemorative booklet

P&O/96/12

- Canberra press release – glossy promotional brochures for ship and detailed lists of companies called upon in the ship's construction and design.
- *Nickel in S.S. Canberra*: A brochure that documents the various items made of nickel across the ship.
- Still photographs of various items

P&O/96/10

- Brochure collection from 1958, similar to that of 1959
- P&O 'round voyages' 1958-59 'escape from winter'
- Various brochure's showing ships: Himalaya, Chusan etc.
- *Discover Cruising* brochure.

P&O/96/27

- Cruise Brochures 1964-1966
- Crossing the line ceremony notes
- *Blowing our own trumpet* letter
- 1965 Brochure *Be sure of the sun in 1965 on a cruise with P&O Orient Lines*
- 1966 Brochure
- 1964 Brochure: *P&O Sunshine Cruising* – the one holiday that has everything
- 1963 Brochure
- Loose memorandum utilitarian - A memo enquiring about the profitability of cruises

BOX 8 E/P+O/Entertainment Passenger Info

- Embarkation Notice for *SS Himalaya* 1952 and 1948 featuring very similar picture and logo.
- *Today's events* – Good Morning. Daily publication which gives a rundown of the day's activities.
- *Posh* magazine Winter 1963/64
- *The Food Is Hot* by William John H Princer
- P&O film brochure
- *An essay on smoother sailing; on shipboard life, both high and low; creature comforts and the elegance of voyaging on P&O Orient Lines Vessels*
Written for P&O-Orient Lines
By Stan Delaplane

BOX 1 Ephemera/P+O/Menus

- *Fruits* menus June 62
- Map menu containing all P&O routes across a world map 18.1.62
Produced by Newman Neame Maps Limited

BOX 14 Ephemera/P+O/Fares and timetables

- Promotional leaflets for specific cruises to certain locations, from either 1950s or 1960s.

BOX 4 Ephemera P&O/ labels etc

- Labels, tickets, postcards, invitations.

BOX 11 Ephemera P&O/Programmes for events etc

- Programmes for events

BOX 3 Ephemera P&O – plans

- Deck plans for various ships

BOX 9 Ephemera P&O – Passenger Lists

- 70 separate lists of passengers from various vessels

BOX 14 Ephemera P&O/scheduled fares and sailings

- Many documents related to scheduling and the price of fares etc

BOX 12 Ephemera P&O/Shore excursions/miscellaneous

- Box mainly appears to be information on excursions etc. Includes 1950s material.
- P&O Ports and Excursions book from 1959
- Hong Kong booklet with photo on the front
- *Dear Old London* booklet.

BOX 2 Ephemera P&O/Brochures – specific vessels

- Oriana brochure

BOX 1 Ephemera/P+O Orient – general brochures 2 of 2

- Large box of brochures which span a lengthy period
- *Come cruising with P&O* programme 1956
- *Cruise in 1954 with P&O*
- P&O cruises 1950 brochure
- *P&O Orient Lines Vacation Voyages 1963* – Europe and Around The World
- *Magic Nights...Merry Days* - P&O Cruises
- *Runaway to Sea* brochures in a series

BOX 1 Ephemera/Orient/Brochures

- Orient line brochure ships and services

Large number of promotional art cards

National Maritime Museum: P&O Committee Meeting Minutes**P&O/93/15**

Framed certificate of 'A Great Ship' – Edinburgh Film Festival (1962)

P&O/4/75

Annual report from Sydney branch

Advertising Department Report

For year ending 30th September 1961 – total expenditure was £785,708

P&O 4/74

Advertising Department

1st March 1961

P&O/4/80

Agency and Departmental Annual Reports For the Year ending 30 September 1966

P+O/4/73

Advertising Annual Report – 1959

P&O/4/76

Annual Reports 1963 – Advertising

P&O/4/77

Annual Reports 1964 – Advertising

P&O/4/81

Annual Reports 1967 – Advertising

P&O/4/82

Annual Reports 1968 – Advertising

P&O/4/83

Annual Reports 1969 – Advertising

National Maritime Museum: Orient Line Collection

BIS/36/12

MS77/081

319. Film – East Africa

From minutes of the 26th Meeting held on the 22nd November 1950,

(g) Durban Publicity – Films

(h) Cinema Slides – Durban

Minutes of the 23rd Meeting held on the 25th May, 1950

(f) Film Advertising

OSN/28/12

Brochure Material

OSN/28/5

Newspaper advertising 1931-1954

OSN/28/11

Sundry Advertising 1934-1939

OSN/4/31

Accounts Ledger – mostly 1950s (contains information on the financing of several Orient Line films.

OSN/30/2

O&P Press Clippings August – October 1958

OSN/31/9

Orient Financial History

P&O/97/21

Vinyl disc entitled 'Duplicate Travel Film'. Suspected music and commentary track played alongside silent travel film.

P&O/96/2

Financial records (including explanation that material will be given a different code from this point onwards)

National Maritime Museum: Union Castle Collection

Union-Castle Mail Steamship Co. Ltd Managing Directors Meetings Minute Book No.4, October 1946 – March 1950, UCM/3/4

Union Castle Mail Steamship co. ltd Minute Book No.5 Managing Directors, March 1950 to Jan 1953, UCM/3/5

Liverpool Maritime Museum: Cunard

B/CUN/7/1-6/3 *Cunard Line – Eight Decades of Progress*, British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, colour illustrations and text.

/5 – Launch brochure of the *Queen Mary* 1934

/10a Advertising brochure commemorating the *Queen Elizabeth's* first peace time voyage. (1946)

/10b Advertising brochure of the *Mauretania II*, revised from the 1938 edition.

B/Cun/7/1-6

/19 Menus from an unknown passage onboard the *Carinthia II* (eight blank).

SAS/29/5/4

1951 – Leaflets: Cunard Line Atlantic sailings and fares, Dec 1951; Cunard Line Tourist Class to Canada

SAS/29/6/10

1951 – Publicity pamphlet *Britannic*, Cunard Line, c1951
Three brochures

SAS/29/8/1

1950 – Publicity pamphlet for *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Mary*, Cunard White Star Line, 1950

'Graced by Sir Oswald Birley's lovely portrait of Her Majesty the Queen, a colour scheme of autumn tints adding beauty to the grandeur of height, the lounge is a room

that remains in the memory as th gracious social centre of a ship whose every attraction is a setting for good living.'

SAS/29/8/3

1959 – Pamphlet: Kodak view containing an article on how photography has aided Cunard Line in design, construction and publicity. Interior photographs of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary

SAS/33D/2/8

1957 – Menus of Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Mary, Cunard Line 1957

SAS/33D/2/9

1965 – Menus of Carinthia, Queen Mary and Sylvania, Cunard Line 1965
Food in 65 is surprisingly British and standard. English sausages, corn beef hash cakes. Little of the faux-exoticism of P&O's menus.

DX/341

1930c – Two jigsaws of Cunard vessels, FRANCONIA, ANDANIA – both with box

The National Archive

CO 758/98/3

Orient Line West Indies cruise: visit by Unit official to secure material for Board and to make a film for Orient Line.

Contains correspondence between John Grierson, Basil Wright and the EMB concerning the production of *Liner Cruising South*.

Liverpool University

PR3/22/1-6

Cunard Safety Leaflets

D42/PR3/20/21/1-46

11-20

Various Cunard 'programme for today' cards which show the activities aboard ship in January 1955. Two movies were generally screened a day, including 'Dial M For Murder'

32-40

Monday January 17th menu 1955 (on with the child figurehead)

D42/PR3/20/21/41-46

Another menu

D42/PR3/21/14

11-16

Menus again – slightly smaller.

D42/PR3/22/28

1965 – *The Rising Tide* (Liverpool: Cunard 1965)

D42/PR3/19/24/1-8

Menus – 1947

D42/PR3/22/11

Spring Mediterranean Cruise

Sailing from New York May 7th 1966

Cunard's Famous World Cruise Liner CARONIA

D42/PR12/5/1-6

Various Cunard Reports and Accounts.

D42/PR12/5/6

Cunard Reports and Accounts 1959

D42/PR12/5/9

Cunard Annual Reports and Accounts 1963

D42/PR12/5/11 – 1965 Report

The Future

D42/PR12/24/1

Press releases

News from Cunard – October 13, 1955

D42/PR12/24/3 – 1957

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 4, 1957

D42/PR12/24/5 – 1959

September 4th 1959

CUNARD CARONIA SAILS ON 35-DAY SPRING MEDITERRANEAN
CRUISE MAY 14TH

D42/PR12/24/6

March 21, 1960

CUNARD ACQUIRES CONTROLLING INTEREST IN EAGLE AIRWAYS

D42/PR12/24/6 - 1960

June 2, 1960

CUNARD LINER QUEEN ELIZABETH BECOMES MOVIE STAR IN "NEXT TO
NO TIME"

D42/PR12/24/7 – 1961

POSTMARKS BY MR. BEN H. RUSSELL

10TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING, EUROPEAN TRAVEL CONFERENCE

SPONSORED BY THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION, NEW YORK
CITY, APRIL 14 1961

D42/PR12/24/7

August 1, 1961
CUNARD LINER CARONIA IS SETTING FOR NEW NOEL COWARD
MUSICAL "SAIL AWAY"

D42/PR12/24/8

1962

January 29, 1962

NEW CUNARD LINE CRUISE FILM WILL BE AVAILABLE IN PUBLIC
EARLY FEBRUARY

D42/PR12/24/8

1962

CUNARD ISSUES NEW DRAMATIC POSTER

D42/PR12/24/9

1963

CUNARD LAUNCHES MAJOR ADVERTISING-PROMOTION PROGRAM TO
SPUR OCEAN TRAVEL TO EUROPE VIA QUEEN SUPERLINERS

D42/PR12/24/10

1964

September 29, 1964

NEW CUNARD WEST INDIES CRUISE FILM WILL BE AVAILABLE TO
PUBLIC IN OCTOBER

D42/PR12/24/11

1965

May 13 1965

CUNARD FILM "CALL OF THE WEST INDIES" WINS CINE GOLDEN EAGLE
AWARD

D42/PR12/24/12

August 1, 1966

CUNARD LINE APPOINTS NEW ADVERTISING AGENCY IN THE UNITED
STATES

D42/PR12/24/13

1967

January 20 1967

CUNARD LINE LED TRANSATLANTIC PASSENGER STEAMSHIP CARRIERS
IN 1966

D42/PR12/24/14

1968

July 1 1968

SPECIAL TO TRAVEL WEEKLY

D42/PR12/27/1

SPECIAL TO WOMEN'S PAGES

LOOK FOR ROMANCE AT SEA...ESPECIALLY IN THE LARGEST LINERS

Miscellaneous

Edinburgh Film Festival Brochure, (1962)

8.0 Filmography

38a Bus to Capetown, Dir. John Karie, (Benn Productions, 1966)

À bout de soufflé, Dir. Jean Luc Godard (Les Productions Georges de Beauregard, 1960)

Across the Pacific (British Pathe, 1956)

A Career at Sea (P&O, 1956)

Accident, Dir. Joseph Losey (Royal Avenue Chelsea, 1967)

A Defeated People, Dir. Humphrey Jennings, (Crown Film Unit, 1946)

A Great Ship, Dir. John Reeve, (Rayant Pictures, 1962)

Alaska Ahoy (P&O), year unknown

A Letter From Wales, Dir. George Lloyd, (British Transport Films, 1960)

A P&O Cruise to the Mediterranean (P&O), year unknown

Aweigh to the Sun, Dir. Hal and Helena Weaver (Union Castle/South African Airways), year unknown

Billy Liar, Dir. John Schlesinger (Vic Films Productions, 1963)

BL to East Africa (P&O, 1935)

Bonnie and Clyde, Dir. Arthur Penn (Warner Brothers, 1967)

Call of the West Indies (John Bransby, 1964)

Caribbean Sunshine Cruise, (John Bransby Productions Ltd., 1955)

Caronia Mediterranean Cruise (Cunard, 1962)

Castles of the Sea (British Pathe, 1964)

Coalface, Dir. Alberto Cavalcanti (GPO Film Unit, 1935)

The Committee, Dir. Peter Sykes (Planet Film Productions, 1968)

Conquest, Dir. Basil Wright, (Empire Marketing Board, 1930)

Country Comes to Town, The, Dir. Basil Wright, (Empire Marketing Board, 1931)

Cruises With A Difference (P&O), year unknown

Crying Game, The, Dir. Neil Jordan (Miramax, 1992)

Cunarders At Southampton (Cunard, 1951)

Darling, Dir. John Schlesinger (Joseph Janni Productions, 1965)

Diary for Timothy, Dir. Humphrey Jennings (Crown Film Unit, 1945)

Drifters, Dir. John Grierson, (Empire Marketing Board, 1929)

East Africa, Dir. Digby-Smith, (Unreleased, 1951)

Elephant Will Never Forget, The, Dir. John Krish, (British Transport Films, 1953)

Elizabethan Express, Dir. Tony Thompson, (British Transport Films, 1954)

Escape To Sunshine (Union Castle, 1955)

First Left Past Aden, Dir. Compton Bennett (Villiers, 1961)

First Time Round (P&O, 1970)

For the Community (James Archibald and Associates, 1969)

Fourteen Hundred Zulu, Dir. Ian K. Bannes, (Drummer Films, 1960)

Friendly Ship, The (British Pathe, 1970)

Gangway To Paradise (P&O), year unknown

Glengarry Topical News, Dir. Sydney and Howard Preston, (Preson Brothers, 1933)

Great Company, (Orient Line), year unknown

Hands to Flying Stations, Dir. John Stewart (1976)

Heart of England, The, Dir. Michael Clark, (British Transport Films, 1954)

Henry The Navigator, (P&O, 1977)

Holiday Afloat (Movietone News, 1951)

Holiday to the West Indies (P&O, 1968)

Holiday with Everything, Dir. Bernard Till, (British Pathe, 1958)

Horizons Unbound, Dir. George Sewell, (Film Producers Guild, 1958)

I Am a Passenger, (Orient Line, 1960)

In Which We Serve, Dir David Lean/Noël Coward (Two Cities Films, 1942)

India and the East (P&O)

Industrial Britain, Dir. Robert Flaherty (Empire Marketing Board, 1931)

Instruments of the Orchestra, Dir. Humphrey Jennings, (Crown Film Unit, 1946)

Into the Sun (Union Castle, 1947)

In Which We Serve, Dir. Noel Coward (Two Cities Films, 1942)

Islands in the Sun (Union Castle, 1957)

Island of Rainbows (James Archibald and Associates, 1969)

Know Your Navy (COI/Admiralty, 1969)

Lake District, The, Dir. Alex Strasser, (British Transport Films, 1954)

La Dolce Vita, Dir. Federico Fellini, (Riama Film, 1960)

Last Voyage, Dir. Adrian Kent (TWW Production, 1962)

Latitudes of Leisure (P&O, 1971)

Launch of the Bloemfontein Castle (Movietone News, 1949)

Launch of the Braemar Castle, (Movietone News, 1952)

Launch of the Kenya Castle (Movietone News)

Launch of the Pretoria Castle and Holiday Afloat, (Union Castle)

Liner Cruising South, Dir. Basil Wright (Empire Marketing Board/Orient Line, 1933)

Look Back In Anger, Dir. Tony Richardson, (Woodfall Film Productions, 1958)

Magic Ride, Dir. Don Higgins, (James Archibald and Associates, 1969)

Magnificent Adventure, The (P&O)

Make Sure of the Sun (Macqueen Film Organisation, 1955)

Men of the Ships, Dir. George Sewell, (Film Producers Guild, 1958)

Nation on Film: The British Transport Films (BBC)

Next To No Time, Dir. Henry Cornelius, (Cunard, 1958)

Night Mail, Dir. Basil Wright/Harry Watt (GPO Film Unit, 1936)

No Siesta for the Sun, Dir. Harold Weaver, (British United Airways, 1968)

Ocean Liner Holiday (P&O, 1966)

Ocean Terminal, Dir. J.B. Holmes, (British Transport Films, 1952)

O'er Hill and Dale, Dir. Basil Wright, (Empire Marketing Board, 1931)

Oriana (P&O, 1963)

QE2: The Final Voyage, Dir. Michael Wadding, (BBC)

RMS Windsor Castle: The Story of a Ship (Union Castle, 1960)

Runaway to Sea, Dir. Ken Fairbairn (Athos Film Productions, 1965)

San Demetrio London, Dir. Charles Frend (Ealing Studios, 1943)

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Dir. Karel Reisz, (Woodfall Film Productions, 1960)

Science of Farming, The (James Archibald and Associates, 1970)

Sea Is For Cruising (P&O, 1960s)

Sea Is Our Business, The (P&O, 1977)

Servant, The, Dir. Joseph Losey (Springbok Productions, 1963)

The Ship That Died Of Shame, The, Dir. Basil Dearden (Ealing Studios, 1955)

Shipyard, Dir. Paul Rotha, (General Post Office, 1935)

Showcase '65 (P&O, 1965)

Snow, Dir. Geoffrey Jones, (British Transport Films, 1963)

Song of Ceylon, Dir. Basil Wright (GPO Film Unit, 1934)

Southward Bound (Union Castle, 1950)

Sound of the Sea (P&O, 1960s)

Spalding movies (1937)

Spring Cruise (1957)

Starting as Strangers (P&O, 1970)

Suez Canal, Dir. W.Hugh Baddeley (Gateway Film Productions, 1966)

Sunshine Breezes and Strange Places

Sweet Thames (James Archibald and Associates, 1970)

Terminus, Dir. John Schlesinger, (British Transport Films, 1961)

Three is Company, Dir. Tony Thompson, (British Transport Films, 1959)

Tomorrow Today, (Cunard, 1969)

To Africa East of Suez, (Union Castle, 1954)

Trudi (Union Castle, 1961)

Two Mules for Sister Sarah (Universal, 1970)

Voyage around Africa, Dir. Harold Weaver, (Tunnel Films, 1958)

The Voyage Home, Dir. Harold Weaver, (Union Castle and Satour, 1960s)

Uganda Cruise (P&O, 1968)

Voyage to Pleasure (United Motion Pictures, 1956)

Voyage To The Sun, Dir. Harold Weaver, (Union Castle, 1958)

The Way of a Ship, Dir. Terry Ashwood, (British Pathe, 1954)

Warwick Castle Cruise (Union Castle, 1952)

Welcome Aboard (Positive Film, 1963)

West Country Journey Dir. Sid Sharples, (British Transport Films, 1953)

Where In The World (P&O, 1973)

Windmill in Barbados, Dir. Basil Wright, (Empire Marketing Board, 1933)

Windsor Castle: The Story of a Ship, (Union Castle, 1960)

Wish You Were Here (P&O, 1974)

World at Three, The, Dir. Frederic Goode (P&O, 1966)

World is your Oyster, The, Dir. Richard Lester, (James Garrett and Partners, 1965)