In the Clouds of Joseph Farcus: The Phenomenology of Going to Sea in the Era of Supermodernity

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In the course of British colonial expansion in the eighteenth century, passenger transport was born with British colonial expansion. It was the cause of a radical transformation of the ship itself: the internal spaces of the ship, which until then had been exclusively organized to follow a largely military logic, were rendered inhabitable. They were adapted, with few exceptions, to the kind of living requirements of the bourgeois house. However, this operation shouldn't be read, as it is often done, as a simple taking over and adaptation of the land habitation to one that floats and moves. The operation hides something more complex: an act of removal, of *transfert*, or transference. The object of removal is the fear generated by the need to cross the ocean using a means of transport that is slow and wind-powered, with claustrophobic spaces and subject to the, by no means, remote possibility of shipwreck. What makes *transfert* possible is the application of a new concept that in the course of the eighteenth century really started to take off: comfort. As Walter Benjamin notes in *Baudelaire and Paris*, comfort isolates, but at the same time assimilates those who benefit from it to the mechanism.

And to that assimilation, which can be regulated by increasing or lowering the level of comfort, resistance is impossible. The level of comfort determines the degree of the *transfert* and the degree of removal. This *transfert* makes the ocean (an environment which ancient myths populated with terrible monsters) inhabitable, and in so doing determines the birth of the passenger ship.

The launch of the *Great Britain* (1843) represents a real moment of change in the history of navigation because it was the first ship constructed out of metal. With the use of this new shipbuilding technique, ships could become much larger, with ceilings reaching a height equivalent to that of a block of flats. Metal offered a structural resistance that made possible the creation of large vertical passages covered at the top with glass, letting daylight into the body of the ship, producing a number of easily imaginable advantages. With the use of metal, the internal spaces of the ship assumed monumental dimensions, so much so that it became possible for the passengers to almost believe they were living in a Renaissance, Baroque, or Rococo palace.

The metal ship is much sturdier than a wooden one and the fears generated by the ocean are lessened, if not completely

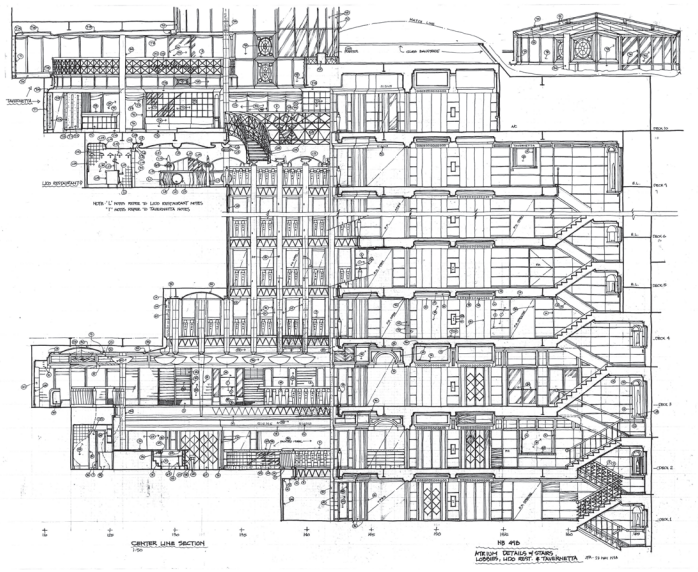


Figure 1
Costa Atlantica, Atrium (August 1998). Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

eliminated, so it's no longer necessary to activate a process of unconscious removal like the *transfert*. The effect of self-willed pretense, of make-believe, of living in a monumental palace, is all that is required to tranquillize the passengers and make them more disposed to entertainment and social life. We see, then, that a conscious emotion, the fiction of "pretending," substitutes the unconscious emotion, the *transfert*.

In the nineteenth century, this pretense is given one of its first theoretical statements (valid also today) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who defines it as a "willing suspension of disbelief," a conscious intentional act. It was this conscious action that for a long time characterized the environment around the ocean liner and, through the course of history, took on different meanings. In the twentieth century, the tendency to want to bring out the arts and myths of an entire nation was dominant. Thus for the *Normandie* (1932), Art Deco was utilized, while in the turbo-ship *Andrea Doria* (1951), Gio' Ponti produced what he himself called an "annunciation of Italy." Other more or less successful examples of this could be mentioned, but the important thing to note here is that in the modern ocean liner there is only a "semblance of truth sufficient to procure . . . that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment"[1] in such a way that the pretense takes place, but nothing more. The differences between pretense and reality in the ocean liner are evident. Make-believe is kept distinct from function. The reason the ship is constructed is to transport people from one place to another in the sea; the pretense has only an additional, accessory function with respect to the primary function. For example, the first class dining room on the *Kaiser Wilhelm II* (1912), on three levels and decorated in an inflated, redundant, neo-Baroque style and clearly a place where the staging is rather too obvious, isn't an end in itself and for which the ocean liner was constructed, that is, moving from one place to another. The

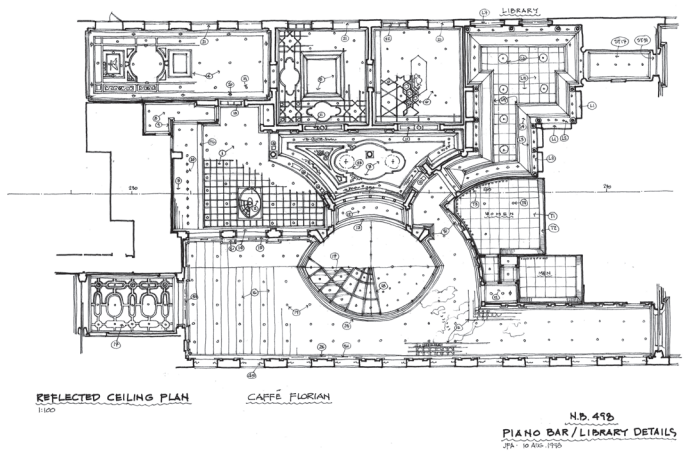


Figure 2
Costa Atlantica, Caffè Florian (August 1998)
Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

ocean liner's journey isn't a journey of make-believe, as it will be for the holiday cruiser in the "supermodern" era.[2]

In the era of supermodernity, the distinction between make-believe and function disappears. The holiday cruiser shows an effective, concrete antecedent—a means of transport—transformed into a means of pretending. Today the function of the holiday cruiser fuses with the make-believe.

As Marc Augé notes, the whole world seems destined to become a global *mise-en-scene* and it seems this process will stop only when the whole of the developed world has become counterfeit. When that day arrives, the holiday cruiser won't be able "to do anything but reproduce reality, which is the counterfeit,"[3] Augé was referring to that particular "extension of the urban fabric," the theme park. The present tendency to construct gigantic ships, real "extensions of the urban fabric"[4] that are organized like theme parks, confirms that the argument developed by the French ethnologist can be usefully applied to the holiday cruiser. In the holiday cruiser, the counterfeit invests not only the internal spaces but the actual function of the ship. The cruise is, in fact, a counterfeit voyage: the passengers board and leave the ship in the same place; the cruise itinerary arranges "guided visits" which show the passengers what they already know from television and the tourist agency brochures. There are also passengers who don't make these so-called "excursions," preferring to stay on the ship for the whole voyage. What's the sense in all this? The holiday cruiser market is an integral part of the tourist market, aimed at the tourist who prefers the simulated, counterfeit experience to the real experience, who chooses to visit only those important historical art monuments that are staged with complex illumination or reproduced using various kinds of electronic media. Even minor commemorative architecture and statuary are transformed into set designs, so as to render them more similar to important monuments of art. In this way, the transformation of reality into spectacle is becoming more and more pervasive, reaching even small urban conurbations and the outskirts of cities.

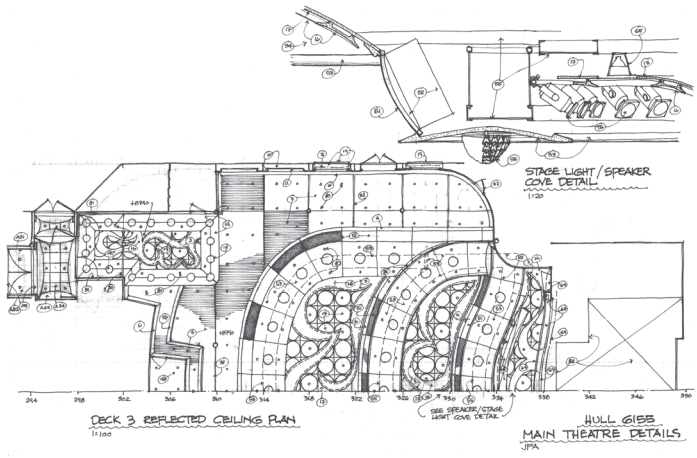
1 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria – Chapter XIV*, 1817.

2 The concept of "supermodernity" is at the base of Marc Augé's anthropological analyses, to which the reader is referred for further study.

3 M. Augé, *L'impossible voyage. Le tourisme et ses images* (Éditions Payot & Rivages, 1997), 71.

4 F. Gambaro, *Parla Augé. Cosa resta dei miei non-luoghi*, *La Repubblica* (31 ottobre 2007), 43.

Figure 3
Costa Luminosa, Theatre (February 2007).
Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

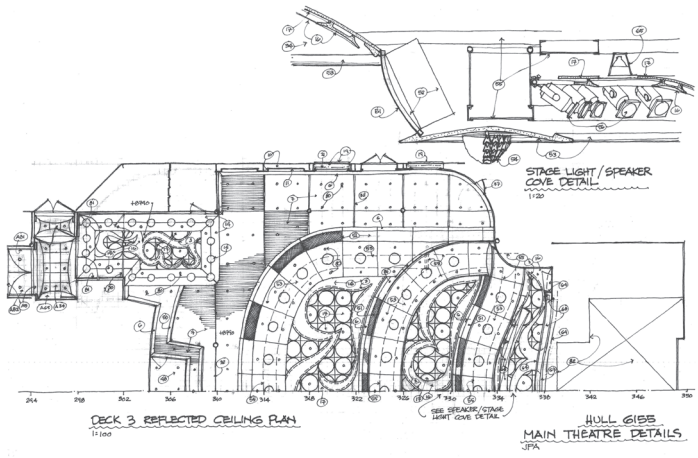


In the developed world, the greatest degree of make-believe is achieved in theme parks, where the spectacle itself is made into a spectacle. The pleasure of visiting Disneyland is in introducing oneself into the "scenes, into figuring next to the actors (the sheriff in the Western or persons out of fable), in identifying the motifs displayed."[5] The Walt Disney Company also built two holiday cruisers that came into service at the end of the twentieth century, and plans to build two more. The Disney Cruise Line ships are floating, moving theme parks that are integral parts of a connected series of resorts of the Walt Disney Company. Recent news in this area is of a theme park inspired by the Harry Potter books, to be constructed in the city of Orlando, Florida. Press releases indicate that it will use interactive technology so that visitors can experience the magic of the boy wizard hero of J. K. Rowling's tales. Perhaps one day someone will decide to build a theme ship inspired by Harry Potter. However, it's important to realize that in the theme parks of today there is a tendency to use sophisticated science technology and electronic media apparatus so as to break through the barriers, which every culture has from its beginnings set up, between reality, dream, and imagination. This can be seen in the case of a ship near completion in the Monfalcone ship yards, the *Costa Luminosa*, the internal spaces of which, planned by Joseph Farcus,[6] are bright surfaces illuminated with LED technology. The internal colors of the ship will be able to change into an infinite number of tones and will be regulated by a computer. With the last frontier opened up by the *Costa Luminosa*, it appears that in the very near future the internal spaces of the ship will include a non-solid surface that can be changed into potentially millions of combinations.

The first environments themed by Farcus are inspired by sequences taken from Hollywood. In the early 1990s, he designed a "promenade" for the *Fascination*, of the shipbuilding firm Carnival. This "promenade" is a real-space transposition of scenes from the David Lean film *Passage to India*. Farcus's transposition is realized through a kind of cutting out of mixed materials, made of neon sign-

5 M. Augé, *L'impossible voyage. Le tourisme et ses images* (Éditions Payot & Rivages, 1997), 28.

Figure 4
Costa Luminosa, Theatre (February 2007).
Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.



writing and plastic elephants with harnesses of Indian cloth, which move across transparent tracking shots. On the same ship, adjacent to the *Passage to India*, Farcus realizes *Hollywood Boulevard*, where the passenger meets various images of Hollywood film stars: Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Bette Davis, Gary Cooper, and John Wayne. This game of creating characters becomes wholly explicit when the passenger bumps into the image of Humphrey Bogart sitting at the bar with his beloved Lauren Bacall comfortably seated on the piano, thus completing a picture that is decidedly ironic, ultra-realistic, and surreal. By entering this space, the passenger takes a route that is the inverse of that taken by Jeff Daniels in the film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. Daniels, bored and tired of the inconsistency of his role, leaves the screen in order to have a romance with a spectator, Cecilia (Mia Farrow). Farcus accomplishes the opposite: the passenger, tired of the role given him by everyday life, enters the screen to inhabit a story which, even though largely already written in the rituals of the cruise, can still have some surprises in store.

This "entering the screen" shouldn't be understood as the induction in the passenger of an unconscious psychological state, which would be absurd. Everyone plays his or her own daily part in the work place, in the office, at home, or travelling through the town. In certain places, the individual is more inclined to play a part, in others less so. There are many studies in this area and from them we learn that the social behavior of individuals and groups can be read as a "dramatic performance."[7]

While a person returning home after a day's work has little desire to put on a pose, he is certainly more inclined to do so in a place of relaxation and in a suitable setting. The holiday cruise ship, thanks above all to a series of rituals that accommodate living on a boat, is a place that, more than others, leads the person to put on a pose, and if the place is created as a film set, as on Farcus's ships, then everything becomes easier.

In the illusion created by film, there is a process of identification with the feelings and emotions of the protagonists. The

6 After taking a degree in architecture, Joseph Farcus worked in the studio of Morris Lapidus in Miami. In 1975, Lapidus's practice was invited to present proposals for adapting the transatlantic liner *Empress of Britain* (1960) acquired by Carnival founder Ted Arison. It was on this occasion that Farcus met Ariston, who in 1977 invited him to present his ideas for the restoration of the *Festivale*. From then on, a fortunate and intense fellowship developed. Almost every day, Farcus presented his ideas to Arison, discussed them with him, and then re-elaborated them during the night. They were free-hand designs done in ink and with all the technical indications needed for their execution already noted. This particular way of working, resulting from an excellent ability in the art of design, will be the distinctive sign of an exceptional professional success story (he has designed an incredible number of ships, about 50 to date) which will transform the way of building the internal spaces of the holiday cruiser.

spectator lives, vicariously, the adventures and misadventures of the heroes of the film. On Farcus's ship, a particular proximic condition persuades the passenger to abandon his vicarious state. A film, too, can persuade the viewer to take that step, bringing him directly inside the screen, but only for relatively brief periods. For example, a sequence made by fixing a camera on the wing of an airplane that dives and twists at an increasing velocity grabs the stomach of the viewer and makes it sink. An emotional tension of this kind can make the viewer exit from his vicarious role, but it can't be protracted for any length of time or it becomes unbearable. On Farcus's ship, passengers are immersed in a make-believe that makes them into actors, not in an actual film but in a reality show. Viewers of a reality show are not spectators but overseers, watchers who take pleasure in exploring other people's life situations. Ship passengers aren't spied on by video cameras (apart from those used by security), and so this could make them think they are taking part in a reality show without spectators. But that's not so: they are fitted into the setting of a spectacle; they observe and are observed, in turn, by other passengers. In this way, they become, through a proximic game of multiple relationships, actors and spectators, overseers and the overseen. Spectacle and oversight aren't contradictory in the reality show, rather one works with reference to the other—one is the excuse for the other. But the holiday cruiser is a reality show without any audience or ratings, and it doesn't make its participants famous. This protects it from the inevitable predictability of a TV spectacle. It is well known that, in order to keep ratings high, it's necessary to create situations that are increasingly degrading for the actors who take part. The idea of starting up a TV channel based on life aboard a holiday cruiser, as recently announced by one large ship-builder, isn't a good one because it would break the proximic equilibrium (described above) that creates the conditions under which a cruiser remains a cruiser, something essentially different from a television reality show.

When the passenger has stepped into the ship, he finds himself in an imposing space, the great atrium where each passenger can observe, and be observed by, the other passengers. By cutting out all of the bridges in the vertical plane, the atrium brings the spectator into a space marked out by a series of circular galleries, as in Elizabethan theatre. From the galleries, and from grand staircases and lifts with transparent sides, it's possible to have an uninterrupted view on all sides. In a counterfeit space, where everyone can observe everyone else, the passenger moves more naturally into taking part in the reality show of the cruise.

On the ship, the theme of the reality show changes from time to time. On Farcus's ships, the theme is usually presented in the grand atrium. On the *Costa Serena*, the usual grand atrium becomes the *Atrio Pantheon*, where classical divinities arranged on plastic clouds function somewhat like those in Correggio's frescoes: they

7 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).

Figure 5
Costa Serena, Lobby Atrium (June 2006). Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

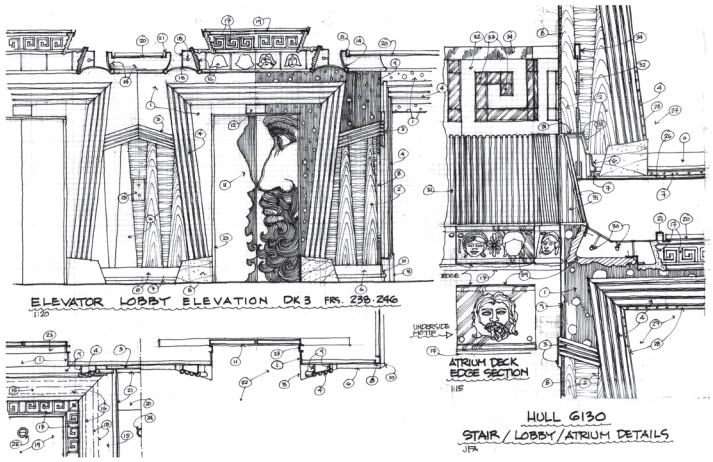


Figure 6
Costa Serena, Caffe Chocolate Bar (June 2006). Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

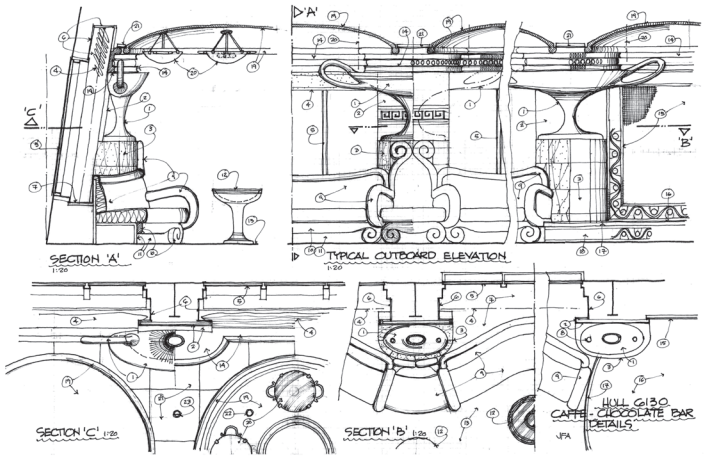
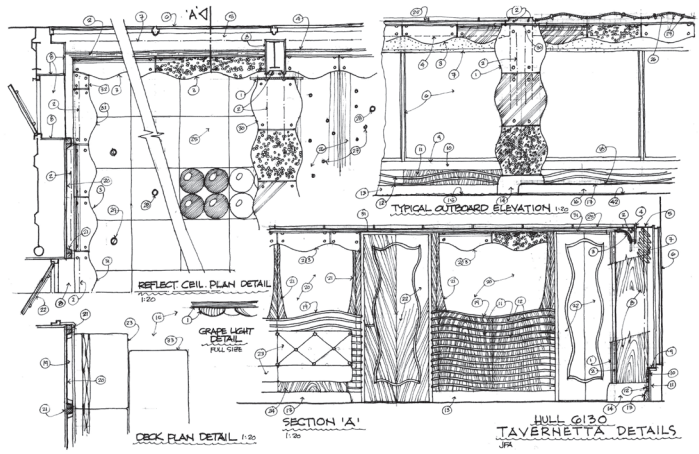


Figure 7
Costa Serena Tavernetta (June 2006). Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.



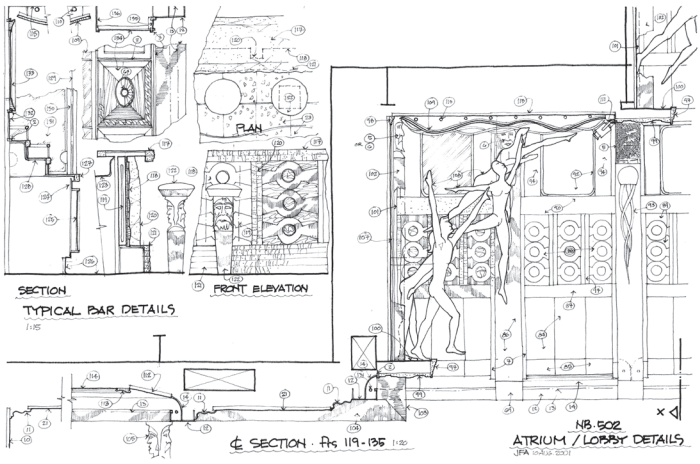
form a sort of indicator system which gives a suitable physical solidarity to the figures suspended in space and places them at a specific point in space. The theme presented in the *Atrio Pantheon* is developed in all the passenger spaces on the ship. On the *Costa Serena*, the reality show theme is taken from history, not from a Hollywood film, even if Farcus's ancient Greece owes a lot to TV programs, which turn history and culture into spectacle to make them more attractive.

Without continual theme change in TV reality shows and on the holiday cruiser ship, there would only be repetition of the same make-believe. If the game were conceived as the repeat of an identical show, it would soon run out of steam. The ship can be built and copied in serial construction with the same tonnage, the same hull, and the same superstructure, but what definitely must change is the make-believe theme.

In order to be realized, the make-believe, or fictional, theme needs a "cosmetic" design. In magazines that deal with the naval sector, a design defined as minimalist is placed above cosmetic design, which makes extensive use of decorative elements. In the pages of these magazines, there are some who support a cosmetic project (the term is not actually used but it's convenient to use it here) and those who, in the name of "good design," think that decorative elements should be used only sparingly. In today's holiday cruiser construction, a decidedly cosmetic design prevails; cruisers built using minimalist designs do not exist. For that reason, in this discussion, minimalist and cosmetic can be taken up only as abstract concepts, as terms in an axiomatic argument. However, this kind of discussion can explain a number of things about the design for the functional and make-believe aspects of the holiday cruiser. It's important, however, to define the character of these two tendencies, or axioms, before discussing the design of the holiday cruiser.

In art, as in design, minimalism is characterized by a dissolving of illusion, by parsimony in the use of signs, and by the exclusion of anthropomorphic and animal forms. With these reductions and exclusions, minimalism obtains a kind of Brechtian distancing which is able to keep the reflective and conscious level alive. Exactly as can be seen in the theatre of Bertolt Brecht, the distancing effect of the minimalist design is educative. In complete opposition to minimalist design, we can understand cosmetic as κοσμητική, the art of beautifying, of adorning. This design procedure isn't something recent but goes back to the first design theorists. Both groups of artists associated with Henry Cole and William Morris speak of ornament to be applied to the object of use. It would appear that the discussion between the two groups was how to realize the ornamentation, or beautifying, of the object: by machine, as Cole and his collaborators wanted, or by hand, as Morris and the numerous representatives of the Arts and Crafts movement sustained. Afterwards, the terms "ornamenting" and "beautifying" were removed from discus-

Figure 8
Costa Mediterranea, Atrium (October 2001)
Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

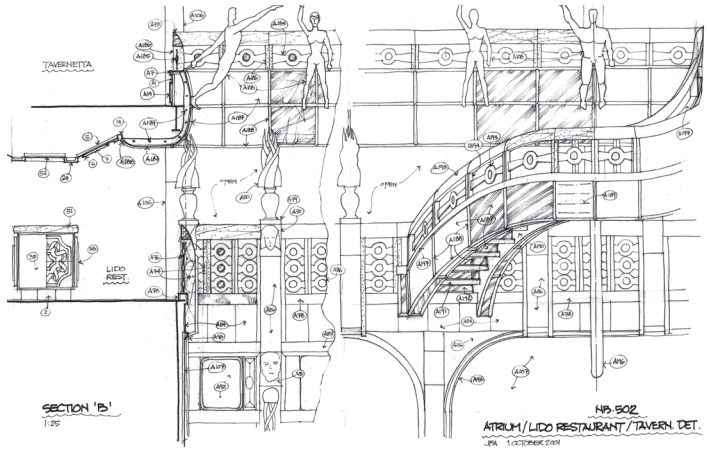


sions of design, and at the same time the term cosmetic," for orthodox rationalists, became a synonym for bad design. The honor of having recovered the "original sense of the cosmetic design goes to Alessandro Mendini, one of the greatest figures in postmodern design. In two designs in particular, Mendini shows his theory of cosmetic design: in the *Poltrona di Proust* (1978) and in *100% Make up* (1992). Discussing the theory of pictorial design, Mendini states that it can apply only to surfaces that can be made immaterial, as in high-tech objects where the practical quality is like "a piece of clothing." It is, however, this "clothing" which makes the object work. A high-tech object lacking this immaterial surface would be completely unusable. Today, the design of the "clothing"—the so-called interface design—allows anyone to use a vast range of products, and it is this that gives the best confirmation to the much discussed theory of "pictorial design."

By applying a minimalist design to the internal spaces of the ship, it's possible to persuade the passenger to reflect on what is outside: the sea, the sky, the coast. The minimalist design makes abundant use of mirror surfaces—mostly created using thin sheets of palladium or gold (as on some large yachts)—arranged so that a part of the outside environment is brought inside. In practice, minimalism uses the mirror for what it effectively is, prosthesis, to help bring the external light, the reflections from the sea, inside the ship. However, in this way the pleasure of staying on the ship has nothing to do any more with "perfectly closing oneself" in an "absolutely finite space" as Roland Barthes says in his book *Mythologies*, but rather consists above all in a reflective, conscious state based on the peculiarity of the environment in which the ship moves, so as to appreciate the smells, lights, and sounds.

The minimalist interior is a geometric, measurable, discrete, and discontinuous space where the only possible illusion is that determined by acceleration and a deceleration of the classical Euclidian environment. Every figure is dissolved and the only ones allowed are in the grain of the wood, designed by a natural, entropic

Figure 9
Costa Mediterranea Atrium Lido Restaurant (October 2001). Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.



process. The internal space, lacking in ornamentation, should lead the passenger to concentrate on the mode of use of the furniture and interior objects. In fact, minimalism still thinks that man uses objects in an exclusively logical manner. This is a false assumption, because as numerous experiments have shown, there's an emotional factor other than the reflective and rational which makes things and tools work well.

But the distancing effect obtained by minimalism has a permanent didactic value: the passenger has a continuous awareness of being on the sea and not in an elegant town salon. This Brechtian distancing effect is, however, planned as a sort of antidote to the make-believe and consequently can be applied with success to the design of a large yacht but not to that of a holiday cruiser, where it is better to use a cosmetic design that can act with maximum effect on the reactive, emotional body systems, as well as the reflective ones. It's not that the minimalist design cannot do it, but one must admit that the cosmetic design has a greater possibility of inducing a certain euphoria in the passenger, making him more ready to enter into the counterfeit, reality show dimension of the holiday cruiser. This needs to be verified experimentally, but the present exponential growth in the holiday cruiser market coincides with the systematic application of a certain type of design that can be defined as cosmetic. This cannot be a mere coincidence; there must be a strong motivation which persuades shipbuilders to prefer one type of design over another, and this cannot be the result of chance, considering the substantial financial investment that goes into the construction of a holiday cruiser. Design researchers could well investigate the reason for this choice.

Neuroscientists attest that the reactive is the first level of emotionality and may be defined as affective interaction. This level acts on the conscious level but it is not possible to control emotional expression in a conscious way—only a few actors manage to suppress their emotional reactivity after many years of preparation.

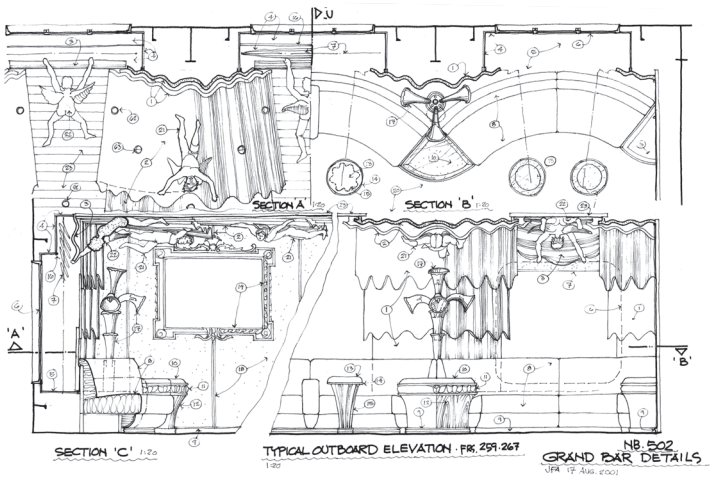


Figure 10
Costa Mediterranea, Grand Bar (October 2001). Image courtesy of Joseph Farcus.

The same process described by neuroscientists, of reactive emotionalism leading to reflectivity, can be analyzed in semiotic terms. Reactive emotionalism corresponds, in semiotic terms, to perception, the icon. This first level of the semiotic process, the iconic, can give rise to an inference that opens in the recognition of a sign referring to a code. The sign, which is the final result of the process of signification, corresponds in the analyses of the neuroscientists to the reflective and conscious level. If we continue in our comparison of the analyses made in neuroscience with those proposed a long time before by Charles Sanders Peirce in the area of semiotics, we see an intermediate phase emerging, an emotionality that cannot be considered unconscious. In semiotic terms, this phase is called *hypo iconic* and it is the stage in which the process that leads to signification has only just started. It's in this border zone that the sentiments take form in the psychic process. Both the process which leads from the icon to the sign and that which leads from the reactive emotion to the sentiment are orientated there. In fact, a perception can bring about an inference but the opposite cannot happen, just as a reactive emotionality can act on conscious thought, but it's unlikely that the opposite will occur. Certainly, the various levels are interactive and one can reinforce the other. For example, when a light euphoria deepens, it transforms into enthusiasm, which, if aroused further, can give rise to an uncontrollable exaltation. In the same way, in semiotic terms, while it's true that perception causes inference, it's also true that a particular signification system or a particular context can influence the way in which the stimulus is perceived.

In the complex psychic processes described above, which for brevity have perhaps been rendered too schematic, cosmetic design relates principally to the reactive level of emotionality—in semiotic terminology, the iconic. In one sense, cosmetic design offers value more than meaning; it places the emphasis on a state of consciousness that is completely unrelated, destined to achieve an inference from which significance is released. This isn't to say that cosmetic design succeeds in acting exclusively at the iconic level (emotional

reactivity), or that minimalist design stimulates exclusively the level of signification (conscious reflectivity). Apart from anything else, the two things would be impossible to realize, and even if it were possible to get them working, each would give rise to an hallucinatory environment in which it would be impossible to live. Rather, the cosmetic action shouldn't be immediately perceived at the reflective level, because if that happened, it would bring about an immediate understanding of the techniques used and, as a consequence, the effect of make-believe would dissolve.

The cosmetic design of the holiday cruiser is a little like a soundtrack, and mustn't be noticed immediately at the reflective level. Any film in which the music and the soundtrack are immediately and critically noticed (prompting a reflection on the acoustic techniques used) is a failure, and impedes the entry of the spectator into the illusory dimension. As in a film, where sound and music carry the spectator beyond the screen into an identification with the sufferings, fears, and joys of the protagonists, so the cosmetics of the ship make it possible for the passenger to act in the make-believe dimension of the holiday cruiser's reality show.

When it comes to the reflective level, cosmetic design—if done well—provokes a conscious emotion. And it is exactly "through feelings—which are inwardly directed and private, that the emotions, which are outwardly directed and public—begin their impact on the mind,"[8] and so influence the decisions of the individual.

A sentiment can be induced by a memory of an experience which is lived directly or vicariously. Places that have been visited leave a mark on the spirit, as does watching a gripping film, or reading of a vividly written book, or seeing a particularly touching situation on TV. All create a feeling that can bring an often strong emotive response.

When Farcus evokes the events in a film or the presence of a Hollywood star, when he evokes the settings which make the passenger relive a past for which he is nostalgic because he imagines them as better than the present, Farcus calls up memories that induce conscious emotions or sentiments that will last for a few minutes or days, whatever is sufficient to reinforce the make-believe element of the ship's environment. Considered from this point of view, Farcus's design is much more functional than other design methods.

The passenger finds himself in an environment that is relatively closed and limited and quickly becomes aware of the emotive states of others, particularly through facial expressions and body language. Reactive emotionalism moves from the internal to the external of the individual and so is directed at the other passengers. But an individual's feelings, which are directed internally, make the passenger more sensitive to emotional reactivity. One factor reinforces the other, maintaining the equilibrium between euphoria and dysphoria at an optimum level and so pushing the passenger into

8 Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*, (Vintage, 2000), 36.

casting off inhibitions that stop him from taking part in the grand reality show taking place on the holiday cruiser.

The inanimate objects in the ship's environment act on the passengers too, as do the other passengers who move about inside the ship. It has been observed that every human being, of whatever cultural extraction, tends to read an emotional state into any object, be it living or inanimate. It is better not to repress this innate disposition, as minimalist design does, if the emotional reactivity is to be kept at a useful level, suitable for the make-believe. One way of ensuring this is to make full use of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms, as Farcus usually does.

Working as it does as the reactive level at the start of the semiotic process, cosmetic design can be defined as the art of the immediate, of the now, that has no need of any historical referent. This explains the frequent use of kitsch, which is discernible in every cosmetic design. Kitsch, an aesthetic object, places itself outside the history of art but manages to stimulate the individual history of the passengers. Kitsch acts on the individual's history mostly by playing on the memory. In addition, by not making reference to a specific local culture, kitsch functions well in a globalized market, such as holiday cruising.

Cosmetic design, unlike the minimalist, doesn't create a discrete, discontinuous space, but a dense, saturated one. In minimalist design, it is sufficient to see a particular to be able to reconstruct the complete object in the mind using simple deductive reasoning; in cosmetic design, that's not possible, for the object can only be appreciated a bit at a time by letting the gaze move over the surfaces. Mendini's *Mobile infinito* (1981) is the perfect example of this concept of saturation in cosmetic design. Created as a surrealist game-work—the *cadavre exquis*—the *Mobile infinito* has to be examined in detail to capture the sense, a particular is not sufficient for deducing the whole, while the image of a significant particular is sufficient in any similar minimalist work. It is likely that a dense, saturated setting arouses an increased reactive, feeling emotionalism, just as it may be said that a discrete, discontinuous space leads more to reflection. But here also, research is needed to investigate these hypotheses.

The mirror surfaces of cosmetic design do not transfer that which is outside to the inside of the ship, as happens with minimalist design, but reflect the internal an infinite number of times, so increasing the effect of suspension, or diversion, from everyday life.

In the case of holiday cruises, cosmetic design is suitable from the point of view of industrial production, because it acts on the surfaces and not on the actual structure of the ship. Changing the make-believe means changing the modality of the function of the ship itself, with obvious advantages at the level of product marketing. A make-believe world which is always different is equivalent to a product which is always different.

Minimalist design, working as it does on the ship's basic structures and enclosing them inside it, is a design method wholly opposed to cosmetic design, not only because it has a distancing effect which strongly represses the make-believe, but also because it makes it difficult to create a varied product. It's not by chance that the minimalist design is well suited to the creation of an individualized product. In some minimalist mega-yachts, the complete structure, including the curvatures of the keel, are an integral part of the inhabitable space. This doesn't create a problem, because the mega-yacht is usually a made-to-order product and so unique and not repeatable. When a mega-yacht has some cosmetically designed internal features, as often happens, these are nothing else than projections of the personal drives of the owner. In this case, the designer has very little freedom and must interpret the desires of the owner, translating them in terms of the setting. In fact, in the mega-yacht market, it's possible to trace a minimalist tendency and a cosmetic one, but in the holiday cruiser market, as has already been noted, that's not possible because it lacks terms of comparison.

It's possible to find traces of minimalism in the transatlantic liner, which of course is a different product from the holiday cruiser. That's not in contradiction to what has been said previously, because the transatlantic liner in the twentieth century often exemplified the technical, industrial, and cultural capability of an entire nation and as such had to be a wholly exceptional product. It was exactly because of this uniqueness that the first minimalist attempts were worked out on the transatlantic liner. It was an implementation strongly limited by the need to "pretend," as discussed earlier. An oft-cited example is that of the *George Washington*, where, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Bruno Paul enclosed some of the ship's basic structures in the inhabitable space. Bruno Paul's idea was the rigorous application of a rational principle: putting into effect a formal coherence between the internal and the external parts of the ship. To follow this example, the histories of design usually feature the transatlantic liner *Bremen* (1929). This ship, with very few others, represents another attempt to apply the principles of rationalism and functionalism to the design of the passenger ship. Having traced these first rationalist and functionalist examples, the histories of design usually then move on to connect them with others, which in the formal language used in the discussion, show a vague stylistic continuity to those previously cited. In this way, the more "set design" examples are rigorously excluded from the history of naval design. This way of writing history blocks any possibility of giving an adequate interpretation of the present day phenomenon of the holiday cruiser ship. Indeed, if the element of make-believe that exists in the transatlantic liner is not considered a part of the design, then the holiday cruiser has very little possibility of becoming an object of special treatment today.

With the progressive achievements of modernity, every element of make-believe is removed from the means of transport,

while in the ship, in inverse proportion, it is increased. The achievement of flight in the stratosphere eliminates every trace of make-believe from the inside of the airplane. The same phenomenon is to be seen in another form in the train as it becomes gradually faster and faster and increasingly efficient. As every element of set design is removed from the inside of the train and plane, a new and specific discipline is born: *Transportation Design*. Just because of how the disciplinary limits of transportation design are drawn up, the holiday cruiser's interiors can't become the object of a serious treatment. It's likely that this theme, so important for the era of supermodernity, must be dealt with in the sphere of a wholly different discipline that could be called *Fiction Design*. It isn't, in effect, a means of transport that is being dealt with but a means of fiction, of make-believe.

For too long, there has been a lack of commitment among design scholars on the question of design for the holiday cruiser. It is a disengagement that is unacceptable considering the important economic and social orientations that the holiday cruiser market has. The aim of this paper is to re-launch a discussion which has long remained interrupted. It is a discussion which must be taken up from the origins in order to analyze the present, so bringing into effect the ancient, but always valid, momentary suppression of judgment—ἐποχή—in such a way as to give it an adequate phenomenological account.