Urban Ideology, Tourism, and the Theme Park as an Infrastructure of Leisure

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to provide an insight on the nature of today's urban ideology through the lens of tourism and its infrastructure as a subset of consumer society. Through an analysis of the theme park typology and Disneyland specifically as a paradigm of Culture Industry's byproduct, the hope is to explicate how the infrastructure of leisure has mobilized the success of Disneyland and the ideology it embodies. Starting with section (1) *"Infrastructure Is Ideology Embodied",* I will show how ideology is inherently embedded in infrastructure in general. Then I will introduce section (2) *"Tourism, Infrastructure, and the 'Culture Industry'",* in order to show how the typology of the theme park is a symptom of Culture Industry and an extreme environment manifesting consumer society's consumerist nature. Followed by section (3) *"Popular Culture + Coney Island + Television = Theme Park Infrastructure"*, I will demonstrate the role of mass media, and television in particular as the most representative infrastructure of leisure that evidently embodies ideology and as a result has led to Disneyland's global success. Also, I will present how historically theme parks, represent something larger than advances in technology through the case of Coney Island. Then, with section (4) *"Disneyland sells an Ideology: The Case of Disneyland Paris"*, I will explicate the significance of Disneyland's current infrastructural techniques in order to conclude with section (5) *"'Disneyification' a Metaphor to describe Urban Ideology"* that tries to understand the phenomenon of "Disneyification" and how it provides an insight for today's consumer culture and the ideology of the Urban. Overall, the hope is to understand the role of infrastructure, as it relates to leisure and play, the ideological concepts it embodies and its relationship the contemporary urban condition that defines our society.

Infrastructure Is Ideology Embodied

Infrastructure is the set of networks that enable the flows and exchange of information, goods, humans, and their ideas in a given place and time. Infrastructure has both a physical as well as an abstract, intangible presence in our built environments. In their physical manifestation infrastructures organize the spatio-temporal ordering of lived human activity. From this point of view, infrastructures shape the networks that define our everyday lives in terms of their functionality, vulnerability, and even sometimes our failures.[1]

In terms of their more abstract function, infrastructures organize the incorporeal dimension of our lives. From the lofty, abstract thinking of the university professor to the cost-benefit logic of the managerial capitalist and even the buzzing and blooming perceptions of the child in the park, the incorporeal lives of people supervene on the various infrastructural apparatuses that surround us. As vehicles that instigate and facilitate the momentum of everything that matters, infrastructures have an irreducibly relational character. Conceptually then, infrastructures are present in every system that defines our built environments, whether physical or abstract – affecting all of the heterogenous operations that take place within their physical bounds.[2]

Given the almost totalizing presence of these frameworks, we must acknowledge the role of power in our infrastructures. That is, infrastructures contain highly political, social, and cultural forms of meaning. Infrastructure has the authority to determine the hardware that will affect public welfare and social justice.[3] The effects of power, therefore, are contained in everything from the 18th century bridge that connects two sides of a village in an alpine territory to an invisible cloud network of big data controlling global information. In all of its manifestations, humanity survives through the law of infrastructure; or as Stephen Graham, in his essay "Urban Metabolism as a Target," characterizes it:

> Many more human beings live highly cyborganized lives, totally dependent upon the Denature of machinic ensembles with their elaborate extra-terrestrial ecologies of megatechnical economics. [...] Without the agriculture machine, the housing machine, the oil machine, the electrical machine, the media machine, or the fashion machine, almost all cyborganized human beings cannot survive or thrive, because these concretions of machinic ensembles generate their basic environment. All of which means that, more than ever, the collapse of functioning infrastructure grids now brings panic and fears of the breakdown of the functioning urban social order. 'Fear of the dislocation of urban services on a massive scale,' writes Martin Pawley, is now 'endemic in the populations of all great cities'.[4]

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[1] Larkin, Brian. "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure" in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42, no. 1 (2013): 327-43. doi:10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155522: 328-330.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Winner, Langdon. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" in *Daedalus* 109, no. 1 (1980): 121-122. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024652
[4] Stephen Graham quoting Timothy Luke in "Urban Metabolism as Target; Contemporary war as forced demodernization" in *In the nature of cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism,* eds. Heynen, Nikolas, Cunnington. Maria, Kaika. and Erik, Swyngedouw. London: Routledge, 2011: 237.

As a result of such fears, infrastructure planning strives toward the organization of urban form and urban life. This is akin to what Henri Lefebvre points to when he defines spaces of leisure as those spaces utilizing technological capacities to make nature available for collective enjoyment resulting in the destruction of nature by this very technology.[5] For Lefebvre, life is determined by the everyday social interactions that occur within urban environments; infrastructure then is an inseparable element for the organization of everyday life.

Thus while infrastructure was used in previous centuries by militaries seeking to define the permanent fixtures of strategic installations, today the notion of infrastructure has expanded, coming to include almost every support system in modern industrial society, whether public or private. The increasing generalization and diversification of the uses of infrastructure suggest an expanded notion of what urban infrastructure actually is, and who governs it.[6] This is easily linked to Marx's characterization of ideology in his famous work, *The German Ideology*. Here, Marx describes ideology as an implicit formal structure that produces and organizes ideas, as well as our basic conceptions and forms of consciousness. Politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., are, for Marx, all forms of ideology. Thus ideology in Marx's sense functions as a "superstructure", providing the basis of human civilization.[7] Given this formulation, I contend that infrastructure itself must be conceived as a form of ideology. This is true in that our infrastructures reify ideological frameworks, and embody the mental and social concepts that contribute to the overall organization and logic of our particular urban spaces, and our everyday lives in general.

Tourism, Infrastructure, and the "Culture Industry"

> *"With approximately 320 million visitors annually, Disneyland Paris is celebrating its 25th anniversary by staying the number one tourist destination in Europe."* [8]

Having visited Disneyland twice as a child (both in California and Paris) I find it particularly fascinating that Disneyland Paris is the leading tourist destination in the whole of Europe. Touristic activity is a major contributor to the global economy, accounting for $7 billion of the world's GDP, and the creation of 284 million jobs (2016 statistics), all of which thrives on the basis of the commodification of experience. Still more, future projections suggest that tourism will contribute $7.3 US trillion to the world's GDP and enable 292 million job creations by 2027.[9] It is therefore

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[5] Lefebvre, Henri. *Towards an Architecture of Enjoyment*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. 2014: 31.
[6] Judd, Dennis R. *The Infrastructure of Play: Building the Tourist City*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003: 22.
[7] Marx, Karl. *The German Ideology*. Literary Theory: An Anthology. Eds. Riv-kin, Julie. and Ryan, Michael. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004: 653-658.
[8] "Disneyland Paris Reaches Unique Milestone On Eve of 25th Anniversary." Disney Parks Blog. Accessed May 09, 2018. https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2017/03/disneyland-paris-reaches-unique-milestone-on-eve-of-25th-anniversary/.
[9] "Travel and Tourism Global Economic Impact and Issues 2017". WTTC.org. https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/2017-documents/global-economic-impact-and-issues-2017.pdf. accessed December 8, 2017.

quite clear that present-day environments (built or otherwise) are rapidly transforming as a consequence of these new economies of space, and the promotion of tourism is a high priority.

Given all of the above, cities world-wide have entered a game of global competition for the attraction of tourists. Motivated by the fact that touristic activity is a critical component of local and regional economic growth, the development of infrastructures that have the ability to absorb, direct, and mediate touristic flows is a must. Cities market their cultural assets, framing or reframing themselves as destinations of leisure, amusement, and fun, continually revising their infrastructures and standards of services.[10] Urban transformation trends are often the result of publicly (and sometimes privately) funded initiatives that tend to demand large amounts of local resources and manifest as integral parts of the overall infrastructural networks of cities and other urban areas. The changing geography of the urban, with technology making air travel more affordable and even faster, puts all corners of the globe within reach. An effect of this is that it has become quite hard to differentiate between the tourist and the local because leisure and culture are now inseparable elements embedded both in the local as well as tourist ideology of a desired "quality of life." When not traveling, locals tend to partake in leisure oriented activities just the same as tourists.[11] Thus the line between tourist and local is blurred by infrastructures of leisure. *But how exactly does infrastructure relate to the economy of leisure and the kinds of play it encourages?*

If it is true that all spaces are heterotopic—that is, sites where the multiple layers of social practice coexist in moments of both harmony and radical discontinuity—then we can say that both the local and the tourist inhabit the same space and utilize the same infrastructures, but in distinct and even mutually unintelligible ways. As such, tourist infrastructures, and infrastructures of play more generally, are not different from urban infrastructure in general. They are, rather, specific types of urban infrastructure, which means they share some core set of properties or features with infrastructure in general, while also including some number specifying features which constitute the specific differentiae of this species. A simple demonstration of this is often seen in the beautification of a downtown for touristic consumption which simultaneously serves the interest of local profit-making endeavors. However, given that the distinction between local and tourist infrastructures is blurry, isolating the infrastructure of play and its effects can only be achieved by looking at a concrete example. Thus, in my view, one of the clearest cases of an infrastructure of play is the theme park because in these spaces, everyone is a visitor, or an outsider, and therefore in some sense a tourist. It is this example that I will take up in my investigation.

One of the most well-known ideological features of theme-parks today is their relationship with today's consumer society. Analyzing the emergence of this condition in their now classic chapter, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in the *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer argue that the development and use of popular culture as a commodity is an effect of the various processes of standardization and mass-production emerged

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[10] Fainstein, Susan S., and Judd R. Dennis. *The Tourist City*. New Haven, 1999: 13-16.
[11] Judd, Dennis R. *The Infrastructure of Play: Building the Tourist City*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003: 65.

along with a Capitalist Industrial consumer society.[12] In their view, radio, film, television, and advertisement all serve as tools for the manipulation of mass society, developing an ideological inertia that makes more and more of us dependent on this materialist consumptive mode of being.[13] Thus, because these types of media, as well as many more today, are widely available to all, they offer an easy venue for the production of consumptive desires and pleasures which are employed by the Capitalist class for the sake of profit-making. The culture industry, then, becomes synonymous with the entertainment industry, since culture has now been reduced to consumptive forms of entertainment and self-enjoyment, and kind of mass hedonism that can think of nothing beyond the bounds of the individual's temporary self-satisfaction. Adorno and Horkheimer provide an in-depth account of the link between entertainment and the culture industry:

> Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism. It is sought by those who want to escape the mechanized labor process so that they can cope with it again. At the same time, however, mechanization has such power over leisure, and its happiness determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment commodities, that the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself. The ostensible content is merely a faded foreground; what is imprinted is the automated sequence of standardized tasks. The only escape from the work process in factory and office is through adaptation to it in leisure time. This is the incurable sickness of all entertainment. […] The spectator must need no thoughts of his own: the product prescribes each reaction, not through any actual coherence – which collapses once exposed to thought – but through signals.[14]

For Adorno and Horkheimer, then, mass entertainment culture is a dangerous tool of capital, since it manufactures both the consumer's needs and objects of satisfaction all at once, leaving no room for the cultivation of individual forms of desire and identity. The trick here is that entertainment appears to be a cure for the conditions of mass society when in fact, it is the culture industry prescribing it.

For my purposes, this notion of the culture industry is particularly powerful for the analysis of the specific forms and techniques of ideology embedded in infrastructure today. Not only does the culture transform the traditional traveler into today's "mass tourist" but it also intensifies the uniformity and standardization of the commodity now known as the "tourist experience."[15] Mass tourism thus, is not just about the flow of people, but also about the consumption of goods in the form of souvenirs, food, cars, planes, hotels, sports arenas, public plazas, and theme parks.[16] This standardization of tourism in the form of the "leisure experience" gives the illusion of the dissolution of boundaries concerning class, nationality, and race, which is clearly manifest in the space of the theme park.

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[12] Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002: 106.
[13] *Ibid:* 107.
[14] *Ibid:* 109.
[15] "Tourism and the Commodification of Urban Culture" By Susan S. Fainstein." The Urban Reinventors. Accessed May 09, 2018. http://www.urbanreinventors.net/paper.php?issue=2&author=fainstein.
[16] Fainstein, Susan S., and Judd R. Dennis. *The Tourist City*. New Haven, 1999: 1.

Popular Culture + Coney Island + Television = Theme Park Infrastructure

In addition to Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry in today's leisure and entertainment culture, Reyner Banham expands on the notion of popular culture by looking at its implications for social life. As a member of the Independent Group in London, he studied the role of mass media in modern culture. Banham notes that as mass media has become a natural environment, a kind of medium of the everyday, it has also undermined the basic principles of democracy, mainly in the form of commercial exploitation.[17]

According to Banham, the primary means for the transmission of the aesthetic expression of popular culture today is television, which he describes as the most iconic machine of the Second Machine Age. This Second Machine Age, at least as Banham defines it, is the age of domestic electronics that penetrate domestic life the most iconic machine of the second machine age — a domestic and domesticated infrastructure which has become the means of mass-communication, distributing popular entertainment primarily through the aesthetic of the vulgar.[18] In other words, today, popular culture is explicit about its use of ideology in infrastructure, and the use of television as an essential tool for the material expression of dominant ideology which is highly conspicuous. Disneyland theme parks become particularly significant, here, since television is one of the most important pieces of infrastructure for their emergence, and future success, as a global influence. When Mickey mouse was born in 1928, Disney movies aimed to embody the American ideal. Additionally, while film had already been used as a tool for embedding deceptive and manipulative ideology, Disney's expertise in this endeavor only served to intensify the use of this condition world-wide.[19] Adorno and Horkheimer describe the ideological subtexts often embedded in cartoons:

> Cartoon and stunt films were once exponents of fantasy against rationalism. They allowed justice to be done to the animals and things electrified by their technology, by granting the mutilated beings a second life. Today they merely confirm the victory of technological reason over truth. […] To the extent that cartoons do more than accustom the senses to the new tempo, they hammer into every brain the old lesson that continuous attrition, the breaking of all individual resistance, is the condition of life in this society. Donald Duck in the cartoons and the unfortunate victim in real life receive their beatings so that the spectators can accustom themselves to theirs.[20]

It has by now been demonstrated how film and television serve as a means of propaganda, manipulation, and direction of social life. More extreme than ever is Disney's use of the infrastructure of the media culture. Used in the past to manipulate public thought during the war and post war years, today the Disneyland Corporation has achieves this manipulation through its theme parks in California, Florida, Paris, Tokyo, and Hong Kong as well as its cruise ship lines—all

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[17] Whiteley, Nigel. *Reyner Banham: Historian of the Immediate Future*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002: 96.
[18] *Ibid:* 143-144.
[19] "The Creation of Disneyland." Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean. Accessed May 10, 2018.
http://www.plosin.com/beatbegins/projects/fischer.html.
[20] Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002: 110.

of which amounts to an unprecedented global manipulation of cultural life through built form.[21] Television and the development of other similar forms of technology have ensured Disney's utopian fantasy becomes part of everyone's style of enjoyment by promoting their accessibility to all. And the fact that the "The Mickey Mouse Club" TV show was designed to promote and raise funding for Disneyland is clear proof of Disney's attempt to manufacture a desire for their products.[22]

Thus, in a more general way, tourism infrastructure, as manifested in the theme park, provides a useful foundation to facilitate an economy driven by the consumption of dreams. While tourism as a commodified activity thrives on the illusion that it is somehow a break from the everydayness brought on by capitalism, the ideology of the theme park is itself the constructed illusion of a temporary "break" from the consumptive form of everyday life. But the theme park as an urban oasis is merely yet another construction of a utopian hyperreality. Here too infrastructure is a tool for carrying out a variety of ideological tasks.[23]

Historically, the importance of infrastructure in the evolution of the theme park, and its effect on urban ideology in general, apart from the role of television and mass media today, cannot be more clearly demonstrated than in the case of Coney Island and its role in the formation of "Manhattanism". In *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, Rem Koolhaas examines the significance of Coney Island and its relation to Manhattan's unique character. He recounts how at the junction between the 19th and 20th century, Coney Island became the playground for testing different ideas and technological advances that later reach Manhattan in the form of complex technical and ideological concepts.[24] What Coney Island then represents is an urbanism made possible by technology's infrastructure. The architecture of the Globe Tower, for example, manifests this trend toward the supposed fragmentation of reality that is said to define the metropolis. It does this via the introduction of a new relationship between site, form, and technology, wherein architecture is used to organize a series of technological infrastructures.[25] Similarly, Luna Park's infrastructure not only supports a fake reality, it also embodies the needs of culture industry; as Koolhaas writes:

> Luna Park is the first manifestation of a curse that is to haunt the architectural profession for the rest of its life, the formula: technology + cardboard (or any other flimsy material) = reality.[26]

Here the reality of nature is subsumed under the escalation of cultural intensity. While the city leads to a kind of reality scarcity; Coney island's multiple fake realities offers a variety of substitutes. This new urbanism of the technologically fantastic has generated derivatives across all outposts of

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[21] "The Creation of Disneyland." Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean. Accessed May 10, 2018. http://www.plosin.com/beatbegins/projects/fischer.html.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Lukas, Scott A. *Theme Park*. London: Reaktion, 2012: 21-64.

[24] Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1994: 30.

[25] *Ibid:* 49.

[26] *Ibid:* 42.

Manhattan, as well as the world at large, serving as an endless advertisement for the metropolitan condition itself.[27] It is quite clear then that infrastructure serves to satisfy the needs of societal ideologies, and it does so in an ineliminably physical manner. *But how does this corporeal form of ideology manifest at the level of the global? How has tourist infrastructure become a tool in this worldwide expansion of the ideology of the culture industry and the hyperreality first manifested in cases such as Coney Island?* The answer, I claim, can be found in Disneyland Paris.

Disneyland sells an Ideology: The Case of Disneyland Paris

As a descendant of the amusement park, Disneyland is an ideal contemporary example of the infrastructure of play. Not only does it effortlessly instantiate the spatial dimensions of our mass culture, but it does so on an unprecedented global scale. Located in a suburb of Paris, Disneyland Paris receives 14 million visitors annually. Since its grand opening in 1992, it has welcomed more than 320 million visitors; and it has created more than €68 billion in added value for the French economy, generating an average of 56,000 jobs every year. Additionally, its resort is the largest single-site employer in France with 15,000 cast members in more than 500 roles.[28]

Interestingly, with the building of Disneyland Paris, this American pop culture machine has now become a global form of infrastructure and now guides the global population's thinking on a mass scale through the physically urbanized space of Disneyland. An older form of collective entertainment, the theme park has now been transformed into a landscape of power, producing an environment of collective desire for the powerless.[29] For my own part, I can still remember being a kid waiting impatiently in line for hours just to get a spot on Space Mountain or the Indiana Jones temple of Peril. The endless queue, we might say, describes society's visual consumption of a landscape of social power.[30] In order for the Disney Corporation to control and manipulate ideology, it requires the appropriate infrastructure. *How, then, does Disneyland manage to lure its visual consumers (tourists) to occupy this space, spending huge amounts of time absorbing Disney entertainment? And what does this tell us about the nature of infrastructure more generally?*

The notion of a dreamland is achieved by the proper use of technology to support the narrative Disneyland wants. The perfectly mastered mechanization of exhibits eases the visual consumption of a spectacle by the tourists' gaze. Similar to Coney Island's Globe Tower, which represents something larger than the conquest of mechanization; it has dissolved all rational connections to nature; where the immensity of its interior prevents any reference to external reality.[31] Furthermore, in the age of smart technology, Disneyland must constantly reinvent itself and its infrastructure. Given that in today's environment of global competition the possibility for an impressive "*wow*" is hard to achieve, Disneyland has managed to create a technology-infused experience where the

27 Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan.* Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1994: 62.
28 Zukin, Sharon. *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World.* Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011: 222-232.
29 *Ibid.*
30 *Ibid.*
31 Koolhaas, Rem. *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan.* Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1994: 79.

spectator becomes an active participant in the experience. The experience of a video game with 3d visual objects makes the experience more memorable while guaranteeing consumption. This approach allows visitors feel like characters in the Disney narrative. What's more, given that humanity is trained to use smart phone technology on a regular basis, its immediacy and availability to all makes it seem like a natural behavior, an extension of one's every day mode of being, albeit in the form of play.[32]

Apart from the use of smart technologies, an important aspect to the successful artificiality of Disneyland besides the budget that comes along a corporation like Disney, is site-specific infrastructure. More specifically, Disneyland has an underground infrastructure of corridors that directs garbage, staff members, employees, food distribution as well as regulates backstage operations that the spectators shouldn't witness at any point in time.[33] No worker is being witnessed without his/her Mickey Mouse or Princess costume and no piece of garbage is flowing through the park. The park is the front stage of a movie set – an artificially made utopia. At any rate, tourist spaces exclude visible evidence of the backstage operations, a result of a staged authenticity in service of "fun."

Given all of the above, Disneyland Paris presents a particularly interesting case study for the understanding of infrastructure of play for a variety of reasons. The park itself belongs in the Eastern section of Paris, a region called, *Marne-La-Vallée. Val d'Europe* the name the territory the Disney Corporation has developed its infrastructure of play, is the result of a public-private partnership between the French government and the American company. It encompasses, 1,943 hectares of land, and for the past 25 years has become a significant contributor in aiding the reinforcement of Eastern *Ile-de-France. Val d'Europe* grows according to a plan, where the French government releases parts of the land for development once a previous step has been completed.[34] *Val d' Europe*, has developed into an urban living and working territory including multiple businesses. Currently, it provides 21,000 jobs, shops and facilities, business and commercial properties – with an additional 136,000 m^2 office space for Euro-Disney's own use.[35] The theme park includes hotels and restaurants for its visitors, accommodation for its employees as well as an elaborate transportation network that makes the trip to Disneyland possible. Through an elaborate infrastructural system of transportation, developed by the French government, a train from the airport of Paris, the leading TGV train as well as the RER rail to central Paris *Val-d'Europe* is within reach.[36] This is particularly important because Disneyland is a destination that one cannot encounter randomly while strolling in the historic district of a city or the woods in a hike. Disney is a

[32] Porges, Seth. "How Disney Parks Are Using Familiar Technology To Shape The Future." Forbes. September 30, 2015. Accessed May 10, 2018. https://www.forbes.com/sites/sethporges/2015/05/11/how-disney-parks-are-using-familiar-technology-to-shape-the-future/2/#203bdf8e3694.

[33] "Tourism and the Commodification of Urban Culture" By Susan S. Fainstein." The Urban Reinventors. Accessed May 09, 2018. http://www.urbanreinventors.net/paper.php?issue=2&author=fainstein.

[34] D'Hauteserre, Anne-Marie. "Val d'Europe: A pioneering turn to 'experience' planning?" in *European Urban and Regional Studies*. 2012: 444.

[35] "Disney Has Built a Pseudo-Paris near Paris." The Economist. August 03, 2017. Accessed May 10, 2018. https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21725807-worlds-greatest-simulacrum-company-finally-outdoes-itself-disney-has-built-pseudo-paris-near.

[36] Orillard, Clément, and Picon, Antoine. *De La Ville Nouvelle À La Ville Durable: Marne-la-Vallée.* Marseille: Parenthèses, 2012: 6-9.

destination that one needs to reach usually by car. Disneyland is also a destination where the entire family can spend leisure time collectively. The case of Celebration or unrealized Epcot – Walt Disney's first visions of urban living – can be reached only by car. On the contrary, in the case of Paris, public transportation allows for Disney to be interpreted as an extension of the urban fabric of the city, and not a utopian-gated-suburban garden-city-community. While *Val d'Europe* shares Celebration's principles of "new urbanism," promoting mixed zoning and walkability, unlike Celebration Florida, with a population of 10,000, *Val d'Europe's* population has grown from 30,000 in 1987 to 60,000 in 2010 (about a fifth of working-age adults are employed by Disney).[37] Finally, while Disneyland LA, suffered from outsourced businesses that fed the tourists *Val d'Europe*'s planning has managed to create a controlled environment where activity is organized by the corporation and not other businesses.

It is evident then, that through a creative re-imagination of urban space Disneyland is providing capital and activity based on consumption rather than production. The ultimate goal was to create an "Imaginative City" – a synergy between leisure, economic activities and everyday living.[38] The artificial construction of a landscape has establishes the basic elements of a new infrastructure of pleasure. Strategies of cultural consumption may only complement strategies of capital accumulation but links between cultural capital (as per the Walt Disney Company) and real estate development (as per the new town plans of the French state) enabled new economic clusters that are helping Paris become a world capital of the art of living, cultural and heritage tourism, and family entertainment.[39] *So what does the promotion of Disneyland as a permanent livable environment tells us about the nature of our society and its ideology after-all?*

"Disneyification": a Metaphor to describe Urban Ideology

It is evident by now that Disneyland presents an extreme manifestation of the conditions that define today's mass media culture, and in built form. In *The Society of the Spectacle* Guy Debord offers a critique of contemporary consumer culture and commodity fetishism that we can apply here. For Debord, the production of images is definitive of the nature of our society today. When he writes: "all that was once directly lived has become mere representation," Debord is explaining that in today's consumer society, life is not concerned with the search for authenticity, but rather is more concerned with having, owning, consuming.[40] As a result, a spectacle is no longer a mere collection of images because images are used to feed a need for consumption through the production of commodified appearance.[41] As consumption has gained agency in linking individual life with urban life, theme parks are spatial environments directing economic activity according to capitalism's guidelines by dictating and organizing needs for consumption.[42] Theme parks aesthetically transform

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[37] Orillard, Clément, and Picon, Antoine. *De La Ville Nouvelle À La Ville Durable: Marne-la-Vallée*. Marseille: Parenthèses, 2012: 150.
[38] D'Hauteserre, Anne-Marie. "Val d'Europe: A pioneering turn to 'experience' planning?" in *European Urban and Regional Studies*. 2012: 436.
[39] *Ibid:* 444.
[40] Debord, Guy. and Knabb, Ken. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2014: Thesis 1.
[41] *Ibid:* Thesis 19.
[42] D'Hauteserre, Anne-Marie. "Val d'Europe: A pioneering turn to 'experience' planning?" in *European Urban and Regional Studies*. 2012: 440.

space by turning environments to specialized vessels for spectacles of pleasure and entertainment, and all for profit making purposes. While Disneyland demonstrates the most extreme case of commodity fetishism, Walt Disney himself believed he was redefining reality:

> You know the fantasy isn't here. This is very real […] the park is reality. The people are natural here; they're having a good time; they are communicating. This is what people really are. The fantasy is – out there, outside the gates of Disneyland, where people have hatreds and people have prejudices. It's not really real! [43]

Its seems to me, then, that what Walt Disney envisioned, resonates with Debord's description of the society of spectacle. Disneyland has becomes the paradigm for the most extreme conditions that define consumer society of leisure, enjoyment, and recreation. It offers a series fragmented realities, a diorama of different concurrent experiences, and a narrative of different themes.[44] In my view then Disneyland, in general, and Eurodisney, more specifically, embodies today's post-modern condition, its gestures intensifying the failures of the Enlightenment by praising the fragmentation of history and the manipulation of culture for capital consumption.[45] Jean François Lyotard in *The Post Modern Condition: A report on Knowledge* writes:

> The logic of maximum performance is no doubt inconsistent in many ways, particularly with respect to contradiction in the socioeconomic field: it demands both less work (to lower production costs) and more (to lessen the social burden of the idle population). But our incredulity is now such that we no longer expect salvation to rise from these inconsistencies, as did Marx. Still, the postmodern condition is as much a stranger to disenchantment as it is to the blind positivity of delegitimation. Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside? The operativity criterion is technological; it has no relevance for judging what is true or just.[46]

The fragmentation of today's society only intensifies Disneyland's attempt to celebrate the supposed culmination of Western thought, but this only reminds us that its ideology is a tool of capital accumulation. Evidence for this can clearly be seen in the generalization of Disney's name into a descriptor of a now common approach to marketing. The term "Disneyfication" is used to describe how Disney carries out the self-promotion of its identity. Disney's model is now imitated globally whether in the space of a theme park, or the rehabilitation of a public square. So one sees that mechanically driven reproduction of an ideology, that isn't culturally authentic in terms of coming out of a cultural tradition, has become popular to mass society. While Susan Fainsteen argues in her article "Tourism and the Commodification of Urban Reinventors" that "Disney and Time Square constitute a democratic tourism and provide common reference points in an increasingly fragmented world", I would say that Disneyland affects cultural identity by turning places into theme parks

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[43] D'Hauteserre, Anne-Marie. "Val d'Europe: A pioneering turn to 'experience' planning?" in *European Urban and Regional Studies*. 2012: 439.

[44] Zukin, Sharon. *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World.* Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2011: 222-232.

[45] Lyotard, J. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.* Trs. G. Bennington & B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984: 24-25.

[46] *Ibid:* 24-25.

within a global competition for control of consumption.[47] Urban spaces, when they are trying to become touristic places, through the reclamation of their downtowns, the elimination of their slums, the creation of resort enclaves somehow turn themselves into spectacles. Similar to Disney's underground corridor infrastructure, the popular ideology then only reinforces a dualism between real and artificial, clean and dirty, authentic and staged, work and play, production and consumption in contemporary urban living. All of which in the end is a stage of itself.

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[47] "Tourism and the Commodification of Urban Culture" By Susan S. Fainstein." The Urban Reinventors. Accessed May 09, 2018. http://www.urbanreinventors.net/paper.php?issue=2&author=fainstein.

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