THE CITY AS THEME PARK AND THE THEME PARK AS CITY
AMUSEMENT SPACE, URBAN FORM, AND CULTURAL CHANGE

by

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Abstract

Amusement space embodies hegemonic and utopian dialogue concerning urban conditions. Throughout the twentieth century, two rival urban visions have reigned: the Coney Island model, a chancy, participatory theatre where patrons can confront head-on current conditions; and the Disney model, a carefully planned setting where guests are made to feel comfortable and secure.

The current ascendancy of the Disney model, evident in urban and suburban landscapes increasingly shaped in the Disney image, has attracted the attention -- and alarm -- of critics who interpret this trend as urban planning with a 'sinister twist.' A case study of Disney's involvement with Seattle Center, originally the site of the 1962 World's Fair and now Seattle's premier urban park, demonstrates, however, that people actively challenge, negotiate, and reform the Disney model to meet their needs by infusing the space with traces of the rival Coney model. The suggestions Disney made for renovation of Seattle Center sparked a city-wide debate that centred on the roles of local participation, cultural sensitivity, and aesthetic design in urban space; Disney was found lacking on all accounts and eventually rejected entirely. Seattle's experience with Disney demonstrates that amusement space offers a rich terrain upon which people can dream about, and implement, urban change.
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FOR DOUG KONRAD
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

What happens when the imagineered logic of Disneyworld [sic] becomes the logic of the rest of the world?¹

In recent years, geographers and other students of the city have begun to track what is seen as a new urban form: the city as theme park, or, as Edward Relph suggests, the logic of Disneyland writ large upon the landscape. Their interest in Disney-like leisure space and its influence on urban and suburban design inspires wider enquiry into the nature of popular culture as literally the grounds upon which social, economic, political and cultural issues are debated. Amusement and theme parks in particular emerge as sites that embody fundamental dialogue concerning what the city is now and what it should be in the future; this richly symbolic interchange directly transforms urban space. This thesis provides a detailed theoretical and empirical examination of amusement space, urban form, and cultural change in order to answer the question: What possibilities do amusement spaces offer as sites of hegemonic and utopian cultural debate?

Amusement space, though an increasingly central part of everyday North American life throughout the twentieth century, is relatively uncharted academic territory. Amusement, theme, and related resort parks, shopping malls, historical villages,

sports complexes, and other landscapes of leisure dominate United States and Canadian cityscapes, attract millions of visitors a year, and record billions of dollars in profits. The significance of amusement space to traditional geographic pursuits, however, rarely has been queried. Dismissed as part of the general, and generally irrelevant, category of 'popular culture' or 'mass culture,' amusement space has inspired few to examine the powerful economic and political ties that historically have defined leisure's role in the city; even fewer have explored the cultural dynamic by which landscapes of leisure incubate new and utopian urban forms.

With the pioneering voices of Braithwaite (1968), Cox (1976), Kyriazi (1976), and Snow (1984), academics began to situate the rise of amusement parks within the broader social fabric of urban and suburban development. Kasson (1978), Koolhaas (1978), and Peiss (1986) brought the focus more sharply onto the cultural realm. The seminal 1981 special issue of the Journal of Popular Culture, offering many research perspectives on the cultural implications of amusement and theme parks, announced that the era of interdisciplinary study of amusement space had begun. It was, however, the interest in postmodernism, spreading rapidly across many fields by the mid-1980s, that acted as the catalyst that brought amusement space beyond the disciplinary confines of amusement park historians and other specialists and into the broader academic gaze.
During the decades when most academics either dabbled sporadically in the arena of leisure space or ignored it altogether, practicing architects, developers, and urban planners were building a much more intimate knowledge of the field. Spurred by the popularity of the Disney parks, this group of theme park enthusiasts carefully studied amusement space to determine what Disney and others could teach them about urban design. Mega-developer James Rouse, for instance, as early as 1963 declared that "Disneyland is the greatest piece of urban design in the United States today" (Rouse, cited in Bright 1987, p.29) Significantly, Rouse and others who shared his conviction were in a financial and political position to translate their visions into three dimensions in the landscape. The Disney motif, thus, has been an explicit influence on urban design for at least thirty years, and students of the city are only now beginning to grasp this cultural dynamic.

As more and more North American landscapes look as though they have been designed with the Disney touch, the relationship between amusement space, urban form, and cultural change takes on new significance for the geographer. How the contours of this relationship are conceptualized will have serious ramifications for the nature of interpretation. Amusement and theme parks play an increasingly central role in the economic, political, social, and cultural fabric of the city, and as such offer a plethora of vantage points from
which to approach study. It is my explicit aim to approach the study of amusement space at the point where theoretical and empirical work intersect, and to focus on the cultural conduits through which our cities of tomorrow are envisioned. I begin by evaluating, and ultimately rejecting, the most well developed line of cultural critique, the 'city as theme park' interpretation, and then asking how we can go past its flaws.

The 'city as theme park' interpretation, inspired by the dramatic impact of Disney-designed space and observed through the lens of various postmodern theoretical constructs, proposes a view of contemporary and emergent everyday space as a landscape at once fascinating and chilling. The formative characteristics of this new space, shimmering with alluring layers of simulacra but concealing underneath a cruel social order, are seen as the articulation of the perceived 'postmodern' rupture of time and space that is linked, in this interpretation, with fundamental cultural and economic transformations. As the first sustained commentary on the general relationship between amusement space, cultural practice, and urban form, the 'city as theme park' interpretation provides an invaluable spark that focuses academic debate solidly on amusement space. It also, however, offers a dubious point of departure for comprehensive study: on both empirical and theoretical grounds, it is inherently flawed. Critical examination of the 'city as theme park' argument, and particularly the nature of its shortcomings, can
point us toward the construction of a more viable framework from which to study amusement space in the city.

The City as Theme Park: "Urban Renewal with a Sinister Twist".  

Welcome to the theme park city, a city whose foundations are built on the quicksand of "hyperspace," whose quasi-public, consumer-oriented spaces and omnipresent market shelves are filled with the "hyperreal," and whose zombie-like residents, having lost their ability to mentally map their surroundings, aimlessly loiter in "hypercrowds." Commentators have observed the perceived excesses of a popular culture sponsored primarily by the Walt Disney Company, drawn these excesses into complex theoretical structures that posit new relationships between culture and capital, and gasped: "[it is] a mutation in built space itself" (Jameson 1984, p.80). Such "mutation" provides for these observers the basis for both including amusement space in their realm of enquiry, and for treating it with suspicious pessimism.

Hyperspace, the provocative and controversial concept developed by Jameson (1984), represents the dissolution of time and space as we know it. Due to the newly emerging role of aesthetic production within current formations of late capitalism, highlighted by "the frantic economic urgency of
producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods," the cultural realm is overwhelmed by a new postmodern spatial and temporal logic (Jameson 1984, p.56). Spectacle and fashion-plate images replace what used to be real history and real geography. The resultant collage of images is only skin-deep; the landscape of hyperspace consists of randomly juxtaposed pseudo-geographies, "a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers . . . a series of pure and unrelated presents in time" (Jameson 1984, p.72). Yet, significantly, while the surface may appear to be a bewildering chaos, the structural placement of cultural production assigns hyperspace a more nefarious role: "this global, yet American, postmodern culture is the . . . expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world" (Jameson 1984, p.57). That hyperspace transcends people's ability to cognitively map their surroundings is doubly dangerous: not only can individuals no longer easily locate themselves perceptually in a mappable external world, but they are effectively blinkered from seeing capitalism's true situation, the "great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects" (Jameson 1984, p.84).

The postmodern landscape of hyperspace has been the focus of thorough geographic investigation; vast portions of North America have been identified as emblematic of Jameson's concept, from micro-scale case studies of shopping malls
(Shields 1989, Hopkins 1990), to regional examinations of metropolitan areas (Soja 1989) and broader national trends (Harvey 1989). This research has pointed to one recurring theme: hyperspace’s fascination with simulacra and spectacle, its contrived depthlessness, and its fragmentation and reconstitution of geography and history as marketable entities all have recognizable counterparts in the world of the theme park. As Jameson himself suggests in an interview with Stephanson (1988, p.8), "Disneyland is, on the whole, supremely prophetic and paradigmatic of a lot of this stuff."

The growing literature that traces hyperspace’s main features to theme park design is of central interest. The assertion that amusement space has fostered urban cultural trends now readily visible in cities and suburbs warrants closer examination, for it ultimately raises the same questions that inform this thesis: What urban models do theme parks embody, and how do they translate into the ‘real world?’ As I shall argue, however, the ‘city as theme park’ perspective cannot adequately answer them.

Those who argue that the city has become a theme park have an extensive body of Disney-related research from which to draw. The salient features of hyperspace have all been linked to Disney theme parks at one point or another. Baudrillard (1983) and Eco (1986), first, provide lively if pessimistic assessments of the Disney parks as perfect models of the hyperreal. The parks’ "entangled orders of simulation"
conceal the fact that the real is no longer real, and encourage us to believe that the hyperreal is, in fact, the superior and more desirable product (Baudrillard 1983, p.23; Eco 1986, p.46). Both writers see Disney’s hyperreality as an accurate, albeit exaggerated, representation of broader urban trends. Walt Disney World, Eco (1986, p.47) states, is not simply a toy city but "the model of an urban agglomerate of the future." For Baudrillard (1983, p.26), the future is already here: America now exists on the order of the hyperreal, and a city such as Los Angeles is "nothing more than a network of endless, unreal circulation - a town of fabulous proportions but without space or dimensions." Marin (1984), in his semiotic analysis of Disneyland, further reinforces the assessment that as a model for urban utopia, Disneyland is utterly "degenerate." Disney’s peculiar spatial and temporal logic, having its own coordinates, structures, and grammatical rules, entertains the visitor with its "distorted and fantasmic representation of daily life" where images become reality and reality becomes an image (Marin 1984, p.240). The experience of this "empty abyss" of capitalist exploitation is "tantamount to a shipwreck or loss of consciousness;" the visitor is left sensing that only his or her will to consume is real (Marin 1984, p.242).

The tendency to single out Disney theme parks as "supremely prophetic and paradigmatic" of hyperspace also appears in more explicitly geographic enquiry. Harvey (1989)
and Soja (1989) directly link Disney to simulacra, fragmentation, and commodification. Harvey, in his extensive study of the postmodern condition, notes that "Epcott [sic] and Disneyworld [sic]" are prime examples of hyperspace's tendency to reduce the world's geographic complexity to a series of images, like television (Harvey 1989, p.300). Soja (1989, p.246-7) likens all of Los Angeles to a "gigantic agglomeration of theme parks, a lifespace comprised of Disneyworlds [sic]." As in Jameson's hyperspace, this Disney/Los Angeles is based on juxtaposed snatches of simulacra in the form of global villages and mimetic American landscapes that cleverly hide the labour processes keeping them together.

Sorkin (1992) and Crawford (1992) see more and more elements of the postmodern world exemplified in theme park space, and more and more aspects of theme park space evident in the 'real world.' This observation allows for the most sustained commentary yet on Disney's role in hyperspace: the city as theme park is no longer merely a metaphoric image; it has become an actual construct, a starting point from which to understand contemporary urban development. The theme park, now indistinguishable from the theme park city, is "ageographica . . . simulations without end" (Sorkin 1992, p.xv). Whether in Disneyland's "ersatz Main Street," the "phony historic festivity of a Rouse marketplace," or the "gentrified architecture of the 'reborn' Lower East Side," one
is completely submerged in hyperspace's spatial and temporal coordinates (Sorkin 1992, p.xiv). Crawford, finally, clearly implicates Disney in the success of the entire hyperspace project. "Our unquestioning acceptance of this landscape of juxtaposition," she asserts, "owes much to Disneyland's radical compression of themes remote in space and time" (Crawford 1992, p.227). By visiting Disneyland or simply being exposed to the Disney logic that blankets North American mass media, we become inured to "discrete worlds [that] collide with an ease previously achieved only in the most speculative science fiction." Once immune to the inhumanities of hyperspace, we gladly accept it as a superior replacement for previous realities.

In summary, the 'city as theme park,' offers a captivating and disturbing commentary on today's urban and suburban landscapes. Proponents claim that the Disney theme parks both reflect hyperspace's spatial logic and actively influence hyperspace's intrusion into surrounding geographies. Fundamental to their argument is the assertion that Disney's role in the propagation of hyperspace is not coincidental: theme park space becomes the hotbed of new formations of everyday life, and Disney, being the undisputed leader in theme park design, becomes the trendsetter.

Rethinking the Theme: Amusement Space, Urban Form, and Cultural Change.
It is at once fascinating and unsatisfactory to identify current and emerging urban ills and link them to Disney-Imagineered theme park space. On the one hand, by acknowledging the significance of popular culture, this literature firmly places the academic gaze upon topics and places earlier scorned as irrelevant to serious geography. Observations within this literature often provoke a sense of crisp recognition: Cities have undergone dramatic economic restructuring during the last century, and these changes clearly are articulated at an everyday level in the cultural sphere. The three salient characteristics of the theme park city as outlined by Sorkin (1992, p.xiii) -- the dissipation of all stable relationships to local geography, the presence of security and surveillance systems, and the primacy of simulation -- have empirical counterpoints easily identified across North America.

At the same time, however, the commentary frustrates as it hints at larger, and largely unexplored, questions. Why are these supposedly degenerate landscapes of leisure so popular? What is the role of cultural resistance in their creation and re-creation? What do the cultural images portrayed in the theme park city signify, in the context of the hegemonic and utopian processes that define them? And, most crucially, how exactly does the cultural dynamic operate whereby the theme park reproduces itself across the city --
what processes are carried through by actual people living in actual economic, political, and social structures?

The 'city as theme park' perspective ultimately fails to answer questions such as these for two reasons. First, by examining amusement space solely within the context of the impact that the Walt Disney Company has had over the last three decades, these observers are not able to posit relationships that would adequately encompass the broader cultural processes that have defined amusement space throughout the twentieth century. Amusement space, of course, did not begin with Walt Disney, and the relationship between amusement parks and urban form did not begin with Disneyland. The ties between leisure space and the city follow a long and complex trajectory dating from at least 1895, with the construction of the first official amusement park, and encompass a lengthy debate over Disney and other forms of amusement design. It becomes necessary to disentangle the peculiarities of Disney from the wider cultural processes associated with amusement space.

Second, the nature of amusement park history further suggests that the theoretical framework employed by 'postmodern' scholars to study the contemporary scene is not nuanced enough to capture the complexity of the ways in which amusement space is shaped by urban cultural processes. Specifically, the theorization of popular culture in the postmodern approach is exceedingly troublesome. Rather than
dismiss popular cultural forms as debased, and participants in
popular culture as unwitting zombies, it will be more fruitful
to ask instead about the ways in which cultural forms and
meanings are formulated and contested through the vibrant
constellation of hegemonic and utopian cultural practices. In
short, in order to work toward an understanding of the
possibilities amusement space offers in North American cities,
a new theoretical and empirical framework must be constructed.

Outline of the Study.

In this study, I approach the realm of amusement space
with a desire to develop new theoretical and empirical
bearings. I pursue three main themes: (1) I conceptualize
popular culture in ways that acknowledge the breadth of its
hegemonic potential, as a dynamic that both reinforces the
dominant culture and opens up utopian avenues for resistance;
(2) I analyze amusement and theme park history in order to
examine the ways in which North American amusement space
throughout the twentieth century has been entwined with urban
form; and (3) I develop an original empirical case study of
the people, processes, and landscapes that lie behind the
formation and transformation of one urban leisure space,
Seattle Center, in order to demonstrate both the complexities
and possibilities that amusement space offers in the 'real'
world.
The chapters are organized as follows. In Chapter Two, I construct my theoretical framework by drawing together culture theory, popular culture theory, and utopian studies. Chapters Three and Four draw upon primary and secondary archival research to examine the amusement park as a site for cultural debate. I present in Chapter Three the two most significant models of amusement space throughout the twentieth century, Coney Island and the Disney parks. In Chapter Four, I consider how issues debated in amusement space become translated into the 'real' world by studying specifically the dramatic impact that the Disney model has had on urban design today.

The subsequent chapters ground the theoretical construct in empirical observation in the form of a case study of Seattle, Washington. The landscape of interest is the city's premier urban park and civic centre, Seattle Center, a site originally designed with the help of the Walt Disney Company for the 1962 World's Fair. Despite its Disney pedigree, Seattle Center over the next twenty years evolved into a distinctly non-Disney landscape. The lack of coherent design, the littered paths, the sorry state of the vegetation, the chaotic usage by everyone from opera-goers to drug dealers, and the occasional gunshot, by the 1980's inspired some Seattle residents to seek Disney's assistance again.

Disney's renewed involvement with the city of Seattle, now in the capacity of urban planning consultant, was marked
by controversy. Resistance to the Disney ideal, ultimately, proved stronger than support of it: after nearly a decade of heated debate, Disney was sent packing and their blueprints for change shelved.

At the centre of these skirmishes, both literally and symbolically, was Seattle Centre's tiny amusement park, the Fun Forest. The Fun Forest, often criticized as a seedy, randomly scattered collection of unadorned amusement rides and games of chance frequented by an even seedier group of patrons, was often the primary target of the pro-Disney contingency. Disneyify the Fun Forest, the reasoning went, and its improved personality will rub off on the rest of Seattle Center. The logic easily extended to Seattle Center as a whole: eliminate undesirable Fun Forest-esque characteristics, those traces of an earlier, now unacceptable vision of urbanity, and it would be possible to restore to Seattle Center the urban values that Disney had initiated in 1962.

It is the much-maligned Fun Forest, as both the symbolic and literal grounds of debate, that is at the heart of this case study. By tracing its history from its ignoble beginnings in 1962 to its equally ignoble existence today, I highlight not only the cultural processes and tensions behind the development of amusement space in an era dominated by the Disney ideal, but also the broader and sometimes convoluted ties between amusement space and urban form as articulated in
an actual city, by actual people. Drawing from a diversity of archival sources such as newspapers, City Council and other committee-meeting minutes, planning documents, and architectural blueprints, interviewing key players involved in both decision-making and decision-implementing, and observing the landscape itself, I attempt to flesh in the many processes that culminate in the relationship between amusement space and urban form.

The chapters that encompass the case study are arranged both chronologically and thematically. Chapter Five considers Seattle Center's beginnings as a World's Fair site, and highlights specifically the fate of the Fair's midway in the wider context of Disney's involvement in the creation and implementation of specific site-wide urban utopian traces. Chapter Six follows Seattle Center as it is transformed from World's Fair site to permanent civic centre; of special interest are the ways in which the amusement park in particular, and the entire site in general, gradually subverts the initial Disney traces and evolves, instead, into a less controlled and less controllable landscape. Disney's reemergence in Seattle Center's life history is the central theme of Chapter Seven, which examines how first the Fun Forest, and then the entire Seattle Center, fell under critical scrutiny and inspired some to believe that the only way to reintroduce a more appropriate vision of urbanity would be to hire the Disney Company as a planning consultant. The
chapter traces Disney's stormy involvement with Seattle throughout the 1980s, until the city finally rejected their assistance. Finally, Chapter Eight, the thesis' concluding chapter, offers an epilogue to the story by speculating on the future that awaits the Fun Forest today.

This thesis is shaped by the conscious rejection of the doomsayers who dismiss all amusement space as degenerate; it is inspired by the desire to introduce into present geographic debate an alternative voice: one that resurrects the utopian possibilities of landscapes of leisure. Ultimately, however, the significance of this work is intended to transcend current 'postmodern' fashion. Whether or not the city has become a theme park, whether or not space has mutated into hyperspace, it is crucial to come to terms with these landscapes that capture the attention, money, and dreams of substantial numbers of North Americans, and understand them in a broader historical context. Long before Jameson warned of the ascendancy of culture, turn-of-the-century amusement parks such as Coney Island were said to attract over a million visitors a day. Amusement space has played a central role in North American culture and North American urbanity for almost a century: geographers must address it in order to understand how, in the everyday lives of millions of people, our cities of tomorrow are being shaped.
CHAPTER TWO
TOWARD A THEORY OF POPULAR CULTURE

Bright sunlight falls on the Fun Forest. Children eagerly pull their parents from ride to ride, teenagers casually saunter as far from their parents as possible, adults mill about, some ride bicycles, and some sit and watch the scene. At one end of the park, the aging but still flamboyant gargoyles of the ‘Flight to Mars’ facade leer at visitors from behind their chain-link fence (Figure 1). The roller coaster next to it, long called the ‘Wild Mouse’ but finally upgraded (structurally and symbolically) to the ‘Galaxi,’ still rattles and quivers noticeably. The dimly lit video arcade, housed in what appears to be the hollow shell of a 1950’s coffee shop, but is actually the hollow shell of the 1962 World’s Fair Hawaiian Pavilion, seems to swallow teenagers as effectively as the space-age ‘Gravitron’ spaceship next to it. Rock music blares from an indeterminable source. A single deciduous tree stands in the middle of the main pathway, surrounded by concrete. Two lone dwarf pines guard the Gravitron’s entrance (Figure 2). The employees, predominantly young and from ethnic minorities, rarely smile.

Small children stand on tiptoe to reach the rifles, darts, and other gaming paraphernalia to play, as paying customers, ‘Bonanza,’ ‘Penny Falls,’ ‘Tucky Derby,’ and similar games of chance. The booths, tucked under the shadowy Monorail tracks, line the path that visitors must follow to reach the ‘kiddie’ rides clustered at the extreme opposite end. There, a colorful miniature train circles endlessly under a willow tree; antique cars tool around a shady and bucolic setting (Figure 3). Children repeatedly swing in the seats of the Ferris Wheel, while employees, visibly on edge, repeatedly tell them not to. Nearby, a giant Porky Pig atop a concession stand advertises, succinctly, ‘Fun Food’ (Figure 4). More serious eaters head to the ‘Center House,’ the old armory pressed into service for the World’s Fair. Many recall this building as the ‘Food Circus,’ the highlight of which, at least from a child’s perspective, was an elevator shaped like an enormous glass bubble. A small shopping mall now inhabits the lower levels where the bubbleator used to stop; few people frequent it.
1. The Fun Forest's Flight to Mars
3. The Fun Forest's Antique Auto Ride
4. Fun Food
Beyond the Fun Forest gates are tangible reminders of the contemporary city. To the west sit the landscaped grounds of Seattle Center, the civic centre within which the Fun Forest is located. Just over the hill from the copper-roofed Miniature Golf attraction, local artists perform an AIDS benefit concert at the 1962 era Mural Amphitheatre. Groups of school children head toward the distinctive, soaring arches of the science museum, stopping to throw coins and the occasional Pepsi cup into the decorative ponds. Homeless people scoop up the money and return to their perch on benches at the fountain's edge. And, to the east, on the Fun Forest's other side, is the city itself: cars rush past along Fifth Avenue, city residents wander between drug stores, grocery stores, upholstery repair shops, gun resale centres, bars. Some stop to take a swig from a bottle, others panhandle. From the Fun Forest, the city is in full view.

An afternoon at the Fun Forest, the site of this thesis' case study, reveals a landscape of leisure fraught with complexities. In one glance it becomes apparent that the Fun Forest, though ostensibly of the same genre as and indeed repeatedly touched by Walt Disney's design approach, embodies several diverse and often contradictory urban narratives. Conceived for the Disney-inspired 1962 World's Fair, and shaped by early attempts at landscaping and theming, it is now defined by a chaotic and unpredictable atmosphere sharply at odds with the Disney ideal. It is situated within a civic centre that openly acknowledges problems such as AIDS or homelessness that would be banished in the Disney city. The Fun Forest is literally the terrain upon which various definitions of amusement space and more broadly urban living are contested. To study the Fun Forest, thus, we require a theoretical examination of the ways that popular cultural
practices are generated and expressed in the built environment.

The amusement park, like most of the everyday environment, traditionally has not been the focus of extended theoretical debate. One does not have many models to follow in initiating a study of amusement parks. The advantages of this situation are many: in the absence of an accepted theoretical framework, the geographer is encouraged to work through the various facets of mass-mediated landscapes of leisure in order to understand where the significant relationships may lie, and to determine from where the theoretical analysis should begin.

To work toward this end, the theoretical exploration moves through several phases. Cultural geographers have, in recent years, demonstrated growing interest in the landscape of popular culture and underlying frameworks for its theorization. An examination of recent trends in cultural geography, first, will set the stage for approaching the popular cultural landscape in general. How the cultural landscape is viewed ultimately depends on how the dynamic of culture itself is viewed. Consequently, the theorization of culture, and in particular the concept of hegemony, will be scrutinized more closely in the second section. Since in the case of the amusement park, we are dealing with a decidedly commodified form of culture, discussion narrows to debates concerning popular vs. mass culture. In order to retrieve
mass-mediated culture from the negativity surrounding "mass culture," the final theoretical section will consider one facet of the wider cultural dynamic, that of the utopian impulse. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to develop a theoretical framework that sees amusement space as 'empty space' through which, via hegemonic and utopian modes of cultural discourse, urban issues are postulated, debated, and transformed.

Cultural Geography and the Everyday Landscape

The amusement park offers to the cultural geographer a singular opportunity for study. As a virtual laboratory of popular culture, it illuminates significant dimensions of the cultural landscape. The rich symbolism of fantasy-laden space, the contextual importance of the institutions, organizations, and historical moments within which these parks developed, and the hegemonic and utopian forms of cultural dialogue that mediate between fantasy and reality all speak to broader dynamics in the everyday landscape. What at first may seem to represent no more than a diversion from the 'real' cultural landscape, thus, reveals itself as a highly complex space.

In the last two decades, cultural geography’s intellectual trajectory has moved in a direction that offers a solid foundation for the study of amusement space. In this
section, I examine how two complementary trends, a growing interest in the geography of popular culture and a more general concern over the theorization of culture itself, have enriched cultural geography, and how they suggest future possibilities for landscape study.

The current reconceptualization of cultural geography has been fueled by the realization that previous cultural geographies offered, at their worst, little more than inventories of facts and artifacts describing isolated, non-industrial areas. These so-called 'objective' studies, it was charged, were laden with hidden assumptions about culture. This precipitated serious examinations of the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural geography that had developed during the twentieth century. Jackson (1980) notes that critical energy focused almost exclusively on North American cultural geography and the contributions of Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School. Though this tendency to equate cultural geography with Carl Sauer obscures pioneering efforts by others, and downplays Sauer's more humanistic interests (Price and Lewis 1993), it is nonetheless instructive to examine the debate over Sauer.

Sauer's 1925 essay "Morphology of Landscape" focused interest on the concept of "landscape," a concept that

\footnote{In particular, it overlooks early interest in the geography of the imagination (Wright 1947, Lowenthal 1961), and the contributions of J. B. Jackson and \textit{Landscape} magazine in the 1950s.}
remains, if substantially modified, fruitful to the present day. His empirical studies set the tone for the examination of landscapes, encouraging by example what should be studied. Preferred locales were primitive, isolated, and rural. Preferred objects of inquiry were the facts and artifacts that could be seen as indicative of homogenous cultural regions.

Perhaps the most contentious dimension of Sauer's legacy is the theoretical framework from which he approached "culture." James Duncan (1980) powerfully argues that the superorganic concept of culture that informed Sauer's work in the early twentieth century has been handed down, virtually uncontested, to every generation of cultural geographers since. Blaut (1980) remarks that this has resulted in the paradoxical situation where cultural geographers, themselves culture-bound, undertook research and presented results as if it was pure objective science. Yet underneath the so-called objectivity, cultural geographies were infused with several major assumptions about culture that together can be categorized as "superorganic" (Brookfield 1964, Duncan 1980).

Though the superorganic mode of explanation, as a form of cultural determinism, initially provided a welcome counterpart to environmental determinism, this approach effectively resulted in the reification of culture. Culture became a thing, a mystic entity that existed external to individuals. Individuals had a rather passive role, as they all internalized "culture" in the same manner, regardless of their
ethnic group, income level, or other personal and social
traits. Within culture, consensus prevailed, and it was
expressed in the landscape in the form of homogeneous areas.
Thus, it was not deemed particularly useful to study
individuals, since they were merely the conduit through which
culture was transferred into material form. Study focused on
the material form itself; a landscape could be understood
through its morphology.

Imagining what a cultural geography of the amusement park
would entail from such a perspective is in a sense folly,
since by definition the amusement park -- an urban form in
many ways the very expression of mass culture -- would never
have qualified as a landscape worth studying. Nonetheless,
such an exercise can be instructive as its weaknesses point us
toward possible avenues of reconceptualization.

In the superorganic analysis, the physical appearance of,
for instance, the Fun Forest, would be shaped by "culture."
First, the Fun Forest’s physical attributes would be
inventoried and people’s behaviours observed and summarized
into ideal types. Next, the theoretical assumptions of the
superorganic would provide the framework for interpretation.
The landscape of the Fun Forest -- that is, its materially
observable components -- would be explained by the causal
efficacy of a culture of pure homogeneity that reflected the
traits characteristic of Seattle, or the Pacific North West,
or perhaps the entire United States.
Such an approach, even in this imaginary scenario, raises serious theoretical and empirical problems. A brief history of the Fun Forest (and indeed Seattle Center) indicates that conflict, not consensus, has been its defining characteristic from the beginning. Conflict, further, comes from all sides and spans several levels of scale, from individuals to local and federal governments to multinational corporations. To unravel the Fun Forest’s history and understand its landscape, then, the operative theory of culture must be reworked first, to restore agency to individuals, and, second, to bring culture down from the plane on which it floated to the ground, where it can be seen as the very terrain upon which cultural practices are actively constructed and contested.

The first wave of sustained assaults against the superorganic formulation of cultural geography sought to rescue all that the individual had been stripped of: creativity, originality, subjectivity, and agency. Drawing on philosophies such as phenomenology and existentialism, humanistic geographers focused on feelings, ideas, and experiences as the key to understanding the human experience of nature, space, and time (Buttimer 1976, Ley and Samuels 1978, Relph 1976, Tuan 1976). In order to "grow more attuned

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Though the emphasis was on subjectivity, it would be a mistake to see humanistic geography as anti-science. As Ley and Samuels (1978, p.9) point out, the goal of humanism has been the reconciliation of social science and the human, of objectivity and subjectivity.

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to the dynamics and poetics of space and time," and grasp "the dynamic wholeness of lifeworld experiences," humanistic geographers necessarily embraced what was then an unorthodox field of observations (Buttimer 1976, p.290, 278). That which articulated the relationship between a person and his or her milieu became the desired source of data; literature, art, and the taken-for-granted experiences of everyday life were privileged over house styles, crop types, and other vestigial categories of traditional cultural geography. Relph (1976) even ventured to include the theme park in his observations about placelessness, thus signalling the emergence of theoretical ground within cultural geography where discussion of amusement space was possible.

Humanistic geography’s insistence on the importance of the individual was its most appealing quality, but ultimately also its Achilles Heel. Concern was raised that by focusing primarily on the need to rescue the notion of subjectivity in the individual’s lifeworld, humanistic geographers were not theoretically equipped to address the social structures and relations of power within which individual people are located. In order to remedy this perceived weakness, interest turned to the theorization of culture; geographers grappled intellectually with both people and the cultural practices and social formations that surrounded them. Blaut (1980) and Cosgrove (1983) attempted to infuse cultural geography with Marxist theories of social formation to restore individuals to
their historical, social, and cultural contexts. Jackson (1980) looked toward a future rapprochement with social geography as a way to redirect cultural geography toward the spatial analysis of social organizations and human culture, and later went on to explore the possibilities offered by symbolic interactionism (Jackson 1984).

Clifford Geertz (1973), in suggesting that anthropology is best accomplished as the interpretation of cultural texts, provided what would be one of the central metaphors of cultural geography in the 1980s: Landscape as Text. Geertz postulated that intricate webs of meaning give coherence to the various symbols, practices, and artifacts that constitute culture, and proposed "thick description" could provide to social scientists a way to penetrate the many layers of meaning. Geertz' popularity amongst cultural geographers in part reflected the originality and appeal of his argument, and in part reflected the fact that geographers had, in various capacities, already worked through and become comfortable with the notion that landscape could be read as a text. J. B. Jackson, with the 1951 publication of the journal Landscape, spoke emphatically and enthusiastically of the vast knowledge to be acquired by reading the landscape; the essays in Meinig's (1979) The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes demonstrated that to many cultural geographers, most likely not influenced by Geertz, "interpretation" also suggested "reading."

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The conscious adaptation of Geertz, however, as discussed by Cosgrove and Daniels (1987), Ley (1988), and Norton (1987), implies more than borrowing the image of landscape as a text that can be read. Geertz' direct influence implies borrowing theoretical ideas concerning how cultural formations manifest themselves in rituals, statuses, practices, and material artifacts, and how these formations can be comprehended through thick description. Such questions lead further into the realm of semiotics and literary criticism (Duncan and Duncan 1988, Silk 1984).

The metaphor of text raises unsettling difficulties concerning the ways we conceptualize culture. Cosgrove and Daniels (1987, p.97) argue that textual analogies, though valuable for preserving the sense of human action, creativity, and layering of meanings, are limited by the specific meaning of "landscape" — the history of a way of seeing and representing. Implicit in their argument is a deep concern over how cultural formation and the dynamic of culture will be theorized. Landscape, itself a socially and culturally constructed entity, is merely one dimension of all that culture entails[^3]. Can we, Cosgrove and Daniels (1987, p.98) ask, theorize culture without specific reference to landscape?

[^3]: Gottdiener (1982) makes a similar argument against a semiotic reading of the city, which, he says, is made up of more elements than just signs.
This question echoed in the writings of other cultural geographers who, significantly, looked for guidance from the culture theorists associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University (CCCS), and the various Marxist theorists the Centre draws upon, such as Raymond Williams and Antonio Gramsci (Anderson 1988, Burgess and Gold 1985, Cosgrove and Daniels 1987, Daniels 1989, Duncan 1990, Jackson 1989). Cosgrove and Daniels (1987, p.99) optimistically contend that the ideals developed by these culture theorists, who focus on a range of popular subcultural forms and practices, each time and place specific yet grounded in wider political, social, and economic frameworks, form a "most fertile, if as yet virtually uncultivated, field for a revitalised cultural geography." Such a revitalized cultural geography can entertain questions of the cultural forms, practices, and mass appeal of the amusement park and its links to urban form. The contributions of the CCCS could point us toward an adequate theoretical framework for its interpretation, and as such are worthy of more detailed analysis.

The Theorization of Culture

The realm of cultural studies is, in Raymond Williams' (1989, p.158) singular definition, a "vague and baggy monster." Its most significant moments have been crystallized in institutional form, most noticeably under the aegis of Birmingham University’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural
Studies (CCCS). The Centre's history, on the surface, reflects the convergence of various intellectual disciplines that can be traced through their articulation in various texts. Emphasis on this academic trajectory alone, however, ultimately obscures what in many ways is the real impetus of cultural studies: a curiosity and indeed demand on the part of people (not necessarily intellectuals) to discuss and comprehend cultural phenomena in a context that is relevant to their own experiences and the pressures they feel.

The contributions made by the CCCS owe a great deal to earlier inquiries into culture that were explored in the "notably unprivileged" sectors of education beyond the traditional university institution (Williams 1989). In the late nineteenth century, both adult education and more informal education amongst women were characterized by innovative study of literature and real-life situations (Williams 1989, p.152); in the late 1940s adult education courses were available in film, press, advertising, and radio (Williams 1989, p.154). Now, of course, such courses are offered at many universities; in some, cultural studies has its own department. The history of cultural studies has been the history of the gradual acceptance and institutionalization of some elements of cultural inquiry, and the marginalization of others.

A full history of cultural studies, or even the CCCS alone, would involve studying not only the internal
intellectual trajectories followed, but also relating these trajectories to the "very precise formations and social institutions in which these convergences happened and had to happen" (Williams 1989, p.161). Clearly, there is not space here to do full justice to such a history, nor is it the proper forum. Rather, I shall examine the work accomplished at the CCCS, together with the traditions being drawn upon, with the underlying focus on how they may provide fertile ground for theorizing the popular culture of the amusement park. The CCCS, on the one hand, suggests a highly provocative synthesis of culturalist and structuralist tendencies, two major approaches to culture in post-war Western social thought. On the other hand, certain silences within CCCS work -- significantly, a lack of interest in middle-class culture, and a failure to theorize adequately a 'mass' culture centred on the commodity -- point to other directions that must be pursued to begin to understand a commodified landscape of leisure.

Any examination of the CCCS' theoretical stances must highlight the diversity of approaches and the historically shifting emphases that define the Centre's work. To do otherwise, and treat the CCCS as one unified body of thought, would be to "run the risk of losing the richness of ... the CCCS intellectual journey" (Gruneau 1988, p.17). The Centre's history as recounted by its second and third directors, Stuart Hall (1980, 1981, 1992) and Richard Johnson (1979), reveals an
intricate weaving of many theoretical and empirical strands. In this context, however, I am most interested in tracing the role of the opposing culturalist and structuralist approaches in informing the CCCS’ trajectory, and in demonstrating how, for Hall and Johnson, Antonio Gramsci provided the theoretical framework to bridge the two extremes.

The word "culture," as Raymond Williams (1976, p. 76) points out, may well be one of the most complicated words in the English language. Its changing definition represents an historical movement as yet unresolved (Williams 1977). At the current juncture of the debate, culture is seen by many as an active process and the medium through which social change is experienced. That this definition bears little resemblance to the initial seventeenth century usage of the word in English, when it referred to the growing and tending of plants, animals, and minds, speaks to the concept’s complex paths of transition. Stuart Hall (1980) suggests that the pivotal moment for understanding this latest stage in the debate occurred at mid-twentieth century, as the grounds of the debate began to shift away from literary-moral conceptualizations of culture and toward a more anthropological definition of culture as 'a way of life.'

Cultural historians Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson, and Raymond Williams have been heralded as the central figures who defined the theoretical space in which cultural studies would later emerge (Hall 1980, 1981; Johnson 1979). They constitute
the formative beginnings of culturalist analysis. Though approaching cultural issues from different empirical vantage points, and employing somewhat different conceptualizations of culture, all three embraced as cultural the institutions, experiences, and symbolic meanings that constituted a way of life, and all three insisted upon the historical specificity of culture. Underlying their work was the conviction that culture formed a necessary dimension of the interpretation of any historical transition.

Hoggart’s (1957) study of cultural change in working class Britain, *The Uses of Literacy*, represented the first signs of the transition to current definitions of culture. In it he penetrates the lifestyles and daily experiences of the working classes, as they move through an increasingly mass-produced and mass-mediated existence. Hoggart is particularly interested in the effects of mass publications on what he calls "genuine" class culture. He sets a specific conceptual agenda, hoping to bring to life the "grass-roots" of actual people’s lives, and to relate these particular aspects to the wider social, political, and economic environments in which they live. While his approach clearly distances him from the elitist tendencies of literary critics such as F.R. Leavis, Hoggart does not break fully from the Leavisite tradition. Hall (1980) notes that Hoggart remains squarely within a form of literary criticism that seeks to read the emblems and idioms of working class life as
privileged cultural evidence. Further, the theoretical strands of his work remain purposely submerged; the work is aimed, Hoggart says, at the "intellectual layman," and as such is generally presented in a purely empirical and often anecdotal manner.

E.P. Thompson's 1963 seminal work *The Making of the English Working Class*, though like Hoggart's study also a detailed empirical examination of historical change, is informed by Thompson's theoretical stance and thus focuses on the role of human agency in the creation of popular political cultures. Thompson confines his theoretical explanation to a brief preface, but he makes his leanings abundantly clear: the human agency that fuels active historical process over time is the root of social and cultural formation, and these individual and collective historical experiences are handled in cultural terms via traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutions. The historical dimension of social formation is paramount: these cultural practices must be observed as patterns that change over time, for to stop history at any one point is simply to expose "a multitude of individuals with a multitude of experiences" (Thompson 1963, p.11). He further argues that 'class' is not a structure, and historical experience is in no way determined (Thompson 1963, p.9-10). For Thompson, culture forms the underpinnings whereby people actively make and remake the conditions of their lives. His insistence that cultural relations only exist as they are
embodied in real people and real contexts results in highly empirical work that is ultimately, as Hall (1980, p.19) comments, theoretical in effect but not in manner nor intent. Thompson presents himself as the "mouthpiece" through which the people whose history he chronicles can speak (Dirlik 1987, p.27).

It is Raymond Williams' work in particular that provides, of the three, the most extended theoretical discussions, and hence, has been credited with most clearly provoking the transition to a new meaning of culture. In The Long Revolution, before commencing his examination of the complexities of cultural change vis a vis the development of major cultural institutions, Williams spells out in detail his theoretical perspective on the definition and analysis of culture. He rejects outright both definitions of culture that limit its boundaries to the process or state of human perfection, and definitions that consider solely documentary evidence preserved in intellectual and imaginative work. Such approaches unnecessarily abstract cultural processes from their embodiment and shaping by "the rest of life" (Williams 1961, p.44). Williams argues that instead, any definition of culture must embrace what he calls the 'social' dimension -- culture as a description of a particular way of life as revealed not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour, in the organization of production and forms of communication. Yet there is a danger in relying
exclusively on the 'social' definition as well. General cultural processes must be seen as more than mere by-products, or "passive reflections of the real interests of the society" (Williams 1961, p.44). This leads Williams to his most salient point: the relationships between the three areas, the ideal, the documentary, and the social, should claim our attention. The theory of culture ought to point to the study of relationships between elements that span a whole way of life (Williams 1961, p.46).

While Williams' work is not without its problems⁴, his contribution to cultural inquiry is unquestionably significant. The scope of analysis is greatly broadened; the elite connotations brushed away. Such a definition of culture also adds historical depth, not only by emphasizing the historical specificity of culture, but also by urging us to consider, as we ponder the relationships between Williams' three spheres of culture, how the "past" is given meaning and re-interpreted in light of the present, and how the present is manifestly connected to elements of the past. In short, Hall (1980, p.27) comments, Williams rescues culture from being a ____________________________

⁴Two criticisms levelled at Williams' work indicate, ironically, shortcomings in Williams' ability to carry out his own theoretical project. Williams has a tendency, in E.P. Thompson's (1961) view, to rely on easily documented 'high' literature sources at the expense of more radical, popular sources. Hall (1980, p.20) further notes that Williams favours a view of culture as the evolution of a way of life, a stance that tends to smooth over the tensions and struggles evident in relations between cultural elements.
mere contingent effect that can be culled and subsequently appreciated from a set of texts and artifacts.

The individual shortcomings of Hoggart's, Thompson's, and Williams' work began to be overshadowed, in the CCCS intellectual trajectory, by a general uneasiness about more profound weaknesses in the culturalist approach (Hall 1980, 1981, Johnson 1979). The emphasis on human agency, lived experience and historical process that had initially freed 'culture' from its literary-moral moorings now, it was suspected, hindered researchers from fully grasping the social relations that are structured and operate behind people's backs (Johnson 1979). This inadequacy was perceived and articulated in light of growing interest in structuralist approaches to culture, the second major influence on CCCS thinking. By the early 1970s, structuralism had become as formidable a force as culturalism had been a few years earlier. It provided the perfect epistemological and theoretical counterpoint to culturalist analysis. Each exposed the weaknesses of the other, and taken together, delineated the boundaries for current debates over definition of 'culture' (Hall 1980, 1981; Johnson 1979).

Both culturalist and structuralist interpretations of culture derive from a common impulse: both reject purely economistic readings of culture and instead ascribe to culture a constitutive primacy (Hall 1981, p.28, Johnson 1979, p.56). But whereas culturalists see experience as the very terrain
upon which culture is actively constituted, structuralists consider experience to be not the ground but the effect, since one only experiences one's conditions through the categories and frameworks of social structures (Hall 1981, p.29).

The categories and frameworks of social structures, thus, form the core of structuralist inquiry. The French philosopher Louis Althusser is most readily identifiable as the central figure in, and perhaps most often blamed for, this approach. In his famous formulation of ideology, Althusser (1971) effectively moves the focus of inquiry away from empirical experience and toward theoretical abstraction, and brings the role of modes of production to center stage. His contributions remain controversial. Those who disdain his work, such as E.P. Thompson (1978), are quick to point out that, in Althusser's words, ideology is a theoretical structure that "has no history." Cultural practices are seen as merely the effect of ideological state apparatuses, that is, the religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade union, and communications institutions that mediate the reproduction of labour power. Individuals are transformed in a rather passive manner into cultural subjects as ideology "hails" them down, thrusting its message upon them.

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Hall (1981), seeking to defend Althusser from some of his harshest critics, also reminds us that the structuralist influence is not Althusser's doing alone. He cites Levi-Strauss, Saussere, and Barthes as other significant contributors.
Others, however, have found more redeeming features in Althusser’s work. Hall (1980, 1981) and Johnson (1979) praise Althusser for introducing an emphasis on the determinate conditions that underlie cultural processes, and for insisting that ideology, while structurally ahistorical, has an historically contingent and overdetermined material existence. In essence, Althusser has theorized cultural practices in such a way that while they ultimately refer back to a functional role, their complexity encompasses different levels of social relation, and can be grasped at different levels of abstraction. Johnson (1979) notes that by retaining a concept of complex unity, Althusser adds a structural dimension to cultural practices without reducing that dimension to a single, essential determining factor. Hall (1981, p.30) further observes that Althusser bridges theoretical and empirical inquiry by positing the existence of different levels of abstraction.

Ultimately, the CCCS concluded, neither culturalism nor structuralism alone will do. If structuralism situates lived experiences within the social structures that operate behind people’s backs, it fails to account adequately for cultural contradiction, class struggle, and generally any cultural practice that falls beyond the sphere of dominant ideology. Culturalism, meanwhile, admirably provides detailed accounts of all manner of resistant cultural practice, but has been criticized for theorizing only what shows up in experiences as
revealed by concrete studies. Hence, the two positions are virtual complements of one another, each suggesting where fertile ground for reconceptualization lies. The rediscovery (and translation into English) of Antonio Gramsci at this stage in the debate pointed the way toward a synthesis.

Gramsci's writings consist of a vast and complex set of ideas; their diversity is such that writers from as distinct theoretical perspectives as Althusser (1971), interested in Gramsci's concept of the State, and Williams (1977), focusing on hegemony, can incorporate him into their work. It was Gramsci's concept of hegemony that initially caught the eye of many interested in culture. I have alluded to such developments in geography; T.J. Jackson Lears (1985) chronicles similar interests in history; and within cultural studies, hegemony offered a framework to deal simultaneously with the deeply contradictory arena of lived cultures, and the organized set of conceptions and relations of production that surround it (Hall 1980, Johnson 1979).

Hegemony, though an exceedingly complex concept that Gramsci never actually defines, can perhaps be summed up as "leadership, not coercion" (Bennett 1981). Gramsci seeks to understand, simply, how dominant social orders come to be dominant. He proposes two ways that this can occur: through pure domination stemming from physical coercion, or through cultural consent achieved by intellectual and moral leadership. Since pure domination is not, in Gramsci's
opinion, a possibility in advanced capitalist societies, it is the latter form of supremacy, cultural consent, to which Gramsci devotes his attention.

Gramsci conceptualizes the entire process through which consent is won as "hegemony." Hegemony charts the transitions that occur between the economic structure and the sphere of cultural superstructures, where ideologies come into open and constant conflict. Gramsci's notions contain significant economic and political dimensions; however, in this context his cultural ideas are of prime interest. Fundamental to Gramsci's argument is the assertion that cultural consensus can be achieved only when leading groups take into account the interests of subordinate groups. They win approval by persuasion, but also by making some serious sacrifices. Thus, consent to forms of domination may be achieved, but it comes neither totally from above nor totally from below, and the longevity of consent is quite tenuous. Cultural and social formations are continually marked by crises of authority, when "the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (Gramsci, cited in Bennett 1981, p. ???).

Gramsci's concept of hegemony proved immensely compelling to CCCS members, Hall (1980, p.36) recounts, because by considering cultural practices and underlying modes of production equally important, it appeared to offer the solution to the culturalist/structuralist impasse. Thus, Gramsci "massively corrects the ahistorical, highly abstract,
formal and theoreticist" tendencies of structuralist analysis, and distances himself from a functionalist view of 'dominant ideology' (Hall 1980, p.35). At the same time, Gramsci balances inadequacies in culturalist analysis by insisting on examining culture as part of the transformative relations between structure and superstructure.

Gramsci has also been a central figure for the ways in which his work encouraged CCCS writers to reconceptualize the realm of cultural practices. First, Gramsci's insistence that culture must be seen as a "moving equilibrium," composed of a "contradictory and discordant ensemble" of people and practices, effectively shifts the gaze from exclusively structure or culture, dominant or resistant, to the terrain upon which all these complex tensions are negotiated. Hall (1981), for example, reasoning that hegemony is neither dominance nor resistance but the ground upon which transformations are worked, could then argue that cultural practice must be seen as a continually contested, historically situated process.

Once focus turned to the cultural grounds of debate, it became apparent, as Gramsci (cited in Clarke et al. 1981, p.61) had cautioned, that 'culture' consisted of many dominant and many subordinate groups, all of whom reacted differently to the various "relations of forces favourable or unfavourable to this or that tendency," and, in short, were often at odds with each other. Thus, where cultural investigation had once
tended to lump a variety of subgroups into monolithic 'dominant' or 'subordinate' cultures, from within the rubric of cultural hegemony a study such as that by Clarke and colleagues (1981) could postulate the distinction between working class "subcultures" and middle class "countercultures."

Finally, Gramsci's interest in how consent is actually achieved points toward the sheer messiness of culture at its most practical level. Since negotiation and compromise are necessary on all sides, and since there is no telling how particular cultural alliances will be formed from day to day, consent, as Gramsci (cited in Lears 1985, p.570) put it, often amounts to no more than a "contradictory consciousness," a tenuous mix of approval and apathy, resistance and resignation. Hall (1981, p.236) notes that such a stance encourages the researcher to highlight the interplay between the two poles of willing approval and steadfast rejection, and focus on the many intermediate forms that cultural practice can take at the everyday level, including incorporation, distortion, resistance, and negotiation.

The incorporation of hegemony into the debate over culture opens up space for dialogue concerning how the cultural realm in general operates as a site for struggle, and how specific cultures in particular form part of the process of struggle, mastery, compromise, and transformation. Yet while such dialogue helps resolve the tension between
culturalist and structuralist perspectives, it insistently raises another dilemma, a dilemma that moves us beyond the terrain covered by CCCS theoretical debates. By acknowledging the multiplicity of cultures, and at the same time identifying the structural role of cultural institutions in advanced capitalist society, hegemony forces into the light a concept that had been for the most part kept safely on the periphery of the cultural debate -- the theorization of a commercialized, or mass, culture.

Up to this point, as Gruneau (1988, p.21) notes, the debate over culture tended to be polarized into the "unambiguous site for class-based ways of life," at the one extreme, and the "ideological supports of capitalist relations of production," at the other. Hall himself has criticized much of CCCS's formative work for lacking nuanced examination of the ways in which mass or commodity culture itself could also be "a sort of constant battlefield" defined by the very interaction between dominant cultures and cultures of resistance (Hall 1981, p.233). The treatment of twentieth century popular and commodified forms of culture, he concludes, is one of the most glaring weaknesses in cultural studies to date. Its failure to address middle-class forms of mass culture also has been noted by several geographers (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987, Ley and Olds 1989, Saunders and Williams 1986). This predicament should not be at all surprising, for 'mass culture,' a concept with a highly
checkered past, has become closely entwined with culture theory. In order to develop a theoretical framework appropriate for the study of amusement space, culture theory must be disentangled from its 'mass culture' overtones.

Mass Culture vs. Popular Culture

The cultural impulses disseminated through mass-mediated conduits have traditionally been stigmatized as decadent, debased, and isolated from the presumed authentic forms of culture that are still unmarred by capital's touch. There has been remarkable consistency amongst both the left and the right in adhering to this dichotomy. I argue that both sides are guilty of operating with a poorly theorized concept of the role of mass-mediated culture in people's everyday lives, and, following Ley and Olds' (1989) suggestion, seek to find a tempering influence that can address mass-mediated culture as both ideology and resistance.

To borrow a phrase from Simon Frith (1988, p.5), the concepts "mass culture" and "popular culture" describe as much the condition of the critics as the condition of the world they watch. Andrew Ross (1989, p.5) adds that the history of mass or popular culture spans not only producers and consumers, but the intellectuals who observe and help shape it. In the 1980s, and particularly in North America, mass culture criticism has at long last begun to question the assumptions underlying the enormous body of literature that

When confronted with most studies that take as their central focus the culture of the masses, Brantlinger (1983, p.18) surmises, it is exceedingly difficult to determine where genuine analysis ends and mythologizing begins. Brantlinger is particularly interested in what he refers to as the myth of "mass culture," a pervasive and persistent outlook on culture that in apocalyptic fashion decries the increasing cultural decadence of the masses. Criticized as being equally mythic in character is its mirror image, referred to as "popular culture," the essentially affirmative and sometimes celebratory view that mass-marketed culture is as genuine and redemptive as any other form of culture (Lazare 1987, Ross 1989). It is these two extremes that cultural criticism seeks to balance.

The myth of mass culture, Brantlinger argues, for so long has been pervasive that it ceases to appear as a theoretically-grounded construct and instead suggests a material reality. Brantlinger comments that the development of industrialized mass culture profoundly and inescapably affected artists and writers of all persuasions. They were united by the need to confront these changes, and the powerful
thread of cultural elitism that runs through writers as diverse as Jose Ortega y Gasset, T.S. Eliot, Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno reveals that equating mass culture with the ruins of society was for many a natural reaction.

Whether the ruin of society is thought to be brought about from below, by the "brutal empire of the masses," as conservative critics such as Ortega y Gasset (cited in Brantlinger 1983, p.187) feared, or from above via the mass deceptions of a culture industry that ruthlessly turns individuals into masses, as Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) argued, cultural processes are reduced to a monolithic and vaguely conspiratorial force. The individuals' role, unless they are lucky enough to be one of the elite or knowing, is quite passive: with a minimum of struggle or even effort, they accept intact the mass culture that is fed to them.

The affirmative "popular culture" approach, particularly as crystallized in 1969 by the Popular Culture Association and articulated through its Journal of Popular Culture, provides a much needed corrective by rescuing "mass culture" from its depressingly negative connotations (Geist and Nachbar 1983). In response to what was perceived to be the artificial dichotomy between the "genuine" culture of the elite and the kitsch-infested culture of the masses, the popular culture

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*While it may have been a natural reaction, it was hardly an original one. Brantlinger convincingly demonstrates that such cultural pessimism is a time-honored tradition, traceable back to the ancient "bread and circuses" approach to the masses.*
approach dissolves the boundaries between highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow culture, and between folk culture and mass-mediated culture (Lazare 1987). Significantly, it rejects the notion that the "masses" have been unwittingly manipulated, and instead seeks to reveal popular culture as a valid and authentic expression of people's interests. People consume popular culture because they want to, and they want to because it reflects their values; popular culture presents a "truthful picture" of what people do and think (Browne 1983, p.17). Thus what had been seen as the diabolical devices of the culture industry -- the ball park, the movie, the best seller, the radio -- are now elevated to the status of genuinely entertaining and appealing experiences.

The popular culture approach, however, has been criticized for entertaining myth as fully as the mass culture approach. It enthusiastically accepts at face value an assumed common culture shared by producers and consumers (Lazare 1987, p.9). It tends to take for granted and tacitly endorse the role of mass-mediated culture in maintaining the status quo (Lazare 1987, p.4). Perhaps its most serious flaw is its inability to overcome the essentialism inherent in "mass culture" analysis (Gruneau 1988, p.26). Mass culture had suffered from too strong a dose of dominant ideology, whereby all the cultural practices of all the individuals who constitute the "mass" are said to reflect a single (false) set of values, ideas, and desires. Popular culture simply turns
mass culture inside out, replacing the monolithic "dominant ideology" with the equally monolithic "authentic expression." Neither approach, thus, considers culture as an active and continually contested process; neither can provide a solid basis for the study of amusement space.

While it is easy to find fault with the "myths" of mass and popular culture, it is considerably more valuable to cull instead what is positive from both, and work toward a reconstructed theory of mass-mediated culture. Each perspective isolates certain meaningful cultural processes and dimensions. Mass culture's interest in how mass-mediated cultural forms are shaped by outside forces, and popular culture's assertion that the pleasures of those forms are genuine, both provide useful fragments of insight. But at this juncture, a wider theory of culture becomes essential to flesh out these ideas: here, hegemony can provide the key to finding a balance between the twin poles of dominance and resistance within popular, commercial culture. A theoretical framework for a culture that is both mass-produced and popularly enjoyed must rest upon the hegemonic play between the producers and the enjoyers.

A defining characteristic of mass-mediated culture is that, due to its expression in virtually every corner of a consumer-oriented society, it "inescapably shapes us all, for better or worse" (Lazare 1987, p.2). It is fruitless to attempt to evaluate cultural forms as either real or
falsified, authentic or just an advertising gimmick, because popular, mass-mediated culture is a commodity; what is possible for us as consumers is constrained by the process of cultural production (Cohen 1989, Fiske 1989a, Fiske 1989b, Frith 1988a, Frith 1988b). Of far more interest, Frith (1988b) adds, are the ways in which cultural consumption is realized within the constraints, ideologies, and "social fantasies" that surround cultural production.

Fiske (1989a, 1989b) refers to the products of mass-mediated culture as, simply, possibilities. They are the cultural resources with which people, through acceptance, negotiation, resistance, and evasion, form their own popular cultures. The act of shopping in a mall, for instance, may say more about the avenues a shopping mall opens up for resistant behaviour than the products for sale on its market shelves (Fiske 1989b, pp. 13-42). In other words, popular culture, though fraught with commodities, is not about consumption. It is about the circulation of meanings.

Stated in more theoretical terms, understanding mass-mediated culture becomes a task of understanding its hegemonic role. Ross (1989, p.3) suggests popular culture is the realm where "the struggle to win popular respect and

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Fiske argues that mall-based activities including pseudo-customers who try on clothes with no intention of buying, women who spend money without the express consent of their husbands, and unemployed youths who "invade" mall space carrying soda cans laced with alcohol, all represent traces of resistant behaviour.
consent for authority is endlessly being waged," where the desires and aspirations of ordinary people, elements of disrespect and opposition, and elements of "explanations" for the maintenance of respect, all meet, intermingle, and become transformed. Popular culture, Fiske further argues, bears both traces of power relations and signs of resistance to them; of particular interest to him are the popular vitality and creativity that make hegemonic incorporation such a constant necessity (Fiske 1989b, p.20).

The resources of mass-mediated culture can ensure their popularity only by making themselves inviting terrain for this struggle (Fiske 1989a, p.5) Thus their relevance to everyday life is central, and the pleasure they offer, genuine. Frith (1988a, p.471) contends that the pleasure of the popular stems from its status as unofficial articulation of doubts, needs, and desires. Popular culture is far from merely escapist; rather, it provides the ground upon which people can attempt to accommodate themselves to and indeed construct their everyday lives (Hall 1981, Jameson 1979, Ross 1989).

Few, however, would mistake popular culture for organized social struggle. The pleasures of the popular, from watching a television show to wearing a particular style of clothing to riding a roller coaster, stand in ambiguous relation to forces of domination and resistance; the sense of fantasy with which much of popular culture is imbued further clouds the picture. Popular culture's political dimensions raise vexing
theoretical dilemmas (Bennett 1992, Brunt 1992, Fiske 1989b, Fiske 1992, Hall 1992). If, as Fiske (1989b, p.56) asserts, "the politics of popular culture is that of everyday life," culture theorists are then faced with a hegemonic tangle of everyday practices where the lines blur between conformity, evasion, and opposition, or even between reality and fantasy. The ways in which resistance, first, and fantasy, second, have been theorized within cultural studies, therefore, must be carefully unpacked.

If resistance within popular culture can be defined, broadly, as the attempt at empowerment in the face of unequal power relations, or, of "constructing our space within and against their space," then focus immediately rests upon questions of hegemonic process (Fiske 1989b, p.36). The relationship between mass-mediated culture and the capitalist structures that offer it for sale have been interpreted both as playing directly into the hands of capital, and as opening up potential avenues for legitimate opposition. Fiske (1989b, p.162) warns, however, that such a framework still leaves unexamined "the submerged ninety percent of the political iceberg." Rarely is cultural practice neatly manifested as either the unquestioning acceptance of dominant forces or the coherent effort to oppose those forces through political means. Rather, the questions posed by actual cultural practices are both much stickier and much richer: how does one interpret, for instance, the resistance to current affairs
television expressed by a 'keep fit' group of politically conservative women, or the "overwhelming delight" that audiences of black women took in the movie The Color Purple (Brunt 1992), or the diametrically opposed affirmative messages that Australian Aborigines and Ronald Reagan, respectively, could extract from the Rambo movies (Fiske 1989b, p.57)⁸?

The complex nature of such cultural practices suggests that resistance is a multi-faceted dynamic that centres upon constantly shifting contextual moments. Hence, in order to begin to situate resistance within cultural practices, one must consider the uses to which actual people put discourse, and not simply the contents of the text itself (Brunt 1992, p.75). But attempts to contextualize resistance raise a still greater challenge. Resistance can appear in many guises, not all of which conform to what Brunt (1992, p.75) refers to as the standard of "real politics" that is implicit in much research. In other words, culture theorists must confront the problem of what constitutes resistance.

Approaches that allow as legitimate evidence of resistance only those explicit political activities that occur

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⁸The Aborigines, according to Fiske, saw Rambo as an oppressed Third World figure valiantly battling First World dominance in the form of white military men. Reagan, on the other hand, was impressed with Rambo's image as a rugged individualist who, like the stereotypical American entrepreneur, created his own opportunities and successfully saw them through (Fiske 1989b, p.57).
at a macro-social level, Brunt (1992) and Fiske (1989b, 1992) argue, ultimately disqualify virtually all of everyday life as a site of significant political activity. Bennett (1992, p.29) suggests that the Gramscian turn in cultural studies, though valuable for many other reasons, "commits us to too automatic a politics." The role Gramsci accorded to class as the coordinating centre of social and political life, Bennett argues, no longer has relevancy for most people; likewise, the paths of political action associated with the Gramscian problematic may now be theoretical and literal dead ends.

Fiske (1989b, 1992) reconceptualizes a typology of resistance located squarely within the confused lineage of contemporary mass-mediated culture. To the traditional category of macro-social radical politics, Fiske adds "evasive" and "productive" cultural practices. Evasive practices dodge social control, often appearing disruptive, irresponsible, and offensive. Productive practices centre on the production of oppositional meanings by engaging issues of social identity and relations (Fiske 1989b, p.69; p.56). Neither contributes direct political action in a traditional sense, yet both, Fiske argues, are legitimate forms of resistance to hegemonic forces of domination, because both open up space for day-to-day negotiations of unequal power relations. That evasive and productive practices do not attempt to change the system that distributes power unequally does not diminish their
significance in people's everyday lives; they form the two foundations upon which radical action sits.

The struggle popular culture offers, thus, occurs within the rich and paradoxical setting of the hegemonic process. It is more about the ability of 'the masses' to construct their daily lives than about the ability of a few to construct overt political strategies. Cultural commodities -- the Harlequin romance, the pair of Levis, the trip to Disneyland -- are the sites upon which dominant meanings are presented, accepted, or evaded, and alternative meanings rewritten. Significantly, these cultural commodities are heavily imbued with a sense of fantasy, which affords them a quality that opens up fascinating utopian potential for resistant cultural practices.

Though often dismissed as contentless, the role of fantasy in popular culture is one of its most potent

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The legitimacy of evasive and productive practices is still a matter of debate, as recent criticisms of Fiske's work attest (see discussion section following Fiske 1992, pp. 165-173). At issue is whether Fiske romanticizes the resistant capabilities of "the people" and the mass-marketed cultural commodities at their disposal, which would then, consequently, make him unable to offer any meaningful strategies or tactics of resistance. Charnes (cited in Fiske 1992, p.172), for example, comments that as "every guerrilla fighter knows," merely destabilizing the power plot is not the same as transferring real power, property, or capital into the hands of the people. While such a distinction is, no doubt, useful, I would point out that by privileging only those forms of resistance that can be linked directly to structural change, and, indeed, implicitly assuming that only those forms of cultural practice can lead to change, it ends up committing precisely the same theoretical errors that Fiske tried to remedy in the first place.
resources: as people take pleasure in recognition of and identification with elements that have resonance in their own lives, they not only partake in a wishful manner of imaginary renditions of social conditions, they also actively construct new relationships and new constellations of meaning. ‘Real life’ is refracted through, not replaced by, popular culture’s prism of fantasy.

Fantasy in popular culture provides a forum where "fundamental social anxieties and concerns, hopes and blind spots" can be expressed, and future reconciliations hinted at (Jameson 1979, p.141). Under the guise of fantasy, popular culture can make statements about social needs and the best ways to meet them, yet never reveal how truly ‘serious’ its statements are. It easily can be dismissed, and often is, as offering no more an "optical illusion of social harmony" (Jameson 1979, p.141). What Jameson and others see as a weakness may also be interpreted as a strength: popular culture, perhaps unlike any other form of cultural practice, can confront head-on society’s contradictions and conflicts in "guerrilla" fashion (Fiske 1989b). By speaking the language of fantasy, popular culture can remain sublimely outside conventional structures of logic and always just beyond the reach of dominant hegemonic forces. Popular culture, in short, presents the ideal forum for utopian dialogue. A closer examination of the cultural role of utopian thought
provides the final perspective from which to formulate a theory of popular, mass-mediated culture.

The Cultural Role of Utopian Thought

Each epoch, Walter Benjamin (1986, p.148) has said, dreams of the one to follow. These utopian traces, left in a thousand configurations from permanent buildings to fleeting fashions, become the "residues of a dream world" that permeate our everyday landscapes. Benjamin identifies the wishful fantasies as the outcome of a collective impulse to both preserve and transform the inchoateness of the social system of production. Benjamin’s ideas are thought-provoking because he synthesizes three important ways of looking at culture: he seeks to pinpoint both the stale and the utopian within culture; he entertains the possibility that both impulses can coexist within the same cultural practice or artifact, regardless of whether that practice or artifact is a product of mass-mediated culture; and he insists that the built environment is a crucial site for the articulation, mediation, and transformation of the utopian impulse.

Benjamin arrives at his perspective on cultural practices by engaging directly utopian writers including Fourier and Marx, and by exploring in a more indirect manner the utopian traces within emergent images of modernity such as film, photography, arcades, and World’s Fairs. The appeal of Benjamin’s ideas suggests that the utopian tradition from
which he draws may also provide singular insight into the
cultural dynamic of amusement space. In order to explore the
rich theoretical possibilities that utopian thought can offer,
I first examine the ways in which utopian cultural practices
have been conceptualized, and second, how utopian impulses
have been interpreted in popular and mass-mediated cultures,
focussing specifically on utopian writers Walter Benjamin and
Ernst Bloch's treatments of the fairy tale, the shopping
street, and the fun fair.

The long tradition of utopian writing reveals, first,
that utopia, like culture, means many things to many people:
"the content of the utopian," as Ernst Bloch (1988, p.5)
comments, "changes according to the social situation." A
quick perusal of the range of utopian thought, such as that
offered in Manuel and Manuel's (1979) comprehensive survey,
indicates the wide variation in both form and content. From
the dream worlds depicted in ancient times, through Plato's
_Republic_, the fictional accounts of Sir Thomas More, Marx's
social observations, and to Le Corbusier's _City of Tomorrow_,
utopian tendencies of diverse nature have permeated Western
thought. The category at first seems vague enough to include
almost anything. Utopia has been treated as literary creation
(Bossert 1987, Frye 1966, More 1965), as concrete city or
place (Fishman 1984, Hayden 1981, Mumford 1966), and as
general cultural dynamic (Benjamin 1986, Bloch 1986; 1988,
Haug 1987, Levitas 1984, Marin 1984). Likewise, the criteria
for utopian status varies greatly, from those that require only the futile expression of wishful fantasies that aspire to "the good life in the good place" (Davis 1989), to those that require highly organized blueprints based on bureaucratic, institutional, legal, and educational orders that fundamentally transform existing social conditions.

Ruth Levitas (1984) offers a conceptual framework to help grasp this plethora of utopias. The form, content, and actual possibility of creating alternatives, she (1984, p.21) argues, are all socially constructed. If utopia in its most general sense can be identified and linked from context to context by the fact that it makes statements about social needs and the best ways to meet those needs, then any particular vision of utopia must be seen as a cultural form (Levitas 1984, p.20).

Two defining features, both with roots in the nineteenth century, can be pinpointed as integral to contemporary utopian impulses: first, the explicit articulation of utopian ideas in the built environment; and second, the increasing centrality of fantasy in utopian expression. Significantly, these features are also pivotal in the formulation of present day amusement space. A landscape such as a Walt Disney theme park represents the intersection and culmination of these two trends.

By the end of the nineteenth century, utopian design images appeared with regularity in the urban and suburban built environment; 'utopia' was broadly accepted as a guiding
planning principle. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City inspired innumerable suburban developments, to the point that a half a century later Jane Jacobs (1961, p. 18) could argue that American planners were still "thoroughly governed" by its utopian principles. Industrialists, likewise, created for their workers company towns such as Cadbury's Bourneville or Lever's Port Sunlight that were essentially utopian. These carefully planned spaces, "tantamount to permanent exposition[s]," aimed to provide wholesome environments that would, it was hoped, foster wholesome workforces (Creese 1989, p. 128). It is significant that these utopian instances, particularly when propagated throughout the landscape, neither proposed the complete overthrow of current conditions, nor, often, were even associated with a consistent politics. The nineteenth century marked the beginning of an era when utopian design became less a political weapon and more an aesthetic planning tool.

Levitas suggests that this ambiguous relationship between utopian and political thought was endemic of a broader shift in utopian expression. Expressed amid western capitalist society and a growing consumerism, the central role of political action in nineteenth century utopianism, she argues, has been eroded and instead a more fantastical form of expression has taken root. The formative role that fantasy plays in current utopian dialogue has profound implications
for the way that it is articulated, interpreted, and, often, dismissed as frivolous.

Utopia, Louis Marin (1984, p.8) has said, "floats, variegated, on the ether of the imaginary with phosphorescent, multiple impressions." With this statement, he poetically alludes to the many layers of reality and fantasy within which utopia functions. Utopia draws its power from its simultaneous existence as both myth and concrete description, mask and revelation. The "dreaming thinkers or the thinking dreamers" who construct utopian visions are consciously removed from reality, yet the removal is a displacement, not a complete severance (Haug 1987, p.54). The displaced pieces of reality are combined and juxtaposed to construct scenes coherent and plausible in their own right. Ultimately, these new utopian scenes, though assuming the guise of a separate and distinct fantasy world, continually refer back to specific problems and situations in the 'real' world (Bossert 1987, p.144).

The utopia in general exists within wider cultural practices as a powerful yet at times virtually clandestine form of discourse. On the one hand, it is a fantastic speculation about "the good life in the good place." On the other hand, it is a thinly veiled dialogue about present conditions. The utopian narrative, perhaps like no other form of social commentary, can strike with lightening-like force into the core of perceived problems (Frye 1966, Manuel 1966).
It can confront head-on the contradictions and conflicts within society, point to their possible future reconciliation, and remain sublimely outside conventional structures of logic (Marin 1984). The power of utopia lies not so much in creating other worlds, but, as Bossert (1987, p.144) explains, in the observers' "shock of recognition in seeing the conditions of their own world in that other world."

The fantasy offered in utopian guise, in effect, embodies hegemonic tension between distraction and social critique; popular, mass-mediated cultures are the site for its exploration. Utopian dialogue is hegemonic dialogue, providing a conduit through which dominant social formations are negotiated, distorted, transformed. In twentieth century fantasy-laden cultural space, this hegemonic utopian dialogue provides a fundamental way that "basic needs" are constituted and debated in industrial society (Levitas 1984, p.27). The trappings of mass-mediated culture -- television, film, advertising, and, most importantly here, their three-dimensional counterparts in the everyday landscape, from McDonalds to the Magic Kingdom, become the utopian conduits that foster debate concerning not only "basic needs" themselves but the process by which the legitimacy of these needs can be established.

One of the most elemental forms of utopian expression in popular culture traditionally has been the fairy tale (Alexander 1984, Bloch 1986, 1988, Zipes 1987). My
examination of sites of contemporary utopian expression begins here for two reasons. First, the fairy tale's very structure embodies and brings to life with disarming simplicity the fundamental defining characteristics of utopian dialogue. Second, though ostensibly a literary form, the fairy tale has played a major role in shaping theme park landscapes.

Alexander (1984) notes that the Brothers Grimm, like explicitly utopian writers, play on the hopes and fears of their readers, and point them toward better moral understanding. Bloch (1986, 1988) is greatly impressed by the utopian potential of the fairy tale. In the world where almost every part is false and yet the whole is true, the small and weak actively see their way to victory by courage and cunning. The fairy tale, Bloch (1988, p.163) continues, is not bound by its own time, as Walt Disney's success in reviving elements of old fairy tales and making them comprehensible to modern viewers would later attest. Reading (or perhaps now watching) the fairy tale, the reader thinks "about a great deal . . . almost everything in their lives," and is spurred on to contemplate visions of the future (Bloch 1988, p.164).

Bloch's focus on the timeless qualities of the fairy tale downplays the ways in which it, as a form of utopian dialogue, changes with the social situation. Zipes (1987) asks how contemporary fairy tales are organized, in a time when possible nuclear warfare, ecological destruction, government
and industrial restructuring, and dramatically changed social formations make classical fairy tales appear sexist, racist, overly authoritarian, and generally objectionable. Fairy tale writers that seek to be "countercultural" and transform society must necessarily work from different vantage points, for the reality that they engage in fantastical terms is indeed a very different one today. Zipes examines several tales, many being reworkings of classical themes, in which little girls now overcome adversity without recourse to the aid of males, wolves are painted from entirely sympathetic perspectives, and dreaded bands of technicians, scientists, soldiers, architects, and businessmen replace the dreaded giants and ogres of old.

When the utopian impulse leaves the realm of the fairy tale and becomes embedded, albeit in fragments, in the everyday landscape, it does not lose its power to transform our imaginations and suggest, however subtly, possibilities for the future. These utopian fragments are the "residues of a dream world" of which Benjamin speaks. Mass culture, Benjamin argues, opens up new utopian avenues. Industrial capitalism, by fusing art and technology, fantasy and function, has re-enchanted the social world (Buck Morss 1989, p.125, p.253). Its "threatening and alluring face" is alive in the city, in billboards advertising "toothpaste for giants," in the rational uniform streets and endless rows of buildings that, ironically, transform the city into a
"labyrinth" (Benjamin, cited in Buck Morss 1989, p.254). Yet mass culture is not simply utopian: Benjamin states that it incorporates the hegemonic tension of contemporary social conditions. It is both bourgeois phantasmagoria and the source of collective energy to overcome it.

Benjamin's investigations of two nineteenth-century landscapes in particular, the panorama and the arcade, provide fascinating glimpses of the redefinition of space and time within a wider web of capitalism, culture, and commodity (Benjamin 1986). The panorama was a short-lived object of entertainment, a creation no longer photograph but not yet moving picture. The makers of panoramas, with "tireless exertions of technical skill," struggled to achieve what may have seemed to be the impossible: the incorporation of the passage of time into a static picture (Benjamin 1986, p.149). In their imitations of natural landscapes, they wished to reproduce the time of day, the rising of the moon, the flow of water. This redefinition of the role of temporality in art was not simply a matter of artistic flourish, but, Benjamin (1986, p.150) argues, a revolutionary expression of a new feeling about art, technology, and life.

The arcade, likewise, an architectural form dating from the early nineteenth century, gained its utopian strength from its unique spatial ambiguity as both solid building and glass-roofed infinity. Inside, "commodities [were] suspended and shoved together in such boundless confusion that [they
appeared] like images out of the most incoherent dreams," leading Benjamin to call it the first consumer dream world (Benjamin, cited in Buck Morss 1989, p.254, p.37). The arcade, both functionally industrial setting and elegantly luxurious shopping district, incorporated all the errors of bourgeois consciousness as well as its utopian dreams. It was, says Benjamin (1986, p.157), "both house and stars."

Bloch (1986), likewise, discovers utopian potential in the shopping street. Despite what Bloch (1986, p.5) calls the obvious futility and deception of a commodity culture that flatteringly and corruptly arouses hope, he (1986, p.33) also sees the shopping street as a street "steeped in dreams." He contemplates by way of example a pair of lizard skinned shoes in the shop window. A woman walking past, he surmises, might pause and think, first, of money, but also of what that money could be changed into, and what the shoes might then offer or symbolize. At this point, Bloch (1986, p.33) continues, a man walks by and looks at the woman looking at the shoes, and so "both of them have a share of the wishful land."

Bloch (1986, 1988) extends his examination of wishful landscapes to the fun fair, a direct precursor of the amusement park. "It is no doubt vulgar and a complete swindle," but nonetheless of substance (Bloch 1986, p.363). Bloch is particularly taken with the extraordinary juxtapositions one sees at the fair, and the way they are expressed. Almost every theme at the fair would raise the
irritation of the "bourgeois conformist." Combined together, the fair represents a "colorful rough fantasy" of unprecedented proportions. The mysterious foreignness of exotic regions is blended with the familiar of the everyday; the "secrets of the bridal bed" are hinted at in the same breath as the "secrets of the bier" (Bloch 1986, p.363). These realms of faraway intrigue and horror are personified in the belly-dancing women, the sword-swallowers, the midgets, giants, bearded women, and tattooed men, and in the built creations like the oriental labyrinth, the jaws of hell, and the haunted castle.

As he did of the fairy tale, Bloch (1986, p.363) situates the fun fair within a timeless trajectory, arguing that even the increasing infiltration of American technology cannot undermine the fair’s rich, medieval character. Clearly, though, the American technology that he disdains does seriously transform the character of the fun fair, as it becomes more and more recognizable as a modern amusement park. Changing social and technological contexts, of course, incorporate continuities from earlier moments, but also spark new utopian dialogues in new eras. As the fun fair gives way to the amusement park, and later to the theme park, we would expect to see the utopian form and content change also. This theme shall be addressed in detail in the next two chapters.
Conclusion

In this chapter, I have constructed a theoretical framework from which to launch an investigation of amusement space, popular culture, and urban form. Neither traditional cultural geography nor traditional culture theory provide adequate starting points. Consequently, I have followed avenues of theoretical pursuit suggested by recent cultural geographic literature. By incorporating culture theory, cultural hegemony, and utopia, I have been able to flesh in a view of cultural practice as a messy and often tension-filled dialogue between numerous dominant and subordinant cultural groups that in the age of consumer capitalism is predominantly mediated through commodities exchanged in a fantasy realm. Beneath fantasy's guise, significantly, 'serious' utopian issues are debated concerning the social conditions of today and possible solutions for tomorrow.

I have now reached the stage where I can put forth very specifically my view of amusement space as informed by my theoretical construct. Amusement space is hegemonic, utopian space. It represents physical landscapes that are at once part of, yet apart from the city that supports them. On the one hand, amusement and theme parks are built by capitalists and filled with commodities. Often the park itself plays an economic or political role in urban development that has little to do with providing amusement for city residents. It is easy to see amusement space as either nothing more than a
frivolous distraction from the real problems of everyday life, or, alternatively, a fantasy-cloaked urban problem in itself.

On the other hand, amusement space's frivolous nature means that beneath its protective layer of fantasy, it can confront head-on and with "lightening force" serious problems of the day. Thus, amusement space is utopian space. The utopian dialogues that amusement and theme parks foster speak to a hegemonic give and take between dominant and resistant forms of urban living. Traces of imaginative resistance define the contours of the amusement landscape.

Most importantly, we must look at amusement space as literally the grounds upon which this utopian, hegemonic debate occurs. The cultural practices that we have postulated theoretically are articulated by individual people acting, deciding, interpreting, and enjoying in specific sites. In the following chapters, we shall see how amusement and theme parks throughout the twentieth century have acted as precisely this terrain, entertaining in spectacular and bizarre ways 'serious' debate about the future of our cities and suburbs.
CHAPTER THREE

THE AMUSEMENT PARK AS A SITE OF CULTURAL DEBATE

The theoretical framework that I constructed in Chapter Two may seem untenable if applied to the popular image of amusement space today. I have asserted that amusement space, as an integral part of the 'serious' urban environment, embeds within it utopian impulses: amusement and theme parks represent critiques of today and dreams of tomorrow. The currently fashionable postmodern reading that posits Disney parks as miniature fascist states with no hope of dissent, however, suggests dystopia, not utopia. Indeed, it is admittedly difficult to discern any other cultural impulses within Disney-defined amusement space and its many related urban forms. But appearances, especially within popular culture, can be deceiving. The notion that landscapes of popular culture such as Disneyland can act as sites of urban cultural debate unearths a deceptively complex constellation of issues.

In order to build toward a general understanding of how amusement space fosters utopian hegemonic dialogue and how this gets translated into the 'real' landscape, I now explore in more detail the cultural processes underlying these sites of leisure. This chapter focuses on the amusement park as a site of cultural debate, and the following chapter considers how elements of the debate become translated into 'reality.'
Both issues raise many empirical questions. What characteristics can be found in actual amusement parks? How are the underlying cultural processes articulated across space? On what themes has cultural debate centered? The answers to these questions animate the theoretical framework with the empirical traces of actual people and places, and provide fundamental historical grounding for the case study of Disney urban space to be addressed later in the thesis.

The specific aim of this chapter is to demonstrate empirically that the current state of Disney parks distracts from fully understanding the possibilities that amusement space in general offers. I argue that all amusement space, whether designed by Disney or not, contains within it forces of both conformity and resistance. Though the dystopian conformity and "sinister" urban design associated with Disney is now the overriding form of cultural dialogue, historical evidence suggests that a rival form of dialogue that focused on parody and resistance has enjoyed supremacy at other points in time and still plays an important, if submerged, role in the totality of amusement space. It is the interplay between the Disney model and this second form of debate, which I call the Coney Island model, that forms the heart of this chapter.

The chapter is organized into three sections. In the first, I introduce a working definition of amusement space and establish its role as cultural process within the broader realm of commercial leisure. The next two sections flesh out
in more detail the Coney Island and Disney models, respectively. Each model is situated within the historical context of amusement park evolution in order to illustrate the interrelationships between its physical manifestation and the cultural meanings debated upon its grounds.

**Defining the Amusement Park.**

Six general characteristics can define the amusement park as cultural space. The first two aspects imbue the landscape with utopian overtones, thus establishing the grounds for utopian debate and encouraging participants to dream aloud. The amusement park is, first, a place physically removed from urban areas or 'reality.' As discussed in the previous chapter, this literal displacement from everyday life is a powerful invitation to enter into utopian discourse. Second, fantasy is its prevailing theme, articulated through imaginary encounters with other times and places, or fanciful renditions of present conditions. Again, the liminal setting offers participants the opportunity to play critically with, or perhaps triumph over, the conditions of their everyday life.

The next two characteristics help situate the amusement park’s utopian qualities within everyday urban ‘reality.’ The amusement park, third, has never existed in isolation of the urban setting within which it was built. Amusement park owners and developers have always operated with economic and political motives that go beyond simply providing amusement to
the masses. Fourth, the amusement park creates within its walls, as Snow and Wright (1976, p.962) point out, an "enclosed, morally policed, architecturally unified and moderately educational" atmosphere in which specific urban 'solutions' are proposed, an atmosphere that patrons then distort and repossess in their own ways.

This dynamic process of control and resistance creates the foundations for the final two characteristics. Fifth, the ensuing cultural dialogue pivots on serious issues spanning urban, social, and technological themes. The park itself becomes an integral part of the urban fabric, influencing the form and design of growth around it. This cultural dialogue, lastly, is articulated in a forum where amusement is a commodity. The amusement park "makes spending a pageant," dramatizing objects of desire and elevating goods and attractions to "fetishes" (Kasson 1978, p.106). To participate in this dialogue, one must also participate in a highly commercialized activity.

The amusement park, though undergoing radical change throughout its development, consistently has demonstrated these six characteristics, and consistently has triumphed as quite literally entertainment for the masses. Daily visitors to turn-of-the-century Coney Island and the present-day Disney parks alike number in the hundreds of thousands. The amusement park looms large in the realm of popular entertainment; it was one of the first and continues to be
one of the most dominant and lucrative forces in commercialized leisure. Before introducing the two most powerful models of amusement space, it is important to situate the amusement park within the broader trajectory of twentieth century commercial leisure and the masses who were being entertained in order to understand the forces shaping the park’s existence and transformations.

Entertainment for the Masses.

The history of leisure in the twentieth century is the history of a paradox: as leisure became increasingly associated with release from the working world, it also became increasingly transformed by capitalist development (Butsch 1990). This situation would have repercussions for the way leisure industries were structured, the definition of who their markets were, the people that comprised their audiences, and the ways in which those people experienced the entertainment offered to them -- all conditions that contributed to the birth and evolution of the amusement park and fueled the nature of cultural debate that occurred on its grounds.

By the late nineteenth century, when the first amusement parks appeared, leisure was already well on its way to becoming a national industry. Theatre, circus, sporting events and clubs, saloons, dance halls and the like provided commercial entertainment (Butsch 1990, p.4). The North
American population, further, by this time had coalesced into a new 'mass' audience ready to be entertained. Commercialized leisure would amuse mass audiences throughout the twentieth century; however, both the nature of the entertainment and the audience would undergo significant transformation. Initially, most entertainment enterprises were locally owned by individual people or companies. By the first decades of the twentieth century leisure industries were clearly consolidating, and by mid-century the ownership pattern was strikingly oligopolistic (Butsch 1990). The audiences to which they addressed themselves, likewise, had changed from the culturally and ethnically heterogeneous working class setting of Coney Island to the more uniform middle-class identity of the Disney era (Kasson 1978, Zunz 1990). While the constellation of reasons behind these shifts, including state policies designed to stimulate consolidation, the transition from labor- to capital-intensive practices, and rising affluence and free time among workers, is beyond the scope of this chapter, the ensuing cultural implications are central to the argument.

Leisure in the nineteenth century, like leisure today, can be seen as an arena of cultural conflict (Butsch 1990, Williams 1977, Clarke et al. 1981). The time, place, and means for producing leisure were controlled by elite groups and continually contested by other groups. Unlike today, however, the exercise of power remained local, direct, and
personal. The oppositional groups were comprised mainly of blue collar workers who had battled successfully for higher wages and shorter hours, and who had their own ideas about how they wanted to spend them. There was, however, little visible solidarity of 'working class' ideals. The everyday hegemonic processes through which leisure space was contested revealed the degree to which the lines blurred: middle-class reformers and working-class labourers often struggled for similar goals, such as health, sanitation, and the elimination of crime (Hardy and Ingham 1983, p.293), and the working classes themselves were often divided by the antagonisms of distinct ethnic communities (Rosenzweig 1979, pp.40-41). Leisure space of the Coney Island era, actively constructed by many groups of many economic and ethnic backgrounds, embraced a diversity of cultural practices.

By the early twentieth century, the nature of hegemonic debate that defined leisure space began to shift toward the homogeneous vision later triumphed in the Disney model. In many cities, local elites and inspired reformers increasingly restricted the uses of public space, arguing that leisure should lead to self-improvement of a genteel nature (Kasson 1978, Hardy and Ingham 1983, Stedman Jones 1977). Commercial leisure often emerged as an antidote to 'proper' leisure: what reformers would no longer allow on the streets, enterprising business people offered for sale. Thus Butsch (1990, p.13) characterizes early entrepreneurs as allies of
the working classes — local people frequently of the same class and from the same neighbourhood as their patrons. In their saloons, dance halls, amusement parks, and other popular spots, they provided private space for now-forbidden public activities.

With the swing toward centralized leisure, however, mass production and mass distribution replaced local ownership and personal contact. Entertainment became increasingly associated with specific products — phonographs, radios, records, and later televisions (Butsch 1990, p.14), and with specific corporate-run places. It was an era of unprecedented corporate control on many fronts: radio by the 1920s, for instance, had distilled itself down to two major corporations, CBS and NBC; breweries in Boston and Chicago had already begun controlling saloons; and the commercialization of sports went hand-in-hand with standardized rules and equipment and product endorsements by star players (Butsch 1990, p.15).

Underlying these changes in ownership was a new approach to the marketing of leisure, and in particular, a new definition of who comprised the market. With the consolidation of industry came the consolidation of the audience: where entrepreneurs had previously catered to specific groups of people most clearly delineated along class and gender lines, corporations now attempted to be all things to all people. The masses were finally being melted into one mass by cross-class and cross-gender advertising that resulted
not in class- or gender-neutral leisure but rather in a vision "with class" (Butsch 1990, p.16). All were encouraged to identify with the luxury of the upper classes. Consumption was promoted as a value, upward mobility a high aspiration (Maltby 1989).

These changes paralleled broader transitions occurring within the North American population. Increasingly, there was a single 'culture' that could be addressed -- one born of the rise of corporate capitalism and based upon a rapidly growing labour force of white-collar workers in which men and women who demonstrated a command of the English language and a willingness to follow middle-class rules of conduct rose quickly through corporate bureaucracies (Zunz 1990). While the working class, as Zunz (1990, p.203) put it, had insisted on its heterogeneity, the newly emerging middle class promoted a "simplification of America's cultural system . . . a more homogeneous society."

Butsch (1990) argues that as a result, whether the 'masses' uniformly swallowed the new identities being thrust upon them or not, the types of leisure they encountered did change. He maintains that one's access to the means of making one's own leisure became increasingly limited. Citing as an example the differences between unsupervised street play and Little League games, Butsch (1990, p.8) claims that increased standardization and movement toward middle-class consumer values meant entertainment became more a complete package
regulated by corporations and less an experience the people themselves produced.

This brief history of leisure practices illuminates several significant trends developing in parallel with the amusement park. First, while the arena of leisure has always been commercially defined, the increasingly oligopolistic behaviour of corporate owners has had specific impact on the way leisure is offered and audiences are created. Class, gender, and ethnic differences have been washed away as corporate owners reach for wider and more homogeneous audiences. Audiences, further, are given less opportunity to participate actively in defining the form and style of their own entertainment. Most significantly, these changes have meant that people who participate in leisure activities today encounter different structural forces than people who amused themselves in earlier decades. While the realm of leisure is today an equally powerful site of cultural debate, the boundaries of the debate have shifted; people are presented with structurally different mass-produced cultural 'commodities' with which to enter the dialogue.

Changing leisure practices form the backcloth against which the amusement park developed; as an avenue through which broader social changes are articulated, they have helped shape the nature of cultural dialogue upon park grounds. The Coney Island and Disney models, as I shall argue, represent utopian reworkings of urban conditions within the framework of
specific ownership patterns, audience compositions, and allowable types of urban play. Though both models have existed simultaneously within amusement space since the first amusement park opened nearly a century ago, the Coney Island model dominated the amusement world until the mid-1950s, when the Disney model began its ascent. The Disney model, of course, still exerts a powerful influence; not only is it the preferred style of theme park design, but its unprecedented impact upon ‘reality’ has transformed preferred styles of urban design as well. By embarking upon our examination of the two models with an introduction to the history of leisure, we can begin to unravel how each model embodies broader trends played out in unique and contradictory ways.

"City of Fire": The Coney Island Model.

The beginnings of the amusement park reflected the paradoxes of popular leisure; the Coney Island model was borne of these contradictions. The first parks emerged as at once a response to the perceived formality and stuffiness of ‘respectable’ landscapes of leisure such as Central Park or the ‘White City’ of the World’s Columbian Exhibition of 1893 (Greenhalgh 1988, Rydell 1984), and to the perceived excesses of the more illicit forms of pleasure found in gambling dens, 1

1Phrase borrowed from the title of Snow’s (1984) exploration of Coney Island, A Postcard Journey to the City of Fire.
saloons, houses of prostitution, and the like (Adams 1991, Kasson 1978). Their form drew from a variety of related outdoor activities, including the pleasure garden, the country fair, the circus, and the World's Fair, combined in novel ways that were thrilling for patrons and lucrative for entrepreneurs (Adams 1991, Kasson 1978, Koolhaas 1978, Kyriazi 1976, Snow 1984, Wilmeth 1982). When in 1895 Captain Paul Boyton thought to enclose his collection of mechanical devices and trained juggling sea lions at Coney Island with a fence and admission gate, he made a colossal business error but launched an industry (Figure 5). Within ten years his ill-fated Sea Lion Park would be merely a faint memory, a victim perhaps of Coney Island's stiff competition and a few rainy seasons, but the amusement park in general would be an unqualified success. By the turn of the century, nearly every major city and many minor ones in North America had a park. Kyriazi (1976, p.98) estimates that by 1919 there were over 1,500 amusement parks in the United States, and Adams (1991, p.57) speculates the number may have been closer to 2000².

These early amusement parks represented the Coney Island model in its prime. Coney Island, or rather the three parks that comprised Coney Island -- Steeplechase Park, Luna Park, and Dreamland -- offered prototypical physical settings and

²The U.S. Bureau of the Census did not begin to keep statistics on amusement parks as a separate category until 1935, by which time most early parks had closed down.
5. Sea Lion Park, 1900
prototypical urban topics for 'discussion.' Following Coney Island's lead, on the grounds of the average amusement park one would find an array of spectacular attractions, food and drink concessions, dancing and bathing pavilions, and, above all, a collection of mechanical devices known as "rides" with eye-catching names such as the Mountain Torrent, Witching Waves, the Tickler, the Cannon Coaster, and the Caterpillar, the most successful of which partook of a "permanent conspiracy against the realities of the external world" (Koolhaas 1978, p.51).

Other technological wonders at the early amusement park included cycloramas, three dimensional spectacles presented under an informally educational guise that spanned recreations of current and historical events, geographical displays, and even simulated burning tenement buildings. "Scenic railways," another technological favourite, were roller-coaster type affairs that featured slow, gentle rides through scenery such as the Swiss Alps, the Canals of Venice, Arctic regions, the bottom of the sea, or even what a contemporary

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3Cycloramas, popular in an age before newsreels and the widespread availability of radios and later television, acted as a three-dimensional news service by re-enacting recent and sometimes not-so-recent dramatic events. Battles and natural disasters were by far the preferred themes; others staged more ambitious cycloramas such as Dreamland's "Blue Dome of Creation" and companion "End of the World." Topics changed frequently as world conditions shifted: the Johnstown Flood at Luna Park abruptly became the Great Italian Earthquake in the wake of the 1908 Messina earthquake (Snow 1984, p.46); the (fictional) American naval victory over the combined forces of the entire German, British, French, and Spanish naval fleets likewise one day became the Russo-Japanese battle of Port Arthur (Snow 1984, p.83).
guide book called an "instructive as well as pleasurable," and what Snow (1984, p.44) called a "grimly literal," tour of a coal mine. Incubator Buildings proved popular at both Luna Park and Dreamland, where paying visitors would enter a rustic German farmhouse-type building to gaze upon premature infants receiving ultramodern medical attention (Koolhaas 1978, p.42).

The Coney Island model was, in essence, a laboratory of the new mass culture, an incubator for the incipient themes and infant mythologies of the twentieth century (Kasson 1978, Koolhaas 1978, Peiss 1986, Snow and Wright 1976). Coney Island "linger[ed] -- residual, delinquent -- as a premonition, a possible model for a less possible architecture" (Segrest 1987, p.61). The utopian power implicit within the Coney Island model came from the way it presented, simultaneously, a confrontation with and a diversion from everyday urban conditions. Participants were invited to mock or symbolically criticize the familiar and to dream new worlds where existing urban infrastructure and social relations were turned inside out. I next present the Coney Island model in detail by focussing on three issues: its ambiguous relationship with the surrounding urban environment, its treatment of technology, and its presentation of social conditions.

Coney Island: Part of Yet Apart from the City

Early amusement parks were both physically removed from the city and an integral part of its structure. Located on
lakes, rivers, and shores, along forest edges and in valleys, they were secluded from but always within commuting distance of an urban area (Edwards [1915] 1976, p.105). The commute to the park, in fact, often guaranteed the park's existence: transit companies, searching for ways to increase ridership and attract attention to suburban land they wished to sell, constructed parks at the end of their trolley lines (Adams 1991, pp.57-60; Edwards [1915] 1976, p.106; Kyriazi 1976, p.99). Other early amusement parks were constructed by municipalities as they developed public park ground already under their control (Edwards [1915] 1976, p.106). In at least one instance, a park was developed with encouragement from city officials who hoped to draw attention to an 'underdeveloped' area ripe for annexation (Dorpat 1984, p.98). Other parks were owned and operated by individual entrepreneurs, but parks built simply to amuse were a rarity. Bailey and Parkhurst (1979), in their survey of early South Jersey parks, note that some even developed as side-businesses on such unlikely sites as grist mills and farm equipment manufacturing grounds.

Ownership by transit company, municipality, or individual entrepreneur indicated a permanence and consolidation heretofore unseen in outdoor amusements. As Kasson (1978, p.50) notes, the first amusement parks located festivity "not in time as a special moment on the calendar but in space as a special place on the map." Owners staked large sums of money
on mechanical contraptions, buildings, and land. Even when they leased amusement concessions within their park to outside operators, they still retained control over the content and style of the exhibitions (Peiss 1986, p.127-8). They thus could develop sustained themes within the parks. In the Coney Island image, the parks embraced the most startling and alarming conditions of the day and translated them into fanciful experiences and attractions.

The Coney Island model, thus, appealed paradoxically as both an exaggeration of and an escape from urban conditions. 'Serious' urban issues were debated within what Coney Island's Luna Park creator Frederic A. Thompson (1907, p.1461) called "a different world -- a dream world, perhaps a nightmare world -- where all is bizarre and fantastic . . . [with] things that would elsewhere be impossible." The element of escape, as observer Albert Bigelow Paine (1904, p.535) commented, was paramount to Coney Island's success: the amusement area promised to be "a world removed -- shut away from the sordid clatter and turmoil of the streets." Richard Le Gallienne (1905, p.243) likewise pinpointed the "Human Need of Coney Island" in the escape it offered from "the world of What-we-have-to-do into the world of What-we-would-like-to-do." Scientific American (1908, p.108) went so far as to recommend approaching Coney Island only by sea, so that visitors would not be reminded of its proximity.
to "squalid neighborhoods and . . . the back of everything" otherwise visible by train journey.

At the same time, the impossible situations that would astound and delight millions were in fact displaced and reworked renditions of those very existences that the millions left behind. Coney's thinly-veiled themes would be easily recognizable to its patrons, for these themes captured the diversity of urban everyday life from a working person's perspective. The Fire and Flames attraction, for instance, complete with real flames, real firemen (a midget brigade at Dreamland), and real 'tenants' (trained acrobats) throwing themselves out of windows, bore an uncomfortably strong resemblance to its urban counterpart (Koolhaas 1978, p.45; Snow 1984, p.44; Figure 6). As contemporary journalist Sylvester Baxter (1898, p.60) observed, it was as if in the amusement park "one of the city's nightmare brood had escaped the urban cage and pursued [the leisure-seeker] to his resting place." The driving rush and overwhelming din of the amusement park was unmistakably also the rush and din of the city; turn-of-the-century Coney Island observer Rollin Lynde Hartt (1907, p.674) accused the entertainment complex of suffering from an acute case of "Manhattenitis." Technology (Kasson 1977, Snow and Wright 1976), gender issues (Peiss 1986), class issues (Kasson 1977), and issues dealing with architecture and urban infrastructure (Kasson 1977, Koolhaas 1978) all were openly confronted within the amusement parks'
6. Dreamland's Fighting the Flames
walls in ways that at once targeted them for mockery and pointed toward potential future reformations beyond the walls.

Coney Island: Reworking the Technology of Urban Living

Technology was both visually and conceptually a dominant Coney Island theme. The mechanical rides that were at the heart of the amusement parks were diligent and often ingenious applications of the latest technologies. The overwhelming presence of loud, clanking, whirring and spinning machinery at Coney strongly suggested both transportation technology and production machinery, the twin industrial pillars of most visitors' lives. The enormity of technology's role in the Coney Island model has provoked conflicting reactions, but rarely gone unnoticed. Braithwaite (1968, p.65), for instance, nostalgically called the amusement park's technology "the effervescence and sparkle of a period of ruthless and unrelenting manufacture," while contemporary observer Mark Sullivan (cited in Hartt 1907, p.674) more dryly commented "if a man suffered in a trolley car what ten thousand New Yorkers pay ten cents to have done to them at Coney Island, he would go to a hospital for a month, call himself a nervous wreck for the rest of his days, and sue the trolley company for $20,000 damages."

At Coney Island the relationship between its machinery and the urban themes they represented, as Sullivan alluded to, was by no means subtle. Patrons were treated to a veritable assault of, or perhaps on, technology. The most spectacular
rides were those that mimicked, always with an edge of mockery, actual technological elements of the 'outside' world. Roller coasters of almost infinite variety joined other mechanical contraptions to provide physical sensations that conceptually resembled and were frequently compared to their more mundane counterparts such as trolleys, mine cars, elevators, or airships.

Though the first roller coasters were not precisely breathtaking experiences, they immediately won a massive following. The earliest coasters, with names such as the "Switchback Railway," "Pike's Peak Railway," and the "Oriental Scenic Railway" were truly participatory adventures. Passengers would have to get out and climb up the taller hills on foot while attendants pushed the cars up by hand (Kyriazi 1976, p.34). Once loaded again, the cars would then glide down a relatively gentle descent, operating solely on gravity. Even this experience, mild by today's standards, provided a thrilling shock to one anonymous enthusiast: "Easily the best sensation at [Coney] Island is the scenic railway with a wooden beam that looks as if it was [sic] going to hit you on the head. It's great!" (cited in Hartt 1907, p.674).

As roller coasters became more fully automated and the track more daring, the experience more closely approximated a runaway vehicle, be it a train, a trolley, or a coal car. Kasson (1978, p.73,76) demonstrates how the unquestionably unpleasant experience of descending into a coal mine had been
transformed into a thrill at Coney Island, and likewise how the everyday dangers of the New York urban train system had been transformed into coasters such as the ghastly "Flip-Flap" that perhaps seemed only marginally more threatening (Figures 7 and 8). Albert Bigelow Paine (1904, p.533-34), writing of his visit to Coney Island and to the Flip-Flap's successor, the Loop-the-Loop, spoke of "gaz[ing] up at the pair of great steel loops" and becoming "silent in the sort of fascination that awaits impending disaster." Against his better judgement, he boarded "this appalling amusement" and soon experienced "a fierce upward rush of air, a wild grip at a loosening hat, and an instant later, the shock! . . . We were darting down to inevitable annihilation." In spite of feeling his body about to "close up like an accordion," Paine was clearly exhilarated and fascinated by this macabre variation of urban transportation.

The circular Loop-the-Loop was joined at Coney Island by other renditions of transit near-misses. At Dreamland, the Leap Frog coaster satisfied two carloads full of eager patrons by realistically simulating a head-on collision (Figure 9). The two cars raced toward each other on the same track, until the last instant, when one car would abruptly switch to another track and miraculously ascend directly over the other car (Kasson 1978, p.77). A contemporary account reported

"The Leap Frog cars, shaped rather like giant elongated slugs, had track running up and over their sloping backs. The "crashing" car simply engaged this second set of tracks and continued over the
7. Runaway Coal Mine Trains
8. The Flip Flap Compared to the El Curve
9. Dreamland's Leap Frog Railway
"the passengers in breathless excitement, momentarily anticipating disaster, realizing that their lives are in jeopardy, clinging to one another for safety, closing their eyes to the impending danger . . . the cars crash into one another, thirty-two people are hurled over the heads of thirty-two others . . . they are suddenly awakened to a realization of the fact that they have actually collided with another car and yet they find themselves safe and sound." (cited in Koolhaas 1978, p.49-50).

Roller coaster developers also attempted to fashion, alas in vain, a coaster that would "Leap-the-Gap," that is, successfully maneuver across a section of broken track. This novel approach to track maintenance never made it past the planning stages: empty coasters could make the leap, but before progressing to trial runs, a perceptive engineer realized in the nick of time that the weight of actual riders would vary from ride to ride, hence making successful completion of the leap a truly chancy event (Siessel 1990, p.34).

The elevator, a quintessentially urban form of transit that ferried passengers up and down solely within buildings, was also transformed into an adventure at Steeplechase Park. Billed as an elevator ride to a "lovely roof garden," it was in fact a trick elevator that went nowhere. Visitors were all car being crashed into.
in on the joke (one hopes), yet were still delighted when
"with a tremendous crash the car would slam backward to lie
wrecked at a forty-five degree angle while the panicked
occupants scrambled for safety" (Snow 1984, p.71).

Other forms of transportation made their debut at Coney
Island long before they became generally available at a mass
level. Visitors to Coney as early as 1907 could ride the
"flying airships," a contraption that at first struck observer
Rollin Lynde Hartt (1907, p.675) as "a rather wanton and
extravagant complication of afflictions" that sane people
should avoid. The ride itself, however, convinced him
otherwise: "the laws of physics uphold you . . . beneath you
the world reels and swells and topples to and fro like
mid-ocean billows, since every successive moment gives you a
new scale of perspective. This . . . you had in no wise
foreseen." The private automobile soon followed, first
offering serene turns around a track, and then quickly
mutating into the unmistakably attractive guise of bumper cars
where high-speed collisions were the goal.

Both the realities of transportation's dangers and the
possibilities of "Yankee ingenuity" commanded a certain
fascination. Indeed, it is perhaps impossible to ascertain
where perilous delight with physical sensation ended and sheer
admiration for the roller coaster's visionary form began.
Lampton (1902), writing in the popular magazine The
Cosmopolitan, discussed the general "fascination of fast
motion" that gripped turn-of-the-century audiences. "Chutes," "Loops," and roller coasters were only a few of the technological wonders Lampton inventoried that "with no visible effort exhilarate[ed] and attract[ed]" (Lampton 1902, p.132). Journalist Sylvester Baxter in 1898 reacted with similar enthusiasm to another product of "Yankee ingenuity" found in the 'real' world, a steel bridge over which trolleys could bypass steam railway tracks. Though the trolley seemed to be on a certain collision course with the steam train, he declared "Never mind! It jumps over, clearing the obstacle by a leap through the air!"

On the surface, Coney's elaborate rides and machinery celebrated this delight, awe and fear of what Kasson (1978, p.74) calls the technological sublime. The breathless excitement exuded in contemporary descriptions clearly demonstrates that the sheer exhilaration of physical sensation was one of the primary attractions of the rides. The rides, however, Kasson (1978, p.81) continues, were intended to throw people off balance not just literally but also figuratively. Technology at Coney Island existed in a utopian tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the safe and the dangerous, the logical and the patently absurd.

5"Chutes," or "Shoot-the-Chutes" were a precursor to modern flume rides, where a flat-bottomed boat was sent flying down a ramp into a pool of water below; Hartt (1907, p.674) described them most simply "as an apotheosis of the banister, or as the cellar door in excelsis."
The effect of such a reworking of technology's role was part comic relief, part accommodation to the prevalence of machinery in everyday life, and part sly mockery. Riders could, at last, brave the dangers inherent in runaway coal mine trains and crashing trolley cars and come out of their fright and disorientation laughing, because they believed in the ultimate safety of the contraptions (Kasson 1978, p.82). On the one hand, this implied a degree of acquiescence to the technological norm. As Snow and Wright (1976) argue, Coney's mechanical wonders encouraged people to participate vicariously in what was in essence a fantastical version of the myth of progress. At the amusement parks, the new technologies were implemented in ways that imbued them with positive attributes and made concessions to popular myths and ideals. The debate generated within popular culture, thus, in part humourously promoted acceptance of the role the machine increasingly played in daily life.

The parodic possibilities of Coney Island's rendition of technology, on the other hand, were equally as much a part of the popular cultural debate. Kasson (1978, p.74) points out that many rides seemed intended as broad parodies of urban experiences; Koolhaas (1978, p.27) sees in the roller coaster, for example, "a parody of the curves, hills, and valleys of a regular railway trajectory." Such mockery opens up the potential of a triumph over, and not acceptance of, the technological status quo. Machinery was, for once, at least
within Coney's confines, the slave of the masses and not their master. Hundreds of state-of-the-art, awe-inspiring behemoth structures were, for all intents and purposes, totally meaningless; they existed solely to amuse Coney's millions. Further, they were not only totally meaningless but also (so patrons were continually reassured) totally harmless. As such, they stood in bold relief as the subservient twins of their evil urban counterparts. "Each nightmare exorcized in [Coney Island] is a disaster averted in Manhattan" (Koolhaas 1978, p.42).

Technology's very absurdity, however, hints at how on another level these parodies of urban conditions served as utopian elements that looked toward the improvement of urban conditions. First, the rides in a symbolic sense represented a world where railways, elevators, and the like were firmly under people's control, and even in their worst moments, promised threats no greater than the occasional whiplash. Second, the rides in a more literal sense actually were seen as prototypes of technology to come. The airplane and private automobile were obvious examples, but more visionary forms were attempted as well. Koolhaas (1978, p.50) reports, for instance, that the Leap Frog Railway was intended by Dreamland developer William H. Reynolds as a prototype to reduce the mortality rate on railways due to collisions. The incubator attraction, likewise, though at the time criticized for "appeal[ing] to the unhealthy morbidity" of paying customers,
was in fact a visionary medical facility operating at a time when no hospitals would experiment with the new technology (Fortune 1938, p.102)\(^6\)

Coney Island: Envisioning New Social Conditions

If Coney Island’s mechanical contraptions provided the tangible symbols of utopian debate, its complex and sometimes bizarre reworking of gender, class, and ethnic relations grounded the technological discussion in a specific urban image. The Coney Island model stands out for the diversity of social practices encouraged. The enormous internal variation evident within Coney Island alone can serve as an instructive example. Coney Island, though usually referred to in the singular, at its prime was comprised of the three "spectacular" amusement parks mentioned above and an extended zone of scattered concessions and amusements\(^7\). Each park and

\(^6\)The Incubator Attractions at both Luna Park and Dreamland were initiated by French doctor Martin Arthur Couney, who after unsuccessfully attempting to convince both French and American hospitals to adopt his invention, brought his "Baby Hatching Apparatus" to Coney Island (Koolhaas 1978, pp.42-43).

\(^7\)Kasson (1978) offers the most sustained commentary on Coney Island’s spectacular era. Peiss’ (1986) shorter discussion of Coney Island and working women presents a detailed and thoughtful essay on class conditions at Coney Island. Snow’s (1984) annotated postcard collection contains a wealth of valuable, if unindexed, information. Architect Rem Koolhaas (1978) offers an unusual, though sometimes inaccurate, perspective, as well as a formidable survey of Dreamland. Kyriazi (1976) includes several chapters on Coney Island in his general survey of American amusement parks, and Adams’ (1991) concise treatment, though largely derivative of the above-mentioned sources, incorporates significant primary material. Various shorter secondary treatments of Coney and numerous primary
area had its own style, its own clientele, and its own set of leisure practices offered. A brief tour of each park will help illuminate how these differences were central to Coney Island's landscape, and how they were all integral components of the generic Coney Island model.

At Coney Island, commercial leisure by the turn of the century already reverberated around a tension between different styles of entertainment, and the tension was most clearly articulated along class lines (Kasson 1978, Peiss 1986). Though all three amusement parks clearly pertained to the same phenomenon, they nonetheless exhibited somewhat different ownership structures, attracted somewhat different patrons, and offered different forms of amusement. Steeplechase Park, built in 1897 and the oldest of the three, was owned by individual entrepreneur George Tilyou, whose family had owned various concessions on Coney Island for decades (Figure 10). Often advertised in local working-class newspapers such as the socialist New York Call, Steeplechase's clientele tended toward blue collar working-class and its atmosphere highlighted the enjoyment of pure physical sensation (Peiss 1986, pp. 134-136). It was also the longest-lived of all three parks, lasting into the 1960s.

Luna Park, the second spectacular park built, was designed and developed in 1903 by architect Frederic Thompson documents exist as well; these are highlighted in the bibliography.
and his business partner Skip Dundy (Figure 11). Here the overall effect was a World's Fair turned upside-down, with colorful exotic architecture and bizarre renditions of current events and foreign scenes. Hilarity blended with middle-class respectability, and Luna attracted the largest audiences (Peiss 1986, pp. 129-131).

Finally, in the wake of the remarkable success of the first two parks, Dreamland, a park to end all parks, was financed in 1904 by a consortium of local politicians and real estate promoters (Figure 12). Its austere white architecture, grandiose exhibits, overblown moralizations, and higher admission price announced to the world it was seeking a higher class of patron. Interestingly, the public did not respond entirely favourably to this park that, as director George Dobson (cited in Peiss 1986, p.132) explained, "sought to appeal to a highly developed sense of the artistic." It never achieved the appeal of the first two parks, and was not rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1911.

The range of cultural practices seen in the three Coney Island parks accents how the whole conglomeration that is an

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8It was at Dreamland that patrons could watch Biblical renditions of the beginning and end of the earth. They also could visit Hell, via a cyclorama called "Hell Gate," and receive a lesson in contemporary morality. Scenes depicted such events as a young woman who buys a new hat, tries it on before a mirror, and promptly is seized by two demons and thrown into a pit of fire; announcers meanwhile gave running condemnations of social evils such as women pickpockets and liquor drinking, and ultimately recommended the church over the saloon (Peiss 1986, pp.131-132).
Luna Park
amusement park acquires various meanings, depending both on how it is presented and how it is used. In looking next at the specific roles of gender, class, and ethnicity within the Coney Island model, the emphasis must be on the interplay between the intended messages and the audience's reception of them. Inherent in the Coney Island model, as I shall demonstrate, was a certain resistance to images of respectability, even respectable images that formed part of the model itself. In short, the Coney Island model encouraged visitors to write their own script.

Coney Island was one of the few places at the time where women, and particularly working women, could appear unescorted in public without risking ridicule or worse (Kasson 1978, Peiss 1986). Albert Bigelow Paine (1904, p.533), on his visit to Coney Island, was delighted to find not only respectable men and their families, but also "well-dressed, well-mannered women . . . walking about entirely unprotected." A year earlier his contemporary, twenty-year old milliner, dress-maker, and domestic servant Agnes M., agreed whole-heartedly when she told an interviewer that to her and her friends, Coney Island was just like heaven (cited in Peiss 1986, p.115). Ironically, Agnes M. may not have been exactly the type of woman Paine had in mind in his statement. Agnes, Peiss continues, enjoyed dancing and flirting and quickly grew impatient with the "high people" who did not share her
enthusiasm for such sport (Agnes M., cited in Peiss 1986, p.116).

Hence, two not necessarily parallel avenues for women's involvement were opening up at Coney Island. One concerned the inclusion of "well-dressed, well-mannered" women who pertained to society's respectable circles. Concurrently, the landscape they visited was fast gaining a reputation of being a site for moral, family-oriented amusement. The other avenue, however, reveals a more complex dynamic, for it encompassed not only working women but also elements of working women's culture that often raised eyebrows.

Peiss (1986) argues that Coney Island offered to New York's working women an all-important escape from the factories and tenements, and at the same time an opportunity to extend the pillars of their own culture into a morally-approved setting. Watching men, dancing, and having a good time were, for women like Agnes M., well-established pastimes in New York's streets and commercial dance halls; these more risque elements easily translated into Coney's many dance pavilions and thrill rides, creating an atmosphere where physical contact was not only unavoidable but actively encouraged. Taking advantage of Coney Island's system of treating, working women could journey to the parks on their own, make a new acquaintance and enjoy the entire day for only the cost of transportation (Peiss 1986, p.126).
Not all visitors approved of the full spectrum of amusement represented at Coney Island. Hartt (1907, p.676), for instance, noted with disdain the "somewhat disconcerting marvels of deportment" he saw involving women, complaining specifically that "in the ballroom any well-seeming youngster may invite any girl to dance -- an arrangement long since sanctioned by that maelstrom of proletarian jollity, the 'social'." Yet significantly, in spite of such resistance, the new, more relaxed tone of entertainment quickly became a permanent fixture of the new mass culture. Coney Island retained its reputation as a place where both working women and 'respectable' women alike could abandon themselves to the pleasures Coney offered in a basically wholesome setting. Even Hartt (1907, p.677) had to admit that Coney did enjoy a high degree of "moral cleanliness," and its "laundered diversions attracted a laundered constituency." Ultimately, the lines between culture 'fit for a lady' and the culture actually preferred by working women blurred at Coney Island, though the tension was never resolved. The paradoxes that lingered were perhaps best symbolized at Dreamland, where, as the Russian socialist Maxim Gorky noted through gritted teeth on his first and last visit to Coney Island, wildly divergent messages were repeatedly juxtaposed. He found especially preposterous the location of "Hell Gate" (see note #8, Ch.3), which warned "Do not sin! Sin is dangerous," and was situated
directly across from the dance hall, which just as earnestly called "Sin! For sin is pleasant!" (Gorky 1907, p.314).

When looking at the opportunities Coney Island offered for women at the turn of the century, it is difficult to disentangle issues revolving around gender from issues revolving around class: To be a respectable woman was, in many ways, to engage in middle-class behaviour, while to be immoral was to partake of traditionally working-class entertainment. Both aspects of this equation, gender and class, had great resonance with Coney's visitors, and to their delight Coney effectively confused the issue by postulating new balances while still evoking old tensions, a tactic that can be seen as having, in the context of popular cultural debate, utopian potential.

Self-appointed purveyors of good taste who observed the parks closely were at once impressed by park standards and dismayed by how patrons did not live up to them. In other words, they grappled with the repercussions of a model of amusement space that incorporated both middle-class sensibilities and a working-class assault upon them. The New York Times, for instance, initially welcomed both Luna Park and Dreamland as "glittering, magic cities" whose presence vastly improved Coney's atmosphere: Police Commissioner McAdoo praised the "new" Coney as clean, moral, and magnificent (New York Times 15 May 1904, p.3; New York Times 17 May 1903, p.2). Owners and developers routinely claimed
their amusement parks were literally walled off from disreputable elements of leisure. George Tilyou, owner of Coney Island's Steeplechase Park, liked to remind his performers that they were to refrain from swearing as his park would only tolerate "polite" entertainment fit for "Ladies and children" (Tilyou, cited in Snow and Wright 1976, p.97). Luna Park architect Frederic Thompson (1907, p.1462) explained that above all, Coney Island aspired to provide fun "such as women and children can enjoy . . . Coney Island is frisky, but it knows where to draw the line." In Salt Lake City, the Mormon Church entered the amusement park business as a way to provide wholesome family entertainment for the community (McCormick and McCormick 1985); likewise, the first roller coaster was invented by a Sunday-school teacher searching for a clean source of entertainment for young people (Kyriazi 1976, p.34).

Amusement park patrons, on the other hand, clearly did not all go to the parks to partake of their wholesome and uplifting atmospheres. Just as the amusement park was not a gambling den, it also was not a pastoral setting. It offered a noisy and thrilling opportunity to drop social conventions for the day. The overwhelming presence of topsy-turvy technology invited topsy-turvy behaviour: first-hand accounts indicate that behaviour within park walls rarely lived up to park owner's wholesome expectation. In 1915, Richard Henry Edwards, active with the YMCA, reported on the "thoroughly debasing" nature of most amusement parks. What he called the
"stress of unusual excitement" fostered by the pure sensationalism of fleeting pleasures led, he feared, to a carnival spirit of freedom, relaxation, and in the worst cases, "gross immorality" (Edwards [1915] 1976, p.107). The Kansas City parks he examined were guilty of "dark concessions, unsupervised bathing pools, ... indecently suggestive pictures, indecent dancing exhibitions, [and] dark unpolic ed parts of the park" (Edwards [1915] 1976, p.108).

At Saltair, the Mormon Church was aghast to learn that park-goers frequently indulged in "that which is forbidden" (Deseret News, 1902, cited in McCormick and McCormick 1985, p.45). Patrons showing up in "improper attire" netted thirty days in jail. Alcoholic beverages were consumed in epidemic proportions\(^9\). Worst of all, young people were obviously exposed to the "villainous arts of practiced voluptuaries" and "degraded character destroyers" (Deseret News, cited in McCormick and McCormick 1985, p.20).

The tension between middle-class sensibilities and practices that threatened their imminent overthrow alluded to a deeper, more serious assault on existing class relations.

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\(^9\)Interestingly enough, the developers of Saltair, a company of which the Mormon Church owned controlling shares, chose both to allow the sale of alcohol and to remain open on Sundays. That the developers deliberately loosened up the morally restrictive environment envisioned by the owners, and got away with it, opens up an intriguing set of questions concerning the relationship between owners and developers.
Class relations in the Coney Island model were targeted for equal doses of mockery and visionary reworking. At Coney, class differences were pronounced irrelevant for the day, thus slipping out from under patrons' feet the familiar carpeting of cultural expectation (Kasson 1978). First, the architectural backdrop set the stage, with its iconoclastic and almost sarcastic rendering of luxurious, exotic themes. Luna Park architect Frederic Thompson described beginning with a kernel of neoclassical formalism and promptly subjecting it to "all the license in the world," ending up with a combination of exuberantly decorated towers, turrets, minarets, arches, lagoons, and other elements that were adorned with mythical beasts and other bizarre ornamentation, and brightly coloured in oranges, yellows, and other hues never before seen in such contexts (Thompson, cited in Kasson 1978, p.63). Symbols of luxury and opulence, thus, in the hands of Coney Island's architects, were expropriated from Fifth Avenue and the mansions of the rich, where most of New York's millions were clearly excluded, and placed firmly in the hands of the "masses" (Kasson 1978, p.66).

Middle-class social sensibilities, like middle-class architectural sensibilities, also were subjected to a tantalizingly warped reworking, most often at the hands of patrons themselves. Swayed by Coney's infectious atmosphere, visitors were encouraged to temporarily shed their roles from the 'real' world. Shedding class distinctions was a favourite
pastime. Edward Tilyou, son of Steeplechase Park’s founder George Tilyou, spoke of factory girls who for the day redefined their class positions and played the part of stenographers and private secretaries, and of shopkeepers who would dress up in their best clothes to be grande dames (Tilyou, cited in Kasson 1978, p.59). More prevalent, however, and more significant theoretically, were the growing number of middle-class patrons who came to partake of Coney’s reputed working-class atmosphere.

Contemporary observers, while quick to comment on Coney’s wholesome air, also focused on what apparently was to them its novel approach to amusement. Coney was celebrated (or denigrated) as the "Palace of Poor Pleasures for Poor Men," where visitors could laugh, shout, see an exposed ankle, steal a kiss, ride a human roulette wheel, be a steeplechase jockey, and generally be thrilled by "coarse excitement" (Le Gallienne 1905, p.245). As Baxter (1902, p.433) somewhat warily expressed it, "the hallmark of the slums is marked upon the place;" Gatlin (1913, p.332) further noted that in spite of a profusion of perfectly good, tranquil parks in New York, the "better class of people" invariably preferred to make a "slumming expedition" to Coney Island.

Hartt (1907, p.669-670) maintained that the opportunity to rub shoulders with the "residuum" left over after New York’s wealthier population drained to the mountains, the shores, and Europe was a central part of the thrill.
"Theoretically an institution for the vulgar herd," he speculated, "the park is pre-eminently a delight for the cultivated." Where else, he asked, could an otherwise respectable person take such licenses as were inspired by "proletarian jollity" and sanctioned by nothing more than widespread convention, and suffer little repercussion (Hartt 1907, p.677).

Coney Island may also have offered "the cultivated" a chance to rub shoulders with ethnic minorities; certainly the amusement parks entertained a tension between dominant white anglo and minority sensibilities. Coney, first, attracted patrons of visible minorities. Progressive reformer Bruce Bliven attested in 1921 to the popularity of Coney Island amongst Eastern and Southern European immigrants, when he complained that "Anglo-Saxon Puritanism" was being displaced by a sea of black-haired heads (cited in Kasson 1978, p.97). African Americans also frequented the park, as evidenced by period photographs and paintings (Cox 1976, Fortune 1938). Secondly, certain attractions at Coney suggested a confrontation with racist themes, though little resolution. The blond, blue-eyed models in Dreamland's moralistic displays provided a stark contrast to the "authentic" African tribesmen on display elsewhere at Coney Island, promised $4.00 a week but paid nothing, or the collection of 'characters' who wandered Steeplechase park much as Mickey and Goofy today wander the Disney parks. This bunch, however, included, along
with a clown and a midget, a Native American Indian and a black policeman -- calculated to provide humour to contemporary audiences (Snow 1984, p. 73; p.91; Figure 13). The overall message was cloudy. Much as World’s Fairs of the day offered anthropological displays under educational guises that were fraught with racist overtones\(^1\), Coney Island’s ethnic themes straddled a fine line between inviting minority groups into the dialogue and merely caricaturing them for the amusement of white audiences. That this tension was confronted at all, however, reflects an incipient critical utopian impulse.

In this section, I have discussed at some length the Coney Island model of amusement space. We have seen that it represented a utopian reworking of urban conditions. Disquieting components of everyday life such as burning tenements and train accidents were thinly disguised and broadly parodied in Coney Island’s fantasy world. Social conventions were turned topsy turvy: women could roam free, class distinctions tossed aside, ethnic roles confronted if not resolved, and social structures in general openly challenged. Most significantly, the Coney Island model encouraged participants to take an active role in scripting their own entertainment.

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\(^{10}\)See Rydell (1984) for a detailed analysis of the role of World’s Fairs as creators of popular racial images.
13. "A Group of Freaks" at Steeplechase
The Coney Island model was set into motion within the context of a specific timeframe and specific landscape. Though the model would become an integral and permanent part of twentieth century amusement space, the parks themselves fell into a period of decline in the broader context of changing leisure practices\textsuperscript{11}. By 1935, the number of parks had dwindled to 303, and the final death knell was sounded in 1955 when Walt Disney introduced a new model of amusement space that proved immediately and overwhelmingly popular.

"Machine-Tooled Happyland\textsuperscript{12}": The Disney Model.

Walt Disney is often treated as the father of family-oriented, middle-class, respectable outdoor entertainment, and with good reason. Not only did he construct the first true 'theme' park in 1955, but he also reconstructed popular perception of what amusement space should be. The Coney

\textsuperscript{11}Though the general economic hardships of the Depression, the shortage of building materials during World War II, changing land values, rising insurance rates, and the rise of other forms of entertainment such as movies and automobile trips all figure into the parks' gradual demise, the reasons most often cited in amusement park histories revolve around the type of entertainment offered and the type of patron attracted. Bullaro and Edginton (1986), for example, offer a typical interpretation: as people came to demand cleaner, more respectable fun, the seedy atmosphere of the early parks brought about their own demise (see also Lyon 1958, Norris and Norris 1986).

\textsuperscript{12}Phrase borrowed from science fiction writer Ray Bradbury's factual account of Disneyland (Bradbury 1965, p.100).
Island era amusement park was rejected as a decadent, inferior model. The theme park, here defined not by Disney but by the rival Marriot Corporation (cited in Bullaro and Edginton 1986, p.61), the hotel chain that played a major role in theme park development, promised a vastly improved experience:

A family entertainment complex oriented to a particular subject or historical area, combining the continuity of costuming and architecture with entertainment and merchandise to create a fantasy-provoking atmosphere.

By offering a new concept in park ownership, a new vision of park design, and a new experience for park visitors, and by retelling the history of the amusement park to make it sound as if all parks before his were dirty, seedy, and drearily boring places to which he could not take his children (Grosvenor 1963, p.157D), Disney introduced a model of amusement space that rivalled Coney Island's in its complexity and power.

That Marriot's definition of a theme park could equally well describe a Coney Island park underscores the fact that the Disney model, like the Coney Island model before it, is first and foremost a setting for utopian debate. Both models propose within their fantasy worlds futuristic reconciliations of present-day problems; even though half a century has passed in between each model's inception, the nature of urban problems addressed remains remarkably consistent. In the Disney world, interest still focuses on technology, social
conditions, and their relation to urban (and increasingly, suburban) life. Yet the Disney model, ultimately, represents a fundamentally different vision of the city. Changing historical conditions, of course, have contributed to Disney's uniqueness, but more significantly, the Disney model embodies crucially different attitudes about cultural debate and utopian resolution.

If the Coney Island model paved its avenues of utopian hope with opportunities for parody of and resistance to existing structures, the Disney model, by contrast, posits that improvement is possible and indeed preferable by appealing to those very structures themselves. It is a model in which capitalism and democracy are not the problems but the solutions: technology, consumerism, and traditional American values are upheld as our hope for tomorrow. By next examining the Disney model in more detail using the three categories introduced for Coney Island -- relationship to the surrounding urban environment, treatment of technology, and presentation of social conditions -- we can see how Disney's different underlying philosophy results in a completely different cultural landscape.

Disney: Part of Yet Apart from the Multinational Communications Network.

The Disney model reformulates amusement space's relationship to the surrounding urban environment on two levels. First, it represents a response to the changing
nature of the entertainment industry and urban development in
general, and second, it offers a specific vision of 'improved'
urban space. These issues, entwined in Disney's presentation,
are articulated in a paradoxical duality reminiscent of the
Coney Island model: the Disney model at once promises an
escape from and an exaggeration of urban 'reality.' Unlike
the Coney Island model, however, Disney's approach never
suggests confrontation. Danger is smoothed over, pseudo-
menaces neutralized, and the present, as we shall see, all but
banished. Urban reality is only allowed in under fantasy's
guise, tamed and domesticated.

Walt Disney once announced "I don't want the public to
see the real world they live in while they're in the park. I
want them to feel they're in another world" (Disney, cited in
King 1981, p. 121). The Disney parks are predicated on the
notion that, as Disney executive Marty Sklar (cited in
Sansweet 1982, p.21) explained, "people can turn on their TV's
and hear about crime and pollution. Why would they come to a
vacation spot that featured the same thing?" The theme park's
physical setting, corporate ownership structure, and design
schemata all help to create an isolated fantasy land that
incorporates qualifying bits of the present in controlled
doses.

If the first amusement parks were a trolley ride away
from the city, today's theme parks are a plane ride away from
the suburbs. Preferred locations no longer hinge upon sites
of physical beauty easily accessible by daily excursions. Theme park siting has become a veritable science, contingent upon market surveys, competing attractions, zoning regulations, environmental impact statements, and the presence of large tracts of blank, shapeable land. The ideal park, taking its cue from Disney, sits on exurban land in semi-isolation. As the potential market mushrooms from the immediate vicinity to national and even international proportions, local transportation needs once provided by enterprising steam and rail lines have now been usurped by airplanes and motel shuttle buses, as well as the private automobile.

The average theme park is palatial in size when compared to the traditional amusement park, which commonly was squeezed onto less than twenty acres\textsuperscript{13}. Disneyland's sixty-five acres seem today impractically small: most major theme parks range between 200 and 300 acres, and Walt Disney himself, determined not to make the same mistake twice, purchased 27,400 acres for his Florida venture\textsuperscript{14}. Here the intent is not so much

\textsuperscript{13}Steeplechase Park occupied fifteen acres (Snow 1984, p.67), Luna Park approximately twenty-two (\textit{New York Times} May 17, 1903, p.2), and after a Steeplechase fire in 1907, Tilyou constructed what must have been the world's first indoor amusement park on five acres (Snow 1984, p.70).

\textsuperscript{14}The land sits within the Reedy Creek Improvement District, a special jurisdiction created by the Florida legislature in 1967 to accommodate Disney. Ostensibly a public entity, Reedy Creek can levy taxes, set building codes, maintain its own fire and paramedic units, and construct roads, airports, and even, if it wished, its own nuclear power plant. Reedy Creek is eligible to finance
spaciousness as control. The Disney organization has so far only utilized approximately ten percent of the land in three decades of development, and the Magic Kingdom theme park itself only takes up one hundred acres or so (Figure 14). The extra space, however, guarantees Disney not just a buffer from the 'real world' and room for expansion but also full control over whatever tourist-related and service sector-oriented businesses later grow. As the theme park industry becomes firmly embedded in the distant economies of the travel industry, tremendous service sector growth has been associated with theme parks (Bullaro and Edginton 1986).

Ownership patterns throughout the field of commercial entertainment have undergone dramatic changes that have had serious impacts on theme park development. Fewer and fewer parties own more and more parks; just as Butsch (1990) found for leisure industries in general, the theme park industry has steadily dwindled to an ever-smaller number in control. In 1919 there were over 1,500 amusement parks owned by, we can assume, close to 1,500 individual entrepreneurs, companies, municipalities, or other groups. By the 1970s, multinational corporations had entered the market full force, and by the early 1980s six corporations -- Disney, Six Flags, Taft

improvements with tax-free bonds (DeGeorge 1988). Reedy Creek, however, bears an unmistakable Disney mark. All of its fifty permanent residents are either Disney employees or relatives, and all of Reedy Creek's supervisors are connected with Disney and almost always run unopposed (Knack 1979, p.20).
Broadcasting, Anheuser-Busch, the Marriot Corporation and Harcourt Brace Janovich -- seemed to own everything (Table 1). The next two decades have marked a tightening of the corporate grip, as the Big Six has slimmed even further to three core corporations. The enormous amounts of ready cash necessary to finance a theme park excludes all but the most solvent owners.

A significant implication of industry consolidation is that the type of corporation that supports theme park development can play a crucial role in the park's form and content. Just as early amusement parks were predominantly held under the auspices of transit companies in order to increase ridership, the majority of theme parks are owned by telecommunication interests with multifaceted intentions. Transit companies, however, merely lured people to their park gates; the trolley park itself was not treated as an opportunity for explicit propaganda. The multinational corporation-owned theme park, by contrast, acts as three-dimensional advertising for its parent company, whether

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\(^{15}\) CBS was the first corporation to enter the field after Disney, with their 1958 purchase of California's Pacific Ocean Park (then Ocean Park) (Kyriazi 1976, p.178). Of the thirty major theme parks that had developed by the mid-1970's, over half were owned by this exclusive group of multinationals (Kyriazi 1976, Bullaro and Edginton 1986). Harcourt Brace Janovich branched out from the publishing business in 1977. Though in 1989 their theme park holdings were second only to Disney, within a year they had sold all their parks to Anheiser Busch. Taft and Marriot have likewise left the theme park business (Adams 1991, pp. 112-125).
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Sources: Moody’s Business Listings  
Adams (1991)
the product be beer, hotel rooms, or the media itself. The theme park exists in a circular relationship with its parent company as it advertises the parent company’s other media holdings, which in turn are used to advertise the theme park.

The Walt Disney Company pioneered this form of oligopolistic entertainment, and is still the model to emulate. Disney crystallized the new form of ownership by consolidating his various entertainment interests into one powerful corporation and then dotting his park with watertight tie-ins to his other products (Bright 1987, Schickel 1985, Wallace 1985, Taylor 1987). Disney effectively merged his own scattered holdings, skillfully bringing his theme parks, movies, television shows, cartoons, comic books, toys, and 2000 other products into "golden symbiosis" (Bright 1967, p.302).

The presence of such tie-ins can be seen as infusions of familiar, seemingly unproblematic elements of urban life. Theme parks sell their owners' mass-marketed products, feature strolling 'animals' or 'creatures' already recognizable from television or movies, and incorporate corporate logos or, self-referentially, their own products into the overall environment. Cartoon characters who should have long since peacefully retired into old age now seem condemned to haunt the grounds of myriad parks: Bugs Bunny, Sylvester and other Looney Tune characters roam the Great America parks; Fred, Barney, Scooby-Doo and their fellow Hanna-Barbera characters
can be found at what were Taft Broadcasting parks across North America; and, of course, the famous Disney characters inhabit the Disney parks. As the Taft Annual Report for 1979 understated, their ownership of numerous cartoon characters is "exploited in many ways through the parks" (cited in Cameron and Bordessa 1981, p.18). Their likenesses grace many souvenirs available for sale and hence help promote television shows and movies; Disney in particular has taken this strategy one step further by developing rides that clearly tie in to recent Disney movies¹⁶. Perhaps most indicative of theme parks' corporate links are the prominently displayed corporate logos attached to rides sponsored by those same corporations. Theme park visitors encounter names such as AT&T, GE, RCA, Eastern Airlines, and Monsanto so regularly that Wallace (1985, p.39) was led to refer to his impressions of Disneyland as one "extended commercial break."

Theme park design offers several further examples of familiar elements of everyday life, once suitably stripped of unpleasant connotations, reinserted into the fantasy scenario. The crowded city street, dirty, grimy, and violence-ridden, undergoes remarkable transformation. Crowds, for instance, in an actual urban setting capable of provoking reactions from

¹⁶Disney cleverly employed this strategy from the very beginning at his parks. Virtually every ride and attraction can be traced thematically to a Disney cartoon, live-action feature, television show, and now, even, Disney-owned NHL professional hockey team.
impatience to random violence to revolutionary dissent, in the
Disney model become recast as cheerful indications of a never-
threatening community. Sophisticated crowd management
techniques are one of Disney's hallmark features. They
control the environment by designing buildings, attractions,
and pathways for optimum utilization. The overall layout
channels people into an entrance corridor, to a central hub,
and then off radiating spokes (Figure 15). The corridors and
spokes were designed with computer analysis to control where
people pause, where they keep moving, and where they turn off
the main path (Walker 1982, p.28). Walt Disney World paths
were scientifically dimensioned to accommodate 85,000 guests
(which raises the question of how well Disney's techniques
hold up now that daily attendance routinely exceeds 100,000)
(Pastier 1978, p.35). Bierman (1979, p.281) further notes
that the inviting presence of myriad forms of entertaining
transportation, from nineteenth-century fire engines to the
Century 21 monorail, also helps regulate the speed and
increase the capacity of Disney's daily traffic. The same
scientific rationale applies once inside attractions, where
guests are almost invariably placed in an
automatically-powered vehicle of some kind, ensuring even
speed and no lost time in loading and unloading. In the
absence of guest-controlled vehicles, it is literally
impossible to recreate the most familiar twentieth century
crowd -- the traffic jam.
15. Disneyland

DISNEYLAND

FANTASYLAND

FRONTIERLAND

ADVENTURELAND

TOMORROWLAND

PLAZA

MAIN STREET U.S.A.

MAIN ENTRANCE
To keep guests on foot from congregating into a true crowd, Disney unobtrusively focuses guests' attention and movement in specific patterns. Disney's most delicate work in this area -- and often called their most successful -- is in dealing with long lines. Guests routinely wait over an hour for more popular rides. Since tired, impatient people can easily become a nuisance to smooth crowd flow, Disney follows specific strategies to combat guests' boredom. These strategies, significantly, do not actually confront the problem itself -- in other words, they do not speed up the line. They simply distract guests from the fact that they still are faced with an hour wait for a seven minute ride.

Disney himself outlined the main points of his scheme -- serenade those in line with live entertainment, place the entrances with interesting views, and zig-zag the lines in maze-like fashion. The live entertainment may make time seem to pass more quickly, but the other techniques essentially make the line seem shorter than it is. The "interesting view" at the entrance that Disney referred to often means that the front part of the line, in an anteroom or perhaps under an artificial "waterfall," is obscured from the view of those appending themselves to the end of the line. Some are not impressed with the Disney theatrics, such as journalist Alice Kahn (1989), who decided after a harried trip through what she experienced as the "traffic jams" inside Disneyland that she felt more comfortable afterward in the real traffic jams on
the Santa Ana Freeway. But most, apparently, are content to
stand in line and wait. Schultz (1988) came away from Walt
Disney World believing that Disney has successfully convinced
people that to wait in line in a Disney park is a privilege.
He encountered one woman who stood cheerfully in a line so
long it was not even clear where it led; she did not know its
destination either, but trusted it would lead to something
pleasant, or perhaps already represented something pleasant
(Schultz 1988, p.278).

Urban dirt, grime, and litter, along with crowds, are all
but eliminated in the Disney model. Not only are pieces of
litter picked up promptly by crews of hundreds hired just for
the role -- Wallace (1963, p.124) calls them "onstage
janitors" -- but Disney extends the concept to the streets,
plantings, and buildings. Streets are steam-cleaned each
morning, floors polished, benches and trash cans touched up
with paint if necessary (Schultz 1988, p.282; Walker 1982,
p.7). Rides are polished, and shooting galleries repainted
daily. Disney replants thousands of trampled plants and
flowers every year, in part because corporate tradition frowns
upon "Keep Off the Grass" signs. The architecture along Main
Street is artificially 'weathered' -- frequently and carefully
painted to look sanitarily old and faded (Hine 1987, p.152;

The Disney model, in effect, situates the theme park
visitor in a landscape that is stripped of contradiction. The
cultural commodities of everyday life — the Coca Cola can, the Kodak film, the Bank of America automated teller, placed within gleaming buildings and colourful flower gardens — are easily recognizable. However, the repercussions of the corporate capitalism they represent — crowded cities, pollution, and, as we shall see, extensive technological and social issues as well — are completely eliminated. Not only are they missing from the 'solutions' posed by Disney, they are not even part of the dialogue.

The 'total environment' Disney creates aims to ensure that contradiction can never arise, through coordination of every thematic detail, visual, aural, and even olfactory. To accomplish this, Disney divided his first park, Disneyland, into five distinct areas or 'lands' (Figure 15). Each land is devoted to a specific time, place, or concept. Like a movie set, the effect is at once artificially two-dimensional and totally immersing. Everything that surrounds the guests pertains to the land being visited, from the rides and restaurants and shops to incidental signs, drinking fountains, cash registers, and other accoutrements (Walker 1982, pp. 20-21). Wallace (1963, pp. 124-5), for instance, comments on the "regional variation" of the trash cans: Adventureland features trash cans shaped like bamboo animal cages, while giant (artificial) redwood stumps double as receptacles in Frontierland. Thematically appropriate sounds emanate from appropriate locations — hillbilly music from attractions in
Bear Country, snores from the second-story window of a Frontierland hotel facade.

When inside one land, it appears to extend as far as the eye can see. Vistas have been carefully planned, architecture carefully scaled, so that no hint of other lands can intrude. The 'side streets' off Main Street, actually dead ends scarcely a half-block long, are just one instance of this technique being used to perfection: heavy vegetation both blocks the encroaching elements of Adventureland from view, and creates a false sense of depth within Main Street (Francaviglia 1981).

The success of the theme, the Disney organization firmly believes, depends upon sustaining the illusion of the "complete unit," and eliminating any possible contradiction. Blue grass banjo music shall never be heard in Adventureland, just as Adventureland's jungle cruise operators shall never set foot into Bear Country (at least not in costume) (Walker 1982, pp.20-1). In the Disney parks, their publicist has said, somebody has thought of everything (Schultz 1988, p.284). The Disney designers are perhaps not being overly cautious in their concern, for as Schultz noted in a visit to Walt Disney World, the illusion is ultimately rather fragile and wholly dependent upon our looking at, and not beyond, the enveloping imagery.
Disney: Better Living Through Technology

Technology is truly the showcase at the Disney parks, for as was also the case at Coney Island, most of Disney's attractions depend at least in part upon its extensive and innovative use. Yet the tone with which it is presented is radically different: never does Disney celebrate the awe and terror of the technological sublime, nor are questions about technology's ultimate good ever raised. Compared with Coney Island, technology at the Disney parks is overwhelmingly tamed and humanized and far more overtly commodified. Disney achieves this effect in two ways: first, by eliminating all obvious connections save one between the technology used within the Disney parks and its form and function in the 'real' world -- the connection that remains is the corporate logo; and second, by using humour and what can be best described as "cuteness" to neutralize any threats invoked by the technology used.

Most technology at the Disney parks appears as scenery, not machinery. Rather than make the form and function of the rides themselves the showpiece of technology, as Coney Island did, Disney shifts the emphasis to the visual imagery that creates the background themes for which the Disney parks are so well known. Hence the cleverly-constructed jungles of Adventureland, the desert in Frontierland, the ghosts and pirates of New Orleans Square, all take precedence over the more conventional amusement park trains and boats that
transport visitors through such scenery. The supremacy of imagery has become increasingly notable since the early 1960s, when Walt Disney became enamored of the possibilities of robotics. "Now we're making ... human forms move ... animals move ... anything move through the use of electronics. It is all programmed ... predetermined ... It's a new door ... a new toy," Disney (cited in Bright 1987, p.163) said of the new technology that led to the now ubiquitous Audio-Animatronic figures that have all but replaced live actors at the Disney parks.

Creating background scenery with computers ensures a degree of control and organization otherwise impossible, and it also rivets visitors' attention to the storylines that are enacted by the technology and away from the actual role machinery plays in everyday life. In this way, Disney subtly transfers any perceived danger away from the machine itself and into the scene being portrayed. Technology, in fact, becomes the neutralizing, or humanizing force that keeps the scenery 'in check.' As Disney employee John Hench (cited in Wallace 1985, p.37) explained it, "we ... throw a challenge at you -- not a real menace, but a pseudo-menace, a theatricalized menace -- and we allow you to win." Wallace (1963, p.124-5), thus, somewhat cynically described his journey through Disneyland's now defunct Nature's Wonderland Mine Train as "an excursion through a wilderness of giant cacti, pouncing [robot] bobcats, and
anthropomorphically-menacing boulders." Kirk (1967, p.911) was more favourably inclined toward what he saw as the "staunch Republican" values expressed in "the most splendid and thrilling ride in all the world," the Pirates of the Caribbean. He described "the fearful joys of this expedition: the cannonades of the [robot] buccaneers volleying and thundering, Panama and Caracas sacked and burnt before one's eyes." With relief he noted "we drift on and on among these scenes of carnage and sanguinary merriment, protected from the combatants by a mantle of invisibility."

Disney's "pseudo-menaces" are by all accounts remarkably well-done fakes; as Schultz (1988, p.283) notes, few people visit the Disney parks without at some point asking whether what they see is real or artificial. Indeed, Disney consistently utilizes state-of-the-art technology, often borrowed from rockets, missiles, and other elements of the United States space program, to produce increasingly realistic figures, be they animal, human, or boulder (Bright 1987, p.150; Schickel 1985, p.333). The robotic part of each attraction cost well over six million dollars a decade ago (Matlaw 1979, p.277).

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17Holleran (1990, p.28) reports that Disney employees only add to the confusion: upon asking an attendant how a nearby Pluto character breathed, he was told "the way a dog breathes." Holleran corrected "I mean the person inside." "That's not a person," the attendant explained. "That's Pluto."
The life-like technological perfection of Disney's "pseudo-menaces" can paradoxically backfire and instead lead to real hysteria, particularly amongst children and others who are not convinced of the "pseudo-menaces'" artificial nature. Consequently, the Disney scenery is tempered with a Disney blend of non-threatening humor and cuteness. The Submarine Voyage, for instance, potentially could be a claustrophobic encounter with underwater volcanos, sinister sea creatures, and other "events of exploration and close escape," as Schultz (1988, p.291-2) points out. His young daughter was immediately suspicious of the simulated journey, since she could see no obvious source of oxygen in the submarine. As submarine-goers look out the portals, however, the spell is soon broken with the intrusion of cliched symbols such as cheerfully modest, barebreasted mermaids -- a message that Schickel (1985, p.331), a harsh critic of Disney's Audio-Animatronic robots, feels means "Just Kidding Folks."

Other elaborately staged attractions further the comic relief with humorous banter from pre-programmed robots and well-rehearsed live attendants. Moore (1980, pp. 212-213) describes Walt Disney World's Haunted Mansion, a ride so popular people are willing to wait as long as four hours to enter:

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18 Visitors had even more reason to be suspicious of the ride in earlier days when it was known as the "Nuclear Submarine" (DeRoos 1963, p.196).
The Haunted Mansion is an appropriately eerie shuttered Georgian-Gothic building. The lawn of the mansion is peppered with small gravestones. The doors are thrown open by a young man or woman in funereal livery who commands the visitors to step inside. The guests are welcomed by a ghostly voice which [sic] tells them they "are in the home of 999 happy haunts, but there's always room for more." Then the ride -- hearse-like black cars seating two -- lurch off into a dark passageway, [past] apparitions [that] exactly fulfill the popular American conception of the appearance of ghosts. [such as] a noisy and very animated graveyard where a disembodied card game is in progress, tombstones jump up, and a cluster of stone busts of the dead are merrily singing in a barbershop quartet.

The Jungle Cruise, though in theory presenting an entirely different sort of experience, also operates on the same premise; here ghosts have merely been replaced with jungle animals. Disney again employs "hokey popular myths," this time about Africa and Asia, and creates a ride along a canal with Edgar Rice Burroughs-esque Audio-Animatronic sights and events displayed on either shore (Schultz 1988, pp.303-4). A live Disney helmsman accompanies each boat, and provides a

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19Moore (1984, p.217, footnote 3) mentions a working-class black woman of his acquaintance who, upon encountering Disney's remarkably life-like, or death-like, "ghosts," ran screaming from the Haunted Mansion and straight out of the park, vowing never to return. He surmises that Disney sanitizes these topics more specifically for middle-class Americans well-acquainted with middle-class science.

20Schultz (1988) reports that it is always a helmsman, and never a helmswoman, hired for the job.
running commentary meant to inject some humor into a situation that could otherwise get out of hand in the midst of enormous, apparently alive wild animals. A camp wrecked by (robot) gorillas, for example, is explained with the quip "you can tell which one’s the woman, she’s trying on the hat;" evil-looking dark-skinned (robot) cannibals with "these natives have one thing in mind: they just want to get ahead" (Schultz 1988, p.304). Johnson (1981, pp.162-3) argues that most Disney attractions, created with similar concepts, techniques, and robot types, and encouraging similar forms of insipid banter, in fact end up structurally similar and hence any ostensible differences in temporal and spatial contexts are increasingly difficult to distinguish.

The Tomorrowland section of the Disney parks has attracted attention as the most somber and least imaginative area in the parks (Blake 1972, Chaitkin 1982, Real 1977), and it is here that Disney’s vision of technology takes on its most fascinating and far-reaching dimensions (Figure 16). Here, images of technology abound, and come closest to evoking the machinery of everyday life. Walt Disney (cited in Bright 1987, p.88) himself proclaimed Tomorrowland to be the place where

you will actually experience what many of America’s foremost men of science and industry predict for the world of tomorrow . . . opening the doors of the Space Age to achievements which [sic] will benefit our children and generations to come.
16. Disneyland's Tomorrowland
Though ostensibly proposing the everyday life of the future, the rocket ships, miniature highways and "People Mover" trains of Tomorrowland quite literally pertain to tomorrow, or perhaps the day after (Chaitkin 1982, p.14). The miniature highway system known as "Autopia," complete with cloverleaf interchange, illustrates well the strikingly familiar nature of "tomorrow's" technology (Figure 17). As one of Disneyland's original attractions, it was conceived with the purpose of giving young children a place to learn to drive and hence later master the freeway system that Disney correctly predicted would soon engulf Southern California (Bright 1987, p.88).

The machines of Tomorrowland are imbued with neither the endearing, non-threatening qualities of, say, Disney's ravaging pirates or card-playing ghosts, nor with the sarcastic and potentially terrifying messages of technology at Coney Island. Instead, the attractions at Tomorrowland are scaled down versions of the real things. Presented with a bland, factual tinge, the message becomes "the machine is the truth, the actuality of living" (Marin 1984, p.256).

This message is sealed, as it were, with corporate stamps of approval as indicated by the many logos that appear throughout Tomorrowland. Working in the tradition of a World's Fair\footnote{Walt Disney, in collaboration with various corporations, contributed several exhibits to the 1964 New York World's Fair, exhibits which in part later found their way back to Disney parks.}, Disney linked up almost every attraction to a
17. Disneyland's Autopia
corporate sponsor, often with only the most tenuous connection between the attraction’s theme and the sponsor’s industrial focus. Both American Motors and Bell Telephone, for instance, have sponsored wide screen theatre presentations at Disneyland; the same attraction is sponsored by Monsato in Walt Disney World (Bright 1987, p.89; Real 1977, p.56). Other of these symbiotic relationships seem more natural, such as McDonnell-Douglas’ links to the Flight to the Moon attraction, and Goodyear’s role in presenting the People Mover transportation system (Bright 1987, p.185).

The corporate logos in the Disney parks not only indicate where a good portion of Tomorrowland’s financing comes from, but they also take the place of humor or cuteness as the humanizing force that tames the technology (Gottdiener 1982, Real 1977, Wallace 1985). This relationship reached its height with the infamous, now-extinct General Electric-sponsored Carousel of Progress, where as Wallace (1985, p.39) describes:

Disney takes visitors on a ride through time . . . the curtain rises on a robot middle-class family at home in 1900. Mom, Dad, and the kids are chatting about housework. They have the latest in labor-saving devices -- gas lights, telephones, iceboxes -- and think that life couldn’t be any easier, but we see that poor Mom is still subject to all kinds of drudgery. Luckily, as Dad reads in the paper, some smart fellers down at General Electric are cooking up new gadgets. At this point the theatre begins
to revolve around the stage . . . until it reaches a new set, this one peopled with 1920's-style robots. Mom and Dad enthuse about their new machines -- percolators, refrigerators, electric irons -- but note that those research people at General Electric are still at it. And on we go to 1940, and finally to 1960. Things have really progressed now. Dad is cooking dinner (though somewhat clumsily) and Mom is celebrating passage of a bond issue (on which she had time to work thanks to her GE dishwasher and dryer). At ride's end a hearty voice-over concludes that we live in "the best time" ("one of the reasons is that electricity has improved our lives"), and that things will get even better . . . Finally we are shuttled toward the Kitchen of Tomorrow to see what General Electric has dreamed up for us next.

The Carousel of Progress became, quite unintentionally, almost a parody of the corporate presence at Disneyland. The reasons for its demise at Disneyland remain undocumented, but Real (1977, p.56) suggests that Wallace was not the only guest at Disneyland to be put off by the obvious nature of its symbolism. Visitors interviewed by Real also saw Tomorrowland as "commercial," "capitalist future," and "terrifying." After the Carousel of Progress' exit, Disney has introduced attractions to Tomorrowland where the relationship to both corporate industry and the future is somewhat more ambiguous, such as the Lawrence Welk-style "America Sings" Audio-Animatronic presentation (Real 1977, p.57), and attractions where fast-paced, 'white-knuckle' action may distract ride-goers from the ambient symbolism period, no matter what its message, such as Space Mountain roller coaster and Star Tours astronaut simulator.
Real (1977, pp.56-7) comments that Tomorrowland's overall effect is that of a pleasantly laid out glorification of technology where the key to a better future is identified with conventional industrial and scientific progress. Beneath its bright and optimistic surface, however, Real continues, Tomorrowland sidesteps questions of human welfare, and variations in social organization and ideals. Indeed, an analysis of the Disney version of technology throughout the parks quickly leads us into a discussion of the Disney version of social structure, for as we shall see, technology at the Disney parks is defined in good part by the wider vision of urban and suburban life within which it is situated.

Disney: Return to Traditional Social Values

If, as Pastier (1978, p.29) has argued, Disney is dedicated to the "generally comforting, if not really accurate, proposition that America is changing rapidly in a technological sense, but hardly at all socially and culturally," then technology, articulated through production and consumption motifs, becomes the only lively component of the social world. The overriding social theme of the Disney parks, then, becomes the restoration of so-called 'traditional' values through, paradoxically, highly efficient technological methods. The effect is the presentation of a cohesive and coherent society where labour, class, gender, race, politics, and other problematic social issues have been subsumed under the image of a smoothly-working place, or, to
use Ray Bradbury's (1965, p.100) phrase, a "machine-tooled happyland."

Disney designers freely admit that they strive for what they call an "optimistic" view of social life, and the ideal social life, in the Disney model, is firmly situated in an earlier time period. Designer John Hench explains that the Victorian period was chosen because Disney people saw it as "one of the great optimistic periods of the world, where we thought progress was great and we all knew where we were going" (Hench, cited in Wallace 1985, p.36). Ironically, it was this same time period that spawned the Coney Island model of amusement space that Disney so adamantly rejected.

The Victorian-inspired Main Street U.S.A. neatly encapsulates the Disney version of social organization; as the first place that visitors enter, it immediately situates visitors in a particular time (turn-of-the-century), setting (Midwestern small town), population (middle-class), and range of activities (consuming present day goods with real money) (Real 1977, p.53). It also introduces to visitors Disney's distinct approach to urban design that is used to create and maintain this atmosphere (Figure 18).

In Walt Disney's own words, Main Street U.S.A. is to correspond to a rosier view of "your own home town Main Street, or the one your parents and grandparents have told you about. Main Street is everyone's home town -- the heartline of America" (Disney, cited in Real 1977, p.54). Descending
18. Walt Disney World's Main Street U.S.A.
from actual Main Street dwellers clearly is not as important as recognizing the archetypes and harboring some fondness for Disney's version of Main Street life. The area, addressed to the image of the white, middle-class population that presumably constituted the bankers, politicians, and entrepreneurs of yesteryear's Main Street, appears as proof of the triumph of entrepreneurial talents in a democratic setting.

By singling out free enterprise as the Disney-preferred characteristic of the Victorian era and simultaneously removing any hint of the hierarchy and inequality that was also part of turn-of-the-century North America, Disney creates an atmosphere where gender, race, and class appear irrelevant as everyone seems to have equal access to everything, where hard work seems to lead to prosperity, and where, from the Disney city hall to the Disney town square and along the shopfronts between, government and private business alike seem to promote a sense of community and general well-being. In Disney's world, there are no immigrants, no teeming cities, no ethnic minorities, and no working classes; guests will never see a tired factory or mine worker heading up Main Street (Real 1977, p.53). Depressions, strikes, warfare, lynchings, and mass protests likewise have been eliminated from Main Street's social milieu (Wallace 1985, p.36). The past has been "vacuum-cleaned" (Wallace 1985, p.35).
Main Street U.S.A. is infused with Disney optimism through carefully crafted architectural technique. Disney planners set out to create an environment where "everything would always remain fresh and new . . . the rows of old-time shops and the traffic vehicles and all the other elements would function together in harmony and unison unlike anything grandfather ever experienced" (Disney official history, cited in Wallace 1985, p.35). The buildings are imperceptibly scaled to produce a forced perspective, tapering to five-eights scale in Disneyland (Wallace 1985, p.34), and seven-eights scale in Walt Disney World (Blake 1972, p.26). Though traditional building materials were used at Disneyland, technological advances allowed Walt Disney World planners to switch to fiberglass where possible for improved maintenance, replaceability, and virtually limitless design facility (Francaviglia 1981, p.152). Not yet having invented paint that is impervious to weather and age, Disney’s maintenance crews continually touch up the buildings, and in between major paint jobs, repaint the street levels to match the fading upper stories of the buildings (Wallace 1963, p.124). Even the streets have been tamed through technology: Blake (1972, p.28) reports that sidewalks, made of a special "resilient asphalt product," never tire one’s legs.

Real comments that Main Street U.S.A. is like an antique shop in reverse, where the buildings are old-fashioned and the products modern. The intricately-detailed storefront facades,
representing such bygone enterprises as the barber shop, apothecary, haberdashery, tobacconist, emporium, ice cream parlor, and penny arcade, are, in the words of Disneyland visitors interviewed by Real (1977, p.54), "colorful," "amusing," and "nostalgic;" the tastefully-affixed corporate logos -- Coca Cola, Carnation, Sunkist, Hallmark, and Hills Brothers, to name a few -- remind visitors that they are also in a modern-day shopping center. In this way, Main Street U.S.A. both encourages the consumption of present-day goods and invites symbolic utopian dialogue about commodities and their wider range of potential meanings.

Consumer goods on the shelves, like corporate logos on the door, enter into "an indistinguishable mixture of fantasy and reality," as they act as both recognizable elements from everyday life and bit players in the bigger drama enacted by Disney (Real 1977, p.55). Main Street U.S.A.'s commodities can be seen, on the one hand, as attempts at tangible proof that the Disney blend of capitalism and democracy is indeed successful. Thus, as Marin (1984, p.253) points out, the commodities become the symbols we play with as we participate in the Disney drama about North American life. Playing with the symbols, of course, ultimately translates into buying commodities. And as our shopping bags grow heavier with Mickey Mouse dolls, clothes, camera equipment, and various other items for sale, critics such as Marin (1984) and Eco (1986) grow more livid at the consumer ideology cloaked in
fantasy’s garb: the actual fantasy, Eco (1986, p.43) charges, "is our will to buy, which we take as real."

On the other hand, the commodities also hold the symbolic role of grounding the fantasies in contexts recognizable from daily life. If other Disney attractions such as the Submarine Voyage wrap up with a "Just Kidding Folks," Main Street U.S.A.'s message can be taken as "Maybe We’re Not Kidding, Folks." The vision of society that is projected -- one shorn of urban ills and class and race differences, where gender roles are universally understood, and where technology, capitalism, and democracy together will guide us to a better future -- is never dismissed as pure fantasy, neither in Main Street U.S.A. where it is first introduced, nor, as we shall now see, in the rest of the Disney landscape.

To a great degree, an examination of Disney’s treatment of labour, class, race, gender, and political issues is an examination of absences, for Disney, considering these perhaps as more "pseudo-menaces," neutralizes them as effectively as they neutralize pirates and wild animals. They simply remove all traces of debate. The process by which possible contradiction is cleansed begins with careful screening of the people who will inhabit Disney’s world -- guests and employees alike -- and is extended to the theme and structure of Disney attractions.

Disney, first, controls the patron composition by not allowing unwanted "guests" through the gates. In Ray
Bradbury's (1965, p.104) words, "no beatniks here. No Cool people with Cool faces pretending not to care." Disney's somewhat undemocratic gate policy that so pleased Bradbury is, if now somewhat altered over the years, still notorious. Long hair on men would get them barred in the 1960s and 1970s, while very short (punk) hair had the same effect in the 1980s (Gottdiener 1982, p.150). Young men without shirts were "out of the question" in the 1970s (Life 1972, p.3). Young women, even with shirts, still had problems: halter tops were forbidden until 1973, and low-cut tops as well as the "obviously bra-less" look are still chancy (Real 1977, p.52). Shirts that meet the dimension requirements may yet fail some other test, particularly if they display the wrong kind of free speech -- "Make Love Not War" and "Don't Blame Me -- I Voted for McGovern" were grounds for rejection in the 1970s (Real 1977, p.53; Schultz 1988, p.280). Schultz (1988, p.280) notes, however, that sometimes the plainclothes security guards take pity and provide the offender with a sweatshirt to wear, thus bringing them in line with all the other acceptable Disney "guests."

Disney employees, second, contribute to the overall social environment on several levels: strict regulations ensure that workers always appear middle-class, clean-cut, and

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Clark (1990) comments that though his long hair barred him from Disneyland in the early 1970s, he was told by security that if he were to return wearing a suit and tie, he might be allowed in.
cheerful, and the division of labour by which the Disney workforce is organized reflects Disney's stance on technology and social hierarchy in the workplace. Job candidates, who are not hired but "cast into roles," are carefully screened for attitudes and appearance. "We like outgoing, clean-cut, enthusiastic people," Disney vice president of theme parks Dick Nunis says (cited in Real 1977, p.51). For years Disneyland adhered to grooming standards "stricter ... than the United States military" (Real 1977, p.51). Men were forbid long hair, mustaches, and beards. Women were not allowed eye make-up, bright nail polish, heavy perfume, jewelry, and in the 1960s, bouffants (Cameron and Bordessa 1981, p.9; Wallace 1963, p.114). Successful candidates then attend the "University of Disneyland" for at least a two-day indoctrination to Disney philosophy, to be absorbed through films, talks, and walks through the park (Real 1977, p.51). Once graduated, cast members are given their stage costume, a name tag (first name only, thus erasing the ethnicity of a last name, as Foss and Gill (1987, p.395) point out), a salary barely above minimum wage (Smith and Eisenberg 1987), and a mandate to smile continually. Smith and Eisenberg, after

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conducting extensive interviews in the mid-1980s, found that, considering the restrictive conditions, worker morale was surprisingly high, particularly amongst long-time employees loyal to Walt's ideals. Schultz (1988, p.297), however, casts a shadow on their findings by revealing that all employees are well aware that any interviewer could actually be part of the covert Disney surveillance of operation team.

The division of labour at the Disney parks reveals a hierarchy fundamental to the Disney model. The most menial jobs are literally relegated to subterranean status; janitors, cooks, workers who do transporting and other services spend all day in Disney's vast tunnel system out of sight of park visitors (Johnson 1981, p.159). Higher status jobs such as guide or host are performed above ground, and the most glamorous jobs of all are reserved not for humans but robots. The Audio-Animatronic figures -- dancing, singing, pillaging -- are clearly the stars of the show. Humans, by contrast, perform the more mundane chores of loading and unloading passengers and cleaning up after them (Johnson 1981, p.160).

The omnipresent robots have been interpreted as a sign from Disney that a better future would hinge upon automated labor. Some, such as science fiction writer Ray Bradbury,

\[24\] Schultz (1988, p.288) even notes the harrowing fact that in his observation, Walt Disney World audiences tend to clap more enthusiastically for performing robots than performing humans.
embrace this notion wholeheartedly, speculating that Disney's mechanical touch "liberates men to their better selves. Here the wild brute is gently corralled, not vised and squashed, not put upon and harassed, . . . not exhausted by smog and traffic." Bradbury concludes that as Disney and others after him "invent and send forth upon the land" robots, it will "make men over, make them wish to go on living, feed them with fresh oxygen" (Bradbury 1965, p.104). Disney biographer Richard Schickel (1985, p.332), however, takes the other extreme, and calls Disney's foray into robotics a "grotesquery [that] threatens to change the essentially harmless character of [Disneyland]." Instead of demonstrating the wondrous possibilities of technology, he argues, it brings forth the possibilities for horror (Schickel 1985, p.337).

Issues of race and gender are likewise politely ignored or subtly transformed into technological, not social, problems. Just as there are no working classes represented in Disney's social world, there are no immigrants or ethnic minorities in the Main Street U.S.A.'s vision. Robots representing visible minorities do appear on occasion throughout the rest of the park, but generally the context in which they appear clearly dictates interpretation of their purpose. Dark-skinned robots of geographically nebulous origin, for instance, adorn the shores of the Jungle Cruise\(^25\),

\(^25\)Disney advertises the ride as a synthesis of the Mekong, Nile, Congo, and Amazon Rivers (De Roos 1963, pp.192-3), geographic license that Hines (1986, p.152) fears has contributed to the
but they can hardly be considered ethnic minorities since they are caricatures of 'natives' on home soil. Further, they are not depicted in a particularly flattering light: those who are not obviously cannibals or spear-brandishing head-hunters are shown in a panic climbing a pole to escape a charging rhino; at the top of the pole is a lone white hunter whose placement has been taken to be a symbolic indication of his social position (Bright 1967, p.300; Bright 1987, p.160). The Jungle Cruise, hence, is ripe for racist innuendo, and as Schultz (1988, p.303) comments, visitors (mostly white) readily enter into the "white conspiracy" by adding their own running commentary. Schultz further implies that the "racist 'takeover'" of the Jungle Cruise is condoned, if not actually egged on, by the guides (none of whom, incidentally, were themselves ethnic minorities).

The It's a Small World attraction, alternatively, has been held up as an example of Disney's racially sensitive side (Bright 1967, p.300). Originally built in collaboration with the PepsiCo Corporation for the 1964 New York World's Fair, and sponsored at Disneyland by the Bank of America (Bright 1987, pp.180-82), the attraction consists of a canal-ride through what Bright (1967, p.300) calls the 'one world' concept applied to a child's dream of a toy store come to popular view that "in the 1960s and 1970s, the United States fought a war in Adventureland."
life. Thousands of doll-like robots, dressed to represent their home countries, all join together in a syrupy rendition of the ride’s self-titled theme song. The international robots in their National Geographic-inspired traditional attire, performing their National Geographic-inspired traditional dances26, convey the sense that they are all separate but equal, and that the technological perfection that literally and figuratively lies beneath their act is the real issue.

The Disney parks similarly impart the notion that men and women, like people of different races, are also separate but equal. Female robots and female humans alike have their roles defined in apparently quite natural categories; the smoothness of the gender divisions means they virtually escape criticism and instead appear as one more intrinsic characteristic in Disney’s cohesive world view.

What could be seen as quite controversial images of women, consequently, receive remarkably little notice. Wallace (1985, p.37), for example, notes with alarm that the robot women in the Pirates of the Caribbean "seem to enjoy being ravished" by the "agreeably wicked" robot men; indeed, Disney representatives themselves explain that in their

26 That rides such as It’s a Small World bring to mind the National Geographic’s style of anthropology is not coincidental: Koneta Roxley, Disneyland’s former Chief of Research, explains that National Geographic has been "a truly invaluable research tool" for Disney designers (cited in De Roos 1963, p.174; p.191).
story-line the robot women enjoy it because they are all old maids (Schickel 1985, p.337). The women robots in the Carousel of Progress, all safely married off in that story-line, face no problems that better technology, courtesy of General Electric, cannot solve; their biggest triumph is to be transformed from a dull Mrs. Drudge into a sparkling Mrs. Modern (Wallace 1985, p.41).

Live women at the Disney parks have traditionally been cast in gender-specific roles. Schultz (1988, pp.305-306) notes that, given the vast changes involving women that have occurred in North America since Walt Disney World opened in 1971, the Florida park has displayed striking consistency in its gender-typing. Drawing from Schultz' argument, women appear as guides in attractions of an earnest, semi-reverent nature such as the Hall of Presidents or the Flight to the Moon, or where "cloying fantasy" is the theme, such as the Tropical Serenade or the Mickey Mouse Revue. Not coincidentally, these attractions all require the guide to elicit a high degree of conformity of response from the audience. The hostess at the Tropical Serenade, for instance, has the unenviable task of not only requesting of the audience "Let's all sing like the birdies sing. Tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet," but also must get the people to actually sing, since, as one candid hostess told Schultz (1988, p.303), "it's written into the job. What if a supervisor was to come in?"

Women workers, Schultz argues, are thus positioned as
protectresses of myths and rituals, their responsibility and loyalty to the Disney ideals projected hand-in-hand with their even-handed efficiency and schoolteacher-like command over audience behaviour.

Men, meanwhile, are cast in quite different roles. As if Disney suspected young men could not be trusted in capacities demanding reverence and responsibility, male guides and hosts are concentrated in attractions where male raillery prevails. The Jungle Cruise, the steamboats, keelboats, the Grand Prix Raceway, all offer the opportunity for tongue-in-cheek spoof and sarcastic teasing, which, as we have seen, can easily slide into racist and sexist innuendo. These young men are handed scripts and carefully coached in their roles so that their patter will appear to be the result of the spontaneous and irresistible urge to play the prankster, something that their female counterparts are particularly discouraged from doing (Schultz 1988, p.305).

While Schultz (1988, pp.305-6) concedes that the strictest gender divisions have loosened up to some extent by the late 1980s -- both men and women are guides at the Grand Prix Raceway these days, and "bland-spoken" men have entered the sanctuaries of the Hall of Presidents and the Mission to Mars to co-host the shows with women -- the basic premise behind their respective presences has not changed. Attractions of both types, reverent and tongue-in-cheek, are both meant to promote group unity and help create a sense of
Disney community. To do so, Disney appeals to popular myths that would reach as many as possible in the audience. Disney’s gender-typing suggests that they are simultaneously creating and reflecting the popular myth that young women are responsible, pure, and nurturing, and young men are fun-loving and given to the tricks of the prankster.

The neutralization of gender issues in the Disney parks, as well as the neutralization of race and class issues, do not just occur by fortuitous happenstance. Rather, they are clearly linked to, and hence presented as successful results of, the political system exalted in the Disney world. Most aspects of Disney’s social conditions are draped in a specific definition of democracy that, hand-in-hand with free enterprise capitalism, ensure a good today and a better tomorrow.

Visitors can absorb the Disney definition of democracy in its purest form in an attraction featuring Audio-Animatronic presidents, known as Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln in Disneyland and the Hall of Presidents in Walt Disney World. "Artificial Abe," as Wallace (1985, p.38) calls him, was first developed by Walt Disney in conjunction with the State of Illinois for the 1964 New York World’s Fair. By the 1970s, the attraction had evolved into a patriotic study of all United States president-turnt-robots. The attraction consists of an introductory film and then the main event, the
presentation of the Audio-Animatronic figures on stage. Wallace (1985, p.38) describes the show at Walt Disney World:

With great fanfare the screen goes up, revealing a stage full of robot presidents. All of them, from Washington to Reagan, are in motion, nodding or solemnly (if somewhat arthritically) gesticulating. They are done up with scrupulous attention to detail. George Washington's chair is a precise reproduction of the one in which he sat at the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Their costumes are authentic down to the last stitch. Wig-makers in Guatemala reproduced their hair strand for strand...

A sepulchral voice-over calls the roll of these men "who have defended the Constitution." The audience is hushed -- perhaps in awe of the solemnity of the occasion, perhaps in amazement at the spectacle of thirty-odd robots twitching about on stage. When the roll call gets to FDR and the more recent presidents, there is a whisper here and there. But when it gets to Nixon, chortles and guffaws break out. The contrast between the Official History and living memories is too great -- Nixon as defender of the Constitution? -- and the spell snaps under the strain. I asked later if this was simply a bad day for Mr. Nixon, and was told that no, the crowd always rumbles when RN takes his bow.

The reaction to Mr. Nixon is most interesting, for it suggests that Nixon serves more as comic relief than as a serious threat to the attraction's underlying message.

Visitors first wait in line in a rotunda, which at Walt Disney World features paintings of the "Founding Fathers," and then watch a film showing the "Founding Fathers" making the constitution (Wallace 1985, p.38). Interestingly, the Disneyland version instead ushers visitors into a rotunda dedicated to another "Founding Father," Walt Disney himself; the film they watch chronicles the making of Disneyland (Sehlinger 1989, p.51).
Audiences heckle the Nixon robot, not the entire entourage.

Schultz (1987, p.289) explores in more detail the affirmative power of the Hall of Presidents which, he notes, is significantly not called the Hall of Democracy:

Everything -- imagery, music, voice -- was presented to make the American pilgrim visitor's throat ache from holding back tears in response to the arousal of the sentimentalities of the national myths. Yet we knew clearly what we were seeing: the emphasis on strong-man presidents maintaining the union; the presumption that the Constitution makes it possible for everyone to be a useful, esteemed participant in this society; and the myth that the "American experiment" tends toward betterment for everyone, identified after the Civil War with the development of mechanized technology, and culminating in the twentieth century with our being surrounded by the rolling fire of rockets blasting off. About Lincoln, Timmy whispered, "Did his team win?" I thought I was about to laugh and cry at once as I joined Disney in the reinforcement. "Yes."

The sense of collective effort that highlights the Disney version of democracy, where everyone can be a "useful, esteemed participant in this society," is played out across the Disney parks. Mechling and Mechling (1981, p.176) note that it is maintained by the very structure of many rides. Visitors are continually placed in situations where they are expected to join with others. The choreography of the Jungle Cruise, for instance, calls for each boatload to turn and wave in unison at those left behind on the dock. This collective spirit as demonstrated here is reminiscent of the conformity of response demanded in the female-dominated Disney
attractions, where audience uniformity is "written into the job." Though, as the Mechlings comment, the end result of such efforts could hardly be called genuine community, the illusion of community that these images inspire is central to the Disney social structure.

So far we have seen Disney present a world in which there is no social conflict: class, race, and gender suggest no hint of inequality in the Disney social structure. There are, of course, plenty of 'bad guys' at the Disney parks, but they are individuals, outsiders, and never representative of significant social divisions. Instead, these intruders are neutralized and once again "the world is a happy place" (Schiller 1973, p.99). The conditions that make possible such a trouble-free environment in the Disney vision are the twin pillars of North American society, capitalism and democracy; the glue that holds this entire system together and keeps it running smoothly is technology.

The Disney model, thus, presents an optimistic and relentlessly cheerful view of North American life. The overriding motif is harmony: the harmonious architectural setting provides the backcloth for Disney's harmonious social world. There is very little wrong with our cities and suburbs today, the Disney model implies, that existing social institutions cannot mend. And this is the model that is writ into the landscape in the Disney parks. Once such a model comes alive, however, it becomes part of the cultural dynamic
and acquires new meanings and symbols as people encounter, interpret, and misinterpret it. The Disney model undergoes rather intriguing transformation in the hands of its "guests."

We can consider three broad categories of transformation. First, visitors to the Disney parks often simply do not extract the meanings Disney intended in the themed landscape. Real (1977) found through in-depth interviews that while visitors to Disneyland spoke glowingly of the famous Disney "lands," they in fact misread the cosmology and misinterpreted the thematic signs. People who thought they were in Frontierland were actually in Adventureland; others were not clear where Main Street ended and Adventureland began (Real 1977, p.63; p.68). In Real's study, visitors were no less pleased with their experience because of their confusion -- in fact, they were apparently unaware of their error\(^{28}\).

Second, visitors apparently are not all lulled into docility by the harmonious atmosphere. Kahn (1988) found Disneyland to be full of cranky, impatient people. Stewart's (1977, p.34) lament that no one jumps queues or otherwise evades authority at the Disney parks may mean he was not looking closely enough. Schultz (1988, p.280), before even entering the Walt Disney World gates, encountered two

\(^{28}\)Such confusion casts semiotic readings of the Disney parks, such as Marin's (1984) and Eco's (1986) analyses, in a new light. If Frontierland's themes are actually images of American appropriation of land and resources, as Marin (1984, p.250) for instance argues, what does that say to the visitor who thinks he or she is still in the African jungle?
boisterous young men sneaking to the front of the ticket line. The author can attest to the fact that people inside the parks jump queues as well29. Real (1977) sheds further light on the subject by suggesting that park guests who appear docile may just be stoned. He found through interviews and observation the incidence of drugs at Disneyland to be rather high, even to the point of seeing people openly smoking marijuana in the park (Real 1977, p. 71). Finally, though the Disney model assures a completely crime-free atmosphere, one’s safety is not necessarily guaranteed at the Disney parks; Disneyland even recorded its first murder in 1981 (New York Times, 13 April 1981, p.A19)30.

The existence of such oppositional behaviour ultimately raises questions about the third category to be investigated: how much freedom for active participation or open dialogue remains, short of violence or other extreme acts of

29The author and a friend, as teen-agers, boldly zig-zagged their way to the front of Pirates of the Caribbean line, thus avoiding a wait of at least forty-five minutes. This minor revolt against Disney authority was surprisingly easy and accomplished with no confrontation. Schultz (1988, p.280) notes his two young men met with similar success, perhaps confirming that while people do not actually behave as expected, there still exists a myth that all people obey all rules in Disneyland, and thus two teen-agers who appear to be cutting into the line must have a good reason.

30A seventeen-year old boy was stabbed in Tomorrowland and, at the time, seriously wounded. The victim’s family has charged that Disneyland was responsible for his subsequent death because management refused to allow outside emergency medical services on the grounds. The boy was instead treated by a Disneyland nurse and transported by unmarked van to a local hospital, where he died.
resistance. Many have argued that Disney's most powerful characteristic has been the creation of a totally passive form of entertainment (Foss and Gill 1987, Hildebrandt 1981, Marin 1984, Schultz 1988, Wallace 1985). The visitor is placed in the middle of an unfolding story, slowly and deliberately moved past the various story frames, and given time to absorb the technological perfection of the image. Most rides in Disney parks move no faster than three miles per hour, as compared to the fifty-plus miles per hour at which the average roller coaster travels (Mechling and Mechling 1981, p.177). Marin (1984) extends this argument to include the morphology of the entire grounds, claiming that it works in the same way to push the "guest" through a series of highly structured narratives.

Over the years, however, people have actively inserted themselves into the Disney drama in creative ways. The changes that Disney management has felt it necessary to make in response, aiming to restrict the free interplay between visitor and park themes, indicate that people have successfully broken through the Disney patina. Rides, for example, that were initially visitor-controlled such as the Autopia Freeway were soon put on automatically-guiding tracks when management realized, in this case, their "guests" were treating the Autopia cars not as suburban station wagons but as bumper cars (Bright 1987, p. 88). Disney responded by gradually transforming the ride so that today there remains
little left for the rider to do -- the cars all but drive themselves. As Schultz’ (1988, p.291) young son discovered, attempts to steer paradoxically result in losing, not gaining, control of the little cars. Likewise, attractions that involved humans or, even more chancy, live animals, were gradually replaced with Disney’s famous Audio-Animatronic robots, to cut down on the possibility of spontaneous actions (Bright 1987, Schickel 1985). Never again shall the Disneyland "real live Indians" invite visitors to take part in their "authentic ceremonial dances," or the horses bolt and wreck the Disneyland Stage Coach, or the Disney mules bite small children, or enterprising guests rip off pieces of the Adventures Through Inner Space attraction as souvenirs (Bright 1987, pp. 119-122; p.200).31

Even the interplay between children and Mickey, Minnie, Donald, and all their friends has been curbed in recent years. The walking cartoon characters are now accompanied everywhere with a "lead," a freshly-scrubbed, brown-uniformed Disney employee who in essence acts as a bodyguard (Schultz 1988, p.297). The Disney guidelines for dramatic interaction between the characters and guests has narrowed, Schultz (1988, p.310, ft.16) surmises, to posed picture taking, autographing, patting children on the head, and close, mechanical movements.

31Guests soon developed another technique to actively participate in the Adventures through Inner Space ride: they spit on the plate glass that now separated them from the set (Bright 1977, p.200).
The reasons for these restrictions are fascinating, for they reflect both management's desire to control all the narratives in the park, and the unacceptable ways in which people have grabbed their opportunity to alter the Disney version. The cartoon characters, apparently, embody powerful symbolic meaning and hence are easy targets when the dialogue gets out of hand: employees in character at Disneyland have been roughed up by "drunken Marines," and two Snow White characters have been raped in the Walt Disney World parking lots (Schultz 1988, p.297). The stricter guidelines for interaction aim to protect cast members from "such alienated attempts to take charge of the story," but they also subvert the "tremendous enthusiasm and energy of broad interplay . . . leading to a more participatory, chancy theatre" (Schultz 1988, p.297; p.310, ft. 16). In a most remarkable act that symbolically summarizes the entire Disney policy and the tenuous control they have over their "guests," Schultz (1988, p.297) reports, an eight or nine year old boy at Walt Disney World tried to stab a Mickey Mouse costumed character in the back.

In essence, we see the Disney model being subverted by attitudes and activities associated with the Coney Island model. Amusement space itself becomes the grounds upon which such contradictions are articulated; Walt Disney has provided both a dream of a better society and, no doubt much to his surprise, the terrain upon which to debate, and perhaps reject, the specific solutions he offered. That upon closer
observation traces of the Coney Island model are visible throughout the Disney parks is of enormous empirical and theoretical significance. The unique and contradictory ways in which people use Disney space enriches our understanding of the complex interrelationships between amusement space and utopian models of urban form: the Disney model is not, as many critics fear, all-encompassing and monolithic. Coney-esque impulses of resistance and chaotic behaviour still form an enticing and powerful component of cultural practices.

In this chapter, I have sketched in a history of amusement space that charts the rise and apparent, if not actual, demise of the Coney Island model of urban life in the context of the now vigorous Disney model. I have demonstrated in some detail both the perceived perils of Disney's urban agenda and the threads of Coney Island resistance inherent in it in order to establish a framework for the next question to be tackled: What happens when these models become transformed into reality?

We are now at a juncture in amusement park history where it is no longer sufficient to explore the concepts and themes articulated simply within theme park walls. Theme parks, as our post-modern critics remind us, recently have seeped through their walls and become, quite literally, part of the urban fabric, with Disney leading the way as they pioneer new forms of urban planning and consulting. As both academics and architects become aware of this transformation in amusement
space, it has inspired the notion amongst intellectuals that something more serious than mere entertainment was occurring within the Disney gates.

While commentary up to the early 1970s had centred on an assessment of Disney's cultural value, Disney observers have grown increasingly interested in the lessons the parks conveyed about urban and suburban life in general. What was once seen, with both amusement and alarm, as a curious fantasyland now appeared to be the mask fronting an even more curious realityland. In other words, Disney commentators began to take the popular culture of the theme parks seriously. In the next chapter, I examine in more detail how architects, planners, and developers have interpreted the Disney parks as valid elements of the landscape, and how the public in general has reacted to the growing Disney presence in their surroundings.
CHAPTER FOUR

DISNEY IN THE CITY

Our cities become theme parks while a theme park becomes a city

Academics, architects, and others who only recently have begun to take the Disney parks seriously are discovering what Walt Disney and the Disney Company have insisted upon all along: their theme parks, whimsical landscapes though they may be, are meant to showcase innovative achievements in technology, corporate capitalism, and urban design. Walt Disney remained until his death in 1966 steadfast in his conviction that his amusement parks could be ideal laboratories for the problematic 'real world,' and in the years since Disney's death, the Disney Company continues to advocate fervently their role in creating the ideal "community of tomorrow."

In short, the Disney model of amusement space displays a prototypical city; cultural debate surrounding the model is not simply confined within theme park walls. As more and more of our cities and suburbs are rebuilt in the Disney image, elements of the debate become transformed into 'reality.' The story of Disney's influence on the contemporary North American landscape reveals the lines between theme park and outer world

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1Anderton 1988, p.90.
blurring as each bleeds into the other to degrees that, one imagines, not even Walt Disney envisioned.

In this chapter, I trace the ways in which the Disney model has become a focal point in debate concerning urban and suburban space. After first outlining Walt Disney's vision of urbansity and its later variant "entertainment architecture," I examine its reception and replication by architects and planners in the 'real' world. Finally, I consider growing evidence of community resistance to Disney-designed environments.

The World According to Walt Disney.

The Disney image has been and continues to be a powerful influence in the landscape; however, the nature and extent of Disney's involvement has changed perceptibly after Disney's death as the company both moves away from Walt Disney's original visions and toward a more directly symbiotic relationship with the planners and developers of the outside world. Consequently, I will deal with the two phases separately, first introducing Walt Disney's own ideas, and then tracing their transformation into "entertainment architecture."

Walt Disney, dedicated builder of utopias, contended that the problems of urbanization, which he conceptualized from the vantage point of his intense dissatisfaction with Los Angeles' uncontrolled sprawl, could be efficiently dealt with through
technological means (Schickel 1985, p.24). He foresaw urban design as the next great frontier of technology, and firmly believed that not only his Tomorrowlands but his entire parks could serve as testing grounds for a better tomorrow.

Disney created in his theme parks not one unified solution to urban problems but rather a series of architectural and social ‘suggestions’ worked out to varying degrees of implementability. While Disney himself apparently intended all his ‘suggestions’ to be harmonious if somewhat unconnected parts of a whole, his ‘suggestions’ are not necessarily compatible with one another. They derive from both his nostalgic and comfortably pedestrian landscapes as exemplified in Main Street U.S.A., and his futuristic and technologically-driven spaces as hinted at in Tomorrowland and carried out more fully, as we shall see, in projects never completed. These conflicting characteristics reveal two competing versions of urbanity that encapsulate remarkably well wider debates about North American cities in the late twentieth century, which I will for the sake of brevity loosely summarize as ‘postmodern’ and ‘modern.’ They also occupy the poles around which architects, planners, developers, and others have argued Disney’s relative merits, and as such provide a starting point for exploring Disney’s role in shaping the contemporary landscape.

Disney’s nostalgic and comfortably pedestrian ‘postmodern’ version of urbanity is well-represented
throughout his theme parks. Draped in the protective mantle of bygone times and exotic places, almost imperceptibly reduced in scale, and scrubbed clean both literally and figuratively, landscapes such as the historically-inspired Main Street U.S.A. or the geographically-inspired Frontierland can be seen as the frivolous cousins of much architecture and urban design that is often called postmodern (Jencks 1977, McLeod 1989). Like Disney, architects working in the postmodern vein exhibit a playful borrowing of other historical styles, seek a form of urban expression in which the individual and the local is not overpowered, and wish to introduce a good dose of levity into the everyday.

Postmodern architecture is often defined as a reaction against a form of 'modern' urban design that, by contrast, presents austere lines stripped of any decoration, looks to technology and not history for inspiration, favours the knowledge of the trained architect or planner over the desires of the people, and requires the total vision and complete control of one person or agency (LeCorbusier 1929, Conrads 1975). Ironically, in Disney's work modernist tendencies can be just as easily identified as postmodernist ones. Tomorrowland represents the beginnings of a modernism not yet fully worked out: its sleek, clean lines celebrate not American history nor geography nor even, in actuality, the American future, but instead the future of technology. With Disney's last and most compelling project, EPCOT Center, not
only are his modernist tendencies demonstrated at their most extreme, but the purest example of his ideas on urban planning is also offered.

EPCOT, or the Experimental Prototypical Community of Tomorrow, as originally envisioned by Disney in the mid-1960s completed the scenario for the theme park as laboratory: it was to be an experimental new town complete with 20,000 residents located squarely within Walt Disney World and, like its neighbour the Magic Kingdom, open to paying visitors. At EPCOT the latest and best advances in urban technology would be applied, tinkered with, and improved. EPCOT would be at once theme park, where the theme would be the innovative technology on display, and an actual "living breathing community" (Disney, cited in Pastier 1978, p.36).

Disney left preliminary sketches of EPCOT that bear more resemblance to a LeCorbusier design than to the Victorian small town ambiance that Disney so painstakingly developed in the rest of his theme parks (Goldberger 1972, p.93; Knack 1979, p.17). EPCOT was to be a radial city, with a high-density downtown hub ringed with lower density, park-lined residential areas and industrial complexes (Pastier 1978, Taylor 1987). High-tech transportation spokes featuring short-haul "people-movers" and longer-haul monorails, two transportation modes already familiar to Disney theme park visitors, would link the two zones.
The downtown core was to be fifty acres in size and covered with a glass dome that would keep out all unwanted weather. Skyscrapers, including a thirty-story hotel, would rise through the dome; smaller buildings housing stores, offices, theatres, restaurants, and nightclubs could be contained within. Local and through traffic would move either under or above the pedestrian-only ground level.

A ring of high-density apartments stood immediately beyond the downtown hub, and beyond that Disney envisioned lower-density housing arranged with every unit facing a park. Dotted throughout the outlying residential districts would be schools, churches, stores, tennis courts, golf courses, and marinas.

Disney (cited in Harrington 1979, p.38) was forthright in describing the social fabric he intended for his city:

It will be a planned, controlled community, a showcase for American industry and research, schools, cultural and educational opportunities. In EPCOT there will be no slum areas because we won’t let them develop. There will be no landowners and therefore no voting control. People will rent houses instead of buying them, and at modest rentals. There will be no retirees. Everyone must be employed. One of our requirements is that the people who live in EPCOT must help keep it alive.

Disney also expressed concern that paying visitors should always find his city, like his other landscapes, operating precisely as expected. To this end, as Taylor (1987, p.33) notes, Disney proposed to monitor and regulate the lives of
the city's residents "almost as thoroughly as the climate in the dome." Disney would outlaw pets, enforce a strict dress code, and reserve the right to expel residents for "unbecoming conduct ranging from drunkenness to unmarried cohabitation" (Taylor 1987, p.33).

Disney died before EPCOT advanced past the planning stages, and, indeed, before it became public knowledge. The Disney Company, preoccupied with all the other necessary arrangements for the 1971 opening of Florida's Walt Disney World, put EPCOT on hold for nearly a decade, and when EPCOT finally re-emerged in 1982, it was greatly transformed from Disney's original grand plans. But in the meantime, the Disney Company went ahead with a smaller development initially known as Lake Buena Vista that Disney had toyed with as a trial run for EPCOT (Goldberger 1972, p.98; Landau 1973, p.594). Lake Buena Vista can provide a glimpse of what parts of EPCOT might have looked like.

Lake Buena Vista was planned as a community of second homes for the wealthy, and appears similar to EPCOT's medium-density rings. At least eighty attached row houses were built in clusters around golf courses, water ways, and common green spaces. The automobile was to be banished to out-of-the-way service roads and all local traffic confined to foot, electric cart, and boat. A skeletal version of Lake Buena Vista was opened with Walt Disney World's grand opening in 1971, when the first group of houses were leased to
business firms for company executive retreats (Landau 1973, p. 594). Disney management envisioned a growing town that would eventually include year-round residents and, by 1991, a total population of 28,000. Disney employee John Tassos (cited in Landau 1973, p. 594) ensured the public that only "qualified buyers" would be allowed in: "We'll be careful about what kind of people can help the community."

Disney also planned to be careful about the ways in which these "qualified buyers" would be allowed to help the community. All decision-making responsibility would be conferred to outside management -- the Disney organization itself (Landau 1973, p. 594). Community action would be strictly controlled, and in essence could only be initiated through sanctioned Disney channels, such as through their proposed "community service awards" programs, where $25,000 would be allocated to those groups deemed to have developed the most worthwhile projects (Landau 1973, p. 594).

In the end, Lake Buena Vista suffered a fate similar to EPCOT's: parts of it were constructed, but early on the Disney Company dropped the community idea entirely and transformed the space into vacation resort villas for short-term Walt Disney World guests (Birnbaum 1989, p. 151).

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2Even the physical landscape, apparently, was to be stripped of its own 'decision-making' ability: Landau (1973, p. 594) reports that Disney intended to regularly manicure not only the golf greens but also the surrounding wooded areas to cleanse them of unsightly underbrush.
Pawley (1983, p.50) speculates that Disney was discovering to their detriment the unforeseen complexities of urban design beyond theme park walls, a predicament in which Disney would often find itself in the future.

**The Disney Company: From Theme Park Developer to Urban Planner Extraordinaire.**

EPCOT and Lake Buena Vista represent the first stage of Disney's entrance into the 'real world,' and the only stage with direct input from Disney himself. From this initial experimentation, the Disney Company would pursue its interest in urban planning by creating more and more elaborate urban environments within their theme parks, by becoming more visible players in the architectural world with their trademark "entertainment architecture," and, ultimately, by entering the market as urban planners themselves.

EPCOT Center, first, as discussed above was initially envisioned as Walt Disney's answer to sprawling Los Angeles. Though its format was radically altered following his death, the final design still bore the stamp of Disney's vision of the city of the future. Significantly, it also still bore the modern-postmodern tension of Disney's own work.

EPCOT Center as built is divided into two sections, the 'postmodern' World Showcase and the 'modern' Future World; thus, designers literally articulated Disney contradictions in
three dimensions. The World Showcase employs design tactics reminiscent of Main Street U.S.A., though now it is international pavilions, and not haberdasheries and apothecaries, that sit on pedestrian-scaled promenades amidst greenery, wooden benches, and gas lamps (Ivy 1987, p.52). A short stroll away, however, Future World stands as a tangible embodiment of Disney's 'modern' tendencies (Stone 1990, pp.44-47). Corporate sponsors including AT&T, Exxon, General Electric, General Motors, and Kraft are housed in structures that, according to Disney (cited in Ivy 1987, p.51), highlight "discovery and scientific achievements." The area's design style, dominated by low horizontal lines and sleek abstract geometric shapes, reminded Ivy (1987, p.51) more of a modernist "bus or train depot" than a charming or nostalgic pedestrian space.

Within two years, it became clear that EPCOT was truly an intermediate step between theme park and outer world. In 1985, Disney created the Disney Development Company, a subsidiary committed to vigorous development plans. Initially concerned with improving the profitability of Disney-owned land immediately surrounding the theme parks, the Disney development arm has since branched out into the world at large.

Disney Development Company president Peter Rummel, eager to establish that Disney was now home to significant innovation, coined the phrase "entertainment architecture" in
order to describe, in his words, "a growing body of architecture that reflects an attitude more than a period or a discipline. The attitude is one of managing the unexpected in a sophisticated way" (Rummel, cited in LA Forum, 1990, p.57). The cornerstone of "entertainment architecture," thus, is the trademark Disney control over their surroundings. Rummel chose not to refer to the other trademark Disney characteristics in his definition: apparently, reiterating the central roles awarded to themeing, consumption, and leisure would be overstating the obvious. The end result is a familiar architecture, an architecture that attempts to delight and comfort in the same vein as the built environments inside Disney's 'magic kingdoms' (Branch 1990, p.78).

"Entertainment architecture . . . bring[s] the fantasy outside the gates;" it transforms the city into an urban theme park (Rummel, cited in Branch 1990, p.79). It presents a clean, controlled, and rational environment. The architecture is meant to be "digestible, readable, and comprehensible" (Frasca, cited in Bosker and Lencek 1987, p.50). Buildings are consciously designed to be "user-friendly," and promote "such old-fashioned virtues as comfort, intimacy, and festiveness" (Bosker and Lencek 1987, p.50). Significant locations become "key urban attractions," and "the show begins on the sidewalk" (Bosker and Lencek 1987, p.51). As Rummel (cited in L.A. Forum 1990, p.57) sums up, "to the extent that we have really perfected the environment inside the park, we
have tried to take that same attitude . . . and duplicate it outside the park."

Bringing full circle Disney’s entrance into the ‘real world,’ the Disney Development Company has commissioned to design their newest buildings some of the foremost architects connected with ‘postmodernism’ and architecture that amuses. Not insignificantly, the architects that Disney favours are already known for producing Disney-like work. As Branch (1990, p.79) points out, "architecture had to come to Disney before Disney would go to architecture."

Thus, architects once influenced by Disney are now hired into the Disney flock to produce Disney-like environments. As yet their work is mostly limited to the proliferation of hotels and office buildings that are springing up in the theme parks’ peripheries: Disney’s more ambitious plans remain as blueprints. Of the work completed to date, the list of guest architects is a veritable who’s who of contemporary architecture. Robert A. M. Stern has been the most utilized architect, winning not only the accolade "super-Imagineer" from Disney chair Michael Eisner but also five commissions -- in France, two hotels (the ‘Newport’ and the ‘Cheyenne’) to surround EuroDisney, two more hotels in Florida (the ‘Yacht Club’ and the ‘Beach Club’ -- complete with ‘real’ shipwreck) and the Disney Casting Center (the Disney employment offices) at Walt Disney World (Branch 1990, p.78; Scully 1990, p.91). The most well-known buildings to date are perhaps Michael
Graves' Swan and Dolphin hotels at Walt Disney World, hotels that fancifully incorporate swan and dolphin motifs, respectively (Leigh Brown 1990) (Figure 19). Graves will also complete a EuroDisney hotel based on a New York theme. Arata Isozaki's Walt Disney World headquarters building, where the theme is 'time,' also has attracted attention, as have works in progress by several others, including Antoine Predock's Santa Fe Hotel at EuroDisney and a Mediterranean-style hotel to be built at Walt Disney World, and Frank Gehry's office building at Disneyland and entertainment center at EuroDisney (Branch 1990, Goldberger 1990, Leigh Brown 1990, Viladas 1988).

Like all entertainment architecture, the styles may vary widely -- from Isozaki's "cosmic modernist" mouse-ears to Graves' abstracted animal fantasies to Stern's historicist approach -- but underneath, all share in common the integration of leisure elements through themeing. These hotels and office buildings have been called "theme parks in themselves" (Zukin 1991, p.228). All are engaged in some degree of mythmaking, creating themes that play off and ultimately reinforce the Disney world view. Themes that do not fit into this schema, or myth, are not allowed: Branch (1990, p.80) reports that one theme that is completely off-limits to Disney-hired architects is that of the actual inner workings of the Disney complex, a theme that was once suggested in a rejected proposal by James Wines.
19. Michael Grave's Swan Hotel at Walt Disney World
Heady with the thrill of working with "Super-Imagineer" architects, and bolstered by an enthusiastic new management team, Disney by the mid-1980s was ready to tackle the outer world head-on. In the same era when Imagineers were wandering around Seattle, Disney was concocting plans for Southern California and Florida as well. Though never straying far from the realm of entertainment, these plans share in common the fact that, for the first time, Disney sought to expand, both literally and symbolically, well beyond theme park walls. Not only would the sites be physically removed from their existing theme parks, but the functions envisioned would include retail, residential, and manufacturing activities.

Development plans for both Southern California and Florida are still unfolding. Expansion in Florida will take place within Disney's cavernous Reedy Creek Improvement District holdings. In Southern California, after cleverly pitting the city of Anaheim against the city of Long Beach in a bidding war (Fiore 1990a), Disney chose to expand in Anaheim. The secretive nature of any Disney development project makes it difficult to comment on their plans, but public records have been released that contain enough detail

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to suggest the type and extent of development Disney has in mind.

Disney's proposals for the construction of entertainment areas in both Long Beach and Anaheim, while still showcasing Disney theme parks, far exceeded mere 'magic kingdoms.' In the failed Long Beach bid, Disney proposed to alter that city's waterfront by constructing Port Disney, a 350-acre multi-use recreational facility at a cost of two billion dollars (Fiore 1990b). Embedded within the project was a trademark Disney theme park to be called DisneySea, but it was Disney's plans with the rest of the space that capture the attention. Disney would have reinvented public space along the waterfront with five hotels, specialty shops, waterfront dining, other entertainment spots, a new marina, and a cruise ship port. Further, they proposed to run shuttles, water taxis, and maybe a monorail to link their waterfront to downtown Long Beach. Preliminary estimates indicated that

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4When participating in city-building beyond their gates, such as in Southern California, Disney no longer enjoys the protection that the Reedy Creek Improvement District political infrastructure allows them. At some point, they must divulge their plans to the numerous city, state, and federal agencies that form part of the California planning process. Though the wrangling that goes on between Disney and various governmental agencies is beyond the scope of this chapter, the process is significant for our purposes because it forces Disney to be less inscrutable.

5The inclusion of public space was perhaps spurred on by the California Coastal Commission, which dictates that some of the development must be accessible to the non-paying tourist (Fiore 1990b, p.B8).
Port Disney could bring thirteen million tourists to Long Beach yearly.

The scenario in Anaheim, though sketchier, appears to be similar: on land adjacent to Disneyland, Disney will construct an entourage of shops, restaurants, and dinner theatres to flank "Westcot," a new theme park to be based on Florida’s EPCOT Center. Again, a network of Disney-style transportation, including monorails, trams, and moving-sidewalks, will move people around, though Disney has not yet said where they intend to move people to or from. The Anaheim project is expected to cost more than the Long Beach project, at three billion dollars, and bring somewhat fewer tourists, estimated at ten million per year (Vancouver Sun, 8 June 1991, p.E4).

What appears to be Disney’s most ambitious project of all is planned for Florida, within the boundaries of the Reedy Creek Improvement District. There, beyond the watchful eyes of governmental agencies or other overseeing bodies, Disney seems to be aiming to construct not only the largest shopping mall in Central Florida but also office parks, schools, hospitals, and a ‘dream city’ of 15,000 to 20,000 residents (Bergsman 1990, Branch 1990, Painton 1991). In short, the Disney Development Company by all indications will be reviving

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6Reedy Creek, as described in Chapter Three, is the Disney-controlled administrative body, equivalent in power to a county, that has jurisdiction over Disney’s land.
Walt's original vision for EPCOT and building an actual, working new town.

In "Celebration," the tentative name for the new city, the streets will be themed along the lines of Charleston and Venice (Painton 1991, p.57). Disney has twice assembled their stable of architects and planners to discuss ideas; presumably, we will see in the streets of Celebration the mark of Michael Graves, Robert Stern, and the other Disney-favoured architects (Branch 1990, p.81). This will be a city where work, school, and fun are pioneered in new ways (DePalma 1991, p.A12). Work, in fact, may be almost indistinguishable from fun: "Wouldn't it be interesting," asks Eisner (cited in Branch 1990, p.81), "to see a Coca-Cola factory, a razor factory?" Future residents are promised as well a special attraction that will showcase "industrial wizardry," highlighting the design elements involved in the creation of "everything from tennis balls to compact discs" (Painton 1991, p.57).

Disney clearly will not fail to play up in Celebration their strength in retailing alongside their new-found interest in manufacturing. The Disney Development Company has already met great success with another non-Disney World retail project, "Crossroads Shopping Center." Celebration's proposed

7The name "Celebration" could be seen as an improvement over two names suggested years earlier for the Disney property by Walt Disney himself: "Yesterday," to be down the road from "Tomorrow" (Anon 1990, p.14).
mall will be ten times as large with an "international flavour." Local financiers are already calling the unbuilt mall "the upscale mall for Central Florida" (Orlando banker J.D. Payne, cited in Bergsman 1990, p.79).

In summary, Disney seems posed on the brink of a new phase of city building. It is likely that their new ventures, if successful, will inspire further development in the Disney image. The everyday landscape would then appear even more devoted to themed, commercialized environments where, following Disney, work, education, consumption, and leisure become one. Thus, an environment first pioneered within the confines of a theme park is more firmly recast as the 'real world.'

The World Discovers Disney.

When Disney died in late 1966, and his work was just beginning to be recognized as a potentially valuable contribution to solving urban problems, Disney observers had only Disneyland to learn from. The EPCOT plans along with the entire Walt Disney World complex, the more 'modernist' of the two theme parks, remained in top secret negotiations between Disney and the State of Florida. Thus, it is not surprising that the first wave of Disney praise was focused almost exclusively on the architectural and marketing potential of Disneyland's charming yesteryear themed atmosphere -- that is, its 'postmodern' elements. The extent of Disney's 'modern'
tendencies would not be revealed for a few years yet, when the debate over Disney would take a new turn.

In the beginning, though, in an atmosphere where many were not yet convinced that a theme park could indeed offer anything serious to discuss, it was novel for Disneyland to win praise of any sort from architects and planners (King 1981b, p.126). The first documented accolades for Disney came in 1963 from shopping mall and new town developer James Rouse, who after surveying Disneyland's pleasing walkways, manicured greenery, festive architecture, and generally happy-looking visitors, declared to a Harvard conference that it was the "greatest piece of urban design in the United States today" (Rouse, cited in Wallace 1985, p.42).

Two years later, Charles Moore, then Dean of the University of California at Berkeley's School of Architecture, examined extensively the state of the "public life" in California, and concluded that Disneyland, though paradoxically a private entity, most successfully recreated the lost qualities of the public realm. Calling Disneyland the "most important single piece of construction in the [American] West in the past several decades," Moore (1965, p.65) was particularly taken with the ease with which Disney integrated play-acting into the urban environment:

Disney has created a place, indeed a whole public world, full of sequential occurrences, of big and little drama, of hierarchies of importance and excitement, with opportunities to respond at the speed
of rocketing bobsleds . . . or of horse-drawn street cars.

Disney's "breathtaking precis[ion]" in recalling other times and places, the clever vocabulary of forms that responded to the "marvelously complex and varied functions of our society," and the absolute absence of raw edges to spoil the picture, Moore concluded, all meant that inside Disneyland "everything works, the way it doesn't seem to anymore in the world outside."

Architectural historian Reyner Banham (1971, p.127), while not as impressed as Moore with Disneyland's pedestrian piazzas and Main Street "institutionalized fantasies," which Banham called products of "base cunning," nonetheless took Disneyland seriously as a formidable architectural influence. He was taken with what he saw as Disneyland's marvelous ironies of mobility: "Ensconced in a sea of giant parking lots in a city devoted to the automobile, [Disneyland] provides transportation that does not exist on the outside" (Banham 1971, p.127). He found not only the forms to be ingenious -- steam trains, monorails, people-movers, horse-drawn carriages, and the like -- but the context within which they were placed as well: at Disneyland one "can step off the pavement and mingle with buses and trams on Main Street in a manner that would lead to sudden death or prosecution outside" (Banham 1971, p.128).

With cutting insight, Banham rather prophetically honed in on what would soon become the vanguard architectural
approach to interpreting the Disney parks — to take them seriously as functioning cities unto themselves. The sheer concentration of myriad transportation forms, Banham (1971, p.128) speculated, would suggest to "East Coast town-planning snobs, determined that their cities shall never suffer the automotive 'fate' of Los Angeles," that Disneyland was not only a playground of mechanical movement but also an urban "alternative . . . work[ing] in the flesh and metal."

With the official opening of Walt Disney World in 1971, interest in Disney exploded and the tone of the debates changed substantially. Architects, artists, planners, developers, and others argued over the relative merits of what they saw emerging in the Florida swamps. Disney’s purest urban visions were made public, both in the tangible form of Walt Disney World’s more sophisticated infrastructure and in Disney’s previously unreleased rough plans for EPCOT. The issues surrounding the lessons the theme parks imparted became infinitely more complex. No longer could Disney be seen as someone who simply offered quaint, pedestrian-scaled environments adorned with harmless geographical and historical symbolism. The infrastructure actually implemented in Walt Disney World, in conjunction with the planned infrastructure for EPCOT, revealed tensions heretofore unnoticed in Disney’s work. Debates soon raged over the humanizing and dehumanizing qualities simultaneously perceived in the parks, debates that
serve as kernels for understanding how Disney has since come
to be a major and contentious force in the landscape.

One of Walt Disney World's first visitors in 1971 was
Arthur Drexler, curator of the Museum of Modern Art in New
York. After surveying the grounds, he was moved to declare
the complex to be "the best example of environmental design in
the United States," representing a form of post-industrial
urbanism worthy of attention from all planners and designers
(Drexler, cited in Pawley 1983, p.50). Within a year,
architects -- whether directly following Drexler's advice or
simply reacting to the general atmosphere -- had discovered
Disney full force. They flocked to Walt Disney World, then
went back to Disneyland to check for differences. By October
of 1972, one year after Walt Disney World opened to the
public, the phenomenon was so well-entrenched that Paul
Goldberger (1972, p.41) could note that a trip to Walt Disney
World was for young architects the same sort of obligatory
pilgrimage that a journey to the monuments of Europe had been
for earlier generations.

The list of Disney aficionados grew more impressive by
the day: architects such as Robert Venturi, Philip Johnson,
and Peter Blake soon joined the ranks of the already-converted
Rouse and Moore in praising Disney's genius. Venturi
explained that interest in Disney arose at precisely the
moment when young architects were calling into question the
validity of traditional standards of architecture. These
architects noticed with some astonishment that Walt Disney World, a construction project from whose design architects were all but banished, "is nearer to what people really want than anything architects have ever given them" (Venturi, cited in Goldberger 1972, p.91). Venturi (cited in Goldberger 1972, p.92) somewhat polemically declared Walt Disney World to be nothing less than a "symbolic American utopia." Philip Johnson was another avowed Disney connoisseur, though after sampling both parks he concluded that Disneyland, and not Walt Disney World, was more successful as utopian space (Goldberger 1972, p.92).

Peter Blake, transfixed by Disney's magic, became the most vocal proponent of the notion that, in his words, "in this turbulent century, urban man [sic] might, just possibly, be saved by a mouse" (Blake 1972, p.40). He also delivered the most extensive commentary on what Disney (and in particular Walt Disney World) meant to those architects who, seeking unconventional solutions, began to take the theme parks seriously.

Blake (1972, p.24) was perhaps the first to fully articulate the belief that Walt Disney World was not merely a clever exercise in urban design, but "the most interesting new town in the United States" this century. In his groundbreaking *Architectural Forum* article, Blake (1972, p.26) briefly considered the Magic Kingdom, a "wonderful piece of unmitigated nonsense" with "cute little fake facades"
appropriately scaled to the pedestrian. But clearly it was
the inner workings of the Walt Disney World complex as a whole
that captured Blake's imagination. He outlined the factors
that made Walt Disney World "the real Tomorrowland:" its
"fast, quiet, beautiful and efficient mass-transit system,"
its vast service and utility basement, large tracts of land
set aside for conservation projects, and its other urban
characteristics including its (proposed) airport,
prefabricated-structures manufacturing plant, satellite
communities, human-made lakes, and its own fleet of submarines
(Blake 1972, p.24).

Significantly, it was Walt Disney World's technical
aspects that impressed Blake as much as its architectural
ones. Disney had dreamed of resolving urban blight through
technology: Blake exalted precisely those aspects of Disney's
work. That Walt Disney World may raise more social concerns
than it answers Blake only acknowledged humorously in passing.
"It has," he said, "no social, economic, or political problems
... it is Nixonland, U.S.A., and its employees are neat,
clean, and reasonably short-haired" (Blake 1972, p.24).
Though Blake never stated it as such, one senses that in his
view, Walt Disney World's "astonishing mix of pragmatism,
idealism, and business acumen," funnelled through the latest
technologies, would dissolve any social problems in its path
(Blake 1972, p.40).

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Blake’s stance not only galvanized an already curious group of architects, planners, and developers into heated debate over Disney, but it set out the parameters of the debate. Blake made it clear that at the Disney parks, surface and subsurface, "cute little fake facades" at ground level and the no-nonsense technological infrastructure below, were two separate realms of achievement and possibly two separate issues entirely. In suggesting that the Disney parks’ true success arose not from architectural proficiency at all, but rather from their breathtaking and hidden machinery, Blake helped uncover the paradoxical nature of Disney’s work by revealing the presence of both ‘postmodern’ and ‘modern’ elements within. Thus, he perhaps inadvertently shifted the argument to the relationship between Disney’s architectural imagery, technological wizardry, and underlying social agenda. And the battle lines were being drawn: was Mickey Mouse the saviour of "urban man" or, as Landau (1973) feared, the "Great Dictator?"

No observers could deny that the Disney parks from the start have been, in terms of paid admissions, great successes. Chaitkin (1982, p.14) speculated that only the Disney parks deliver what people really want in an urban environment: pedestrian-scale streetscapes that are old-fashioned yet new and totally planned, smoothly serviced by giant technologies, and cleaner and safer than any city outside. Goldberger (1972, p.93) might add that the transportation system runs
when it is supposed to, and the power never blacks or browns out. Yet the question still remained whether, as city planner Bob Hart (cited in Goldberger 1972, p.94) argued, the Disney parks are "probably the best example of an urban environment where people are treated in a humane way," or its converse -- cleverly-constructed landscapes that depend on inhuman degrees of mechanization and control to achieve their aims.

With nearly the same speed and intensity with which some observers discovered Disney's perceived redemptive qualities, others recoiled in distrust. "Disney-bashing," Orange County (Florida) Commissioner Bill Donegan (cited in Holleran 1990, p.25) commented, "is now a way of life." "Disney-bashing" spanned three areas of concern: the skin-deep nature of the parks' urban charm, the poor rendition of social relations within, and the dictatorial control that underlay Disney's worlds.

First, critics levelled that Disney's "vaunted human scale" was merely an illusion (Chaitkin 1982, p.14; Rowe and Koetter 1978). Chaitkin (1982) argued that Walt Disney World's successful urban image was no more than a scientifically-construed quantification of manipulated sentiment: its comfortable pedestrian scale, for instance, was simulated by building all facades at five-eights 'true' size, and its urban vistas fabricated through architectural

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"Buildings in the Disney theme parks are often treated as scale model replicas of 'the real thing,' due to their design proportions: the first floor is constructed at full scale, and
forced perspective and shrewd landscaping. Ultimately, Chaitkin suggested, Walt Disney World's immense popularity may stem from its successful employment of image-marketing based almost solely on calculated audience appeal, and not from any breakthroughs in urban design that would be of use in the outside world.

Rowe and Koetter (1978, p.46) similarly objected to Walt Disney World as "a machine for the production of euphoria." When looking at Main Street U.S.A., they saw beneath the "sugar-coating and eternally fixed smiles" a filtering and packaging operation that eliminated tragedy, time, blemish, and all other aspects of urbanity that hinted at unpleasantness. Walt Disney World, Rowe and Koetter concluded, eliminated human imagination and as such could only ever be a pale derivative of a true landscape that would engage speculative curiosity and insist upon expenditure of mental energy.

Disney's unwavering faith in the "perfectible near-future of Scientific Progress" has made the "sugar-coated" postmodern surface appear to critics even more sinister (Chaitkin 1982, p.15). Rowe and Koetter (1978, p.45-6) noted that Disney's "nauseating" world of illusion was supported by a chilling

then each successive floor diminishes in proportion so that the overall height of the building is approximately five-eighths (at Disneyland) or seven-eighths (at Walt Disney World) life size (Francaviglia 1981). The effect not only creates architectural forced perspective, but also suggests to many a "toylike quality" to the atmosphere (Wallace 1985, p.34).
underground world of fact -- the seventy acre technological substructure that housed the park's inner workings. Drawing a parallel between Orlando and Paris, Rowe and Koetter (1978, p.45) likened Walt Disney World's two worlds to Garnier's Opera and Haussmann's sewers, arguing that in both cases the world of art (above ground) and the world of technology (below ground), though treated as insulated and separate, were interdependent. As the Parisian sewers "validated" the opera, Disney's technological catacombs and their malevolent implications were inseparable from the above-ground fantasy. And once the postmodern charm was stripped away to reveal cold, modern inner-workings, critics were then led to question the depth of Disney's commitment to the social and cultural dimensions of his urban vision, our second major category of discontent.

Disney's urban strengths have rarely been located in the realm of admirable social advances. Even those most sympathetic with Disney's agenda, such as planner Bill Stubec (cited in Goldberger 1972, p.93), admit that "the Disney organization is fascinated by technological experimentation, but scared to death of social concerns." Indeed, critics began to suspect that Disney's experimentation with urban planning was set up so that they could concentrate on what they wished -- technology -- and ignore any other complicating factors. The theme parks, as Landau (1973, p.591) determined, were meticulously-regulated planned environments that
showcased the best in urban technology, yet by virtue of that very 'showcase' approach, were absolved of the responsibility for social planning.

From this standpoint, even a social commitment such as Disney's alleged dedication to energy conservation, admired so much by Blake, could be reinterpreted as an interest in technological, and not social, change. As Pastier (1978, p.34) pointed out, Disney's so-called attempts at energy conservation focused exclusively on elaborate efforts to produce cheaper sources of electricity to feed their ravenous energy appetite; never was it suggested that the parks actually cut back on total electricity expenditure. Mickey Mouse's nightly electrical parade, apparently, was sacrosanct.

Goldberger (1972) questioned whether Disney adequately addressed the social consequences of his technologically-inspired approach and, ultimately, whether Walt Disney World could be considered in any sense a prototype for a new town. With no schools, drugs, welfare, politics, or, for that matter, permanent residents, Walt Disney World offered a very unusual case where "social planning [meant] putting the golf course in the right place" (Goldberger 1972, p.99). Shielded from the problems most actual cities would confront, and armed with unheard-of amounts of money ("money," Philip Johnson (cited in Goldberger 1972, p.96) once said, is Disney's "secret ingredient"), Disney would produce successful environments on the strength of "pleasing spaces and wizard
technology alone," but, as Goldberger continued, Disney had yet to prove that "super-appliances, pollution-free vehicles, and clean open spaces can truly affect the quality of life" (Goldberger 1972, p.99).

When EPCOT opened, critics took it as further proof that Disney's urban settings completely lacked any true sense of community. Ivy (1987, p.52) noted that at EPCOT machinery, not people, were at centre stage; further, the 'stage' itself was the product of an "imposed, abstract order," "sleek ideas . . . not particularly accommodating to people" (Ivy 1987, p.51). Vonier (1984, p.44) charged that the missing sense of community was absolutely unforgivable, as it stemmed directly from Disney's meshing of entertainment, corporate sponsorship, and so-called urban planning. EPCOT spoke of the "awesome financial and intelligence resources" at Disney's disposal (Anderton 1988, p.89). Incestuous relationships between Disney, the themes, and major corporate sponsors, Vonier (1984, p.44) continued, served to reinforce only the most repugnant aspects of decidedly suburban life: how, for example, Vonier asked, could the future of transportation as envisioned by General Motors not be foreseen as wholly dependent on private motor vehicles? EPCOT, he concluded, was "ultimately stultifying and devoid of the vitality one might expect of places intended for people." As urban space, it formed a "harrowing prospect as a prototype" (Vonier 1984, p.44).
As critics quickly were coming to the conclusion that, in Landau's (1973, p.594) understated words, "Walt Disney World's community building achievements are, to date, still modest in scale and scope," the sheer popularity of the theme park as actively-used urban space presented an intriguing puzzle. Landau concluded that Disney's lack of responsible social planning was not, within the theme parks' confines, a liability for the Disney parks. Rather, the essential components boiled down to "both visual Disneyification and the control required to maintain it" (Landau 1973, p.594). Indeed, the degree of control exerted by Disney, which some characterized as nearly dictatorial, was already legendary. Like other "Disney-bashers," many architects expressed concern over our third category of anti-Disney sentiment, the implications of Disney's perceived iron grip.

Disney's domain of power was reflected on several levels, from the legal and economic to the symbolic. The 28,000 acres that constituted Walt Disney World, as discussed above, represented a corporate zone of unprecedented political jurisdiction; Disney's economic monopoly extended across every inch of their huge property. Any change within the entire complex, as Pastier (1978, p.34) reminded, was the result of a "centrally-ordained development plan, scientifically phased." No one, neither employees nor "guests," were beyond Disney's long reach. Employees were subject to strict monitoring of behaviour and appearance. "Guests" were thrust into the role
of passive observer, an aspect of Disney’s universe that troubled many architects.

Once Disney situated itself as an "active regulator in control of the system," Landau (1973, p.592) speculated, "guests" by default were placed in the role of passive fun lovers. They needed only sit back and enjoy the entertainment prepared for them. Two-way communication between the observer and the observed was resolutely discouraged, and made even more difficult with the substitution of machines for people. Rowe and Koetter (1978, p.46) surmised that in Disney’s controlled universe, they could scarcely allow such "risky business:" spontaneous interaction might threaten their dominion.

Landau (1973, p.592) went so far as to identify the entertainment of "passive fun lovers" to be Disney’s single-minded, undeviating goal. He argued that with the care and attention Disney dedicated to achieving its goal, the resulting environment held great appeal. And why not, he continued, provide a "non-abrasive, not-too-stimulating environment where all decisions would be ready-made and where entertainment would be pre-packaged," an experience no doubt not only entertaining but also soothing and therapeutic for "tired and demoralized" visitors to the parks.

The trouble as Landau saw it arose because Disney approached not only theme parks but community planning in general in fundamentally the same manner. Both were based on
a dispenser/receiver model where Disney's "secret weapon" was central decision-making and control (Landau 1973, p.595). Landau saw the reward model of community action proposed for Lake Buena Vista, as discussed above, as indicative of Disney's general framework: in Disney's society, there must always be both controller and controlled. The controller, always the Disney organization, always knew best; they provided the best possible environment. It was, thus, the environment that mattered; the people who inhabited it were of minor importance since their roles were already written into the landscape (Landau 1973, p.594-5). The ultimate irony, Landau (1973, p.595) concluded, was that in an era when forward-thinking architects were seeking to move beyond the central control of administrative hierarchies and instead toward more socially-sensitive programs that addressed mutual interests and decentralized decision-making, Disney's social vision stagnated twenty-five years behind the times. Even more ironic, one might add, is that Disney remained the darling of many architects who, in the early 1970s, classified themselves as forward-thinking architects sensitive to contemporary social issues.

Disney's more recent forays into urban planning, as well as the preponderance of environments designed in the Disney image, have inspired a new generation of bitter commentary. As Disney has widened its scope to include the North American landscape at large as its laboratory, so too have critics
expanded their gaze beyond theme park walls. Architectural critic Brendan Gill (1991, p.96) complains that due to "the present epidemic of architectural Disneyitis," as he calls it, the "culture of the country as a whole has become, or is rapidly becoming, Disneyized." Suburban malls (Gruen 1964, Kowinski 1985, Rouse 1962, Whyte 1988), small-town Main Streets (National Main Street Center 1981), large-city downtowns (Frieden and Sagalyn 1989, Gratz 1989, Hall 1988, Harvey 1988), and residential neighbourhoods (Boles 1989, Soja 1988) have all been interpreted as places that draw explicitly from Disney. "Theming," Dan Rose (1990, p.112) contends, has become "the key conceptual and design requirement" in the landscape. Zelinsky (1990, p.47) further observes that, drawing from Disney, "one of the signal revelations of our era is the lesson that fantasy is profitable, not just in the field of entertainment but in all manner of other businesses."

The incorporation of themes into the everyday landscape, of course, is nothing new. The fantastical images we saw at Coney Island were symbolic of wider changes occurring to urban and suburban landscapes of the time (Lieb 1985). But the argument here is that themed environments, in the Disney age, offer a qualitatively new experience, because the 'theme' is encountered concurrently with the various other traits associated with Disney landscapes. It is the combination of all these forces that defines the character of the Disney
landscape: an unprecedented conjunction of entertainment, commercialism, and control. Increasingly, observers are questioning whether "entertainment architecture" can exist without "megaplanning, megadetails, and . . . CIA-style secrecy" (Kay 1990, p.52); Disney-like environments, consequently, have fallen under closer and closer scrutiny.

The integration of leisure and fantasy into the everyday landscape in itself does not necessarily earn the rancor of urban and architectural observers, but when Disney's "successful and sinister methods of people control are now being mobilized to forge mainstream architectural expansion," eyebrows are raised (Anderton 1988, p.87). Critics maintain that Disney-inspired urban planning results in the city as stage, where slickly-commodified imitations of urban activities, catering to a well-healed and mobile clientele, replace the traditional freedoms, spontaneity, and diversity associated with the city.

The Disneyfied city seeks to draw people in and keep them entertained (Falk 1986, p.150). Peter Hall (1988, p.351) speaks disparagingly of the city-as-stage and its inspiration:

Like theatre it resembles real life, but it is not urban life as it ever actually was: the model is the Main Street America exhibit . . . at Disneyland, sanitized for your protection . . . wholesome, undangerous, and seven-eighth's real size. Around it, the charmingly-restored streets -- all yupified with a massive injection of HUD funds -- have exactly the same quality: they manage to look like a Disney movie lot of an imagined urban
America, but they happen incongruously to be real.

In referring to the city-as-stage's "unashamedly tourist based" existence, Hall (1988, p.350) alludes to a second criticism of the Disneyified city: Disneyification effectively creates two cities -- one for tourists and the wealthy, and one for local, poorer residents. Between the "visitor" city and the "regular" city, notes Whyte (1988, p.208), "there is little contamination." No one in their right mind, adds Massing (1982), would ever mistake Baltimore's Rouse-developed Inner Harbor festival marketplace for Baltimore's poverty-stricken, predominantly black inner city. Indeed, the potential for comparison is unlikely, as elevated walkways linking the various 'urban attractions' ensure that visitors never need set foot on a traditional Baltimore street. Harvey (1989) expresses further concern over the dual aspects of Disneyified cities such as Baltimore, noting that commercial tourist areas simultaneously fortress in the wealthy and fortress out the poor. These Disneyesque structures, further, are symbolic of cultural and social conditions that both produce urban poverty and homelessness, and, by encouraging the transformation of public space into private space, indirectly dictate that the poor be spatially segregated from the rich (Harvey 1989).  

9 The privatization of public space is a phenomenon often related to Disney-like environments. Though the specifics are beyond the scope of argument here, the implications are far-reaching and parallel many of the cultural conditions of Disney
We can consider in more detail reaction to the characteristics of the visitor’s city, the Disney city, by examining both what is provided and what is missing. Prime on many critics’ lists are the ways in which Disneyified landscapes subsume not only leisure but production and consumption under the sphere of entertainment. Activities that usually have little relationship to amusement are now housed in buildings that "hint at pleasure:" Gill (1991, p.98), for instance, notes that tax-payers in Illinois conduct their business in a Helmut Jahn building that "plainly seeks to amuse and lull," and the residents of a Stanley Tigerman house outside of Chicago can park their cars in two small garages facing each other at forty-five degree angles, a design that amuses but also, Gill (1991, p.99) continues, must invite collisions.

Exacerbating matters, the references to pleasure are frequently entwined with commodities: Disneyified landscapes are charged with being unequivocally consumer environments that reduce people to consumers and experience to trivial, one-dimensional make-believe (Davey 1985, p.21; Harvey 1989, Rose 1990, Shields 1989, Soja 1989). "Money," observes Rose (1990, p.112), "flows effortlessly from the consumer into the corporation; the transaction is concealed within a good time."

lands. For further discussion of privatized Disney space, see Hopkins (1990), Whyte (1988, particularly Ch. 14), Harvey (1989), Hall (1988).
Davey (1985, p.19) further argues that the Disney approach packages "it all," and part of the package is the cheerful admission that everything is packaged, artificial, all in fun. Because people are painted as "dreary spoil sport[s] if [they] object," we are "increasingly cajoled into buying more-or-less useless objects in environments which [sic] themselves trivialise and consume authentic images and rituals" (Davey 1985, p.19).

As parts of a highly consumer-oriented culture, Disneyfied landscapes not only sell commodities but attempt to 'sell' themselves to attract visitors. Critics further argue that architects and planners resort to a form of "chilling . . . subliminal advertising" in order to most effectively 'sell' their creations: manipulations of scale, perspective, and thematic content that may be "somewhat innocent" in a theme park acquire more sinister connotations in the 'real' world (Branch 1990, p.80). Local or historical sensitivity is reduced to "finding marketable meanings in a locale," and the result is often nothing more than "cheap imitation" (Rose 1990, p.112). Dixon (1991, p.9) cautions that Disney too often resorts to such cheap imitations instead of striving for "newly-minted fantasy;" Anderton (1988, p.90) comments that as Disney teaches other architects, they prompt thousands of even cheaper imitations of an already cheap imitation.
At worse, the overall effect is "simulated cities for people who hate cities" (Whyte 1988, p.221). The Disneyified city, critics claim, turns its back on the 'real' city. Davey (1988, p.31) calls these landscapes "anti-urban . . . profoundly alien to the complex and varied nature of real cities." Whyte (1988, p.208) notes with dismay all the activities that these places forbid: "controversy, soapboxing, passing of leaflets, impromptu entertaining, happenings, or eccentric behaviour, harmless or no."

While Disneyified places recreate the illusion of urbanity within, actual surrounding urban space is frequently fenced off. In the extreme case, such as at Los Angeles' Bonaventure Hotel, the Disney city (that which is inside the hotel) literally reflects the pre-Disney city back on itself in its sleek, mirrored walls (Jameson 1984, p.82). More often, however, as we have seen, the Disney city integrates into its design a symbolic attempt to blend in with its surroundings. The pedestrian scale, the preoccupation with color and texture, the 'themeing' of historical and local elements, all speak to Disney-like efforts to create a sense of urban life. Yet, as Goldstein (1988) finds in her analysis of Jon Jerde environments, efforts to relate Disneyified landscapes to the street are often more symbolic than meaningful. Jerde's Horton Plaza, for instance, while highly successful as a "fantasy city," is in her opinion little more than "a stucco stage-set for leisure shopping" unceremoniously
dropped in the middle of downtown San Diego. The greatest contribution to its neighborhood that a similar Jerde work in Los Angeles made, she further notes, was that it fueled a local slow-growth movement in its opposition (Goldstein 1988, p.84).

Thus we see a remarkable paradox in the Disneyified landscape: the more that architects, planners, and others involved in their development attempt to integrate Disney's 'postmodern' characteristics and create unique, "user-friendly" environments, the more we see Disney's 'modern' tendencies revealed as the resulting landscapes are increasingly universal in appearance and autocratically controlled in experience. All the elements that Disney landscapes purport to offer -- their scale, texture, color, surprises, cleanliness, safety -- in fact do not exist separate from the sleek sterility of control that Disney exercises over its lands. Previously we have seen this paradox hinted at in Disneyland and Walt Disney World, as modern and postmodern tendencies clashed. In EPCOT Center, as Walt Disney's vision is played out more fully, the tendencies became more clearly articulated. But it is in the 'real' world of "entertainment architecture" beyond Disney gates that the paradoxical nature of the 'Disney magic' strikes most clearly, and consequently, generates the most criticism.

In short, what critics see happening is a transformation that parallels the transition from the Coney Island model of
amusement space to the Disney model. Rose (1990, p.114) explains:

The trends in the entertainment landscape are moving with undiminished 'theming' toward more total experiential environments, away from the carnival, where there is no audience because we are all participants, and toward an ever more mediated visual stimulation of a passive audience.

The somewhat chaotic freedom and critical edge associated with Coney Island is increasingly subsumed under the Disney drive for order and control.

Evaluation of current trends takes on all the more urgency as the Walt Disney Company, in its latest developments, remakes itself from theme park developer to urban planner extraordinaire. As the Disney model becomes firmly transplanted upon the grounds of cultural debate, city residents become central players in the dialogue. These participants are not simply paying visitors. Disneyification has profound repercussions for the communities, neighbourhoods, and cities in the path of their development. I now turn to the processes of Disneyification as seen from the perspective of those involved at an everyday level.

Community Resistance in Disney's World: Attacking the Mouse.

As I have argued in previous chapters, the Disney model of amusement space, like the Coney Island model before it, articulates specific visions of urbanity; amusement space itself, however, is dynamic 'empty' space. It provides the
grounds for cultural debate, as the models are contested by actual people in actual places. At the point that Disney entered the 'real' world, their corporate vision shifted from pure model to contestable landscape, and became vulnerable to a whole new set of attacks.

The Disney model of urban planning clearly incorporates elements of both great appeal and great revulsion. The Walt Disney Company has been heavily courted in Anaheim, Long Beach, and Orlando, yet in all three development sites it has also met staunch resistance. Again and again we see local communities grasp at the increased tourism, general growth, and enhanced 'urbanity' that Disney promises, but balk at the tangle of disadvantages that accompany them.

"It is in vogue to attack the mouse," Florida State Representative Richard Crotty (cited in DeGeorge 1988, p.48) understated in 1988. Indeed, as Disney becomes more firmly ensconced in the landscape, the battle lines become more deeply set. The popular topics shift from what Disney offers to the havoc it wreaks, and the criticism, coming from all sides, is truly non-partisan. Significantly, however, the type of criticism is remarkably consistent. While locals abhor the direct and indirect impacts of a negative externality on the scale of the Walt Disney Company, and are further piqued by what they perceive as a wholly uncooperative attitude on Disney’s part, rarely, we shall see, have Florida
or California communities seriously questioned the underlying model of urbanity that Disney offers.

In the mid-1960s, when Central Florida became more or less unwittingly a testing ground for the as yet unproven effects of Disney expansion, mouse-attacking was not yet in vogue. On the face of it, Florida was unabashedly eager to attract the entertainment giant to their domain.\textsuperscript{10} Formal announcement of Disney's impending presence was met with general enthusiasm tempered only by delicate and apologetic reservations (Fogelsong 1990, pp.8-9) The Orlando Sentinel newspaper reported that the local business community was "breathless and transported . . . into dreamland from whence they could see nothing but unparalleled economic returns" (cited in Fogelsong 1990, pp.8-9). Orange and Osceola Counties, within whose jurisdictions Disney's new land sat, welcomed Disney because, as an Osceola County Commissioner explained, Disney "will bring progress and progress is good for us all" (cited in Fogelsong 1990, p.9). Tentative concern was voiced over potential traffic snarls and crowded housing conditions, and Orange and Osceola County officials reportedly hinted that Disney had perhaps started off on the wrong foot by keeping the two counties in the dark during negotiations

\textsuperscript{10}More accurately, "only a few co-conspirators," including the Governor, a small group of land brokers, and possibly members of the Florida Development Commission, were the only ones who could be eager to attract Disney, simply because initially they were the only parties who knew of, and were involved in, negotiations with Disney (Anon 1990, p.8).
that would very much affect them (Fogelsong 1990, pp. 9; 14). Overall, however, the $100 million Disney project promised to be merely the catalyst to spark untold levels of "progress." Disney’s economic projections inspired visions of 50,000 new jobs, a population increase of 128,000 people, construction of 37,700 new dwelling units, and nearly $350 million added in tax revenues (Fogelsong 1990, p.17). Its advantages, thus, were expected to far outweigh its disadvantages, and, as Orlando’s planning director reasoned, even if "progress" threatened to get out of hand, Disney’s presence would hopefully stimulate efforts to finance any capital improvements that may later be needed (Fogelsong 1990, p.9).

It is probably fair to say that no one, including the Walt Disney Company, accurately foresaw the massive impact that Walt Disney World would have and continues to have. When Walt Disney World opened in 1971, Central Florida was advised by the Disney Company to expect approximately six million tourists for the year. Over ten million came (Fogelsong 1990, p.18). Thus the pattern was set, and has persisted ever since. Central Florida has been overwhelmed by staggering statistics for which it has never quite been prepared.

Virtually overnight, Greater Orlando\textsuperscript{11} was a new city,

\textsuperscript{11}"Greater Orlando" unofficially signifies Orlando’s metropolitan area and encompasses Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties. When referring to the geographic entity within the boundaries of these three counties, I will use "Greater Orlando," and when referring less specifically to the area within Disney’s sphere of influence, I will use "Central Florida."
with a new population, a new economic base, and a new urban outlook. The population of Greater Orlando has quadrupled to over one million since 1960. Even today, new residents arrive at a rate of 102 people a day (Painton 1990, p.52). The population growth has gone hand-in-hand with economic growth. Central Florida quite literally woke up one morning, October 1, 1971, and found itself in the midst of a dizzying transition to a tourist-based economy. Land prices skyrocketed, costing anywhere from ten to 500 times pre-Disney prices (Fogelsong 1990, p.19; Holleran 1990, p.22). The service sector mushroomed, and even during the 1980s jobs in that realm still increased by 137% over 1980 levels (Painton 1991, p.52). Central Florida seems fond of measuring success in terms of hotel rooms: between 1965 and 1990, the Greater Orlando hotel room supply leaped from 8,000 to 70,000 (Fogelsong 1990, p.23). These figures should rise to nearly 80,000 when Disney opens its latest brand-name architectural hotels (de Palma 1991, p.A12). Osceola County alone now has as many hotel rooms as it had permanent residents in 1960 (Painton 1991, p.58). The convention business, virtually nonexistent before Disney came to town, is now a billion dollar a year industry (de Palma 1991, p.A12).

Economic growth has not been limited to the service sector. The Central Florida region has displayed sizable increases in manufacturing. Between 1980 and 1990, it led the
country in new factory jobs created per year, thanks to the recent arrival of such corporations as Westinghouse, AT&T, and the American Automobile Association. New jobs in the high-tech realm are being created at three times the national average. And, perhaps most appropriate of all, the movie industry has settled into Disney territory, with both Disney and Universal setting up production studios in the area (Painton 1991, p.52).

It would be foolhardy to infer that Disney is the sole cause of growth in Central Florida. Cape Canaveral, forty miles east of Walt Disney World, has attracted high-tech industry to the areas for decades. Furthermore, Orlando’s tourism industry predates Disney, as embodied in its two main pre-Disney attractions, Gatorland and the Tupperware Museum. But while it is impossible to gauge precisely the impact Disney has had, that the impact has been significant is indisputable. This point is illustrated most vividly in the built environment, in the urban aesthetic that now defines Central Florida.

In Central Florida, "it is not clear where Disney World begins and ends," comments local cultural anthropologist John Rothchild (cited in Painton 1991, p.55). Orlando could have built itself in the NASA image, or in the Tupperware image, but it was Disney’s image that was apparently irresistible. Disney offers what would seem to be, for some, an infectious sensibility, and even now the urge for neat, tidy, themed
environments has not abated: a [failed] recent bid for a National League baseball team specifically promised not to build a concrete mega-park but instead an old-fashioned, intimate playing field; Orlando transportation planners currently favour implementing an old-time trolley line over a modern elevated rail system; and new residential developments attempt to recreate a strollable past, in convivial neighborhoods that look suspiciously like Main Street U.S.A. 12.

On the surface, Orlando appears to be a landscape in which, like the Walt Disney World landscape it echoes, visitor and resident alike can live, work, play and commute in neat, tidy, themed environments. In actuality, however, the image breaks apart almost immediately. The realities of Central Florida’s rapidly growing urban problems corrode the edges of this comfortable, nostalgic surface. First, most Central Florida residents can not afford to live in those charming, convivial neighborhoods. Service sector wages rarely rise above ten dollars per hour, with most maids and clerks averaging between four and six dollars per hour (Fogelsong 1990, p.23; Painton 1991, p.58). At the same time, affordable housing is scarce in an area where land that sold for $200 an acre in 1965 now can cost as much as $80,000 an acre (Holleran

12One of the most notorious of these developments is to be Avalon Park, a 9,400-acre community designed by Andres Duany, mastermind of the Disney-esque Seaside, Florida.
Many Orlando workers, Disney employees included, find their only option is to live in less expensive Seminole County and commute twenty or more miles to work, each way, daily (Fogelsong 1990, p.23). And these are the lucky ones: the less fortunate live day-to-day in trailer court communities in Osceola County, and the less fortunate still live in Orange County on park benches (Painton 1991, p.58). Orlando’s homeless population, in fact, has become visible enough that city shelters are overflowing and the city has taken to watering nightly the grass (and any sleeping people) at its landmark Lake Eola Park, a tourist favorite (de Palma 1991, p.A12). During the busy season, informal day labour pools spring up: de Palma (1991, p.A12) claims that, ironically, some of these homeless day labourers earn their day’s wages at Walt Disney World.

Second, for those who commute, transportation to and from work can resemble more a living nightmare than a trip down memory lane. Though the Orlando site originally was chosen in great part because it then seemed to have a highway system with room to grow (Fogelsong 1990, p.16), Disney initially based its judgements on an estimated flow of only 12,000 cars per day. Today, the city of Orlando is lucky to get fewer than 12,000 cars per hour. Holleran (1990, p.26) comments from frustrating personal experience that the highways "turn to gridlock instantly when the slightest thing goes wrong." When, for instance, Walt Disney World closed its gates early
on one particularly crowded Thanksgiving holiday, traffic backed up for eighteen miles (Fogelsong 1990, p.19). A regional Florida planning group has recommended that by the year 2000, the major artery through Orlando should be expanded to twenty-two lanes. Currently it has six (Painton 1991, p.58).

In many respects, Central Florida is no different than any other rapidly growing metropolitan area. Homelessness, poverty, inadequate housing, and out-dated transportation systems are widespread concerns. But few metropolitan areas have a presence as overwhelming -- and a target as visible -- as the Walt Disney Company. What makes Greater Orlando so distinct, in the eyes of many local residents, is that their situation has been greatly exacerbated by, if not entirely created by, Disney. Thus, a massive multinational corporation who, in 1989, cleared $703 million in profits, is perceived as being inexorably linked with Central Florida's woes (Holleran 1990, p. 21). And, both on economic and on political grounds, Disney is often painted as the villain.

There were signs even from the beginning that the relationship between Central Florida and Disney would not be entirely smooth. The County officials who reportedly were miffed when Disney did not include them in the initial planning of Walt Disney World were merely setting the stage for more explicit struggles to come. Other likewise seemingly minor events proved to be manifestations of trouble ahead:
even before Walt Disney World was completed, Florida residents voted down a $300 million road bond issue, indicating that they had little desire to finance singlehandedly the infrastructural improvements that Disney’s presence would necessitate (Fogelsong 1990, p.9). This theme, too, would be repeated often in years to come. Further, during Walt Disney World’s construction, environmentalists were appalled to watch as Disney first drained Bay Lake of its natural water and bulldozed its shores of their natural sand, only to refill the lake bed with clear blue Disney water and replenish the beaches with clean white Disney sand (Knack 1979, p.23). Environmental conflicts such as these would soon routinely plague the Disney Company.

One event above all others mobilized resistance into one, coherent voice: the arrival, in 1984, of a new Disney management team and the announcement of one billion dollars worth of new projects for Walt Disney World (deGeorge 1988, p.48). What before could be rationalized as bearable inconvenience now seemed insurmountable. Not only did the projects themselves promise to strain the existing

13While the bond issue was not directly aimed at Disney, its defeat was interpreted by Governor Burns as a regrettable loss for the tourism industry in general and for Disney in particular (Anon 1990, p.9).

14Had initial plans been carried out, environmentalists would have been even more upset: Disney had envisioned robot birds to populate this ‘natural’ setting (Painton 1991, p.59).
infrastructure to impossible limits, but Central Florida residents began to seriously question whether the Disney Company would help straighten out the messy urban conditions that they in large part had created. Sustained attacks on the Disney Company emerged from all sides -- rich, poor, urban, rural, Republican, Democrat. The targets were many: roads, housing, the environment, taxes, and a multitude of related development issues. Beneath all resistance lay a real disdain for the way Disney conducted business -- the design and management of a city through totalitarian methods.

Disney, once described as Central Florida's "modern Merlin," now became to locals "the mouse that ate Orlando" (Fogelson 1990, p.9; Fiore 1990a, p.A1). "Don't get carried away with the pixie dust," Orange County Commissioner Linda Chapin (cited in Fiore 1990a, p.A22) warned. Again and again, Disney proved itself eager to expand yet unwilling to help Central Florida deal with such expansion. Most vexing was Disney's approach to expansion: Disney seemed bent upon the ruthless exploitation of whatever resources they needed from the natural and social environment. And thus, irate politicians, environmentalists, and residents came head to head with Disney.

Central Florida politicians accused Disney of taking advantage of the urban infrastructure that the three counties were struggling to maintain. "The roads are jammed, everything is clogged, and now we have to raise taxes to pay
for Disney's business . . . it's just plain greed," Orange County Commissioner Bill Donegan (cited in Fiore 1990a, p.A22) summarized. Disney appeared to make only token efforts to better the situation, by endorsing, for instance, a proposal by a Japanese consortium to build a bullet train that would whisk people directly from the airport to EPCOT Center, but refusing to support Orlando's attempts at establishing a light rail system (Fogelsong 1990, p.29; Holleran 1990, p.25).

Osceola and Orange Counties were particularly obstinate in demanding that Disney pay their fair share for road improvement, either through road impact fees or straight cash donations. In 1989, Orange County finally succeeded in extracting $13.4 million out of Disney for road improvements -- a first, but still a fraction of what they had asked for (Fogelsong 1990, p.27).

The affordable housing market, like the road network, was also overcrowded and underfunded. Orlando Mayor Bill Frederick, noting that service sector employees could not afford to live in Orlando, in 1986 requested that Disney help alleviate what was becoming a critical affordable housing shortage. Disney refused, saying that a housing shortage was a market situation and not their problem (Fogelsong 1990, p.23).

Disney's adversarial stance did not improve relations between the company and the people of Central Florida. Orange County attorney Harry Stewart (cited in Kenney 1988, p.17),
summed up changing public perception of Disney's role from "the benign benefactor that was going to do wonderful things" to "a sovereign nation state of their own." Most irksome was that Disney still "believe that they support the community;" Commissioner Chapin (cited in Fiore 1990a, p.A23) added that they still "have this mindset that they are wonderful. They think we are ingrates, biting the hand that feeds us."

Disney, taking the role of the wounded party, fought back: "it's just sheer jealousy," reasoned Disney executive Ray Maxwell (cited in Holleran 1990, p.30). "But what have we done wrong?" cried the president of Walt Disney Attractions (the theme park branch) Dick Nunis (cited in Painton 1991, p.59). "When we came, this was a community that was dying because young people were leaving. Today, you name an industry and now it exists in Central Florida."

What, indeed, did Disney do wrong? For one, some Central Florida residents were not sure that they "want[ed] to be on the map" (anonymous resident, cited in Holleran 1990, p.30). Others, such as Commissioner Donegan (cited in Fiore 1990a, p.A22), declared that they would prefer to not share their spot on the map with an entity that simply "isn't American." Donegan continued, pinpointing exactly why he thought Disney guilty of "un-American" activities: "they are a quasi-city not required to follow any growth management. They can build whatever they please on that property and there isn't a thing we can do about it."
Critics who suggest that Disney made a mockery of the democratic process could amass abundant empirical evidence to support their claims. At the heart of the evidence was the fact that, as a local resident (cited in Holleran 1990, p.29) put it, in a climate of heightened concern over coordinating state, regional, and local growth management, "nobody really knows what Disney is thinking"\textsuperscript{15}. Disney repeatedly refused to disclose their own comprehensive development plans. Both Orange and Osceola Counties, frustrated by their inability to second-guess Disney's future moves, separately threatened to challenge the legality of the Reedy Creek Improvement District's political autonomy. In both cases, Disney responded by negotiating deals that put money and other concessions in the Counties' pockets, yet ensured that Disney's autonomy remained intact. In Orange County, in fact, not only did Disney and the Reedy Creek Improvement District preserve their autonomy, but by waving $13.4 million dollars in front of the Commissioners (the same $13.4 million that went toward road improvements), Disney encouraged the County to sign the 1989 "Inter-Local Agreement," essentially a promise to not sue the company for the next seven years. Within a few months of the "Inter-Local Agreement," however, Disney announced yet another round of expansion and sparked

\textsuperscript{15}The Florida State Legislature passed in 1985 a growth management act designed to ensure that local growth was consistent with regional and state planning.
complaints that Orange County had been duped. The area was
now faced with seven new hotels, twenty-nine new attractions,
an estimated 19,000 new jobs, a new regional shopping center,
and quite possibly a new city of 20,000 -- and, because of the
"Inter-Local Agreement," they had no legal channels through
which to fight back (Fogelsong 1990, pp.25-27; Painton 1991,
p.59).

Disney's actions, meanwhile, continued to irk local
residents. In 1990, Disney became embroiled in a veritable
soap opera over tax-exempt bonds. Disney, in spite of earlier
proclaiming that "the use of government bonds for building any
function that could be built privately is repugnant to us,"
applied for and was granted over $100 million dollars in
tax-exempt bonds (Holleran 1990, p.26). What enraged the
populace was that Disney, under the auspices of the Reedy
Creek Improvement District, gained access to this money in
direct competition with other Florida counties, including
Orange County. In essence, money that could have been used to
finance low-income housing in Orange County instead went
toward upgrading the Walt Disney World sewer system (Painton
1991, p.59). The Orlando Sentinel called Disney "the grinch
that stole affordable housing," and the Florida State
Legislature made Disney promise that it would not apply for
Disney once again publicly bemoaned what they considered
unprovoked antagonism: Reedy Creek comptroller Ray Maxwell

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reassured the public that "it disturbs me that people are expressing concern. All we did was follow guidelines set up by state law and apply for bonding authority. There's no more public purpose than sewage treatment" (Maxwell, cited in Holleran 1990, p.26).

Disney's track record with the natural environment soon rivalled their track record with the social environment. Environmentalists, who as we have seen had been rather testy from Walt Disney World's ground-breaking days, acquired more ammunition as Disney grew. As press release upon press release announced planned expansions for the late 1980s and 1990s, environmental accusations began to fly. In 1989, it was revealed that overzealous Disney employees, in an attempt to dissuade visiting vultures, beat them to death. While the employees' actions became more understandable when it was further disclosed that the vultures were not simply at Walt Disney World to take in the sights, but rather were pecking out the eyes of live tortoises on Discovery Island, the State of Florida wasted no time in charging Disney with sixteen counts of animal cruelty. The charges were later dropped when Disney agreed to donate $95,000 to local conservation groups (Holleran 1990, p.25; Painton 1991, p.59).

No sooner had the vulture imbroglio died down than Disney found itself charged -- for the second time in two years -- with sewage violations and improper storage of toxic waste. What had been a State complaint now rose to a federal level:

Indeed, with each new action, Disney now seems to stir up a hornet's nest of environmentalists. Its plans for "Celebration," for instance, have attracted the attention of several groups, including the Southern Florida Management District and the Audubon Society. At issue now is the location of the new project, which appears to be slated for wetlands that Disney originally promised to leave untouched. Jim Show of the Southern Florida Management District articulates a familiar worry: Disney refuses to share the specifics of their plans, and apparently feels no need to justify their reason for altering the natural ecosystem (Bergsman 1990, p.79). The Audubon Society further notes that no inventory yet exists of the plants and animals in the Reedy Creek Improvement District, despite attempts by Orange County officials to legislate the requirement of such a survey (Fogelsong 1990, p.26; Bergsman 1990, p.79).

"Here comes Disney, there goes the neighborhood."16

In the above section, I have demonstrated at length the conflicts that have arisen between Central Florida and the Walt Disney Company. To some degree, the repercussions of

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Walt Disney World pertain to Central Florida's unique social, cultural, political, and economic milieux; they should not be considered automatically applicable to every locale that Disney touches. Yet Central Florida still imparts fundamental lessons in "Disneyitis." As the most fully developed example of Disney's impact in North America, Central Florida instructs as a model of the shape of things to come. Moving, now, to California and the two Disney projects recently under development there, we can see the commonalities of Disney urban planning already emerging in the landscape.

Disney initially promised to build an extensive urban development highlighting leisure and retail activities in either Anaheim or Long Beach. The Company already owned available land in both cities; Disney CEO Michael Eisner made it clear that the final decision depended upon "which community wants us more" (Eisner, cited in Woodyard 1990, p.D2). Thus Disney, perhaps stung by their recent antagonistic relations with Central Florida, cleverly sparked a bidding war between the two California cities. As Anaheim and Long Beach "compete[d] for attention the way Cinderella's stepsisters went after the prince," Disney would be assured of a 'winner' who was both willing to dedicate large sums of

17Disney owned eighty-three acres of unused land contiguous to Disneyland (Kahrl 1989, p.6), and in 198?, through an involved property acquisition that put the Disneyland hotel at last in Disney hands, also acquired land in Long Beach that included the tourist attractions Queen Mary and Spruce Goose (refs.)
civic money toward infrastructural improvements, and who would have the least number of vocal critics (Fiore 1990a, p.A1,A23).

Both cities had strong pro-Disney contingencies willing to spend millions of dollars and risk social changes of enormous proportion. Had Disney gone to Long Beach, for example, they would have become the area's second largest employer, behind aerospace giant McDonald-Douglas (Fiore 1990C, p.B1). Long Beach officials urged their city to "bend over backwards" to assist them in their efforts to win Disney (Fiore 1990a, p.A22). Long Beach Councilmember Les Robbins (cited in Fiore 1990a, p.A23) pledged, on behalf of council, to "pursue Disney and leave no rock unturned," adding that "when you're talking Disney, you're talking Rolls Royce." Anaheim officials also spoke glowingly of Disney: they described their relationship with the company as "only positive," and some of the more adventurous vowed to do "almost anything" to capture Disney's affections (Fiore 1990a, p.A22).

It would be premature, however, to assume that Disney's presence in either of these cities was unproblematic. Officials in both cities have said that, having learned from Florida's mistakes, they are not naive about the realities of working with Disney (Fiore 1990a, p.A23). Disney can be assured, as well, some degree of resistance from local
residents. We now look more closely at the resistance that brewed in each city.

Disney met with the most well-rounded resistance in Long Beach. Neither city officials nor citizens were uniformly pleased with Disney's announced plans. Debate revolved around several of the same issues that surfaced in Florida: traffic problems, environmental abuse, and social inequity.

The road network in particular was a bone of contention. Noted Stanley Green, neighborhood leader and traffic engineer, Disney's plans for people-moving would undoubtedly be far more innovative than their plans for car-moving; Green foresaw only an even bigger traffic mess than before (Fiore 1990b, p.B8). Long Beach Mayor Ernie Kell similarly had many questions about potential traffic problems that were not answered satisfactorily by Disney: What about the Long Beach Freeway and cross-town traffic, he asked (Fiore 1990C, p.B8). Other residents added their own comments. What about the air quality associated with increased traffic? And what exactly are we to do with these extra fifteen million tourists a year (Fiore 1990b, p.B8)?

Underlying most critical commentary was a fundamental distrust of anything Disney says or does. When Disney released a report predicting an economic bonanza for Long Beach, the general response was lukewarm, with city officials disinclined to believe the numbers put before them. Community Development Director Susan Shick, for example, questioned
Disney's assessment of its impact on the job market, demanding to know the economic realities behind Disney's employment promises (Fiore 1990C, p.B1). Mayor Kell made it clear that, while he generally favoured Disney's plans, he would not do so at his city's expense: "if we don't work out the problems, I won't support [the plans]. We don't want to be gobbled up by the giant" (Kell, cited in Fiore 1990b, p.B8).

Long Beach, of course, lost out to Anaheim in their bid to attract Disney. Though the Anaheim project presented Disney with similar design issues, budget projections and attendance levels, Anaheim offered one significantly different characteristic. There appeared to be no opposition on the part of city officials. Officials insisted they were to a person "overjoyed" at the prospect that Disney might expand in their city (Woodyard 1990, p.D2). The Los Angeles Times, for its part, on various occasions informed readers that in Anaheim there is "no [Disney] image-bashing here," and that there has been "not a word of opposition" in the city (Fiore 1990a, p.A23; Fiore 1990b, p.B8).

Ironically, at the time the decision was made to expand in Anaheim, Disney's plans for development in Long Beach were far more thoroughly worked out. Preliminary environmental reviews had been initiated, further implying that Disney favoured the Long Beach project. Yet Anaheim, whose city officials vowed to do "almost anything" for Disney, successfully negotiated the deal. If Disney based its final
decision on an absence of critical resistance, as they seem to have done, then they may be in for a surprise. Anaheim residents have proven singularly reticent to embrace Disney development in the past, and have provided formidable opposition against city officials wishing to cooperate with Disney.

The fate of a 1987 major Anaheim redevelopment plan, drawn up by the City of Anaheim with the strong support of the Disney Company, can illustrate the role the community has played in fighting off Disney. The $2.6 billion, thirty-five year redevelopment proposal was intended to improve the area within which Disneyland was located, an area of "increasing physical deterioration, crime, and inadequate public improvements," as Disney Development Company president Peter Rummel (cited in White 1987, p.42) chided. This redevelopment would then set the stage for future Disney expansion on eighty-three acres of land Disney owned but was not currently using. Total redevelopment was expected to increase Anaheim's annual visitors from twelve to twenty million, double the traffic load, and displace 7,000 residents (White 1987, p.42; Kahrl 1989, p.6).

Residents of Anaheim were less than enthusiastic about the redevelopment plans (Kahrl 1989). As the Los Angeles Times intermittently carried "breathless reports" of rumoured Disney propositions, residents became downright hostile. Ripples of protest grew into organized resistance; community
meetings were held around Anaheim where Disney was "denounced as just another grasping corporation" (Kahrl 1989, p.6). This grass-roots resistance proved effective: the redevelopment plan was dropped, and Disney was dissuaded, at least temporarily, from considering expansion in Anaheim (Kahrl 1989, p.6). Now that Disney is back, it remains to be seen if, in spite of the best efforts of Anaheim officials, the city's residents will again scare Disney away.

Conclusion.

We have seen throughout this chapter how as the Disney model becomes translated into the landscape, it is contested on many grounds. Academics and architects have objected in principle to Disney's perceived inhumane treatment of technological and social themes. Affected communities have reacted more directly to the traffic jams, skyrocketing rents, slick political deals, shrinking wetlands, dead vultures, and other unpleasant occurrences associated with Disney as a negative externality. What we have not observed, however, is a community reject the Disney model on the basis of the underlying ideals of urban life it purports to offer, and turn instead to the freedom, diversity, and hint of chaos embedded in the Coney Island model. Such an action, as I shall demonstrate in the case study of the Seattle Center, allows us to observe the complexities of cultural debate played out to its full dimensions, drawing upon elements of both the Coney
Island and Disney models, articulated in a concrete landscape, animated by actual people.
CHAPTER FIVE
SEATTLE CENTER CASE STUDY

Recall, again, the Fun Forest. It is an autumn Sunday, a slow day during what for this industry is the off-season. It is late afternoon, there is a bite to the wind, and few visitors are to be seen. Two years have passed since our first visit. The site remains largely the same: the myriad minor changes that have been made do not seriously jeopardize the Fun Forest’s familiar personality.

We enter the amusement park along a broad asphalt pathway leading through a gently sloping grassy knoll at the foot of the Space Needle. This entrance is entirely new: two years prior, the much-maligned "Building 50," veteran of the World’s Fair, stood on this site. When the building was still standing, virtually its entire history could be read from its facade, beginning with shadowy reminders of its majestic days as the Commerce, Fashion, and Interiors Pavilion, its later incarnations as the Fun Circus, then the Washington State Fire Service Historical Museum, the Air Museum, and finally, as a storage and maintenance facility for the Fun Forest. Today, its absence is equally symbolic: the Space Needle is assured garden-like tranquility at its feet.

As we wander through the kiddie ride section, we see that although individual rides have been moved or replaced, the overall atmosphere is the same. The traditional Ferris Wheel may now be gone, replaced by the more space-age Star Chaser, but the traditional Roller Coaster remains, still seemingly abandoned in a bed of overgrown weeds (Figure 20). Incongruity, as before, is the unifying theme: the Star Chaser’s space-ships sit next to Puffin Dumbo’s flying elephants, which are next to miniature four-wheel drive vehicles, which themselves back up against antique automobiles (Figure 21).

There are more employees than visitors on the grounds today. The disaffected youth hired at summer’s height have left, going back to school or perhaps, one wonders, to juvenile detention centres. Ride attendants who look seasoned and grizzled have taken their place. They are predominantly male and older than their summertime counterparts. General
20. The Fun Forest's Rainbow Chaser Coaster
21. The Fun Forest's Four Wheel Drive Kiddie Ride
surliness borders on downright harassment: one can be heard calling sarcastically to another as he closes up his ride for the night "aw, did all your kiddies go night night?"

We take refuge from Kiddieland in the Center House, the fast food/communal area that serves not just the Fun Forest but the entire Seattle Center. It is, significantly, heated; people from all parts of the site are congregating here. Here we see the diversity that Seattle Center both actively and indirectly encourages. The food options run the gamut of ethnic and thematic choices, and individual neon signs advertise each vendor. Each meal, however, ends up being suspiciously similar to all the other possible meals: they all consist of microwaved, carbohydrate-rich, overly greasy things served on plastic plates. But now a cappuccino and a warm cinnamon bun are welcome, and without question they will be superior to the hot dog and chips available in the Fun Forest itself.

Standing in line allows time to listen idly to other conversations: in front of us is an older couple, tourists from Australia who ponder whether they should head north to Vancouver the following day. Behind us are local Seattleites who have just been to visit a friend who works at Seattle Center. The current background music is the Sex Pistols.

Night has fallen. Leaving the Center House, we find that the Fun Forest, in our absence, has been illuminated, transformed. The effect is amazing. Through the screen of trees, we see the rides glittering with light and colour. Those rides still operating literally twinkle as the lights disappear and reappear behind the trees. Was this what Coney Island looked like? Intrigued, we walk quickly back into the Fun Forest.

We come to an abrupt stop, beginning to sense that it is all an absurd parody. On closer inspection, random lights are missing or burnt out. The pathways are just as dingy, but darker. Something seems wrong. Gradually, we realize what is missing: there are no people here. No one is out strolling through the grounds. Each ride has only one or two seats occupied. The technological spectacle seems to be for the benefit of the machines themselves.
We leave the Fun Forest through an older and far less bucolic entrance, at the other side of the Space Needle. At the gate sit three natives, a women and two men. They appear to have with them all their belongings. The woman asks first for a generic donation for the homeless, and then drives home the point by adding "for we're homeless too, you know."

I have opened this chapter, and with it the second part of the thesis, with images of the Fun Forest in order to reinforce a central theoretical point. Sites of popular culture such as amusement and theme parks ultimately must be examined at ground level. Here, the theoretical processes of popular culture and the symbolic content of amusement park models become concretely expressed in the landscape, negotiated by individual people working within the constraints of specific structures. The methodological framework I develop in previous chapters must now be fleshed in with primary research carried out at ground level, and the Coney Island and Disney models of amusement space traced through their everyday articulations. Hence, I now turn to an examination of a specific place in order to illuminate the fine grain of detail necessary to fully understand the dynamics of popular culture and the creation and recreation of images of urbanity: the individual decisions made, the constraints felt, the opinions offered, the futures envisioned, the peculiarities encountered. That place is Seattle Center, and the object of our investigation, the Fun Forest amusement park.
Seattle Center is an especially rich candidate for a case study, for it offers a unique opportunity to see many of the themes I have discussed in the abstract come to life in a single landscape. Seattle Center, a seventy-four acre urban park with roots as a World's Fair site, currently supports a number of competing forms of entertainment: opera, ballet, museums, arts and crafts, professional sports, and an amusement park all manage to co-exist at Seattle Center (Figure 22).

Throughout its history, Seattle Center has displayed a tension between Disney-like and Coney Island-like elements. On the one hand, its planners have often attempted to model Seattle Center as a Disney-esque entity, frequently by seeking the direct involvement of the Walt Disney Company. On the other hand, Seattle Center in many ways defies the exigencies of the Disney model and embraces instead hints of Coney Island.

In all cases, the Fun Forest emerges as a central player. As an amusement park, it is both symbolically and literally the epicentre of debate. Here, the issues surrounding the different visions of amusement, leisure space, and urbanity are most clearly articulated. And here, within the amusement park, it becomes clear that what is at stake is not simply the shape of our amusement parks, but, ultimately, also the shape of our cities.
In this section of the thesis, I will trace the Fun Forest's evolution and its relationship to the surrounding Seattle Center environment. The aim is to track the tension between the Coney Island and Disney amusement models and, teasing out the utopian elements, extrapolate to urban development in general.

My approach weds the chronological and the thematic. First, the chapters are outlined so as to flow in chronological fashion. We will be dealing with the temporal evolution of a landscape where present conditions can only be understood in relation to past events. The discussion will be divided into three general parts. The remainder of this chapter covers the 1962 World's Fair and the creation of the site's form and personality (1955 to 1962). In Chapter Six, I discuss the transformation and maintenance of the site as a permanent fixture (1962 to 1980s). Chapter Seven charts the growing dissatisfaction with the current state of the site and the advent of the most recent Disney-as-saviour era (1980s to present).

The chronological approach serves to reinforce the cyclic patterns that underscore Seattle Center's history. Many of the general themes that define the tenor of Seattle Center in general and the Fun Forest in particular are significant not simply for their content but also because they recur in virtually all stages of Seattle Center's evolution. These recurring themes themselves create an internal organization to
the general chronology, and thus also suggest a distinct structure within each chapter. In each stage, we will see the following three interrelated themes: (1) the Fun Forest as both physically and symbolically a Coney Island-like entity surrounded on all sides by more Disney-like landscapes; (2) the current form and content of the Fun Forest as being the result of continually ineffective struggles to temper its Coney Island elements with Disney-inspired 'improvements;' (3) the lines increasingly blurring between Disney as amusement planner and Disney as urban planner. Significantly, in studying Seattle Center, it becomes apparent that what Disney offers in each capacity does not necessarily produce the same end result.

Century 21: Control and Carnival.

The aim of the Century 21 Exposition is. . . to preview the ways man [sic] will work and play and live in the year 2000.

In 1962, Seattle joined an elite group of North American and European cities by virtue of the fact that it, like cities such as London, Paris, and New York before it,

1"General Information" (1960, p.1).
held an officially-sanctioned World's Fair\(^2\). Unlike their predecessors, however, the fair planners in Seattle had no intentions of seeing their "spectacular gestures . . . disappear into an abrupt oblivion" (Greenhalgh 1988, p.1). The Century 21 Exposition, as the Seattle fair was called officially, would leave as its legacy the infrastructure of a new Seattle. Nearly three-quarters of the seventy-four acre site would be left intact to offer to the city, in the words of fair planners, "an animated jewel mined from the intellect and creativity of scientists, artists, and men of vision" (Official Souvenir Program 1962, p.4). Not only would the site serve as a new cultural heart for Seattle, but, it was hoped, its permanence would rejuvenate what was feared to be a decaying urban area.

From its inception Seattle Center sought to redefine urbaniy through leisure. One method of doing so, of course, is to physically rearrange the elements of the city. The World's Fair provided a new opera house, coliseum, convention halls, museum buildings, and amusement park. Century 21's landscaped gardens became Seattle's premier downtown green

\(^2\)The Seattle World's Fair was the first American Fair in twenty-three years to be officially sanctioned by the International Bureau of Expositions. Morgan (1963) provides a detailed account of the Seattle Fair. McCullough's (1977) more general treatment of World's Fairs devotes a chapter to Century 21. Other useful references on World's Fairs, though they do not cover the Seattle Fair, include Greenhalgh (1988), Harrison (1980), and Rydell (1984). See also the journal World's Fair.
space. The surrounding urban 'blight' was removed -- literally. Yet a World's Fair, like all landscapes of leisure, operates on two levels. Not only does it contribute as an urban element itself to the redefinition of the city, but within its gates it provides a forum for more fanciful redefinition. Within it gates, the utopian impulse may flourish in its dream-like setting.

When fair planners set out to envision the ways people would "work and play and live in the year 2000," they instigated utopian processes far more complex than they presumably had intended. For, as Benjamin (1986, p.157) reminds us, utopia is "dialectics seen at a standstill" -- the truly utopian confronts the conflicts inherent in our society head-on. The evolution of Century 21, and beyond that, of Seattle Center, is fraught with competing definitions and conflicting hopes and dreams. Beneath the arguments over ideal forms of entertainment we find more fundamental disagreements over ideal cultural, social, and urban settings. And like other landscapes of leisure, at Seattle Center we find these arguments in their purest form in the areas most concretely devoted to amusement: Century 21's midway, known as the "Gayway," and later Seattle Center's Fun Forest.

With this chapter, I commence our examination of the ways in which these utopian strands of popular culture are woven into actual landscapes by focussing on Seattle Center's beginnings as the site of the Century 21 Exposition. I am
interested in the Fair's history from the perspective of the women and men who planned, built, and worked at the Fair, and the visitors who subsequently came to see the dream city that these planners built. I address several questions in order to understand the cultural processes that underlie Century 21: What was built, when, and by whom? What were the planners' motivations and inspirations? Within what decision-making environment did the planners work? Within what social and historical contexts did the site emerge? What general images of urbanity were associated with the various Fair elements? The answers to such questions must provide not just a visual sketch of the physical construction of the site, but also a deeper understanding of the social construction of landscape.

The vast complexity of activity that characterized Century 21 will be interpreted in terms of the dichotomy of Coney Island and Disneysque amusement space. Century 21 was to be in its entirety a Disney-esque landscape, but the amusement zone slipped through Disney fingers and instead became a segregated fragment of Coney Island-like thrills. Ultimately, the Disney-Coney Island tensions at Century 21 speak to Disney's increasing role as an urban planner.

Control: A World's Fair in the Disney Image.

The physical construction of Century 21's site involved many players operating at different scales, at different
stages, and with different objectives. Downtown business interests, local arts activists, civic leaders, state and federal politicians, visiting dignitaries, local architects, construction workers, concessionaires, and fairgoers themselves contributed in some way to the Fair’s creation. In this section, I will introduce the general contours of this social construction in order to set up more detailed discussion of the Gayway in later sections. To this end, I first discuss broadly the symbolic messages the Fair was to purvey and, second, the physical impact that various players hoped the Fair would have on Seattle. I then elaborate how through attempts to achieve these aims the idea of leisure became inextricably tied to the name Disney, a relationship that in turn suggested new urban images.

"A World’s Fair of Science"

Though actual World’s Fair planning in Seattle dates back to 1955, when in the absence of a site, a theme, funding, or official sanction the rather optimistically named "World’s Fair Commission" was created, our real story begins in 1958. In that year, the work and planning accomplished by early Fair boosters began to pay off: the crucial National Science Planning Board was created to bring to life the Space Age themes, a site architect was appointed, the United States

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3Initial Fair planners were primarily a group of local businesspeople interested in the economic benefits a World’s Fair could offer (Findlay 1989, Morgan 1963).
government officially committed its support, and, significantly, the first talks were held with the Disney Company.

It appeared certain that Seattle would indeed hold a Fair, and not merely a World's Fair, but as announced in an early Report to the Legislature, a "World's Fair of Science" ("World's Fair of Science," 1958, p.1). "The key to Century 21's exhibit program," stated contemporary promotional material, "is the theme 'Man in the Space Age'" ("Century 21 Exposition Informational Prospectus," n.d., p.3). Fair planners emphasized that their Fair would be different from previous World's Fairs because they were "not attempting to tell a universal story of man's endeavors . . . or relate present and future progress to the past" ("Century 21 Exposition Informational Prospectus," n.d., p.5). Rather, they saw themselves, as they saw "Man" in general, as "stand[ing] on a new frontier. His rockets are making paths he soon will follow" ("Century 21 Exposition General Information," n.d., p.1). Century 21 would, too, follow those rocket paths and blast into this new Space Age.

Fair planners hoped Century 21's foray into the Space Age would meet four objectives: (1) the promotion of international cooperation; (2) the demonstration of the unity of all sciences, social and natural; (3) the clarification of the role of science in human affairs; and (4) the awakening of interest in science amongst young people ("World's Fair of
Science," 1958, pp.1-2). The National Science Planning Board, "composed of twenty of the nation’s top scientists," convened several months later and agreed to these basic policies, adding that they should seek "maximum assistance from industry . . . [there] should be no curtain between industry and science" ("Century 21 Exposition Informational Prospectus," n.d., p.3; "First Meeting of the National Science Planning Board," 1958, p.1).

The various planners involved by late 1958 -- site architect Paul Thiry and his staff, the twenty "top scientists," and local business interests who spearheaded the Fair -- set out to shape the physical site to embody their objectives. A final site was pinned down out of several possibilities. Century 21 would be situated approximately one mile north-west of the central business district, taking advantage of nearly fifty acres and several existing civic buildings already owned by the City of Seattle (Figure 23). An additional twenty-five acres of adjacent land known as the Warren Neighbourhood would be acquired by the City to complete the site (Findlay 1989, Morgan 1963, pp.67-68, Lynes 1962, p.21).

Century 21’s seventy-four acres would be divided into five "worlds:" The World of Science, the World of Century 21, the World of Commerce and Industry, the World of Art, and the World of Entertainment (Figure 24). The World of Science, not surprisingly, would be "the 'jewel box' of the Exposition and
23. **Seattle-World's Fair Site and Environs**
24. The Five Worlds of Century 21

RAND McNALLY OFFICIAL MAP OF
THE SEATTLE WORLD'S FAIR.

- World of Century 21
- World of Science
- World of International Commerce and Industry
- Gayway 21 and Show Street
- World of Art
- World of Entertainment
- Feed Circus
- World of Domestic Commerce and Industry
- Monorail Terminal and Entry Gates
- Boulevards of the World
- Service Buildings and Restroom Facilities
[was] intended to make the greatest impression on visitors" ("Century 21 Exposition Development Plan," n.d., p.2). The Worlds of Century 21 and Commerce and Industry, furthermore, were envisioned as informal adjuncts to the World of Science, showing various aspects of science and technology applied to everyday life. The World of Art, which would present a cultured selection of fine arts and theatre, was introduced almost apologetically, as Fair planners noted that at Century 21 "advances in science . . . hold the spotlight" ("Century 21 Exposition General Information," n.d., p.3). If the World of Art was treated apologetically in promotional literature, the fifth and final world fared even worse. The World of Entertainment consistently was listed last in promotional material and was given the least treatment. And in this World, in amongst parades, sports, and spectacular events, and tucked away into a corner of the Fair site, would be the Gayway, Century 21's midway.

The Social Construction of the Century 21 Landscape

As the World's Fair physical site was being sketched out on paper, the Fair's richly complicated social landscape was also being constructed. The triumphant theme of "Man's" progress into the twenty-first century was not meant to be simply metaphorical. Fair planners hoped that the economic, cultural, and urban improvements that the Fair promised could transform the symbolic themes into tangible realities within the surrounding urban fabric, though the various parties
involved each had their own goals and desired results. The United States government, first, was eager to lend its support and, more importantly, its money to a cause that could bolster American scientific and technological progress in the Cold War era. The Russians may have had Sputnik, but now the United States would have Century 21 and a uniquely American way of doing science. As President Eisenhower himself said on Century 21's behalf, "we must constantly state and demonstrate our belief that increased scientific knowledge must be used for the benefit of man" ("Century 21 Exposition General Information," n.d., p.1).

Seattle businesspeople saw potential economic benefits for their city, hoping that Century 21 would stimulate business and call attention to the area (Morgan 1963, Findlay 1989). Arts activists envisioned a cultured centre unlike any Seattle had before, celebrating the arts, open space, and the "excitement of silence," and took it as a positive sign that Seattle was becoming more supportive of the arts (Seattle Times, 10 June 1962, p.41).

Civic leaders hoped that Century 21 would help rejuvenate downtown. Ewen C. Dingwall, General Manager of the World's Fair, recalled some thirty years later that there was "some blight" in the immediate area, referring to the ill-fated Warren neighborhood. Dingwall specifically cited a growing crime rate and a declining family population, thus illustrating some of the criteria by which civic leaders
judged urban "blight". It was hoped, he added, that the Fair would help lure the central business district toward the Denny Regrade, the similarly worrisome area between the Warren neighborhood and downtown (Figure 27). Century 21, therefore, was meant to strengthen both downtown and peripheral "blighted" areas and, Findlay (1989) further argues, it was to inspire growth fashioned in a suburban image. Century 21, in an era of rampant suburbanization, would at once focus attention back onto downtown by providing traditional urban amenities, yet reshape downtown into a more suburban entity by injecting the suburban convenience of ample pedestrian space, green space, parking, and easy freeway access.

Finally, fairgoers themselves entered into the social construction of Century 21, and they had a decidedly different stake in the matter. As Seattle residents or visitors, they may also have supported any perceived positive externalities

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4Other Fair observers concurred with Dingwall's view: Harper's Magazine described the Warren neighborhood as "what is today called 'blighted area' -- slum dwellings, small stores, warehouses, and garages" (Lynes 1962, p.21); Architectural Forum likewise referred to the area as "city jumble" better screened from view, and Morgan (1963, p.68) called it a "transition zone . . . that could stand change." However, more recent analyses protest that the Warren neighborhood "certainly was no slum" (Seattle Times, April 20, 1982, p.C1). The nearly 200 houses and apartment buildings that were condemned, the Seattle Times continued, may have been "going to seed," but the area was basically a quiet neighborhood beginning to feel the pressure of businesses and small industrial plants pushing their way in, attracted by favourable zoning. Findlay (1989) points out that while the area was hardly a slum, when compared to suburban residential neighborhoods it had a higher crime rate, higher unemployment, fewer owner-occupied homes, more aged and unattractive housing, more elderly residents, lower average incomes, and fewer families and school-age children.
the Fair would bring. But while at the Fair, for them the site took on different meaning. Whatever else the site would ultimately achieve, between April and October 1962 Century 21 had to entertain. As Greenhalgh (1988, p.42) argues, the popular success of World’s Fairs since the late nineteenth century stemmed from their ability to entwine education and enlightenment with entertainment. Fair planners, from downtown businesspeople to top scientists to concessionaires, all understood this; entertainment was perhaps the only common goal amongst all Fair planners. And thus all the other objectives -- scientific achievement, economic windfall, cultural advancement, urban renewal -- became entangled with entertainment. Not surprisingly, the model most often looked toward was that popularized by Walt Disney.

Looking Toward Disney

That Disney might provide the most profound and long-lasting advice, suitable for many objectives, was recognized early in the planning process. One of the first common design themes to emerge, surfacing simultaneously amongst different planning contingencies, was the Disney model. Significantly, the Disney name repeatedly symbolized not just entertainment but the entertaining presentation of 'serious' issues. Before the five "Worlds" were finalized, planners were contemplating the possibility of attracting Walt Disney to the Fair to help them articulate their messages. One scenario envisioned placing a "World of Industry" in the
existing Armories building and creating a giant animated model of the Columbia River. Planners speculated that the exterior face of the building could be transformed into a solid sheet of falling water, and the interior, "if some arrangement could be worked out between the Ford Motor Company and Walt Disney," could provide the illusion of a ride down the river ("Century 21 Exposition Development Plan," n.d., p.3).

The National Science Planning Board was also interested in enlisting Disney's help. Board member Donald H. Menzel, Director of the Harvard Observatory, proposed that their exhibit be aimed at "the average man" and cited as a successful example the simulated trip to the moon "already at Disneyland." "We must pay more attention to entertainment and interest rather than to education or publicity in a given field of science," he reasoned ("Suggestions for Exhibits at the Seattle Exposition," n.d., p.1). Thus, the "top twenty scientists," like the businessmen dreaming up the World of Industry, foresaw the role Disney could play in animating the site and strengthening the force of the Fair's messages.

The most compelling threads of evidence that tie Century 21 to the Disney motif, however, come from abundant direct contact with the Disney organization itself. Even before the National Science Planning Board met for the first time to begin its task of crystallizing the Fair's central theme, Fair planners visited the Disney Studios in Burbank. This first meeting, occurring in early May 1958, was deceptively simple.
Otto Brandt, Century 21 Vice President, reported to then-Fair President Edward Carlson that he "told them that we were anxious to meet with them to explore the possibility of Disney interest in our project. Roy [Disney] was very receptive and will be glad to meet" (Brandt to Carlson, 8 May 1958). The composition of the meeting suggests that although no concrete details were raised at that stage, Brandt and the Century 21 planners he represented were clearly interested in more than advice on where to place the Ferris Wheel. Roy Disney and the two other Disney people present, Director of Promotions and Exhibits Card Walker and Executive Vice President of Administration and "friend" of Otto Brandt Donn Tatum, provided an excellent resource for information about Disney business acumen and management techniques; they were not particularly well known for their creative design talents (Taylor 1987, p.12). In this meeting, Donn Tatum was designated Century 21's Disney contact, and thus began two years of close negotiations between the two organizations, and, in a wider context, an alliance that would haunt the site for decades to come.

5Walt Disney's older brother Roy was president of Walt Disney Productions, as the Disney Company was then called; he "provided the business know-how" (Grover 1991, p.6). Roy and Walt together formed the earliest incarnation of the enterprise, the 1923 Disney Brothers Studios. By 1929, the outfit had been renamed Walt Disney Productions and Roy was clearly relegated to second in command (Grover 1991, pp.6-7; Taylor 1987, pp.6-12).
The Disney organization, and Disneyland in particular, appealed to Century 21 planners on various levels. Fair Controller Russell T. Mowry, after a visit to Disneyland, reported back that he was "very much interested in everything that was going on in Disneyland" (Mowry to Tryon, 19 January 1959). Disneyland’s "cleanliness, orderly arrangement of the various concessions and exhibits, and . . . very courteous groups of employees" were only a few of the aspects of "everything" that caught Mowry’s eye (Mowry to Tatum, Jan 19, 1959). Also interesting to Mowry was that "everything worked so smoothly and orderly;" significantly, in his lengthy in-house memo distributed amongst fellow planners, he dwelled on the management techniques that underlay Disneyland’s general overall appearance and not on that "remarkable" appearance itself (Mowry to Tryon, Jan. 19, 1959). In this memo, Mowry paid strict attention to all manner of Disney detail, including land ownership, concessionary agreements, the handling of on-site money, ticket arrangements, turnstile readings, attendance figures, admission charges, parking facilities, insurance policies, fire and security arrangements, liquor licensing, and surveillance systems "for detecting any irregular practices" amongst staff (Mowry 1959). In short, Mowry sketched in for his colleagues suggested

"Though Mowry’s words were directed toward Disneyland’s Tryon and Tatum, and hence may be laced with flattery, I emphasize here the specific elements he chose to praise.

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methods that Century 21 could adopt to construct a temporary city that would run as "smoothly and orderly" as Disneyland.

There is little evidence to indicate that Fair planners ever seriously questioned the benefits such an approach might offer. Rather, proceeding as if all parties involved implicitly understood that Disney was the best route to follow, Fair planners over the next three years implemented as many of Disney's techniques as possible. Dingwall recalls that the Disney presence made an "immense contribution" to Century 21, particularly in the areas of management and operations (Dingwall interview 1986, p.1). The impact was assured not only by imitating Disney techniques but also by hiring Disney personnel. George Whitney, the "seventh person hired for Disneyland," Frederick Schumacher, who "helped organize Disneyland in 1954," Leo F. Wagman, who "was with Disneyland for five years," and Max Burland, another Disneyland veteran, all were appointed to senior Century 21 administrative positions (Century 21 News Releases 19 June 1959, 12 Sept. 1960, 2 Dec. 1960); Fair President Joseph Gandy, in spite of his valiant efforts and his plea to Walt Disney that "we realize that our request is unusual, but we are doing unusual things. No one has done more unusual things than you," apparently could not convince Disney to part temporarily with another Disneyland employee, Jack Sayers (Gandy to Disney, 16 June 1960). The four Disney personnel who aided in the construction of Century 21 applied "a good
deal of polish" to the handling of people, the movement of guests, and the selection and training of "young people" to work at the Fair (Dingwall interview 1986, p.1). To ensure that those "young people" lived up to their training, they would work under the watchful eye of the "Willmark System" as employed at Disneyland: any abnormalities would be reported immediately to management (Carter to Bergman, 5 Sept. 1962; Mowry 1959, p.2).

Century 21 planners also sought to utilize forecasting and evaluation techniques as scientific and watertight as Disney’s, going so far as to hire the same research outfit to carry out the necessary calculations. Economics Research Associates (ERA), contracted in September 1960 to study Century 21’s market penetration, program circulation, foot and traffic load, projected attendance, and other financial matters, attracted Fair planners on the strength of ERA’s Disney-related credentials, including Disneyland’s site location study, financial and operating planning, traffic control planning, use of peripheral property planning, and preliminary evaluations of theme park development in Florida (ERA 1960, p.3).

Though indirectly related to Disney, it is interesting to note that Century 21 planners also sought the help of local shopping centre designers John Graham and James B. Douglas. Graham designed the Space Needle, and Douglas "had many helpful suggestions on moving people" (Dingwall 1985, p.1).
Thus, through careful observation of Disney practices and the direct employment of key Disney personnel, Fair planners ensured that Century 21 would bear a distinct Disney mark. Significantly, although in the words of Disney veteran George Whitney Century 21 "should include fun all the way through the fairgrounds," "fun" was not foremost in planners' minds when they consulted with the entertainment giant (Century 21 News Release June 19, 1959). Rather, they sought advice for a smooth operation, a seamless city. By examining the underbelly of North America's most popular theme park, they came away with the blueprint of a new city.

This new image of urbanity was, following Findlay's (1989) argument, fundamentally suburban. It was a landscape that, like the suburbs, promised to minimize the disorder of the city and reinstate a sense of community and culture. Like its suburban counterparts the housing subdivision, the shopping mall, or the industrial park, Century 21 would present a series of controlled environments suited to specialized tastes and needs. The themes stressed and the methods utilized would reinforce the values and processes behind suburban growth. Technology, prosperity, leisure, and the 'future,' articulated as they would be on carefully planned and managed grounds, would replace, both symbolically and literally, the chaos of the old Warren neighborhood. Ultimately, the planners who looked toward Disney looked toward new ways to shape urban space.
Carnival: The Amusement Zone Slips through Disney Fingers.

Century 21, I have argued, envisioned a world made better through scientific advancement and sound planning. This better world had itself been bred in the most potent experimental urban laboratory of the latter twentieth century, Disneyland. Now, through the indirect influence and direct involvement of the Disney Company, this Disney utopia was being recreated in Seattle. However, like all utopian entities, Century 21 was characterized by contradiction: embodied within the Disney model was the implicit acknowledgment, and subsequent rejection, of other utopias in general, and of the Coney Island model in particular. Indeed, the utopian power of Century 21 and later Seattle Center comes not from the presence of a single model but from the tension between elements of both Disney and Coney Island models.

At Century 21, the Coney Island impulse sprang most purely from the amusement zone, in spite of attempts to Disneyify it. The midway, after much design consternation and many attempts to involve Walt Disney, in the end was built by seasoned carnival men. The finished product encouraged a quite different form of entertainment than that of the rest of the site. In this section, my focus shifts from the entire Fair to the Gayway as I describe the story of how the amusement zone was transformed from a Disney to a Coney Island entity. In doing so, I complete our investigation of the planning of the social landscape of Century 21; in the final
section I return to a Fair-wide scale to ask how the various Disney and Coney Island elements fell into place during the final, and most illuminating, moments of Century 21’s social construction -- the days of the Fair itself.

Bringing the "Great Family Attraction of the Nation" to Seattle

Century 21 planners apparently toyed briefly with the idea of creating a World’s Fair with absolutely no midway at all, a move that would have been truly a bold departure from conventional Fair wisdom (Greenhalgh 1988). Planners in the early stages suggested that "in lieu of any 'Gayway' operation, the area . . . be developed into attractions for youth and children," a place where "parents could 'park' their offspring while attending events of primarily adult interest" ("Century 21 Exposition Development Plan," n.d., p.4). However, they were soon advised against this by amusement park consultant Walter A. van Camp. In a report filed, coincidentally or not, on exactly the same day that Brandt informed Carlson that talks with Disney were well underway, van Camp counseled that "in a fair or exposition the amusement center is most valuable in providing the draw for the general public. To all intents and purposes, at night the amusement section is the fair" (van Camp 1958, p.1).

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The quoted reference to Disneyland was used by amusement park consultant Walter van Camp (1958, p.4), in a report commissioned by Century 21 planners.
Van Camp's "Amusement Survey" is instructive here, because in it he specified in great detail the types of amusement zones that would be most appropriate for family entertainment. "Showmen all over the United States," he began, "agreed that the old midway type operation, with its shills, barkers, and side show atmosphere has, as a result of the success of Disneyland, been replaced with a family-type amusement center." Since Disneyland's general pattern was being followed "by all current amusement centers," van Camp concluded, "that is the type I recommend for Seattle's proposed exhibition" (van Camp 1958, p.2). In addition to information concerning Disneyland's technical operation and management, van Camp included lengthy discussions of Disneyland's themed atmosphere. He specifically drew Century 21 planners' attention to Disney's innovative combination of architects, creative artists, and "practical showmen" all under his command (van Camp 1958, p.3). Their efforts, carried through from attractions to buildings to landscaping, resulted in a unified sense of place to which Seattle should also aspire. Van Camp (1958, p.8) even provided Fair planners with suggested appropriate regional themes, such as "Seafairland," to include Neptune's Castle, pirate ships, Davey Jones' Locker, and a children's kingdom; "Alaska-Yukon-Pacific," featuring a gold ship, Indian village, Eskimo igloos, dog sled races, and Canadian Mounties; and "Northwestland," celebrating the growth of local industry with
attractions based on Paul Bunyen, sea ports, log-rolling, and tree-topping.

Fair planners were also cautioned in rather graphic terms against the dangers of employing the Coney Island-type model of entertainment. In an amusement survey commissioned in 1959, amusement consultant Alfred Stern warned that "carnival concessionaires, for the most part, are a tasteless breed, eager to cut corners and dynamically opposed to the philosophy which [sic] motivates first-rate contemporary designers" (Stern 1959, p.4). Stern admonished Fair planners to remember that the midway would be "obviously on a civic project," thus ruling out the "games of chance, crooked wheels, gambling, or lewd side shows" carnival concessionaires would be wont to include. The midway "must reflect the high standards of design which [sic] are an essential part of the Century 21 concept and such design must be controlled by the Exposition" (Stern 1959, p.3). Stern then paraded the methods of Disneyland as a successful antidote to such chaos and vulgarity, where "the highest design level is maintained. Concessionaires [at Disneyland] are told what costumes or uniforms their help will wear, how a menu cover or a place mat will be styled, and every other such detail is controlled. This quality has paid off" (Stern 1959, p.4).

With such words echoing in their ears, Fair planners set off to create a mini-Disneyland in the amusement zone. However, unlike with the rest of Century 21, Fair planners
apparently had neither the expertise nor the interest to devote much attention to the midway. The resulting story of the Gayway's development becomes a history of indecision as much as decision, of oversight as much as vigilance. Fair planners in the end had little to do with the trajectory that led to the actual creation of Century 21's midway. Though the trajectory seemed to begin firmly in Fair planners' hands, its subsequent path moved, in essence, from the comforting heart of Disneyland straight into the uncharted wilds of Coney Island. The contours of this path form the basis for the rest of this section.

Fair planners started on a strong and brash note. In what appears to be the first recorded mention of the Gayway, and at a time when deliberations with Disney were only just beginning, planners announced in May 1958 that Century 21's "fun zone" was being planned "by the men who made Disneyland a household word for family fun" ("World Science Pan-Pacific Exposition" 1958, p.6). Other early references to the Gayway were more conservative, primarily because they contained less detail, though they too bore little resemblance to the site as actually built. What little was said reinforced one central image: the Gayway, like Disneyland, was to be themed.

In keeping with Century 21's central message, the theme would be 'the future.' Early promotional literature variously referred to the Gayway as a "Playground of Tomorrow," a "Midway of the Future" ("Century 21 Exposition Informational
Fair planners said that the Gayway would "embrace the carnival of the coming century, presenting the rides, amusements, shows, and games of the future" ("Century 21 Exposition General Information," n.d., p.3). Though it was as yet unclear who would be charged with the Gayway’s development, or what they would do with it, planners were forewarned by Alfred Stern (1959, p.4) that they should "hold firm and not compromise [the theme], for the first bit of compromise opens the door for other inevitable deterioration of concept." They were further reminded by both Stern and van Camp that for uncompromised family entertainment, Disney was the man to emulate.

Century 21 planners’ engagement with Disney can be traced back as early as May 1958, when Brandt held his initial meeting with Roy Disney; they continued to consult with Disney on general issues throughout the Fair’s development. Early contact with Disney suggested that their help in the planning of the Gayway would be beneficial. Mowry brought back from his January 1959 visit to Disneyland a taste of the theme park’s magic, and by June of that year, Century 21 planners sought the counsel of George Whitney, the "seventh person hired for Disneyland." Whitney delivered the reassuring advice that Century 21’s plans for a themed zone were "excellent," but suggested they start in right away to guarantee the quality of amusement they desired. Disney, he reminded them, had set new standards of excellence. An
amusement area today would have to sparkle with cleanliness and beauty, courteous service and family fun. To avoid "old-fashioned 'con games'," the implication was, talk to Disney (Century 21 News Release, 19 June 1959).

Allen Beach, at that point the Director of Exhibits and Concessions and thus overseeing the Gayway's development, took this advice to heart. A few days after being reminded again by Stern that "obviously there will be many design coordination problems between the amusement areas and other elements of Century 21," Beach arranged a visit to Disneyland in order to discuss various aspects of the theme park with Disney executives (Stern to Beach, 26 Aug. 1959; Stern to Dingwall, 29 Aug. 1959). Beach's reliance on Whitney grew as well, to the point that on May 2, 1960, Whitney was engaged as an official Century 21 amusement consultant and charged with the development of concepts for the entertainment and concessions of the Gayway; Whitney proclaimed his first consideration would be to shape a long-term attraction appropriate "for the kiddies" (Century 21 News Release, 2 May 1960).

Whitney moved Disney's potential involvement to another plane. Twelve days after being hired as a consultant, he was in California to meet with Disney and his staff. For the first time, discussions revolved around Disney's direct participation in what Whitney called a "continuing and permanent type operation" (Whitney to Dingwall, 17 May 1960).
In short, Whitney proposed no less than a Disneyland North, a theme park permanently anchored in Seattle that was designed, owned, and operated by Disney. And the early prognosis was good. Whitney reported that "Walt expressed interest in the matter and asked that I spend considerable time with William Cottrell" (Whitney to Dingwall, 17 May 1960).9

From his subsequent meeting with Cottrell, Whitney learned in more detail the nature of Disney's interest. Disney had in mind a theme park for children under twelve, using basic ride mechanisms but creating special visual and design concepts to tell the story of a theme based on the various Disney characters (Upson 1960). Two central criteria and a concern emerged: Disney would participate only if his involvement would be permanent, and Disney did not want to develop the entire eight-acre Gayway site; rather, he had his eye on a 325 by 325 square-foot plot that covered about one-third of the site (Whitney to Dingwall, 17 May 1960). The spectre of the remaining five acres of the Gayway unsettled the Disney people, as Whitney (to Dingwall, 17 May 1960) reported: "Frankly, they are extremely afraid that if they went into a certain portion of the Gayway and the remaining part, through press of time and so forth, had to go to a

9Cottrell was then president of WED Enterprises, an arm of the Disney empire created in the 1950's that consisted of a "super-secret group of engineers and artists who work in hiding in a Glendale warehouse" and "help [Walt] create more imaginative rides" for his theme parks (Grover 1991, p.8).
rather sharp operator, then this other operation would taint the Disney participation and do their name some damage."

Though Whitney reassured them that all of Century 21's design standards were on par with Disney's, Disney as if by premonition indeed pointed to the central conflict that would underscore the Gayway and, in the future, the Fun Forest.

In spite of these potential complications, the somewhat euphoric news quickly filtered back to Seattle that "the Disney people are definitely interested" (Whitney to Dingwall, 17 May 1960). Having the Disney name as a permanent fixture at Century 21 and the future civic centre grounds was an enticing, if rather unexpected, turn of events. Century 21 planners, realizing the enormity of the implications, promptly called a meeting of "the appropriate Century 21 and City people" (Upson to Dingwall, 27 May 1960). Whitney briefed representatives of City Council, the Mayor's Office, the Parks Board, and high level Century 21 officials on the latest developments in the Disney situation. The general reaction was "excellent, and interest was very high among all the participants" (Upson to Dingwall, 27 May 1960). All agreed that "Mr. Disney's proposal was most interesting and certainly worthy of further investigation." The addition of a "very high class, 'clean,' compact area, whose primary objective would be the entertainment of families and particularly children," was seemingly unproblematic, even in spite of
Disney's own stated worries. No objections were raised (Upson, Minutes, 27 May 1960).

The remaining Gayway area, however, was acknowledged by Whitney as "a more difficult problem" (Upson, Minutes, 27 May 1960). Again we see the assumption that in the absence of Disney, the amusement world would become a minefield and any path they took would jeopardize Century 21's high standards. It was resolved that Fair planners would have to "find as reputable a carnival operator as possible" to package an entire show for the rest of the Gayway, complying with the theme as much as possible. Though the task would be that much more challenging "particularly in view of the unique theme we are proposing," planners now had the added motivation of ensuring the respectability of the remaining Gayway to protect the reputation of their star client, Walt Disney (Upson, Minutes, 27 May 1960).

The honeymoon lasted exactly two months, until one morning Whitney found on his desk a rather terse letter from William Cottrell stating that the "decision has been made" that the Disney people would be "unable to design or operate" the Gayway or any portion thereof (Cottrell to Whitney, 5 Aug. 1960). No explanation of their seemingly sudden reversal of interest was given.

It is difficult to assess how significant Disney's direct involvement was to Fair planners at this stage. At least part of the Gayway would have been Century 21's responsibility,
Disney personnel would be laced throughout the Century 21 site regardless, and Cottrell's letter reiterated Disney's commitment to continue "working with institutional sponsors of shows." Presumably, thus, those planning the amusement zone would still have at their disposal Disney's wisdom, even if indirectly, and would not face any qualitatively new situations. Yet the loss of Disney's proposed 'kiddieland' seemed to precipitate a dramatic change of heart that translated into a lack of interest in the Gayway's development.

The first post-Disney decision that affected the Gayway came two weeks after Disney's withdrawal, when, due to budget overruns, all travel "for the purpose of securing participation in the amusement park area" was suspended. As Allen Beach explained to Whitney, it was "recognized that this . . . may jeopardize the securing of good and well-planned amusements for Century 21. However, without the travel funds, nothing can be done about it at the present time" (Beach to Whitney, 19 Aug. 1960). Five days later, Beach resigned his post as Director of Exhibits and Concessions (Century 21 News Release, Aug. 24, 1960). Losing both its Director, Beach, and its most promising concessionaire, Disney, in the same month, plans for the Gayway were back to square one.

Starting from Scratch: The Gayway Slips Away

Faced with an impending Disney-less amusement zone, Century 21 planners initially approached the situation as they
had handled the rest of the site. They appointed Disney surrogate George Whitney as Director of Concessions and Amusements and hoped Whitney could successfully draw upon the wisdom he gained while working at Disneyland. Whitney’s first public statement indicated he held fast to the appropriate values, promising themed amusement areas that would appeal "to all ages" (Century 21 News Release, 4 Sept. 1960). Interestingly, the theme he proposed, a "world of yesteryear," completely contradicted both what Fair planners had envisioned for the Gayway and the general tenor of Century 21 itself. Whitney justified the new theme by explaining that "Century 21’s five worlds will be full of science, technology, and space-age exhibits. In the Gayway, we will be providing the light, nostalgic touch which [sic] will give a change of pace" (Century 21 News Release, 4 Sept. 1960).\footnote{I have found no evidence to suggest why the Gayway underwent this sea change of theme. Promotional materials from this point on simply echoed Whitney, referring for example to an amusement zone "reminiscent of 'yesteryear'" that would provide a welcome relief from "the strange and unusual 'world of tomorrow'" in the rest of the Fair, as if that theme had been intended all along (Promotional Brochures A and B, n.d.). The change apparently did not generate any discussion that crossed Dingwall’s desk.} Though the theme had been altered, it was, importantly, still a theme. Thus, it seemed at first glance that no irreparable damage had been done with Disney’s exit.

This was not, however, to be the case. At this juncture, the development of the Gayway entered a new phase in which its character grew more and more removed from the Disney image,
and its evolution more a matter of happenstance rather than planning. As we shall see, Whitney and the other Gayway staff stumbled in and out of various scenarios for the Gayway and eventually settled with the one that promised to be the least offensive.

Soon after taking over, Whitney was presented with the tattered remains of the Gayway to date: two preliminary site layouts stipulating an area large enough for seventeen rides and thirty games (Whitney to Dingwall, 23 Sept. 1960), and a status report containing the names of thirteen potential concessionaires who had expressed interest in participating in the Gayway ("Status Report," 14 Sept. 1960). As a staff member commented on an earlier version of the status list, "most of the enquiries re rides and amusements amount to very little" (Dunn to Dingwall, 12 May 1960). Most concessionaires offered to provide only a ride or two, such as Kenneth E. Farrell’s elephant and pony ride, or Chance Manufacturing’s "futuristic looking" miniature train ride, though one "local 'carney' operator," Rainier Shows, proposed to oversee the entire midway operation ("Status Report" 14 Sept. 1960).

Whitney apparently was not optimistic about the Gayway’s prognosis. On 30 September, he issued the equivalent of a blanket S.O.S., sending out letters to sixty-nine amusement park managers and ride manufacturers to "promote interest in Century 21" (Whitney to Dingwall, 23 Sept. 1960; Whitney to Dingwall, 30 Sept. 1960). Two weeks later, Whitney followed
up his initial request with twenty-nine more letters to "major amusement park owners" seeking their expertise in establishing proper negotiation procedures with outside concessionaires (Whitney to Dingwall, 14 Oct. 1960); two weeks after that Whitney mailed an additional thirty-five letters to amusement device manufacturers to solicit information about their products (Whitney to Dingwall, 28 Oct. 1960).

The results of Whitney’s communications began to trickle in, and the status list was fleshed out to include the names of several recognized professionals. By the beginning of December, Whitney had received two proposals from major ride manufacturers to install rides for an indoor kiddieland, several inquiries about locating individual rides, and a tentative commitment by one manufacturer to provide nine rides billed as "one of a kind rides especially designed or conceived for Century 21" (Whitney to Dingwall, 2 Dec. 1960; 4 Nov. 1960; 18 Nov. 1960). In addition, the travel budget by then had been replenished: Whitney and his staff were able to attend the annual meetings of the National Association of Amusement Parks in late November and meet with potential concessionaires. Whitney reported they had "good acceptance" which he credited to the "excellent publicity" Century 21 had attracted (Whitney to Dingwall, 2 Dec. 1960). Whitney’s canvassing continued into the new year with a trip to San Francisco to meet with "several other firms" regarding the Gayway (Jorgenson to Dingwall, 13 Jan. 1961). Whitney also
reported during this period "continuing follow-up on prospective concessionaires" and "initiat[ing] contacts in new concession activities which [sic] will be desirable to obtain for the Exposition" (Whitney to Dingwall, 16 Dec. 1960).

The Gayway, in short, was moving further and further from the Disney model of entertainment. Significantly, the course of action that Whitney pursued virtually guaranteed that the Disney influence would be minimal. By seeking assistance from traditional amusement park operators, and by soliciting an assortment of independent concessionaires, Whitney in effect set into motion a Coney Island style evolvement of site. Whether Fair planners were alarmed by, or even recognized, this shift is an intriguing question. Whitney had been retained on the strength of his Disney credentials, yet previously while still a consultant for Century 21, Whitney had revealed what to the trained eye were Coney Island-esque leanings. As early as February 1960, Whitney had discussed at some length various strategies for securing or leasing rides from individual operators, a procedure that would not be necessary in the centrally-controlled Disney scenario (Upson to Dingwall, 24 Feb. 1960). He further suggested at that time several amusement consultants whose expertise was recognized in carnival-type operations. Included in this list were Patty Conklin and Harry Batt, the two men who would ultimately operate the Gayway (Upson to Dingwall, 24 Feb. 1960). Fair planners, however, never voiced any concern about the path
Whitney was following. I speculate that their uncritical faith in Whitney's Disney affiliation, coupled with a fundamental lack of understanding of the amusement world\textsuperscript{11}, perhaps falsely reassured planners that the Gayway was in good Disney hands and would emerge the themed, family-oriented space that they had hoped.

The Gayway At Last Secures an Operator

Initially swamped under a long list of potential concessionaires and other contacts, Whitney progress rapidly and soon retained a single set of operators for the Gayway, Patty Conklin and Harry Batt. The agreement at first appeared to ensure that the Gayway would meet Century 21 standards. It would be the first World's Fair midway entrusted in its totality to one organization, and it would also be the first to eliminate the side show and other "spicier" entertainment\textsuperscript{12}. Whitney personally assured Dingwall that

\textsuperscript{11}Century 21 planners' unfamiliarity with the amusement park business is underscored by their frequent misidentification of even the most well-known names in the trade -- the manufacturing giant Arrow Development Company, for instance, becomes "Aero Development," (Upson to Dingwall, Feb. 24, 1960), and the classic Canadian CNE fair is called the "C and E" (Henke to Conklin, June 21, 1961).

\textsuperscript{12}Spicier entertainment at Century 21 did exist, though relegated to a separate zone, "Show Street." Show Street featured various shows that today would be considered exploitative of women, such as "Back Stage U.S.A.," a presentation that in the appreciative words of Century 21 commentator Edo McCullough (1976 [1966], p.140), provided a staged glimpse of "lovelies in action -- dressing, undressing, changing costumes, and taking showers . . . at $1.25 a glimpse."
"the theme for the amusement zone will be as originally planned by Century 21" (Whitney to Dingwall, 28 Apr. 1961).

On closer inspection, however, the negotiating process and subsequent design attested to the haphazard, non-Disneyesque manner in which the amusement zone was unfolding. In March, Conklin was merely one of many interested in providing "three or four" rides, and Batt, in a separate proposition, asked about installing games at the midway (Whitney to Dingwall, 31 Mar. 1961). A month later, the pair had been hired as joint developers of the Gayway. As Whitney described, the actual appointment was basically unplanned: "We kept asking [Conklin and Batt] questions, and they kept answering. I don't know who suggested what, but it was only a short time before it was obvious we were talking to the people who should be the operators and that's the way it worked out" (Whitney, cited in McHugh 1962, p.22). Though Whitney exaggerated the casual nature of the process -- Conklin and Batt submitted a formal proposal that was officially reviewed and accepted on April 28 -- the Gayway was now clearly the responsibility of two carnival men, that "tasteless breed" against whom Stern originally had warned Century 21 planners (Stern 1959, p.4).

Conklin and Batt proposed to develop "the total amusement zone," but in fact at that point the location of the amusement zone was again in limbo, so that the two men could offer no fixed plans. Their entire proposal had been accepted "pending
final determination of the layout;" Fair planners in essence contracted sight unseen for a midway that may still have been, and indeed later was, physically relocated.

Not until mid-June, nearly two months later, did Century 21 planners reach a tentative agreement with Conklin and Batt, stipulating that the operators would provide sixteen rides (Henke to Conklin and Batt, 14 June 1961). The next month more details were forthcoming: Batt informed Whitney that so far they had procured a European skeeter car ride, a Calypso, a Satellite Jet, and four new American-made rides set to make their amusement debut (Batt to Whitney, 8 July 1961). From then on, however, Century 21 planners turned their energies elsewhere and left the development of the Gayway to Conklin and Batt. Whitney ceased his weekly status reports to Dingwall. Apparently, no news was considered good news: as long as the Gayway did not threaten to tarnish the rest of the site to an unacceptable degree, Fair planners could focus on more pressing issues.

The sparse communication amongst planners that did concern the Gayway focused on impending problems. An instructive example involved Conklin and Batt's electronic fortune-telling machine and the IBM Corporation. Century 21 planners intervened to avert minor disaster when IBM discovered that this machine, which incorporated an IBM sorter and hence displayed the IBM logo, was planned for the Gayway. Fair planners requested that Conklin and Batt remove the logo
because, they explained, IBM was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars at Century 21 to "present the IBM corporate image in a first class way. They do not want to find themselves downgraded on another part of the grounds with this kind of operation" (Foster to Dingwall, 1 Nov. 1961). Similarly, when planners were informed just days before the Fair was to open that the "Giant Wheel" ride would not be ready on time, they scolded Conklin and Batt that "Century 21, having been assured that your operation would be ready for opening day almost constantly for the past month, of course is very distressed," further reminding the two men that Century 21 had specifically chosen to feature the Giant Wheel's silhouette in publicity pictures including those that appeared in Life Magazine (Henke to Gateway 21 Amusement Zone, 11 April 1962). Again, the message was clear: planners would only intervene when Conklin and Batt strayed too far from the Disney model of wholesome family entertainment implemented in a rational and orderly manner.

Even Century 21 press releases seemed to address unvoiced criticisms. Announcing Conklin and Batt's entrance into the Fair, Century 21 rather defensively claimed "this will not be the carnival type thing just thrown on the grounds" (Century 21 News Release, 14 June 1961). Three months later, again they strove to convince the public that the Gayway would be "the most glittering and thrilling amusement zone ever created," the antithesis of a traditional midway, which, the
newspapers offered, "always has had a sleazy sound to it and reminded us of all the tired, run-down carnivals we have ever seen" (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 4 Sept. 1961).

And so the Gayway inched closer toward opening day, missing Ferris Wheels, shady fortune-telling machines and all. Conklin and Batt's piecemeal creation stood in stark contrast to the model that the Gayway was to emulate, Disneyland. Disney, Whitney once reminisced, knew exactly which rides would be built two years in advance (Century 21 News Release, 19 June 1959). Conklin and Batt, seasoned carnival men, neither had the time nor the inclination to operate in such terms. In spite of the fact that Gayway planning ostensibly began in 1958, in reality the actual layout, design, and construction under Conklin and Batt took place "in ten weeks" (McHugh 1962, p.18). The two operators worked quickly and worked within what to Disney would have been an enormous constraint: Site planners only finalized the Gayway's location on February 25, 1962, slicing off three acres in the process, less than two months from the April 21st opening date. The amusement zone that emerged bore the mark of the motion, chaos and freedom that symbolized Coney Island.

The Gayway is Built

The Gayway, Time Magazine (27 Apr. 1962, p.65) commented, "does not measure up to the taste and imagination of Disneyland." Indeed, what Conklin and Batt created within the five-acre spot was a densely-packed collection of seemingly
randomly-placed rides and games (Figure 25). Whereas the original, larger site had a projected capacity of seventeen rides, Conklin and Batt managed to cram twenty into the final site. More space, most likely, would not have seriously altered their style; Conklin and Batt’s proficiency in amusement park development, no matter what the spatial configuration, did not encompass the Disney model.

The physical site as built incorporated few Disney techniques. First, it did not sport a unified theme, unless Whitney had been speaking literally when he proposed an amusement park that harkened back nostalgically to carnivals of old. The Gayway, like the traditional amusement park, featured an assortment of technological spectacles with no attempt to cloak them in a central theme. The decoration of each ride spoke only to the mechanical structure to which it was affixed: thus, rides such as the Monster (lower left), the Skooter (lower right), and the Calypso (upper left) shared in common only their physical location (Figure 26).

Second, the various rides, games, and other concessions were not centrally controlled. Conklin and Batt themselves managed only five of the rides; a total of ten different individuals or organizations were involved in managing the Gayway’s other fifteen rides (Table 2).

The Gayway, third, did not promise to be a comfortable, soothing landscape. In place of Disneyland’s quiet pedestrian vistas and lush vegetation, the Gayway would feature flashy
Century 21's Gayway

GAYWAY

EXHIBIT FAIR

JAPANESE VILLAGE

ISLANDS OF HAWAII PAVILION

STADIUM

CALYPSO

CENTURY 21

HOT RODS

Olympic Bobs

CAROUSEL

WILD MOUSE

METEOR

FLYING COASTER

5th AVE BLDG

MONSTER

SPACE WHIRL

SKOOTER

Laff on the Farm

ROTAR

TRIP TO MARS

BUBBLE BOUNCE

GIANT WHEEL

BROADWAY TRIP

CAKE-WALK

SKYRIDE

MONORAIL TERMINAL

FIRE ALARM CENTER

Source: Seattle World's Fair Official Guidebook

288
26. The Gayway at Night
Table 2
Ownership of Gayway Attractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Wild Mouse</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>137x50</td>
<td>Conklin &amp; Batt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hot Rods</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>125x53</td>
<td>Conklin &amp; Batt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 C-21 for Fun</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>60x40</td>
<td>Velare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rotor</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>40x40</td>
<td>Velare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Space Whirl</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>52x52</td>
<td>Arrow Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Calypso</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>68x63</td>
<td>Hughes &amp; Conklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Broadway Trip</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>88x40</td>
<td>Hughes &amp; Conklin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Space Wheel</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>60x43</td>
<td>Heth Shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Auto Skooter</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>94x55</td>
<td>Conklin &amp; Batt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Monster</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>60x60</td>
<td>Meeker &amp; Eyerly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Cake Walk</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>87x22</td>
<td>Morgan &amp; Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Laff on the Farm</td>
<td>83,000</td>
<td>79x46</td>
<td>World's Finest Shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Trip to Mars</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>79x40</td>
<td>World's Finest Shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Olympia Bobs</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>64x60</td>
<td>Conklin &amp; McDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Flying Coaster</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>55x55</td>
<td>Bobby Cohn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Meteor</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>55x50</td>
<td>Bobby Cohn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Carrousel</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>41x41</td>
<td>Conklin &amp; Batt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Bubble Bounce</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>55x55</td>
<td>John &amp; Harry Batt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Antique Cars</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>250x40</td>
<td>Conklin &amp; Batt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Giant Wheel</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>Velare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: McHugh 1962
lights, clanking machinery, noisy crowds, expanses of concrete, and a clear view of the city beyond (Figure 27). Conklin and Batt boasted of installing 75,000 incandescent lights, over three miles of tube lighting, and the latest sound systems from Europe (Seattle Times, 7 Feb. 1962; 8 Apr. 1962, p.16-C). Given the site's limited space, the effect could only have been one of sensory overload. As Batt understated, "never before has a midway in America had such light and sound" (Batt, cited in Seattle Times, 8 Apr. 1962, p.16-C).

Fourth, the Gayway was not designed as a 'safe' family environment. The emphasis was on thrill rides, the scarier the better. Press releases and related newspaper articles stressed the illusion of danger. "At the end of each turn" on the Wild Mouse roller coaster, said Conklin, "you'll think the cars are going off into space" (Conklin, cited in Seattle Times, 7 Feb. 1962). The Seattle Times (22 Apr. 1962, p.17) speculated that the Monster, a "many-armed bucket ride that swings you and slings you," appealed because of the ominously black-painted contraption’s "overtones of suicide." Likewise, the Rotor was not so favourably compared to being "plastered against the sides of the tank like socks in a clothes dryer" (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 25 June 1962). Other aspects of the clearly non-family atmosphere were evident: many of the games of chance hinted at gambling, and Conklin himself raised the image of sexual innuendo championed at Coney Island,
27. The Gayway Against Seattle's Skyline
choosing to call attention to the fact that the Wild Mouse "has much more privacy than a [traditional] roller coaster, in that the car carries two persons" (Century 21 News Release, 14 June 1961).

The Gayway as planned and constructed, therefore, exemplified neither Disney's architectural techniques through unified themes or the creation of a pleasant, suburban atmosphere, nor Disney's social conditions through a family-oriented, centrally-controlled management structure. It stood as an isolated island in surroundings that, I have argued, emulated precisely the Disney model that the Gayway rejected. This dichotomy brings us to the final point of analysis in this phase of Seattle Center's historical development: How did the two different worlds of the Gayway and Century 21 co-exist? How did the two different utopian impulses physically establish in the landscape broader cultural dialogues about urbanity?

The Fair Itself:
"Some of its Sights Recall Coney Island;
Others are Pure Disneyland"13

The final layer of Century 21's social construction to be discussed now involves the fairgoers themselves. I have traced so far the planning of the Fair and of the Gayway in particular: now everything was in place, waiting only for the gates to open and the people to come. On April 21, 1962,

13The comment is a quote from Architectural Forum, June 1962, p.99.
President John F. Kennedy declared the Seattle World’s Fair open with lavish technological fanfare
during his visit to the fair. Century 21 was now no longer merely an idea but also an actual landscape with people moving through it and, as we shall see, interpreting, misinterpreting, and transforming it (Figures 28 and 29).

We have investigated the circumstances that created the dialectic struggle between the Disney and Coney Island models, and we have seen how in spite of attempts to shape a Disney-like amusement zone, the Gayway emerged a Coney Island entity. Now we can pursue in more detail the third prong of the framework: what does the struggle between Disney and Coney Island inherent in the Century 21 landscape suggest about Disney’s wider role as an urban planner? The task requires considering how Disney-esque tactics, once translated into the Fair’s physical and social spaces, fared when people populated the landscape.

Century 21 planners, we have seen, based their ideal Fair design upon a constellation of interrelated Disney-like qualities. They hoped the space would present family-oriented entertainment on a site divided into specific zones and consequently detailed along unified themes. They proposed centralized control from which to oversee the entire site’s

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14 Kennedy, in Palm Beach, Florida, pressed a telegraph key that activated a computer in Andover, Maine, which then focused a radio telescope on the star Cassiopeia, intersecting a light wave that was in turn relayed back to Seattle. Its arrival in Seattle set off bells, lights, and "cheers" (McCullough 1976 [1966], p.141).
28. Century 21: Space Needle and Science Pavilion
development and management. The 'city' thus created would run efficiently and seamlessly, with a properly urbane and well-balanced citizenry springing naturally from the behavioural controls built into the landscape.

Through a combination of intention and happenstance, these ideals became somewhat modified in their translation into the built environment. The real test came when people inhabited the landscape. The Gayway, not surprisingly, exhibited a number of Coney Island characteristics, but more interesting is the fact that many of the purer Disney elements in the rest of Century 21 were completely trampled over by fairgoers. This leads us ultimately to ask to what sort of city did Century 21 actually aspire, and how fairgoers in general appreciated that vision. To this end, I now examine in closer detail the Coney Island aspects of both the Gayway and the wider Century 21 fairgrounds.

i. The Gayway

The Gayway was, first, by sheer numbers the most popular attraction at the Fair. Of the average 50,000 people who attended the fair daily, fewer than half of them chose to visit the centrepiece scientific exhibits such as the U.S. Science Exhibit or World of Century 21; approximately ninety percent of them lingered for a ride or cotton candy at the Gayway. The Gayway's traditional amusement park atmosphere,

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15It should be noted that to some extent these figures reflect capacity. Most Century 21 exhibits could only handle about 25,000 people a day, so they would by definition attract fewer people.
risque activities, somewhat questionable employment practices, and the generally weird and unpredictable clearly rivalled the outer "strange and unusual 'world of tomorrow'" of which Century 21 promoters boasted (Promotional Brochure B, n.d.).

The family atmosphere that demanded respectable behaviour on the rest of the fairgrounds was relaxed inside the Gayway. It was impossible to remain dignified while being tossed and slung about on the rides, and this informality permeated the grounds. "Teenagers Find Fun on Gayway," one local newspaper announced, referring to their affection for death-defying rides (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 22 Apr. 1962, p.17). Century 21 chose to not publicize the fact that teenagers and other Gayway visitors were finding more than fun. They were successfully challenging authority to a degree apparently unforeseen by Fair planners. Within a few weeks of opening day, Dingwall was advised that "some consideration should be given to regular cruising of the Gayway area by uniformed security." The memo warned of "teenagers" who were causing "problems" but "of course" vanished by the time regular Century 21 security showed up; there was further intimation that female attendants were being harassed (Brandt to Dingwall, 25 Apr. 1962). Allegations also suggest that the Quick Draw Theatre, an elaborate shooting gallery-type attraction designed to play on the current popularity of

However, even so they still frequently ran under capacity by several thousand people (Thompson to Schumacher, July 7, 1962).
television westerns, incorporated a more realistic portrayal of the Wild West than Century 21 officials may have imagined. Gayway employee Dick Snyder recalls a scandal involving a rumoured brothel operation being run by Quick Draw concessionaires (Snyder 1990a).

The Gayway's forty-five games of chance further encouraged a looser atmosphere. Again the newspapers (and Century 21's publicity machine) played down the negative implications. The Post Intelligencer (22 Apr. 1962, p.17), for instance, declared that the Gayway games were "too tame" to be classified as gambling, and presented the image of a two-year old child winning a stuffed bear larger than herself. Once more, one gets the sense that Century 21's press coverage defended the Fair against unvoiced criticism. Indeed, what was not reported in the papers was community concern over the games operations. The next month, concerned citizens retained a lawyer to pursue the situation. G. Robert Brain, Esquire, presenting as evidence the story of three (unnamed) children, ages eight, eleven, and twelve, who had "lost considerable money" while playing the games, suggested in his capacity as potential prosecuting attorney, that Century 21 should enforce a ban on children playing games or face having the games closed down (Brain to Century 21 Administrative Offices, 29 May 1962). Century 21 administrators wrote back to reassure Mr. Brain that his "admonishments" were not well advised; they already had taken care to maintain the highest family
standards and had posted "No Minors" signs in the appropriate places (Savage to Brain, 5 June 1962).

The troublesome games of chance also shed light on the different role given to consumer goods in the Coney Island and Disney models. Games of chance in the Coney Island model were a prime disseminator of material products in the form of prizes. Possessing them was almost a bonus: they were to be coveted on the shelf, and they could be of virtually any type or theme. Though the Disney model eliminated games, consumer goods still held a privileged role in the amusement landscape in the form of souvenirs. Souvenirs, in contrast to prizes, most commonly refer back to the place or event they commemorate. To acquire one, fairgoers need only part with their money. The souvenir, following Disney’s strategy, takes its part in a complex relationship linking the landscape and the values it represents to wider markets and wider audiences.

Disney-style souvenirs could be found fair-wide, with Science Pavilion ashtrays, Space Needle pencil sharpeners, and other related objects available at inflated prices "on every corner" (McCullough [1966] 1976, p.141). Within the Gayway, however, the products on display as game prizes harkened back to Coney Island days, and ranged from the practical to the ridiculous to the sublime. Anything and everything from stuffed animals and toys to sports and kitchen equipment to radios and cameras to luggage to towels, blankets, and bedspreads, and even, for a short time, live poodles, could be
won as a prize (McHugh 1962). As long as the value did not exceed fifteen dollars, the product might appear in the Gayway games\(^{16}\). The significant point here is that in the Gayway, unlike the rest of Century 21, the available commodities did not reinforce a single theme or message. These objects spoke to a number of parallel realities: some were 'luxury' items, some useless, many no doubt would fall apart the next day, but some, such as the towels and blankets, were above all functional and hinted at a lack of material wealth in the 'real' world. In short, material goods on the Gayway played a more critical role, in a utopian sense, in relation to the dialogues they embodied about cultural conditions than did their counterpart souvenirs in the rest of the Fair.

Finally, the Gayway staff quite effectively reinforced the social conditions reflected on the amusement zone's grounds. A relationship very different from that embedded in the Disney model in the surrounding Century 21 was posited between the staff, visitors, and the visitors' money. I argue that, in the best of Coney Island traditions, capitalism's competitive realities were exposed to the point of parody at the Gayway. The artificial (though utopian) economic and social conditions implemented in the rest of Century 21 were lifted. The visitor was not an honoured guest. The employee

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\(^{16}\)The live poodles were banned, ironically, not because of controversy surrounding insensitive treatment of animals, but because their value exceeded fifteen dollars (McHugh 1962, p.37).
was there to take the visitor's money, legitimately or otherwise. Each ride or game required separate tickets. Patrons could watch their money disappear nickel by nickel; the process was not enshrouded in a single entrance fee that then would make the interior space 'free.' Often, employees sped up this process: Batt, for instance, refused to accept bonus discount coupons for the Giant Wheel, until Dingwall pointedly reminded him that his actions were against regulations (Dingwall to Batt, 21 July 1962). Numerous concessionaire employees erred in ringing up sales; suspiciously, they always collected at least the correct amount of cash if not more, but entered lower figures into the register, if they chose to enter the sale at all (Carter to Bergman, 5 Sept. 1962).

Lastly, without the protective cloak of a centralized management system, the individual concessionaires and operators were at the mercy of economic conditions and could go bankrupt at any time. Fair planners, in fact, had been forewarned that it would be normal for twenty-five percent of concessionaires to go out of business within two to three months of opening (van Camp 1958, p.6). Century 21 was lucky to lose only one major concession, yet it clearly left administrators somewhat flustered. The Quick Draw Theatre, the shooting gallery already infamous for its suspected brothel activities, had perhaps overshot its capabilities and by the Labour Day weekend was facing financial collapse. Its
workers staged a two-day walkout in demand of the previous week's paycheque, much to the mortification of Century 21 administrators, who scrambled to come up with a plan to save it. They were, however, too late: two days later Century 21 Comptroller Marty Grass was informed that the Quick Draw Theatre "had bit the dust," leaving them with a "dark spot in the Gayway area" (Savage to Grass, 7 Sept. 1962; Savage to Cooperstein, 5 Sept. 1962).

In conclusion, the Gayway's built environment bore few traces of the Disneyesque landscape that Fair planners initially had in mind. Conklin and Batt's creation encouraged somewhat aberrant behaviour, and fairgoers took to the atmosphere and carried it even further. The question remains, however, whether the Disney characteristics more firmly ingrained in the rest of Century 21 were more readily adapted by fairgoers. The answer to this question ultimately will reflect upon Disney's potential success as an urban planner in Seattle.

II. The Century 21 Fairgrounds

To inquire into the fate of Century 21's Disney features quickly becomes an inquiry into the question of whether people's behaviour can be channelled into a particular urban lifestyle through controlled architectural and social conditions. The experience of Seattle's Fairgrounds suggests that this may be more difficult to achieve than initially envisioned. A closer examination of the 'city' that Century
21 created reveals that, first, fairgoers were as apt to subvert Disney tactics in the rest of Century 21 as they were within the Gayway, and second, that Century 21 administrators had to resort to measures at times extreme to keep these subversive tendencies in check. Century 21 ran smoothly not because problems did not arise, but because administrators spent a lot of energy neutralizing those problems.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Century 21 planners relied heavily on Disney wisdom to create an urban model for their fairgrounds that would capture the best of suburban life in the heart of downtown. Cultural and technological amenities nestled in open green space and wide pedestrian pathways would, as at Disneyland, be the surface facade of the dream city; behind-the-scenes monitoring of visitors' entrance, movement, and behaviour would ensure the dream city operated smoothly. Certainly to some extent Fair planners were successful in carrying this off. Some parts were, as Architectural Forum had noted, "pure Disneyland," a comparison

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17Evidence suggests that even Disney's building-block calculations upon which they built the Century 21 'city,' such as expected attendance and parking necessities, may have been flawed. Overcrowding was a horrendous problem, with visitors complaining to Century 21 offices of waiting in line for up to five hours. Century 21 planners were eventually forced to contact Disney-recommended analysts E.R.A. for updated advice after a few months of this frustrating congestion (Thompson to Schumacher, July 7, 1962). At the same time that analysts under-estimated attendance, they vastly overestimated parking demand. Parking lots and garages were consistently underutilized, and one $250,000 project was closed down after only twelve cars used it (Murray 1962).
that often resurfaced in local and national media. Appreciative fairgoers such as Mr. and Mrs. James R. Osborne wrote Century 21 officials to thank them for elements including "clean, beautiful grounds, and above all, the handsome clean young Americans and other young men and women" employed at the Fair (Osborne to Dingwall, 19 June 1962). But of more interest here are those fairgoers and staff who contested the Disney image, those who explicitly or implicitly rejected the control and measure of the suburban 'city.'

Fairgoers, first, apparently delighted in finding ways to outfox the Disney strategists. Every suggestion that Disney veterans had offered to make Century 21 a smoother operation was appropriated by fairgoers for their own benefit. They quickly learned ways to sneak into the grounds for free, through service entries and through the un-patrolled outer lobby of the Opera House (Brandt to Dingwall, 25 April 1962). In due time, they discovered that the invisible re-entry stamp recommended by Disney was symmetrical -- a quick dash out the gates, touch someone else's hand, and that person would get in free (Bushnell to Dingwall, 29 June 1962). Those handy discount passbooks, visitors further realized, were ideal for

18 Though not always referring specifically to Disney, the two local newspapers, the Seattle Times and the Post-Intelligencer, advertised Century 21's Disney-esque qualities by describing it as a clean, beautifully landscaped, safe, family-oriented place. Publications of national exposure, such as Sunset and Life, also emphasized its Disney-like character.
distribution (at a small profit) outside the gates; the less entrepreneurial simply transferred the non-transferable passes to friends (Brandt to Dingwall, 25 April 1962). Even the classic Disney standby, their litter prevention programme based on the assumption that people presented with decorated trash cans in pristine settings would not litter, suffered at Century 21's visitors' hands. They littered, and, as a dismayed administrator commented, "litter breeds litter" (Brandt to Dingwall, 25 April 1962).

Employees also appeared reluctant to take part in the Disney image. That Century 21's administration felt it necessary to employ the Willmark System, a staff surveillance system also utilized at Disneyland and designed to uncover through clandestine observation all irregularities, already indicates that Century 21 was never actually envisioned as a city in which respectable urban behaviour would spontaneously spring forth. Rather, the staff's 'natural' anti-social tendencies would arise and be forcibly removed. In this sense administrators were not disappointed: the weekly Willmark reports filled pages and pages. Tour guides, for example, were repeatedly chastised for pointing out and ridiculing the exclusive Club21 and its wealthy clientele as part of their spiel (Ruff to Henke, 14 June 1962). Cashiers systematically underrang sales and, it was suspected, pocketed the difference. By the end of the season the Willmark reports were still chock-full of infractions and other abnormalities,
implying that employees made little effort to adhere to the Disney definition of a model worker (Carter to Bergman, 5 Sept. 1962). In other words, fundamental assumptions that underlay the Disney city -- that an environment that was both physically and socially well-crafted would ensure a smooth running city -- were being proven wrong.

Though Fair planners and administrators never explicitly addressed the situation in such a manner, in essence they were watching as their neatly erected Disney city unravelled at the edges. Significantly, instead of rethinking the basic components of their 'city,' planners drew upon what perhaps turned out to be the most useful of Disney lessons. Century 21 administrators focused on how their Fair was presented in the media. Assuming, presumably, that what actually happened within the Fair was of secondary importance to what was said to have happened, administrators after a few weeks clamped down on media personnel's freedom of coverage. Their free access to the Fair was revoked, and they no longer enjoyed entirely amicable relations. This action prompted a spate of angry letters from the media, whose general attitude was summed up well by Post-Intelligencer reporter Jack Jarvis, who complained that now that the media had "served its purpose," it was subject to "constant harassment . . . treat[ed] like poor white trash" by Fair management no longer interested in it (Jarvis to Rockey, 1 May 1962). Further, so-called spontaneous events that would receive media coverage were

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carefully staged: even the epitome of randomness, the Fair's 'millionth' visitor, was pre-screened "on the usual factors" (Rockey to Morrow, 14 Aug. 1962).

Little by little, between April and October 1962, Century 21 challenged the very foundations upon which it had been planned. Each subversive moment, each non-conforming act, each unexpected outcome, peeled away like onion skin a layer of the Disney myth. The dream city was exposed as a place whose democratic and family atmosphere was achieved through at times elitist and hypocritical means, whose apparent seamless cooperation between visitors, staff, and management -- in essence, the appearance of community -- was strong-armed through surveillance techniques and other methods of control, and where even its urbane 'spontaneity' was carefully choreographed.

The tension between the urban image on the surface and the methods used in its attempted creation raises far-reaching questions about the particular ideal 'city' to which Century 21 aspired. The contradictions could perhaps be dismissed as insightful but essentially harmless in the context of a temporary Disneyland, an insulated landscape devoted to entertainment. However, as Dingwall himself explained, Fair planners from the beginning saw their task as that of translating Disney wisdom to the "real world." They felt Century 21 differed from a Disney theme park on three counts: it was, in Dingwall's words, "full scale," it reflected the
contributions of many, and, most importantly, it had a significant permanent agenda (Dingwall 1986). It would become part of Seattle's urban fabric, and in doing so, would insert Disney logic into the "real world."

Our interrogation of the urban visions expressed at Century 21, ultimately points toward an examination of the implications when Disney-inspired urbanity resurfaces in actual urban space. The World's Fair site would become the landscape upon which this question would be debated in Seattle over the next thirty years, but the seeds were firmly sown during Century 21 itself. The opening volley, as it were, came in the form of the exhibit The World of Century 21, which outlined in great detail the shape of cities to come. "City Century 21" depicted Seattle as it should be in the year 2000, and other angles of the exhibit fleshed in the economic, social, and cultural conditions that would accompany this type of urbanity. A closer examination of "City Century 21" illuminates precisely the type of city that Fair planners and civic leaders hoped the Fair would promote.

"City Century 21" bore a striking resemblance to Walt Disney's preliminary plans for his utopian EPCOT project, which as I discussed in Chapter Four itself recalled design by modernist architects such as Le Corbusier. Like EPCOT, "City

19"City Century 21" predates Disney's EPCOT plans by several years. Though there is no evidence to suggest that Disney directly contributed to "City Century 21," it is tempting to see it as a rough draft.
Century 21" featured concentric rings of segregated activity. At the centre was the downtown core, densely packed with skyscrapers and covered by a climate-controlled dome, envisioned as "the nucleus of administration, commerce, education, and culture" ("Final Script Washington State 'Threat and Threshold'" n.d.). The busy downtown was surrounded by the tranquility of a "lush" greenbelt, and industrial and residential communities were situated on the periphery. Elaborate transportation networks linked the zones: "floating cars" traversing "electronic roadways" and monorail routes would criss-cross the region; cars were not allowed in the central business district (Official Souvenir Program 1962, p.22).

This was to be a city in which, according to the Official Souvenir Program (1962, p.17) "the mechanics of livelihood are more complex but living itself is less complicated. Civilization has found its most rewarding goal in its most pure element -- the family." The perfectly-designed city, together with the emancipating qualities of consumer goods, would redefine life at home, in the office, at school, in the market, and at play. It would be at once fast-paced and relaxing. "Mobility," General Motors assured visitors, "turns your world of tomorrow into an accessible and amicable place" (Official Souvenir Program 1962, p.22). General Motors, ironically, may well have faced falling profits in the Seattle of the year 2000, since planners envisioned a city in which

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"some of us will fly, some of us will drive our air cars, but most of us will use . . . monorail systems" (Official Souvenir Program 1962, p.19).

Due to "the tireless persistence of electronic machinery," the Program (1962, p.17; p.19) continued, not only would we go from place to place more efficiently, but also "we'll work shorter hours. We'll have more time for arts, sports, and hobbies." Fair planners ventured to guess that with executives of the next century earning at least $12,000 a year for a twenty-four hour work week, all families would have both the time and the money to enjoy "City Century 21."

Houses would feature "undreamed of conveniences," such as wall-to-wall televisions, cordless phones, and the ability to "change the interior colours of your home to suit your mood" (Official Souvenir Program 1962, p.19; p.18) (Figure 30). The office of tomorrow, likewise, would highlight banks of computers producing "a metallic cacophony of sound," and schools would have walls "made of jets of air," tables that stood on invisible legs, and ominous-sounding "memory retention machines" that would whir in the background (Official Souvenir Program 1962, p.19).

The ideal city of the future, thus, was a tightly zoned entity in which the social and economic problems of urban life were to be solved through technological means. Like Walt Disney, Century 21 planners equated progress with technology and quality-of-life with accessible consumer goods. Not all
30. World of Century 21 Exhibit's Suburban Future
visitors to Century 21 were entirely impressed with the display: Mrs. Walter R. Austin, for example, who described herself as "a housewife from Seattle," wrote back to express her "disbelief, disappointment, [and] disgust" for the exhibit, chiding its designers that "a den of Cub Scouts" could have come up with a more imaginative effort (Austin to Dingwall, 4 May 1962). Yet though the World of Century 21 was the least popular of the major exhibits, and attracted nowhere near the number of people that the Gayway did (Thompson to Schumacher, 7 July 1962), the vision of the city it proposed becomes fundamental to understanding Seattle Center's next thirty years, and beyond that, to coming to terms with the future of all North American cities.

In this chapter, I have traced the inception of the World's Fair site in general and the development of the Gayway in particular in order to examine the tension between Disney and Coney Island elements. We have seen several important patterns emerge. First, Fair planners embraced the Disney model as the most appropriate one on which to model not only an amusement zone but a city. Second, they were completely unable to shape the midway in the Disney image. The Coney Island-esque Gayway, significantly, was consciously segregated to a safely contained zone where, planners hoped, it would not appear to be an integral part of the urban fabric proposed by Century 21. In other words, planners created a 'themed' area where the urban qualities of contradiction and resistance
could be displayed but never threaten the rest of Century 21. As fairgoer Joanne B. Daniels stated in a letter to a local newspaper, "how wonderful that [the Gayway] has its own gaudy niche," a niche that could never bleed into the more important "parts of the fairground whose appeal is based on something entirely different" (Seattle Times, 27 April 1962).

The "gaudy" Coney Island-esque aspects evident in the Gayway, of course, did resurface in other areas of the Fair -- the third significant pattern. Many of the urban images standard to the Disney model, such as well-behaved crowds, cheerful employees, and pristine groundskeeping, proved elusive as visitors and employees alike resisted adherence to the model. The triumph of Coney Island impulses throughout the fairgrounds suggests that a Disney model when extended from theme parks to cities introduces as many problems as it solves. And thus the stage was set for the debates over urban planning that would take place at Seattle Center: the Disney model being privileged while the amusement zone, relegated to "its own gaudy niche," consistently provides the spark of resistance that always threatens to undermine the Disney 'city.'
CHAPTER SIX
"BRILLIANT JEWEL" TO "BEDRAGGLED RELIC"
SEATTLE CENTER: 1962 - 1982

While fairgoers were riding the Wild Mouse and contemplating the World of Tomorrow, Century 21 planners were already fully engrossed in the next stage of the site's development. The fairgrounds would be transformed into a permanent civic centre by the following summer. It was not only the buildings, plantings, and other elements of the built environment that were preserved. In this chapter, I demonstrate that the impulses, tensions, and contradictions that emerged during Century 21 became permanently embedded in the Seattle Center landscape. Seattle Center's amusement space, envisioned in the Disney mold but built like Coney Island, experienced a similar relationship to its surrounding Disney-like environment as the Gayway had to Century 21. From the time of Seattle Center's inception to the early 1980s, when planners again sought Disney's advice, repeated attempts to domesticate the amusement park and eliminate its Coney Island qualities were futile. The growing levels of frustration amongst planners further suggests that their desire to tame the amusement park was symbolic of a deeper suspicion that all of the Seattle Center site needed taming: Disney-inspired urbanity was not taking hold as hoped. The amusement park instead became a site where Coney Island impulses flourished in the form of evasive and productive
resistant practices, creating the foundation for the more overtly political strategies that would later be successfully wielded against the Disney Company.

Brilliant Jewel: Tasteful Amusement in a Garden Setting.

The transition from Century 21 to Seattle Center has been complex, riddled with problems, and, as Dingwall commented in 1986, is still on-going (Dingwall 1986). Seattle Center is ostensibly a public entity owned and operated by the City of Seattle. It is classified as a Seattle park: Seattle Center staff are City employees and major changes must be approved by City Council. However, Seattle Center's very creation was overseen by a private, non-profit corporation temporarily created for the purpose, under the control of the City, and headed by former Century 21 General Manager Ewen C. Dingwall. Various private organizations from the beginning have either leased space or owned outright structures on the grounds. In short, the planning of the Seattle Center site quickly became a bureaucratic tangle with no fewer than eleven different groups representing federal, state, and local interests.

For our purposes, of prime interest are the initial creation of the amusement park, the transition of that space from public to private hands, and the ensuing relationship between the private parties, Seattle Center management, and the City. In these phases can be traced the fundamental tensions between Disney and Coney Island models of amusement
space that have defined Seattle Center's landscape. Decisions concerning the broader models of urbanity that Seattle Center would incorporate proved to be pivotal in the amusement park's development. Thus, our examination of the Fun Forest begins with the evolution of a Seattle Center master plan, and then hones in more specifically on the development of the Fun Forest itself, where I explore in detail the manner in which Coney Island-esque class, gender, and ethnic contradictions have been articulated in the amusement park amidst a Disney background.

The Seattle Center Master Plan.

The Civic Center Advisory Commission (CCAC), a post-fair planning group amalgamated from a core of Century 21 advisors, was charged with the development of a Seattle Center master plan. In August 1962, while Century 21 was still in full swing, site architect Paul Thiry submitted plans shaped by the commission's conviction that Seattle Center should be a "thoughtful blend of activity and repose" (CCAC Minutes, 3 Aug. 1962, p.2). Spurred on by Century 21 architect Clayton

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1The initial post-fair incarnation of the CCAC consisted of twenty-one members, including Century 21 planners, representatives of the arts community, City Councilmembers, and the Mayor. Local attorney Harold Shefelman headed the commission. The CCAC was later renamed the Seattle Center Advisory Commission and trimmed to sixteen members, though retaining a similar balance of representation from City Council, the arts, the business community, and, this time, "sports."
Young's enthusiastic slide show on the topic, commission members proposed that Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, as a "unique, tastefully designed and managed private park operation," would be the ideal park to emulate (CCAC Minutes, 17 July, p.5; 17 Aug.).

Tivoli Gardens was a particularly interesting choice on the part of commission members, for it represented a conscious decision to not model Seattle Center after Disneyland. The CCAC made clear that, in the words of Century 21 architect Minoru Yamasaki, Tivoli was a "finer example to follow than the Disneyland-type of park;" what Seattle needed was a beautifully landscaped urban park whose graceful buildings, gardens, restaurants, and festivals sparkled with life, and, significantly, balanced fun with loftier cultural pursuits.

This rejection of the Disney name at first glance seems contradictory, considering that the same group of people months earlier embraced the Disney image in the planning of Century 21. Yet on closer observation, the CCAC reacted against precisely those aspects of amusement parks, which a Seattle Times editorial summarized as a "perpetuation of hot dog stands, souvenir booths . . . and Ferris wheels" (Seattle Times, 10 June 1962, p.41), that Disney had also intended to remedy with his theme parks. Though Disney did initially allow some of these elements into Disneyland on a limited basis, the Seattle Times concluded that in a permanent urban context, they would be a "nuisance."
The Tivoli Gardens model as interpreted by the commission eliminated this "hurdy gurdy" and promised instead a small, compact, urban setting where the roller coasters, by virtue of clever landscaping, fountains, and other visual screens, would never detract from the operas or art exhibits. Each type of leisure would remain neatly in its place. The commission confidently proclaimed that such a model "would appeal to all groups and classes of people as an appropriate activity on the Seattle Center site" (CCAC Minutes, 17 July 1962, p.5).

Thus, though the CCAC publicly distanced themselves from Disneyland, what they in fact endorsed was an image based on the Disney model of urban leisure space. Their selective interpretation (and sometimes misinterpretation) of the Tivoli framework emphasized precisely those aspects that paralleled the Disney approach^2. As Disney favoured zones of activity with distinct themes, so too did the commission find in Tivoli the justification for segregated types of entertainment and the visual means to create attractive and effective separations between them ("Seattle Center: Supplement to Total Plan," 1962, pp.5-6). Also like Disneyland, Tivoli seemed to be sealed off from the outer world; Thiry proposed that Seattle Center too should be a "completely enclosed

^2The CCAC would later be accused by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin of creatively misinterpreting some of Tivoli's underlying principles. As I shall discuss later in this chapter, commission members tended to read more Disney-like elements into Tivoli Gardens than Halprin claimed existed.
Center. When a person walks in, he should be shut off from the outside and his attention turned inward" (Thiry, cited in Seattle Times, July 2, 1962, p.25). Tivoli's private management organization, third, resulted in a tightly-run operation and turned the park into a money-making venture, goals that also lay at the heart of the Disney model (Seattle Times, 19 Mar 1963, p.2). In short, CCAC members rejected Disneyland specifically as a model to embrace instead an approach that in fact better approximated the Disney-style of urbanity than even Disneyland did in 1962. "The end result of the Total Plan," planners concluded, "has been to establish a controlled environment which [sic] by its design is free from possible intrusion from exterior forces" ("Seattle Center: Supplement to Total Plan," 1962, pp.6-7).

Designing a New Amusement Park
The CCAC recognized early that the amusement zone would be problematic. As their Century 21 forbearers had before them, commission members briefly contemplated avoiding one altogether, resolving that a "small family and children's entertainment area might be considered but that a full-scale amusement park would not be encouraged" (CCAC Minutes, 13 July 1962, p.2). The allure of potential revenue, however, proved stronger than their aesthetic reticence: as Dingwall later remarked, all came to agree that a "well-designed amusement park" would be "essential for the economic health" of Seattle Center (Dingwall, cited in Seattle Times, 5 Feb. 1963, p.5).
Their task, thus, became that of ensuring that Seattle Center’s amusement park would indeed be "well-designed."

By emulating the Tivoli model, the CCAC adopted an approach to urban space that not only allowed an amusement zone but promised to rid it of any Coney Island-like indelicacies and transform it into a respectable entity "as peaceful as a secluded garden" (Seattle Times, 18 Mar. 1962, p.6). Before recommendations for the physical site had been finalized -- before commission members had even decided whether an amusement park should be included -- they agreed that "if an amusement park is incorporated, it should be tastefully designed in a landscaped setting and screened from other areas of the site" (CCAC Minutes, 3 Aug. 1962, pp.2-3). Its placement would be dictated by whichever location could best "screen features that could clash in visual discord," which, as the Seattle Times reminded readers, was considered as one of Tivoli’s greatest assets (Seattle Times, 17 Mar. 1963, p.13). Hence in Thiry’s Total Plan, submitted August 18, 1962 and approved by Council the following month, an amusement park was included, tucked into a corner and safely screened off from the rest of the site by the Armory Building to the west, Memorial Stadium to the north, and the Monorail tracks to the south (Appendix 1).

Thiry’s plan, praised by local arts groups for its Tivoli-like promenades, gardens, fountains, and waterfalls, seemed to offer the ideal setting in which to fashion an
amusement area completely different from the Gayway. Where the Gayway had been "jammed with rides," the new park would be more spacious, with generous landscaping to soften the edges. Thiry envisioned a "wooded aspect . . . tastefully landscaped with plantings of flowers" ("Seattle Center: Supplement to Total Plan," 1962, p.20). Dingwall in a newspaper interview pointedly compared it to Tivoli Gardens (Seattle Times, 30 Oct. 1962, p.1). Its design would be overseen by a landscape architect and, ultimately, Thiry himself; further, its management would not fall into the wrong sort of private hands. Having learned from their experience with the Gayway, planners suggested that Seattle Center itself retain complete control over the area (Seattle Center Commission, Minutes, 30 Oct. 1962). The new amusement park, thus, from its inception was predicated on two fundamental Disney-esque principles: its respectable, family-oriented setting would flow naturally from its tasteful design and landscaping, and shrewd centralized control would ensure that nothing went awry with its respectable image.

Yet controversy soon struck the new amusement park’s development, revealing the tension still lurking between Disney and Coney Island models of urban space. When newly-appointed Seattle Center landscape designer Lawrence Halprin arrived, he criticized what he called the CCAC’s tendency to exaggerate the importance of sharply separated activities in Tivoli Gardens (Seattle Times, 2 Dec. 1962, 322
Arguing emphatically that Tivoli's success in reality stemmed from the fact that it allowed the different activities to spill playfully into one another, Halprin suggested several changes to Seattle Center plans, including the relocation of the amusement park. The park, Halprin said, should be expanded into an area south of the Space Needle. The new location would not only "provide sufficient area for a new landscaped amusement section of sufficient size to be economically feasible," but would also boldly infringe upon Science Pavilion 'territory' (Seattle Center Commission, Minutes, 5 Feb. 1963).

Halprin's proposal, as commission minutes understated, generated "considerable discussion" (Seattle Center Commission, Minutes, 5 Feb. 1963). CCAC Chair Harold Shefelman later told the media he was "shocked" by this "intrusion" into the Science Pavilion's setting that ran "entirely counter to the 'total plan' we have had for the Center" (Shefelman, cited in Seattle Times, 5 Feb. 1963, p.5). Shefelman, however, was not in a position to veto the plan. Once the Fair ended and the Seattle Center site was turned over to the City, final approval of all physical development lay with City Council. In this instance, assured by Dingwall that the new amusement park would bear no resemblance to the Gayway, would be sheltered by "heavy landscaping," and would make money, Council approved the change (Seattle Times, 5 Feb. 1963, p.5; 19 Feb. 1963, p.1).
With the new amusement park poised to sit in the shadows of serious culture (the Science Pavilion) and serious dining (the Space Needle), planners moved with renewed effort to certify that it would not be an embarrassment. Century 21, Inc. acquired eight 'major' rides and eight 'kiddie' rides, and, importantly, retained the local architect Roland Terry to guarantee that the rides would be properly situated in a park-like setting.

Roland Terry’s Fun Forest.

Roland Terry’s blueprints prepared the skeletal framework for the current Fun Forest, covering the same area and bestowing it with its name, yet in its details of execution were the seeds of an entirely different vision. Terry set out to create what he called a "light-hearted world of fantasy . . . a stage setting for everyone to have fun." It would have "none of the jukebox, cornball feeling" of the Coney Island-style park. Rather, the distinguished Fun Forest, unified by its "park-like" motif, would reflect an elusive magic as "imaginative as Tivoli . . . if not more so" (Terry, cited in Seattle Times, 5 May 1963, p.1). Terry coined the name Fun Forest for his tree-shaded amusement park, and proposed a landscape design so intricate in its arrangement that the rides, to be constantly in motion and changing
colours, virtually seemed the backdrops to the centre-stage trees, plants, and fountains.

The area that Terry was given to work with, we have seen, juxtaposed two Seattle Center 'zones.' The landscaped, gently rolling terrain between the Space Needle and the Science Pavilion presented an altogether different working environment than the rectangular, concrete expanse hemmed in by massive buildings and Monorail tracks. The solutions that Terry arrived at for each zone illuminate the complexity of meshing, in the Disney image, the garden theme with the urban environment: an intriguing segregation of amusement activities emerged within the Fun Forest boundaries.

The tranquil, tree-shaded area between the Space Needle and the Science Pavilion offered, in Terry's plans, an ideal location for children's and family-oriented leisure. The eight 'kiddie' rides to be placed here could be appropriately subdued by the lush landscaping. The atmosphere would resemble an English landscape garden in the Capability Brown vein, where vegetation, pools, lakes, waterfalls, and winding paths would accentuate the natural curves of the environment. Children could sample the tame rides while their parents relaxed in "restful picnic areas" (Seattle Times, 5 May 1963, p.1).

The concrete-dominated half of the amusement park offered a different challenge (Appendix 2). As the segment most firmly quarantined from the rest of Seattle Center, the eight
'major' rides could safely be located here to form the heart of the Fun Forest’s thrill ride section. The incorporation of a Tivoli-like theme required an alternative strategy; Terry chose to adopt a more urban-centred motif. In the absence of heavy landscaping, Terry instead turned to a delicate choreography of organized plantings, matching street furniture, and extensive art work (Figures 31 and 32). Terry acknowledged that the rides were "explosive items" and designed the surrounding site to simultaneously curtain and complement them: "the effort is to provide a unified background . . . and let the fun spots be fun spots (Terry, cited in Seattle Times, 5 May 1963, p.1).

As in the children’s section, the rides would be draped in greenery. Leafy sycamores were to be planted around the perimeter, and maples, poplars, beeches, and cedars to ring the individual rides. Yet here the vegetation was intended to contrast as much as to contain. The geometric placement of the plantings, together with the high profile fountains, built-in benches, and antique lamp posts, added a distinctly urban feel to the area. The crowning touch was to be the artwork: elaborate mosaics in the pavement and a sixty-foot high sculptured "Silver Gate" arching over the rides would be artifice as compelling to look at as the mechanical contraptions they offset. The effect would perhaps be articulated most powerfully at night. Garlands of alternating white and gold lights, involving over 20,000 light bulbs,
31. Roland Terry's Fun Forest Sketch
would be switched on to illuminate the trees. Thirty miniature lighted fountains would shimmer at ground level. And finally, the whirling, colourful rides themselves, now integral but not privileged components, added the final touch to what Terry called the Fun Forest's "jewel-like brilliance" (Terry, cited in Seattle Times, 5 May 1963, p.19).

Terry's plans met with the "delighted" approval of Century 21, Inc. officials, who were satisfied with its lush landscaping and tranquil pockets of repose (Seattle Times, 5 May 1963, p.1). On another level, however, Terry's Fun Forest can be seen as an intriguing compromise between Disney and Coney Island elements. The suburban ideal of family-oriented, tree-shaded leisure was relegated to the shadows of the 'serious' side of Seattle Center. The adult section, however, hidden away in its less-than-serious surroundings, thrived on deeper contradictions that perhaps went unnoticed by Century 21 officials.

Terry, unlike Disney, made no move to mask the structures of the thrill rides and thus alter the narrative they embraced. Rather, he juxtaposed them with greenery, art work, and urban street furniture: the Fun Forest's beauty would come from the simultaneous existence of these various impulses. Even the manner by which Terry envisioned joining the adult with the children's sections was rich with symbolic contradiction. He proposed the two areas be connected by a festively-lit "yellow brick road" that would also function as
an old-fashioned midway. The idyllic-sounding yellow brick road, well-recognized in popular culture as the path to utopia, would in fact lead more concretely to the Fun Forest’s Coney Island-esque games of chance (Alpert 1978, p.6).

Terry’s plans are worth examining in some detail because in utopian terms, he in effect set up the groundwork for dialogue concerning the two models of urban leisure space. In the spring of 1963, Seattle Center began construction on Terry’s Fun Forest; the groundwork was literally writ into the landscape. In retrospect, Terry’s plans were only partially implemented, and haphazardly maintained. However, those segments that were built seemed to set into motion conflicts between Disney and Coney Island space that to this day underlie the Fun Forest.

The City Tries its Hand at the Amusement Business.

The City of Seattle, under the auspices of the non-profit corporation Century 21, Inc., entered the amusement park business in 1963 and accepted full responsibility for the Fun Forest. They controlled all design, all capital expenditure, all hiring, and hence shaped the Fun Forest’s physical and social form in its inaugural season. They set out to lay the groundwork to “create a truly park-like atmosphere” for years to come (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.).
Following Terry's plans, the post-fair planners instigated several changes to the physical plant. The children's section, surrounded by the Science Pavilion and the Space Needle, received most of their attention. A "large lagoon" was constructed at the foot of the Space Needle and adorned with a "water sparkler" fountain; a second pool was added around the Mural Amphitheatre (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.). Not an inch of the children's area was left untouched: Century 21, Inc. boasted of planting "three acres of grass sod, over 1100 trees, 600 shrubs, and much ground cover" (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.). Building 50, the Fashion Pavillion during the Fair, was converted into a "Fun Circus" for the "small fry." All kiddie rides were located within this building, thus leaving the surrounding area in its natural tranquility (LARC 1978, p.64).

The adult section, on the other hand, apparently did not require as dramatic or immediate treatment. Its landscaping consisted of "hundreds of young trees" as yet too small to have much visual impact. But post-fair planners assured that this was just the beginning. "In a few years," they promised, the trees would "enclose the rides under a canopy of foliage" (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.). This "beautification program," as they called it, would continue into the coming years, featuring not only more landscaping but also "decorative roofs" covering each ride "providing protection from weather as well as keeping noise confined to the rides"
themselves" (Century 21, Inc., 1963b, n.p.). Finally, they promised, the Fun Forest would definitely be back in operation next spring (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.).

Such optimism belied internal confusion concerning the Fun Forest. Gayway employee and future Fun Forest, Inc. owner William Aubin recalls that, privately, Century 21, Inc. officials felt that they had suffered a "dismal" year and were ready to throw in the towel (Aubin 1991). Financially, they were in dire straits; the amusement operation was in the red (LARC 1978, p.64). The rides alone had cost Century 21, Inc. $230,000, which, added to the undisclosed sum spent on landscaping, "account[ed] for a significant portion of that corporation’s first year [Seattle Center-wide] investment" (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.). Century 21, Inc. reported "nearly 1,175,000" Fun Forest tickets sold and $315,000 in gross revenue (Century 21, Inc., 1963a, n.p.), but later listed their entire net concessions revenue, including food and merchandising, at $34,217 for the 1963 season ("Seattle Center: Nine Months Operation," 1964, n.p.)³.

Clearly, impressive profits from the Fun Forest would not be immediately forthcoming. Negotiations with Disney years earlier, as reported in the previous chapter, had foreshadowed this problem: Disney had expressed interest in Seattle solely

³A more detailed breakdown of Fun Forest revenue is suspiciously absent in 1963 Seattle Center annual reports; I speculate Century 21, Inc. selectively provided figures that put the ailing Fun Forest in the best light.
in terms of a permanent, long-term operation because of the sheer impossibility of amortizing one’s investment in a single year (Upson, Minutes, 27 May 1960). If Century 21, Inc. planners had considered the inevitable debt an amusement park would incur, it was not openly discussed in CCAC meetings. But now, whether forewarned or not, Century 21, Inc. were saddled with an amusement park that was not making money and were faced with still more capital expenditure to ensure the park would remain 'respectable.'

The "dismal" financial situation was a blow for the Fun Forest, since its very inclusion in the Total Plan had been justified on its money-making potential. And again, as during the Fair, the ultimate outcome of this muddle would involve the amusement park being transferred to private hands; under new management, the Fun Forest’s incipient Disney-esque tendencies would quickly be subdued. The 1964 season, thus, ushered in what would be a two-decade long era of Coney Island-like amusement in the Fun Forest, challenged intermittently but unsuccessfully by critics who called for a return to the Fun Forest’s original image.

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*Amortization rates can vary from three to twenty years, depending on the type and scale of operation. An operation the size of Roland Terry’s Fun Forest might expect a ten-year amortization period (Seattle Times, July 8, 1982, p.A1).*
As Seattle Center planners, in the absence of sufficient funds to carry out the Terry plans, lost interest in the Fun Forest, the amusement operation team of Gerald Mackey and William Aubin "stepped in and took over" (Aubin 1991). Their company, MAC Amusements, purchased the Fun Forest rides from Century 21, Inc. and signed a five-year lease with the City of Seattle as concessionaires of the Fun Forest. From the beginning, there was no question that the new, privately operated Fun Forest would resemble a Disney design. Both Mackey and Aubin, like Conklin and Batt before them, were experienced carnival men. Mackey was also the president of Burrard Amusements, the outfit that ran the midway at Vancouver’s Pacific National Exhibition between 1958 and 1976. Aubin’s expertise lay in midway games (Snyder 1990a, 1990b). Most of their employees had worked on the Gayway during the Fair (Snyder 1990a). MAC Amusements, thus, was far more likely to fashion a Coney Island-style amusement space than a peaceful, landscaped family leisure area. Yet in spite of their own personal approaches to amusement design, the people involved with MAC Amusements did inherit a site based on the rudimentary groundwork of Roland Terry’s Fun Forest. Hence the resulting amusement park contained both elements of a Disney-esque space and the seeds of rebellion against it.

The physical and social landscape that Mackey and Aubin constructed beginning in 1964 would remain rooted in the Seattle Center environment for decades: the Fun Forest, in spite of hundreds of minor adjustments over the years, has undergone few substantive changes. The amusement park effectively exists as utopian space in the Coney Island vein, occupying an unofficial netherworld where intense dialogues about leisure and urban space are staged, but where its everyday activities are often ignored. The Fun Forest often has slipped through the cracks, a product of decisions never formally recorded and changes never formally approved, representing, in short, the antithesis of Disney planning methods. Behind its mantle of fantasy, the Fun Forest provides the terrain upon which serious urban issues can be contested.

The Fun Forest, thus, steeped in a history of confused authority lines, neglect ranging from the benign to the malignant, and occasional flare-ups of panicked intervention from outside parties, offers sustained commentary on the tensions between Disney and Coney Island models of urban space. Whether examining the Fun Forest’s physical site and patrons, or the social relationships articulated between Fun Forest management, Seattle Center, and the City; whether observing the Fun Forest in times of neglect or high-pitched crisis, the parameters of debate are clearly defined. Disney space has been challenged consistently by Coney-esque
impulses, and these impulses hinge most often upon class, gender, and ethnic lines -- precisely those social issues "neutralized" in the Disney model.

The Fun Forest's Physical Site and Patronage.

The Fun Forest quickly, if erroneously, gained the reputation of being a place founded on "tacky leftovers from the World's Fair" (Fun Forest promotional consultant David Lempesis, cited in the Seattle Post Intelligencer, 6 May 1987, p.C5). While the Fun Forest was not, strictly speaking, a Century 21 remnant, its design features did suggest to many a "tacky" carnival character. The social composition and behaviour of patrons further emphasized the gulf between the Fun Forest and a Disney park. This distance, which I now examine, illustrates the magnitude of social issues being debated upon Fun Forest grounds.

A 1978 report commissioned by Seattle Center and carried out by Texas-based amusement consultants Leisure and Recreation Concepts, Inc (LARC)⁶ provided an indepth analysis of the Fun Forest's atmosphere and pinpointed those qualities that over the years had contributed to the Fun Forest's image as "just a carnival lot" (LARC 1978, p.91). "The first impression a visitor has when he [sic] enters Fun Forest," LARC (1978, p.10) began, "is that it does not belong there.

⁶Leisure and Recreation Consultants, Inc., are well-established consultants within the amusement industry. Their report can be seen as a reading of the Fun Forest through theme-park influenced eyes.
Fun Forest has an out-of-place look, like a P.T.A. carnival being run in the halls and classrooms of a school building."

The illusion of impermanence, LARC argued, was underscored by several characteristics of the park's design. The rides, "just sort of scattered around the perimeter," suggested that "everything could be taken down and moved in a couple of days" (LARC 1978, p.55). The only landscaping that was immediately evident to the consultants consisted of "flowers [that] have been planted occasionally" and shrubbery at the base of the roller coaster (LARC 1978, p.55, 59). The LARC consultants could discern no planned colour scheme, and freely commented that the colours the park had chosen, which in 1978 were heavy on "yellow, passionate pink, and purple," ranged from "really bad" to "downright offensive" (LARC 1978, p.11, 60, 62).

Graphics and signs were found to be "almost non-existent" (LARC 1978, p.53). The lighting came predominantly from the individual rides and did not form part of a broader aesthetic; in addition, many bulbs were burnt out (LARC 1978, p.51). The consultants labelled the Fun Forest sound "cheap and nerve-wracking" and noted that like the lighting, sound emanated from individual rides and clashed rather than complemented (LARC 1978, p.52). Traffic flow, finally, left the consultants somewhat baffled, as the Fun Forest's major pedestrian conduit also doubled as a fire and service lane. Were Fun Forest visitors adept at dodging the cars and trucks that used the walkway as a road, LARC (1978, p.63) asked, or
were visitors using the road as a walkway? Either way, the Fun Forest clearly did not offer an environment conducive to the pedestrian, and in the broader sweep of the eye (and ear), suggested to the patron that this "tacky carnival" might pull up stakes and leave town at any moment.

The LARC report, in essence, condemned the Fun Forest for not living up to Disney standards. Indeed, if Disney design stipulates the creation and maintenance of a harmonious, thematically unified site through centrally controlled management, the Fun Forest fails on both counts. Though Fun Forest management put a considerable amount of energy into site planning, change is always isolated, haphazard. New rides are scouted and old rides unloaded at industry conventions and through ride brokers on an on-going basis, but the decisions concerning a new ride's purchase, placement, and any necessary renovations are entirely pragmatic. A ride is purchased if it catches management's attention, the price is right, and space allows; it is located where it can be most easily set up in the least disruptive manner (Snyder 1991, Aubin 1990). No rides, further, are custom designed for the Fun Forest; consequently, they come mass-manufactured and relatively unadorned. Often the only 'theme' will be in the ride's name: The "Kiddie Coaster," for example, was rechristened the "Rainbow Chaser," yet the only rainbow in sight is on the ride's signboard (Snyder 1990a).
Landscaping, central to Disney's design and originally meant to be the Fun Forest's prize component, offers another example of Fun Forest's deviation from the Disney ideal. Only half-implemented in 1964, the park's landscaping has essentially stagnated since. As with the rides, change in the greenery comes gradually and randomly. One year, for example, Seattle Center's Physical Plant felt it prudent to remove a number of poplars that had grown into the Wild Mouse roller coaster. Another year Fun Forest management requested several juniper trees in planter boxes be added to the grounds (Longman 1991). Neither Seattle Center nor Fun Forest operators ever undertook a landscaping program as dramatic as Century 21, Inc. had in 1963; from year to year, the site remains basically the same. Landscaping at the Fun Forest, in fact, is most significant for the complex tug-of-war it has signalled between the Fun Forest and Seattle Center staff, as shall be described later in this chapter.

The patrons who populate the Fun Forest landscape deviate from stereotypical Disney guest profiles as much as the site itself deviates from classic Disney design. Data collected for the Fun Forest by the Gilmore Research Group in 1986, based on 401 on-site interviews, can provide an overview of

7Fun Forest contracts stipulate that Seattle Center, and not the concessionaire, was responsible for landscaping the amusement park grounds. The concessionaire, however, was welcome to put forth suggestions.
typical Fun Forest visitors\textsuperscript{8}. The average demographic sketch revealed a visitor thirty-two years of age, earning $27,250, who came to the Fun Forest 4.4 times a year in the company of 2.8 other people (a group that included other family members 61\% of the time), stayed 3.2 hours, and spent about $20.00; one out of three of these "average" visitors would be "non-white"\textsuperscript{9}, and each visitor stood an equal chance of being male or female (Gilmore Research Group 1986, pp.6-7). The nuances of the data, however, penetrated the unremarkable "average" visitor and better illustrated the peculiarities of Fun Forest patrons: interesting relationships between age, gender, race, income, and time of day emerged.

Two distinct sets of visitors, suggesting quite different experiences of the Fun Forest, can be gleaned from the statistics (Table 3). During the day, the park entertained "white" adult women with small children in tow: fully 81\% of day-time patrons were "white," and 76\% of the women who came to the park day or night were also "white" (Gilmore Research Group 1986, p.35). Since the ratio of "white" to "non-white" patrons rose consistently with increasing age, it can be assumed that these "white" women were in general twenty-five

\textsuperscript{8}Informal discussion with Fun Forest staff suggests that Gilmore's findings were equally applicable to earlier decades (Aubin Interview, May 31, 1991; Snyder Interview, Nov. 7, 1990).

\textsuperscript{9}The Gilmore Research Group (1986, p.7) defined "non-white" as inclusive of black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American.
### Table 3

**FUN FOREST PATRONS**

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent’s Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Time of Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-17 Years</td>
<td>18-24 Years</td>
<td>25-65+ Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17 Years</td>
<td>18-24 Years</td>
<td>25-65+ Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL n=</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gilmore Research Group 1986
years of age or older. They might visit the amusement park three or four times a year (Gilmore Research Group 1986, p.6).

After dark, however, a different picture was revealed and the image shifted to large proportions of "non-white" (primarily black) male teenagers who patronized the Fun Forest at least once a month. Whereas only 19% of day-time visitors were "non-white," the ratio increased to 45% in the evening. "Non-white" men outnumbered "non-white" women at all times of the day, as did "non-white" teen-agers in comparison to all other age groups (Gilmore Research Group 1986, p.35). The "white" women and their children left the premises at sunset, apparently, to be replaced by "non-white" male teens who arrived not with family but with friends and, in averaging twelve visits a year, made the Fun Forest something of a preferred local haunt (Gilmore Research Group 1986, p.7-8).

Income distributions, though not cross-tabulated with other factors, also suggested significant deviation from the Disney model when divided into frequent and infrequent visitors (Figure 33)\(^\text{10}\). The average income of $27,250 masked variation amongst subgroups of visitors. While the incomes of the eighty-four infrequent visitors were distributed into a normal curve, the incomes of the 113 frequent visitors displayed a moderate, though not dramatic, positive skew. For

\(^{10}\)For income distribution, once minors and non-responses were eliminated from the data set, \(N\) equalled 250.
Household Income
Fun Forest Visitors

Source: Gilmore Research Group 1986
our purposes, the useful implication lies in the fact that eighteen percent, or approximately twenty frequent visitors, reported incomes of less than $10,000. As people who visited the Fun Forest more often than average, these low-income patrons would thus contribute more visibly to the Fun Forest's overall atmosphere than, say, the six percent of infrequent visitors who earned over $50,000 (Gilmore Research Group 1986, p.41).

This statistical sketch of Fun Forest patrons hints at a richly complex social setting. Indeed, Seattle residents developed a variety of meanings and uses for the space, both evasive and productive, that quickly became integrated into the physical site's general atmosphere. Going far beyond the types of social and urban expression allowed within the Disney model, these meanings and uses ultimately contributed to the Fun Forest's Coney-like reputation. The profiles of the two dominant demographic groups, "white" women with young children and "non-white" male teenagers, immediately suggest a certain level of tension. On the surface, at least, some patrons effectively created family-oriented leisure space: by lingering in the more heavily-landscaped kiddieland area, one could enjoy an afternoon surrounded by features marginally reminiscent of a Disney park. It is less likely, however, that the second category of patron sought entertainment of this nature. The contours of the Fun Forest's social landscape, etched along deeply-embedded racial, economic, and
cultural lines, not only indicate that some patrons did not aspire to a Disney-like experience but also highlight the role of the Fun Forest's Coney Island traits in fostering utopian debate concerning specific racial and class-based dialogue, which I next explore.

Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s, various racial dialogues were articulated on Fun Forest grounds. Tracing their histories becomes a particularly intriguing task, because they were not reported in the media and never recorded in official archival documents; eyewitness accounts become the most dependable source of information. Fun Forest employee Dick Snyder (1990a) worked at the park since its inception, and watched cycles of racially motivated events occur. He sums up his experiences, from the perspective of a white ex-military man, in one word: "terrible." The Fun Forest was "the focal point . . . the place where everyone goes," thus attracting "many blacks, Orientals, Filipinos, Chicanos, who all have their own gangs." Snyder situated racial unrest within the context of Los Angeles' Watts riots; "after the [Watts] blacks had destroyed their own homes," Snyder explained, "the Federal Government relocated 40,000 Los Angeles blacks to Seattle . . . From that point on, all the trouble started, and it hasn't stopped yet."

The nature of the racial "trouble" as expressed on Fun Forest grounds transformed over the years from overt political struggle in the 1960s to drug and gang-related violence in the
1980s. Blacks during the 1960s used the Fun Forest and surrounding Seattle Center as a locale for what Fiske (1989b, 1992) would call a combination of evasive and productive tactics of resistance, and what Snyder (1990a) more dramatically labelled "terrorist" activities. The annual SeaFair Parade, for instance, whose route snaked through Seattle Center, one year was the target. Snyder (1990a) described that blacks "had threatened to blow up the SeaFair Parade," and Seattle Center was "heavily secured." A "total army battalion was hidden upstairs" overlooking the Fun Forest, ready for action. In the end, the parade was tense but unmarred, which Snyder attributed to then-Mayor Dorm Braman, who "talked tough to the blacks, telling them to go tell their communities that if they tried anything, he wouldn't hesitate to use all his firepower to turn it into a bloodbath."

The Fun Forest was once itself caught in such racial crossfire, according to Snyder. A ride known as the "Devil's Joy Ride" was "firebombed by blacks" within three hours of its grand opening in 1967. The fire's intense heat melted candy apples in a nearby snack bar and caused cigarettes to self-ignite in the ticket booth, but "miraculously" did not spread to other rides or injure anyone (Snyder 1990a)\(^{11}\). Snyder later lamented that the Municipal Arts Commission

\(^{11}\)Newspaper coverage made no mention of the cause of the fire (Seattle Times, June 11, 1967, p.1).
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forced the Fun Forest to repaint the (by then rebuilt) ride's front scene, which was decorated with evil spirits, gargoyles, and creatures who bore a certain resemblance to African jungle dwellers. Snyder implied that the Commission found the 'African' creatures particularly offensive; I speculate that the original ride's fiery demise may have also been hastened by what could be construed as racist decoration.

By the early 1980s, the nature of racial unrest had changed but the same fear of violence at the hand of "non-whites" remained. Snyder recounts an episode where "four blacks in battle fatigues were sighted at the bumper cars." Plainclothes police became suspicious as "all the kids were running up to [the four] and welcoming them to the Fun Forest, to Seattle," and, upon scanning the area, spotted "thirty-five known gang members" in the park (Snyder 1990a). Gang activity paralleled drug activity -- "blacks sell drugs right on the grounds" -- and the end result was "problems . . . they're in here tearing things down, shooting." Trouble at the Fun Forest signalled trouble across Seattle Center and in surrounding neighbourhoods. Fun Forest staff utilized the radio code "it's getting dark out" to indicate that "the blacks are coming and it's time to get the money under lock and key and watch out" (Snyder 1990a). Local businesses such as McDonald's, a block away, shut down when trouble loomed. "Someday," Snyder added, "someone will get killed."
Snyder emphasized that the sort of people about which he expressed concern was not simply a matter of race. At the root of the problem was "a certain type, those on social assistance" (Snyder 1990a). In raising this point, Snyder alluded to the visible presence of lower income people at the Fun Forest and attributed to them certain cultural traits. "Everytime we use the word 'free' in advertising," Snyder commented, "we have a riot. They think everything is free, the food, the rides, everything." Problems arose, Snyder continued, because these were the "sort of people who think everything should be free, that they deserve it."

Snyder's consternation with the apparent abundance of people who seemed disenchanted with authority is somewhat ironic, given that those same people may have been attracted to the Fun Forest due to the park's celebration, in other ways, of similar cultural traits. The Fun Forest, for instance, was sued by the City in 1971 for operating games of chance the City contended were illegal, and seven years later, it was again in hot water after installing the Penny Falls gambling machine, because, as a local newspaper stated, "Nevada Bans It, Seattle Center Has It" (Seattle Times, 18 Mar. 1971, p.B1; Seattle Times, 19 Aug. 1978, p.A1).

The social atmosphere in general often strayed from the middle-class safety and comfort guaranteed by the Disney model, an observation vividly captured by the image of two girls, ages six and nine, scared out of their wits in the dark
recesses of the Fun Forest's "Haunted House" ride when the attendant shut off the ride, an anonymous caller surmised, to intentionally frighten them (Seattle Center Complaint Sheet, 10 April 1989). Not all visits to the Fun Forest left patrons in tears, but many went away hopping mad over their treatment by Fun Forest staff. Visitor Cheri Peel, for example, reported being aghast when a game attendant swore at her and her family (Seattle Center Complaint Sheet, 4 Aug. 1988); an anonymous man and his children similarly encountered a "very rude" employee in the Mini-Golf attraction (Seattle Center Complaint Sheet, 2 June 1985).

The Fun Forest radiated unpleasant unpredictability in other ways, with one of the more notorious examples being the handwritten complaint entitled: "Naked woman in Gravitron" (1 Aug. 1988). The nude woman, as it turned out, did not appear in the flesh but rather in a video that played while the ride spun around; the employee in question had brought his own video from home and neglected to fast-forward through the offensive parts.

This small sample of the Fun Forest-related complaints that crossed the desk of Seattle Center's Contracts and Concession's Office illustrates how the amusement park set up a social landscape in which unconventional behaviour was exhibited with some frequency. It is not inconceivable that many of the repeat visitors represented by the Gilmore Research Group's demographic survey -- the black male
teenagers, the low-income visitors -- responded to the Fun Forest's aberrant nature. Fun Forest, Inc. owner William Aubin (1991) observed in a more anecdotal vein that by mid-season, the concessionaires know half of the patrons by name. Yet the fact that our thumbnail sketch of some of the park's more disreputable cultural traits has been culled from complaints lodged with higher authorities suggests that not everyone was comfortable with this atmosphere. Many, like Dick Snyder, would have preferred to see the park cleansed of people who "think everything should be free," people who could not be counted on to act in accordance to middle-class standards.

In essence, the Fun Forest's physical and social landscape is defined by a tension between its predominantly Coney-like atmosphere and the latent Disneyesque qualities to which it has clung over the years. While it is not my intention to condone gang and drug-related violence, or even scaring young children, these actions represent the evasive and productive cultural practices that set the scene for constructive utopian dialogue. Vandalism, drug deals, employees who swear at park visitors, and other such occurrences are all inherently spatial acts. Each practice -- contemptuous of authority, offensive, and hence easily accused of being politically empty -- represents the takeover and redefinition of a particular location. It is, to quote Fiske (1989b, p.36) "constructing our space within and against their
space," with their space being the traces of the Disney model. Clearly, this form of resistance will not earn participants any degree of social transformation except perhaps a jail sentence; however, of significance here is that the Fun Forest fosters an atmosphere unstructured enough to allow resistance to the conformity to dominant culture that the Disney model seeks to enforce. In short, within the Fun Forest’s physical site and in the behaviour of its patrons, Coney Island impulses, inviting confrontation rather than conformity, prevail.

Centralized Control? Fun Forest Management.

A central tenet of the Disney model is that the management of urban space should be centrally controlled, organized, and efficient. The Fun Forest, as we shall see, is none of these. The park exists as public space that has been leased to and managed by a private company; consequently, the amusement park and its operators are situated within specific formal arrangements with both Seattle Center and the City of Seattle. However, most of the Fun Forest’s daily interactions with these two entities fall into territory not covered by formal agreements. All parties, further, have different priorities and exercise enormous latitude in their interpretation of their role in the Fun Forest’s situation: The Fun Forest is tolerated by Seattle Center management who look forward to the yearly revenue the park guarantees, cursed by the landscaping and design segment who come into daily
contact with it, ignored by Seattle Center architects and planners who concentrate their attention on more 'serious' issues, and completely forgotten by the City -- until the next crisis looms.

The Fun Forest’s network of relationships creates a hierarchy of authority where the degree of contact the amusement park has with a governing body is inversely proportional to the amount of control that body has over the Fun Forest. The City of Seattle, as the landlord, has the 'final say.' Through the municipal powers vested in City Council, it can decide the park’s fate. Fun Forest-related issues, however, rarely make it to council chambers. The Municipal Arts Commission, a citizen’s advisory commission appointed by the City with offices at City Hall, similarly holds the authority to request artistic or design-related changes when such need is brought to their attention. The bulk of the Fun Forest’s management, however, falls into the hands of the Seattle Center Department, a City Department created in 1966 to run Seattle Center’s daily operations.¹²

The Seattle Center Department, located on Seattle Center grounds, was established as a large department with its own hierarchy of power. Its director was to be appointed by the Mayor, but all other hiring would proceed internally. Four

¹²The creation of the Seattle Center Department officially ended the transition period that Century 21, Inc. oversaw (City of Seattle Ordinance #94446, Jan. 1966).
branches of the Department’s pyramid became important for the Fun Forest, in diminishing order of authority: the Director, the Project Management Office, the Contracts and Concessions Office, and Physical Plant. While the City holds ultimate authority over the Fun Forest, we can consider this constellation of relationships internal to Seattle Center to be most influential on the amusement park’s daily existence. The impact each department has had within a maze of informal and ill-defined authority lines can be outlined by examining the unique perspectives each group held, starting with the Fun Forest itself and moving outward. Such an overview stresses the degree to which the Fun Forest’s management deviates from the orderly, efficient Disney model. Instead, it is governed by a form of management closer to the Coney Island model — decentralized, disorganized, and at times laced with chaos.

1. The Fun Forest’s Perspective. Fun Forest comptroller Dick Snyder summed up his view of the amusement park’s role as "the bastard cousins in the family. They tolerate us, take our profits, but would rather see us disappear" (Snyder 1990a). The "family" broadly encompasses both Seattle Center and City representatives, and acquires a somewhat faceless quality: Fun Forest personnel tend to refer to both groups interchangeably, rarely specifying individual names even when carefully quizzed (Aubin 1991). The actions of this faceless entity occasionally aid the Fun Forest, but more often hinder their affairs through a perceived presence that ranges from
incompetent to conspiratorial. The overall result, from the Fun Forest's point of view, is series of minor disturbances that, while not immediately threatening, prove annoying.

Talking to the "City," Aubin (1991) commented, is "like spinning wheels." He points to the fact that they "didn't know anything" about the amusement industry, exacerbated by their consistent lack of a clear idea concerning Seattle Center's future. The "City," or, variously, the "Seattle Center," is held responsible for the relative status of Fun Forest aesthetic design and landscaping. "Seattle Center Management," for example, Snyder recalls, handicapped by "total incompetence," missed an opportunity to take advantage of Tivoli lights and benches donated by the City of Copenhagen during the 1960s. The "Seattle Center" never got organized, and the street furniture, never installed, eventually disappeared (Snyder 1990a). Other design elements were more specifically blamed on the Municipal Arts Commission, another element of the "City" with no understanding of amusement parks. Neon lighting that had decorated the bumper cars, considered quite fetching by amusement park standards, was dismissed as "too gaudy" by the Commission and ordered removed (Snyder 1990a). Likewise, Snyder continued, the Commission also vetoed the traditional red and white carnival colour scheme that the Fun Forest wished to implement, not grasping the pragmatic significance of the high visibility of these colours day and night. The conversion of the elegant,
copper-roofed IBM pavilion (Figure 29 [Chapter 5]) into a Mini-Golf attraction in the mid-1960s, further, was considered a "terrible idea" by the "City," until the Mayor himself paid it a visit and "at the eighth or tenth hole" stopped and declared "now, this is what I call taking a black hole and making it useful" (Aubin 1991). "As soon as the Mayor liked it," Aubin commented rather bitterly, "suddenly everyone else liked it too."

Fun Forest management also perceive the "City" as interfering in the park's landscaping. Snyder (1990a) laments that the "City" capriciously removed many of the trees that had been planted around the thrill rides in 1963; it was also a "tragedy" that the "City" had taken down "fifty to one hundred" pine trees on the Fun Forest perimeter, simply because it was "not in their plans." At the same time, however, trees recently planted by the "City" between the Space Needle and the kiddie bumper cars are not welcome, because they are seen as a tree screen lobbied for by the Space Needle, an independently owned Seattle Center structure rumoured to want the Fun Forest replaced with a sculpture garden.

The notion of subtle conspiracy often resurfaces in discussing the Fun Forest's role at Seattle Center. As Snyder phrased it, the rest of the Seattle Center "would rather see us disappear;" "City" and "Seattle Center" actions are often interpreted as gentle nudges in this direction. In the late
1960s, for instance, Snyder related, bond money earmarked for Fun Forest improvements was somehow diverted into valet parking for the Space Needle, a move that swallowed up the Fun Forest's children's theatre in the process (Snyder 1990a). A Seattle Center "Tourmap" from 1969 neither labelled nor graphically depicted the Fun Forest: the entire area was shown as a gently landscaped setting nestled in at the foot of the Space Needle (Seattle Center Tourmap 1969). The Fun Forest was further affected by "secretive operations" in later decades as Seattle Center directors made deals "behind everyone's back." The Skyride, for instance, was lost in 1979 when its spot was 'annexed' to expand the Seattle Center theatre zone, and a few years later, in a move rumoured engineered by the Space Needle Corporation, the Water Sparkler fountain was filled in and replaced with a large red sculpture (Snyder 1990a).

Aubin (1991), in light of such actions, was led to suspect that the Fun Forest is not wanted. Declaring that "I don't want to be where I'm not wanted," he took pains to establish himself in the role of the cooperative concessionaire: "I don't want to interfere with the betterment of the Seattle Center . . . whatever they want to do, I'll go along with" he explained, later repeatedly asking the rhetorical question "am I crazy to be willing to invest a
million dollars on my contract?" In general, thus, the Fun Forest has endured the decades since it took over in 1964, feeling hemmed in and misunderstood by other authorities that it felt wished to turn it into something it was not.

ii. Other Seattle Center Perspectives. The interpretation of any situation is tempered by the individual personalities involved and the perceived nature of surrounding conditions, but by looking at the perspectives that various Seattle Center parties hold on the amusement park, we can see how Fun Forest personnel could uniformly conclude, individual personalities aside, that they were misunderstood and unwanted. From the upper echelons of Seattle Center management to the groundskeepers, carpenters, and others who come into daily contact with the amusement park, no one shares the Fun Forest’s perspective on the situation.

Those in administrative positions speak of the Fun Forest as a welcome money-making and relatively trouble-free entity that seems to take care of itself. Pat Morosic, for instance, who currently heads the Contracts and Concessions Office, and hence is charged with administering Fun Forest contracts, stresses "we love the Fun Forest," praising Bill Aubin as a "neat guy" who has exceeded expectation given the hampered conditions within which he must work (Morosic 1991). Morosic

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Aubin referred specifically to the contract’s length: the longest contract that Fun Forest, Inc. (or, previously, MAC Amusements) had been awarded was five years, and during some periods the contracts were year-to-year.

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FUN FOREST REVENUE
Paid to City of Seattle

Source: LARC 1978
describes the Fun Forest as having free reign over design issues, with most concern focused on technical issues such as electrical connections or noise levels. The Project Management Office, responsible for overseeing all Seattle Center design, concurs: Seattle Center architect Terry Plumb explains that with the Fun Forest, there is no real design approval process. Minor changes, such as repainting or other maintenance-oriented actions, require little administrative attention. "The Fun Forest can do what it wants in that arena" (Plumb 1991). Fellow Seattle Center architect Tim Rood adds that due to a "benign relationship" between the Fun Forest and Seattle Center, written agreements are rarely deemed necessary (Rood 1991). For larger changes, Plumb explains, the Fun Forest need only submit plans to the Contract and Concessions Office, who then "may pass it along to us" if they so chose. Plumb points out, however, that this scenario is basically conjecture. "The Fun Forest has never wanted to make major improvements . . . so I really couldn't say what would happen." Both Rood and Plumb freely admit that amusement park design is not a preferred topic of contemplation in their offices. "Basically, the Fun Forest is all carnival rides. If you've seen one, you've seen them all. Either you like carnival rides or you don't," Plumb says, implying that he does not (Plumb 1991).

In short, the everyday haggling that the Fun Forest personnel see as central to their life seems non-existent in
the Seattle Center administration's world view: it is the administration's impression that the Fun Forest is allowed to continue, undisturbed, as long as its financial and safety obligations are met. Yet access to the internal records of the Contracts and Concessions Office, as the body also responsible for mediating Fun Forest-related complaints, provides an interesting counterpoint. The office files document that far from being unproblematic, the Fun Forest's relationship with other branches of Seattle Center's everyday operations is rife with bickering and negotiation. The fighting, further, centres almost exclusively on minor issues and never seems to engender change that would require official approval -- it is not hard to see how Morosic, Plumb, Rood, and other administrators not directly involved in these daily skirmishes, and, hence, not necessarily even aware of them, could conclude that the Fun Forest operated with little Seattle Center input. But for those who have to deal with the Fun Forest everyday, a picture emerges of a complex "tug-of-war"\textsuperscript{14} between the various contingents responsible for maintaining the Seattle Center grounds, where the central issues at stake are the design styles that should be implemented in the amusement park and who should have the authority to implement them -- both issues central to the

\textsuperscript{14}Phrase borrowed from a memo by Seattle Center employee Bette Robbins, referring to an on-going battle to stop the Fun Forest from draining a fountain (Robbins to Boblet, July 14, 1986).
Disney model, yet left nebulous in the Fun Forest's short-term contract. Significantly, one sees repeated attempts on the part of Seattle Center to instill Disney-esque qualities in the Fun Forest.

"Absolutely no cutting or pruning unless authorized," a memorandum addressed to "All Fun Forest Personell [sic]" stated, for "violation could lead to termination" ("All Fun Forest Personell," 8 Mar. 1988). The terse tone of this memo speaks to the antagonistic relations developed between the Fun Forest and other Seattle Center staff. A steady stream of complaints concerning trees, shrubbery, trash, excessive noise, painting, sidewalk decoration, and myriad other minor issues trickles through the Contracts and Concessions Offices. These complaints not only register the frustration of others trying to work around the Fun Forest's practices, but also lend substance to Fun Forest personnel's sense that Seattle Center management does attempt to control them from above. A memo from Pat Morosic to the Fun Forest Offices, for example, thanked Fun Forest staff for removing two planters that proved offensive to Seattle Center sensibilities and suggested that "if you [still] require a 'barrier'... we suggest a picket fence or something more becoming to the areas" (Morosic to Robertson, 23 Jan. 1989). Likewise, another memo from Morosic revealed that the Fun Forest's "free reign" in colour scheme was closely guarded even within the Seattle Center administration: "We're excited about the [proposed] Fun
Forest facelift," she began, and reminded the Fun Forest that the Arcade was to be painted cream colours with deep purple accents on the arches and pillars, the snack bar the same cream colour, the Fun Forest offices light grey, and the souvenir shops "either grey or cream -- the choice is yours" (Morosic to Aubin, 19 Dec. 1988). News that Aubin had agreed to these colours reached the Seattle Center Director herself, who enthusiastically replied "this is great news!" (Anderson to Morosic, 15 Dec. 1988).

Other Seattle Center staff have been less enthusiastic about the general situation. Ken Longman, as head of Physical Plant, provides a more cynical glimpse at the daily machinations that culminate in Morosic’s cheerful memos. "Utility," he claims, "designed the Fun Forest" (Longman 1991). From his many haggles with Fun Forest employees, he concludes that "these guys are businessmen, mechanics, that’s all. They have no interest in aesthetics." He retells with disdain the story of how the junipers that Aubin requested came to be: "Aubin called me up, asking for plants that would withstand general rough wear and no water, since he didn’t have enough money to water it." The juniper, clearly not Longman’s favourite, was chosen only because of its indestructibility. As to the rest of the Fun Forest’s landscaping efforts, Longman continues, "they stuck a couple of trees in hodgepodge." More often than not, from Longman’s perspective, the Fun Forest landscaping is a reductive, not
additive, process: three cedars, for instance, one day were "chopped down [by Fun Forest staff] for a ride, whether we like[d] it or not."

Other elements of Fun Forest design, Longman adds, rival the landscaping in their unattractiveness. "All design means to them is how to catch customers with this glitzy ride, then pull them over here with that ride," a strategy, in Longman's view, doomed from the beginning because "the rides destroy any aesthetic integrity . . . anyway." Seattle Center, he concludes, "does not need an amusement park and an amusement park does not need Seattle Center."

Longman, a landscape architect by training, sees the root of the problem stemming from the Fun Forest's existence as a "tight, autonomous" entity that has been allowed to let the landscape evolve and be modified over the years with no master planning. He pinpoints specifically the "cozy relationship" that he felt the Fun Forest enjoyed with long-time Seattle Center Director Jack Fearey. During that era, Longman reported, "things worked out in [the Fun Forest's] favour." Whatever they wanted to do, Fearey said "no problem, go ahead" (Longman 1991). The frustration that Longman and others feel, translated no doubt into years of complaining to the Contracts and Concessions Office, is echoed in a plea made by that Office to upper Seattle Center management: "The Fun Forest is

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15Fearey held the post between 1970 and 1983.
inclined to do 'their own thing' and we come across it after the fact . . . we need to know what's happening" (Morosic to Lewis, 18 July 1988).

The constellation of relationships that define the Fun Forest's existence within layers of Seattle Center and City authority, thus, mean many things to many people. Seattle Center and Fun Forest employees, most intimately involved with the park at an everyday level, feel they are struggling against overwhelming demands made and resistance staged by the opposing entity. Whether agency is ascribed to the hands of an amusement park that is "inclined to do 'their own thing,'" or to the hands of a faceless, conspiratorial group that "would rather see us disappear," both parties would agree that nothing tangible is ever accomplished. 'Higher' authorities remain oblivious to the minor bickering. For most of the time, the Fun Forest signifies to them reliable profits and, perhaps, a game of Mini Golf -- until, that is, the next crisis begins to brew.

The occasional crises that strike the Fun Forest, as I discuss in the next section, in essence represent the moments when the Disney/Coney conflicts are most powerfully crystallized within the complex web of management I have outlined above. Fun Forest management represents the very antithesis of Disney management; central control only works democratically if all parties share the same goals and interpret situations in the same light. In the Fun Forest's
case, the absence of any shared perspectives transforms Disney-style top-down management into perceived dictatorial control. Occasionally, as we shall see, the clashes become too intense to ignore.

iii. Times of Crisis. As we have seen, a Coney-Disney tension is always simmering in the Fun Forest's world. At points, though, the tension flares to an explosive point, and as if struck with a flashbulb, the social issues lingering in the darkness are brilliantly and briefly illuminated. These crisis points share three characteristics in common. First, in each case the impetus comes as outside money becomes available and changing leadership in either the City or Seattle Center refocuses attention on the Fun Forest, sparking a crisis. Second, these episodes of crisis management are in a sense meaningless: neither the Fun Forest landscape nor the network of relations within which it exists have ever been transformed as a result. But third, and most important, the crisis points symbolically indicate how the Coney Island-esque aspects of the Fun Forest focus a broader urban debate. These flare-ups neatly encapsulate everything wrong with Seattle Center and, by extension, urbanity; efforts to reconceptualize and retrieve the park's submerged Disney-esque elements can be seen as tantamount to efforts at redefining urbanity in a more palatable, suburban vein.

The first crisis surfaced roughly two years after MAC Amusements took over, when it appeared that a substantial sum
of money from the city-wide Forward Thrust initiative would be directed toward Seattle Center in the near future. Under the leadership of newly appointed Seattle Center Director Max Burland, one of the original Disney veterans during Century 21, Seattle Center initially called for 4.5 million dollars to finance the "completion and expansion of the Fun Forest" ("Draft Report for Discussion," 18 Feb. 1966). Burland, addressing the Seattle Center Advisory Commission (SCAC), noted that though the Fun Forest management had already "gone further with its investment than the length of its [five-year] contract justified," it was time to "create the quality necessary to maintain and enhance the aesthetic character of the Center" (SCAC, 13 Sept. 1966).

Burland's comments instigated a flurry of activity. Roland Terry was consulted once again, and later officially retained by the Mayor's Office to provide plans for the upgrading of the entire Seattle Center campus (SCAC, 2 Nov. 1967). Terry surveyed the existing Fun Forest site and declared that "great improvements in appearance" were necessary (Terry to Shefelman, 23 Sept. 1966). Giving the amusement park "visual permanency," Terry argued, could be most easily achieved by returning to Thiry's Master Plan in general and to his own Fun Forest proposals in particular.

Forward Thrust was a ground-breaking set of bond issues in the mid-1960s that was to finance many improvements aimed at making Seattle a 'livable city' and simultaneously restructure the political process through which such improvements were financed.
Terry entertained the SCAC with a refresher course on the "Tivoli Concept," which all found "most enjoyable and exciting" (SCAC, 2 Nov. 1967). Terry provided specific advice, punctuated with sixty-three graphic sketches, on how to return to the concept from which the current Fun Forest had strayed: "By means of exciting innovations in lighting, graphics, signs, murals, and landscape features, [we] can make this area of comparable design quality to other facilities in the Center" (SCAC, 25 Sept. 1966; Terry to Shefelman, 23 Sept. 1966). Furthermore, Terry added, the upgrading should proceed not under Fun Forest's auspices but under the supervision of Seattle Center's primary architect, using local artists and craftspeople (Terry to Shefelman, 23 Sept. 1966).

In spite of these ambitious beginnings, plans for the Fun Forest gradually lost ground to other Seattle Center priorities. By July of 1967, Seattle Center had settled on its five primary objectives: (1) alleviation of traffic congestion and parking problems; (2) acquisition of additional land; (3) construction of additional theatre facilities; (4) provision of adequate rehearsal space for all arts; and (5) conversion of the stadium area into other uses ("Outline for Seattle Center Meeting," 12 July 1967). The Fun Forest did not figure into any of their top plans, and ultimately was only allocated $400,000 and not 4.5 million dollars. The money, it was stipulated, was to be spent on the creation of proper ride pad areas, the modification of underground
utilities, the upgrading of paving, fencing, seating areas, and the east gateway facade ("Preliminary Draft Report: Seattle Center Capital Improvement Needs," 23 Nov. 1968). Though the Fun Forest, presumably, was a safer amusement park upon the completion of these improvements, it was not a different-looking one. The most pronounced visual impact, as Snyder lamented, was the loss of Fun Forest facilities to Space Needle valet parking.

For the next decade, the Fun Forest continued as it had before the Forward Thrust initiative, submerged in its own maelstrom of arguments but ignored by the City and top Seattle Center management. Then, in 1977, a nineteen million dollar Seattle Center bond issue was passed, with $1.3 million allotted to the Fun Forest for unspecified general improvements (Osaki 1982, p.9). City and Seattle Center management, once again spurred into action, took a good look at the Fun Forest, and, again, noted how far it had deviated from the Disney ideal. In the words of local journalist Bill Alpert, they saw "unrelieved expanses of littered black asphalt . . . The only lights of any distinction [came] from the SeaFirst cash machine, the splashes of colour limited to day-glo poodles that [hung] limply waiting to be won" (Alpert 1978, p.6).

Seattle Center management dusted off the 1963 Terry plans and consulted with Terry himself, who assured them that "I still feel the potential is there, even in that chopped up
space, if the proper person is given authority. It could be like Tivoli" (Terry, cited in Alpert 1978, p.6). Seattle Center Director Jack Fearey then hired the amusement consulting company LARC for $10,000 in order to determine how best to spend the bond money (Seattle Times, 29 July 1982, p.B1). In their lengthy study, LARC set out to provide sufficient factual information about the amusement industry to help Seattle Center make decisions, and to recommend specific modifications to the Fun Forest (LARC 1978, p.2); Seattle Center hoped to use this information to decide how best to pursue transforming the Fun Forest into a theme park (Alpert 1978, p.7).

The advice Seattle Center received assured them that Fun Forest could be elevated from "just a carnival lot" to a "family entertainment center" without "inordinate expenditure" (LARC 1978, p.91; p.85). Instead of all-out themeing, LARC (1978, p.86) recommended that Seattle Center encourage a "general upgrade of everything." A site redesign, amounting to a reshuffling of ride positions (Figure 35), should be enhanced with costumed characters and inexpensive redecoration along a central theme. LARC suggested, in keeping with the 'forest' motif, costumed bears, woodcutters, and old witches, groups of singing and dancing college kids dressed as Robin Hood and his merry men, concession stands converted into candy-stick houses, and themed flags, banners, and trash receptacles to complete the image (LARC 1978, pp.85-86). "All...
35. **FUN FOREST PROPOSAL**

LEISURE AND RECREATIONAL CONCEPTS, INC.

Adapted from Leisure and Recreational Concepts, Inc. 1978
of this will be most attractive," LARC promised, but also reminded Seattle Center that their role in all this must be "knowledgeable, informed, firm, even-handed, imaginative, and involved" — in short, everything that Seattle Center had not been (LARC 1978, p.101; p.88).

Seattle Center and the City, perhaps inspired by LARC's warning, attempted to remain more involved in the Fun Forest's future. At the end of 1978 MAC Amusements' five-year contract expired, and for the first time, instead of automatically renewing it, Seattle Center issued a Request for Proposal for the amusement park concession, and Council staff made various calls to "amusement parks around the country" to try to drum up interest (Osaki 1982, pp.10-11). The only proposal they received, however, was from the current concessionaire. MAC Amusements was awarded a year-to-year contract, and a portion of the original $1.3 million was put toward maintenance and upgrading. The Fun Forest gained increased storage space, improved restroom facilities, better safety lighting and electrical connections, and a new roof for the Arcade, which, as LARC (1978, p.12) noted, was "in urgent need of bird-proofing."

17That Seattle Center called for proposals and not competitive bids would later come back to haunt them: Council later criticized Seattle Center of engineering their so-called search for alternatives to lead back to MAC Amusements, since the proposal, unlike the bid, allowed concessionaires to negotiate the terms of their contract and thus guaranteed far more fluidity than Council wanted (Seattle Times, July 29, 1982, p.B1).
The bond money, the LARC report, and the surrounding interest they generated, like the Forward Thrust initiative a decade earlier, thus, left no real tangible marks. The *Seattle Times* (29 July 1982, p.B1) accused Seattle Center of ignoring sound advice even when it had the money available to bring about change. Yet the outcome of this round of crisis management did, in fact, leave one lasting trait: by piquing the interest -- and suspicion -- of City Council, it ensured that when the next crisis loomed, the repercussions would be that much greater.

The City was by now well attuned to Seattle Center affairs: after their first round of attempted proposal negotiations in 1979, they grew increasingly uncomfortable with ‘traditional’ Seattle Center characteristics. Seattle Center reported mounting debt and the director seemed involved in shady dealings. The last straw came when, from Council’s perspective, Seattle Center tried to slip past Council a dubious twenty-year amusement park contract. Council made the Fun Forest in particular, and Seattle Center in general, a top priority, and a thorough investigation was undertaken.

City Council, in a fact-finding mission spearheaded by Councilmember Dolores Sibonga and carried out through the research of legislative assistant Alan Osaki, unearthed sufficient evidence against Fun Forest operations to convince themselves not only to reject the new contract but also to re-evaluate the entire Seattle Center infrastructure. The
nature of the complaints against the Fun Forest painted it as a seedy, poorly-run business. Not only did it "look like a carnival," as Sibonga criticized, but its daily operations smacked of the criminal (Sibonga, cited in Seattle Post Intelligencer, 25 Jan. 1983, p.C1). Osaki (1982, pp.2-3) outlined charges of skimming laid against MAC Amusement's owner Beverly Mackey Hughes by the RCMP while operating games at the PNE in Vancouver. He further pointed out that the two owners of sub-lessee S + H Concessions, who happened to be Mackey Hughes' brother and ex-husband, had amassed between them a police record that included robbery, forgery, burglary, assaulting a police officer, and conspiracy to defraud. They also had been blacklisted by the State Gambling Commission (Osaki 1982, p.4). Council, not surprisingly, balked at granting a twenty-year lease, the terms of which eased safety requirements and lowered the City's guaranteed yearly percentage (Seattle Times, 29 July 1982, p.B1). In the sheer absence of other alternatives, however, Council agreed to a one-year provisional pact with MAC Amusements.

Mackey Hughes reacted with outrage, first demanding an apology from Osaki and, when that was not forthcoming, launching a $15.3 million lawsuit against the City, claiming defamation of character and unfair denial of a contract (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 14 July 1982, p.C1; Seattle Times, 30 July 1982, p.B1; Seattle Weekly, 4-10 Aug. 1982, p.5). Events eventually simmered down and the lawsuit was
dropped, but the damage was done. The City began to reconsider the entire Seattle Center structure within which the park existed.

Attention came to rest on Director Jack Fearey, whose activities seemed symbolic of the breadth of Seattle Center's problems. Of prime concern was the fact that Seattle Center consistently lost money. At one point during 1982, it was over one million dollars in debt. Fearey approached Council for a $300,000 emergency loan, and asked to have $25,000 of bad debts written off. Instead of automatically granting Seattle Center's requests as had been done in past years, Council arranged a full-scale audit and discovered that Seattle Center had neglected to attempt to collect on the 'bad' debts (Seattle Times, 10 July 1982, p.A6).

Fearey also came under fire for his personal approach to business matters. In 1979, as noted, he had been accused of favouritism in negotiating a new Fun Forest contract, a charge that echoed earlier allegations of impropriety stemming from Fearey's acceptance of a basket of fruit and cheese from a Seattle Center concessionaire (Seattle Times, 25 Apr. 1977, p.A10). Council was similarly unimpressed when Fearey authorized design work on a new theatre without prior approval from the City (Seattle Times, 10 July 1982, p.A6). In short, Fearey's mode of operation suggested the very style of urban planning that produced landscapes such as the Fun Forest.
Council wanted change. Fearey was 'encouraged' to resign and the man that the mayor appointed in his stead was Ewen C. Dingwall. This was the same Dingwall who first imbued Century 21 with Disney traits and then tried to maintain them in Seattle Center's early years.

One of Dingwall's first actions as Director was to lobby council for a redesigned amusement park. He argued that this was not only necessary for the Fun Forest site but would also "spark a revitalized interest in Seattle Center" as a whole (Dingwall, cited in *Post Intelligencer*, 25 Jan. 1983, p.C1). As he later told Aubin in a letter, it would reflect "an entirely new concept which will be consistent with other changes which are underway" (Dingwall to Aubin, 6 Aug. 1984). In developing this "new concept," Dingwall turned to his old friend Harrison Price.

The relationship between Harrison Price and Dingwall stretched back many years, before Price's involvement in Century 21 to when they were young "colleagues," or "college roommates" as some have said (Boren 1987, p.2; Snyder 1990b). As important as the hint of favouritism was the fact that the Harrison Price Company was at the time financial consultant to the Disney theme parks. In seeking Harrison Price's advice, Dingwall was, in essence, going straight to the Disney master.

The review by Price's company bolstered Dingwall's proposal. The Fun Forest was an "old-fashioned, antiquated park hanging on in a marketplace which would support something
better...it does not merit a long-term lease on prime public ground. It needs much more than a minor face-lifting and redecorating" (Harrison Price Company, cited in Seattle Times, 13 Jan. 1983, p.B6). On the basis of this report, Dingwall asked and received from Council $90,000 to start planning in earnest for a new, improved Seattle Center.

The $90,000 was to be devoted exclusively to the Fun Forest: Harrison Price would be officially hired as consultants, and various city employees would be paid to take a more active interest in the amusement industry through such means as visiting parks around the country (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 25 Jan. 1983, p.C1). Dingwall told Council that he hoped to attract a small theme park that would take advantage of "revolutionary changes in design and technology" and incorporate a theme unique to Seattle (Dingwall, cited in Seattle Times, 25 Jan. 1983, p.A1). Best of all, the new theme park, which would cost between ten and twelve million dollars, would be financed entirely by private capital.

Dingwall's enthusiasm spread. Dolores Sibonga, now infamous for her savage criticism of the Fun Forest, stated that she would welcome "more of a permanent structure, with good landscaping" (Sibonga, cited in Seattle Post Intelligencer, 25 Jan. 1983, p.C1). The following August, Council approved a proposal to invite developers to tender bids; plans for 'Disneyland North' were underway (Seattle Times, 13 Aug. 13, 1983, p.C22).
Conclusion.

When Dingwall won the right to open bidding for the new Fun Forest, it appeared that, at last, the amusement park, and with it the entire Seattle Center, would fulfill its Century 21 promise. A safe, family-oriented theme park, developed in conjunction with Harrison Price’s sound Disney advice, would not only double attendance and revenues, Dingwall suggested, but also infinitely enhance Seattle Center’s urban character (Seattle Times, 13 Jan. 1983, p.B6). Bringing a Disney-like park to Seattle, however, turned out to be a harder task than Dingwall envisioned. Large theme park developers were disinterested in such a small lot size hemmed in by public property. Of the small operators that did apply, ironically, Aubin’s Fun Forest, Inc. submitted the only acceptable proposal, one drafted with the assistance of Texas-based theme park designer David Hughes Architecture, Inc. (Figure 36) 18. The Fun Forest was back as usual, again on a year-to-year contract. But though the amusement park’s Coney Island-esque traces remained firmly embedded in Seattle Center, the way was paved for more serious consideration of how Disney could help reshape urbanity.

Over the years, as I have argued in this chapter, the Fun Forest engendered chancy, participatory dialogue that

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18 Beverly Mackey Hughes had since sold out entirely to Aubin, who officially changed MAC Amusements to Fun Forest, Inc. in December 1983.
36. **FUN FOREST PROPOSAL**  
**DAVID HUGHES ARCHITECTURE, INC.**

Adapted from Hughes, n.d.
confronted head-on a variety of social issues; evasive and productive cultural practices that centred upon class and racial tensions were particularly evident. The chaotic management practices that underscored the Fun Forest's existence made it nearly impossible for any single agency to shape the Fun Forest to their ideal. The Fun Forest, in other words, represents contemporary amusement space in which the Coney Island model has triumphed. It plays host to forms of resistance -- often disruptive, offensive, and seemingly empty -- that would by definition be written out of the Disney script.

Seattle Center management and the City in 1983 both embraced Disney specifically in the hopes that Disney-style design could cleanse not just the Fun Forest but Seattle Center of its Coney-esque characteristics. Disney, of course, held great appeal as successful creators of charming and organized urban spaces within theme park walls. Yet Seattle, in a truly visionary moment, transformed the symbolic to the literal: they speculated Disney would be able to help them physically rebuild actual urban space, and set out to enlist Disney's help in reshaping Seattle Center. Thus, as I explain in the next chapter, the tensions that the Fun Forest incubated on its terrain now, as Disney takes on the role of 'serious' urban planning consultant, become translated to the city at large.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DISNEY DECADE: DISNEY REDESIGNS SEATTLE CENTER

The final chapter of the Disney saga in Seattle both offered the most promising Disney vision yet and ultimately spelled the end of Seattle's interest in Disney. During the years 1985 to 1989, the Disney Company became a high profile urban planning consultant for the city of Seattle, and Seattle now had the opportunity, in essence, to experience the Disney model in the flesh. The utopian visions that were first incubated in the premier popular culture laboratory of our time, Disneyland, officially graduated to 'real life.' Seattle, the guinea pig city, grappled with the allure and the constraints of utopia-become-reality, and discovered that the 'Tomorrowland' dictatorial core of the Disney model overwhelmed its friendly 'Main Street USA' facade. In this chapter, I conclude my case study by tracing out these final years of Disney's presence in Seattle, charting the enthusiasm and reticence expressed by the triad of City, Seattle Center, and Fun Forest, and, significantly, by a very vocal public.

I have demonstrated in the previous two chapters that both the City and Seattle Center management made countless efforts to imbue Disney characteristics into Seattle Center. Though rectifying the Coney Island-esque state of the Fun Forest was often their primary focus, the pro-Disney contingency early grasped the Disney model as an urban solution born of, but not limited to, amusement space. From
the initial planning of Century 21, through its transition to permanent civic centre grounds, to the various minor points of crisis culminating in the 1982 scandals, the perceived benefits Disney could offer were rarely questioned. Ironically, they also rarely took hold: in spite of repeated efforts, Seattle Center, as if 'stained' by the Fun Forest in its midst, steadily maintained a Coney Island atmosphere. By 1983, as we saw in the previous chapter, the amusement park and surrounding civic centre remained, as always, immune to change. However, with the reemergence of Century 21 General Manager Ewen C. Dingwall as Seattle Center Director, and with his links to Harrison Price, the Disney seeds were resown.

When Dingwall returned to Seattle Center in 1983, he observed Seattle Center's current state and categorized it as problematic and in need of serious alteration. "The mayor told me to fix the Seattle Center," Dingwall said of his appointment (Dingwall, cited in Seattle Times, 25 Dec. 1983, p.B2). The Seattle Times (25 Dec. 1983, p.B2) praised the new director as a man who "talks the same language of tourism promoters and other businessmen [sic] who criticized the city-owned park as not being up to snuff as a tourist and convention center." Speaking this language of tourism tinged with his own brand of Disney optimism, Dingwall pinpointed litter and violence as two problems deserving immediate attention. Dingwall made clear he would not tolerate previous slovenly levels of groundskeeping even within his limited
budget and hired interim clean-up crews to avoid paying regular staff overtime (Seattle Times, 15 May 1983, p.A14).

Behaviour exhibiting violent overtones, which as we saw in the previous chapter had a long tradition at Seattle Center, reached "unacceptable" proportions by 1984. Dingwall initiated a series of steps to curtail violence that ran the gamut from robberies and assaults involving chako-sticks and bicycle chains to "breakdancing" (Seattle Times, 6 Sept. 1984, p.B3; Seattle Times, 24 Aug. 1984, p.B6): Fans attending rock concerts would not be allowed on Seattle Center grounds before 4:00 p.m., side streets running through Seattle Center would be closed, breakdancing would not be banned outright but incorporated into "supervised programs," and, generally, the "ethnic youth" at whom these measures were aimed would be made to feel unwelcome (Seattle Times, 24 Aug. 1984, p.B6).

Cleaning up the grounds, both literally and symbolically, was only to be a temporary solution. At the root of Seattle Center's problems, Dingwall felt, was its very design. As virtually every observer seemed to lament at some point during the early 1980s, the Seattle Center tried to be too many things to too many people, resulting in a disorganized and inefficient concoction that, as the Seattle Times (15 May 1983, p.A1) summed up, was "home to hockey players, video-game players, modern art and modern science, Wagnerian opera and carnival rides." City Council was sufficiently bothered by Seattle Center's apparent lack of direction to spend two years
hashing out a "Mission Statement," and two years later, a more in-depth "Goals and Policies Report." Dingwall, for his part, tackled the problem in a somewhat different manner. He contacted the Disney organization.

The Road to Disney’s Land.

At this point, in the mid-1980s, the Disney Company was at a corporate crossroads that would pave the way for their involvement with Seattle. Disneyland and Walt Disney World were well established. It seemed unlikely that Disney would pursue further theme park development in North America; plans for EuroDisney would not materialize for a few years. Taking advantage of this slack period, new Disney CEO Michael Eisner issued a bold new agenda. The underutilized Imagineers were told to diversify, to apply to the urban setting their skills in creating what Seattle Mayor Charles Royer later called "excellent people places" (Royer, cited in Seattle Times, 5

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1. The 1985 Mission Statement, in spite of the amount of time devoted to its development, was essentially an affirmation of the 1962 Total Plan mission statement. It declared Seattle Center "an active and lively civic center... [that] will accommodate a wide range of uses and activities which [sic] include festivals, theatrical performances, concerts, exhibitions, amusements, sports events, and general gatherings." The more in-depth Goals and Policies Report, by contrast, was developed specifically in response to Disney's presence in Seattle, and will be discussed later in greater detail.

Mar. 1987, p.F1). Specifically, the Disney Company, through Walt Disney Imagineering, would explore business opportunities in non-Disney projects by providing consulting services on city facilities and, ultimately, would enter planning and development work themselves with mixed-use, public/private entertainment facilities (Tang 1986, p.22). Disney’s track record to date, when Seattle first contacted them, included consulting on the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum in Los Angeles, the Johnson Space Center in Houston, and preliminary talks with the cities of Burbank and Chicago concerning individual projects (Kenney 1988a, p.19; Tang 1986, p.22). Seattle Center would be their first major urban project, and early negotiations suggested that they were interested in not just consulting but also developing, financing, and operating a Disneyified city-owned centre (Seattle Times, 15 July 1986, p.A1).

The Disney organization assigned three Imagineers to head the budding Seattle project: Gordon Hoopes, who, according to his official Disney biography, began his Disney career in 1970 as the Tomorrowland designer at Walt Disney World and by 1985 oversaw environmental design for the entire theme park ("Biography: Gordon Hoopes," n.d.); Vance Ablott, who listed among his accomplishments the design of Disneyland’s Star Tours attraction and was currently project manager of two non-Disney projects, the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum and the Johnson Space Center ("Biography: Vance Ablott,"
n.d.); and Juliann Juras, the program developer of all off-property Disney developments, who had previously served as EPCOT’s Corporate Computer Timesharing Coordinator, assisting the Imagineers in computer-aided planning and design ("Biography: Juliann Juras," n.d.).

Seattle Center offered the Imagineers an intriguing opportunity to expand beyond the confines of theme park walls and put their place-making skills into practice. "Nice town," one Imagineer was overheard to say on a preliminary visit to Seattle, "we can do something with it" (Tang 1987, p.24). The Disney group conceived of their role as developers of new, imaginative concepts for Seattle Center’s overall design. Central to their attention was the Fun Forest, in their eyes "unsightly and substandard," and Seattle Center’s food and merchandising operations, currently housed in what Hoopes referred to as the "ridiculous" Center House (Seattle Times, 8 Mar. 1988, p.B2; Seattle Times, 5 June 1988, p.D7).

From the beginning, however, Disney made it clear they would not come to Seattle just to revamp the Fun Forest. They would only consider pursuing the Seattle project if their domain was to include all of Seattle Center’s seventy-four acres (Seattle Times, 15 July 1986, p.A1; Seattle Times, 12 Sept. 1986, p.G4). Vice President of Imagineering Patrick Scanlon explained that Disney was going to Seattle to look over the entire site and ponder what buildings and activities to retain and what new images to create (Seattle Times, 12
Sept. 1986, p.G4). The Imagineering staff sketched in more specifically the need to reevaluate the effectiveness of entrances, lighting, security, signage, landscaping, and open areas (Tang 1986, p.23). Disney's aim, Scanlon assured the city, was not to recreate Disneyland North or EPCOT West, but to create something unique for the area. That Scanlon found it necessary to defend Disney's intentions as early as the fall of 1986 indicates that even before a single resolution had been passed or contract signed, Disney's presence was a contentious issue.

Negotiating with "the World's Best:" Round One

Dingwall quickly won the support of Mayor Royer, who, asserting that Disney was "probably the best in the world" at urban entertainment planning, circulated around City Hall Dingwall's draft proposal to hire the Imagineering unit (Seattle Times, 5 Mar. 1987, p.F2; Seattle Times, 15 July 1986, p.A1). However, convincing the rest of the city that a Disney-designed center was in their best interest would prove to be a harder task. The first group to balk visibly was the Seattle City Council. Before the City could officially contract with Disney, Council had to approve authorization to

begin negotiations; they hedged on such a move for over a year.

The initial draft proposal, coming in an era, as outlined in the previous chapter, when Council was still prickly over perceived excesses in Seattle Center management, first raised suspicion when several council members suggested that Dingwall was acting in the tradition of previous Seattle Center directors and trying to operate behind Council's back. Royer had recently appointed a twenty-five person advisory commission to study and recommend changes to the way Seattle Center was administered and financed, and Council feared that Dingwall's proposal was an attempt to undermine the commission's efforts. Councilmember Jeanette Williams called the timing of the Disney proposal "bothersome," and was joined by Virginia Galle and Dolores Sibonga in publicly condemning the proposal for potentially interfering with the commission's work (Seattle Times, 17 July 1986, p.B2).

Others on the nine-person Council found fault with the Disney proposal. Council President Sam Smith and future mayor Norman Rice both questioned whether the proposal, which invited Disney to both study the center and have first crack at redeveloping it, presented a conflict of interest; Smith, along with Jim Street, also opposed the preliminary cost of

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4. Williams was also chair of Council’s Parks and Public Grounds Committee, and hence was the councilmember with the most contact with Seattle Center operations.
the study, estimated at $450,000. Only two councilmembers were optimistic about the proposal: Paul Kraabel welcomed Disney as "a great outfit," and George Benson, who would prove to be Disney's most solid defender on Council, stated simply "[Disney] is the answer" (Seattle Times, 17 July 1986, p.B2; Seattle Times, 15 July 1986, p.A1).

When the Disney group visited Seattle a few months later and met with Council, anti-Disney members of Council gathered new ammunition. Criticism shifted to the nature of the political treatment Disney expected. Several members were openly offended by Scanlon's assertion that "[Disney] will not enter competitive bidding because it is our belief that there aren't people who are competitive with us" (Scanlon, cited in Seattle Times, 12 Sept. 1986, p.G4). Scanlon also made clear that Disney would expect right of first refusal in the negotiating process. Councilmembers Rice and Sibonga were so livid they refused to meet with Scanlon, Rice explaining that if Seattle was to do work with them, Disney "should have a public process that is above board" (Rice, cited in Seattle Times, 12 Sept. 1986, p.G4). Disney's attitude, coupled with a firmer consulting fee now placed at $400,000, left only Benson claiming still "I'm all for it!" (Benson, cited in Seattle Times, 12 Sept. 1986, p.G4).

The Imagineers, rebuffed by this frosty welcome, returned to Burbank and issued a statement contending that "the many people concerned about Seattle Center didn't seem to have a
clear direction in what they want, and we don’t want to force our services on them" (Disney spokesperson Paul Goldman, cited in Tang 1986, p.22). Though confusion over Seattle Center’s direction could be considered a legitimate stumbling block to further negotiations, the Disney group neglected to mention that, ironically, the one point of agreement that did exist regarding Seattle Center’s future seemed to be a reticence to turn it into a Disney product. Thus, for the first time during Disney’s nearly thirty year relationship with the Seattle Center grounds, the city began to question publicly Disney’s role in urban planning.

The resistance was initially sparked by the political nature of development-related issues, with Disney thrust into the role of negative externality. Criticisms of conflict of interest and outside interference, such as these, could have been levelled at any consultant, but Disney was not just any consultant. Their presence in Seattle was predicated on the fact that their very name promised something different, something laced with pixie dust magic. Significantly, the anti-Disney voices also began to question whether Disney, issues of propriety aside, could be entrusted to create an urban space sensitive to Seattle’s local culture.

Mayor Royer, surveying the rubble of his first attempt to unite Council and the Disney organization, claimed to be "frankly surprised by some of the negative reaction" (Royer, cited in Tang 1986, p.23). He specifically reassured Council
that no one was trying to transform Seattle Center into a Disney theme park, nor was anyone trying to sneak Disney through the back door. Royer's professed "surprise" at the negative reaction was in itself surprising, for his chosen points of explanation suggest that Council's fears were by then well known. Such fears were, at any rate, to grow, and to convince Council to bring Disney to Seattle, Royer would have to try different tactics.

**Negotiating with "the World's Best:" Round Two.**

After Disney left town in September 1986, focus on Seattle Center appeared to revert to local efforts. Council inched closer to finalizing a Goals and Policies Statement for the centre, and the citizen's advisory commission continued to study Seattle Center's administrative and financial standing, with completed reports expected in April and July of 1987, respectively. Seattle's engagement with Disney waned visibly, and the Seattle-Disney connection seemed destined to be a polemical but fleetingly temporary arrangement.

Dingwall and Royer, however, were not about to let this potentially groundbreaking deal slip through their fingers. By early 1987, they had doubled their efforts to convince Seattle that it wanted to work with Disney. Their intensive lobbying entailed, first, creating a new public image for Disney, whereby Disney became firmly situated in the company of other 'serious' urban leisure planners and developers, and

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second, ensuring that, through numerous personal meetings, all people involved with Seattle Center would be informed sufficiently of the improvements Disney could bring.

The two men had a busy schedule in a campaign timed, not coincidentally, to reach saturation just as Council would be handing in their final Goals and Policies resolution. Royer adhered to a rigorous schedule that saw him meet with members of the business and arts communities; special attention was lavished on groups neighbouring Seattle Center that would be most affected by Disney's presence, such as the Queen Anne Chamber of Commerce and the Queen Anne Community Council (Seattle Times, 21 April 1987, p.F1). His goal, as he spelled out in another meeting with the Seattle Rotary Club, was to garner their help in persuading Council to authorize negotiations to hire Disney (Seattle Times, 5 Mar. 1987, p.F2). Royer also met individually with each councilmember to stress that the Disney contract was his "top priority" (Seattle Times, 2 Apr. 1987, p.F7)⁵.

To each group, and in almost weekly interviews with the media, Royer and Dingwall repeatedly emphasized that Disney was no longer interested in building "epic theme parks." Dingwall patiently explained that Disney was merely marketing its planning services to urban areas interested in developing

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⁵. Royer's prioritization of the Disney project had clear political motivations. While he was already in a second and final term as Mayor, a Disney coup would, he believed, further his chances when he ran for State [Senator?] in 1990.
and redeveloping their own recreational areas (Seattle Times, 25 Jan. 1987, p.F3). He later reassured Seattle Weekly readers that no Disneylands were on the horizon: Seattle, he claimed, was attracted to Disney's expertise in transportation, crowd management, and "efficient entertainment," and he likened Disney's role to that of the Rouse Company in developing the Inner Harbour or Faneuil Hall (Boren 1987, p.2). Lest Disney's appeal be toned down too much, Royer asserted that the envisioned Disney product, though unlike a theme park and unique to Seattle's local character, would nonetheless be "splashy" and "dramatic" (Royer, cited in Tang 1987, p.24). Disney's gift, he told the Seattle Rotary Club, was in "help[ing] cities create excellent people places. They're probably the best in the world" (Seattle Times, 5 Mar. 1987, p.F2).

For a variety of reasons, the vigorous lobbying campaign began to prove successful. The nature of Disney's proposed involvement had not changed -- they were still expected to revamp the Fun Forest, Center House, and food and merchandising operations, and suggest new concepts for Seattle Center's overall design -- but the context within which it was presented had changed. Royer and Dingwall's efforts to cast Disney's public persona in a new, less threatening light were complemented by other fortuitous conditions. The Disney people, for their part, on recent visits appeared more inclined toward compromise. They toned down their political
demands from right of first refusal to right of first negotiation (Tang 1987, p.25), and their general comments seemed less patronizing and more, in the words of the Seattle Times (25 Jan. 1987, p.F3), "keen-eyed." The nearly completed Goals and Policies statement, further, was appropriated as an opportunity to officially channel Disney’s energies and thus mitigate concern; the final draft stipulated repeatedly that the focal point of Seattle Center must remain the natural and cultural heritage of Seattle and the Pacific North West (City of Seattle 1987a; Seattle Times, 2 June 1987, p.B2). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Disney group had left the distinct impression that should they redevelop Seattle Center, they would finance the work. As the Seattle Times (21 Apr. 1987, p.F2) observed, it was increasingly difficult to resist any developer who would be willing to spend what was then estimated to be forty to fifty million dollars on the ailing centre.

Over the next several months, thus, Disney gained more advocates. By July 21, 1987, when the formal vote went to Council, the decision was five-four to authorize negotiations, which subsequently crystallized into an official contract with the Disney Company in October. At this point, it looked like Royer and Dingwall had emerged victorious: Disney was going to save Seattle Center. However, that was not to be the case. Disney had garnered just enough support on Council to slip
through by a narrow margin; their overall acceptance was by no means assured.

Setting the Stage for Disney’s Entrance.

Disney’s consulting services were authorized in an atmosphere that saw intensified resistance within Council, growing concerns amongst the public, and more questionable behaviour on Disney’s part. Demonstratable support on City Council, first, was even more phlegmatic than the vote’s narrow margin suggested. Only Benson and Kraabel solidly endorsed the proposal. As Rice, who did not vote for Disney, explained, Council still was not generally pleased with the proposal, but saw it as the only alternative to "long-term decay" (Rice, cited in Seattle Times, 2 June 1987, p.B2). Jane Noland’s decision to vote for Disney, for instance, was accompanied by a harsh reprimand: "‘thou shalt not develop an amusement park’ is the way I’d put it," she said (Noland, cited in Tang 1987, p.25). Jim Street, who cast the ninth and deciding vote, claimed to have made up his mind to support the plan only at the last instance (Seattle Times, 27 July 1987, p.C1).

The Disney detractors on Council were far more steadfast in their convictions than the Disney supporters. Williams, in a Seattle Times (11 July 1987, p.A11) editorial, offered general criticisms of Disney’s design style and political approach. "Why should we feel that only a California firm
knows what is best for the citizens of Seattle?" she asked, adding that this particular California firm had never attempted a project like Seattle Center before. Seattle Center, she continued, should "be us -- our art, our culture, our gathering place," and its North West flavour could only be ensured if "the public [is] fully informed and involved in these important decisions." Williams left council chambers on the day of the vote even more secure in her misgivings. "We're not talking about some ducks and mice and Snow White dwarfs . . . [these] are businessmen, hardened businessmen [sic]." Rice concurred, accusing Disney of "almost arrogance" (Williams and Rice, cited in Seattle Times, 21 July 1987, p.B2;B1).

In addition to reservations expressed by Council, second, there was increased evidence of city-wide resistance. "Over thirty citizens" appeared at a preliminary council hearing to complain about Disney's potential involvement, specifically pointing to Disney's lack of expertise in urban design beyond theme park gates and the seemingly conspiratorial nature of the closed bidding process (Seattle Times, 2 July 1987, p.B2). The local alternative press, which would later issue detailed scathing reviews of Disney's involvement, also grew more vocal with their misgivings. "Is the Disney Plan Just Another Goofy Idea?" the Seattle Weekly (Boren 1987, p.2) asked in a headline; Weekly journalist David Brewster later summarized the Disney project as just another example of an ill-fated
private/public merger, where the slick private entity turns the "bumbling public partner into a sucker," and chastised Royer for trying to hand Seattle Center's "managerial morass" over to Disney "of all people" (Brewster 1987a, p.19).

Finally, in what was no doubt a genuinely surprising development for Disney advocates, the Disney organization itself proved to be an obstacle. By the time Seattle had sorted out its internal conflicts and decided to hire Disney, Disney's interest in designing and investing in Seattle Center had waned. Disney, in the interim, had tied up land in France and Imagineering energies were now being channeled toward EuroDisney. A week before Council's vote, Disney management warned City officials that due to new commitments their services would be spread thin, and, according to one source, actually advised Seattle to not hire them (Seattle Times, 12 July 1987, p.B1; Brewster 1989, p.2). Royer and Dingwall chose not to follow this advice, and were no doubt further surprised to hear, upon announcing the successful council vote, a Disney spokesperson claim that it was their understanding that Royer was not looking for an investment partner. Royer and Dingwall scrambled to put the situation in the best light, with Royer's office assuring that the doors for Disney's financial participation were not yet closed if "the investment climate is at all reasonable," and Dingwall adding that he too remained confident that Disney would pay for "a big chunk of it" (Royer and Dingwall, cited in Seattle
The damage, however, was done; this latest episode merely fueled the anti-Disney debates. Ironically, the widespread negative publicity that now swirled around Disney's presence had developed prior to the existence of any actual design plans. The way that Disney approached design proved sufficient to evoke suspicion and speculation concerning the sort of blueprints Disney might produce. To truly adhere to a North West cultural and educational theme, Seattle Times columnist Rick Anderson satirically commented in one such example, Disney would have to present attractions such as "Ferry-Tale Land," simulating a real-life ferry, oil leaks, power failures, and all, and a "Tunnel of Loathing," featuring computer printouts of cost overruns for the new Metro Bus Tunnel then under construction in downtown Seattle (Seattle Times, 24 Apr. 1987, p.B1). The implication was clearly that Anderson, like Williams and many others, assumed Disney would be incapable of capturing genuine Seattle themes. And when Disney finally released their design blueprints in the spring of 1988, the plans did little to quell such suspicions.
"Full of Sunlight and Joyous Citizens:" Disney's Plans.

The Disney Company launched in earnest upon design plans for Seattle Center in October 1987, when their employment was authorized by Council and an official contract drawn up between Walt Disney Imagineering, financial consultants Harrison Price, and the City. The authorization ordinance stipulated that Disney was to produce three alternative plans for Seattle Center's redevelopment in return for the sum of $475,000 (City of Seattle 1987b). The contract spelled out the conditions: the three plans should represent alternative visions for the redevelopment of the entire grounds, with special emphasis on the Fun Forest, food, beverage, and merchandising operations, and the integration of two new properties that would expand Seattle Center to approximately 100 acres (Figure 37). Disney was also to assist City Engineers in parking and transit problems. The entire process was to include at least four meetings with the Disney Study Advisory Group (DSAG), an advisory board to be appointed by City Council⁷, and at least three meetings with the general public. In particular, Disney was to "consider the impact of

⁶. The quote, from the Seattle Weekly (May 25, 1988, p.19), was a somewhat satirical comment on the general nature of Disney's plans.

⁷. Ordinance #113695 stated that the Disney Study Advisory Group should be drawn from diverse groups including representatives of the City, Seattle Center management, Seattle Center tenants and concessionaires, the Space Needle Corporation, business and labour groups, and general representatives of the greater Seattle area.

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37. Seattle Center and Potential Additional Property

SEATTLE CENTER SITE MAP

Possible Additional Properties
its recommendations regarding Seattle Center on the [local] communities" (City of Seattle 1987c). The study, finally, would be broken into three phases, with Disney first assessing the current state of Seattle Center's facilities and usage, then providing three redesign plans, and lastly attaching financial information to Council's preferred plan.

Phase I, during which Disney carried out a public telephone survey, user interviews, and a facilities review, would sketch in the framework upon which Disney was to base its redesign. "Our first objective," Disney explained, "was to understand the place Seattle Center held in the minds of the public" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p.5). The Imagineers began by visiting Seattle Center in order to blend in with the crowds in the role of participant observers. They "grabbed coffee and sandwiches" and sat in the Center House's eating area, watching senior citizens foxtrotting across the dance floor and parades of children in "yellow slickers, pastel parkas, mittens, and galoshes." A "young, obviously economically disadvantaged" woman with "eight little girls in tow" caught their eye: the group "danced" over to a table, and "mom" opened a brown bag with nine homemade cupcakes and a jug of Koolaid. They sang happy birthday and "it was just that -- a happy birthday. She didn't know she was poor, she didn't know that mommy couldn't afford to throw her parties they might have in the expensive part of town." Seattle
Center, Disney concluded, had provided her this "vibrant environment" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988e, p.19).

Disney then set out to quiz residents of Seattle and surrounding counties on what factors contributed to Seattle Center's "vibrant environment." Between 824 telephone surveys and further videotaped focus group interviews, the consultants discovered that the International Fountain was Seattle Center's most popular draw, with the Center House a close second (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988a, p.A27). A majority of respondents (65%) described Seattle Center as being now a "family activity center," with "amusement/entertainment center" being the second most popular choice; in the future, an even stronger majority (75%) claimed, Seattle Center should remain a family activity center (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988a, pp.A52-A53; p.A59). When asked to recommend specific improvements, the top two responses focused on improvements to the existing physical plant, such as better lighting, security, and transportation access. The most requested design improvements included

8. The telephone survey polled residents of Seattle and its four surrounding counties. Though Disney did not reveal their sampling strategy, the demographic breakdown well mirrored a stereotypical Disney audience: Forty-six percent of the respondents represented couples with children, sixty-one percent reported professional, managerial, or other white collar forms of employment, and eighty-nine percent were white. Asians, at four percent, formed the largest minority group in the poll, while blacks, who form ten percent of Seattle's population, only formed two percent of the respondents (Disney 1988 - I, pp.A6-A14; Morrow 1990, p.177).

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performing arts and children's play areas (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988a, pp.A63). When quizzed specifically on the Fun Forest, twenty-one percent wished it to remain as is, thirty percent suggested minor improvements, twenty-five percent preferred a complete renovation, and twelve percent wanted it eliminated entirely (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988a, p.A70).

Disney next set out to mesh user needs with their own design principles. Regardless of the direction Seattle Center would take, Disney said, it would be necessary to develop a strong "sense of place" by applying the classic Disney formula. Colours, first, would be "subliminal references .. . Disney always puts a great deal of effort into choosing just the right shades to identify and position its projects, and evoke the feeling we wish the guest to experience" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988b, p.5). Coordinated symbols and logos, second, should be used extensively "on everything from banners to stationary" so that identification with Seattle Center would occur almost automatically. Additional graphics and signage, third, would provide further continuity no matter what the venue, with the new Seattle Center logo, of course, part of every sign. Area lighting, fourth, would not only provide a safer environment, but also "dramatic effect:" thoughtfully incorporated lighting could in minutes change the mood from festive to holiday to romantic to contemplative. Festive structures and banners would anchor Seattle Center's
new personality in the landscape, and, finally, the "plant pallet" would provide the crowning touch, since "beautiful landscaping is central to sense of place" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988b, p.5).

The facilities review apparently was influenced both by the physical condition and usage of Seattle Center structures and Disney's stated design principles. Of the Fun Forest, for instance, Disney assessed:

The Fun Forest is among the most problematical of Seattle Center's attractions. On the one hand, it is a lucrative source of income and really the only facility specifically targeted at the teenage market. . . . On the other, it is extremely dated in character . . . and has a crazy-quilt layout that is confusing, unsightly, and substandard in terms of visitor comfort and ease of circulation. Moreover, the noise and frenetic atmosphere associated with operations of this type tend to detract from the more passive, adult- and family-oriented facilities comprising other parts of Seattle Center.

The Fun Forest, Disney concluded, "desperately needed" a "complete overhaul" in order to meet the perceived facilities need of a "lively, colorful amusement area providing a safe, active outlet for youthful energies" (Disney 1988a, p.B41).

Disney's perceptions of user needs, their own ideas on sense of place, and the results of their facilities review culminated two months later in the much-awaited presentation of the three alternative plans. While Phase I had generated little adverse publicity -- "at least someone is making decisions," as Tang (1988, p.21) commented -- Phase II and the unveiling of the three plans brought with it storms of protest. After presenting the details of the three plans, I
then will examine why they became the focus of such negative reaction.

Disney's three plans bore what local journalist Peter Staten called the "unforgettable titles" of Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C (Staten 1988a, p. 19). Plan A, subtitled "As Is -- Programming Commercial," was developed, according to Disney, "in response to the many people that seemed to enjoy the Seattle Center as it was" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p. 17). The plan was intended to maintain Seattle Center's personality and, out of what Disney called financial necessity, enhance its commercial aspects: "most of the facilities [in Plan A] would be dedicated to profit-making ventures" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p. 17-18) (Appendix 3).

Plan B, the "Regional Family Entertainment -- Programming Public Interest" option, grew out of Disney's belief that a majority of Seattle residents wanted Seattle Center to remain a family centre. As Disney described, "the key here was to increase [cultural, educational, and performing art's] profile on the grounds without allowing any of them to dominate" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p. 19) (Appendix 4).

Plan C, by contrast, known as the "Community Park -- Programming Passive" plan, attempted to downplay Seattle Center's more active aspects and instead cater to those who appreciated "the beauty of the grounds, the fountain, the chance to relax within . . . park-like elements" (Walt Disney
Imagineering 1988d, p.19) (Appendix 5). Though Disney recognized that their survey suggested this "wasn't the strongest public choice," they felt its inclusion was still warranted, particularly for the future development possibilities it would open up for surrounding neighbourhoods (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p.19).

Disney, thus, purported to offer three alternative visions of Seattle Center's future that spanned the active and commercial to the quiet and contemplative. The first major stumbling block to the plans' acceptance, however -- or to any real understanding of the options the plans represented -- was that to most observers all three plans looked alike. All sported a new grand entrance on Broad Street, complete with valet parking, all were anchored by a large pond and amphitheatre in the centre, all banished amusement space to an adjoining lot and segmented the main body of the centre into the same themed 'districts,' and all proposed the construction of 3,400 new parking spaces. In short, all three proposed almost identical demolition of old Seattle Center structures, and all three placed similar new buildings and activities in their stead. "Given what one presumes are the rich, creative resources of the Disney people in matters of site design," DSAG member Norman Johnston commented, the absence of true alternatives "seems to me a curious lack of 'imagineering' on their part" (Johnston 1988, p.1).
Making matters worse, this 'megaplan' in its three renditions was roundly accused of being a poorly executed attempt at reshaping Seattle Center's future. Instead of capturing the site's unique personality, critics charged, the plan(s) embodied everything wrong with Disney's approach to urban design. Complaints fell into two general categories that echoed fears expressed earlier in the negotiating stages: the mediocrity of Disney's urban design skills, and the virtual impossibility of influencing from the outside the highly insular -- and politically privileged -- process that resulted in such mediocre design. The many disgruntled voices, further, represented a wide variety of interests across the city. Of particular interest here are the reactions of the DSAG, as the group that had the most prolonged direct contact with Disney throughout the design process; City Council, whose mandate it was to select one of the three plans; the media, who shaped for the public reports on the activities of Disney, the DSAG, and Council; and the Seattle residents themselves, who at times presented quite vocal opposition to the Disney plans. This constellation of angry voices, though not always working in tandem or resisting for the same reasons, becomes especially important as the cultural force that eventually rejected the Imagineers and their attempts at Seattle's Disneyification.

The experiences of the DSAG offer a useful starting point for understanding how resistance to the Disney plans
developed, because they encapsulate simultaneously reaction to the 'unacceptable' product and to the 'unacceptable' backroom processes that led to it. The DSAG struggled to fulfill their role as watchdog in an atmosphere where, as DSAG member John Friedlander noted, it was necessary to act early and swiftly in order to have any influence on the process (DSAG, 25 Jan. 1988). Before the three plans were released, the DSAG already had entertained debates over Disney's aesthetic design strategy, its sensitivity to Seattle's local character, its level of commitment to community, and particularly minority, input, and Disney's perceived tendency to patronize local authorities.

Early contact with the Disney organization suggested to the DSAG that they were overseeing a group of urban planners whose designs would be based on general ideas that might not mesh well with Seattle Center's past, present, or future. Disney's general ideas sometimes bordered on stereotypes that members of the DSAG found offensive. Chair David Sprague, for instance, after reading the Phase I report, admonished Juliann Juras that "we are amused by the immature stereotypes such as 'Great Pacific NORTHWET' and [Seattleites with] 'webbed feet' which [sic] demean Disney" (Sprague to Juras, 18 Mar 1988). The Open Space and Public Use Committee further advised Disney that "comments made regarding the winter weather offer an incomplete and unfortunate view of Seattle in terms of outdoor
recreation and activities during this time of year" (Open Space and Public Use Committee, 15 Mar. 1988).

Several DSAG members also expressed concern in these early stages that Disney was proceeding with a development plan that did not include any local input. The Transportation and Parking Committee criticized Disney for failing to "survey nearby residents and businesses regarding impacts of Center user parking on community and patronage" (Transportation and Parking Committee, Report on Phase I, n.d.). The DSAG as a whole noted that the local Queen Anne Community Council was "very concerned" about safety and security, and specifically requested that Disney "must study thoroughly the potential impacts" of the new plans on the Queen Anne community (DSAG, 1 Feb. 1988; Sprague to Juras, 19 Apr. 1988). Lest Disney be tempted only to study the impact on, or program for, a white middle-class population, the Activities and Constituencies Committee stepped in and reminded them to "strengthen and protect activities of special interest to minorities," and further recommended that an excellent way to ensure this goal would be to hold continuing discussions with minority groups and "get their participation in the process," a point Sprague later reiterated to Juras in a personal letter (Activities and Constituencies Committee, 18 Mar. 1988; Sprague to Juras, April 19, 1988).

Finally, the early planning stages left DSAG members concerned for a variety of reasons that Disney merely
sidestepped the stickier moments of 'real world' planning, conveying the attitude that such messy leg work was beneath them. Disney, for example, incorporated into their plans the demolition of Memorial Stadium, a structure owned by the Seattle School Board, without actually consulting the School Board. Such an action did not sit well with the DSAG, who then informed Disney that it was expected that any sound planning firm would first ascertain the School Board's position (Sprague to Juras, 19 Apr. 1988). DSAG members were similarly frustrated by Disney’s insistence during the project's early stages that the city must look toward local transportation authorities, and not Disney, for solutions to Seattle Center's traffic morass, in spite of the fact that Disney's presumed expertise in transportation issues was oft presented by Royer and Dingwall as one of Disney's selling points (Transportation and Parking Committee, "Report on Initial Draft of Phase I," n.d.). Yet another contentious problem proved to be Disney's penchant for the wrecking ball. Not only did Disney propose the demolition of several beloved Seattle Center buildings, which in itself suggested a serious lack of judgement on the California planners part, but even worse, no reasons were given as to why these buildings should be torn down (Economic Analysis Committee, 16 Mar. 1988). The message Disney wished to convey to the citizens of Seattle, the DSAG concluded, was that in their role as outside experts, they knew best.
The DSAG was sufficiently concerned by early progress to insist upon a special meeting with Disney well before the Phase II report was due. The watchdog group presented their concerns, and Disney was given the opportunity to respond. The results of this meeting only reinforced in DSAG members' minds the perils of working with Disney. The Imagineers spent a large part of the meeting praising Seattle Center's attendance figures, a subject that many felt to be off-topic and misleading. When Disney did address the negative comments, Juras carefully warded off most of the criticisms by claiming they were more relevant to, and hence would be addressed during, Phase II. Hoopes, in what was perhaps an unfortunate choice of example, defended his understanding of Seattle Center's local character by explaining that Disney was being sensitive to this issue by incorporating "satellite museums and opera-singing waiters" (DSAG, 28 Mar 1988). DSAG members were left wondering again how to influence Disney's steamroller approach.

When preliminary copies of the three plans were circulated amongst DSAG members, their fears were realized. The DSAG articulated many of the same complaints that would later radiate through the media and Seattle residents. In intensive subcommittee meetings, it was noted repeatedly that Disney had submitted one plan, not three; that many Disney design concepts were unappealing and dysfunctional; and that the plans failed to capture Seattle's unique character or
cater to actual city residents, such as senior citizens or ethnic groups. The "functionless undulating pond," the "inordinate number of kidney shaped landscaped areas arranged in a seemingly haphazard fashion," the "contrived" boating activities, the "physically segregated" areas that "discourage[d] a mix of activities," all added up to a site design that was "curiously formless . . . floating, ambulatory, [and] anti-urbane" (Johnston 1988, p.2; Open Space Committee Report, n.d.; "Comments on Preliminary Phase II," p.3; Johnston 1988, p.2).

The three plans, when officially released, satisfied virtually no one's idea of how Seattle Center should look or be planned. Though Royer introduced the three plans to the media by claiming they successfully allayed fears of "guys from California with gold chains and boffo ideas coming in with their castles and mountains," and the Seattle Times initially offered cautious optimism about the three options with their "common, and common sense, elements," the Disney plans were in trouble. What the DSAG had fretted about in private was now public concern (Royer, cited in Seattle Times, 12 May 1988, p.A14). Rumblings could be heard across the city; original Seattle Center architect Paul Thiry, for example, announced the plans to be a travesty of his vision, because they simply tore everything down and did not replace it with anything superior (Seattle Times, 5 June 1988, p.D1).
The alternative press spared no mercy, saying the plans "may look as cute as Bambi, but . . . where’s the venison?" (Staten 1988a, p.21). The Seattle Weekly (Staten 1988a, pp.19-20), for example, offered to help its readers sift through the Disney rhetoric and the "suspiciously common elements of all three proposals" to extract the "'real' Disney plan:" Seattle Center, currently an odd but culturally significant collection of leftovers from Century 21, would through the demolition of several key structures be transformed into a virtually clean slate. Upon that clean slate, the Seattle Weekly continued, would be placed some utterly ridiculous design solutions dreamed up by California-based planners who apparently had an unhealthy infatuation with automobiles and standing bodies of water.

The Weekly could only explain the size and placement of the parkades as a California-inspired "motor madness." Not only were the new parkades most likely unnecessary with existing Seattle Center parkades currently running at half-capacity, but the structures were to be located in peculiar fashion: "all manner" of new driveways into the parkades would break up the corner of Seattle Center, journalist Peter Staten (1988b, p.20) explained, into "curious little traffic islands," including a triangular patch that Disney "desperately labelled" the Sculpture Garden. The area, now "one of the goofier intersections in town," would not even be functional: parkades were placed at the most inaccessible
point possible if one arrived at the grand entrance (Staten 1988b, p.20; Staten 1988c, p.22).

Even the Seattle Times, which remained somewhat more loyal to Disney throughout the process, could not fathom why the popular International Fountain had been replaced with a pond. "Disney either did not know ponds are not as rare in Seattle as they are in Anaheim, or they did not care," the newspaper concluded (Seattle Times, 12 June 1988, p.L1).

Also disappointing was that, after the dust of Disney's massive redecoration scheme settled, it became apparent that Disney failed to implement successfully even those ideas that seemed sound. Disney's heralded "activity zones," or themed districts, were difficult to spot in amongst the more than twenty new buildings scattered around the site; each single use, the Weekly noted, had its own building and its own "four boring walls" (Staten 1988c, p.22). Further, Disney in actuality only introduced two new uses to the centre -- an ice rink and a teen disco, to which the Seattle Weekly could only ask "how do you feel about the city going into the teen disco business?" (Staten 1988c, p.22). Finally, the Seattle Weekly intimated, Disney was out and out lying about the cost of their schemes (Staten 1988a, p.21). Though firm economic figures were not due until the end of Phase III, Disney had

9. Though the existing Seattle Center officially did have an ice rink, the Arena was rented exclusively to organized teams and not open to general public use.
led the media to believe that the total bill would be in the neighbourhood of sixty-six million dollars, a figure that the Weekly correctly speculated was far too low. When questioned, the paper reported, Disney "snapped 'we want the City Council to agree on a concept first, and the numbers will come later'" (Staten 1988a, p.21).

Public input intensified as media coverage grew. Due to the nature of the Disney design process, the question of access to citizen participation became as important as the opinions expressed during that participation. It was increasingly apparent that few channels of access were open to the public. The public meetings called for in the initial contract turned into slick Disney-run shows, where Disney talked and the public listened. Disney's behaviour prompted several observers to complain to City Hall: local architect Cynthia Richardson, for example, reported being "absolutely appalled" at the way the Disney project was handled; "we need public involvement," she stressed (Richardson to Royer, 12 May 1988). Similarly, local landscape architect Richard Haag bluntly informed Royer that "the tactic of bypassing public input does not work" (Haag to Royer, 27 May 1988).

Considerable resentment of this sort arose, to the point that City Council eventually was persuaded to force Disney to address the many "citizen concerns voiced," as will be discussed later in this chapter (Liu to DSAG, 21 July 1988).
The concern over public involvement in the Disney design process aimed to ensure that Seattle residents could criticize what they felt to be an inferior effort; few demanded more input in order to praise Disney. Through examination of letters forwarded to the Mayor, Council, and Seattle Center offices, as well as informal citizens' activities, a clear picture of how Disney was regarded amongst many Seattle residents emerges. "Please, please, scrap the Disney plan!" Anne Wyne pleaded to City Council (Wyne to Council, n.d.). Floyd Springer concurred that Disney "came up short:" "top-notch designers," he said, do not remove most major structures and then try to "'design in' history and tradition" (Springer to Royer, 14 May 1988). The new features Disney suggested in place of "our tradition that they [would be] tearing down" failed to impress (Wyne to Council, n.d.). Robert B. Filley, for instance, found the new Seattle Center "a little contrived and unnatural," and the pond in particular a poor choice: "Frankly, standing water may be no big deal in the northwest" (Filley to Hughbanks, 17 May 1988). As Dale P. Rothlind, "Disgruntled Citizen," summed it up, "I am very nearly dumbstruck by the sheer nerve of these people" (Rothlind to Royer, 16 Aug. 1988). Citizens' groups such as the informal coalition signing themselves as "Seattle Center Employees Coalition, Shareholders of Seattle, Strand Helpers, and Save the Seattle Center," arranged public meetings to debate such questions as "is Plan B really a 'family' plan?"
Or is it an attempt to pander to the appetites of the developers and special interest arts groups by transforming Seattle Center into a Yuppie ghetto?" ("Is it Necessary to Destroy the Center to Save It?," n.d.)

In short, the three plans did little to convince Seattle residents that the city's $475,000 had been well spent. Some, such as Anne Focke, lamented that the results delivered little of the Disney promise. "What I miss is the magic, the spark, the zing, the 'something special' that ties it all together" (Program Committee, 16 May 1988). Others, such as DSAG member Norman Johnston, more specifically questioned whether Disney had lived up to their end of the agreement. "To say -- as was done -- that this is the only design the Disney people were willing to support lacks commitment to their contract responsibilities" (Johnston n.d.). In bringing up Disney's contractual obligations, Johnston pointed to a perceived weakness that would become for Disney an Achilles' Heel: City Council, as we shall see, also perturbed by the current state of affairs, was in a position to officially reject the Disney plans and literally send Disney back to the drawing board.
"Many People are Amazed at Disney's Lack of Performance."  

Many may have been amazed at the Disney debacle unfolding in Seattle, but it was City Council who now had the power to act. According to the design schedule, they were to choose one of the three alternative plans by May 31, 1988. Royer and Dingwall's propaganda machine reminded Council how Disney's "great product" offered a "tremendous opportunity . . . to recapture and revitalize the Seattle Center," and how "very encouraged" they were with "Disney's sensitivity to the unique history and environment of Seattle" (Merritt to Galle, 18 May 1988; Williams to Sibonga, 23 May 1988). Council, however, already dubious about Disney, in recent weeks had felt the general wrath of Seattle residents and been briefed on the details by the DSAG. They were in no mood to "express confidence and real enthusiasm" as Merritt, a member of the Seattle Center Board of Trustees, had encouraged them in her letter. Instead, Council decided that none of the plans was acceptable. For Disney to fulfill their contract, they would have to present a better product, this time strictly adhering to design criteria set out for them by Council.

Council formalized their unhappiness with Disney's progress in a "militant" resolution signed days before a final decision was due (Staten 1988b, p.20; City of Seattle 1988).

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10. Comment made on handwritten note to Norman Johnston by fellow DSAG member Steve Goldblatt (n.d., NJJ Papers, Box 2 // F=SCDSAG 88 - 3).
The resolution tentatively favoured Plan B "for the purposes of securing more program and design development information," but required Disney to reshape both the blueprints and their method of design. Council stipulated "further refinement and analysis" of virtually all design elements in Plan B, including the troublesome grand entrance, pond, dance hall, ice rink, amphitheatre area, parkades, and "pedestrian and car conflicts." In addition, the resolution encouraged Disney to consider a public plaza/town square area, which the DSAG had stressed to Council was sorely missing (Johnston 1988).

Disney's clandestine approach to planning would also have to change. The resolution stated Disney would be expected to coordinate with local traffic studies underway and generally provide "expert advice and assistance" to city planners and engineers concerned with Seattle Center and surrounding areas. Further, Disney would "participate in discussions and exchanges of views" with the DSAG, community groups, and "other interested citizens." The resolution extended Disney's contract into September in order to accommodate these public workshops. Finally, the new plan Disney submitted would be subject to an environmental impact study.

Disney, thus, was sent back to the drawing board. In their own words, "a new physical master plan approach was developed which we felt began to address some of the suggestions made" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p.26).
Following three public workshops and what Disney called "a lot of good work on the part of a lot of thinking people," Disney unveiled the new, improved Plan B (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988d, p.49). The response, however, was underwhelming.

The New Plan B: "From the Ridiculous to the Absurd"

Disney's new plan was highlighted by new design rhetoric and new themed areas. To meet the goals of "community integration," "zone creation," "site unification," "groups and individuals," and "merchandise and restaurants," Disney introduced six new "area studies:" Community Square, Sister Cities Court, International Fountain area, Coliseum Area, Theatre District, and the Family Amusement Park (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988e) (Appendix 6). The new districts retained traditional Seattle Center structures as stipulated by Council. The pond, for instance, was scrapped and instead International Fountain would remain, though "slightly repositioned" by four feet in order to fall in line with a central axis across the grounds (Walt Disney Imagineering

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11Attendance lists indicate that these workshops were not a representative sample of Seattle residents: out of 120 participants, only ten were not directly affiliated with either Seattle Center, the City, or the Disney organization (Disney 1988 - III Prelim, n.p.)

12Quote extracted from a letter written by Dale P. Rothlind, "Disgruntled Citizen," to Mayor Royer (Rothlind to Royer, August 16, 1988 // NJJ Papers, Box 2, F=SCDSAG-6)
The grand entrance concept, similarly, was replaced by two smaller entrances. A town square complete with pavilion was included to provide an internal focal point. Conceptual sketches and vivid description illustrated the new atmosphere (Figures 38 and 39); the new thrill ride area, as an example, was described as a site of "fast-paced excitement," with a "rustic, sea-shanty feeling playing off Lake Union." Colour and music would be "splashed everywhere" to complement the "out-and-out iron rides" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988e, p.45) (Figure 40). A separate kiddieland, by contrast, would be a "world of gentle entertainment," whose specially themed fantasy lighting, balloons, jugglers, friendly clowns, graceful animals, chugging trains, and bright shiny airplanes would "add up to spontaneous joy" (Walt Disney Imagineering 1988e, p.27).

While Disney clearly made concessions in their new plan, the ultimate results did not convince many that Disney truly had turned over a new leaf. Mitch Baker, speaking on behalf of Royer, valiantly asserted that the new Disney plan was an "excellent product," but his was a lone voice (Baker, cited in Seattle Times, 8 Aug. 1988, p.B2). DSAG member Norm Johnston called the new plan "superficial," adding "for that amount of money, we should have got a better job" (Johnston, cited in Seattle Times, 8 Aug. 1988, p.B1). Council member Jane Noland had more scathing comments: "this development has breached faith with what we asked for. We will have a mini-Disneyland
38. Walt Disney Imagineering: Conceptual Sketch
39. Walt Disney Imagineering: Conceptual Sketch
40. Walt Disney Imagineering: Family Amusement Park
if this goes through. To say I am disappointed is putting it very, very lightly" (Noland, cited in Seattle Times, 2 Aug. 1988, p.C4). The Seattle Weekly speculated that though Disney "might" have been influenced by the public workshops, they apparently set loose cartoonists, not architects and planners, to transform those ideas into conceptual sketches (Staten 1988c, pp.21-22).

"And Now the Bill: More than the Convention Center, Less than a Moon Shot"13

Public dissatisfaction with Disney's new plan so far had focused on its design elements: DSAG chair Sprague, for instance, dismissed the two smaller entrances as overblown and out-of-place "King Louis XVI" gates (Sprague, cited in Seattle Times, 17 Aug. 1988, p.A12); Snyder noted that Disney's theme park sketches offered little beyond conventional amusement park arrangement (Snyder 1992). When in late August Disney completed Phase III and presented the financial statements, however, critics found another more potent weapon. Disney, who had six months earlier intimated the renovation would likely cost sixty-three to seventy-five million dollars, now revised that figure to $335 million. The rather significant increase literally left city officials and others breathless: "the magnitude of the money set forth in the final Disney site plan surprised the Council, to say the least," as Sprague

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informed the DSAG (Sprague to DSAG, 18 Sept. 1988). Adding insult to injury, Disney and Harrison Price financial analysts also informed the city that even with the Disney-designed renovations, Seattle Center would still require a yearly infusion of approximately four million dollars of city money (Seattle Times, 20 July 1988, p.D4).

Council debated how to overcome this latest hurdle. Jim Street suggested that funding should be sought on a region-wide basis, Virginia Galle wondered if only the less expensive segments of the plan could be implemented, and Jane Noland "actually uttered the unthinkable:"

to pay for this plan, the City would have to erect a fence around Seattle Center and charge admission (Seattle Times, 16 Aug. 1988, p.B1; Staten 1988d, p.19). That the Disney plan forced the City into a position where an admission fee would be virtually inevitable symbolized the true private and exclusionary nature of Disney’s so-called public planning venture. Rice vehemently opposed this, arguing that "we’re fast denying places for teenagers and particularly the low income to go" (Rice, cited in Seattle Times, 16 Aug. 1988, p.B2).

It was increasingly apparent that the easiest way to handle Disney’s design flaws and outrageous costs would be to reject the plan entirely. Council was advised by the DSAG that the Disney plan created "malaise, reinforced by the arbitrariness and unreality of much of [their] suggestions," and that members could "find no substantive basis . . . for

The mechanism most readily available in order to back away from Disney gracefully was the environmental impact study. The EIS required three alternative plans for comparison; as Staten (1988b, p.20) noted, since Disney in essence submitted three identical plans, someone outside Disney would have to produce two more meaningfully distinct plans. Council took this opportunity, upon formally moving to begin the EIS, to open the way for other alternative designs. Ironically, after spending nearly half a million dollars on Disney, the Disney plan itself would not be entered into the EIS. Council initially spoke of at least retaining the Disney plan as a planning tool, but in the end, it was completely eliminated from consideration.

At the beginning of the EIS process, the Seattle architectural firm TRA was hired by Seattle Center management to develop all three alternative plans to be used throughout the EIS. They were encouraged to augment "programmatic information" from the Disney study with information gathered from further public meetings and workshops (Fiske 1990, p.25), and eventually produced three separate plans (Figures 41, 42,
and 43). The lengthy controversy surrounding Disney's presence in Seattle, however, had inspired other local architectural firms to rise to the challenge and attempt to prove that Seattle residents really could develop better designs than the California-based Imagineers. Three local plans were submitted, unsolicited, to Council. Council, however, was willing to allow only five plans into the EIS, and on June 5, 1989, they specifically removed the Disney plan, as well as one of the local plans, from the shortlist of potential EIS contenders (City of Seattle 1990c). Included in the final EIS were the three TRA plans, the Olson/Sundberg plan (Figure 44) and the Seattle Weekly plan (Figure 45).

The EIS, thus, signalled the official end of Disney in Seattle. Disney's absence was not lamented. As the Seattle Weekly commented, it came as a great relief to those who had come to think of the "Disney debacle" as "Exedrin Headache #327," or "Seattle's Nicaragua" (Brewster 1989, p.32; Brewster 1988, p.2). That the assessment was carried out using five locally-developed plans, none of which bore the name Disney, spoke to the nature of the long and complex debates that had surrounded Disney in Seattle throughout the 1980s. The City had struggled with an urban planner who was not only an outsider and an overwhelming corporate power, but who also explicitly drew their planning wisdom from theme parks. The entertainment architecture Disney proposed for Seattle,
41. TRA Seattle Center Plan A
43. TRA Seattle Center Plan C
44. Olson/Sundberg Seattle Center Plan D
45. Seattle Weekly Seattle Center Plan E
ultimately, not only failed to deliver the magic touch but did not even present a livable site plan.

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, the Disney Company offered to Seattle a compelling but ultimately unacceptable vision of urbanity. Disney's urban design on the surface incorporated seemingly desirable elements: Disney promised a revamped Seattle Center, sensitive to local history and culture, where activities would be neatly divided into themed areas, the grounds always well-kept, colourful, and cheerful, transportation and crowd control smoothly efficient, the money always flowing -- in short, as Mayor Royer proposed, "an excellent people place."

Clearly these aspects stand out as utopian traces from the Disney model, honed over many years within theme park walls. But, as I elaborated in Chapter Four, the Disney model contains within another set of utopian traces, those that reflect the hidden machinery necessary to maintain the pleasant facade. This machinery as articulated in Seattle included Disney's insistence that Seattle Center should embrace Disney's trademark architectural style at the expense of local landmarks, be addressed to a middle-class audience, encourage family-oriented activities, and that none of their suggestions were open for negotiation. As master planner, Disney knew best. In the end, Seattle residents concluded
that the negative components of the Disney model outweighed the benefits; the model was rejected.

During the 1980s, Seattle both courted and rejected Disney through official channels. However, the Council resolutions, Advisory Committee Decisions, and Environmental Impact studies that chart this process reflect precisely what Seattle residents had been expressing, through their active use of Fun Forest and Seattle Center, since the days of Century 21. The Coney Island-esque traits outlined in Chapters Five and Six reveal that as amusement space, Seattle Center consistently has hosted a complex debate about urbanity that confronts those very issues of class, gender, and ethnicity that Disney refuses to address. Finally, as we shall see in the next and concluding chapter, though Disney has left town, in Seattle Center the tension between Disney and Coney space is still evident. In the contemporary Disneyfied North American landscape, the debate about the type of city Disney promises is on-going.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have traced the ways in which amusement space acts as both the symbolic and the literal site upon which better cities are envisioned; in Seattle, the prolonged involvement of the Walt Disney Company in Seattle Center shaped the initial World's Fair site, provided a blueprint for change, and ultimately set the stage for the rejection of the Disney model. When Seattle achieved the honour of being the first, and to date only, city to refuse Disney's assistance, it turned back to an urban planning approach that drew upon local architects, solicited public input, and sought to incorporate a diversity of views. In this concluding chapter, I sketch in a brief epilogue to Seattle's Disney saga for a final examination of the theoretical and empirical implications of landscapes of leisure.

Disney's involvement in Seattle Center officially ended on July 5, 1989, when City Council chose the plans that would be used during the environmental impact assessment phase. The Disney plan was not among them (City of Seattle 1990c, p.2-6). Instead, focus shifted to five locally-developed designs -- the three provided by TRA under contract to Seattle Center, the Olson/Sundberg plan, and the Seattle Weekly plan. The final master plan, adopted by Council in May 1990, was a
hybrid of all five, proposed by Seattle Center management, to be implemented in phases by the year 2000 (Figure 46).

The master plan chosen in preference to Disney's suggestions, thus, was locally designed and shaped with what Seattle Center management called "substantial citizen participation" (City of Seattle 1990c, p.2-5). The plan, however, as yet had no funding attached: in a final act of "citizen participation," money would be granted by voters through a tax levy. In May 1991, a $49.9 million Seattle tax levy earmarked primarily for refurbishing aging Seattle Center buildings passed, but on the same ballot a more ambitious county-wide levy for $94.3 million toward development of new facilities failed¹ (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 29 May 1991, p.A1). Currently, the first round of physical improvements has begun, but in the absence of more money, implementation of the master plan is still in its early stages.

It is tempting to read the rejection of Disney and implementation instead of the locally-designed master plan as a clear-cut triumph of popular cultural resistance. However, cultural geographies expressed in urban form are not so unidimensional. The currently emerging role of the Fun Forest in the master plan demonstrates that in spite of Disney's

¹The county-wide levy that failed proposed measures including a new symphony concert hall, a new children's complex, two new theatres, and, on the former Metro bus barn site, a new "Family Entertainment Center" to replace the Fun Forest (Seattle Post Intelligencer, 29 May 1991, p.A6).
rejection, the tension between Coney Island and Disney models continues.

The Fun Forest’s Future.

In the master plan, the Coney Island-esque space of the Fun Forest is marginalized as it was in virtually all other plans. As in the Disney plan, it has been moved to the Metro bus barn site, but now its existence is even more nebulous. The amusement ride silhouettes visible on the plans are for interpretive purposes only: in essence, it is represented as blank space waiting for private funds to flesh it in.

Conversation with the Seattle Center Redevelopment Office indicates that while a Disney-like space would not offend, the very existence of the new Fun Forest is not a pressing concern in Seattle Center’s overall plans (Buchan 1990).

The Fun Forest’s current state can be better gauged from two other sources: comments made during the citizen’s participation process that formed part of the development of the Master Plan, and actual day-to-day changes being made to the Seattle Center landscape. References to the Fun Forest in public workshops, open houses, and questionnaires indicate that to at least some residents of Seattle, a Coney Island-tinged amusement space is not desirable. "I get grossed out everytime I’m there," one teenager succinctly expressed it at a workshop (City of Seattle 1990b, p.20).
"Really the thing that I hate about that Fund Forest\textsuperscript{2}," she explained, "is the people who hang out there and play, you know, from Lynnwood\textsuperscript{3} or something." Another teenager who moved to Seattle four years ago had a similar reaction to the Fun Forest, and her comments offer insight into the ideal model sought (City of Seattle 1990b, p.19):

I’d only been to Disneyland before, and I thought Fun Forest would be just like Disneyland. And then like all these rides, and I’m going, oh my God. This place is so messy. The ground was all caving in and there were pop cans and everything all over the place. All the rides looked like they were corroding.

Others interviewed during the public input phases also surveyed the Fun Forest site with distaste because it did not meet the Disney ideal (City of Seattle 1990b, pp.19-20):

The rides are all on top of each other. It’s unappealing in a way because it’s Flight to Mars on really dirty hard cement. I’m not saying have carpeting or anything. But it’s just that I don’t know if it can work not being a Disneyland. Because in Disneyland you’re entering bear land now and you go on all the bear rides. [The Fun Forest] is just sort of this drab setting in a way.

As another specified on a written questionnaire, an "up-to-date amusement park, as extensive as possible," was "very important," and it must be kept in "sparkling condition" (City of Seattle 1990a, n.p.).

\textsuperscript{2}The respondent’s reference to the park was recorded as the "Fund Forest." Whether this renaming was intentional on her part, or a fortuitous typographical error, is not known.

\textsuperscript{3}Lynnwood is a suburb approximately fifteen miles north of downtown Seattle.
It is not yet clear whether public input such as this will greatly affect designs for the new improved Fun Forest, since at present there are no designs. However, minor changes that are now occurring at Seattle Center will directly shape future directions the Fun Forest can pursue, and those directions hint that Seattle Center management, like the Seattle residents interviewed above, would prefer to see the creation of a Disney-like amusement space. Seattle Center management decided that for the 1992 season, several areas in and near the Fun Forest needed upgrading. Two buildings, the Fire Alarm Center and the Fun Forest Offices, would be demolished to open up extra ride area. The existing kiddieland area, now to be shifted to this newly-cleared site, would be replaced with a sculpture garden, and thus patrons to the Seattle Center -- and, significantly, Space Needle visitors -- would be greeted with a new look in Seattle Center's southeast corner (Figure 47).

Before the 1992 season, the Fun Forest cleared a portion of kiddieland in anticipation of the changes soon to come. The antique car ride, still situated in the gently rolling hills and shady trees of Roland Terry's 1963 vision, was cleared out and temporarily squished into an unoccupied sliver of land closer to the Fun Forest's centre. The Choo-Choo train was moved as well to open up more space for the new

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4The Space Needle owners, as discussed in Chapter Nine, have long lobbied to replace Fun Forest with a sculpture garden.

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47. **FUN FOREST**

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

- **ZIPPER WHEEL**
- **ARCADE**
- **GRAVITRON**
- **GALLEON**
- **FLIGHT TO MARS**
- **SKY WHEEL**
- **MONORAIL TERMINAL**
- **SNACK BAR**
- **MONSTER**
- **LOG FLUME**

**PROPOSED KIDDIELAND**

- **FUN FOREST OFFICES**
- **PROPOSED DEMOLITION**
- **FIRE ALARM CENTER**
- **DEMOPLISHED**

**Olympiad Sculpture**

- **Boats**
- **RAINBOW CHASER**
- **MOTO-JUMP**
- **PUFFIN DUMBO**
- **SPACE SHIPS**
- **ANTIQUE AUTOX**

**PROPOSED SCULPTURE GARDEN**

- **GAZEBO STREET**
- **VALET PARKING**
- **BUILDING 5B**
- **DEMOPLISHED**

**SHOOTING GALLERY**

- **BUMPER CARS**
- **MINI GOLF**
sculpture garden. Finally, Fun Forest management vacated their offices and moved into smaller quarters in the Center House.

The Seattle Center renovation schedule, however, did not proceed as planned, causing a series of delays and inconveniences that Snyder suggests were intended to discourage Fun Forest management from seeking to renew their contract (Snyder 1992). Demolition of the old Fun Forest offices was postponed repeatedly, until eventually Seattle Center management instead decided to keep the building and issued an RFP for its renovation. Its retention meant that space would no longer be available for Fun Forest use, either intact as offices or cleared as ride pads.

The Fire Alarm Center was demolished, though months later than initially planned. The delay alone would have made it impossible for the Fun Forest to prepare the site for the 1992 season, but procedures followed by Seattle Center further complicated matters. As soon as the building went down, the Fun Forest should have been granted access to lay the underground wiring necessary to support the amusement rides. However, the freshly-cleared site was paved over immediately, and the Fun Forest now at its own expense must dig up the unnecessary paving. The situation represents a tangible reminder of the lack of communication between Fun Forest and Seattle Center management (Snyder 1992).
The Contested Terrain of Urbanity.

The teenagers who lament the Fun Forest's "gross" appearance, the Space Needle owners who lobby to have the park replaced with a sculpture garden, the Center management who decided to pave over the Fire Alarm site without consulting the Fun Forest offices, and the many other instances that reflect poorly on the Fun Forest ultimately speak to more than the current state of the amusement park. They are channels for cultural debate over the tension between Coney Island and Disney models in urban space. At Seattle Center, this tension is articulated by the balance between the civic centre's existence as a sometimes chaotic mingling of uses that offers meaningful landscapes to groups ranging from the homeless to wealthy opera-goers without reducing their options to a middle class norm, and those who feel uncomfortable with Seattle Center's deviation from that middle-class norm. Thus, a 1990 open house survey could generate comments as diametrically opposed as the man who chastised Seattle Center for the "'scuziness' appearance it seems to acquire, and the problems with homeless and gangs," and the homeless person who said "thank you for having me and other individuals to be part of the Center House -- warmth etc. as a homeless person" (City of Seattle 1990a, n.p.).

On a broader level, the condition of the Fun Forest within the evolving state of Seattle Center speaks to the ongoing debate in North America about the shape of cities to
come, and the central role that amusement space plays in this debate. Throughout the twentieth century, amusement space has been the terrain upon which various facets of urbanity -- the roles of technology, the nature of social relations, and the look of the city itself -- have been contested. The dialogue is both hegemonic and utopian: as landscapes of popular culture, amusement and theme parks embody the contextual articulations of dominant economic, social, and cultural moments, and, behind their mantles of fantasy, the avenues to dream of better solutions. The nature of the cultural commentary is dynamic, always changing as the social conditions change. The Fun Forest represents a debate currently centred upon the tension between the two most popular models of amusement space, Coney Island and Disney, and the implications each has when translated to urban space.

The Coney Island model, based on a loosely organized collection of amusement parks and other leisure attractions in turn-of-the-century New York, developed in an era when the masses it attracted were predominantly blue-collar city dwellers of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Their daily lives placed most Coney visitors in rigidly defined class, gender, and ethnic roles; their everyday relationship to dangerous machinery was especially precarious.

The Coney Island model incorporated these aspects of daily life and, in its fantastical way, proposed their overthrow. The utopian impulses expressed at Coney Island
were wholly confrontational. The amusement parks never shied away from depicting the horrors of city life, and then against this backdrop of burning tenements, runaway streetcars, and crashing elevators, boldly turned class and gender relations inside out, if only in 'play.'

The Disney model, like its predecessor, also addressed at its core the roles of technology, social relations, and urban design in contemporary urban life. Unlike the Coney Island model, however, the Disney model addressed a different audience who lived under different circumstances. When Disneyland was built in 1955, the 'masses' had been remade both economically and culturally. Most of Disney's potential visitors held white-collar jobs, lived in suburbs, and were exposed daily to television, private automobiles, dishwashers, and other accoutrements of a mass-mediated homogeneous 'American' culture.

The Disney model proposed distinct utopian solutions to perceived crises of urbanity. While Coney Island confronted visitors with all manner of urban ills, and in effect challenged them to rewrite their own scripts, the Disney theme parks instead offered a controlled environment where corporate capitalism's existing social structures had been cleansed of impurities through the careful application of technology. Within the Disney model, the utopian script was written; all that was required of "guests" was conformity to the model.
Of particular interest in this thesis is the current ascendancy of the Disney model and its translation to urban space. As Disney critics and supporters alike contend, the Disney model is now a pervasive influence. "There is a bit of Disneyland inside every shopping mall, struggling to get out," architectural critic Paul Goldberger (1986, p.A12) has observed, a comment many would extend to much of the everyday landscape from suburbs to inner cities. Disney's harmonious architectural designs, pedestrian scale, lush landscaping, immaculate groundskeeping, and seamless efficiency have proven irresistible to both theme park patrons and architects and planners. That Seattle Center management and the City have pursued Disney so diligently is not surprising. They, like millions of others, wish for pleasing and non-threatening urban space.

The fate of Disney's proposals in Seattle, however, speaks to the flip side of Disney's utopian vision. Its surface charm masks the social conditions that make such design possible. Seattle residents encountered in Disney an outside planning expert perceived dictatorial, arrogant, obsessed with middle-class consumerism, and incapable of designing with local sensitivity. Indeed, careful analysis of Disney's track record with their own urban development efforts in Florida and California does not reflect well on the Company. As Walt Disney World's Reedy Creek Improvement District's General Manager Thomas Moses once stated, the
Disney Company "believe[s] very strongly that cities and counties ought to have a lower profile than they do now" (Moses, cited in Knack 1977, p.20). Such an attitude has led the citizens of those cities and counties involved with Disney to conclude that Disney's dream city can only be implemented at enormous social cost.

**Drawing Conclusions from the Seattle Center Case Study.**

Seattle's rejection of Disney has significant theoretical import. It demonstrates that critics who argue that Disney wields monolithic influence across North America are working with a poorly theorized concept of amusement space and of the popular cultural practices that occur within. From the Seattle Center case study we have learned four important points to help construct a more nuanced framework. First, the Disney model should not be confused with amusement space itself. Amusement space is 'empty' space; it is the specific location where models are articulated, negotiated, resisted, and transformed. The Disney theme parks, like Coney Island or the Fun Forest, represent the physical locations where models of amusement space are forged. Incorporating both the models and debate surrounding their translation to actual landscapes, these places embody the messiness and contradiction of the popular cultural landscape. Hence, at the Disney parks, for instance, we could spot instances of resistance and chaos lurking beneath the 'machine-tooled' surface; likewise, at
Coney Island we could find everything from Dreamland's elaborate architecture and moral atmosphere to the brothels and gambling dens it was meant to transcend. The model, thus, does not impose an absolute solution; rather, it provides the cultural resources with which people rewrite their own interpretation.

Amusement space's dynamic and unpredictable nature leads to a second concern, a broader critique of the ways in which Disney critics have theorized popular culture practices. While critics are right to point to the conformity inherent in the Disney model, they fail to examine lived practices to determine if anyone actually conforms to the model's ideals. As we have seen in Seattle, the translation of the Disney model into urban space is far more complicated than critics imply: not only has its implementation from the World's Fair to the present day been partial and fragmentary, but the people who encountered these Disney traits brought many often contradictory readings to them. The most cohesive response the Disney model evoked, ironically, was its rejection.

Third, Disney's fate in Seattle focuses attention on a crucial shortcoming concerning the way that political activity in particular has been treated. Critics who wait for signs of traditional, organized political activity to measure 'authentic' resistance to the Disney model likely will miss a rich assortment of guerrilla attacks of varying proportions and effectiveness. Though in Seattle Disney's death knell
ultimately was pronounced through recognized political procedures, the model had been gradually undermined for three decades through the enthusiastic expression of activities almost entirely outside the sphere of 'real' politics. The Century 21 fairgoers who jumped queues, the "naked woman in the Gravitron," or the Center House graffiti suggesting that more elite parts of Seattle Center could be put to better use as homeless shelters, for example, may have been fleeting acts that disrupted daily operations only in a minor way. Yet taken together, these evasive and productive tactics chipped away at Seattle Center's Disney traits, and literally set the stage for organized action. Seattle Center experienced so many individual acts of people constructing our space within and against their space that in the end, cultural 'ownership' of Seattle Center did actually shift away from Disney control. The implications are significant. Resistance that has lasting effect need not come from organized political struggle; similarly, the absence of revolutionary politics in the theme park city does not necessarily imply that the residents have accepted passively the model's ideals.

Finally, though Disney critics offer insightful commentary on the ideological values embedded in the Disney model in the context of the ties between the city-as-theme-park and broader economic processes -- and reach understandably pessimistic assessments of the prospect of cultural change within the Disney model -- they operate with a
fundamental misunderstanding of the nature and possibilities of cultural transformation in amusement space. The theme park city may look increasingly like a stage set, but life in that city is not reduced to a passive theme park ride. Amusement space remains the grounds of debate, and from amusement space come the cultural resources to shape the dialogue. By examining actual people in actual landscapes, we are able to uncover a vital dimension of current debate: it hinges on a tension between Coney Island and Disney models, and Coney Island appears to offer the antidote to Disney's faults.

When Seattle rejected Disney's blueprints for Seattle Center, it turned instead to a plan that was developed locally with substantial citizen input, designed to embrace the diversity of Seattle Center patrons and activities -- particularly those that deviated from the Disney ideal -- and, significantly, not close off avenues of change by imposing a static, unwieldy, and prohibitively expensive project on the ever-evolving centre. In short, Seattle turned to a plan that captured the essence of the utopian urban vision forged at Coney Island.

That Seattle was able to reject Disney at all, in an age of pervasive Disney influence, speaks to the continued relevance of Coney-esque traits. From the Coney Island model comes the possibility for multiple voices and dissent. Unlike Disney's version of urbanity, which assumes dissent is not necessary because the Disney Imagineers, who know 'best,' will
have planned the perfect environment, Coney's urban vision encompasses a spectrum of urban moments -- from Dreamland to the Bowery, from the Space Needle to the ill-reputed Quick Draw Theatre -- and lets the visitor confront them head-on. This somewhat chaotic diversity encourages the evasive and productive practices that add up to Coney's chancy, participatory theatre, and, when translated to actual landscapes, provide the cultural resources to dream of, and implement, alternatives to Disney. Thus, contrary to what Disney critics fear, cultural change is possible in the theme park city.

An examination of cultural transformation at ground level, however, would not be complete without acknowledging the messiness and contradiction within the popular culture landscape. In spite of Disney's outright dismissal, at Seattle Center the debate continues. Many still hope to replace the area's Coney Island traces with Disney-esque elements. The relative desirability of the Disney city, thus, is still being actively negotiated, and the debate may well yet be in its infancy. As more spaces are built in the Disney image by Disney enthusiasts and, increasingly, by the Disney Company itself, the contested terrain expands beyond amusement space to the city at large. In each location, the exact parameters of debate will be unique, but already we have seen common threads emerge. The Disney city offers the promise of a charming, organized, profitable, and controlled environment;
its implementation, however, has presented enormous challenges. Most significant from a theoretical standpoint has been the varied resistance expressed against the Disney city, and the fact that these many oppositional tactics speak to its rival model of amusement space, Coney Island.

Ultimately, we see that the tension between Coney Island and Disney reinforces amusement space's role as the terrain of contested urbanity; it transforms the amusement park from a merely escapist to a utopian landscape. In the amusement park we dream of the epoch to come by struggling to involve these urban visions into our own experiences and desires. Currently, the Coney Island model offers the cultural 'weapons' with which people can contest 'Disneyitis.' As the cultural conditions change, however, so will the parameters of utopian dialogue, and, consequently, the shape of our cities. Amusement space, thus, represents the rich ground upon which contradictory impulses can be articulated, negotiated, and transformed.

The Cultural Geography of Amusement Space.

Careful empirical and theoretical inquiry into the role that amusement and theme parks have played in shaping North American cities ultimately enriches our understanding of cultural geography, just as cultural geography provides the initial foundation that allows us to develop a sharper understanding of amusement space. From cultural geography we
incorporate, first, the formative thesis that cultural processes are writ in the landscape; second, the longstanding tradition of close field observation to uncover those processes; and third, more recent concerns for social and cultural theory that can be used to reconstruct intellectually what we look for and how we look for it. We approach the popular cultural landscape with the conviction that the practices and activities that shape and are shaped by these places are the central conduits through which people experience, articulate, and transform their everyday lives.

Amusement space, thus, becomes the terrain of contested urbanity; its dimensions suggest three fundamental lessons for the cultural geographer. First, the investigation of amusement space reinforces the importance of meshing theory with empirical field study. Neither alone will suffice. An understanding of amusement space derived wholly from postmodern theories that warn of hyperspace’s perils, we have seen, will be equally as flawed as studies that seek to comprehend amusement space by simply inventorying its contents. The run-away mine trains, crashing elevators, audio-animatronic jungle cruises, and Main Street U.S.A.s only gain their meaning from the context within which they exist. Theoretical constructs designed to explain that context, further, can only be fleshed in by careful examination of the lived realities to which they pertain. Theoretically-informed empirical research alone can uncover what Ley and Olds (1988,
call the "turbulent" nature of popular cultures, and amusement space offers the ideal ground to observe these fractured and negotiated processes.

Second, from amusement space we learn that meaningful cultural geographies are forged at the juncture where ideological constructs and lived realities meet, a juncture often defined by the popular. These popular cultural practices, representing the messiness of ideology, interpretation, and landscape in dynamic transformation, contain the key to grasping broader relationships between social process and urbanity. Popular culture is not a diversional escape void of 'serious' content, and the popular cultural landscape, likewise, is not simply a frivolous collection of elements outside of 'real' geography. In the fast-food restaurants, shopping malls, and theme parks of the contemporary city are the places where people directly tangle with the 'abstract' urban processes that define the boundaries of their everyday lives.

This study has also demonstrated, finally, that amusement space does offer one special facet that separates it from the rest of the popular cultural landscape, and that facet may be its most important contribution to cultural geography: in amusement space we can observe clearly the dimensions of utopian cultural process. As territory steeped in fantasy and predicated on the suspension of disbelief, amusement and theme parks openly invite what is in essence utopian dialogue. The
'real' world is cordoned off, albeit temporarily, and the visitor is greeted with fantastic renderings of the ordinary into the extraordinary, the hopeless into the hopeful. Class, gender, and ethnic discourses are rewritten against backdrops that themselves are fanciful speculations concerning technology, urbanity, and society. Because within amusement and theme park walls these utopian dialogues stand out in bold relief, cultural geographers can approach amusement space almost as a laboratory to study utopian impulses that are much harder to disentangle in the 'real' world beyond.

Our investigation of one specific landscape, Seattle Center, has established that utopian processes nurtured within amusement space can play a formative and potent role in cultural formations of a broader scale. The significance of the Coney Island and Disney models far transcends the type of amusement park experience they offer to their patrons. These utopian models entered into a much wider debate, encompassing more space both culturally and geographically, and ultimately became the poles around which our cities of tomorrow are being negotiated at the everyday level. The point at which fantasy and reality meet can prove rich ground for the cultural geographer.
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Appendix 1

Paul Thiry's Total Plan, 1963
Appendix 3: Walt Disney Imagineering Alternative A
Appendix 4: Walt Disney Imagineering Alternative B
Appendix 5: Walt Disney Imagineering Alternative C
Appendix 6: Walt Disney Imagineering New Plan B