**Feedback Loops of Disneyfication: From Theme Parks to Urban Spaces and Back**

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One of the most widely discussed issues in academic research on themed environments pertains to the spread of design strategies originally developed for theme parks to other private, but also and especially to public urban spaces. Already in 1981, Margaret J. King noted that “theme parks are becoming prototypes for more and more of the ‘real’ environments [such as] the strip, shopping centers, malls, buildings public and private” (60). Starting in the early 1990s and using examples from North American cities as diverse as New York, Montreal, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and Seattle, but also Medina, Ohio, as well as Anaheim, California, and Orlando, numerous critics from a large variety of academic disciplines have contributed to the debate about the increasing “Disneyfication” of public urban spaces, variously identifying the resulting private simulations of public realms as “hypercities” or “cities as theme parks” (Sorkin), “urbanoid environments” (Goldberger), “quasi-urban” or “pseudo-public spaces” (Gottdiener), “not-cities” (Marling), “non-place urban realms” (Carosso), “privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces typically organized around a specific theme (PROPASts)” (Mitrasinovic), or simply “Disneyfied places” (Kolb).

However, in what could be described as a “feedback loop of Disneyfication” – or perhaps a classic case of a monster turning upon its creator – architectural and urban planning strategies developed for the “Disneyfication” of public urban space, including raised pedestrian bridges and other examples of what Gottdiener has called “defensive architecture” (181), have also found their way back to the theme parks. There, they have served, much like elsewhere, to keep specific people (visitors) from accessing specific places that used to be open to anyone who had paid the admission. The results are simulated private spaces within simulated public spaces or “hyper-Disneyfied” places that are restricted to a narrowly circumscribed group of customers, mostly based on additional fees.

Our paper will proceed in two steps. First, we will briefly discuss “classic” cases of theme park simulations of public urban spaces such as Disneyland’s “Main Street, U.S.A.” or Terra mítica’s “Grecia,” which simulate public accessibility by drawing on such urban forms as the small-town main street and the European market square. Interestingly, theme parks have used these forms whether they are appropriate to the theme (as in the case of “Main Street”) or not (as in the case of the Acropolis at “Grecia”). Second, we will use the example of Disneyland’s “New Orleans Square” to illustrate specific “feedback loops of Disneyfication.” Both the creation of the “Disneyland Dream Suite,” an overnight accommodation, in 2007 and the expansion of “Club 33,” a private bar/restaurant, in 2013/2014 at New Orleans Square necessitated the addition of staircases, ramps, and covered pedestrian bridges to the existing structures of the “Square.” Clearly visible to every visitor, the additions are simultaneously designed to discourage people from entering the spaces and to increase their desire to do so, which is, however, only possible in exchange for considerable amounts of money. As in the case of simulated public spaces elsewhere, New Orleans Square’s simulated private spaces are designed to maximize profits.

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