both icon and exemplar, a talismanic Ralph Lauren that enables mass market reproductions to be discussed as high culture. Which is more authentic, the cultural critic of the *New York Times* has asked: an idealized version of the past or the real past with all its warts? "The Disney version, like Mr. Lauren's environments, corrects all the mistakes, and paradoxically gives you a much better sense of what the experience of being in a lavish Victorian seaside hotel ought to have been" (Goldberger 1992a, 34).

The spatial reality of virtual reality

The virtual reality of Disney World most resembles the metropolitan region of Orlando. Orlando's rapid growth since Disney World opened relates at least as much to the theme park and the tourist economy it spawned as to the proximity of high-tech industry at Cape Canaveral, low-wage labor, and open land. The theme park brought Orlando subjective legitimacy as a place where businesses and people wanted to be. "Spend less Orlandough," says a United Airlines poster in a travel agency window on Madison Avenue in New York. People are attracted to the city because it has the image of public space that Disney World projects. "People come here because they know it's going to be safe," says the head of Universal Studios, Florida. People need never worry about bad weather or crime. The author of a best-selling book of investment advice who lives in Orlando says, "The best place to live is where everybody wants to vacation" (quotes in "Fantasy's Reality," cover story, *Time* May 27, 1991, 52–59, on 54).

Besides helping to shape the growth of Orlando, Disney World influences the shape of other places. The commercial and critical success of planned residential communities with strict building and design rules, like Seaside, Florida, planned by the architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, show that people like benevolent authoritarianism, as long as it rules by imposing visual criteria. In smaller development projects, re-creating the 19th-century town green has been highly marketable. But the old town and town green represent more than aesthetic images; they embody broader strategies of social control. The organization of space is accompanied by a carefully planned distribution of population by age and income level. This goes hand in hand with acceptance of an internalized political authority. Ironically, the town government legislates a certain amount of diversity. No white picket fence in Seaside may look like any other white picket fence. Other regulations control the density, size, and style of construction, as well as the use of space. Controlling diversity determines the aesthetic power of the place. In social class terms, this is a middle-class space, the equivalent of Disney World's Main Street. It reproduces the white middle-class exclusivity – the safe, socially homogeneous space – of the 1950s, within acceptable limits of aesthetic diversity.

Since four-fifths of the visitors to Disney World are grownups, the look of the place must appeal to what adults want. Disney World exemplifies visual strategies of *coherence*, partly based on uniforms and behavioral norms of conformity, and partly based on the production of set *tableaux*, in which everything is clearly a sign of what it represents in a shared narrative, fictive or real (see Boyer 1992). Disney World also uses a visual strategy that makes unpleasant things – like garbage removal, building maintenance, and pushing and shoving – *invisible*. Disney World uses *compression* and *condensation*, flattening out experience to an easily digestible narrative and limiting visualization to a selective sample of symbols. Despite all the rides and thrills, Disney World relies on *facades*. You cannot go into The Magic Kingdom, but it is a central place at Disney World.

These visual strategies have influenced the building of shopping complexes with historical themes like South Street Seaport in New York and shopping malls with amusements like the West Edmonton Mall in Canada. They also shape consumption space as a total experience, as at the Mall of America in Minnesota. But defining a consumption space by its look is especially suited to transnational companies in the symbolic economy, which try to synergize the sale of consumer products, services, and land. Disney World is, of course, the prime example. It is followed by the Ashley resort, or "recreational village," built by the Laura Ashley Company in Japan, where the home furnishings, fabrics, and fashion company designs and sells hotel rooms, restaurants, gardens, stables, helipads, apartments, and houses (Gandee 1991). The look is the experience of the place. Controlling the vision brings market power.

Disney World's strategies for organizing space also influence New York City's business improvement districts (BIDs). Their first goal is to *clean up* an area, to keep it free of litter that the city's sanitation services cannot control. They also secure space by erecting barriers or otherwise limiting public access and making rules about appropriate behavior. Private

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