

lively aesthetic element so desired – after years of public criticism – in the redevelopment of Times Square.

The BIDs' strategies for managing public space suggest what an important role vision plays in defining spatial identities. To some extent the importance of visualization reflects the cumulative influence of photography, film, and television from the end of the nineteenth century, but it also reflects the influence of Disney World on public culture. In New York, advocates of both historic preservation and new construction accuse each other of "Disneyitis" (see Gill 1991), as they try to regulate, or free from regulation, aesthetically or narratively incoherent segments of the city. Occasionally these efforts are too strenuous. In a village on the eastern end of Long Island, where many affluent New Yorkers have vacation homes, some old-time residents criticized the village improvement association for "trying to turn Water Mill into Disneyland," by cutting down two trees on the village green to preserve a windmill that is a national historic landmark (*New York Times*, December 30, 1991).

The general question behind "Disneyitis" is which visual strategy – historic preservation, imitation, or imaginative recreation – is morally legitimate. While strategies based on theme may be transparent, techniques of simulation decontextualize the production of space and so may be difficult to decode in a critical way. Moreover, simulation is economically productive, for it provides opportunities to develop new products and a market edge, as well as to export work to new markets, especially in Japan and Southeast Asia. By the same token, simulation gives art and architecture critics something to discuss, rhetorical grist for the critics' mill. The architecture critic of the *Boston Globe* defends a new, pseudo-neo-Georgian office tower in Boston by the architect Robert A. M. Stern because it "is architecture for an age of simulation" (Campbell 1992). He also praises the way the social diversity and unruliness of the work force contradict the apparent aesthetic harmony and political coherence that real neo-Georgian architects aimed for in the early 20th century. Between post-modern architecture and the new informality, public space enshrines spontaneity and chaos – but to what purpose and at what cost? "A long-haired messenger boy in bicycle tights . . . transforms the building at once, by his mere presence, into a stage set. . . . An attorney in running shoes and earmuffs simply by being here alchemizes [the building] into a museum representation of a dead culture, becoming, herself, a tourist in that museum."

Disney's symbolic economy

The sponsorship of marine culture at Disney World represents an integration of primary products and visual symbols. Like Disney World itself, this symbolic economy accepts incongruities that violate historic material forms, both economic and ecological. Buy "fresh salmon steak, farm raised and grain fed," as a supermarket poster in New York proclaims. In the symbolic economy, employers hire a work force with cultural capital or higher education to do productive labor and provide a labor-intensive service called fun. Because of language requirements, business establishments use "European" employees in front regions in direct contact with customers and "minority" employees in the back. The Disney World model suggests that a local or regional economy can be created on a primary base of services, which spin off real estate development, attract other "clean" businesses, and generate creative business services like advertising and entertainment (Zukin 1990).

This model of the symbolic economy creates its own internal stratification, with low-wage workers, temporary workers, and unionized workers performing low-status tasks of maintenance, security, and food preparation. One of the crucial social issues is how this model handles status disparities. Much of the burden is borne by corporate culture and job security, but the cost may be employee burnout, achievement limited to the benefits provided by the firm, and vulnerability to corporate mind control. Will producing fun create a different kind of personal identity than producing widgets?

The corporate managers that took over the Disney family business in 1985 have bet on the development and diversification of new mass culture products: Hollywood films, syndicated television programs, and videocassette releases of old Disney movies. They have also taken on the role of hotel developer at Disney World and expanded the theme park by building new rides, linking them with such high-price talent as Michael Jackson, Steven Spielberg, and George Lucas, and multiplying "participation agreements" with large corporate sponsors. Corporate synergies are not new to Disneyland. Back in the 1950s, Walt Disney received a \$500,000 investment and a loan guarantee of \$4.5 million from the television network ABC to build Disneyland.

In return, the network owned one-third of the park and got to show Disney's first weekly television program. Walt Disney also sold Coca-Cola an exclusive soda concession for Disneyland; Kodak bought exclusive rights to sell film at the park. Under a