

preserved by excluding what Lofland (1989) refers to as the “unholy” and “unwashed”—the panhandlers, the winos, the homeless, and simply the urban poor. In many cities, in the name of pedestrian safety or extreme weather, public agencies have planned and built networks of underground tunnels, sky bridges, and pedways to connect these insular corporate spaces. This has created what Trevor Boddy (1992) calls the “analogous city,” or a city of contrived urban spaces that keeps out the poor and undesirable.

It seems that proliferation of such insular and protected spaces has extended beyond the business and shopping districts of the city. In recent years we have seen a phenomenal growth of gated communities throughout the U.S. (Blakely & Snyder, 1997). When asked why they chose to live in gated communities, most respondents spoke of the need for safety and a search for community, presumably one that is based on homogeneity and cohesion. The result is the spread of a “club phenomenon,” an apt metaphor used some years ago by Charles Tiebout (1956) and his colleagues to explain the political economy of metropolitan fragmentation involving multiple autonomous municipalities (Ostrom et al., 1961).¹⁴ The study by Blakely and Snyder suggests that this tendency to live in club-like communities with common spaces and facilities arises from a fear of strangers, especially of those who come from a different class, culture, ethnicity, or national origin, and not just a concern for personal and property safety.

Interestingly, the search for utopia in such controlled communities has become both an object and a subject of the expanding domain of the entertainment industry. The life portrayed in the movie *The Truman Show*, filmed in the original New Urbanist icon of Seaside, Florida, is a caricature of programmed but insular private and public life in a controlled setting. While the utopian life may be an object of entertainment in *The Truman Show*, The Disney Corporation takes the search for utopia seriously in the planning and development of Celebration, a planned new community not too far from Disney World in another corner of Florida. Only 3 years old, this company town is an edited New Urbanist utopia that emulates the quintessence of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century American towns, and a clear departure from Walt Disney’s initial dream of a high-tech utopia. Although, as Kurt Andersen (1999) points out, “Celebration is the real EPCOT—the quasi-democratic, postmodern fulfillment of Walt’s totalitarian, late-modern vision” (p. 74). Entertainment-based corporate vision even provides the script for uses of the “public” realm and

space, such as Disney music or Christmas carols piped in through loudspeakers installed in the streets or fake snow falling in the downtown at night (Andersen, 1999).¹⁵

If Celebration successfully combines the communitarian ideals—the “trap,” as David Harvey (1997) would argue—and a hyper-reality, as suggested by Umberto Eco (1990), that only Disney can so effectively and professionally construct and orchestrate, what does it presage about the future of the public realm? Andersen (1999) speculates that Celebration may in fact set the stage for reinventing the suburb and may influence public taste to demand similar buildings and places in the future. The real question is whether such products will come packaged only in the form of insular and gated communities. If that happens to be the trend, the democratic ideals of public space and the public realm will no doubt atrophy further. Yet the brand of public life offered by Disneyland and its cohorts continues to intrigue such noted observers as Charles Moore (1965) and Umberto Eco (1990), who concede that while contrived, these settings offer clean, efficient, and predictable encounters and experiences. The entry fee guarantees that and, in the words of Charles Moore, “You have to pay for public life” (p. 57). The public seems to agree and be willing. Disney’s command of the future of public life and space may in fact be a *fait accompli*, according to some observers (see Ghirardo, 1996).

Invented streets: a public life of *flânerie* and “third places”

The sense of loss associated with the perceived decline of public space assumes that effective public life is linked to a viable public realm. This is because the concept of public life is inseparable from the idea of a “public sphere” (Habermas, 1989) and the notion of civil society, where the affairs of the public are discussed and debated in public places. The domain of the public sphere is seen to exist between the privacy of the individual and domestic life and the state (or the government).

But there is another concept of public life that is derived from our desire for relaxation, social contact, entertainment, leisure, and simply having a good time. Individual orbits of this public life are shaped by a consumer culture and the opportunities offered by the new “experience economy” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The settings for such public life are not necessarily public spaces. According to Ray Oldenburg