

## Wonder and Worth: Disney Museums in World Showcase

*Corinne A. Kratz and Ivan Karp*

Museum professionals frequently define themselves and their institutions in opposition to popular forms of entertainment.<sup>1</sup> In recent decades, they often compare museums to Disneyland and Walt Disney World, a contrast which encodes oppositions between what they see as serious culture and popular culture, educational motives and economic motives, and the authentic versus the facsimile. Such oppositions, articulated in terms of stark contrasts, mask the ambivalence many museum curators feel about theme parks and world fairs. As institutions, museums also embody the often contradictory goals and impulses that can be found in theme parks. At the same time as museums express opposition to Disney theme parks, they have increasingly adopted styles and techniques of display associated with them. Museums have begun to combine entertainment with education, in part because they see themselves in greater competition with other display institutions.<sup>2</sup>

No matter where they are located, displays about culture and history impart information and present a set of perspectives and values. They thus become a means through which viewers can relate their viewpoints and experiences to others. In the process displays become resources for self-production, though the selves produced may simultaneously be national citizens, international travelers, and consumers, variously located through class, ethnicity, and region.

These processes of self production are related to what Stephen Greenblatt (1991) has described as "resonance," the ways in which displays connect to the structures of feeling and experience found in the everyday world outside the display setting. "Resonance" is opposed to "wonder," a mode of relating to the object that focuses on its seemingly intrinsic characteristics, as opposed to its relations to the world outside the display setting. In distinguishing between resonance and wonder Greenblatt argues that viewers have multiple relations to objects and this suggests that there can be different approaches to display. While resonance relates the object to multiple contexts, wonder focuses attention on the qualities of the object

itself. Obviously both are important; these are two poses of attention rather than opposed phenomena. Greenblatt follows Baxandall (1972) by pointing out that during the Renaissance this sense of wonder changed: from an appreciation of the material qualities, such as rarity and value, that can be associated with an object of material culture, wonder came to focus instead on the skill displayed in creating an effect. If wonder can encode history and change, as Greenblatt asserts, then it possesses resonant aspects. "Rare" and "valuable" are judgments which depend on values external to the display setting, values that are historically determined and culturally constructed—even when this tends to focus the viewers' attention on the object of display rather than on a more didactic message. In most display settings resonance and wonder are connected and can reinforce or conflict with one another. In this paper we explore the combinations of resonance and wonder evoked in the museums inserted into Walt Disney World's Epcot Center and how they relate to questions of self production.

Unlike museums, the overall Disney perspective harbors no worries about purity.<sup>3</sup> From the start, Walt Disney envisioned his theme parks as "something of a fair, an exhibition, a playground, a community center, a museum of living facts, and a showplace of beauty and magic" (quoted in Rykwert 1992). At one and the same time ignoring and using conventions which define boundaries among display settings, Walt Disney World shrewdly appeals to and draws from a wide range of markets. The deliberate blurring of boundaries between reproduction and fake, fiction and fact, fantasy and history is central to Disney World's experience and appeal. As such, it is an ontological melange that Umberto Eco calls hyperreality (1986; cf. Fjellman 1992:255-57). But Disney displays are more complex than even Eco suggests. Display types and settings are not fused into a single amalgam; they are related to one another through the act of "quotation." Susan Stewart (1984) argues that quotation necessarily privileges the "original" context, but in Walt Disney World we think this privilege is more apparent than real: Disney "quotes" from the original context, or object

in the case of the museums, mixing historical periods in the “countries” at random in a systematic attempt to manufacture a form of cultural authority. As a result the “quote” is subordinated to the overall effect created by the synthetic reproduction. The complexities of “quoting” are no more apparent in Epcot Center than in its five museums, some displaying objects on loan from places such as the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History and the Fowler Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles. What are such objects and museums doing in this world of fabricated simulacra, in the midst of Disney World?

Museums are presumed to be the home of the “real,” temples of art, and repositories of knowledge and value. Museums control audience behav-

ior for specific purposes in carefully defined settings. Theme parks and amusement parks simulate unfettered experience in fabricated (but still highly controlled) settings. Disney World seems to defy these standard definitions. Its theme rides underscore control and often impart information, while its museums appear to be oases of freedom. Clifford Geertz defines a blurred genre as one form masquerading as another, so artfully composed as to obscure the “original.” Disney World contains many blurred genres—history masquerading as pageant and vice versa (Wallace 1985), art as popular culture (Marling 1991), and theme parks that contain museums. Epcot’s “World Showcase” is the home of the theme-park museums. Why they are placed there and not elsewhere is the first question in exploring how Disney museums figure in



1. China Gate at Epcot Center. "A recreation of the Temple of Heaven in Beijing is just one of the elements at the China Showcase in Epcot Center. Visitors can view a 360-degree CircleVision® film 'Wonders of China' and see locations never before filmed by western cameras. Authentic shops and restaurants also bring the unique culture of the People's Republic of China to the Walt Disney World Resort." (Copyright 1991. The Walt Disney Company)



which a united "future" has emerged. The "past" is packaged in a manner that allows it to be experienced in the short compass of a tourist trip or museum visit.<sup>4</sup>

We turn now to the accessible "past" of World Showcase. Eleven countries are represented there by pavilions, arranged around a lagoon. Within that array there are five displays that we will consider here as the museums of Disney World. They are found in Mexico, Norway, China, Japan, and Morocco. All five are called exhibits in the Epcot brochure and explicitly called "museum," "gallery," or "exhibit" in the guidebooks available (Birnbaum 1992; Mobil 1991).

The United States pavilion is placed at the center of World Showcase as The American Adventure, the only pavilion not called by its country name. The rest are United States neighbors, trading partners, and allies: Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Japan, China, and Morocco. Each country is housed and landscaped in a style appropriate to a specific period and region, standing for the country as a whole. Countries are represented at vastly different periods, jumbling the visitors' sense of history and foreign relations from the start. Each country features various "attractions," including films, rides, and museums, distributed as shown in Fig. 3.

The only features common to all pavilions of World Showcase are restaurants and shops; this is overwhelmingly a world of commerce. The commercial nature of World Showcase is not ignored by its visitors. As one young visitor remarked to a woman we took to be his mother, "These aren't countries, they're just dumb shopping." In the case of Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, he's right; there are no attractions in these pavilions except shops and restaurants. France, however, joins Canada and China in offering films with spectacular views of nature and lyrical representations of cultural heritage. Mexico and Norway have rides. The American Adventure has a unique presentation combining film, theater, and Disney Audio-Animatronics, an extremely expensive technological wonder that runs nine minutes longer than any other World Showcase attraction. Museums alone supplement shops in Japan and Morocco, while China, Norway, and Mexico add museum displays to their other attractions.

Corporate sponsorship in World Showcase, unlike Future World, is not obvious.<sup>5</sup> Only The American Adventure openly acknowledges corporate sponsors, namely American Express and Coca Cola.<sup>6</sup> Sponsoring entities are also listed in the Epcot Center Guidebook Brochure for Norway and China: Norshow and China Pavilion Exhibit Cor-

poration. These entities appear to represent different mixtures of corporate and government involvement, clearly sufficient to warrant naming them.

In other countries, sponsoring and consulting bodies seem to be involved on a smaller scale, identified in portions of each pavilion. Japan's museum is sponsored by Mitsukoshi Department Store. France's Tourist Bureau was involved in the film "Impressions de France" (Fjellman 1992:246). Canada's film has a CBC logo marking its cooperation, though Fjellman indicated that no Canadian government agencies or corporations helped plan the pavilion (Ibid.:246).<sup>7</sup> The Moroccan National Tourist Office maintains an office and slide show in the pavilion, though we do not yet know who sponsored and planned their museum. Of the countries which offer attractions and/or exhibitions, then, Mexico alone has no mark of sponsorship.

The countries without museums are all Western and industrial—France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Canada. These include the countries where museums began, and which still pride themselves on having museums of international renown. Their encyclopedic museums were often associated with imperial conquest and contain the world within their doors, with halls devoted to single countries, regions, or "civilizations." The "national museums" in World Showcase deal with one country at a time, and

EPCOT CENTER: WORLD SHOWCASE PAVILION <sup>1</sup>	
<p><b>Mexico</b> Attraction: ride Exhibit: museum Restaurants Shops</p>	<p><b>Japan</b> Exhibit: museum Restaurants Shops</p>
<p><b>Norway (Norshow)</b> Attraction: ride Exhibits: museum, travel info. Restaurants Shop</p>	<p><b>Morocco</b> Exhibits: museum, travel info. Restaurant Shops</p>
<p><b>China (China Pavilion Exhibit Corp.)</b> Attraction: 360 film Exhibit: museum Restaurants Shop</p>	<p><b>France</b> Attraction: film Restaurants Shops</p>
<p><b>Germany</b> Restaurants Shops</p>	<p><b>United Kingdom</b> Restaurants Shops</p>
<p><b>Italy</b> Restaurant Shops</p>	<p><b>Canada</b> Attraction: 360 film Restaurant Shops</p>
<p>The American Adventure (American Express and Coca-Cola) Attractions: (magic) theater shows Exhibit: quilts Restaurant Shops</p>	
<p><sup>1</sup> The Guidebook identifies sponsors for only some of the country displays, shown here in parentheses after the country name.</p>	

3. Epcot Center: World Showcase Pavilions.



4. Mexican Pavilion. "Epcot Center's WorldFest spotlight shifts to Mexico for the month of May featuring some of Mexico's most famous folk groups." (Copyright 1985 The Walt Disney Company)

those countries are the most foreign-seeming to Americans: Japan, China, Mexico, Morocco, and Norway. Many visitors could easily have visited museums in each of these countries, especially Mexico, whose National Museum is internationally famous.

Going to museums has been described as a "ritual of citizenship" (Duncan 1991; Duncan and Wallach 1980) in which museumgoers experience and may even identify with a national past and present glory. The history of museums has often been bound up with the "formation of national and cultural identities" (Coombes 1988; cf. Bennett 1988), and the displays of Walt Disney World, including the museums, are no exceptions. However, do they tell us more about the countries they represent or about ideas held by Disney World's middle-class, largely American visitors? The Official Guide tells us: "Disney conceptions

about participating countries [are created] in remarkably realistic, consistently entertaining styles. You won't find the real Germany here; rather the country's essence . . . an artful pastiche of all the elements that give that nation's countryside and towns their distinctive flavor" (Birnbaum 1992:141).

An announcement for the daily light show, *IllumiNations*, sums up the attitude: "The countries themselves become performers." They are called *countries*, not *nations*, despite the name of the light show. This carries through in narrations within countries; the sole exception is the United States, systematically characterized as "nation." It might seem the European countries with only shops and restaurants resisted further Disney redesign to create an "essence" of their national character and style, one that might differ from their own self-definition.

Raymond Williams (1976) argues that “country” is a more positive term than “nation,” one that suggests emotional ties and identification of individual with collective. “Nation” refers more to a polity than a people, a political organization that commands allegiance. In World Showcase only the United States lacks displays that typify its inhabitants. The American Adventure refers to shared history and environment, and asserts that people of different origins compose the polity, but individual and collectivity are not one. National character is not prominent, nor is the conventional “melting pot” image used to define American character. America is distinguished from the other “countries” by its national standing, as a country of *different* people who accommodate one another. The word “adventure” also implies a kind of spontaneity which is in sharp contrast to a more rational definition of a nation-state—another way in which Americans, and especially Disney, seek to differentiate “us” from “them.”

Just as the United States is distinguished as a nation among countries, the location of museums in World Showcase also distinguishes two classes of countries included around the lagoon. The most foreign-seeming countries (from an American perspective) are the ones with museums. Each museum uses conventions that evoke different museum genres, quoting museums of culture history, art, and ethnography. What kinds of experience, then, are represented and predicated for visitors? How do the displays relate to their pavilions and to non-Disney museums?

The Mexico pavilion is shaped like a Mayan temple; its museum vestibule leads to a market plaza, shops, restaurant, and a ride. “Reign of Glory: A Celebration of Mexico’s Pre-Columbian Arts” was on display when we visited. It included a bright mural painting reconstructing Palenque life and cases showing artifacts against scrims that changed from a plain background to reveal small-scale dioramas. Colima pottery, for example, was shown against a stone wall that revealed a diorama of a woman grinding corn. A plaque listed exhibition lenders—the Denver Art Museum, the Southwest Museum, and other prestigious institutions—though they were not identified with particular pieces.

In contrast to the boutique lighting, elaborate scrim technology, and dramatic setting of the Mexican museum, the Norway museum next door seemed dim, somewhat dated, and hidden away. A polar exploration exhibit was tucked inside the replica of a medieval Norwegian *stavekirke*, but no signs indicated that something was inside. This history exhibit relied heavily on dioramas: a near

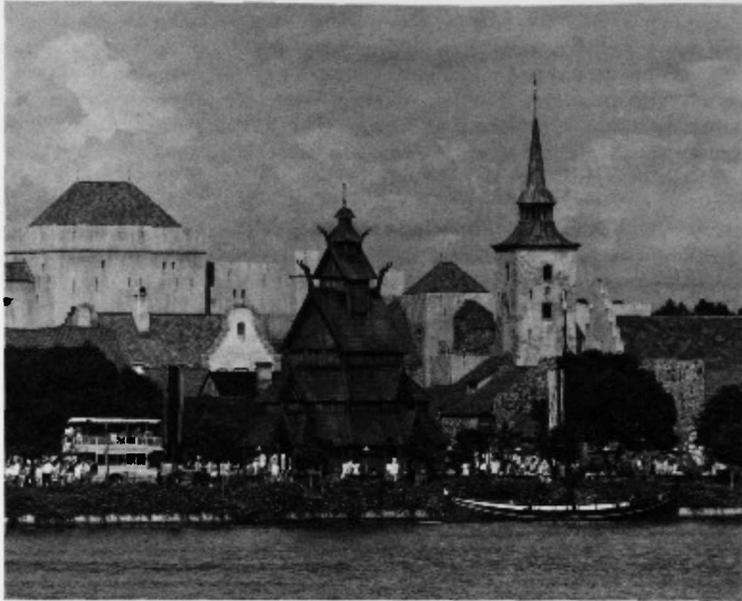
life-size one of explorer Roald Amundsen with a packed dog sled, and miniature models of a boat designed to sail to the North Pole. Another case showed objects, with skis, paddles, and heavy clothing used in early Norwegian polar exploration.

The Norway exhibit highlights an irony of the Disney museums. Imagineers and technicians, the very masters of “Disney realism” who created a walking, talking, pipe-smoking Ben Franklin in The American Adventure, here devoted themselves to recreating the lifeless mannequins of early dioramas, an antecedent of Audio-Animatronics. In the museums they rely on the use of actual objects and refer to real events. They present the real writ small rather than the realistic simulations that define the hyperreal’s claim to a privileged portrayal of reality.

The Chinese museum was a well-lit, central part of the pavilion, and also a lobby for the pavilion’s movie theater. This museum showed great care and attention—it had a prominent introduction, intricate carpeting, and an elaborate plexiglass dragon with display cases set into its sides. As in Mexico, pieces were on loan, but the home of each piece was identified in this case—they came from the Palace Museum in Beijing and the Avery Brundage collection in San Francisco. The predominant signature was that of the art museum. Pieces were identified as treasures; labels named materials, period, and discussed iconography and symbolism. Glistening gold leaf, intricate cloisonné, and ornate clockwork made value and skill obvious to visitors. This museum was well-attended whenever we went there.

Japan’s museum was modeled on a contemporary art gallery, and sponsored by Mitsukoshi department store. It was showing “Echoes Through Time: Japanese Women and the Arts,” an exhibit on the reinterpretation of Japanese traditional arts, featuring six artists living in California. The Bijutsu-kan Gallery (literally the “Art Museum Gallery”), as the museum is called, is located in Japan’s back left corner, opposite the department store’s exit. From the outside, the kimono display in the gallery could be interpreted as another shop window. Many visitors left the store without continuing into the museum. Some who entered spent time looking around, but more left after a quick look. Future plans for the gallery involve constructing a permanent display about Japanese culture history (Fjellman 1992:243). The Japanese pavilion itself was constructed with the intention of imparting the specific forms of wonder manifested in Japanese aesthetics. Fjellman quotes the Epcot Center commemorative volume’s assertion

5. Scandinavian skyline at Epcot Center. [Norwegian museum is housed inside the church.] "Norway is the 11th international courtyard to join the circle of nations in World Showcase at Walt Disney World Epcot Center. Skyline features include the towers of the Stave Church (center) and Akershus Castle (right)." (Copyright 1988 The Walt Disney Company)



that the Japanese pavilion will demonstrate "grace, refinement, serenity, formality, taste, proportion, decorum, delicacy," and associates this vision with the "exotic harmony Americans have vaguely come to understand as the flip side of Japan, Inc." (1992:242). But this is not a new understanding. It is as old as the first images of Japan produced in the West, and strikingly like the intentions of the recent permanent installation of Japanese arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which stresses the wonder of traditional Japanese aesthetic values. Of course, once wonder is defined in terms of conventional images about a culture, it draws on resonance.

The final museum, in Morocco, was the most ethnographic, with more attention to contextual interpretation and local terms. The centerpiece was a diorama of a Fassi wedding with the bride, her dowry, and a long label on Moroccan wedding customs. Two small rooms displayed metal work, jewelry, and musical instruments. Vitrine display highlighted craftsmanship and artistry, but labels also told us about types of music and the ethnic groups of Morocco.

Each of the five Disney museums emphasizes certain genres of museum experience—art museum, contemporary gallery, ethnographic or history museum—but the genres blur here just as they do in non-Disney museums. By virtue of their setting in World Showcase, Disney museums have an affinity to national museums, representing their countries. Yet compared to national muse-

ums, these are very small, jewel-like installations, with just one to three small rooms. Louis Marin's observation on Disneyland is relevant here as well: "Where something is incredible [i.e., part of a world of fiction, history, or fantasy], the full-scale model prevails, and where it is credible [as in contemporary technology, or in this case museums], the reduction serves to make it attractive to the imagination" (quoted in Eco 1986:47).

Exhibiting devices and the use of miniaturization evoke personal mastery and individual imagination. Susan Stewart suggests that the miniature has to do with the invention of the personal, that it can be seen "as a metaphor for the interior space and time of the bourgeois subject," while the gigantic relates to the invention of the collective, "a metaphor for the abstract authority of state and collective, public life" (1984:xii). If she is right, the museums of Disney World reverse the usual relation between visitor and national museum, inverting museum "rituals of citizenship." The role of national museum is displaced to Disney World itself, the countries and their little museums part of its collection. The museums are thus particular kinds of showcases within the World Showcase. The ritual of citizenship associated with this kind of museum is aimed at a multinational and transnational middle class, the future inhabitants of Future World. Many observers have noted that Future World is a development of the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century enthusiasm for world's fairs, but they have not drawn the

connection between the way displays of technology and displays of culture that were characteristic of world's fairs have been reproduced in Epcot Center. Tony Bennett (1988) observes that nineteenth-century world fairs were part of "an exhibitionary complex" in which class-divided European and American societies came to imagine themselves as all white and middle class. Visitors to Epcot Center come to imagine themselves as transnational possessors of the fruits of late capitalist technology shorn of allegiances to the "essences" of Old World and precapitalist cultures portrayed in World Showcase.

A second reversal can also be seen in Disney museums. Museums outside of the Disney empire are public places organized by extensive canons of behavior; their audiences have been disciplined over time (Levine 1988:177-84). While museum conventions carry over, Disney museums embody a very different effect and contrast; they are sites without the instructions and lines elsewhere ubiquitous in Walt Disney World. In a place that has perfected crowd control and the management of human traffic, Disney museums are neither regularly staffed nor wired with speakers that direct visitors. This freedom allowed to visitors in the museums stands in stark contrast to other Disney displays. A strong narrative sense organizes Disney World, with cinematic control of gaze and story (King 1981; Bukatman 1991; Fjellman 1992:257-64). In the Disney museums these narratives are not so much broken as bent; they seem to flow around the museums, or in some cases right through them without affecting them.

In Epcot Center, the renowned technology and financial investments of the Disney empire are consistently combined with explicit educational intent and claims to meticulous research. In addition to what we call the rhetorics of value that frame Disney World generally—phrased in terms of careful scholarship, enormous monetary and temporal investment, incredible technology, and exceptional social management—World Showcase also taps the authority of key cultural institutions by incorporating classic museum settings and techniques. Disney museums typify a certain period, using display techniques that evoke a time when museums enjoyed great cultural authority relatively unchallenged. As with the Countries at Epcot Center, the "essence" of the museum is presented, but the essence is always set in the past, along with most of the rest of World Showcase. Here a museum aura is appropriated into Disney's own blend of cultural authority. Museum genres in the World Showcase may blur, combining techniques associated with art museums and ethno-

graphic museums. Yet the museums of World Showcase carefully screen out the use of display techniques and exhibitionary styles which museums outside Disney have begun borrowing from theme parks—and not least of all from Disney itself.

These are not just stage set museums. The objects are real; they come from real museums outside Disney World. This authenticity was, in fact, important to staff working on the exhibit in Mexico. When discussing objects to borrow from the National Museum of Natural History, the Disney person handling the loan "expressed concern that so many of the pieces selected were reproductions—they wanted originals" (NMNH note on Disney Loan, 31 Oct. 1989). Again, the irony is striking: Disney masters of reproduction in search of authentic objects to enshrine within their larger constructed country.

This is precisely the mixture Eco describes as symptomatic of hyperreality. He examines re-created period rooms and houses studded with "authentic pieces which would make Sotheby's ecstatic . . . but what prevails is the connective tissue, totally reconstructed with arrogant imagination" (1986:27). This mingling obfuscates the difference between real and facsimile, making reproductions seem more authentic, the overall effect hyperreal. In World Showcase such mixture abounds, but on an expanded scale; hyperreality is writ large as well as small. The blending of artifice and authentic takes place less within the museum setting, but in the country displays as a whole. Islands of "authenticity," "real" museums are juxtaposed to reconstructed, scaled down buildings. Or are they simulated museum settings that use "real" objects and "authentic" museum techniques? Regardless of their status as "real," they are reminders of and signs of museums;<sup>5</sup> they evoke a sense of recognition much as the miniature Eiffel Tower does when people approach the France pavilion. An intermittent but persistent breaching of the line between reality and artifice is layered throughout the experience of Walt Disney World (cf. Fjellman 1992:255-57); in World Showcase, "classic" museums play an important part in this continual framing and reframing.

We can see, then, how museum settings feature in the ontological bricolage of World Showcase, and how they buttress the authority of Disney representations. Nonetheless, they are not highlighted as main attractions. They appear on no postcards. *The Official Guidebook* (Birnbaum 1992) completely overlooks Norway's museum, and mentions Mexico's only in passing. Disney World is full of minute details given remarkable attention, more

than any guidebook or postcard rack could show. But this might lead us to consider again, in a different sense, why there are museums in Disney World.

### Resonances and wonders

The recognition experience evoked by the Disney museums creates contrasts and relations with other displays inside World Showcase, in Epcot Center, and in Walt Disney World. It also brings Disney World into a closer connection with institutions and contexts of display external to the Disney environment. Earlier we discussed some of these relations from the top down. We argued that in order to understand the paradox of an authenticity grounded in a display setting thriving on simulation, we had to examine museums as an aspect of a larger set of representations which connects displays in Walt Disney World. The museum experience in World Showcase both incorporates and contradicts the ways in which museums are experienced in the wider world. World Showcase draws on the authority of museums in order to legitimize the nostalgic tourist experience that makes its pavilions the "past" of Future World. Museums in World Showcase are oases of freedom and release from the controls and surveillance exerted over behavior in the rest of Disney World.

The museums are an essential aspect of Epcot and its World Showcase precisely because Epcot Center claims to be more than entertainment. It proclaims itself to be a serious place, a site of technological cooperation and experimentation and a place of scientific education. These are not the activities central to World Showcase, however. World Showcase is designed to be visited *after* visiting Future World.<sup>9</sup> It is, as we have argued, following Louis Marin and others, the nostalgic past of the future. World Showcase is in this sense the Future World's museum of culture and history; it contains the past that the transnational family of the future will have transcended.

Museums are not among the most popular attractions, even in World Showcase. As noncommercial activities, it would be surprising to find that they were designed to take up a significant portion of visitors' time. While we were in the Moroccan museum, we were struck by the number of visitors who peeked in and immediately left. The museums operate in a manner not dissimilar to high culture in the wider world, as sites for the sophisticated few, providing a sense that society values its past. They are not media of popular entertainment, either at Disney World or in the world at large, blockbuster exhibits notwithstanding.

This may be why the museums in World Showcase are so conservative in terms of their exhibit values. They are that part of the future that has been preserved in order to show that the future values its past. What values, then, do the objects preserved in World Showcase illustrate? In the case of Mexico, the exhibit emphasizes the artistic achievements of Pre-Columbian civilization and the highlights of colonial Mexican architecture and craft. For Norway we are given a world of bravery and determined spirit in the face of a harsh environment. China shows us imperial splendor. Japan asserts continuity with the exquisite sense of design manifested in the period before contact with the West. Morocco presents an intricate world of craft and custom.

All of these values and experiences are strangely missing in the futures portrayed in Future World or even in Futureland in The Magic Kingdom. We are not promised skilled and individualized craftsmanship nor spectacular and elaborate architecture. The world of the future provides comfort and leisure, and arts in which form follows function. In this sense Disney's stories of humanity's universal future are modern rather than postmodernist, especially in the aesthetics advocated. The postmodern is manifested in the World Showcase, where the past is encapsulated in the future through "quoting" cultural "essences," just as Disney's rather old-fashioned museums (which signify retention of values) are encapsulated and "quoted" in the World Showcase itself.

This is surely not the literary form of postmodernism which is hostile to metanarrative and universal values. Rather it is the architectural postmodernism of Phillip Johnson, which appropriates ("quotes") the past in the service of the future. Yet even architectural postmodernism has its subversive side. Future World and World Showcase are at the same time pleasurable and intensely commercial. Do the noncommercial havens dotted through World Showcase like raisins in rice pudding provide the possibility of experiences that resist homogeneity and commodification? After all, that is surely one great purpose of museums.<sup>10</sup>

Experiences of resonance and wonder as evoked in Disney museums may provide means to counter narratives presented elsewhere in Walt Disney World, resources through which visitors can imagine, multiply, and savor many possible selves. Again, the museums must be seen in relation to other displays in Epcot Center, for experiences of resonance and wonder are not confined to museums in Disney World, and resonance and wonder are not inherently noncommercial.

Stephen Greenblatt (1991) describes resonance and wonder as historical phenomena, changing in relationship to changing structures of everyday life and feeling. He sees a movement from one kind of resonance and wonder to another. We think that there are multiple resonances and multiple senses of wonder in the museum experience. The resonance that Disney intends is a resonance towards and desire for a particular future. But surely the fact that World Showcase is the future's past means that the past, which is also the audience's past as well as part of its present, may seem more "real" than the now rather dated science fiction futures presented in Future World. This creates the possibility that what Disney presents as the past may be more valued by the audience than the future, or at least more resonant for them.

There are also at least two senses of wonder presented here. The first is a wonder associated with the achievements of other cultures and other times, wonder associated with the presence of authentic objects. This is surely one sense of wonder that the Disney museums seek to impart. Yet the wonder found in the encapsulated museums becomes just one particular kind of wonder, and not the acme of wonder at that. Aesthetic wonder at particular objects is subordinated to the wonders of science and scale, encompassed within the marvel of complexity, technology, and management that constitutes Disney World. Surely the Disney Imagineers intended the audience to experience these two senses of wonder simultaneously but not equally: they had in mind a hierarchy in which the wonder associated with an object is somehow less significant than wonder at the effort and resources invested in production of the whole. Yet as museum professionals know, audiences are difficult to control. Some portion of them may experience the wonder as nonhierarchical or even reverse the hierarchy. Until some research on the aesthetics of response is conducted at Walt Disney World, speculations about response can be only that, speculation—and the Disney literature is full of confident speculation.

If experiences of resonance and wonder are part of the way visitors define themselves through museum displays, the multiple resonances and wonders of Disney World offer different modes of self-definition as well as various diversions.<sup>11</sup> Not all are programmed or controlled, but many may be new versions and variants of the middle-class white subjects that museums and other display institutions have helped define since the mid-1900s. In Epcot Center as a whole, national subjects are downplayed in favor of transnational cooperation and consumption, though The Ameri-

can Adventure advances one form of nationalism as the exception to this.<sup>12</sup>

When museum professionals express antagonism towards Disney theme parks, they may be worried about more than losing audience and market share to a less authentic display medium. Both museums and Disney theme parks seek to define the kinds of selves that visitors imagine and produce through cultural displays. Disney theme parks also attempt to recast the very means through which museums manufacture a cultural authority by appropriating the form and aura of the museum. By multiplying modes and experiences of resonance and wonder and condensing them into a single place, Disney World can seem to encapsulate and overpower museums outside the World as well, at once appropriating their authority while seeming to undermine it. The worry is that Disney has achieved the ultimate triumph of mechanical reproduction, in which the museum effect appears subordinated to the greater Disney effect. ♦

#### Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1992 annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco. Thanks to Ed Bruner for organizing the session, Mary Louise Pratt for marvelous comments, and others at the session for helpful discussion. This is part of a larger project and was preliminary to a longer paper on Disney museums (Kratz and Karp 1993). Thanks also to Mark Auslander, T. O. Beidelman, Micaela di Leonardo, Steve Feld, and Ellen Schattschneider for comments, and to Carol Mirko, Marcia Bakry, Robert Leopold and Ellen Schattschneider for help with various aspects of the work. We also appreciate support from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Arts and Humanities at the Smithsonian Institution.
2. Adopting techniques of display from commercial settings is not recent in American museums. Neil Harris (1990) describes how department stores and world fairs were taken as models for museums during the 1930s, when museums were also experiencing problems with audience share and financing. It may be that the modern history of museums will show a tendency for them to draw on their competition in periods of crisis.
3. But museums in World Showcase do worry about and assert authenticity, as we argue later in this paper.
4. In "The Fate of Tipoo's Tiger," we note how visitors to museums can turn the museum visit into a tourist experience by use of photography and costume (Karp and Kratz ms.).
5. We have yet to find a detailed account of collaboration and sponsorship processes in any pavilions of World Showcase or Future World. Fjellman (1992) includes a concise sketch of the political economy of Walt Disney World as it relates to Orlando and to the larger group of Disney enterprises, but has little on internal aspects of political economy related to the production of Walt Disney World representations.

6. The spectacular technology of The American Adventure show comes with a colossal pricetag. Nelson notes that it cost \$11 million to develop, but his observation that this is the only World Showcase pavilion with sponsorship is wrong (1986:142).
7. Fjellman also quotes Canadian Newspaper figures on the investment required to sponsor a pavilion (though it is unclear if this is a small-scale, partial sponsorship or the type that gets named, like Coca-Cola): start-up costs are \$10-\$15 million, and annual maintenance fees are \$1 million. (Ibid.).
8. A point Mary Louise Pratt made in discussing our paper.
9. Because this traffic pattern is built into Epcot Center and the most popular attractions are in Future World, lines build up there first. Guidebooks therefore advise people to go immediately to World Showcase and work "backwards" towards the Future.
10. But museums also make commodification possible, by subtly contrasting the original or unique objects displayed in their collections with the commodity-filled everyday—imparting both a sense of the limitless reproductive qualities of commodities as well as the sense that they share something with the original—why else do people crowd the museum shops?
11. Mary Louise Pratt's discussion of our paper noted the importance of diversion in another self-producing effect of Walt Disney World, namely that the change of schedule, the place, and the variety of a vacation helps reproduce a work force, as well as continuing to shape it in the image of middle-class consumers.
12. This is, of course, a claim of exception. As a nation, rather than a country, America would appear to be better able to prepare its citizens for a transnational existence than countries whose citizens are captured by an essence. This is not a new story, but yet another version of the myth of American Exceptionalism. America is no longer the melting pot, but the space in which its inhabitants learn to be citizens of a diverse world.

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Corinne Kratz is Assistant Professor at the Institute of African Studies, Emory University, and Research Associate in Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution. Ivan Karp is National Endowment for the Humanities Professor and Director of the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University.