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Disney World, the Mythic Space, and the Disney Company Mythology

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In this thesis, I examine previous literature about Walt Disney, his life, and his company to dissect and illustrate how he functioned as a mythical tale. Disney's life story is a point of pride for those close to him and his family because it reflected the success of a man in a dire situation. However, I use this claim, as well as academic literature, to assert that the Walt Disney Myth eventually expanded into a broader Disney Company Mythology. The mythology is less about Disney and more about the ideas he represents to the public. To illustrate this, I identify the key and consistent aspects of the Walt Disney Myth and their evolved forms in the Disney Company Mythology. These aspects serve to examine how the Walt Disney World Resort functions as a ritualized place for the Disney Company Mythology disciples. Once I describe the aspects of the Disney Company Mythology, I apply them to various exemplars (e.g., parks, attractions, and lands) throughout the park to showcase how Disney World functions as a ritualized place for the Disney Company Mythology. Though this analysis, I illustrate the implications of the relationship between mythologies and capitalism and how corporations use myths to control their narrative for their consumers (disciples).

KEYWORDS: Walt, Disney, Myth, Mythology, Disney World, Monomyth

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Since I have been traveling to the Walt Disney World Resort theme park in Orlando, Florida, on a regular basis since I was six months old, it should be fair to assert that I possess an affection for Disney World and its attractions. However, I also have been entranced by many products of the Disney Corporation (e.g., films, television shows, and books). I am not alone in my fanaticism of the Disney Company and its theme park. More than 20 million people visited the Magic Kingdom in 2017, with the three other parks within the Walt Disney World Resort property ranking in the top ten most visited parks of 2017 (Hetter, 2017).

In this study, I intend to rhetorically analyze how Disney World uses its attractions, lands, shows, and character meet-ups to present and reinforce an overarching Disney Company mythology for its millions of fans. Each component within the theme park functions to express its own myth while also communicating the overall mythology of the Disney brand. Walt Disney World Resort is an enormous amalgamation of four interdependent theme parks that coalesce to contribute to an overarching narrative about Disney World and the Disney brand. These parks are The Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Hollywood Studios, and Animal Kingdom. Each park within the Disney World property reflects and maintains a particular theme for the audience to experience (e.g., EPCOT reflects the theme of the future and a neoliberal interpretation of international collaboration). Additionally, each park segments its rides through sub-categorical properties known as "lands." The lands within each park reflect various components of the theme within the park for the audience to transition between the variations of the park's overall theme (e.g., there is a land in EPCOT known as Future World). As such, the rides maintain a thematic consistency not just within their respective park, but also within their respective land (e.g., Test

Track, a ride meant to flaunt the power of the American car and showcase its future potential through futuristic testing sites, resides in EPCOT's Future World land). Moreover, each ride within Disney World tells a story for the audience to experience when boarding the attraction. Since each ride must remain thematically consistent with the land in it it resides, the stories contribute their individual myth to the overall mythology of the land. These myths coalesce to express the overarching mythology of the park, which, in turn, reflects the mythology of Disney World. Ostensibly, the rides contribute to the Disney World mythology as individual myths for the audience to experience as separate, powerful stories.

Studying Disney World as a part of the Disney Company mythology serves more than merely indulging in my own fanaticism because it will allow us to understand how a corporation, such as Disney, can use myth and mythology to appeal to an audience of the 21st century and continue to enchant their audience to blissfully accept what may seem like a pretty old-fashioned narrative of the park and company. This thesis will argue that Disney World not only utilizes myth and mythology to construct a multi-dimensional world to appeal to an American audience but also that Disney World (especially the Magic Kingdom) functions as the modern-day equivalent of Mt. Olympus or Asgard.

In this chapter, I will elaborate on previous research on theme parks, especially those that examine the Disney World, to demonstrate how this thesis will contribute to our preexisting knowledge of theme parks and the Disney World property. I will look at previous literature that has treated Walt Disney as a mythological figure, though much of this research does not consider Disney's creations as forms of myth. Then, I will outline the method I intend to utilize in this thesis in order to consider of Disney World rides, lands, and character interactions as forms of communication that function as myths.

Past Literature on Disney and Theme Parks

Within the last few decades, researchers have focused their research on theme parks, especially the Disney parks, and where they stand as cultural objects in American society (Adams, 1991; Jackson & West, 2011; Knight, 2014; The Project on Disney, 1995; Wasko, 2012). Theme parks (even outside of America) are some of the most popular places to visit and attract hundreds of millions of visitors each year. The Theme Entertainment Association (TEA) (2017) writes that more than 233 million people visited a theme park in 2016 (a year that the TEA considered a mixed bag, in terms of financial success for theme parks). However, while each theme park in the top 25 most popular parks accumulates tens of millions of visits each year, Disney consistently dominates this list, with seven of the top ten parks worldwide owned by the Disney Company (Hetter, 2017). Wasko (2012) writes that Disney had accumulated revenues of over $6 billion in 1999 and operating incomes resulting in almost $1.5 billion. Since these theme parks, especially Disney, are enjoying tremendous support from the public, studying theme parks and their rhetorical and mythological devices are in need of more scholarly attention.

For fans who engulf themselves in the nostalgic and mythological aura of the Disney brand and parks, any alterations and changes, regardless of how insignificant, are often met with fervent resistance. By analyzing the mythology within Disney World and framing Disney World as a mythic space, we can properly conceptualize why disciples of the Disney Company mythology aggressively demand the maintenance of the *status quo*. For example, Disney announced on their Disney Parks Blog, on June 29, 2017, that they would replace the infamous "Wench Auction scene" from the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction (where the pirates round up the women in the Spanish fort, tie them up and attempt to sell the women to the drunken pirates)

with a new scene (Mangum, 2017). In this new scene, Red Head, the main female slave character in the original ride, would now become a pirate and join the raid of the Spanish fort. This announcement was met with vitriolic responses among those who appreciated the ride and the scene (LeBlanc, 2017). LeBlanc reports on one comment on the blog stating:

As one of the last rides Walt (Disney) oversaw, I'm very sad they felt the need to change this. We need to stop shielding people from history. Why don't we just give all the pirates cell phones instead of [them] interacting with each other?

This example reinforces two arguments that form the groundwork for this thesis. First, Disney World attractions are so popular that any tweaks to a popular ride, no matter how small, are met with castigation by the fans. Second, this qualifies as evidence for the mythic quality of the rides and the parks. The alteration of a ride and its myth kindles a defensive reaction and demand that the myth remain in a form of stasis lest the Disney Company tarnish "Walt Disney's vision." Situations such as this not only highlight the necessity of analyzing Disney World as a text, but also the struggle Disney World faces when attempting to maintain their mythology into the 21st century. This struggle stems from the source in which mythology obtains its power, the refusal to modernize. Disney, like any other company, is attempting to bring in a new audience, specifically, one that is not entrenched in the nostalgic glamor of the Disney Company mythology. The response demonstrates how closely longtime fans hold onto the Disney Company mythology. However, this mythology has become the ethos of the Disney brand, and altering these myths threatens that ethos. For those that integrated the Disney Company mythology into their childhood/identity, this attempt to appeal to a new audience by altering the Disney Company mythology is perceived as an attack against themselves.

Past Research on Theme Parks

King and O'Boyle (2011) explain that a theme park "is a social artwork as a four-dimensional symbolic landscape to evoke impressions of places and times, real or imaginary" (p. 6). Theme parks invoke an intertwining psychological narrative to influence the visitor's perspective on specific angles and points of view both in and out of their attractions. Unlike amusement parks, theme parks immerse their audience into a space that is separate from reality and time to create the illusion of a dreamlike state for the audience to experience. The space of the theme park becomes more than space because it transforms itself into a multi-dimensional landscape that encourages the audience to accept the theme park's myth as real. Once a visitor enters the theme park's space, they cross the borders from reality into the multi-dimensional space and are thus separated from reality. After one crosses that border, they become a resident, though temporarily, of that space.

This assessment of how parks function is consistent with Rowland's (1990) conceptualization of myth and mythology, where myths transport the audience away from real time and space and into a new realm of experience. Through details like architecture, live performances, light shows, parades, and interactions with fictional characters, theme parks become worlds themselves. King and O'Boyle (2011) argue that theme parks are quite different from amusements parks: "A theme park without rides is still a theme park; an amusement park without rides in a parking lot with popcorn" (p. 7). Theme parks invite guests into a powerful experience beyond simply enjoying rides.

Even if Disney as a company removes Disney's theme parks from the equation, that would do little to blight the company's influence over our evolving culture and communication practices. Disney is one of the six companies that control 90% of U.S. media and it has

expanded itself throughout the global market for decades (Lutz, 2012; Smoodin, 1994). This level of cultural influence is not arbitrary but instead designed by Walt himself as an effort not only to sell his animated products but also to sell the image of himself as a mythological American public hero (Wasko, 2012). Walt convinced his brother, Roy, to join his company in October of 1923 and they labeled their company The Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio. However, since the marketing tactic of the company was to present Walt as the icon of the company brand, they re-named the company the Walt Disney Studio. This move was meticulously designed because it highlighted the brothers' roles within the company; Walt was the "imaginative and creative" force and claimed the public acclaim and reception, whereas Roy managed the finances of the company behind the scenes. Despite losing certain cartoon characters through legal disputes (e.g., Oswald the Lucky Rabbit to Universal), the company regained its footing through the creation of Mickey Mouse and his animated shorts.

The Disney Corporation is one of the most powerful and influential companies in the world. As already mentioned, seven of the top ten most visited parks in the world are owned by Disney (Hetter, 2017). The Magic Kingdom Park alone welcomed more than 20 million visitors in 2016. The Disney Company earned $45 billion in revenues from their parks in 2013 (Sylt, 2014). In the 1990s, when Disney decided to re-release their old films (even initial flops such as *Pinocchio*) on VHS tapes (which were managed by Buena Vista Studios), Disney practically monopolized the video market (Wasko, 2012). Every top selling VHS tape in 1997 was a Disney film and this accounted for more than $1.6 billion (or 19.83% of the retail market). Wasko explains that the company relied on merchandizing during this time because the revenue of their animated shorts only barely broken even. By 1999, Disney's merchandizing had reached more than $112.3 billion worldwide. According to the Walt Disney Company's (2017) own reports on

the fourth quarter of 2017, Disney accumulated revenues of $5.5 billion in media networks, $4.7 billion in parks and resorts, $1.4 billion in studio entertainment, and $1.2 billion in consumer products and interactive media.

Disney World. It is impossible to discuss theme parks and their cultural influences without mentioning the Disney World in Orlando, Florida, as it is consistently the most visited park in the world (Hetter, 2017). Willis (1995) writes that "Disney World, where 'the fun always shines,' makes an advertising campaign out of a real utopian longing" (p. 6). Disney World uses that utopian longing to incite motivations within their audience not only to inspire certain behaviors within the park but also to construct their image for the public to perceive and interpret as Disney sees fit. The park works, according to Willis, "because its visitors make it work" (p. 9).

Previous research on Disney World examined the text as a rhetorical space that influences and maintains cultural and behavioral expectations within and outside the park. For instance, Blair and Michel (1998) are some of the few rhetorical scholars who examine Disney World, but an analysis of Disney World was not the original intent of their critique. Initially, Blair and Michel analyzed the Space Mirror Memorial at the Kennedy Space Center (SMMKSC) in Merritt Island, Florida, through textual analysis to see how the memorial communicates its commemoration of passing astronauts (the crews from the Apollo 1, STS-51L Challenger and STS-107 Columbia ships) to the audience. They conducted this textual analysis of the SMMKSC by examining it through the rhetoric of architecture and conducting a semi-ethnography of the guests near the memorial (by simply watching how people reacted and interacted with it). However, despite their efforts, they realized the visitors around them did not see the memorial through the same lens as the researchers. Confused, they noticed that almost everyone around

them wore or possessed Disney World paraphernalia. As the second half of their analysis shifted to examine the space of Disney World and how that space constructs specific behaviors and how those behaviors remain with the audience, even when they exit the park (Clair & Michel, 1998). Essentially, the fun natured environment of Disney World formulated the sense that theme parks (especially within the Orlando area) are designed only for fun and entertainment, regardless of their context. Even when approaching a memorial designed to commemorate the loss of various American astronauts in their dangerous field of space travel, visitors cannot help but to perceive the space as entertainment because Disney World encourages them to view the space in this manner.

While the Disney Company mythology connects itself and relies on the mythology of the American Dream, the Disney Company has become a mythology of the 21st century. Few companies have produced such an eternal, sanitized, and interactive perpetuation of the American Dream's values as Disney (Adams, 1991; The Project on Disney, 1995; Wasko, 2012). The Disney Company mythology reflects the American Dream through not just its theme parks, but through every product it creates. While the American Dream archetypes can be easily identified throughout Disney properties, the company has reshaped the American Dream mythology into something that has a distinct "Disney-like flavor." While the American Dream is present in the Disney Company mythology, they are unmistakably Disney because they create caricatures through a Disney lens. Ostensibly, Disney implants its own aesthetics and childlike interpretation into the mythology of the American Dream to appeal to impressionable youth across the country. It is important to examine what scholars have concluded on the mythology of the American Dream (Archer, 2014; Cullen, 2004; Fisher, 1972; Rushing, 1983; Wyatt-Nichol, 2011). While they do not directly link the American Dream mythology to the Disney Company

mythology (or even mention Disney at all), they serve as a framing device to examine components of the Disney Company mythology.

Myth and Mythology

Campbell (1991) elaborates that myths and mythologies are clues to understanding human potential and the experience of meaning and life. They are stories we tell ourselves that we believe true to ourselves, as well as the community in which we reside (Rowland, 1990). Myths provide life models for people because they teach communities how to perceive and interact with one another (Flowers, 1991). Campbell asserts that myths are the world's dreams because they all reference archetypal stories that deal with issues humans encounter in the real world. Joseph Campbell also elaborates in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2008), on the monomyth. Effectively, the monomyth is the typical structuring of almost all myths. The general structuring of the monomyth is as follows: departure-initiation-return. In this structuring, the hero leaves their home (departure) to conduct their adventure and prove their status as a hero through trials (initiation) and bring the new power, philosophy, and ideas acquired from the initiation stage back home (return). After examining myth and mythology throughout the world and history, he realized that almost all myths follow a similar structure, the monomyth.

Hamilton, in her book *Mythology* (1969), elaborates how mythology functioned within ancient civilizations (e.g., Greece and the Nordic Region) and how those that lived in those societies were affected by those mythologies. Those that lived throughout these regions believed their mythologies to be "true." These "truths" reflected not just their ideological framework, but also how they understood the world and the way in which they interacted with others within and outside of their society. Additionally, Rowland's article, "On Mythic Criticism" (1990), elaborates on his concerns that scholars are becoming too liberal on their identification of texts

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and fiction as myth and mythology. Essentially, he asserts that not all narratives are myths because not all myths are believed to be "true" by their audience. For instance, while the *Star Wars* movies may follow the monomythic structure (Campbell, 2008), no one "believes" the Force to be real because it is just a tool to progress the narrative. While Campbell's monomyth structure is the essential analytical framework of this thesis, Hamilton's book and Rowland's article provide the appropriate context in which to examine not just Disney World, but the Disney Company mythology and how Disney materializes their mythology through their park.

By understanding the previous literature, I realized that merely analyzing how Disney World utilizes myth and mythology not only reduces this textual analysis' scope but also overlooks the bigger picture at play within the texts. This simple framework of analysis assumes that myth and mythology within the park are formed in a vacuum rather than created over decades (or close to a century) of marketing and distributing a capitalist's tale and certain animated films to the public for consumption. If this context were to be ignored, scholars such as Rowland (1990) would vehemently claim that Disney World lacks the qualifications of a myth unless the park's story not only follows the proper structure and components of a myth but also is perceived to be true by a substantial number of people. Disney films, product placements, and merchandise reflect the broader Disney Company mythology for the audience to consume and experience. Disney World is merely a mythic system that is part of the Disney Company's overarching mythology. How does that mythology materialize and function within the space of Disney World? How does this mythology within and outside Disney World affect those that experience those myths? This thesis will attempt to answer these rhetorical questions and decipher their implications for future research.

There is a plethora of literature that examines the Disney brand and how it became mythologized throughout the American public (Giroux, 2010; Hefner, Firchau, Norton, & Shevel, 2017; Sammond, 2005; Jackson & West, 2011; Ward, 2002; Wasko, 2012). While this literature does not examine the Walt Disney myth specifically, they analyze how Disney's narrative became mythologized throughout the public. For instance, Sammond's (2005) book, *Babes in Tomorrowland: Walt Disney and the Making of the American Child, 1930-1960*, examines the discourse of the ideal child and how it was conceived through the introduction of American film in the early 1900s. As the ideal American child was being discussed throughout the discourse, Disney would eventually take advantage of this socio-political context to his advantage to earn prestige among the American public as a positive influence on the average child. Disney would be one of the only film producers that not only avoided any morally questionable scandals, but also explicitly created animated films with the purpose of appealing to children and families, and this earned the affection of the American public. As such, Disney would effectively define not just the ideal child, but also the ideal childhood. Ward (2002) examines Disney films specifically through a mythical framework. However, none of this previous literature specifically examines the Disney Company mythology nor Disney World as a mythic space.

All of this literature refers to one consistent key theme when examining Disney: innocence. The Disney Company mythology thrives on its own representation of childhood innocence because it frames each of its stories and products through the lens of a child. The Disney Company mythology uses its own interpretation of innocence as a framework through which to tell its stories—not just through its animated films, but also its own marketing and branding for the public. While much of this research examines Disney World, researchers

generally examine the park as an outgrowth of the Disney brand and as a cultural text and product. These analyses of the park are usually focused on how the park influences their audiences through capitalistic structures and perpetuation of the Disney brand to a wider audience (Clair & Michel, 1998; Kiste, 2015; Knight, 2014; The Project on Disney, 1995; Wasko, 2012). While all of these assertions and frameworks are accurate, they are limiting because they do not explicitly examine the park as a materialization of the Disney Company mythology and how Disney World reflects the Disney Company mythology the company has been constructing for almost a century.

Additionally, the previous analyses provide the vital context in which to analyze the different lands and attractions throughout the parks because they lay the groundwork for establishing the myths that existed prior to the park's opening. The park attempts to connect to the audience by reflecting on an existing Disney Company mythology, and each of its respective lands and attractions attempts to reflect pre-existing mythology (e.g., The American Dream, Pirates of the Caribbean area, and Western fantasy). As mentioned earlier, the parks were not created in a vacuum. Koh (2009) writes that nostalgia is "an ideology-laden reaction to the constantly changing cultural landscape of postmodernism" (p. 736). Koh continues, "It is a composite image 'based on the recognition by the viewer of pre-existing historical stereotypes, including the various styles of the period it is thereby reduced to the mere narrative confirmation of those same stereotypes'" (p. 736). Essentially, we fetishize the world, specifically its representation, into an image of a previous period that we wish we could experience. The stereotypes and archetypal structural expectations of past eras are shown as historical postmodern interests.

Preview

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I thoroughly examine existing literature on theme parks in general, on Disney, and on Disney theme parks. I also examine literature that elaborated on the rhetoric of space, spatial politics, and the rhetoric of monuments. I review academic literature that illustrated ritualized spaces and how they attract disciples of a myth to construct their own pilgrimage to maintain their identification with that narrative and what it represents. Finally, I briefly illustrate the Walt Disney myth to provide the proper context for this analysis. In Chapter 3, I will elaborate on Burke's pentad to establish a rhetorical framework. Then I will distinguish between myth and mythology before defining the monomyth structure (Campbell, 2008). I also describe the American Dream mythology to establish a mythical framework in which to analyze the Disney Company mythology and Disney World as a mythic place.

In Chapter 4, I elaborated on how Disney's narrative became mythologized throughout the American public and I identified its core theme. However, the Walt Disney myth eventually evolved into a broader Disney Company mythology and I illustrate this evolution and its new consistent themes. Once the Disney Company mythology has been established, I identified patterns between these themes and applied the themes and patterns to exemplars throughout the Walt Disney World Resort (i.e., attractions, designs, parks, and lands). This was to identify how Disney World uses the pre-existing mythology to frame its space as a ritualized place for its disciples to visit in order to maintain their identification with the mythology. I will examine specific attractions within their respective lands. For clarity, this analysis will incorporate all four parks in the Disney World property. To prevent this analysis from becoming bloated, I will select the rides that possess tremendous amount of cultural significance (e.g., Pirates of the Caribbean) and/or tie themselves to Disney films (e.g., Peter Pan's Flight, The Little Mermaid: Ariel's

Undersea Adventure, and Seven Dwarfs Mine Train Roller Coaster). I also examined the lands within all four parks and how they construct and perpetuate the themes of their respective park. I analyzed the designs of the lands and how they relate to the attractions that reside within the lands. More importantly, I examined how each exemplar related and reflected the Disney Company mythology.

Finally, Chapter 5 will elaborate on the significance of the thesis and will propose potential future research on this subject of the Disney Company mythology and mythological research on Disney theme parks. For one, by analyzing Disney World through a mythological lens, we can conceptualize why the park and the company inspire tremendous fanaticism among fans. These parks not only provide thrills for the visitors to experience, but also a mythological space for the guests to consume, experience, and accept as meaningful if not literally "true." If the Disney Company mythology and its physical manifestation of its theme parks encourage a large enough audience to undergo that mythological process of acceptance, that audience will likely tie their personality and childhood to the mythological brand of the company and its parks. Without conceptualizing the mythological and rhetorical technique of the Disney parks, the Disney Company mythology will maintain its *status quo* in American discourse and their power consolidation of media outlets. By encouraging their large audience to accept this mythology, Disney can present itself as sacrosanct because those ideals and values constructed by the company are unconsciously normalized and accepted by the public. This thesis attempts to deconstruct those rhetorical techniques to encourage others to engage in this necessary discourse.

Summary

This rhetorical analysis provides opportunities to reconsider the function of myth, particularly in modern times. As we can see through Campbell (2008) and Hamilton's (1969)

work, myths function to influence behaviors and thoughts because those societies (i.e., Greek and Norse) believe these myths to be "true." The myths within the Disney brand and parks could perpetuate a whitewashed perspective of history onto its audience and encourage them to view history and social structures only through the perspective of White people. As mentioned earlier, myths are meant to be perceived as "true" by their audience. If so, how would that audience, who may have been influenced to perceive reality through a whitewashed perspective, react if Disney were to alter those myths? Altering those myths for a wider audience would highlight the oppressive and patriarchal standards that were perpetuated throughout its mythos but often leads to vitriol among certain sects of the audience to return to the golden era of the mythology. Ignoring this text through this framework neglects the problematic influences conducted by the Disney Company mythology and how that influence sets a standard for future audience members. These implications showcase the necessity of this thesis and its potential findings because it allows us to understand not only the popularity of the company, its brand, and its parks, but also why audiences continue to contribute and perpetuate that mythology each new generation. Moreover, this also allows us to conceptualize how the Disney Company maintains its influence and mythological presence over our culture for almost a century. We must understand the mythological and cultural influence companies, such as Disney, possess over our perception and expectations of our social structure and order.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature of the Rhetorical and Ritualized Space

This thesis will establish the existence of the broader Disney Company mythology. Once this thesis showcases how the Disney Company mythology functions as a rhetorical myth rather than a literature myth, I will examine Disney World as a mythological space and how the Disney World theme park contributes to the Disney Company mythology. That is to say, this thesis rhetorically showcases the existence of the Disney Company mythology and how the Disney world theme park uses that mythology to maintain its dominance over the space in which it resides.

First, I will examine the rhetoric of space and how space can be mapped to reinforce a particular narrative over others. Then I will elaborate on the history of theme parks and their rhetorical power. I will also elaborate on Walt Disney's life story through multiple biographies to contextualize his life and how it contributes and constructs the Disney Company mythology. Once Walt Disney's life is explored, I will examine how the life and career of a man evolved into a mythology as it became the name at the center of a vast entertainment empire. Finally, I will elaborate on the design of Disneyland and how it physically manifests the Disney Company mythology. All of this will set the groundwork for the analysis to examine the Disney Company mythology and Disney World as a mythological space.

Rhetoric of Space

Rhetorical scholarship on space, spatial politics, and public memory is rather extensive (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2008; Senda-Cook, 2013; Steedman, 1998). These will allow this rhetorical analysis of Disney World to be grounded in the framework of space and the trappings of spatial politics. Moreover, I will also utilize Burke's (1969) dramatistic pentad to

frame Disney World as a mythological space. The established frameworks of space can be used to examine Disney World not just as a theme park text, but also as a text that is spatially political and rhetorically mapped to benefit certain narratives over others. Disney World's space was not formulated in a vacuum, and to assume would lead to a simplistic analysis and potentially silence or undermine certain narratives as an unintended consequence (Otherizing them).

  Rhetoric of the politic of space. This section will elaborate on what space is and how symbols function within a space and how humans often use those politicized spaces for their own ends. This section will also examine how space is constructed by people, how humans attribute politics to space, and how the space obtains its identity through the rhetorical mapping of a dominant narrative. It will also examine how the mapping of a dominant narrative throughout a space often silences other narratives and the tension that results from the inevitable marginalization from that mapping. The space is political and the political permeates all space, regardless of how barren it may seem.

  A common misconception of space is that it is merely a plane of existence for things (living or not) to occupy in accordance with that space. However, rhetorical scholars on space emphasize that this perception of space could not be more misconstrued because it neglects centuries of historical factors that frame that space. This includes space outside the boundaries of the Earth, especially since many governments engaged in a literal race to label other planets and other orbital lands (e.g., the moon) as their own property (Cadbury, 2007). Massey (2013) asserts that place and space are always in tension and are never truly settled because historical and political factors reinforce those tensions. Space and place are not pre-given and are only given coherence by external forces that project their character and identity to that space. However, that is not to say that space and place are the same. A place is a space that has been politicized. For

instance, the Catholic Church only possesses political power when its space is identified as the

Catholic Church; otherwise, it is just a space. Since the Catholic Church is a political force, once

it claims a space as its own, it turns the space into a politicized place that obtains the identity of

the Catholic Church. Simply put, space can exist without an identity because it has yet to be

politicized, whereas place cannot exist without identity because it requires politicization from an

external force.

Palczewski (2018) constructs her rhetorical critique of the Greasy Grass/Little Bighorn

Battlefield National Monument. Merely examining space from its surface "closes off political

imagination" (p. 48). In her critique, Palczewski highlights women's role in the Little Bighorn

battle by using Massey's notion of spatial politics and Goeman's rhetorical tactic of decolonial

remapping. As mentioned earlier, place requires identity, which is formulated by the external

forces that distributed historical coherency throughout the space. Palczewski identifies this as

mapping a space with a dominant coherency (the white 7th Calvary) to oppress or Otherize other

coherent external forces (the Native Americans in the Little Bighorn battle), transforming it into

a place. This hegemony of a space construct *mnemoncide* because it erases the identity of the

Native Americans from the space. Their histories within the space are erased by the hegemonic

domination of the coherent politics and identity of the 7th Calvary that plagues the space of Little

Bighorn.

After establishing these rhetorical frameworks, Palczewski (2018) asserts that re-mapping

the place of the Little Bighorn Memorial to include women's stories expands and re-draws its

circumference. When a force attempts to add women's narratives of the battle into the space, the

space is not only being re-drawn but is also expanding the space's circumference. However, this

expansion and re-drawing of the memorial's space will likely receive backlash by those that believe in the dominant narrative within the space.

In Dickinson, Blair, and Ott's (2010) book, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* they establish three types of *topoi* in their analysis of space and spatial politics: rhetoric, memory, and place. The authors assert that attempting to isolate these *topoi* into individual segments would be simplistic as these three formulate an intersectional relationship. The authors use the interlocking relationship between rhetoric, memory, and place to examine how "place seem to haunt one another in recent scholarship and how that haunting might be materialized in a serious, productive, and animated conversation among these different, highly complex coordinates of public life" (p. 2). It is important not to see *topoi* as individual components of place, but instead, as interrelated cogs within a rhetorical machine that is spatial politics.

After Disney and his company built Disney World in Orlando, Florida, the space in which the park is built transforms into a place of the Walt Disney World Resort theme park and the identity of the Disney World Park and Walt Disney myth is ascribed to the space. The Disney Company literally and ideologically mapped the area with its own narrative to dominate the space in which it resides. The narrative of the Disney World Park permeates the space and the identity of the park becomes the identity for the space itself. Orlando is no longer just a city in central Florida because it is now the city where Disney World resides. The space of Disney World frames the area around the parks to become part of the parks, which, in turn, become part of the Disney World narrative that permeates the politicized space (Pugh & Aronstein, 2012). This framing of additional liminal space within the space of Disney World showcases the Disney

Company's attempt to expand their circumference and dominate the space with their politicized narrative.

Burke's Pentad and Dramatism Critique

Burke (1969) examines human motives through his what he refers to as the pentad or dramatism. Burke elaborates on the five terms of motives for human behavior and communication habits: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. These five terms allow us to understand the motives behind human behavior and to answer five important questions: "What was done (act), when or where it was one (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose)" (p. xv). These terms are not mutually exclusive because they constantly interact with each other to illustrate the motives of human behavior. This interaction between the terms of motives is referred to as a ratio. Ratios illustrate the possibilities of motives through the terms' range of "permutations and combinations and then to see how these various resources figure in actual statements about human motives" (p. xvi). If one uses the terms individually and not through ratios, they neglect the complexity and potentialities of human motives.

Public memory. In a space, some narratives are silenced because they do not possess the rhetorical power of the dominant narrative within a space. This is important to understand because it determines what is remembered and what is forgotten about the space and the narratives that permeate the area. Dickinson, Blair, and Ott (2010) cite Foucault's claim that memory is an activity of collectivity rather than merely an individualistic cognitive functionality. This is why they refer to "public" spaces because of their emphasis on the collective mutual relationship that interconnects with the collective's political, historical, and investment interests. The authors collapse this notion of memory under the umbrella term "public memory" because of its inherent collective and shared understanding of the past throughout the collective, either

local or nationwide. The authors assert that the act of remembering takes place within a group and undergoes the following steps:

(1) Memory is activated by present concerns, issues, or anxieties; (2) memory narrates shared identities, constructing senses of communal belonging; (3) memory is animated by affect; (4) memory is partial, partisan, and thus often contested; (5) memory relies on material and/or symbolic supports; (6) memory has a history (p. 6).

Groups narrate their pasts not just to others, but to themselves to justify or valorize the conditions, actions, or beliefs of the current moment (Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010). These narratives of the past (especially when they valorize certain individuals over others) also function to instruct the current generation on how to act and perform within and outside the group in the future. Essentially, the narrated past is selective, filtered, and distorted to modify the representation and memory of the past to accommodate the needs of the present. It would be fallacious to assume that the act of memory is to remember the past as it was because memory is not designed to preserve the past, but to adapt it and manipulate it for the present. "Memories are not ready-made reflections of the past, but eclectic, selective re-constructions based on subsequent actions and perceptions and on every changing code by which we delineate, symbolize, and classify the world around us" (p. 7). Memory can never be objective.

Second, this narration of the group's past formulates a common identity within the group (Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010). It provides people within the group symbolic connection with each other and allows them to possess a sense of belonging to that group. The authors claim that this identity formation is anchors itself into the comfort of the collective. Thus, memory "comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and stabilize and convey a society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group

bases its awareness of unity and particularity" (p. 7). This identity formulation is often linked to the formation of jingoism because people feel an identity toward the country in which they reside. Various groups (e.g., White nationalists) use these techniques of public memory to remember "their" country's past glories as an excuse for a comfort collective memory of White purity (a White America).

Third, memory often neglects the chronological development of social groups' past, instead focusing on particular events, people, objects, and places that are considered worth preserving, which is often determined by the pathos of the event (Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010). This animation of public memory is bifurcated "as a simple irreducible, and unexplored, assumption, or as the particularized ground for phenomenological explorations of trauma" (p. 7). As mentioned earlier, memory is not objective and does not perfectly replicate the events of the past because it was never designed for that functionality. Dickinson, Blair, and Ott (2010) even assert that memory and history are opposed to each other because memory is subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting and conscious or unconscious distortion that manipulate the representation of that history. History is never complete and is always problematic because it is always occurring rather than representing something through a distortion.

Fourth, public memory is political and partisan, which often leads to that public memory being contested by opposing partisan politics (Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010). Memory, by design, is selective and often distorted and can deflect other memories. Memory is prone to forgetting and neglecting the memories of others within a group or space. Public memory is often challenged by the varied versions of the remembered past through the introduction of new or different memories from within and outside the established group. Essentially, memory can be

used as an ideological weapon and reveals the vulnerability of established memories and demands for revisions of that public memory.

Fifth, public memory relies on symbolic supports, usually language and other communication rituals, to provide the individual with some form of attachment to the group or space (Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010). The support of a public memory must be materialized through an imprint of an object that preserves that memory (not history. Dickinson, Blair, and Ott (2010) call this symbolic support of a memory "the 'infrastructure' of collective memory" (p. xx) because it allows the audience and group to physically experience and engage with the memory of the past.

Finally, public memory has a history (Dickinson, Blair, & Ott, 2010). Memory is historically situated based on cultural and intellectual practices that evolved throughout time and various cultures. Dickinson, Blair, and Ott (2010) assert that "memory is historically and culturally specific; it has meant different things to people and cultures at different times and has instrumentalized in the service of diverse cultural perspectives" (p. 11). Societies based their history on the memory of that history or *lieux de memoire*, an artificial memory that stands for a national memory.

Blair, Dickinson, and Ott (2010) assert that "memory places themselves have histories. That is, they do not just represent the past. They accrete their own pasts" (p. 30). The memories created in Disney World are not just for guests to remember the park because they also serve as a way for guests to connect themselves to the broader Disney Company mythology where the Disney parks (not just Disney World) function as ritualized places under a single guided narrative. The broader Disney Company mythology must exist for its audience in order for these public memories to manifest because without that initial ingredient, the idea of a journey

becomes impossible. By identifying with the Disney Company mythology, the Disney audience becomes obligated to conduct their own pilgrimage to the park to create and/or maintain their identification with that mythology. How can one want to traverse thousands of miles and spend thousands of dollars to travel to a place if they do not already possess pre-inscribed knowledge of that place or what that place represents?

Once guests traverse to Disney World, the events within the park become memories that are tied to not just the park, but also the Disney Company mythology. The events and attractions in the park create particular memories for its guests to encourage their patrons to remain loyal to the Disney Company mythology and frequently visit the place to celebrate what functions like a modern religion. For instance, the parks provide public memories about certain aspects of America and American culture, such as the American small town. Main Street U.S.A. presents the audience with the public memory of the American small town and how it is perceived from a pristine perspective. Main Street U.S.A. is the idealization of the American small town and the park uses this public memory to valorize and fetishize this part of American life. Public memories, such as this, are formulated throughout the park and are used to remember, valorize, and justify certain actions and participants within the public memory. As guests experience the park, they also experience the public memories that are created by the Disney Company for the park.

Rhetoric of monuments. Since Disney World formulates particular memories to encourage guests to frequently visit the park, it is safe to assert that the place also functions not only as a theme park, but also as a form of a monument. One of the ways that public spaces are commodified for public consumption is through the creation of public monuments. This is a

process that also clearly politicizes spaces, because memorials effectively alter and focus the meanings that the public attaches to these spaces.

Rhetorical analysis on monuments is appropriate and consistent with the framework of this critique because monuments map their space with a dominant valorized narrative to maintain the *status quo* (Blair & Michel, 1998; Palczewski, 2018; Rigney, 2004; Wright, 2005). Monuments are the physical manifestation of that framing because the monument designates a valorized past and marginalizes other narratives that also once resided within that space. Palczewski (2018) not only analyzes the space of the battle of Little Bighorn in her rhetorical critique, but also the memorials that were built within the space over time. In 1946, the monument and national cemetery there was renamed Custer Battlefield National Monument. While a proposal to remove Custer from the monument was introduced in 1972, Palczewski argues that the removal of Custer's name is negligible when compared to the myth of Custer in this space because it assumes that a century and a half of spatial domination over Native Americans can be ameliorated by removing a name from a statue. If only structural racism were that simple.

First, the monument labels the space as a "battlefield" when it was once a village where three Native American tribes resided (Tsistsistas [Cheyenne], Lakota [Sioux], and Hino'eino' [Arapaho]) while attempting to avoid a genocidal war waged by a white nationalist American government (Palczewski, 2018). That last point is important because it rhetorically mapped how White people in America viewed the Native Americans and their residence of the American land during and after this genocidal war. In January 1, 1836, Native American tribes were required, by federal law, to report to their local agencies or be hunted down by the American army for extermination. Essentially, while Little Bighorn (which the Native Americans called Greasy

Grass) was a village for the Native Americans, the White nationalist spatial politics of the time mapped their perspective out of the public space and memory, framing that village as a home for "hostile savages." The use of the term *battlefield* to refer to a Native American village in the monument symbolically plants itself within the dominant spatialized politics of the late 1800s of white nationalism and supremacy. It frames the space as a space where the Native Americans were already hostile and planning on their conquest against white people in the 1800s rather than fleeing from a jingoistic, racist, and genocidal military and government.

Another study that reached similar conclusions about the meanings of public monuments was conducted by Clair and Michel (1998). This study rhetorically analyzed the Astronaut Memorial at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Center (KSCVC) through two premises: "(1) rhetorical events are symbolic and (2) they are more or less appropriate to their contexts" (p. 30). The authors assert that these frameworks were not chosen but are as natural as breathing because these texts reference a symbolic world to attract an audience (Clair & Michel, 1998). The Astronaut Memorial functions through what Clair and Michel define as a public commemoration genre because it marks the death of the astronauts while on duty and creates a relationship between the audience and the marked deaths. This memorial influences the audience to see the deaths as a public memory and a collective conscience in which the audience feels connected. The rhetorical critique elaborates on the tactics of the Astronaut Memorial, but for the purposes of this analysis, the tactics are less important than the ideas the memorial itself represents.

This analysis, as well as the analysis of the memorial at Greasy Grass (Palczewski, 2018), provides a framework through which to view memorials and their rhetorical power. Memorials are more than mere statues, but symbolic texts that map a space with specific politics and Otherize narratives within the same space. The space is political, and memorials are designed to

politicize the space in which they reside. All places are politicized, but which narratives within those spaces are remembered the most become the dominant identities of the place. When a new dominant narrative is added to a space, the circumference of that place is expanded and re-drawn to include the new narrative.

This process of politicizing an already politicized place is made more evident with the physical marker of a monument. The memorial marks the space as a political place where an event, idea, person, or the idea the person represents becomes its identity. The symbolic nature of the memorial provides the space with a physical manifestation of its identity (Rigney, 2004; Wright, 2005). Memorials also possess the rhetorical power to silence other external forces within the politicized spaces because they commemorate and focus on one mapped narrative. Most stories are excluded from these monuments because memorials are designed to exclude all narratives but the one they are actively commemorating.

The symbolic and rhetorical meanings of a space are incredibly malleable and can oftentimes lead to meanings and symbols of a certain space being eliminated for a new meaning to take its place. Monuments reinforce this mapping of the space and are used to signify which narratives are dominant throughout the space. The dominant narrative of the place applies pressure onto other less remembered narratives and this results in their erasure and silencing. Monuments engage in a form of spatial politics by signifying the identity of a space. This, inevitably, leads to ideological conflict between other political forces that may conflict with the dominant narrative. The identity of a space can be erased to pave the way for a new dominant narrative to permeate the space (e.g., what was once a village may become a battlefield, a city, or a memorial). This framework is helpful because it reveals that the Disney Company marks Disney World's locale as a politicized place and to valorize a single narrative within that space.

It is possible that the parks themselves function as a memorial because they all fall within the space of the Walt Disney World Resort and use the Walt Disney myth to ritualize the space as a sanctuary for the mythology. The space is designated as "Disney's world," where Disney's imagination and ideas permeate the area and this space is a commemoration of his ideas and narrative. However, this physical manifestation of the Disney narrative also likely silences the narratives of those that lived in the area before the park's creation. The Walt Disney myth, which permeates the space of Disney World, becomes the dominant narrative of the space because the park becomes part of the Disney Company mythology. Disney World, as a memorial, can link guests to the broader Disney Company mythology, such that the narrative is one of capitalism, but frames that capitalist narrative through magic and imagination.

Theme Parks are a Space with Rhetorical Power

As a type of monument, theme parks also act to rhetorically identify spaces and to influence public memories. In this section, I will elaborate on the rhetorical evolution of amusement parks. Once the history of amusement parks is established, I will explore how they use narrative to map their spaces. Theme and amusement parks are interactive public memories and monuments and they alter the space in which they reside by mapping the space with their narrative.

One of the main reasons for this analysis of Disney World was to fill in the academic void of rhetorical research on theme parks. Theme parks, as a text, have been somewhat overlooked by rhetorical scholars. Thus, scholars are, for the most part, left in the dark on the rhetorical and historical impacts of theme parks. Attempting to find any research on theme parks that was not a tourist guide, a book, or a pamphlet approved by a theme park's parent company has proven difficult because academic research often neglects these types of popular texts.

Rhetorical evolution of the theme park. The amusement park used to be the dominant form of themed attraction entertainment (Adams, 1991). However, with the exception of a few (e.g., Six Flags and Cedar Point), the traditional amusement park is a relic of the past that failed to meet with the capitalist demands of the public. Many of the original amusement parks (e.g., Steeplechase Park, Luna Park, Dreamland, and Olympic Park) failed due to either a fire or other catastrophes, but more importantly, they were plagued with criminal activity and their locations (usually a suburb of a major city, usually Chicago, New York, and Coney Island) were inaccessible to many due to the common occurrence of traffic congestion (Norton, 2008). Since the original amusement parks were right in the middle of a suburb of a major city and their spaces were often open and spacious, criminal activity was common within the parks. The beginning of Coney Island was particularly bad with the con artist landlord McKane (who owned the property and often worked with the Mafia and allowed criminal activity to flourish as long as the criminals possessed enough money) and "the Gut" (a part of Coney Island that was rife with criminal activity, especially prostitution) and eventually people visited the parks less as time progressed.

While parks began to incorporate themes and even myth within their space (e.g., Dreamland and World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 or "The White City"), they eventually failed because they all remained within a confined space of a city suburb (Adams, 1991). The World's Columbian Exposition (WCE), for instance, was designed not only to be the material version of the Christopher Columbus "discovering America" myth (to celebrate his 400th anniversary), but also to create the space where this "New Jerusalem rose from the swamplands of Chicago" (p. 19). It incorporated the already established myth of Columbus within its space to entice people to want to visit the park and identify themselves not just with their American

identity, but also the identity of the Columbus myth as one of their "Founding Fathers." The park functioned as a monument (though in a form of entertainment) for Columbus because it used the dominant myth of Columbus to valorize the actions of a previous voyage to appease a whitewashed history (it was called "the White City" for a reason). However, this theme park only lasted for a year or so and was eventually torn down.

Disney used the failures of the previous parks as a building block for not just Disneyland, but also Walt Disney World Resort (Adams, 1991; Gabler, 2006; Watts, 1997). When building Disneyland in the middle of the city of Anaheim, Disney's mythical ethos was already well established throughout the American and international public. His name and recognition were already seen as a legendary success story of a capitalist system and he created Disneyland to allow people to experience his animated films in a material form. The park functions as an interactive and spatial celebration and valorization of the Walt Disney myth. However, despite the financial and cultural success of Disneyland, Disney was not happy with the project because it still resided in an urban area that he felt ruined its magic.

In this rhetorical context, the Disney Park (agent) was attempting to overcome the scene by isolating itself from the real world (scene) to become not just its own entity, but also its own metaphysical dimension. However, this attempt from Disneyland (agent) to overcome the scene suffered from two issues: the urbanized area of Anaheim and the incomplete Walt Disney myth. Disneyland was built in the middle of a city, which is the same geographical context as the amusement parks of yesteryear (e.g., The White City, Luna Park, and Olympic Park) (Adams, 1991). Since it was in the middle of a city, the park suffered from the same congestion problems that other urban parks had experienced (Norton, 2008).

Disney spent months secretly looking for properties that were isolated from other cities to build his new park on a completely different plane of existence (Adams, 1991; Gabler, 2006; Watts, 1997). Unlike the original parks, including Disneyland, Disney flipped the amusement park formula on its head by building Disney World in the middle of a swamp where living residence of the area was relatively small (though there were people who did live there) and it was possible to build walls to keep the dream and imagination of the Walt Disney myth *in*. This design of Disney World creates a space entirely separate from the real world that allows the Walt Disney myth to proliferate in a material form.

Amusement pilgrimage. If parks use existing myths to entice audiences to visit their spaces, I want to see how a specific space can immerse visitors or guests into that mythology. This section will elaborate on how certain monuments and locales use myths and mythologies to encourage groups of people to travel to those places and experience that space (a form of spatial politics) before elaborating on how theme parks utilize this same tactic for their own space.

As Elizondo (1999) writes, "We carry memories on a pilgrimage: memories of our ancestral lands and people. Memory is the soul of a people. Without it we are just individuals living and working in a common space" (p. 20). While theme parks may not seem to possess the grandiose allure of a religious place, such as Jerusalem or Santiago de Compostela, the rhetorical mechanics are virtually identical. Amusement parks, as will be elaborated here, still function as a space of pilgrimage because they utilize an existing myth within their space the same way other pilgrimage spaces do to attract potential pilgrims and patrons.

Knight's (2014) book, *Power and Paradise in Walt Disney's World*, elaborates on pilgrimage sites and how public memory of a space can influence people to want to travel to those areas to experience their own pilgrimage. How one experiences a pilgrimage depends on

the context of the individual and their social groupings and the public memory within their respective groups. A pilgrimage is a malleable journey because it requires different components for the personal pilgrimage to be completed. While no pilgrimage is the same, they all require a journey, physically or emotionally, to a fixed destination that the individual must enter to complete the journey. Traditionally, pilgrimages often require physical hardship when traversing to the ritualized locale because that physical strain also becomes part of the pilgrimage. While modern transportation (e.g., buses, cars, and airplanes) may damper the hardship of traditional pilgrimages, the personal and spiritual experience of pilgrimages can still be experienced.

Knight (2014) identifies three types of pilgrims: explorers, travelers, and tourists. The explorer attempts to unveil the undiscovered, the formless, and the unknown. The tourist tends to gravitate toward the safety and sanctity of commercialized sites and places. The traveler amalgamates the explorer and the tourist by engaging in excitable and unpredictable travels while also wanting to unveil the unexplored. Tourists are often stigmatized because they are perceived to be uncritical and privileged simpletons who only trespass those spaces in which they do not belong. However, Knight argues that, despite many scholars' annoyances with tourism, tourism should be seen as a new form of pilgrimage. Knight provides a framework for this analysis by examining a ritualized site and the audience that journeys to that site to experience their own pilgrimage. She examines Santiago de Compostela as a ritualized site and what it means to those who decide to make a pilgrimage to the site.

Before one traverses to Santiago de Compostela, the broad public memory and story of the site must be known and remembered by its audience (Knight, 2014). The broad story of the site provides the audience with a framework in which to understand the site and recognize the heroes and villains within the tale. Santiago de Compostela relies on two narratives that both

revolve around Saint James the Great (also known as "The Elder"), who was one of the twelve apostles and alleged to be blood related to Jesus.

The first legend of The Elder occurred after he was beheaded by Herod Agrippa after returning to Jerusalem around 44 A.D. (Knight, 2014). According to the legend, The Elder's followers carried his body back to Spain in a stone boat only to be buried and forgotten for centuries as the Romans brought war and depopulation. A hermit named Pelagius reportedly found The Elder's body in the ninth century, making The Elder the only apostle buried west of Rome. Once this knowledge was found, "Archbishop Gelmirez and Compostela Cathedral authorities endorsed and promoted the city as a pilgrimage center, and King Alfonso II declared James the patron saint of Spain" (p. 30). The second legend casts James as "the Moorslayer" because he appeared on a white horse and led the Christians to victory over Moors at Clavijo. This legend also names James as the patron saint of Spain and marks Santiago de Compostela as a site of pilgrimage.

Through these myths, Compostela became a nationally significant space for Spaniards (Knight, 2014). Moreover, the space of Compostela transcends the political and becomes a commercial product. The Compostela site remains as a prominent pilgrimage site because the legend permeates the space functions as a magnet for those that are entranced by the myth. Those that believe in the myth of Saint James will traverse to Compostela to maintain their connection and identification with that narrative. The site not only functions as a pilgrimage site, but also as a symbol of patriotism to the country of Spain. By undertaking the pilgrimage to the Compostela site, individuals become "true patriots" to their country and heritage.

Knight (2014) asserts that all pilgrimages undergo a stage of transcendence because the site possesses symbolic and physical power. This symbolic power is segmented into two

different versions of a pilgrimage: "liminal" pilgrimages and "liminoid" pilgrimages. Liminal pilgrimages are pilgrimages based on obligations, whereas liminoid pilgrimages are considered playful or touristic journeys. However, these two versions of pilgrimages are not seen as isolated from one another and can coincide with each other. People who undertake a pilgrimage to the Compostela site for patriotic duty (liminal pilgrimages) can also find themselves enjoying the journey (liminoid pilgrimages). Disciples of the myth can often purchase items such as holy water, portraits of Saint James, and other themed products at Compostela at a premium. When disciples purchase these items at the ritualized place, they can further identify themselves with the myth. As a result, the Compostela site is just as much a product for consumption as it is a symbolic site of patriotism to the disciples of the myth. Additionally, the pilgrimage sites, such as Santiago de Compostela, are designed to influence the paths the pilgrims undertake while at the site. The sites structure their spaces to lead the pilgrims to experience the site in a particular fashion. Nothing in a pilgrimage site is random because it is all designed for the pilgrim to undertake a manufactured experience.

The space becomes mythologized because the myth that permeates the space becomes the identity of the space itself. It becomes ideologically impossible to isolate the space from the myth because the space is an extension of the myth. The myth and the ritualized place become one and the same as the dominant group's narrative silences other less remembered narratives that also permeate the place. One cannot see Santiago de Compostela as anything but a ritualized space for Saint James because other narratives that may contradict his story have been so thoroughly silenced that they can never resurface, eliminating or mitigating future conflicts.

The Disney Company mythology constructs Disney World as a refuge for its audience. The park is a monument that valorizes, promotes, and justifies the Disney Company mythology

within a mapped place that acts as a refuge for its pilgrims to venture to in order to maintain their identification with that mythology. In order for Santiago de Compostela to function as a mythical pilgrimage site, the myth of Saint James must not only pre-exist that pilgrimage, it must also already be believed as "true" among an audience (Knight, 2014). Those that journey to the ritualized park are attempting to relive the mythology they believed to be "true" and experience that mythology in its material form, just like the pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela do.

When people construct a pilgrimage to the park, the Disney Company mythology must pre-exist that pilgrimage or the pilgrimage loses its mythical meaning. Ward (2002) asserts that a ritual is a repetitive action that identifies the subject "with the sacred or as a symbolic experience" (p.21). Disney's myth must already be believed as "true" by a large enough audience or the pilgrimage is no longer a journey to identify with the myth. Instead, the park would simply become a tourist attraction instead of a ritualized site. Disney World can never be anything but the centralized and ritualized space of Disney, his company's creations, and what his creations represent. The Disney World theme park is not a mythology itself, it is a sanctuary or pilgrimage site that celebrates and ritualizes the Walt Disney myth for its guests. The Disney World theme park uses the broader Disney Company mythology to formulate public memory about Disney and his myth for their guests. In order for the disciples to maintain their identification with the Walt Disney myth, they will gladly spend thousands of dollars and travel across the country (sometimes the entire world) just to experience that broader mythology in its material form. The narratives of those who lived before the creation of Disney World are lost in the discourse because the Disney Company's narrative is so dominant that any other narrative is lost in the noise (sometimes literally). Since Disney World uses the Walt Disney myth, it becomes a

sanctuary or a pilgrimage site that encourages people throughout the world to journey to the place and experience the Walt Disney myth in its material form.

The Walt Disney Myth

And what is that myth? When Disney created his parks, he built them under the cultural context of his mythical ethos already permeating American discourse (though in an incomplete way) (Adams, 1991; Gabler, 2006; Watts, 1997). It is important to understand the Walt Disney myth and what it often communicates to its audience because it allows this thesis to contextualize how and why its audience identifies with this mythology. This section will expound the components of Disney's life that are highlighted in the Disney Company mythology to map out its narrative and see what the myth is communicating to its audience.

Born in Chicago in 1901, Walter Elias Disney and his family moved from the city to a farm in Missouri (1906) and then moved to Kansas City (1910) (Gabler, 2006; Wasko, 2012; Watts, 1997). While Disney was born in Chicago, Disney focused on his life beginnings at the small town of Marceline, Missouri. Growing up in Marceline, a young Disney lived a rather harmonious life with the local population and his family on the farm. Disney was a playful kid who spent most of his time interacting with the farm animals, drawing, and entertaining the local populations. Disney was always fascinated with entertaining people and making them smile because he was a kind-hearted boy who cared about everyone in the town. Marceline was where he found his affection for trains (he even had an almost life-sized train set in his backyard). Living in Marceline was the greatest part of Disney's life because it was the area that taught him not only how to live his life, but also how to perceive the world around him.

However, Disney's father, Elias Disney, became sick and Elias sold the farm and moved to Kansas City to hopefully obtain a job as the area began to see rapid urbanization (Gabler,

2006; Wasko, 2012; Watts, 1997). Elias purchased part of a large newspaper outlet and multiple routes in which his sons would deliver papers every morning, regardless of the dangers that came with this job. The winters, for instance, were rather brutal and nearly froze Disney and his brother Roy to death on multiple occasions. Despite this, Elias Disney still forced his sons to deliver the papers in every weather condition and did not pay them.

Eventually, Roy left Kansas City to join the Navy and fight in World War I (Gabler, 2006; Wasko, 2012; Watts, 1997). Disney, who was very close with Roy, was envious of his brother's adventures in Europe and wanted to be closer to his best friend. Disney eventually joined the Red Cross and was sent to France for almost a year. While he was deployed, he often drew a lot in his notebooks and made crafts to pass the time before he filed for an honorable discharge. When he returned to Kansas City from France, he was hired as an animator at a Kansas City animation studio (Gabler, 2006; Wasko, 2012; Watts, 1997). At this studio, he created his first successful animated/live action series *Alice's Wonderland*. After creating multiple episodes for the Alice series, he began to earn his ethos as an American animator. Eventually he created *Oswald the Lucky Rabbit* cartoons that also achieved tremendous success and add to Disney's resume as an animator.

A large corporation, through a contractual loophole, stole Oswald from Disney and the company laid off most of its animators, including Disney (Gabler, 2006; Wasko, 2012; Watts, 1997). Lacking a job, and on a train to California (he often traversed between California and Kansas City), he was desperate and needed a cartoon to save his career. Like the birth of Athena (who was born from a thought from Zeus) (Hamilton, 1969), Mickey Mouse randomly came to his head and he drew him on a notepad on the train. This is the creation tale of Mickey Mouse and how he became a burgeoning staple in his animation career.

While living in Chicago, Elias Disney forced his family to spend most of their time in church (specifically the Congregational Church) (Gabler, 2006). The congregational church eventually reorganized and built a new building only two blocks from the Disney house and Elias was named as the church's trustee. The Disney family not only went to church on Sundays, but also throughout the week and Elias even took the mantle of minister when the original minister was briefly absent. The church became the identity of the Disney family and the activity that defined Elias for the rest of his life.

This led to the narrative that the Disney family used to bolster the Disney name (Gabler, 2006). The story goes that Walt Disney's name came from a bargain between Disney's mother (Flora) and the wife of the new priest after finding out that they were pregnant at the same time. Flora would name her boy, assuming she had one, after the new minister and Mrs. Parr would name her son Elias, assuming she also had a boy. This is, ostensibly, how Walt Disney received him name. However, this is only part of the story. The second Disney son, Ray Disney, "may have originally been named Walter" (p. 9) as it was on his birth registration before Elias and Flora reconsidered. This suggests that the Disneys already thought about the name years in advance before Disney was born. There were even rumors that Disney was not Elias' natural child because Disney only had a baptismal certificate and not a birth certificate.

This story is significant because it emphasizes the mythical (if not religious) aura of Disney and what he represents to the American (and international) public. Formulating a birth narrative that possesses a variety of religious undertones and paradigms (e.g., two women, a pious woman and a preacher's wife, make a bargain when they were pregnant at the same time) provides the Disney name with a religious and mythical ethos to the public, rather than a birth certificate error. Flora and the preacher's wife being pregnant at the same time seems identical to

the story of the births of Jesus and John the Baptist, with Mary and Elizabeth being pregnant at the same time as well (likely not a coincidence). Whether or not Flora and the preacher's wife were pregnant at the same time is meaningless because it is part of the Walt Disney myth and it is represented as "true" (almost religiously "true"). The Disney name is no longer just a name. Instead, it is a named tied to that of religious figures like Jesus, Mary, and John the Baptist.

This section is vital because it showcases what the Disney Company mythology is communicating to its audience. The actual details of Disney's life are superfluous because what matters is what the audience "knows" about Disney. By acknowledging those details, they may even ruin the myth because they contradict or mitigate the mythical qualities of the Disney. The abstracts and what those abstracts represent to an audience are what are important in this analysis. Providing excess details of his narrative obscures the purpose of this rhetorical critique, proving that Disney does function as a rhetorical myth rather than a literature myth or a folktale (Rowland, 1990).

Summary

In this extensive literature review, I elaborated on how a space can be politicized and transformed into a place and how public memories of events are controlled through external forces (e.g., monuments). I also established the rhetorical power of amusement parks and how they would inevitably contribute to the Disney Company mythology and Disney World. This eventually led me to illustrate how ritualized places rely on mythic narratives to entice disciples to conduct their own pilgrimage toward these pilgrimage sites to maintain their identification with that myth. In chapter III, I will elaborate on how I plan to conduct my rhetorical analysis of the Disney Company mythology and the Walt Disney World Resort.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Mythical Methodology

This section will illustrate the methodology of this mythological analysis. I will elaborate

on which texts I analyzed (i.e., Disney parks within the Disney World Resort, the Lands within

the parks, and their respective attractions) and my rhetorical framework (i.e., the scene-agent

ratio of Burke's pentad). Moreover, since this is a mythological analysis and the Disney World

Park, I will also define myths, the monomyth structure, and archetypes to provide the reader with

an understanding of my mythical reading of the text.

Walt Disney World Resort, the Lands, and the Attractions

For this thesis, I went to Walt Disney World Resort two separate times (July, 2018 and

January, 2019) and examined as much of the four parks on the property as possible to construct a

concrete rhetorical analysis of the space. While the park is the primary text for analysis, I will

also use published materials from the resort (e.g., commercials and pamphlets). Also, as

mentioned in chapter I, I do possess an extensive history with Disney World and have visited this

park more than a hundred times since I was incredibly young, and those experiences will also be

figured into this analysis. I examined the park through various angles throughout the four parks:

Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Hollywood Studios, and Animal Kingdom. For instance, Magic

Kingdom possesses five distinct lands: Tomorrowland, Fantasyland, Frontierland, Liberty

Square, and Adventureland. Each land possesses attractions consistent with the lands' themes

such as Pirates of the Caribbean in Adventureland. After examining the park, I identified

consistent themes throughout the park and elaborate on how they contribute to the myth of the

resort. I selected certain attractions within each land of all four parks as exemplars of these

identified themes to rhetorically reinforce the findings of the analysis. I also examined the

attractions within the parks. Specifically, I considered the visual and sound elements of each attraction and how these related to the theme of the overall park and the land in which the attraction can be found. However, my analysis also included the queue lines and how the queue lines function within the framework of the attraction.

Overall, I examined the experience of the park. Moreover, my visits to the park represent different experiences that may provide varied results to this analysis. The first visit (during the summer), I went to the park by myself, whereas the second visit to Disney World was shared with my mother, father, and brother. To inform my analysis, I rely upon a framework in which to conduct this methodology. The following sections will elaborate on the methodological frameworks through which to analyze the text: first, Burke's pentad, Campbell's notion of the monomyth as a framework for mythic criticism and Gramsci's notion of consent in a capitalist society.

Burke: The Scene-Agent Ratio

As one examines how a space can be politicized and transformed into a place, it is vital one examines Burke's (1969) notion of the pentad and the scene-agent ratio. For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus on the scene and the agent (the scene-agent ratio). The scene is "the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred" and the agent performs the act (p. xv). The scene-agent ratio is a relation between the person and the place. Burke emphasized the elements that are "prior" in their respective ratios. For instance, a scene-agent ratio suggests that the scene is acting upon the agent. Essentially, the scene shapes the agent's act within and outside the scene. The quality of the agent is matched to that of the quality of the scene. For instance, if a scene possesses supernatural qualities, then the agents within the scene will partake in that supernatural quality. There is a consistency between the scene and the agent because this

consistency allows the motives to be easily understood by those who are hearing the narrative. Through this ratio, the agents do not act in the scene, but instead, are moved because their actions are influenced by the scene in which they reside.

One example of a pentad reading of a text is Dunn's (2018) study of US President Barack Obama's farewell speech. Dunn examines President Obama's farewell speech through Burke's (1969) dramatism/pentad rhetorical framework. He identifies the various ratios throughout President Obama's farewell speech in 2017 to examine how his speech communicates to the audience and which political contexts he is speaking under. Since rhetoric is malleable, it is rare for any text to only contain only one set of the pentadic ratios. So, Dunn segments President Obama's farewell speech into various sections in reference to the pentadic ratios. This allows the reader to understand how and why Obama uses certain styles, allusions, metaphors, and forms of repetition and its political context (e.g., scene).

Dunn's (2018) pentadic analysis, as well as other pentadic studies (Kelley, 1987; Meisenbach, Remke, Buzzanell, & Liu, 2008; Palczewiski, 2018; Tilli, 2016; Winslow, & Yeh, 2015), illustrate the relationship between the scene and the agent that is ideal for this analysis. The scene shapes and influences the agent's act within and possibly outside the scene. The Disney Company mythology is mapped throughout the park as the scene, so the guests can directly experience the scene directly. Through the scene-agent ratio, I can examine how traveling and experiencing the mythological space of Disney World becomes more than just a visit to a park, but a pilgrimage to experience the Disney Company mythology in its material form.

Myths, the Monomyth, and Archetypes

If the pentad illustrates the complexities of human motives, then I must elaborate on the ultimate informer of motives, myths and mythologies (Burke, 1969). In this section, I will define myths and mythologies, then contextualize the rhetorical critique by discussing the methodology of mythic criticism (as well as retooling some components of traditional mythological rhetorical critique to properly fit this text), then elaborate on Campbell's (2008) monomyth structure, and finally elaborate on the American Dream mythology, as it is a particularly appropriate lens through which to understand the overall meanings of Disney World.

Defining myths and mythic criticism. In his interview with Moyers, Campbell (1991) asserts that, ever since Greek, Latin, and biblical literature were removed from the classroom, the traditional Occidental mythological information was lost to children. For Campbell, these myths were always in the minds of people because these stories would always be relevant to something in their lives Myths provide perspective on one's life events. Ancient information, such as myths, provided humans with themes that encouraged them to conduct nearly impossible activities, such as formulating civilizations, religion, inner mysteries, and thresholds. Without myths, we lose a crucial guide for understanding our human instincts and how the world works about us and vice versa. Myths are teachers for everyone, especially the young because they provide the ones with the least experience of the world with an idea and a guide in which to navigate and interact with the world.

Interestingly, Campbell (1991) turns to Disney to talk about one of the important functions of myth. Moyers then asks Campbell why he believes human imperfection is the best way to understand humans. Campbell responds, "Aren't children lovable because they're falling down all the time and have little bodies with the heads too big? Didn't Walt Disney know all

about this when he did the seven dwarfs? And these funny little dogs that people have, they're

lovable because they're so imperfect" (p. 4). This links to the human story of suffering, striving,

and living and persevering in spite of that suffering.

Moyers (1991) reiterates on Campbell's definition of myths from his book, *The Hero*

with a Thousand Faces (2008), that the common thread of humans is revealed through myths.

Myths are stories of our attempts, over a tremendously long period, to understand the world,

truth, mean, and significance of those meanings. Myths help us cope and understand death and

the passage from birth to death and what that signifies to us and what inner mysteries are created

in that passage. Fisher (1972) furthers this by citing Campbell's claim that "myths are public

dreams. Dreams are private myths. Myths are vehicles of communication between the conscious

and the unconscious, just as dreams are" (pp. 160-161). Myths provide meaning and an identity

to the world and support the social order. Without myths, humans and nations do not possess a

past, present, or future. Myths are clues to "the spiritual potentialities of human life" (p. 5). They

help us know what humans are capable of knowing and experiencing within and outside.

However, myths serve other purposes as well. Rowland (1990) elaborates on the other

functions of myths and what they communicate to a culture and a society. Rowland cites Lévi-

Strauss' assertion that myths are primarily significant not because they justify social structures,

but because they provide a logical explanation for the contradictions that permeate those social

structures and how one overcomes those contradictions. From Lévi-Strauss' perspective, myth is

a powerful tool to make sense of the world. This function drastically contrasts with Malinowski's

definition that argued that myths serve as a reality lived and a pragmatic charter to justify a

social structure.

However, these perspectives only elaborate on what functions myths fulfill for a society rather than define myths themselves. Rowland (1990) finds himself in a predicament when he asserts that scholars of mythology use a mythic structuring to their rhetorical criticism too liberally and that a definition of myth and mythology must be limited to prevent all stories from being considered myths. While Rowland acknowledges that any story can possess tremendous value to different people, he argues that a story can only be considered mythic if the person or persons believe this story to be true and more than just entertainment. However, this does not mean the story must be factually true; there must exist a group of people that believe the essence of the story to be "true." He separates these two types of narratives between stories that are "true" as myths and mystical stories that are geared toward entertainment as folk-tales.

Rowland (1990) asserts that a definition of a myth that is too broad can lead rhetorical scholars to misapply myth and mythologies to any stories that are not "true." As mentioned earlier, Rowland distinguishes stories that are "true" and entertainment between myths and folktales respectively because of myth's emphasis on what is considered "true." Rowland also asserts that folktales are also considered literary myths because they lack "truth." The example he uses is Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy because, while it may structurally mimic a myth in a literary sense, it is not a rhetorical myth because it is a story for entertainment. He applies this to Star Wars as well by writing, "No one believes in 'the Force' as anything more than a plot device" (p. 108). To Rowland, simply matching a mythic structure (the monomyth structure) does not necessarily equate to that narrative being a myth because it must possess a "truth" to its audience. This limited definition of myth allows scholars to identify myths in a more explicit rhetorical framework compared to metaphorically throwing darts blindfolded and seeing what sticks (Rowland, 1990). That being said, this rhetorical critique also attempts to expand the

circumference of the definition of myth to include Disney and Disney World as myths and mythic spaces while also maintaining the balance set and justified by Rowland.

Ward (2002) writes that Disney has become a cultural educator for children by rewriting old tales (e.g., *Hercules* and *Pocahontas*) through an American lens (as already illustrated in chapter I). Disney and his products have become a central storyteller for Americans, especially for children and families. Ward cites Burke's notion of narratives as "equipment for living" and reframes it for Disney as "equipment for *moral* living" (p. 3). Warduses a mythic rhetorical critique to examine the morality inscribed throughout Disney animated films and how Disney animated films use original myths to teach children not just morals, but "truths." Ward found that Disney films used previous myths (e.g., Christian theology and Pocahontas) and mythical tools to educate their audience (children and the child within adults) about morality and frame themselves as *the* moral educator of children. Disney, through their films, identify which symbols and characters are "evil" and which others are "good." Finally, Disney re-constructs these previous myths and mythical tools for their own purposes and redefine how audiences tell and re-tell those old narratives (almost re-writing history). This provides a rhetorically grounded framework in which to examine Disney through a mythic lens. It showcases that Disney stories are not folktales, as Rowland (1990) describes, because the Disney brand provides "truths" to its audience, that being children and families. The next section will encompass Campbell's (2008) monomyth structure and how it works in mythic tales.

The monomyth. This section will abridge Campbell's monomythical structure to establish the methodological framework through which to examine Disney World as a mythological text. Essentially, the monomyth is a typical structuring of myths around the world (Campbell, 2008). While one may find certain myths that deviate from this structuring, the

monomyth encompasses almost all myths because they usually follow this basic format. The monomyth itself is not a myth because it is simply the format which other myths follow. Campbell explains that the hero is the "man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms" (p. 14). Primarily, the hero represents the best of a society who has surpassed the other residents of a given homeland. Campbell explains that the path of the mythological hero follows a constant and familiar storyline: *separation*, *initiation* and *return*. Heroes separate themselves from the world and society in which they reside to be initiated into a new power or philosophy, only to eventually return to their society to educate or protect it into prosperity. Campbell further elaborates on this monomyth structure in the first part of the book called "*The Adventure of the Hero*." Since the hero represents the collective as one individual, it is vital that the hero accomplishes this structure by venturing into the void and defeat the villain (e.g., dragons, ogres, and an evil king), only to return to the society in which the collective resides to emphasize their triumph. The monomyth will be one mythic structure through which I will analyze Disney World. I will use the attractions, the lands, and their relation to the parks to provide rhetorical evidence that the resort functions mythically.

The American Dream. The American Dream is a prevalent mythology in our contemporary society that will serve as an additional frame through which to understand Disney World's meanings and function as a mythical text. The American Dream mythology is an abstract narrative that focuses on the "exclusive" ideals of America and the land of America. The mythology tells the idea that anyone born in America or immigrates here can acquire success through their hard work. This ideal of rags-to-riches is perceived as exclusively American because the American Dream mythology informs its disciples to accept this as "true." As

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powerful as the American Dream mythology may be, it possesses flaws that are easily visible. For instance, social mobility (how one moves up and down the capitalist hierarchy) is virtually eliminated, and more Americans are struggling financially and unable to escape poverty than at any point in American history (Archer, 2014; Wyatt-Nichol, 2011). Millions of American continue to pursue this mythical dream in the hope of attaining success (e.g., material wealth) in the Land of the Free. This section will also elaborate on why such mythology continues to persevere despite its materialistic damage to those that pursue it on a daily basis.

However, the American Dream is more complex and layered than one might expect because the various interpretations of that mythology prevent any one definition to reign as the defining attribute to the myth. Fisher (1972) asserts that there are two versions of the American Dream myth: the materialistic myth and the moralistic myth. Fisher illustrates these two versions of the myth through the 1972 presidential election between Nixon (representing the materialistic myth) and McGovern (representing the moralistic myth). The American Dream possesses not only different interpretations but also different identities depending on the political ideology of a person or group (Cullen, 2003; Fisher, 1972; Rowland & Jones, 2007; Rushing, 1983). Fisher asserts that during the 1972 Presidential election, the American people were not voting on all of Nixon's and McGovern's policies or their stances. Instead, the American people were voting on which version of the American Dream each candidate represented (e.g., Nixon representing the materialistic American Dream myth and McGovern representing the moralistic American Dream myth).

For the materialistic myth, the American Dream is grounded in the puritan work ethic and places the value of an individual on their persistence of "playing the game" and succeeding in a capitalistic society (Cullen, 2003; Fisher, 1972). It places a deep emphasis on competition to

determine someone's worth within the "free" enterprise system and the notion of freedom, which is defined to be free from control and regulation. The American Dream mythology rejects all regulations because it sees them as a hindrance to the Americans that want to persevere in a system that does not provide help, regardless of how necessary it might be for the person or groups. This interpretation of the American Dream myth prefers the socio-economic hierarchy where those that do not "life one's energies and talents to the fullest" (p. 161) will be relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy, whereas those that lift their energies will ascend the hierarchical social structure. However, this materialistic myth is not persuasive to those that are not convinced of this capitalistic perspective. Those that have lived by these practices (e.g., lifting one's energies) and remain at the bottom of the hierarchical structure are likely to see this materialistic myth as flawed, self-centered, and exploitative.

This drastically contrasts with the moralistic myth of the American Dream that McGovern represented (Fisher, 1972). The moralistic myth emphasizes the basic statements of the Declaration of Independence where "'all men are created equal,' men 'are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,' 'among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'" (p. 161). This myth focuses on the tolerance and compassion of others and "stresses the freedom *to be* as one conceives himself" (p. 162). This contrasts with the materialistic myth where that focuses on the freedom *to do* as one pleases and damn the consequences. Unlike the weaknesses of the materialistic myth (which are isolated to itself), the moralistic myth's weaknesses are linked to the existence of the materialistic myth. While moralistic values are emphasized in the American Dream represented by McGovern and encourage reform policies and altruism, its appeal requires those that engaged in the materialistic myth (the dominant version of the American Dream) to experience guilt for their actions and promotion of a self-

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centered system. Fisher states, "In order to be moved by moralistic appeals, one must condemn himself in some way or other" (p. 162). When people supported Nixon and the materialistic myth, they signified their loyalty and patriotism to not only to Nixon, but to the materialistic myth he represented to relieve themselves from potential guilt of supporting the Vietnam War (Fisher must have read Burke).

However, the various identities of the American Dream are not limited between the materialistic and moralistic mythologies. The American Dream mythology can be identified between political parties (e.g., a conservative American Dream and a liberal American Dream). Rowland and Jones (2007) elaborate on these interpretations of the American Dream myth by comparing and contrasting the dominant conservative American Dream (initiated by President Reagan) and the then-upcoming liberal American Dream formulated by then-Senator Barack Obama's Keynote Address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention (DNC). Rowland and Jones write that, despite multiple polls showcasing that most Americans (at the time of polling) supported liberal based policies (e.g., Social Security, increase in taxes for universal healthcare, and gay rights), there were more registered Republicans than Democrats in 2004 and Republicans had consistently won elections since Reagan. This contradiction between party identity and policy support seems out of place until one acknowledges that conservatives were dominant not because of their policies or ideology, but because they had won the political narrative of the country.

One defining feature of the American Dream narrative is the protagonist of the story (Rowland & Jones, 2007). In the romance framing, the hero does not provide a model to be imitated, but a model proves that the heroes' actions are successful. The success of the hero in the romantic classical liberal American Dream provides the American public with "proof" that the

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individual can accomplish anything and lead America to a better society. How the hero succeeds

is less important than the values that they represent, that of individual success in a capitalist

system. The success of the hero provides the validity of the American Dream itself to the public.

However, the hero must be an ordinary person who accomplishes something great to be

considered a romantic myth because then their actions become motivated by the values shared by

other Americans. The inherently unheroic ironically becomes heroic as they enact the entire

values of the American Dream and what that mythology represents. Democrats and Republicans

focus on different parts of the American Dream narrative to dominate the ideological narrative of

political discourse in America. Similar to the previous use of the pentad, the scene is the

opportunity in America, the agency is the ideology and societal values inscribed to space, and the

agent is the ordinary person or American citizen. To examine Disney World and Disney as a

mythological text, this rhetorical critique must ground itself in the mythological framework of

the American Dream. Through this framework, the Walt Disney myth and mythology are

products of the American Dream and this analysis will attempt to use this methodology to

examine why and how this mythology functions in this space.

      Archetypes. This section will briefly elaborate and define archetypes within mythic tales

and their history in the field of psychology and philosophy. As mentioned in the monomyth

section, heroes must separate themselves from the society in which they reside to break through

the threshold and enter the realm of darkness where difficulties reside (Campbell, 2008). The

hero must break through this distortion of the archetypal images. Campbell cites Jung's notion of

archetypes as "forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as

constituents of myths and at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious

origin" (p. 342). Ward (2002) writes that archetypes "are part of the collective unconsciousness"

(p. 17). These images and forms are inspired throughout human culture and form the basic images of myths and mythic rituals. This "Eternal Ones of the Dream" is not the same as personalized dreams. Individual dreams are personalized myths that are symbolic of a person's life. In other words, "in the dream, the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind" (p. 14). The hero is tasked to battle and surpass their personal and local historical limitations to obtain a higher understanding of themselves and the world. Archetypes are unconscious images that have acclimated throughout the collective consciousness that they believe to be "true" to real life. Burke (1969) asserts through his illustration of the familial definition that everyone and every symbol are imperfect replications of a previous "pure form." While each archetype may possess variables distinct to themselves, they still rely on a delimited framework. Simply put, archetypes are like products from a dollar store. The items you purchase in the store are an imperfect form of other brand products (a generic soda compared to Coca-Cola). This component of myth will allow this analysis to identify archetypal images within the text and account for those images in the analysis chapter.

Myths and mythologies are stories that provide people and groups with "truths" and understandings about humans and their interactions with other people and the world. The American Dream myth, while interpreted in various ways, provides the American public (and even an international audience) with the "truth" about American exceptionalism, capitalism, and success in that system. The moralistic myth may exist within the American Dream, but this is clearly trounced by the dominant framing of the materialistic myth (if American political elections were any indicator of this assertion) (Fisher, 1972). How success is perceived varies by the individual, but the dominant materialistic myth inscribes this notion of monetary success as

the main form of success. While Rowland (1990) may express concerns about a mythic

rhetorical critique on a text that may, on its surface, be labeled as either a folktale or a literary

myth, this thesis will attempt to remedy those concerns and show how Disney and its products

function as a myth.

This thesis will be using narrative, myth and mythology, the monomyth, and the

American Dream mythology in order to understand the meanings that are being communicated

by the Walt Disney World Resort. Through this methodology, I will attempt to examine how the

Disney World Park functions mythically. This will inadvertently examine how this mythical

functioning formulates a mythic adventure for the guests of the park to experience. Rhetorical

analyses of Disney World are few and far between and this thesis will attempt to remedy this

absence of rhetorical research through this methodology.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

Analysis

While previous literature asserted that there is an existing Walt Disney myth, I have come to the conclusion that it contributes to a broader Disney Company mythology that functions far beyond Walt himself. Disney World is a part of that mythology. As the Disney Company acquires more multinational media companies and consolidates various media outlets (being one of the few owners of all media), the Walt Disney myth expands beyond its initial delimited rhetorical space (Krawcyzk, 2018; Lutz, 2012). It is impossible to escape the Disney Company mythology because its circumference has expanded past its traditional space of animated films and family products to include varied entities ESPN, 21st Century Fox, ABC, and Miramax. At one point, the Disney Company merely created fantasy stories to entertain children (the Walt Disney myth), but that would eventually expand into various other mediums that do not normally typify the Disney brand (the Disney Company mythology).

I consider the notion that the Walt Disney myth eventually expanded itself into a broader Disney Company mythology. By expanding itself into a broader mythology, not only does the core aspect of the Walt Disney myth evolve, but it also now includes additional aspects and mythical tools. These new and evolved aspects (e.g., One Man's (Capitalist) Dream, Imagination and Dreams, and the Family and Inner Child/Child Fantasies) are constantly presented in the Walt Disney World Resort to reinforce the broader Disney Company mythology. Rowland (1990) asserts that myths and heroes must be bigger than life because they must deal with larger social issues. Heroes and myths that are larger than life allow disciples to cope and conceptualize these issues for themselves and those around them. The Disney Company mythology becomes

necessary in any political climate because it teaches its disciples how to understand those experiences and how to deal with them.

This chapter will elaborate on and analyze how the Disney narrative became mythologized and apply this myth and its aspects to the Disney World Park. The first section will introduce the aspect of the Walt Disney myth. Then elaborate on how the Walt Disney myth expanded into a broader Disney Company mythology and illustrate its evolved aspects. Finally, I examine how the Walt Disney World Resort uses these evolved aspects to communicate and reinforce the broader Disney Company mythology to its disciples. I picked exemplars throughout the Disney World Park that best exemplify each aspect of the Disney Company mythology. The purpose of this is to reveal that Disney World is not a myth on its own, but, instead, a ritualized space that functions as an extension of the Disney Company mythology.

As the Marxist scholars of The Project on Disney (1995) write, analyzing Disney World is incredibly difficult because it drowns its guests with endless potential content that they can experience. The park is designed to provide so much content that it is impossible to experience everything the park has to offer, unless one were to possess a tremendous amount of capital and time. While I have been attending the park for 24 years and my mother's second wedding took place at the Disney World Wedding Pavilion, even I cannot attest to every component of the park because I have not experienced everything Disney World offers to its guests. In this rhetorical critique I opted to focus on a quality analysis of certain areas of the park rather than a quantity attempt to do a shallow analysis of everything in the resort.

The Mythologization of Disney

This section will explain how Disney's name and narrative became a myth and illustrate its core aspect (One Man's dream) before elaborating on how it contributes to the broader Disney

Company mythology. Once the Disney Company mythology is established, I will elaborate on its own aspects and how they function throughout the broader narrative. The purpose of this analysis is to examine how the Walt Disney myth evolved into a Disney Company mythology and how the resort contributes to and reinforces that broader mythology.

The Walt Disney myth: The modern Jesus. After his death in 1966, Disney had his body cryogenically frozen and preserved with the hope that humankind will find a way to bring the dead back to life, or so it is told. Spotting where this infamous rumor came from is rather difficult, but it would seem that a tabloid called the *National Spotlite* was the culprit behind the rumor (Gabler, 2006; Sammond, 2005). According to the tabloid, a correspondent claimed they snuck into St. Joseph's Hospital, where Disney passed away, by picking a storage room door lock and saw Disney suspended in a metal cylinder. A French publication, *Ici Paris*, resurfaced the story in 1969, claiming the sources were close to Disney. *The National Tattler*, an American tabloid known for fostering scandals, claimed that, before his death, Disney ordered doctors to thaw his body in 1975 and bring him back from the grave. Even Disney may have provided the greenlight for this rumor. Reportedly, weeks after Disney's death, studio department heads were invited to watch a screening of a film where the heads would sit next to their name plate and the film was Disney staring and pointing to each head and discussing future plans for each person. Each screening ended with Disney smiling and stating, "I will see you all soon." However, the reality was far less interesting than the story about a fabled cryogenic tale. Disney's body was cremated at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, California (Gabler, 2006). This conspiratorial story functions to mythologize Disney beyond his death. It provides his name and what he represents with otherworldly power and illustrates the limitless quality of his products.

When Disney began releasing cartoons, he began to establish himself as part of the dominant discourse (Sammond, 2005). Cartoons like his *Silly Symphonies* and *Three Little Pigs* not only received great praise from critics, but also earned countless endorsements from the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) and their publications, such as the *Motion Picture and the Family*, as being family friendly. Once Mickey Mouse was introduced, he was constantly being compared to the likes of Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Ronald Colman, with Pringle (2005) claiming that "Walt Disney is the envy and the despair of his fellow producers in Hollywood" (p. 76). Disney animated films would consistently receive these endorsements from outlets funded by the MPPDA, essentially providing Disney with a stamp of approval for their family friendly corporate image. Disney became everyone's "uncle" not just because of his label on the show, but also because Disney permeated the media discourse after he took full advantage of the socio-political media climate of the early 20th century and the "Code." Disney and his products became synonymous with childhood and innocence (Giroux, 2010). This historical aspect of his narrative mythologized his tale and it began to permeate the media landscape.

This permeation throughout the media and familial discourse led people to see Disney not just as a cultural teacher, but also as a part of their family. Disney was no longer just an animator, he was the hero in the trying times of the Great Depression and helped shape the "ideal child." Disney and his products represented the best of American values and shaped the discourse for how children should behave and how to view and perceive morality. Disney was insistent that he and his company would always follow the Hays Code and rarely received any complaints from the MPPDA (Sammond, 2005). It would become an industry joke that "there has not been a censorship cut in a Disney film in four years. The last was over a cow (referring to

Clarabelle)" (p. 76). Disney would frequently use surveying methods to maintain an idea of how the public was perceiving the morality of his cartoons and this helped him maintain that public image.

Additionally, Disney was one of the first executives to focus on the new medium of television to advertise not just his new products, but also himself and what he represented. With shows such as *The Wonderful World of Color*, Disney presented himself with the persona of "Uncle Walt" to advertise his new products (Sammond, 2005; Wasko, 2012). However, once he passed in 1966, the Disney Company scrambled to create more products, but without the "genius" of the "fun factory" being present. This often led to many employees asking the phrase "WWWDD" or What would Walt Disney Do (Wasko, 2012)? Disney's mythical ethos possessed so much rhetorical power that it did, and continues to permeate, the company's space and public discourse. The seeds of the Disney Company mythology were planted after his death. In essence, "truths" about Disney ceased because everything that was known about him shifted to storytelling and that began the creation process of the Walt Disney myth.

While absurd, the conspiracy theory of Disney's death and frozen body speaks volumes about the public's affection toward Disney and what he represents. Just like the myth behind Disney's name (his mother and their preacher's wife being pregnant at the same time), this prominent conspiracy theory about Disney's death also possesses religious allusions. It is the promise of his return from death which mimics that of Jesus where he was predicted to resurrect from the dead three days after his crucifixion. If Disney's body is cryogenically frozen, then there is a possibility that he may return from the dead and grace us with his presence. It emphasizes the notion that Disney is seen as the modern-day Jesus who died for our sins and will hopefully return from the afterlife.

One man's dream. Understanding how Disney's narrative became mythologized is vital to proving the rhetorical existence of the Walt Disney myth, which leads me to identify the main aspect of his myth. However, I believe a distinction between the Walt Disney myth and the Disney Company mythology is needed to properly contextualize this analysis. The Walt Disney myth (especially through this aspect) emphasizes his childhood narrative of growing up on a farm in the small town of Marceline to frame Disney as a personal mythical character who is friends with everyone and does not view people as numbers (mirroring the small town vibe). Despite living in the depths of poverty and domestic abuse from Elias Disney, Walt rose to the top by sticking to his dream of being an animator and that accretion of success helped put smiles on Americans' faces.

Eventually, the Walt Disney myth evolved into the overarching Disney Company mythology. The Disney Company mythology is less about Disney and more about what he represents to the public. The Disney Company used the Walt Disney myth as a blueprint and drew a global ideological map to illustrate the proper way to grow up and live and paralleled this with the newly formed Disney Company mythology. The Walt Disney myth functions as the initial stage of the Disney Company mythology and it reflects the idea of the Disney name to the public and they, in turn, idealize the values inscribed in that broader narrative. Disney's Dream of building his success from the ground up becomes the foundation of the Disney Company mythology because it represents individuals' drive to succeed regardless of the obstacles placed against them. Through the Disney Company mythology, his name and what he represents became bigger than life because he reflects the values presented by the American Dream and the materialistic myth (Fisher, 1972).

It is important to distinguish between the capital "D" Dream and lower case "d" dream because it not only showcases the existence of the Walt Disney myth and the Disney Company mythology, but it also reveals their distinctions. In the Disney Company mythology, Disney's Dream is framed through the capital "D" because it reigns as the supreme narrative in a hegemonic structure. As mentioned earlier, theoretically, anyone can use this Dream (and the ideas it represents) and their dreams as a drive for personal success. However, the capital "D" Dream of Disney is implied as the dominant narrative that keeps all other dreams in order. Those who attempt to follow their dreams may obtain success, but they are classified as lower case "d" because their dreams are just a product of the Disney Company mythology. The Dream of Disney is described as the Dream of "one man," which emphasizes the individual and that individual's success from their hard labor. This aspect of an individual Dream rings true to the capitalist notion of the materialistic myth of the American Dream (Fisher, 1972; Rowland & Jones, 2007). The Disney Company mythology does relate itself as a product of the American Dream, but it is often perceived as its own overarching narrative.

However, the Walt Disney myth frames his dream through the lower case "d" because it is a product of the American Dream mythology. In this case, Disney is a disciple of the American Dream mythology and his dream, in turn, falls within its mythical framework. The Walt Disney myth may follow the monomyth structure (Campbell, 2008), but it is not an overarching mythology because what it represents has not been formulated nor completed. The dream is less about what it represents and more of a story to create a particular image of the man to advertise his products. It may be one man's dream, but that narrative is merely a product of a broader narrative.

Thanks to the Disney Company mythology, Disney's presence still lingers throughout the public imagination, despite his death. Disney's Dream is so powerful that the ideas he represents remain solid enough to function as the foundations of the company, nearly 60 years after his death. The Disney Company mythology powers itself through the Walt Disney myth because the ideas he represents formulate its image to the public. Every narrative created by the Disney Company uses the Walt Disney myth as their foundation because they all represent His Dream and its values.

The Disney Company mythology is a narrative that is no longer isolated to just Disney because it now belongs to the public that constantly shares it and embraces the tenets of the mythology as an expression of the good life which becomes an aspiration to everyone. The Disney Company mythology acts as bait for a capitalist audience because it reflects and represents ideas that, theoretically, anyone could achieve because they are disciples of this American mythology. It is an idea for audiences to grasp, where they can earn their own success by (lower case "d") dreaming hard enough and believing in those dreams. It formulates the notion that, if a poor farmer boy from Missouri can grow up to be a multi-billionaire, then anyone who works as hard and as consistently as Disney can also obtain that success. Not only did he obtain massive success, but he also acquired that success virtually by himself and that story of a "one-man studio" entices the dominant materialistic myth, which, in turn, heavily relates to a capitalist American audience.

Disney's name is so prominent that it is possible to use his name as a verb to describe an action related to the company and the broader mythology that it continues to operate under. One could argue that his name is a genre all its own because of its permeation throughout not just American culture, but also the global market and discourse. He becomes not just a hero of the

American childhood and Dream, but also as a capitalist hero who other Americans are inspired to mimic for their own success.

The Completion of the Disney Company Mythology

While this aspect illustrates the functionality of the Walt Disney myth, it does not explain how his myth evolved into a broader mythology. This section will briefly elaborate on how Disney's myth was completed and how it has expanded since his death. Through this discussion, I will showcase that Disney's myth has become a full-fledged mythology in the 21st century and it has acquired disciples who conduct their own pilgrimages to Disney World (a ritualized place) to maintain their identification with that broader narrative.

While Disney's presence was a dominant force throughout American media, Disney's myth was underdeveloped and incomplete. Disney may have been a dominant media figure in American discourse and was clearly a mythical hero in the eyes of the American public, but that ethos possessed a delimited capacity. Everyone loved "Uncle Walt," but the discourse can only identify with Disney and what he represents in the moment, and that divided connection means his mythologization is limited and incomplete. If his audience can watch Disney himself on the television with new episodes of *The Wonderful World of Color*, then they not only feel safe with his material presence, but they are also not required to remember him because he is always in the present. Once he died, the discourse was left with no choice but to remember the representation of our relationship with him and what he represented to complete his mythologization. What was remembered about Disney was less about him and more about what he represented to the American (and eventually international) public. With his death, the Disney Parks now possess a different context from their original intention. Instead of just being a space where fans of Disney's work can experience his characters in a material form, the parks become a mythical

space in which to remember Disney and what he represents alongside his past and present creations (a fun and happy graveyard). Simply put, "Uncle Walt" needed to die for his mythologization to be complete.

      One man's (Capitalist) Dream. Through the Disney Company mythology, we remember less about the man and more about the ideas he represents. Once the Walt Disney myth evolved into a mythology, it also evolved its thematic patterns and these aspects are what will be used in this analysis. Where the Walt Disney myth possesses the One Man's dream aspect, the Disney Company mythology evolved it into the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream. Since His death, the completed Disney Company mythology has expanded drastically. With its recent acquisition of 21st Century Fox (Skrebels, 2019), the Disney Company has not just expanded the circumference of its mythology into other mediums, but also other markets. ESPN, Lucasfilm, and even Marvel Entertainment are all owned by the Disney Company and now fit within the Disney Company mythology (Carpenter, 2019). These media outlets work in vastly different markets, yet they are all owned by the same company that functions following its own mythology. The Disney Company mythology is an explicitly capitalist narrative that allows its disciples to witness its ever-expanding growth as a symbol of the power of Disney's Dream. The premise of the Disney Company mythology now permeates throughout so many mediums and outlets that it now touches every citizen's daily media life in one way or another. This capitalist premise is so pervasive that Disney could purchase any outlet, regardless of how off-kilter from their traditional brand (i.e., children's cartoons and fairytales) it may seem, and the Disney Company mythology's disciples will likely perceive it to be a part of the broader narrative. Disney's Dream is no longer about the man and more about the capitalist ideas it represents and that idea now permeates almost all of our media diets. This is the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream.

Dreams and imagination. As mentioned earlier, the Disney Company mythology is primarily based on the capital "D," Dream of Disney, but drenches itself with the lower case "d," dreams of its disciples (dreams and imagination in the Disney Company mythology are used interchangeably). The Disney Company mythology is designed to reconstruct how the public remembers Disney and what he represented to them. Mythologies provide tools to the disciples to not only understand the world and human interaction, but also to deal with social issues that are much bigger than us (which is why a hero must be larger than life) (Flowers, 1991; Rowland, 1990). The Disney Company mythology provides its disciples with dreams and imagination as a tool to understand human interaction and to improve to world around them. By using the dreams and imagination tool, people believe that they are capable of accomplishing anything (look at the Disney brand)!

Moreover, these dreams are driven by the human need for wishes, which, coincidentally, are also provided by the Disney Company mythology. If we use the Disney Company mythology as a basis, we are encouraged not only to find something we love, but also to wish upon a star to obtain that newly found or old passion. The Disney Company mythology sets the scene for its disciples to wish for their goals and aspirations, which, in turn, leads the audience (agent) to obtain that wish through the *act* of dreaming and imagination. As wishes, dreams, and imaginations accrue throughout the scene of the Disney Company mythology, the scene escalates because it provides imaginary tools to the audience to accomplish their personal goals, which, in turn, validates the Disney Company mythology. The more people use the act of dreaming and imagination (specifically provided by the Disney Company) the more the Disney Company mythology grows in its cultural significance. Moreover, it reinforces the reconstructed public memory of Disney because the ideas he represents flourish through the disciple's acts of

dreaming and imagining (tools that are perpetuated and reinforced by the Disney Company mythology). Since the Disney Company mythology now incorporates nearly all media outlets, it is nearly impossible to avoid "the Magic of Disney" as we consume media and stories. As a result, the disciples of the Disney Company mythology follow in the footsteps of Walt Disney (or the public memory of him) and remain as children and refuse to grow up (like Peter Pan).

As Campbell (1991) asserts, myths provide us with tools not only to understand humans but also the experiences of those humans' interactions and the world. While the disciples' dreams would function as a lower case "d," dream, they still fuel the Disney Company mythology because they are explicitly inspired by the broader Disney narrative as a basis for the audience to improve not just themselves but also the world around them. When people use their imagination, they transform their delimited human abilities into something that is beyond human.

The family and inner child/child fantasies. While the Disney Company mythology is powered by the dreams of its disciples, it also provides them with a pathway back to their childhood (or an idealized version of it). As Sammond (2005) writes, the ideal or generic child was a massive socio-political topic throughout the early 1900s (scene) and it evolved as other people (agents) contributed (act) to that discourse. How one defined "the family" would inevitably evolve throughout the discourse and the Disney Company mythology must somewhat "evolve" with that definition of the family and childhood to maintain its relevance. However, evolve may be a loaded term because myths are not designed to evolve, hence my placement of the term in quotation marks. The Disney Company mythology may not evolve, *per se*, but what it includes in its definition of the "ideal family and childhood" (its circumference) must expand to prevent the alienation of a market. The mythology itself does not evolve; instead, which groups of people are included in their definition of the family evolves.

For instance, all of the Disney parks now celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month with ceremonies and products that represent the LGBTQ+ movement and community every October. However, this was not always the case because the Disney Parks not only explicitly banned homosexuals from the park, but they also wrote dress codes for men that explicitly discouraged outfits that expressed homosexuality (Adams, 1991). In the broader Disney narrative, members of the LGBTQ+ community did not meet its definition of the family and were excluded from the narrative. However, as the national discourse surrounding the family and childhood progressed to include the LGBTQ+ community, the Disney Company mythology must expand the circumference of its definition of the family and childhood to include those who were initially excluded from that definition to maintain its relevance to the market.

Moreover, the Disney Company mythology also emphasizes not just childhood, but also childhood fantasies and the inner child. The stories and products created by the Disney Company are not just marketed to appeal to children, but also to the inner child in adults. The harsh reality of the world (the unknown or the void) and the workforce can lead many adults to want to revert to the innocence of their childhood (Giroux, 2010). The Disney Company mythology is a (possibly *the*) representation of childhood that audiences (regardless of age) can use in order to reminisce about their own mythologized childhood memories.

Koh (2009) writes that texts create nostalgia in their audiences through a *mise-en-scène* that possesses a historicist feel (a mythologized remembering of a past era) rather than a historical feel (a factual recollection of events). Koh calls this "nonspecific nostalgia" because the era, decade, and place of the nostalgia is often left vague and is only implied through the *scene*. The Disney Company mythology provides a non-specific nostalgia to its audience because it does not specify the era which the audience is to relive. However, it formulates the template

(or mythical tools) for its disciples to bring themselves back into the ideal childlike age and mindset and briefly remain in that stage of innocence and forget the harsh realities of the present.

Summarizing the Disney Company Mythology and the Walt Disney Myth

In this section, I will briefly summarize Disney Company mythology and the Walt Disney Myth to illustrate their distinctions and prevent any confusion. Moreover, I must also restate the distinction between a myth and a mythology. Myths are individual narratives that humans believe to be "true." Whereas mythologies are broader narratives that use lesser or individual myths that perpetuate the ideas those broad narratives represent. The myth functions underneath and within the broader mythology. For instance, the American Dream is a mythology because it is a narrative that affects a large group of people and it uses individual myths (like the Walt Disney myth) to perpetuate its ideas. In summary, the Walt Disney myth focuses on Walt Disney (the man) and his personal mythical rags-to-riches tale and this constitutes only one aspect, One Man's dream. Whereas the Disney Company mythology is the evolution of the Walt Disney myth and focuses less on the man and more on what He represents. The Disney Company mythology also evolved the aspects of the Walt Disney myth: One Man's (Capitalist) Dream, Dreams and Imagination, and the Family and Inner Child/Child Fantasies. Once Disney died in the mid-1960s, He transformed into a mythical hero and the Walt Disney myth became part of something much bigger, the Disney Company mythology.

Moreover, while the Disney Company mythology spawned from the ideology of the American Dream, it now functions by itself and formulates its own meaning for its disciples to perceive and celebrate. However, while the Disney Company mythology no longer requires the American Dream to properly function, the essence of the latter can still be perceived by those that can read between its lines. When the Disney Company was preparing to build Euro

Disneyland (now called Disneyland Paris) in France, they were met with incredible hurdles (Perjurer, 2018). While the Disney Company had been in contact with the French government, the company never polled or asked the citizens about their thoughts on a new park in their area. Without reaching out to the citizens of Paris, Many French citizens detested the creation of the park because they saw this as an American corporate expansion and colonialization of their land and culture. However, this backlash only became worse as former Disney CEO Michael Eisner required English-only business and developmental meetings of the park, the employees of Euro Disneyland were required to wear certain articles of clothing and even acquire certain haircuts and facial hair styles (which was illegal under French law), and theme parks in France possess a long history of filing for bankruptcy. Some in France even called this expansion, cultural Chernobyl and advocated citizens to burn the park down (Cue, 1992). The Disney Company asserted that they required these aspects to provide its guests with the Disney product they expected. The Disney Company mythology (as an American mythology) attempts to conceal class differences and when it tries to ascribe these values onto other countries that possess different values it is seen as colonization.

The Disney Company Mythology in Disney World

After defining the Walt Disney myth and the Disney Company mythology through its three consistent aspects (e.g., One Man's (Capitalist) Dream, Imagination and Dreams, and the Family Inner Child/Child Fantasies), I selected exemplars (e.g., attractions, lands, characters, and parks) throughout the Disney World theme park that best represented them. After examining the exemplars through each aspect, I drew the conclusion that the Disney Company mythology does function as a rhetorical myth (Rowland, 1990) and it can be witnessed and experienced through the Disney World theme park. Moreover, I will also identify various patterns throughout each

aspect that disciples can experience within the Disney Company mythology and at the Walt Disney World Resort. This section will apply these aspects and their patterns to the exemplars throughout the park.

One Man's (Capitalist) Dream

Due to the mass applicability of this aspect of the Disney Company mythology, it was both incredibly easy and difficult to find exemplars throughout the Disney World theme park. Since this aspect represents Disney products as being a part of His Dream, theoretically speaking, everything that resides within the boundaries of the park qualifies as exemplars of this aspect. Even if one were to find an attraction or even a park that does not relate directly to Disney or His Dream, they were still built within the mythological framework of One Man's Dream. Like Athena being born directly from a thought of Zeus, the properties created by the Disney Company and the parks are the ideological and mythological children of Disney and His Dream. To properly contextualize my analysis of this aspect of the Disney Company mythology I organized this section through consistent patterns I noticed throughout the park: separating the guest from the material world, looking back at a mythologized past, the nostalgia of future prospects and expanding the (American) unknown, and monuments to Disney.

Separating the guest from the material world. The Magic Kingdom is the most indisputable exemplar of the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream aspect because it materially mimics every aspect of the Disney Company mythology. The park is an explicit representation of Disney's worldview and what His mythology represents to the public. The park is a refuge from the real world, where people can enter Disney's Dream that not only permeates the Magic Kingdom but is also materially crafted to represent the Disney Company mythology. The broader mythology is the rhetorical blueprint of the Magic Kingdom.

Guests separate themselves from the real world and interject themselves into the mythological space of Disney and His Dream. One could argue that the Magic Kingdom itself is Disney World because of its ideological and mythological mimicry of the Disney Company mythology. I know for myself and my family, the Magic Kingdom is consistently the first park we visit, and all the other parks would simply be icing on the cake rather than the full mythological meal. This is backed up by the fact that the Magic Kingdom is consistently ranked as the most visited theme park in the world (TEA/AECOM, 2015; TEA/AECOM, 2016; TEA/AECOM, 2017). The disciples of the Disney Company mythology are more than willing to traverse to the Magic Kingdom in droves to experience the broader narrative in a material form.

The Magic Kingdom functions as a mythical utopia because it is isolated from the rest of society and ideologically perfected into a centralized location. Moreover, this essence of a mythic space is emphasized by the fact that one cannot enter the park through traditional methods (e.g., driving to the park). Instead, the only way to approach the Magic Kingdom is to board transportation provided by Disney (i.e., monorails, Disney buses, or a boat from Fort Wilderness). Moreover, all the avenues to approach the Magic Kingdom are designed for the guests to see the park from a distance as if it resides in a whole other dimension. The park is a utopia mapped in a bubble that is isolated from the rest of the world (Koh, 2009). This utopia is also a part of One Man's (Capitalist) Dream because it is born from the thought of the Disney Company mythology (just like the birth of Athena).

When guests arrive at the gates of the Magic Kingdom, they witness ticket booths, security bag check lines, and metal detectors that act as a border between the gate and the park. In fact, one cannot see the inside of the park from the gate as it is blocked off by an enormous garden of flowers in the shape of Mickey Mouse's face, with a train station and tower bridging

over the top that acts as a second gate to the utopian space. This entrance doubles as an isolated space whereby crossing that border can only be granted by those who possess enough money to purchase a ticket. Moreover, the utopian space requires multiple transactions from the guest in order to maximize their time at the park (The Project on Disney, 1995). Breaching the border that isolates the Magic Kingdom from the real world is magical because it creates the illusion that one is entering a new dimension, that of a utopia.

This mimics what Campbell (2008) calls *The Crossing of the First Threshold* (this is part of the departure stage of the monomyth) because the guests are entering the space of the unknown or the void. Guests penetrate the threshold that segregates the Disney World Park from the real world. This penetration of the Disney World border signals when guests begin their adventure within the void of the mythical land of Disney World. The guest departs from their home of the real world and enters the magical space of the park to begin their mythical adventure (with a monomythic structuring). Effectively, the guest becomes a mythical hero in their own tale and this departure is that myth's beginning. The mythological permeation of the Magic Kingdom is made more explicit through two factors: Cinderella's Castle and the statue in front of the castle called Partners. The statue form of Disney holds hands with Mickey Mouse as they gaze into the beyond while he raises his free hand as a gesture for the beyond. This statue is placed in the center of the Magic Kingdom not only to provide guests with a central navigational point as they wander the park. The statue and its location as the center of the park also reveal what narrative and perspective is prioritized in the Magic Kingdom. It explicitly illustrates the identity of the Magic Kingdom's space and what ideological and mythological frameworks maintain and run this place.

Disney and Mickey (which the park often represents as one and the same) are the Gods of this place because they are not just the center of the Magic Kingdom's attention, but they are also presented as the rulers of this magical kingdom that we visit as their "guests." The statue is also a place where the guests can pay tribute to the Gods of the Magic Kingdom by taking pictures of the "partners" or even ideologically connect with the mythological message inscribed into the partners. The statue, just like other monuments (Blair & Michel, 1999; Margolin, 2012; Palczewski, 2018; Rigney, 2004; Wright, 2005), politicizes the place of the Magic Kingdom by distinguishing itself from other places and even from the other three parks by providing itself with the identity of the Disney Company mythology. By placing Cinderella's Castle right behind the Partners statue, the place is equated to that of royalty and high class. The Magic Kingdom is designed around the castle and its residents are bounded by its rule, though it is presented as a much friendlier relationship than history may view monarchies.

Moreover, the beginning of every Disney film opens with Cinderella's Castle and the other properties that are a part of its kingdom. This opening has evolved as Disney continues to purchase more corporations and intellectual properties. Since Disney's purchase of Marvel and Lucas Films, this opening (with Cinderella's Castle and its kingdom) now includes the settings of those intellectual properties as a part of the kingdom. This illustrates the Disney Company mythology because it reveals the constant expansion of the company and its accumulation of various narratives into its mythology. The idea of the Magic Kingdom permeates all Disney media and products. When disciples of the Disney Company mythology traverse to the Magic Kingdom, they become a resident of the Kingdom. The disciples are a part of this capitalist kingdom and their residency enables its expansion and accumulation of other narratives and media outlets. Additionally, this separation also creates the mythical essence that this place is the

"happiest place on Earth" (as the park's slogan asserts). This metaphysical nature of the park isolates happiness and positivity within a confined space and purposefully neglects the realities of the real world. When disciples of the Disney Company mythology visit this park, they are also treated as "the good people" of the world because only those that possess virtuous values can truly appreciate the park.

Looking back at a mythologized past. Attempting to look back at a mythologized past tends to become all-encompassing because the nostalgic premise encourages us to constantly relive those constructed memories of the past. As a result, this pattern of the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream is rather extensive because the Disney Company mythology and the Disney World Park are drenched in their nostalgic representations of past eras. The entire park could almost function as a time traveling device because it metaphysically transports the guests to not just a past, but a past created by their constructed public memory. It is a past they wish were real or that did, in fact, happen in history. This pattern will be segmented into three sub-categories: A time capsule of an American bygone era, a mythical representation of the American origin, and experiencing the mythical presence of the American President,

A time capsule of an American bygone era. As mentioned earlier, the Magic Kingdom isolates itself from the real world through rhetorical and physical barriers to create the sense that the park resides in a magical dimension. Through the park's multidimensional trappings, it acts as a time capsule for past eras in American history. The park isolates itself from the rest of the world and the experiences within it are exclusive to just the place. This becomes clearer when one compares the settings between Main Street and the magical European setting of most of the Magic Kingdom since they are incredibly contrasting designs. If the park only used the Walt Disney myth, the contrast of theming between Main Street and the rest of the Magic Kingdom

would be jarring because a myth cannot constitute a place as large as Disney World. However, this issue can be alleviated by the Disney Company mythology because it functions on a broader scale when compared to a myth.

As Koh (2009) writes, texts can create nonspecific nostalgia, through the use of a *mise-en-scène*, that references an idealized past without specifying which era it is referencing. This idealized and mythologized *mise-en-scène* formulates a mindset in which the nonspecific nostalgia is framed as a utopia of sorts or a historicist feel. This mythological framework fits neatly within Main Street U.S.A. (to prevent punctuation confusion I will refer to this place as just Main Street from here on) because its nonspecific nostalgia references a bygone era of the American small town feel. Once the guests penetrate the border that isolates the Magic Kingdom park from the real world, they walk underneath the train station (with posters referencing Disney World like movie posters hanging on the wall) and enter the space of Main Street.

Main Street is lively with its setting as cars, that are reminiscent of the early 1900s, drive all around on the tracked street/cul de sac with cast members dressed up in attire of the era (as well as buildings, streets, and other structures). There is a small barbershop on the left-hand side of Main Street before the shopping mart (next to the Emporium store), where a Barbershop Quartet band (called the Dapper Dans) will appear in the morning to sing Disney songs and conduct small comedy sketches. The architecture is pristine in its presentation and it almost seems timeless or sublime in its preservation of this era. There is a City Hall, a Chamber of Commerce, and a Town Square right at the entrance at the cul de sac. Once the guests walk past the cul de sac, Main Street funnels down to the Partners statue and Cinderella's Castle (both are centered from this angle to influence guests on where to walk) to prevent guests from losing their place. However, multiple shops line both sides of the funneled street, with architecture that

reflects a bygone era (though it never specifies when) of roughly the late 1890s and early 1900s. There are multiple kiosks throughout the area where cast members in their themed costumes attempt to sell people balloons of Mickey Mouse and other cast members take photos of families in front of the castle. Main Street formulates an historicist feel for the guests and it also becomes part of the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream aspect of the Disney Company mythology. The way in which Disney remembered and mythologized Marceline was bigger than the town itself because the idea of the American small town matters more than a particular place. The name Main Street U.S.A. also implies a mythical vision of the true American main street. In this representation, the Main Street of Marceline represents the Main Street of America. One Man's (Capitalist) Dream allows its disciples to experience this representation of the American Main Street and relate it to their own experiences with the ideas it represents to themselves. This representation of the American small town and the Main Street of America becomes commodified. Moreover, this idealized representation of America connects American values to the capitalist system. This nostalgic representation of America could *never* be a communist system and not only is the link between capitalism and America understood, but it is also accepted as a natural force for the disciple's country. This also inscribes the notion of good and evil within the disciples. If this nostalgic representation naturalizes capitalism with America (and the negation that America could *never* be a communist country), then the disciples are subsumed as part of the "good guys" team (capitalism).

  A mythical representation of the American origin. Where Main Street acts as a time capsule for small town America in the turn-of-the-century by providing guests with a historicist feel of the era, Liberty Square transports its guests to a time of the American Revolutionary War. For reference, Rowland (1990) asserts that myths take their disciples out of place and time. It is

unlikely that Liberty Square is the first land guests visit, but the land is vital to this analysis because it establishes the Disney Company mythology as an extension to the American Dream mythology. I would even assert that the Disney Company mythology is claiming that it is now bigger than the American Dream mythology because it is hosting a material showing of the American Dream within its own space. The place of Liberty Square is distinguished by a red brick gate and flooring to create the sense that this land is a time capsule of America in 1776. There is also a plaque on the gate the reads as follows:

Past this gateway stirs a new nation waiting to be born. Thirteen separate colonies have banded together to declare their independence from the bonds of tyranny. It is a time when silversmiths put away their tools and march to the drums of a revolution, a time when gentlemen planters leave their farms to become generals, a time when tradesmen leave the safety of home to become heroes. Welcome to Liberty Square!

The gate of the land explicitly tells its guests that Liberty Square will transport them back to a time when the American Colonies fought against the British Empire during the American Revolution. Guests walk through a space of the American Colonies right as the Founding Fathers are about to sign the Declaration of Independence for the creation of their country. The buildings are crafted to resemble the Mid-Colonial design of the houses of the era. There is also a store called Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe that, as the name implies, sells Christmas artifacts year-round (maintaining the Christian dominance throughout America). Through these designs, the land creates a historicist feel of this particular era for its guests to visit the literal events that led to their country's creation (Koh, 2009). Liberty Square sells remnants of the American origin to its disciples who are willing to pay a premium for those products. Disciples of the Disney Company mythology can purchase their American identity in this land and its respective stores. Moreover,

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the attractions in Liberty Square also normalize the capitalist representations of the American past and this also naturalizes the relationship between capitalism and American values.

When guests enter this place, they can finally meet their American heroes such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and, most importantly, Abraham Lincoln. If this land wishes to accurately represent American history of this period, then it requires further review because Lincoln was not born until over 30 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. However, that is the mythical purpose of this land, it represents an American past and origin tale we wish to be true. Lincoln was not a Founding Father, but his mythical presence as the president who freed the slaves is so pervasive because the American public often sees him as a Founding Father of the post-Civil War America. Being a Founding Father of post-Civil War America, Lincoln can stand next to American figures like George Washington or Thomas Jefferson. In Liberty Square, disciples of the American Dream mythology can experience this idealized version of the founding of America in a material form to satisfy that mythical fantasy. In this land, the Founding Fathers (and other past presidents) are always about the sign the Declaration of Independence and the guests can pay to relive this mythical moment. While these mythical characters are obviously not exclusive to Disney, they resemble the broader connection between the Disney Company mythology and its American Dream mythological origins. The Disney Company mythology is a product of the American Dream because Disney struggled through multiple obstacles to obtain his Dream (the materialistic myth) (Fisher, 1972). Liberty Square is a monument of not just the American myth of its creation, but also the indirect origin of the Disney Company mythology.

Experiencing the mythical presence of the American President. If guests enter Liberty Square to experience the founding of their country, the Hall of Presidents allows guests to

directly see their American heroes in action. The show is placed in a giant Mid-Colonial

building, where guests enter to witness a small museum of the American presidents and their

lives. There are artifacts that once belonged to previous presidents with brief descriptions lying

next to them. There is a replica of the White House mat in the center of the museum that is

protected by a metal gate. The museum provides the guests not only something to do while they

wait for the next show, but it also sets the tone of the attraction they are about to witness.

Once the show is ready, the doors open, and guests find a seat in the massive stadium.

The show opens, and a video narrates the founding of America and what led to the creation of

the Land of the Free. It transitions between the different eras such as British Pilgrims, the

Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War. Once the show

approaches the Civil War, the curtain is raised, and an animatronic Abraham Lincoln stands up

and invites the guests to experience his famous Gettysburg Address. Eventually the show is

replete with images that represent modern American events (e.g., Vietnam War, Civil Rights

Movement, and 9/11) with an American song being sung in the background. When the montage

is complete, the curtain rises again and animatronics of every president (including the current

president) stand in unison for the audience. The narrator then announces every president's name

in the order in which they were elected. A spotlight highlights the animatronics and the

presidents bow their heads in acknowledgement. Apart from being elected, their

accomplishments as president are never mentioned to the audience. Eventually, the narrator

announces the current president (who stands prominently on the center of the stage) and the

spotlight shines on the other presidents of the past as they look at him for guidance. The

animatronic of the current president then provides the guests with a speech with the attempt to

unite the public through the rhetorical power of the president.

Moreover, this attraction emphasizes the mythical quality of its space because it places every elected American president of its history into one location. The disciples experience the material and mythical existence of every American president in a scene that transcends time and space. In this attraction, Lincoln is always President of the United States and orates his Gettysburg Speech every 25 minutes until closing time. The attraction transcends space and time because it is less about the presidents and more about what that position represents to the American audience. The disciples experience this mythical fantasy of not only seeing the Gettysburg Speech, but also experiencing the American presidents as how they are remembered and represented to the public.

Through Liberty Square and the Hall of Presidents, those who possess enough wealth can traverse to this place and separate themselves from reality and time. The guests experience the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream aspect of the Disney Company mythology through Liberty Square and the Hall of Presidents because Disney's Dream (and what it represents) provides its disciples with the tools needed not only to separate themselves from reality but also to transport themselves into any era they wish to experience. However, they are not simply traversing back in time. Instead, they are traversing back to a mythical era or a past event (or events) they purposefully mis-remember (as they reflect upon the narratives they experienced through Disney that re-wrote history and other myths) to satisfy a historical wish-fulfillment and the Disney Company mythology encourages this practice to maintain its mythical qualities. As Ward (2002) writes, the Disney animated films use previous myths not only to act as a moral educator, but to also re-write historical myths (e.g., Pocahontas) How Disney wants its disciples to remember the past in Disney World is reflective of their mythical tactics within their animated films. Liberty Square is the mythical equivalence of fan fiction or a team of super heroes banding together for a

common good (e.g., Avengers and the Justice League). Disney's (Capitalist) Dream is a mythical tool that transcends space and time and Liberty Square, and the Hall of Presidents are examples of this transcendence. As I mentioned earlier, attractions, such as Hall of Presidents, naturalizes the relationship between capitalism and America and treats other country's values as "lesser" because American capitalism is the assumed norm. Moreover, the Hall of Presidents also represents the President (or the idea of the position) as an ideal and legitimate figure in a capitalist system. The liberal institutions are not only framed as legitimate through Hall of Presidents, but they are also fetishized as the ideal capitalist dream.

The nostalgia of future prospects and expanding the Unknown. Where Main Street preserves the past through a historicist *mise-en-scène* (Koh, 2009), Tomorrowland attempts to encapsulate a past ideological era when the prospects of the future were relevant compared to today. The land acts as an ideological time capsule that fetishizes the future while maintaining aspects of the past. Tomorrowland resides on the right-hand side of Cinderella's Castle (from the front the Castle) and the Partners statue. The gate of Tomorrowland is on a beautifully designed bridge with four metal arches that hold a globe shaped sign that reads Tomorrowland. As guests enter the land, they see a material representation of the perfect future through the land's architecture and attractions. The bridge that leads to the land crosses over a pristinely presented waterfall with stone architectural design that reflects an upbeat and clean future. The music of the land slowly crawls into the ears of the guests as they walk closer to the space. They will hear slow electronic beats that mimic the sounds of machines from science fiction cartoons and a soft orchestra to tie all the beats together.

As mentioned before, Koh (2009) asserts that texts use an idealized *mise-en-scène* to create a historicist feel of a past that is not based on historical fact, but, instead, on a feeling

about a past in comparison to the realities of the present. This historicist feel frames this nonspecific past (nostalgia) as a utopia in which people wish for this time to return in order to affect an escape from the harsh realities of the present. While this may seem awkward in a land that literally (as the name suggests) focuses on the future, Koh's notion of the historicist feel fits, though some terms may need to be reshuffled a bit.

Where texts mythologize a nonspecific past to instill nostalgia into its audience (Koh, 2009), Tomorrowland uses the same mythological tactics, but in reverse (I refer to this as the futurist feel). Tomorrowland can never truly be representative of the future, especially if it wants technology to be the forefront of this aspect, because it is impossible to predict how technology will progress over time. The representation of the future in Tomorrowland is less about representing the future but reflecting on a past era where humans constantly fetishized and idealized the prospects of the future. While Tomorrowland may be looking at the prospect of the future, it is still mythological because it is a mythologized view of the future from a perspective of the past (a futurist feel). However, it should be noted that this was clearly not the initial intention of Tomorrowland when it was built (as the Disneyland version was built in the 1950s). The original intent was intended to represent an idealized vision of the future, but this reading evolved with the advancement of technology into its current futurist feel.

Moreover, there are attractions within Tomorrowland that valorize this futurist feel, such as Space Mountain. Space Mountain transports guests back to a time when venturing into the unknown of space was considered a tremendous human (an especially American) achievement. On the surface, Space Mountain is merely another roller coaster meant to bring thrills to its guests. However, through the attraction's design and the context of the land in which it resides (*scene*), Space Mountain provides this analysis with a different way of reading this text. When

guests enter the futuristic white dome, the place transforms into a pseudo space station, creating the sense that the guests happened to step outside of the ozone. The music of the queue is not just orchestral, but it also reflects the emptiness and silence of space to maintain the setting for the guests. The guest can hear echoes of shooting stars and electronic tunes chirping throughout the orchestral song. As guests progress through the queue, they notice windows on the right-hand side where they can look out and see space as planets and spaceships cruise by casually as if it were a normal highway. Once the guests enter the transport pod, they are peppered with videos of space travel as a tourist attraction. This creates the sense that Space Mountain is not just a station, but also a tourist attraction where guests can pay to experience space travel as a commodity.

Once guests board the small spaceship cart, they are transported through a giant exhaust pipe and they begin to ascend like a traditional roller coaster. However, as they gradually rise they will see astronauts working on a satellite and floating above the carts while two communication sites reside on both sides of the tracks. Once they reach the top of the track, the guests and carts are consumed by pitch darkness and some stars twinkle into the far-off distance. Then the spaceship cart swoops around and begins to increase its speed and intensity while careening in pitch darkness. The guests are thrust into the intensity of the attraction by the loss of their visibility through the emptiness of space. Space Mountain remains consistent with the thematic framing of Tomorrowland because it uses a futurist feel to bring guests back to a time when Americans marveled at the concept of the space race (and defeated our Communist adversary) (Cadbury, 2007). An attraction like Space Mountain can only work in a place like the Disney parks because of the metaphorical ties between the Disney Company mythology and the

American Dream. Space Mountain is not just a roller coaster with a gimmick, it is a monument to the mythical notion of American superiority of space.

Where Tomorrowland, through a futurist feel (Koh, 2009), attempts to bring people back to a time when we used to marvel at technological advancement, Adventureland allows guests and disciples to venture into the unknown and expand their horizons. When guests enter the space of Adventureland, the music of exotic drums and harmonies slowly comes into earshot and the space of the park becomes almost a foreign entity. The space is deliberately designed to mimic that of the unknown. The sign for Adventureland uses wooden pallets that are carved to resemble totem poles, African spears sticking out on top, drums and other instruments (though it never specifies which African country). There are also a few human skulls lying around the sign and neighboring buildings, hinting at some danger ahead. Guests experience an adventure into the unknown that carries a threat—or promise—of danger. The space is mapped to be both hostile and welcoming to adventurers to visit the land and experience a venture into the unknown.

By adventuring into the unknown, guests are taught always to venture to places they never considered before in the attempt to discover a new idea or product that would benefit society (materialistic myth) (Fisher, 1972; Rowland & Jones, 2007). Some of the ideas the disciples discover are American (capitalist) ingenuity, innovation, and the rag-to-riches myth that the disciples can also re-tell to future generations. This mythical reading into Adventureland is furthered by the attractions that reside in the land. Jungle Cruise, for instance, is a boat ride captained by a cast member along an African river (again, no specified African country), where guests venture into the dense forest to experience the unknown. The boat crosses paths with African tribes that attack the boat at one-point, ancient burial tombs with buried treasure, and

giant insects and creatures. The ride ends with a robotic occult witch doctor holding a shrunken head and attempting to sell the heads to the guests on board. Through this attraction, the guests experience an adventure into the unknown, a core component of One Man's (Capitalist) Dream. Moreover, Adventureland constructs a similar futurist feel, but frames itself differently. Adventureland transports its guests back to a time where uncharted geographical locations and the material unknown still existed (before European colonization and technological advancement revealed the entire world to humans) and we wanted to venture toward those uncharted spaces to discover new things. It is a monument that valorizes a time when adventures into the unknown were still possible. Moreover, this valorization extends to White nationalist and capitalist exploitation of the unknown's (non-White countries) resources for profits. There was a time when White countries were active perpetrators of racist and capitalist slave trade and robbing non-White countries for capital. Jungle Cruise and Adventureland allow disciples to reminisce that past exploitation of the unknown by treating non-White cultures as "savages" or "uncultured."

Monuments to Disney. As mentioned earlier, everything within the property fits within the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream aspect because they are all products of Disney's original work and reflect certain ideas ascribed to those cultural products and they all contribute to and become extensions of His Dream. An exemplar of this pattern is the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction. This attraction fits within the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream because it is not just a product of Disney's Dream, but also the last product Disney worked on before dying from cancer. That metaphysical connection between the product and Disney's Dream treats Pirates of the Caribbean like a tombstone for Disney as His legacy. When guests board Pirates of the Caribbean, they are experiencing the Disney Dream finale or *magnum opus*. While disciples are

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aware that Disney "created" Pirates of the Caribbean, they are actually referring to the Disney Dream (and the ideas it represents) when discussing the attraction's origin tale. His Dream crafted Pirates of the Caribbean for His disciples to enjoy and they must remember and respect that mythical ideology. The Pirates of the Caribbean attraction functions as one of the many mechanical monuments dedicated to what Disney represents to His disciples. Disney represents the capitalist system at its most potent level and valorizing the ideas He represents, in turn, valorizes the capitalist system in which He obtained tremendous profit. Essentially, Disney could never work or succeed through a communist system because He is remembered as a capitalist hero. How Disney defines hero and villains is based almost solely on the basis of capitalism and how the Disney Company mythology wants its disciples to view that system and the ideas it has "created." While communists are never mentioned in the Disney Company mythology nor Disney World, they are the assumed negation (villain) that the disciples must be aware of or Disney's Dream will wither away.

Dreams and Imagination

The One Man's (Capitalist) Dream aspect was rather complex because of its broad applicability throughout the park and this blanket applicability can also be found in the dreams and imagination aspect. This aspect is broad because every part of the park functions in Disney's Dream and his imagination but in a material form. Disney's Dream is so encompassing that its imaginative force has never stopped. Disney World was created to be a metaphysical space where Disney's Dreams and His imaginative creations and abilities are brought to life for His disciples to experience when they venture to this ritualized place. This park runs on dreams and imagination as its main form of energy and production and those energy sources permeate the entire place. This energy source, in turn, is provided to the disciples by the Disney Company

mythology. The patterns of this aspect of the Disney Company mythology are as follows:

Magical construction, The power of imagination and dreams, fantasy book in a material form,

and the final teaching moments of imagination

        Magical construction. This aspect can be applied to every attraction and show that

occurs throughout the park because Disney World is always trying to break that barrier between

reality and fantasy through the workings of their Imagineer team and their magical construction.

Disney engineers are called the Imagineers because they are not creating machines nor

technological advancements, they are, instead, using and creating magic by utilizing the

imaginative tools provided by the Disney Company mythology. As mentioned earlier, Disney's

Dream is always functioning and is always imagining for the benefit of others. However, this is a

rather strange exemplar since the guests never see the Imagineers at the park, just their finished

work and upcoming projects or refurbishments. Conversely, this invisibility adds to their magical

and imaginative aura because it creates the notion that magic, not engineering nor boring

mathematics and physics, is constantly accruing throughout the park. If Disney's disciples knew

that the products within the park were built by engineers, the rules of reality would be in play

and the "magic" they believe to be real would be squelched. When an existing attraction is under

construction or refurbishment, the attraction is boarded up by a wall that informs the guests that

the attraction in question requires magic to be fixed for future use rather than telling them that

engineers are working to fix a broken robot. One of the many strengths of capitalism is its ability

to hide its actual structures and machinations from the proletariat. If the Imagineers work away

from the disciple's view, they cannot see the actual system behind the Disney Company

mythology and the "magic" would be ruined. The disciples can never see the mythology at work

or they will revolt against the company, just like the bourgeoisie control over the proletariat.

The power of imagination and dreams. As already mentioned, when guests enter the Magic Kingdom, they experience a plane of existence that feels segmented from the real world as it uses nonspecific nostalgia to entice its audience to relish a past era as a better time than the present (Koh, 2009). Main Street, for instance, is not magical, in the traditional sense of the term, but instead, its pristine representation of the past functions as the magic of that space. Which highlights the park's main source of mythical power, dreams and imagination. Through its attractions, shows, monument designs, and representations of the past, the Magic Kingdom does not rely on real-world logic because it presents itself as a metaphysical place where the rules of reality do not apply. The Disney Company mythology encourages its guests to find and create their own dreams through their imagination (provided by Disney's Dream). This also emphasizes the power of capitalism because it relates the power of the Disney Company mythology to the capitalist system. While the power of the dreams and imagination (through the Disney Company mythology) can stand on its own, it could not exist without capitalism. The power of dreams and imagination also reflects the power of capitalism. Capitalism, through the Disney Company mythology, is the ultimate power that permeates the Disney World place. While capitalism is never mentioned, it is the assumed virtue (hero) throughout the park and among the guests. Whereas communism is assumed to be a vice or an adversary to the hero (villain).

Fantasy book in a material form. The Disney Company mythology represents Disney's Dream as a powerful force that is capable of literally anything (such as creating life from fiction) because Disney (or what He represents) used His imagination to achieve His Dream. The purpose of this aspect and pattern is to marvel at the limitless potential of imagination and dreams through the lens of Disney's Dream. While the general framing of the Magic Kingdom encourages guests to use their imagination to achieve or create their dreams, Fantasyland is the

one land in the park that explicitly uses that aspect for its disciples. The design behind

Fantasyland is reminiscent of a fantasy book come to life (particularly those from Disney films).

Fantasyland is also one of the only lands in the Magic Kingdom that possesses a

particular entry point to maintain its mythical facade for its audience. If one were to walk

through Cinderella's Castle, they will see the Prince Charming Regal Carrousel attraction

(Merry-Go-Round) on the other end of the tunnel. In the Castle, there are murals that abridge the

narrative of Cinderella for its audience to piece together by reading each painting from left to

right. Once they walk through the castle, they will enter Fantasyland in all its glory. The guest

will see the European fantasy architecture sprawled throughout the place with the Prince

Charming Regal Carrousel being pronounced as the center of the land's attention. There is also a

sword permanently inserted (through magic) in a stone (referencing the Sword and the Stone

animated film) that guests can try to release from its magical prison. The scene of the land opens

to the guest like a curtain being raised just for them or that they walked through a portal that

transported them to a whole new dimension within the park. In essence, Fantasyland is a stage

(scene) for the guests and they are co-actors (co-agents) with the cast members to allow this

show to continue. The impressive effects, illusions, and consistency to its world showcases the

capabilities of the Disney Company mythology and its ability to allow fantasy to come to life

rather than it only residing in books or the television (all through the act of imagining).

Moreover, Fantasyland also illustrates how the Disney Company mythology defines good

and evil to its disciples. The Disney Company mythology reconfigures how its disciples perceive

heroes and villains and their respective ideals. As Ward (2002) writes, Disney defines morality

and acts as *the* moral educator for their disciples. Fantasyland (as well as other Lands and Disney

narratives) materializes this moral education for its audience and frames good and evil in how it

sees fit. The virtues of the hero and the evil of the villains are defined by the Disney Company mythology and what those ideas represent remain consistent throughout the mythology. The heroes, as defined by the Disney Company mythology, are always selfless and willing to sacrifice anything for the well-being of others. Whereas the villains are often defined as selfish, dastardly, lustful, and greedy for monetary wealth. The Disney Company mythology uses these consistent definitions to maintain their status as *the* moral educator (Ward, 2002).

  The final teaching moments of imagination. The imaginative tools of Disney World teach its guests that using the limitless power of imagination will always allow them to achieve their dreams. This becomes more evident in the Happily Ever After firework show at Cinderella's Castle. The firework show occurs at night, near closing time and all the guests are required to stand around the castle in designated areas (the park will block off certain parts of the park). The show is a mixture between a light show and a firework show as Disney characters are projected onto the castle in conjunction with the music that is being played for the guests. In this 15-minute show, the narrator and the Disney characters always remind the audience that imagination is limitless and if guests remember this fact, they can achieve any dream they desire. This show constantly hits its audience on the head with this aspect in the hopes that it stays with them long after they leave the park.

  This would reflect the *return* section of the monomyth because it is providing the guests with new knowledge and philosophy for them to bring back to their homes (Campbell, 2008). In the *return* stage of the monomyth, the hero, at this point, has obtained a new power or philosophy with which they must *return* to where they came from to improve their home residence with the new knowledge. Not only does this show explicitly exemplify my findings of this aspect and pattern (as well as the entire Disney Company mythology), but it also provides

the audience with the necessary tools as they *return* to their homes after their magical adventure to the ritualized space. The capitalist narrative (the Disney Company mythology) lives within its disciples regardless of their location and this show reminds them of this reality. This firework show reminds the Disney Company mythology's disciples that they are heroes because they are a part of the (capitalist) mythology. More importantly, they are a hero of this (capitalist) mythology and anyone that stands against this mythology (communism or other forms of socialism) are the villains in this children's tale.

The Family Inner Child/Child Fantasies

Where imagination and dreams function to teach guests that imagination leads to one's achievement of their desires, the family and inner child/child fantasies are an explicit attempt to ignite nostalgic feelings about how they remember their childhood. Children often possess multiple desired identities (some more coherent than others) because their understanding of the world is incomplete. When children find narratives that appeal to them, they not only identify with them, but also its characters. As we exit our childhood years and enter our adolescence, we begin to narrow those scattered desired identities into a few identities that we can coherently define to others. However, those desired identities never truly escape us, and they are always in the back of our memories. Disney is often synonymous with childhood because it constantly creates narratives that create and appeal to those desired identities or trigger them during our adolescence or even our older years. As a result, the patterns of this aspect are as follows: Childhood fantasies in a material form and celebrating the Disney Company mythology.

Childhood fantasies in a material form. The framing of Fantasyland is where all the Disney characters (particularly the Princesses and other fantasy films) reside. While this was mentioned in the dreams and imagination aspect, The Family Inner Child/Child Fantasies aspect

intends to trigger a particular memory within the guests. Rather than showcasing the limitless power of imagination, this aspect provides its disciples an opportunity to finally confirm that the fantasy characters they connected with not only exist in real life, but they also live happily together in this quaint little town. The Magic Kingdom uses so many tactics to trigger these childhood memories and scattered desired identities that it is overwhelming.

Moreover, the disciples begin or continue to connect with the Disney Company mythology through the Magic Kingdom because it becomes a physical representation of their childhood and, in turn, a representation of them as a person. The disciples are always a resident of the Magic Kingdom because the park represents them and their values (specifically to those of the Disney Company mythology). The Magic Kingdom is not a theme park, it is a sanctuary space for Disney's disciples. This pattern of this aspect of the Disney Company mythology is also rather extensive and will require three separate sub-categories: Meeting longtime friends from fictional worlds, fulfilling the childhood fantasy of adventure, and fulfilling a childhood desired identity.

Meeting longtime friends from fictional worlds. Fantasyland allows guests to indulge with their childhood fantasies by breaking the boundary between fantasy and reality and bringing Disney characters to life and the attractions, such as The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh attraction. Theoretically, I could have picked any attraction in Fantasyland and the argument would remain consistent because the details of each attraction are superfluous to their main purpose, bringing fantasy to life. The purpose of these attractions is to break the limitations of fiction and allow guests to interact with their favorite narratives as if they exist in the material world.

In the Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh attraction, guests wait through a literal Winnie the Pooh book to board the attraction. Once they board the attraction, it guides them through a story of Winnie the Pooh and his friends as the animatronic versions of these characters move around the honey pot shaped cart and often interact with the guests indirectly or directly. The guests finally experience the Winnie the Pooh narrative in a material form rather than just through books or film. The details of the attraction are meaningless if it remains consistent with the narrative and characters from the books and animated films. If the attraction meets that criterion, it is doing exactly what it was designed to do, bring Winnie the Pooh and his narrative to life.

When experiencing this material narrative, the guests can relive their connection with the narrative and its characters and identify with not just the Disney Company mythology, but also the scattered desired identities of their childhood. Winnie the Pooh and his friends not only already know the guest, but they also want to remain as friends with them (the scattered desire of befriending a fictional character). Winnie the Pooh is no longer a fictional character in this context because he now exists in front of the guests and he and his friends interact with them in his attraction. Moreover, with the introduction of character meetups, Disney World maintains the Disney Company mythology by creating the sense that their characters truly exist in a material form (outside their respective attractions). In these meetups, guests can directly interact and sometimes talk (depending on the character) to Disney characters from animated films and attractions. The costumed cast members are required to remain in character to prevent the illusion of the childhood fantasy from being ruined. Through the power of the Disney Company mythology, the characters are not limited to just the narrative guests experienced (e.g., animated films, books, and attractions) because they are right in front of them and are interacting with the

guests in real time. The barrier between fiction and reality is, once again, broken by the Disney Company mythology.

The Disney Company mythology is inherently capitalist and any accomplishment from that mythology is seen as a victory over the villains (communism and socialism). The Disney Company mythology must present itself as a power fantasy because it is attempting to galvanize its disciples to join its ranks while also keeping them from seeing the system at work. If the Disney Company mythology showcases any sense of weakness, then they risk framing their moral education as contradictory or reveal its true nature to its disciples. The Winnie the Pooh attraction accomplishes this by bringing a fictional narrative to life for the Disney Company mythology's disciples to experience. Essentially, if the disciples are not completely awestruck by the creations of the Disney Company mythology, the disciples may see the villain as more sympathetic.

Fulfilling the childhood fantasy of adventure. Where Fantasyland allows guests to relive their childhood memories by entering the space of Disney characters, Adventureland allows guests to relive their childhood fantasies of venturing into the unknown. While I already mentioned this in the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream aspect, this focuses on one's childhood fantasy of venturing into the unknown. As already mentioned, children often possess a variety of desired identities and fantasies that they wish to experience. The notion of an adventure is often one such childhood fantasy in which children often indulge in to satisfy their want for excitement of the unknown. Adventureland provides that specific fantasy to its guests by designing the land to constantly frame itself as a world of the unknown that is in desperate need for discovery and the unknown is calling upon the guests to complete this task. While colonialism and technology

have virtually eliminated uncharted territories, this "issue" is not present in Adventureland because there is always something to discover in new uncharted spaces.

This would be reminiscent of *The Call to Adventure* stage of the monomyth because it requires the guests to agree to this adventure in order for its mythical power to flourish (Campbell, 2008). In *The Call to Adventure* stage, the hero is presented with an opportunity to undergo an adventure and they must agree to that adventure in order for the myth to occur. Through Adventureland, the Disney Company mythology calls upon the guest to venture into its unknown space and to discover what is currently undiscovered. The Disney Company mythology provides the disciples with an adventure that is their monomythical adventure.

The Disney Company mythology, through Adventureland, provides its disciples with a product not seen by any other company or enterprise. The adventure in this land (as well as other parts of the park) creates the essence that the disciples of the Disney Company mythology that they are a hero on their own journey. While this experience is provided by the Disney Company mythology, the adventure feels like one assigned and tailored specifically to the individual guest at the park. Moreover, this adventure becomes commodified not only through an entrance fee at the park gate, but also the items disciples of the Disney Company mythology can purchase at kiosks and other stores in Adventureland. The disciples can purchase these items to prove that they were on an adventure that no one else can experience because it was "tailored" to them.

Fulfilling a childhood desired identity. Just like Fantasyland, I could have picked any of the attractions in this land and the argument would remain the same. However, the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction possesses a focus on the scattered desired identities from our childhoods that I believe it to be pertinent to this analysis. Broadly speaking, the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction tells the tale of Caribbean pirates attacking a fort and its residing town to not only find

the town's treasure, but also Captain Jack Sparrow (referencing the Pirates of the Caribbean films). The pirates are robbing, pillaging, and raiding the town and they eventually set the town ablaze in a drunken stupor. As the pirates become more intoxicated, they begin to sing the attractions theme song, *Yo Ho, Yo Ho, A Pirate's Life for Me*. The actual lyrics of the song are superfluous because all that matters are that the guests hear the chorus of the song, Yo Ho, Yo Ho, a pirate's life for me. This chorus dominates not just the song, but also the entire attraction because it is reinforcing the desired childhood identity of a pirate (the mythical representation of a Caribbean pirate). The attraction is designed to identify the attraction with the guest's childhood desired identity of becoming just like the pirates in the attraction. If the Disney Company mythology can formulate personalized adventures for its disciples, then it should not have any issue providing them with a childhood identity. The Disney Company mythology manufactures identities for its disciples purchase through their identification with those characters and the transaction of capital.

Celebrating the Disney Company mythology. Since Disney World functions as a ritualized place that worships the Disney Company mythology, the park also provides guests and disciples with ways in which to celebrate His Dream and what it represents to them. A celebration of the mythology in unison reinforces the mythical power of the broader narrative within not just within the individual, but between other disciples of the same belief. Where guests can interact with the Disney characters directly, the Happily Ever After firework show allows the guests to collectively relish their connection to these characters and how they reflect the Disney Company mythology. The show functions as a celebration of the Disney characters and the Disney Company mythology. The guests frequently sang along with every song that played every time I watched this show for the last few years. Moreover, the guests would often

become ecstatic whenever their favorite Disney character appeared on the castle. In the Happily Ever After firework show, the disciples of Disney gather around a central location (Cinderella's Castle) to celebrate the gifts that the Disney Company mythology has (its characters and narratives) and continues to provide to its guests. Cinderella's Castle becomes the mythical central point where the Disney characters (the Gods of the land and mythology) reside and the surrounding area is the ritualized space where disciples of the Disney Company mythology worship the Gods from below. Essentially, the Magic Kingdom and Cinderella's Castle are the mythological equivalent of Mount Olympus and Asgard.

The disciples of the Disney Company mythology are not just required to visit the park, they are also required to fervently support the mythology at all costs. The disciples are hero within the Disney Company mythology and an attack on it is an attack on them and their status. If they do not celebrate with other heroes of the Disney Company mythology, they are likely not seen as "true" disciples.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed how Disney's narrative became mythologized throughout the public imagination and then identified the main aspect of the Disney myth (e.g., One Man's dream). Then, I elaborated on how the Disney myth evolved into a broader Disney Company mythology before illustrating its key aspects (e.g., One Man's (Capitalist) Dream, Dreams and Imagination, and the Family and Inner Child/Child Fantasies). Once I identified and illustrated the aspects of the Disney Company mythology, I applied them to exemplars (e.g., parks, lands, and attractions) throughout the Disney World theme park to delineate how it functions as a part of the mythology. In chapter V, I will discuss the implications of these rhetorical findings and what they mean for this type of scholarship.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Discussion

After an extensive examination of previous literature, I pointed to the evidence that the

Disney Company mythology does exist and its functionality, illustrating my thesis'

methodology, identifying the aspects of the Disney Company mythology, and applying them to

the Walt Disney World Resort, I am left with the simple question: Why does this matter? If

rhetorical analyses of Disney theme parks and the Disney Company mythology are rare, then

why spend all this time on this text? This chapter will elaborate on the implications of these

rhetorical findings and how they serve the bigger picture of a broader capitalist narrative. The

first section will examine the relations between the disciples and the Disney Company

mythology through Gramsci's (1971) notion of consent to the capitalist system as logical. The

second section will elaborate on how the disciples of the Disney Company mythology buy into

the mythology through mythical (and capitalist) means. The final section will elaborate on the

dark side of mythology and how blind faith toward a mythology can lead its disciples to excuse,

accept, and promote not only problematic ideologies but also deadly actions toward marginalized

groups. I will also incorporate a discussion of potential future research in each section of this

chapter.

Implications

Consent to the Disney Company Mythology

In the book *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971), Gramsci asserts that a capitalist

structure relies on the consent of the masses for its exploitation to properly function. While

capitalism often attempts to prevent the proletariat from becoming conscious of their class

difference (Eagleton, 2018; Lukacs, 1971; Marx & Engels, 1964; Marx, 1990), the working class

has always been aware of their class' exploitation but the bourgeoisie, through their control of material history, have convinced us that this system is logical. As the bourgeoisie constantly tells the proletariat about the capitalist trappings of reaping the rewards of their labor, the working class often sees the system through the lens of the ruling class, which leads to the mass' consent of that system.

The Disney Company mythology is drenched in the notion of their disciples' dreams and how they relate to Disney's Dream of success in spite of any dangerous circumstance. It uses the materialistic myth of the American Dream as its key bait to earn not just massive disciples in America, but also their consent to that capitalist system as logical (Fisher, 1972; Gramsci, 1971). The disciples of this mythology are likely aware that the Disney Company mythology is oversimplified or eliminates details that contradict its message, but they often choose to neglect that reality not only because is it more comforting, but it would also reveal the contradictions of capitalism and it would ruin the "magic."

Disney's disciples consent to this exploitative mythology because they feel compensated by the presence of Disney's Dream. When I purchase a ticket to Disney World, I am providing the Disney Company with my capital in exchange to spend an entire day in the theme park. The profit Disney acquires from my purchase functions as the surplus-value in this capitalist scenario because the value of the ticket and the experience of the park is ascribed by the company, not by the labor of the proletariat. For instance, many of the purchasable items at the park are valued at a ludicrously high price even though many of them can be purchased outside of the park at a much lower price range. The item possesses a higher premium because it is purchased within the ritualized space (like purchasing Holy Water at Santiago De Compostela). Moreover, as an American citizen, I have been conditioned to believe that Disney deserves the billions of dollars

it accumulates because they are not just providing us access to a park, they are also providing us access to a representation of our childhood and Disney's Dream. The experience of our childhood and Disney's Dream is perceived by its disciples as priceless, despite possessing a literal price tag.

Buying into the Desired Childhood Identity

As Marx and Engels (1964) write in *The Communist Manifesto*, the bourgeoisie always finds a way to evolve consumption, instruments of production, and the relations of that production. This is why Marxists often use the term capital when discussing exchange value because the American dollar (or other printed currency) is merely a form of material consumption (Marx, 1990). Capitalists always find a way to commodify any material or metaphysical product. This is emphasized by the fact that the form of capital is irrelevant because it always represents the same capitalist notion of exchange value (Eagleton, 2018).

One of the Disney Company mythology's strongest components is its continued attempts to provide its audience with an endless supply of desired childhood identities. Children often possess multiple desired identities (I sometimes refer to this as scattered desired identities) because their conceptualization of the world is often incomplete. When disciples of the Disney Company mythology conduct their pilgrimage to the ritualized place of Disney World, the attractions and stores reinforce their connection with Disney's Dream and those desired identities. The proletariat contributes to this system because they consent to the value ascribed to the products by the bourgeois (Gramsci, 1971). The disciples are purchasing pieces of Disney' Dream for themselves in hopes that they can one day become part of the bourgeoisie.

In EPCOT, there is a land called the World Showcase, where pavilions that represent certain countries surround a circular lake. Some pavilions (e.g., Mexico and Norway) possess

their own attractions, but they all contain not only a restaurant that serves their respective country's food but also stores where guests can purchase cultural items from that country. In the German pavilion, there is a store that sells homemade cuckoo clocks and the clocks hang all of their displays on a wall with a fabric gate segregating the customers from touching the products. I have a tradition where I always go to this store and look at the cuckoo clocks whenever I visit EPCOT because my capitalist career goal is to purchase them for either my office or home (possibly both). As a critical neo-Marxist, this practice should go against almost everything I stand for, but the mythical neoliberal allure of obtaining an upper-class status through my hard labor is difficult to evade. If I struggle to maintain my neo-Marxist perspective in the presence of the Disney Company mythology, it is safe to assume that those that already find themselves consumed by the mythical possibility of success through the American Dream would fall prey to this capitalist narrative.

Additionally, when guests visit the park, they are experiencing their own material monomythic adventure within the mythical framework of the Disney Company mythology (Campbell, 2008). The guests *depart* from their homes, break through the *threshold* of the property's magical borders, experience the *trials of the adventure* (e.g., attractions and shows), and once they obtain the new *philosophy*, they *return* home with their newfound power. The guests become heroes of their own monomythic adventure within the Disney Company mythology. When guests experience the attractions throughout the parks, they maintain their connection with the Disney Company mythology because they witness the broader narrative in a material form. This aligns with the Disney Company mythology's constant production of scattered desired identities for its disciples because guests are not meeting a character from a multi-billion-dollar enterprise; they are, instead, meeting a longtime friend.

This attempt to allow its disciples to identify with their childhood identity (which is often provided by the Disney Company mythology) becomes more evident when one exits the attraction and enters its gift shop. For instance, in the gift shop of the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction, guests can purchase costumes and other miscellaneous items related to not just the attraction, but also the Caribbean pirate archetype. If the disciples of the Disney Company mythology are encouraged to connect and identify with these desired identities that are provided by the broader Disney narrative, then it is safe to assume that its audience will feel like the individual myths reflect them as a person and their identity.

For instance, in the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction, there is a scene known as the "Wench Auction," where several women are tied up and are being sold to the drunken pirates. However, among the women is a redheaded woman (while she does not possess a name, the pirates drunkenly refer to her as "the redhead") who wears a red dress and is more conventionally attractive than the other women and poses for the pirates as she is being sold. This scene was actually one of the last projects Disney approved of before he died from cancer in 1966. However, in 2017, the Disney Company announced that they are removing this problematic scene and replace it with a new sub-story (Magnum, 2017).

In this scene, the redhead, now named Redd, has become one of the pirates in the raid and the tied-up women are no longer be sold in a sex trafficking scene. Instead of women being auctioned off, the citizens' property (e.g., vases, portraits, and carpets) are being auctioned off to the pirates in this new scene (Magnum, 2017). The announcement of this change brought about the ire of some Disney fans who felt this change would "ruin" the Disney Company mythology and what it represented to the public (Martens, 2017). I see this harsh reaction toward the alteration as a response to what the Disney disciples felt was a personal attack on not just Disney,

but also themselves and their identity. These disciples of the Disney Company mythology have likely purchased pieces of Disney's Dream (e.g., Disney animated films, tickets to the parks, and miscellaneous items from the attraction's stores) and ascribed those cultural products to themselves and their identity. As a result, when attractions, scenes, or large parts of the Disney Company are altered for the sake of progressive representation, these disciples will feel like they are being told that they are a problem and in need of fixing. If the auction scene is altered to meet the standards of the present, then it somewhat sullies the impression of the Disney Company mythology, what it represents to the public, and, in turn, its disciples.

However, this leaves this analysis with another question: Why does the Disney Company maintain certain components of the park and mythology? Since the Disney Company mythology allows us to embrace our inner child and is synonymous with childhood, altering the mythology would damage that fantasy. The Disney Company mythology largely remains the same throughout history because it wants all their disciples to hang onto the past that is inextricably linked to the Disney Company. The park and the Disney Company mythology reflect class differences as those who visit the park are their guests, especially since the park requires at least $100 or more to enter its space for a day – in other words, those who possess enough capital or geographical convenience. Earlier in this thesis, I mentioned that Disney was unhappy with the result of Disneyland because he felt like it did not possess the magic of his brand. However, despite Disney's concerns about Disneyland, the original park is still a part of the Disney Company mythology because it represents their ideas. I would argue Disney's initial concerns are no longer valid because the Disney Company mythology disciples continue to treat the park as a ritualized place. However, I must admit that my perspective is limited as I have never been to Disneyland as of the time of writing this thesis.

For future research, I encourage an extensive literature that combines mythic criticism with neo-Marxist readings of their capitalist ties. While Marx (1990) may find a disconnect between myth and capitalism, massive corporate entities use mythology not just as an advertisement tool, but also as their brands' identities to relate to their audience. Moreover, as Disney acquires more media outlets to expand the One Man's (Capitalist) Dream, the Disney Company mythology continues to penetrate all aspects of our media diet. Since the bourgeoisie control of the means of production and are obsessed with market expansion (Eagleton, 2018), what would stop a company like Disney from continuing this expansion and control most, if not all, mediums of storytelling? Since Disney is monopolizing the mediums of storytelling, all narratives would be forced to function under the framework of the Disney Company mythology. Representations of the capitalist system and exploitation of the proletariat would continue to encourage them to perceive this system as logical and consent to its existence (Gramsci, 1971). Through further neo-Marxist analyses of myth and mythology in relation to capitalism, I assert that the proletariat can become more aware (eroding their false consciousness) (Lukacs, 1971) of the exploitative nature of capitalist mythologies (e.g., Disney Company mythology) and hopefully become closer to revolting against the bourgeoisie.

The Dark Side of Mythology

If mythology can be used to influence wealthy patrons to conduct their own pilgrimage to a ritualized place to maintain their identification with a broader narrative, then it can also be used to perpetuate not just problematic viewpoints, but also deadly actions toward marginalized groups. In *Mein Kampf* (1943), Hitler writes about mythology and propaganda and how it can be used to manipulate the masses and work against the ruling class (or "the Jews" in this case). He asserted that if a political group wanted to appeal to the masses, they must create propaganda that

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is as simple as possible because he believed they were simply not intelligent enough to comprehend complex messages (O'Shaughnessy, 2016, 2017; Shirer, 2011). To Hitler, his supporters were a means to an end and were just a product of the hateful mythology of the "pure Aryan race." He used that myth as a cultivation tool to rally his "stormtroopers" to fight back against the "Jewish Marxists" that he and his supporters perceived as the "true" bourgeoisie. By reading Hitler's use of myth, one can identify the three tactics that rally mythical disciples together in unison: (1) Disciples must conduct mass meetings (especially at night), (2) disciples must plaster the myth's identity or insignia all over the place or light something ablaze (or both), and (3) disciples must sing or scream a language exclusive to the group in unison.

This should sound familiar from the previous chapter, specifically, with the Happily Ever After firework show. In this show, the guests are required to stand in particular areas around Cinderella's Castle in the Magic Kingdom while projectors project various Disney cartoon characters onto the castle and they move and dance in synchronization with the song that is being played by the speakers (all of which occurs at night). While the show is playing, it is common for the guests not only to become ecstatic when their favorite character is being projected but they also often sing in unison when their favorite song is played during the fireworks and lightshow. While the Disney Company is not attempting to galvanize Nazi stormtroopers to commit genocide against the Jews or other marginalized groups, they are still using the same mythical and rhetorical tactics of Hitler and the Third Reich. Some may argue that other spaces, such as sports arenas, may encourage their audience to transition between these three steps to assert that my claim is far reaching. However, this misses the big picture of my claim, the fact that these tools often lead to White nationalism. For instance, audiences have often used the space of sports and the three stages illustrated by Hitler to perpetuate White nationalist mythologies (such as

Confederate Flags at NASCAR races) (Abad-Santos, 2018; Creswell, Draper, Maheshwari, 2018; Hembree, 2017). The idea is not that these tactics always lead to fascism, but that they open the door to either fascism or further marginalizing other groups of people.

If a company that purports to be the moral educator of children is using similar mythical tactics of Third Reich propaganda, then this should call us into question about the potential dangers of myth and how it can alter our perceptions of the world and human interaction. Myths take abstract narratives and exclude details for the purpose of creating good narratives that an audience will believe it to be "true." Myths can create positive forces to allow a collective group to formulate change in a systematically oppressive society, but they can also ignite hatred toward marginalized groups through the use of mythical tools like archetypes (e.g., racial slurs and racist stereotypes) and monomythic narratives that frame the Other as "different" from "us" (white people).

Moreover, myths can also encourage its disciples to neglect the implications of the messages they are blindly following as "truths." For instance, the Disney Company mythology's Classical Liberal representation of the President of the United States can not only contribute to a problematic perception of the presidency but also how to view hegemonic structures. In 2016, the American electoral college elected a President that openly admitted to sexually assaulting women (New York Times, 2016) and blamed "both sides" after a Neo-Nazi murdered Heather Heyer in the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville (Merica, 2017). Despite these morally reprehensible acts, the Disney Company still created his animatronic for the Hall of Presidents show to be represented as the current President of the United States, where he must unify the disciples of the American Dream with a presidential speech. Since the Disney Company mythology is an extension of the American Dream, the Disney Company is obligated to

represent the current President of the United States as a pristine individual, regardless of context or their actions (the Classical Liberal representation). If the Disney Company mythology were to reject using Trump's likeness in the Hall of Presidents for moral reasons, then the magic of the mythology corrodes because it reveals the real world in a mythical place. Even if Disney does not perpetuate capitalist, racist, xenophobic, patriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic sentiments throughout their mythology, who is to say that another corporate entity or political figure will not use the same mythical tactics to oppress or scapegoat marginalized groups to collect power?

However, the dark side of mythology is not just limited to fascist representations of the Other because it also constitutes the appropriation of other cultures. As we saw with the French citizens' vitriolic response toward the creation of Euro Disneyland and the requirements it placed onto its employees (Perjurer, 2018), the Disney Company can (and often does) appropriate other cultures under the tutelage of the Disney Company mythology. This cultural appropriation can also be seen in attractions such as Pirates of the Caribbean where all the pirates are White and not escaped slaves. Moreover, the pirates' lifestyle may be ragged, but they are playful and quite jolly to be pirates (as the theme song implies) despite the fact that the pirates of this era lived a rather brutal life. Pirates of the Caribbean Whitewashes the history of pirates by representing them as a White archetype that is palatable to the Disney Company mythology. While the Disney Company would assert that they are unifying these cultures, they are uniting them under the singular banner of the Disney Company mythology where their original expression is filtered for a White audience. These are not pirates of the Caribbean, they are Disney Pirates.

I encourage scholars to research the dark side of myth and mythology and their deadly implications on marginalized groups. Not every mythology attempts to paint a group of people as

the Other, but many mythologies have explicitly Otherized or scapegoated certain groups for the sake of collecting power (Hitler, 1943; O'Shaughnessy, 2016; O'Shaughnessy, 2017; Shirer, 2011). While rhetorical analyses of the mythical dangers of Hitler and the Third Reich may be fairly extensive, we cannot neglect other existing mythologies that also attempt to galvanize its disciples through hateful "truths" about a vaguely defined Other. This thesis is more than just examining Disney and a theme park because I hope to use its findings to encourage future scholars not just to examine parks as a rhetorical text, but also to see the broader implications of mythology and its effects on its disciples.

Media Literacy: Understanding the Disney Company Mythology

I do not wish to bedevil those who enjoy Disney products or its theme parks because not only would I be a massive hypocrite, I would also be painting a rather bleak future for our agency of narratives and myths. I want to provide potential ways to understand the Disney Company mythology that can be conceptualized by a layperson. This section will briefly provide instructions of how to properly read the Disney Company mythology and how to properly navigate its expansion as it continues to acquire more media outlets. I encourage anyone reading this to see where the Disney Company has expanded itself as of now and use the patterns seen in that expansion as a predicting factor for future acquisitions. Moreover, I also think people should see what the Disney and 20th Century Fox acquisition encompasses and which properties they picked up in the process. The *Simpsons*, for instance, is now a part of the Disney Company mythology through their purchase of 20th Century Fox. If Disney is willing to spend billions of dollars to acquire outlets that possess adult animation, what would be the stopping point for the company? This is a question I encourage laypeople to ask themselves when consuming media because I want them to see through the mythical qualities of corporate consolidation.

Moreover, when a layperson traverses to Disney World (or the other Disney Parks), I encourage them to consider the parks' design and their implicit messages. For instance, how can Disney World be the "happiest place on Earth" when there are other Disney Parks? Is the Disney Company referring to this park exclusively or the idea it represents? Guests should pay attention to the details of the park and understand the meaning behind those designs. I am not encouraging people to reject the park. Instead, I am encouraging people to see through the Disney Company mythology and what it represents. The Disney Company mythology wants its disciples to not see the machination of the broader narrative and it is essential that people see the functioning of that system. The disciples need to see the Disney Company mythology as just that, a mythology. Mythologies represent overarching ideas and Disney's audience must not only understand those ideas, but also the bigger ideas they represent.

Conclusion

While scholars may encourage a limited definition of myth (Rowland, 1990), these findings showcase that the circumference of myth needs a slight expansion. The Disney Company mythology is more than just a story of a poor farmer boy from a small town obtaining success through the spontaneous creation of a cultural icon. Instead, it is a materialistic myth that perpetuates the notion that the individual can acquire success through their hard labor, regardless of context or social structures. While it may use flowery language and present itself as a story for children and the inner child, it is merely window dressing for the same materialistic myth of the American Dream meant to entice an American audience to believe this tale to be "true" to Disney and, in turn, to themselves.

After establishing the Disney Company mythology and how it became mythologized in the discourse, I dissected its three consistent themes (e.g., One Man's (Capitalist) Dream,

Imagination and Dreams, and The Family and the Inner Child/Child Fantasies) to use in the analysis chapter. I then selected exemplars throughout the Disney World Park (e.g., attractions, lands, and parks) that best reflected these distinct aspects and elaborated on their application. This showcased how Disney World functions as a ritualized place where the guests that visit the park conduct their own pilgrimage with the intent to maintain their identification with not just these aspects, but also the Disney Company mythology. Disney World itself may not be a mythology on its own, but it is part of the broader Disney narrative and it explicitly reflects it in a material form. Disney World becomes a place of worship for the Disney Company mythology. Conducting a pilgrimage to Disney World as a disciple of the Disney Company mythology is the religious equivalent of Jews venturing to Jerusalem and Catholics traversing to Santiago de Compostela.

While myths can encourage positive forces into the world, their consistent tendency to encourage blind faith can prove troublesome, especially in a capitalistic system. For instance, when disciples of the Disney Company mythology venture to the park, they are also attempting to relive their scattered childhood identities (at least the ones provided by the Disney Company). Purchasing a ticket to the park does not provide disciples access to everything within the property. If guests want to be like the pirates in Pirates of the Caribbean or be one of the Disney Princesses, they can, through the exchange of their capital. The relations of capital in Disney World feel less economic than the real world because the disciple is not purchasing a miscellaneous object, they are, instead, purchasing a piece of Disney's Dream to maintain their identity with the mythology (Marx & Engels, 1964). Finally, while Disney may not be attempting to conduct a genocide against any marginalized group, their use of mythology could reinforce "truths" that encourage its disciples to perceive certain groups in a problematic fashion.

Moreover, it can also influence a future political or corporate entity to copy Disney's (as well as the Third Reich's) mythical tactics to achieve harmful effects. Disney may want us to remember that "it all started with a mouse," but without His disciples to believe that tale to be "true," that myth would not exist.

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