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From the Globe to Globalisation: Shakespeare and Disney in the Postmodern World

David Schalkwyk

Summary

Both Disneyland and the New Globe Theatre in London, which purports to be a faithful copy of Shakespeare's Globe, are informed by specific concepts of historical authenticity, reconstruction and entertainment. Using the chance conjunction of the Globe Theatre and Disneyland Paris during the author's holiday in Europe, this article offers a comparative study, in terms of both theory and personal experience, of the nature of these two cultural institutions in a postmodern world.

Opsomming

Beide Disneyland en die "New Globe Theatre" in Londen (wat voorgee om 'n presiese kopie van Shakespeare se Globe Theatre te wees), is gebaseer op spesifieke konsepte van historiese egtheid, rekonstruksie en vermaak. Hierdie artikel gebruik die geleentheid van 'n toevalige sameloop van die Globe Theatre en Disneyland Paris, gedurende die skrywer se vakansie in Europa, om, in terme van persoonlike ervaring sowel as teorie, 'n vergelykende ontleding van die twee kulturele instellings in 'n postmoderne wêreld te gee.

> ... history will not be imitated. It has to be made ....
>
> (Umberto Eco 1987)

There can be few who have had the experience, as I have, of seeing a production of *Henry V* at the New Globe Theatre on London's South Bank on one evening, and riding Big Thunder Mountain at Disneyland outside Paris the next. This conjunction of Shakespeare and Disney was the fortuitous outcome of some tight planning for a family visit to Europe last summer. On a trip that was to span the great academic and cultural centres of London and Geneva, and include

the historical and gastronomic riches of Champagne and Burgundy, the adults had to give way to the children at least once and forego Paris for Disney. My wife and I felt, no doubt along with a number of other Disney-sceptics, that the association of London and Disneyland, or even worse, Shakespeare and Mickey Mouse, was not a conjunction but a disjunction, and we consoled ourselves with the thought that if we had to move from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the sacred to the profane, from culture to kitsch, our equilibrium would be restored by some cultural authenticity on the other side, as it were.

Only when I began to do some research on both Disney and the new Globe Theatre did it become apparent that these two institutions had been conjoined by more than our idiosyncratic itinerary. From the very beginning, when the project of reconstructing "Shakespeare's Theatre" on its original site beside the Thames was first mooted, and in the legal, political, and academic battles that followed, the New Globe and its champions were haunted by Disney. They were haunted by the spectre of trivialisation, of ersatz history, of commercialisation and pandering to gauche tourism, of the very idea of the "theme park": in short, by the horror of "Disneyfication".[1] Barry Day, the official chronicler of the New Globe, invokes this familiar time and again as he quotes Sam Wanamaker, the American-born actor who was the New Globe's "onlie begetter", when the latter reflects on the instinctive challenge to his dream from left-wing politicians: "They thought we were just a front ... that the Globe was spurious, a facade, something out of Disneyland" (1997: 139). Day's understandably partisan account invokes the spectre of Disney no fewer than twelve times (by my count); yet the organisation is omitted from his index, perhaps in an unconscious attempt to ignore the contamination by a specifically American popular culture of an English (or at least "universal") icon of civilisation and cultural value.

Professor Philip Brockbank, then Director of the Shakespeare Institute in Birmingham, England, negotiated this thorny issue in a planning document for an international academic conference held at Northwestern University, Illinois, in 1984, in which he dealt with the problematic conjunction of "Londoners and tourists", "purposeful and casual visitors" that would be drawn to the proposed theatre, by suggesting that the New Globe would, in the name of Shakespeare, "help the area [London's South Bank - then the third poorest local authority in England] to recover some of the importance as a centre of popular civilisation that it had been in Shakespeare's time" (Drakakis 1988: 29). The adroit but telling substitution of "civilisation" for "culture" subtly retains a sentimentalised and uncritical conception of Shakespeare as "universal man", while safely removing him from anything that could be considered "popular culture" in the Modern, or Postmodern, sense of the phrase. "Civilisation" is what Shakespeare is, and was, about: while indubitably appealing to tourists - the "casual" visitor

- "Shakespeare's Globe", as it proclaims itself on signposts, notices, programmes, and websites, signals its inherent difference from the throng of humanity that is so casually drawn to the attractions of Anaheim, or Orlando, Marne-la-Vallée or Tokyo.[2]

But is it that different? The very name - *Shakespeare's* Globe - should make us pause. A theatre, in the most material sense of the word, a play-house, which arose from, and flourished within, a set of peculiar historical, social, political, and aesthetic practices which included a wide range of disparate traditions, voices, actors, audiences, events, entrepreneurs and companies, has, under the sign of authenticity, been reduced to a single man's name. Just as the Magic Kingdoms, feature films, cartoons, merchandising industry, and Experimental Prototype Communities of Tomorrow (EPCOT) that have now long outlived the vision and intentions of their supposed "onlie begetter" continue to be represented by the "authentic" signature of the man who had to be taught by his animators how to sign his inimitable name: Walt Disney.[3] The fetish of the proper name, of the originating genius who stands above the petty community of enabling collaborators, lives as much in "Shakespeare's Globe" as it does in Disneyland. The decision to rebuild the first rather than the second Globe, about which much more is known, appears to have been taken on the grounds that a theatre built in 1614, long after Shakespeare's retirement, and a bare two years before his death, could hardly be called *his* theatre. As Day puts it:

> Why rebuild the *first* Globe about which so little was known? Why not the second which, presumably, had been built, after fire had destroyed the original, with all the knowledge accumulated during the period? Surely the second Globe was the definitive Globe - the Globe Shakespeare and his colleagues would have built, had they known in 1599 what they had learned by 1614.
>
> One very good reason would have been that - whatever else could be argued in its favour - by no stretch of the imagination could you call the second Globe *Shakespeare's* Globe.
>
> (Day 1996: 81)

This reason appears to have been decisive: overriding all other academic or practical reasons, even historically-based arguments by which not even the first Globe could reasonably be called "Shakespeare's" Globe. The result is, that as you step out of London Bridge or Waterloo tube stations (the theatre lies between them) the freshly painted signs do not direct you, through a maze of postmodern office blocks, apartments, hotels, and pubs, to the "New" Globe, or the "Reconstructed" Globe, or the "Best-conjecture-on-the-basis-of-current-historical-knowledge" Globe, but to "Shakespeare's" Globe. As if the great man had in fact been increasing his shareholding over the intervening four hundred

years up to the point of incorporating completely what was once a joint stockholding company through an astute accumulation of capital by his canny latter-day factors. This is, of course, exactly what has happened. This is not the place to investigate the curious ideological investment that has gone into Shakespeare's name in English, Colonial and American literary and cultural history. John Drakakis (1988) offers an acute analysis of the phenomenon as it pertains specifically to the rebuilding of the Globe.

I am interested here in the way in which the proponents of the New Globe project attempted to exorcise the name of Disney which clung persistently to their enterprise: by pursuing the letter and spirit - or the ghost - of "authenticity". "At every stage of the project", Day reminds us "the clarion call was - *Authenticity*" (1995: 98). If Disneyfication represented kitsch consumerism and inauthentic imitation then the Globe would distance itself by applying the most rigorous standards of historical authenticity, based on the foremost academic experts in the field: Stephen Orrell and Andrew Gurr. Such authenticity seemed required if for no other reason than to offset the American origins, and hence the perceived cultural contamination, of the instigator and driver of the whole project.

Sam Wanamaker was a left-wing actor of working-class origins from Chicago who had left the United States for London during the McCarthy witch-hunts, and who pursued his dream of rebuilding an Elizabethan-style theatre on or near the site of the original Globe with astonishing (and admirable) passion, tenacity, and personal sacrifice.[4] From the beginning, it appears, Wanamaker's origins in the United States of America aroused suspicion among English people opposed to his dream: when it was not supposed that he was a cultural upstart for even thinking of tampering with something so quintessentially English as the Bard, let alone trying to teach Englishmen something of their history and presuming to restore a major aspect of it, he was assumed to be in the pockets of greedy capitalist developers - with whom he had formed a partnership - who were eager to rob the poor working-class people of Southwark of their homes and their community for the sake of an ugly office building, a Shakespeare theme park, and a fast buck.

What is astonishing is the extent to which Wanamaker (now deceased, but not before he had seen the Globe nearing completion and had been made a Commander of the British Empire for his efforts) continues to be vilified by English scholars of Shakespeare whose cogent intellectual objections to the project are soured by the unashamed anti-American prejudice with which Wanamaker is written and talked about. In a lively, and often heated, debate on the SHAKSPER Electronic Bulletin Board, the Globe's detractors have often tarred it with the "American" brush, invoking Wanamaker's inauthenticity (as

a British citizen) and denigrating the theatre as a whole for being in essence the product of a naive and childish desire by people from across the Atlantic to create the kinds of "hyperreality", in the name of a deluded quest for historical "authenticity" (cf. Eco 1987; Baudrillard 1983). This is, of course, no less than the charge of Disneyfication. It is made, as the French intellectuals who decried the establishment of EuroDisney at roughly the same time did, in opposition to a kind of cultural imperialism which, if it is assumed to be the smiling face of globalised capitalism, is also attributed to a whole national psyche: to *all* the denizens of the land of hamburgers, shlocky soap operas, soundbite news, and Mickey Mouse.

Stephen Orrell, Andrew Gurr, and Philip Brockbank, all eminently British academics who wholeheartedly supported Wanamaker's "dream", would presumably claim, against Terence Hawkes and others, that the meticulously realised historical authenticity of the New Globe renders the comparison with both American popular culture and Disney in particular not only spurious but pernicious. The landmark discoveries not only of the foundations of the Rose Theatre but those of the first Globe itself during the period when political disputes and a lack of funds delayed the project, have now provided concrete evidence regarding dimensions, shape, materials and location which makes this reconstruction much more than the mere flights of fancy that marked attempts to rebuild the Globe in other parts of the world. Gurr and Orrell are honest enough to admit that the building remains "as `authentic' as the state of current academic knowledge can make it and current legislation will permit" (Day 1995: 89). Nevertheless, the pursuit of authenticity not only in design but also in the means of construction is impressive. Robert McCurdy, a "reborn master carpenter" who specialises in the restoration of Elizabethan timber-frame houses, was engaged as master builder of the theatre. As Day puts it, "McCurdy was not a man about to produce `his' version of an Elizabethan building, a modern interpretation prefabricated by modern methods. *His* Globe was to be the result of the continuation of the strict and careful traditional methods of his professional predecessors" (1995: 246-247).

The reconstruction of a theatre that disappeared almost four centuries ago, as close to its original site as is practicable, and following the best of archaeological and historical knowledge and the most meticulously applied traditional modes of construction, obviously reraises the questions mooted by Umberto Eco in his witty and perceptive account of the relationship between reality and fantasy, copy and simulacrum in "Travels in Hyperreality" (1987). Eco draws a distinction between the philosophy of museum display and historical reconstruction that is to be encountered in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California and the free indulgence in what he calls the "Absolute Fake" in the

Hearst Castle near Santa Barbara, the Madonna Inn on the slopes of Mount San Luis, and the Palace of the Living Arts in Los Angeles, among others. Whereas Hearst Castle, a grotesque "masterpiece of bricolage" (1987: 23), is "not an *unicum*, a *rara avis*" but "fits into the tourist landscape with perfect coherence, among the waxworks Last Supper and Disneyland" (p. 24), the Getty Museum "on the contrary, is the work of one man and his collaborators who tried in their way to reconstruct a credible and 'objective' past" (p. 34). To read of the museum building, which is in part a careful reconstruction of the Villa of the Papyruses in Herculaneum, as Eco describes it, is to be put in mind at once of the reconstructive philosophy behind the New Globe:

> We cross the villa of the Papyruses of Herculaneum, totally reconstructed, with its colonnades, the Pompeiian wall-paintings, intact and dazzling, the snowy marble, the statue-population of the garden where only plants that flourish along the bay of Naples are growing. We have crossed something that is more than the Villa of the Papyruses, because the Villa of the Papyruses is incomplete, still buried, the supposition of an ancient roman villa, whereas the Malibu one is all there. J. Paul Getty's archaeologists worked from drawings, models of other Roman villas, learned conjectures, and archaeological syllogisms, and they have constructed the building as it was or at least as it ought to have been. My guide is bewildered, because she knows that most notions of museography insist that the container should be modern and aseptic, and the number one model is Wright's Guggenheim Museum. She senses that the public, flung from the realer-than-real reconstruction to the authentic, could lose its bearings and consider the exterior real and the interior a great assemblage of modern copies.
>
> (Eco 1987: 32)

I have quoted Eco at length, because his account of the complexities of the relationship between the real, the authentic, the copy, and the reconstruction here, especially in terms of the disorienting *experience* of a visitor, matches my own sense of that other great reconstructed "exterior", Shakespeare's theatre. Eco goes on to say that the Getty Museum is probably much more "authentic" in its reconstructed buildings than in its treatment of the objects of art on display within them. The latter come to us within a web of expectations and accumulated conventions - "the chill incompleteness and the unnatural isolation of the 'correct' restoration", as Eco puts it (p. 34) - that would cause us to recoil in horror at a painted Greek statue, but which allows us to accept the (historically correct) polychrome marbles recreated for the Herculanean temple.

Eco's analysis gains its strength from its inclusion of the dimension of experience. A museum, however static, is thus like a theatre; to the reconstruc-

tors of the Globe, it was not to be a museum at all, but wholly a theatre: "As for the Globe - that would recreate the *experience* of the Elizabethan playhouse" (Day 1995: 201). As we begin to ponder the aim of re-creating not merely the building, the "exterior", but the original experience, the "interior" of the Globe, Eco's reflections become especially apt. The fact that the champions of the New Globe did not wish to see it as a mere museum - a hugely expensive model for the historian of the theatre - but as a living theatre, "the space", as its director, Mark Rylance remarks, "that Shakespeare wanted us to meet him in" (Rylance 1997), means that they were and are aware that the mere building, no matter how "authentic", is not enough. That "meeting" with Shakespeare, presumably impossible in any other space, must be assumed to be a product of the space and what happens in that space: the play itself. Now, as it happens, many of the productions that have been put on in the theatre have not even pretended to be historically authentic: in its opening season, for example, Shakespeare's Globe staged a revival of *Umabatha* - the "Zulu *Macbeth*" - *The Winter's Tale* in a set consisting of corrugated iron and barbed wire, and the "Womad Acoustic Concert", sponsored by Real World and Virgin Records. Of none of these productions could it be claimed that it needs the theatrical space of "Shakespeare's" theatre, and some positively clashed with it.

The production that I attended, however - the one with which the theatre opened - reveals through the Shakespeare Quarto title - *The Life of Henry the Fifth* - its commitment to the idea of authenticity. The programme proclaims that the play "was written in the spring or summer of 1599 when the Globe first opened" and that "the production will be played in recreated clothing and accompanied by music of the period. It features an all-male cast and will last for 3-3½ hours, depending on intervals" (Rylance 1997). Title, clothing, music, length of playing-time, and an all-male cast all pander to expectations of authenticity, modern convenience, not Elizabethan practice. To stand for over three hours without a break is perhaps too much to ask a modern audience to endure in their "meeting" with Shakespeare. In addition to these aspects of production, the conjunction of the dates of writing and of the construction of the first Globe must be regarded as a disingenuous signal of authenticity: it appeals to the long-held myth that *Henry V* was written for the opening of that theatre, a myth which Sam Wanamaker had himself found difficult to relinquish: "At one point he flatly refused to believe that *Henry V* hadn't been written for the Globe. After all, it contained the definitive speech and Larry [Lawrence Olivier] had set his *film* version in the Globe" (Day 1995: 200). That "definitive speech" ("Can this cockpit / Hold the vasty fields of France? Or may we cram / Within this wooden O the very casques / That did affright the air at Agincourt (Greenblatt et. al 1997: Prologue, ll: 11-14) adorns the back cover of the

programme, making it clear that in this instance, at least, Rylance and the Trustees of the Globe Theatre have succumbed to the pressures of the Absolute Fake, in terms of which fantasy is indubitably more real than reality itself.

If historical truth could be bent in the choice of the play because it appears to be more real than dull historical fact, the costume designer had made no such concessions. In an article wittily entitled "Standing Room Only at the Opening of Globe" in *The Times*, Alberge (1997) remarked that "the production took authenticity in earnest". Taking up the programme's declaration that "extensive research has gone into the clothes that will be worn for this production", it quotes Jenny Tiramini, the designer, who makes a similar statement in a programme note:

> No Calvin Klein underwear here, the actors are entirely dressed in recreated clothing of the period .... For us it is vital that the clothing is a faithful copy of the original rather than a superficial interpretation. We want the actors to wear realistic clothes in order to experience the effects these have on movement and behaviour and thus inform us about the reality of Elizabethan theatre.
>
> (Tiramini quoted by Alberge 1997)

Such realism extended to using only Elizabethan dyes, including, in the words of *The Times*, "onion skin extract treated with urine" (Alberge 1997). The language of scholarship is curiously mixed with the more popular, casual register of the tourist brochure, confirming the tension between academic research and a tourist resort under which the Globe Theatre exists.

Surely these can exist side-by-side, one is tempted to exclaim, and this was indeed contented by many of the proponents of reconstruction: what the Globe would achieve, precisely through its impeccable historical accuracy, would be the recovery of that communal, popular experience which marked Shakespeare's theatre all those years ago. The Globe Theatre therefore stands for the revival of a popular culture, or rather, as Philip Brockbank (Drakakis 1988: 29) put it, a "popular civilisation", thereby distancing the project carefully but firmly from the popular as it is expressed and exploited by the world of Disney.

Much can be said about the notion that the historical reconstruction of a single building, or even complex of buildings, will enact a "magic kingdom" in which all are conjoined in mutual worship of a single man's universal genius. For the moment I will confine myself to a single remark: the moment one concedes that as a "living theatre" the place will become a major tourist attraction, with all the things that accompany such things in the late-twentieth century - the museum shop and restaurant, the flying visit as part of a hasty itinerary, the turning of the past into something quaint and old-fashioned, the desire to experience "real" history in a predigested and easily consumable way,

as is testified by the places all over Britain which now invite visitors to enjoy the "Oxford", or the "Canterbury", or the "Viking" (York), or the "London Experience" - one has given in to a certain degree of Disneyfication. By seeking to re-create the original experience one runs the risk of losing hold of history entirely, just as Eco's guide is well aware of the danger of inverting the authentic and the copy through the miracle of historical reconstruction. Let me explain this paradox by recounting my own experience, one summer's evening in July, of "Shakespeare's" Globe.

The first thing to say about the Globe Theatre is that it is hard to find, certainly if you have not been there before, and have only a vague set of expectations based, say, on Wenceslaus Hollar's *Long View of London* (1644) or Claes Visscher's 1616 engraving. The problem is that one cannot simply set out along the river bank in the hope of stumbling upon the theatre. From London Bridge, the closest tube station, you are directed along a warren of backstreets and alleys, past modern red-brick office blocks and wharf developments, and then alongside Southwark Cathedral, which comes as a welcome signal that you are on the right track. At the Anchor pub you are at least on the bank of the river itself, and the relief is so great that you put your head down and walk, in the assumption that London's third largest, and certainly most distinctive, theatre will declare itself when you approach it. It therefore came as something of a shock to discover that I had walked right past it. It is tucked back from the riverside, dwarfed by a conglomerate of office blocks that surround and overlook it; certainly it does not tower over the area, signalling its presence and promise to the citizens across the river, as the original and its sister theatres would have done. As it is, it has been raised some two metres above the river bank, precisely in order to counter its change of scale in relation to its surroundings since Shakespeare used it (Day 1997: 133). I have indulged in this only apparently digressive preamble to make the point that, before a single line by Shakespeare is spoken, a gesture is made, or a pair of authentic nickers donned, it is impossible for a modern visitor to Shakespeare's Globe to see, to experience, the building as an Elizabethan would have. And when the former eminently theatrical things are done, authenticity becomes even more elusive.

Before we go into Shakespeare's Globe, let us cast an eye over the Inigo Jones, a low red-brick building to the right. This is the second theatre in the Globe complex, reconstructed from drawings by the great Jacobean architect and stage designer, Inigo Jones. But "reconstructed" is not the right word, for the Inigo Jones Theatre was never constructed in the first place. What we have today is a structure based on seventeenth-century drawings which never existed as historical entity or thing. The present building is therefore, truly, a simulacrum: a copy of an original that itself never existed. Baudrillard uses the concept

of the simulacrum to exemplify the especially postmodern condition by which reality is not imitated, but *replaced*, by the hyperreal (Baudrillard 1993). The anachronistically named Inigo Jones Theatre is, furthermore, not an exact, but an adapted, simulacrum. It has been enlarged because, as Day remarks, "the auditorium, as drawn by Jones, was just too small for modern use. To reconstruct it to the given dimensions would certainly result in a 'museum' theatre - a prospect totally alien to the concept of the whole project" (1996: 103). So, in order to make the simulacrum live in the modern, or postmodern, experience of authentic historicity, one has to render an inauthentic copy: one that seems more real than the real one could possibly be. I shall return to the notion of hyperreality and the simulacrum in the discussion of Disney. In the meantime, let us leave this latter-day embodiment of Inigo Jones's drawings, and turn to the building for which no plans exist: merely a couple of four-hundred-year-old sketches and engravings, and a tantalising slice of its foundations.[5]

You enter the Globe Theatre from a large, squarish wood-panelled foyer which doubles as a "museum shop", where you can buy articles that range from academic treatises on Shakespeare to such tourist bric-a-brac as Shakespeare pencils, Shakespeare Teddy Bears, and large pennies (costing one pound each), supposedly replicas of the coins that an Elizabethan audience would have dropped into a box to secure their place as one of the "groundlings", but much bigger and heavier, much more "real". As a latter-day groundling, I had paid five pounds for my standing place in the yard. A ramp leads down from the unprepossessing foyer into the Globe Theatre itself. Especially after my initial disappointment, nothing prepared me for the impact of the structure. The interior of the Globe is, on first impression, paradoxically both enormous and intimate. The structure towers over and around you, while the stage, with its two painted pillars holding up the polychrome "heavens", seemed larger than any stage I had ever seen, some eleven metres broad and thrusting into a yard that is only double that in width. Three encircling galleries rise up some thirteen metres around the yard and stage, providing space for an audience of one thousand five hundred (the original number would have been three thousand, but modern fire and safety regulations cut that by half). A gallery runs along the top of the stage, which is hung with hangings depicting Hercules on one side, and Atlas bearing the globe on the other. The latter contains a wry postcolonial - and post-Shakespearean - joke: the hangings were made in New Zealand, and on the globe that bears down on Atlas's shoulders the antipodes displace Europe as the centre of the world.

The interior of the Globe Theatre, with its unusual distribution of spaces - its fusion of size and intimacy - is immensely impressive. The wholly unexpected change in perspective from outside to inside is due to a phenomenon that Disney

has made central to the effect of its theme parks: for maximum effect, exclude or hide everything belonging to the "outside world". From outside the theatre is dwarfed by its postmodern surroundings; from inside they disappear entirely, and all you can see, as a tangible, imposing presence, is the great circular structure rising around and above you, with only the blue of the sky above that. The paradoxical sense of size combined with intimacy is apparently what strikes most people about the building, and perhaps accounts for the thrill of excitement that you feel as you enter it. "Some Facts and Figures", on the Globe Website at the University of Reading, records that although it is the third largest auditorium in London "everybody who has experienced the stage, whether actor, director, or playgoer, describes it as *intimate*" (http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/-Bulletin/Findings 96/Facts.html). The closeness with which the actor can approach the playgoer may be seen from my own experience. Leaning with my arms and chin resting on the stage when I felt that my legs would no longer support me without some aid, I found myself staring at a pair of flat leather shoes no more than a hand's reach from my eyes. They were the king's! He was intoning something above me, but my schoolboy attention was fixed on the loops of his leather laces, pleading to be unbound and then tied together. I am sorry that I lacked the courage to do it. It would have put the much vaunted idea of an active audience to the test: even if he had noticed me joining them, what would he have done? Stopped his speech to chastise me? Ignored me? Merely stooped and unbound his feet after he had finished his speech? And then there is the delicious thought that he might *not* have noticed, and as he took his first, decisive step towards Harfleur .... My moment of greatness in the "great Globe itself" has passed forever, I fear.

Another impressive aspect of the stage are the two imposing Corinthian pillars, painted to look like marble, which hold up the canopy, originally called the "heavens", on which are painted a golden sunburst, clouds, stars, and signs of the zodiac. The debate over whether to paint these structures with rather gaudy *tromp l'oeil* effects appears to have been haunted, once again, by the spectre of Disney. All evidence pointed to an Elizabethan propensity for "wild and vulgar" decoration; but would that not merely fuel the criticism that this was one more over-the-top theme park? As Day points out, the problem was once again that the quest for historical authenticity might alienate admittedly ill-informed, but no less powerful for that, preconceptions of what something that belonged to Shakespeare *should* look like: "Would the vivid decoration be a distraction for modern audiences? Or actors? Would it lend strength to the 'Disney' detractors?" (1996: 254). My own experience confirms that this continues to be a real problem. My ticket was bought for me by two Londoners, old friends of my father-in-law, who, as Oxbridge-educated and very serious

amateur historians, had taken an active, and supportive, interest in the reconstruction. They procured not only my "groundling" ticket, but also every other pamphlet, brochure, and piece of information on Shakespeare's Globe that they could lay their hands on. They had themselves been to the production the previous week but, as octogenarians, had foregone the novel pleasures of the yard for the relative comfort of gallery seats. I was sent off with my playgoer's package and a lecture based on their experience of the theatre. They approved of most aspects of the theatre and the production, but were appalled by the "totally anachronistic" and utterly kitsch pillars and *tromp l'oeil* balusters and rails. They could not understand what had possessed the designers. Surely they had had academics and historians to advise them ...?

In an essay on the "Elizabethan experiment" that he conducted at the University of Western Australia in the sixties and seventies, in order to "make possible practical research into the staging techniques of the Elizabethan public playhouse for which Shakespeare wrote", Philip Parsons admits that, despite his passionate commitment to re-creating the original conditions of production for Shakespeare - who "in our theaters is all too often a grotesquely diminished figure" - "you can't recreate an Elizabethan audience" (1996: 156, 163-164). From my friends' objections to the fact that the sound of passing aircraft and Thames traffic at the Globe Theatre are distracting and annoying and the "authentic" stage painting unbelievable, through the strange obsession with urine, onionskins and original underwear behind the scenes, to the alienating effects of having men "authentically" play the parts of women, the evidence points to the fact that while one might well produce a pretty authentic reconstruction in the spirit of a *museum*, a working theatre cannot produce anything like an authentic or original experience of either theatrical space or play. This is because behaviour, conventions, language - even objects - which would have been part of the unreflecting course of everyday life to an Elizabethan playgoer must inevitably invoke experiences of strangeness, alienation, even irritation and bewilderment, in a late-twentieth century audience. I have already mentioned the impression of the theatre, dwarfed by postmodern office blocks, and my friends' responses to the stage and the noise. In the production of the play itself, it is striking that no attempt is made to speak Shakespeare's language, rather than the less archaic or at least impenetrable one to which textual editors and modern, mostly English, actors have made us accustomed. Alongside this anachronism, having men in the women's parts is a pathetic and misguided attempt at authenticity. To a modern audience the latter offers an extremely disorienting experience, evoking twentieth-century notions of drag artistes rather than an authentically Elizabethan correspondence of actor and part.

These issues cannot be analysed from an empiricist perspective; they must be

examined phenomenologically, if the re-creation of *experience* is the primary purpose. The production of alienation has a powerful history in twentieth-century conceptions of the literary, and it may well be that the best way to do so is to return to the past. But such a return will not re-create a supposedly original experience; it will not allow us to "meet" Shakespeare properly again, as he would somehow have wished us to meet him. Bertold Brecht, one of the major proponents of alienation, and a deeply historicising reader and director of Shakespeare, nevertheless believed that to make Shakespeare speak to the modern world one has to, as Rodney Symington puts it, "reject the feudal elements ... as irrational, and no longer capable of being performed in the modern theatre without some critical attitude" (1970: 97). One of the most problematic aspects of the pursuit of authenticity is the belief instilled in the audience that they will, merely by entering Shakespeare's Kingdom, be magically transformed into Shakespeare's playgoers. One of the Globe websites invites one to "*become* a groundling" or an "Elizabethan gentleman" or a "great Lord", simply by occupying the (virtual) places from which such various strata of the society would have watched the play. In this Magic Kingdom, then, the audience is invited to believe, through claims about the authenticity of the building, the costumes, the decor, the sex of the actors, that they are *really* there. I enjoyed the freedom to move about, to chat with my fellow playgoers during the performance (though *not* to sit down: the yard was sprayed with water precisely to prevent this - in the interests of what kind of authenticity, I wonder). But I found their behaviour as an audience irritating, even offensive. Believing that to be a proper groundling one had to cheer whenever Henry came on and boo whenever the French made their appearance, they persisted in their cheerfully assumed jingoism throughout, stopping only when their flagging spirits forced them to swap the discomfort of a wet bottom for that of aching feet and calves. They went home, fully satisfied with this genuinely theme-park experience, as the Reading Globe Website testifies, but their response to the play was neither thoughtful nor properly authentic.[6]

This creation of a pseudo-Elizabethan audience returns us to Eco, and his central insight that hyperreality is the product, not merely of a second-rate and tawdry mocking up of the past, but an important acceptance that at least in a postmodern world "authenticity" lies not in the object itself but in the experience of the object. Since the sense of what is or is not authentic is as much a product of expectation as it is of faithful reproduction, hyperreality comes into being at this expanding point of intersection between the demand for the "real thing" and the set of expectations that determine what the "real" *must* be: "The American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake" (Eco 1986: 8). Proponents of authenticity at the Globe Theatre overlook

the phenomenological nature of the experience of authenticity or reality, despite their stated aim to re-create not a lifeless museum but the living experience of an Elizabethan playgoer. As a result every move towards genuine historical authenticity merely takes one a step further away from re-creating an authentic experience, in a never-ending pursuit of the wild goose of the absolutely historical. As my friends' response to the decoration of the stage attests; as the estranging "drag" performances of Catherine and the other "women" in *The Life of Henry the Fifth* show; as the silly impersonation of a mythical "Elizabethan" audience reveals; and as is demonstrated by the peculiarly late-twentieth century desire to use the theatre to reclaim a sense of community, the pursuit of the authentic can in most instances only give rise to the fake. It is a curious concept of authenticity that is obsessed with historical underwear and urine-based dyes, but which thinks nothing of meeting Shakespeare under the Heathrow flight path.

Let us now leave the Globe Theatre, and walk a half a mile or so along the river to Waterloo station, where the direct, nonstop express every morning "to France conveys you safe,/ And brings you back, charming the narrow seas/ To give you gentle pass" (Greenblatt et al. 1997: 2.0, 37-39). In fact it transports you, with the magic of high-speed rail and tunnel technology, directly to Marne-la-Vallée, the station that exclusively serves Disneyland Paris. There is nothing that appeals to travelling parents with small children so much as the promise of convenience, so when we learnt that there was not only a train dedicated to Disneyland, but that you could check your luggage in at Waterloo and it would be taken directly to your Disneyland hotel ("leaving you free to explore the exciting world of the Magic Kingdom from the moment you set foot in France") my wife and I felt almost reconciled to our children's choice of holiday pleasure. And a "gentle pass" it is too. Apart from the directness of the connection, and somewhat irritating Disney characters on the train who handed out silly "Mickey Mouse" packs which our eleven-year-old son was too embarrassed to accept, the passage itself was woven seamlessly into the destination. The thrill of an extremely fast train, an unfamiliar landscape whizzing by, and the dark excitement of passing under the English Channel was, as we saw with hindsight, a prelude to the rides that we were to take with such enthralled pleasure in the Magic Kingdom itself.[7]

My whimsical reference to the voyage to Disneyland in terms of Shakespeare's theatrical appeal to the powers of the imagination, or the imagination of power - "on your imaginary power work" (Greenblatt et. al 1997: Prologue 1.18) - is not wholly inappropriate, although some who believe that Shakespeare and Disney are not to be mentioned in the same breath might find it so. One of Disney's central claims concerns its capacity to engineer the imagination, and

it has developed a jargon in which every aspect of its parks is converted into the discourse of the theatre. The designers of the parks and their attractions are called "imagineers", employees are termed "cast members", public areas and restricted areas are respectively called "onstage" and "backstage", visitors are "audiences", uniforms are "costumes", interviewing for a job is known as an "audition", being hired "casting", and the headquarters in Florida the "casting centre" (Bryman 1995: 108).

To enter Disneyland, then, is to enter a vast, complexly controlled and rigidly scripted theatre. Everything, including the Disney hotels on the outskirts of the park itself, is rigorously "themed", with everything and everyone falling within a particular themed space forced to conform rigidly to the illusion created within and by that space. A cowboy serving drinks in "Frontierland" may not under any circumstances wander through "Fantasyland", for example, on his way to lunch or after his shift, because this would break the carefully prepared consistency of each themed area. Visitors, too, are channelled along a network of paths within the park in such a way that they cannot move at will from one area to another. There are carefully controlled points of access which allow you to cross the boundaries. This is fine if you are merely ambling through the park, allowing yourself to be conveyed wherever the paths take you, but it can be a frustrating business if you've agreed to meet someone in a different area. Even the hotels, especially in Disneyland Paris, are themed. We stayed at the cheapest, the Santa Fe, constructed to ape the adobe architecture and desert landscape (in the middle of the Ile-de-France!) of New Mexico. The hotel is signalled by an enormous drive-in cinema screen bearing the gigantic image of Clint Eastwood as he appeared in his early "spaghetti westerns". This returns us at once to the question of the authentic. The Disney company at first wanted the screen to be blank, but they were prevailed upon to fill it with an image that would speak to the average European of authentic America. They went along with Eastwood for obvious reasons, but in doing so stepped away from authenticity in two respects: Eastwood was not an authentic member of the Disney cast, and there is something strange - no, merely hyperreal - about using a figure from an Italian conception of the American West as its archetypal icon. I had visited New Mexico, including Santa Fe, the previous year, and am now struck, in hindsight, by how much more Disney-like the "real" city seems, with its ostentatiously uniform indigenous architecture (the most "genuine" of which, shown to me proudly by my hosts, had just been completed), its plethora of stores in the main square, where the local inhabitants would in a normal town do their weekly shopping and business, filled with "Indian" artefacts and "local" jewellery, "ethnic" restaurants and "historic" tourist hotels. This may be a case in which the outside world is following in Disney's footsteps, rather than vice

versa.

Your first impression of Disneyland is of a place that has painstakingly attempted to reproduce "authentic" detail to create a total illusion of the past, and this is indeed mentioned as a primary characteristic of the Disney philosophy (Hunt 1995: 17). The first vista that greets you in all the versions of the original Anaheim Disneyland is a reconstruction called Main Street USA. This consists of a spacious town square and street, lined with buildings purporting to be replicas of an original, generic, American "home town" at about the turn of the century. There has been a great deal of commentary on this invariable return to the past as the very passage by which you enter the Magic Kingdom. It ranges from speculation about the degree to which the street conforms to Disney's own home town, Marceline, through comments on its evocation of a false or "fabricated", essentially middle-class, nostalgia (Robertson 1990), to accounts of the way in which a forced perspective is created by making the top stories of all the buildings that line the street only three-quarters of normal size. Despite the range of shops and offices represented on the facade, once you penetrate this facade the whole of Main Street USA turns out to be a series of endlessly replicated stores and restaurants selling a relentlessly unvaried selection of Disney merchandise and food. Seen one, you've seen them all. Worse still, tasted one, you've tasted them all. It is striking how easy it is to penetrate this facade, how thin the illusion is, how little effort there is in hiding the world of pure, contemporary consumption that is spread out behind the nostalgic simulacrum. The receding "Main Street" with its cleverly constructed forced perspective focuses on the most striking simulacrum in the park, an invariable centrepiece of all versions of the Magic Kingdom: the fairytale castle from whose hub the other spaces radiate. Again, through the clever control of perspective, the castle appears to be much larger than it actually is: "They are so designed and so placed that they seem to loom over the landscape as they would if they were actually the homes to kings and queens, princes and princesses" (Dunlop 1996: 14).

The Disney castles, which are both symbolic and physical centrepieces of the theme parks and the ubiquitous image of Disney itself, are a good place to start in a discussion of the Magic Kingdom's relation to authenticity. Sleeping Beauty's castle in Disneyland has its origin in the Disney film of the same name, but the animators who drew the castle for the film took their ideas from real castles in Europe, notably the Chateau of Ussé in the Loire Valley in France. For both the Magic Kingdom in Florida and Disneyland Tokyo, a different design, Cinderella's Castle, made up of a more elaborate, gothic pastiche of Bavarian and French castles, was used. Disneyland Paris, however, presented a special problem. As Tony Baxter, one of the designers, puts it:

> Disneyland used Neuschwanstein, and Florida was an amalgam of many French castles. We needed to go to the realm of fairy tales and not tread on anybody's sense of integrity: I didn't want to do Gothic columns [in the land in which they were invented!]. I didn't want to do in Fibreglas what you could go into the city [Paris] and see. So we created twisted tree forms that kind of grow out of rock as our columns. There's no way you're going to confuse that with the real thing. Likewise, having a fire-breathing dragon in the basement is not the sort of thing you're going to encounter at Chenonceaux.
>
> (Baxter quoted by Dunlop 1996: 103-104)

No indeed. What is curious about this statement is the idea that anyone visiting Disneyland Paris might confuse anything in it with "the real thing". More understandable is the designer's reluctance merely to re-create, in the name of fantasy, copies of buildings which exist as tangible monuments of history within a stone's throw of the park. One could do this in the USA, where both the European fairy tales upon which Disney modelled many of its own narratives and their exotic architecture were remote signifiers of the archaic and the exotic, indeed of fantasy itself: symbols of a world removed from the real world which each Disney park resolutely attempts to keep beyond its boundaries. Yet the American theme parks have mock-ups of New Orleans and supposed reproductions of abandoned Arizonan mines. Eco (who travelled from the real New Orleans to the fake one in a single day) suggests that this is acceptable in the United States because of the vast distances that separate the real models from the copies. In Europe the originals are geographically that much closer, and so are more resistant to mimesis. And yet, as you walk around Disneyland, with its fibreglass castles and reduced-scale folk European architecture, its pirate ships and mock Moroccan bazaars, its meticulous reproduction of Captain Nemo's Nautilus, Robinson Crusoe's stockade and the Swiss family Robinson Tree House, it becomes apparent that, ultimately, Disney need be authentic only to itself. In the much trumpeted attention to authentic detail, to the "real", no distinction is ever drawn between that which really existed and that which is the creation of a merely possible, fictional world. The realism of the Nautilus (which is very impressive, if somewhat dull) is of exactly the same kind as that of a nineteenth-century American mining camp, with its display of actual tools, warning notices, and bits of rusting machinery through which you wind your way in your forty-minute wait for a ride on Big Thunder Mountain. When Disney declared that "imagination is the model from which reality is created" (Dunlop 1996: 14), I suspect that he was playing on the radical instability of the word "reality", by which it is not at all absurd to praise as equally *real* a re-creation of a world created by Jules Verne, a reconstruction of the theatre in which Shakespeare worked, and the palace of Louis XIV at Versailles. Through

a historical and material process by which Disney has always-already filtered European fairy tales, E.E. Milne's stories, American frontier myths, and even the futuristic fantasies of other film makers, through its own set of images, simulacra, and narratives, everything in Disneyland is a self-referential reflection of a product always-already previously appropriated by the company. The visitor knows this well enough, and is enchanted by it. What is more telling is Disney's obsessively litigious protection of its copyright over absolutely everything it has touched. More of that later.

For the moment we need to reflect on the peculiar and intense pleasure that Disneyland has to offer. While there have been cultural studies of Disney recently, few deal directly with the problem (or the joy) of the pleasure to be had within the boundaries of the Magic Kingdom. In a morbidly serious string of analyses which focus (quite appropriately) on the passivity of the entertainment on offer, the debilitating interpellation by Disney of its subjects as abject consumers of late capitalism, and the deeply dystopian qualities of the Disney conception of Utopia that have come out of academia, it is hard to see what joy millions of visitors could possibly have gained from the parks. Susan Willis tackles the issue from the start in her opening essay for The Disney Project, but her introduction, entitled "The Problem of Pleasure", skirts lived experience by falling into a mode of analysis which either dismisses the pleasure people *think* they had at Disneyland as a form of false consciousness, or supplants it with an alternative form of dissociated enjoyment to be gained by observing the ways in which other, less enlightened, guests misrecognise their boredom, irritation, or fatigue as enjoyment: "People watching is an active means for coping with boredom, fatigue, stress, and duress associated with mass culture" (Klugman et al. 1995: 10).

It should be clear by now that the adults in our little family party of four would have far preferred to have savoured the cultured pleasures of Paris, Champagne and Burgundy to the infra-dig schlock at Disneyland. My wife and I had even decided not to breathe a word to friends and colleagues about our stopover in Disneyland, but merely to allow the kids a bit of (frowned-upon) fun, and then pass on, pretending that it had never happened.

I am sorry to say that we were seduced by the place, and I was not surprised to learn subsequently that the ratio of adult to child visitors to the parks is an astonishing four to one: in favour of adults (Bryman 1995). This is not to say that much of the callowness of the place, the tawdriness of the consumable goods, the silliness of the characters, the inanity of the stories, the childishness of the appeal, and the shameless political incorrectness of the ideology was not immediately and everywhere apparent. There is material for another umpteen Routledge cultural materialist studies everywhere you turn. Most offensive,

perhaps, is "It's a small world", a ride which takes you through polystyrene puppets grouped to represent, in the most revoltingly unselfconscious stereotypes, different cultures and countries from around the globe, and which culminates in Hollywood as the pinnacle of global(ised) achievement. Perhaps it's all too accurate. I refuse to believe, however, that visitors to the Magic Kingdom are the mere passive automatons that they are made out to be, even by academics who insist that they are not going to treat them as automatons. Of all the academic analyses I've read (and I must admit that I have not covered them all) Umberto Eco is the only one who is honest enough not only to admit the pleasure to be had in the Kingdom, but to try to convey it in his description of some of the rides. They happen to coincide with the ones that we, as a family, found the most fun, and to which we, blissfully and indulgently, returned up to half-a-dozen times in the course of our two-day visit to the park.

I should say at once that, along with all other academic commentators, we found Tomorrowland (Discoveryland), a themed section devoted to space travel and technology, the least satisfying aspects of the park. Admittedly Space Mountain, the terrifying and exciting major adventure ride in this section, always had queues for which none of us found reserves of patience (we declined to stand in lines that would take more than fifty minutes). We also adopted a family resolution that none of us would take a ride from which the youngest member was excluded (Disney demarcates such rides by excluding anyone who does not measure up to a certain height), and Space Mountain would have excluded James for being vertically challenged. This arbitrary imposition was the only thing, barring the food, about which he complained: he could see no reason why they could not design scary and exciting rides that would safely accommodate everyone: they seemed to be able to do so many other wonderful things. The other attractions at Discoveryland - a ride on a flight simulator which reproduced a crazy trip in one of the Star Wars fighters piloted by CP30, a 3D movie starring Michael Jackson as Captain EO who saves the world by transforming an evil cyborg-like alien queen (Angelica Houston) and her vile cohorts into the epitome of peace and ecological correctness through his songs, and a 360-degree film in which H.G. Wells meets Jules Verne (played, respectively, by Jeremy Irons and Gérard Depardieu) at the 1900 Paris exposition for a conducted tour in twentieth-century travel - seemed curiously flat. They lacked the visceral excitement of Big Thunder Mountain or the witty mimesis of the Audio-Animatronics figures of The Pirates of the Caribbean, by far our two favourite rides.

Before I discuss those, a word is necessary about Michael Jackson, whose characteristic androgyny has been seen by some commentators as the only disruptive ideological effect in all the parks. Jane Kuenz comments that

> although it is difficult to call him subversive, Jackson does stick out in Disney World [he also makes his appearances in Disneyland Paris], to say the least, as the locus of gender and sexual difference that hasn't yet been completely co-opted in the way certain gay cultural practices have been.
>
> (Klugman et al. 1995: 73)

This remark is made against the background of Disney's general eschewal of all forms of sexuality, and its resolute commitment to an ideologically imposed image of the white, middle-class, (but desexualised) heterosexual family as both its archetypal image and its target audience. Paradoxically, it appears, Disney staff, though selected and controlled in ways that would have impressed Stalin, are by all accounts predominantly gay, at least at Disney World in Florida, and there they constitute a major subculture of difference in the city of Orlando (Klugman et al. 1995: 153). Michael Jackson certainly embodies the semiotic and cultural signifiers of difference as Captain EO, and yet the 3-D medium detracts from this significance by drawing far too much attention to itself as technological magic.

Disneyland Paris, perhaps fortunately, has no EPCOT centre, as Disney World has. It is a leaner, more "authentic", model of the original Disneyland at Anaheim, California. Most cultural commentators on the theme parks tend to get stuck on EPCOT, itself a separate theme park in Orlando, and for which a special entry ticket has to be bought. EPCOT was the dying Walt Disney's dream, a vision by which he thought he might not simply entertain the world but change it in his own image. It was to be a working city, a real community, which embodied all his most cherished values:

> It will be a planned, controlled community, a showcase for American industry and research, schools, cultural and educational opportunities. In EPCOT there will be no slum areas because we won't let them develop; there will be no land-owners and therefore no voting control. People will rent houses instead of buying them, at modest rentals. There will be no retirees, because everyone must be employed. One of our requirements is that people who live at EPCOT must keep it alive.
>
> (Disney quoted by Bryman 1995: 14)

What is striking about this is its oxymoronic combination of Orwellian control with a folksy communitarian idealism: Disney as benevolent Big Brother, who outlaws slums, saves older people from social decrepitude, and protects the little person from exploitative landowners in the name of its own, despotic, total ownership of everything. Disney's litigiousness, especially when it comes to protecting its own intellectual property, is well known; so is its refusal to

countenance any form of unionisation, its stinginess, and its desire for total and unfettered control over every aspect of its parks, perhaps best illustrated by its remarkable deal with local authorities in Florida in terms of which it is exempt from local government regulations and taxes (Bryman 1995; Klugman et al. 1995; Smoodin 1994).

The penchant for control is evident in the parks themselves, where it soon becomes clear that Mickey Mouse and Pluto are, under plastic smile and cardboard whimsy, very effective vehicles of institutional discipline. Step out of line and a grinning Minnie Mouse will quickly and effectively put you back in your place. The whole environment, with its crowds of people attempting to get onto their favourite rides, and all being marshalled helpfully but firmly through a bewildering but extremely effective system of corrals, is an exemplary, and at times disturbing, demonstration of the philosophy and practice of crowd control. It is partly this philosophy that led to problems with both workers and visitors in Marne-la-Vallée. More than once we saw European workers (or "cast members") allowing the mask of inane politeness and cheerfulness to slip and Gaulish irritation to flash momentarily, although it must be added that the "cast" is recruited from all over Europe and United States. In France, too, Disney was forced to relax its total ban on alcohol within the parks. But it does so in shamelessly classist terms: you can get only wine and beer, and then only in the most expensive restaurants within the precincts of the park, at which a three-course meal might cost two or three times the price of an entry ticket, and would therefore be more expensive than good restaurants down the road in Paris, where competition is permitted. But outside Paris the local visitors cheerfully ignore Disney's ban on any food and drink being taken into the park. We choked on greasy chicken, dry pizza, and pathetic hamburgers while wiser locals spread out their picnics of baguette, cheese and pâté and, who knows, gulped down quantities of contraband *vin de pays*.

But I was writing of pleasure, something cultural critics tend either to ignore completely, or explain away via the now threadbare platitudes of ideological critique. EPCOT attracts most of the cultural analysis because, by all accounts it is a pretty dreadful place: not an imagined, utopian society in which a nostalgic sense of community is recovered and enforced, as Walt Disney had wished, but a tawdry combination of World Fair exhibits and tedious rides (sponsored by corporations such as AT&T, Kraft, General Motors, and IBM) which shamelessly preach a consumerist message in which visitors are told to leave the future in the capable hands of globalising capital. All accounts of Disney's attempts to deal with the past and the future point to the utter incapacity of the imagineers to deal with the latter in any properly innovative or imaginative way, and this was certainly borne out by our own, somewhat

deflated experience in the Dicoveryland section of Disneyland Paris, which promises exciting rides into the future on not quite as grand a scale as EPCOT in Florida, but which on the whole disappoints. Perhaps Disney is incapable of dealing with either the future or the present in any really imaginative way because its own profitability depends upon its exploitative hold on both: to tax the imagination in these two areas would be to expose its own consumerist fantasy.

The same is not true of adventures such as Big Thunder Mountain or the Pirates of the Caribbean, however, which appeal to a combined sense of wonder at a kind of mimesis which knows itself as such, and an inimitable visceral energy. The former is one of the most popular of all Magic Kingdom rides, and it is not difficult to see why. It stands out as an imposing reconstruction of a generic mountain in Arizona or Utah in the depths of which is hidden an old mine. In the fifty-minute or so queue to the ride itself you wind back and forth through a realistic reconstruction of the mine buildings, of which the guidebook writes: "[I]f parts of Frontierland look surprisingly authentic, that is because they are. Disney imagineers collected real antiques from many states in the US, and transported them here for special effect" (Hunt 1993: 41). Once on the patently adventure-park train (no pretence at authenticity here) you are taken on a roller-coaster ride through the "mine-workings", the scenario being that you are on a runaway train which plunges down the mountain, along caverns hung with stalactites and bats with glowing eyes, and past abandoned relics of past prospecting. After an initial ascent through a forest and mining camp the train lunges round and, at terrifying speed, dives into a dark tunnel. There is a sudden, unexpected explosion, the walls and roof cave in towards you, revealing tantalising flashes of gold veins, but not before you emerge into daylight at the summit of the mountain. For a brief moment all of Frontierland lies before you, a geyser spouts on the left, the Phantom Manor and Mississippi river-boat lie far down on the right, and then the train takes a final, even more gut-wrenching plunge, down to the river. As you cross the bridge it appears to collapse; the train lurches through a burst of water, and after a gentle corner you are back where you began, shaken, exhilarated, and bursting for more. Unlike the attenuated, claustrophobic, electronic simulation of the Star Wars ride, Big Thunder Mountain is exhilaratingly corporeal. You feel your body and its tensions, the grip of knuckles on the bar, the wind in your face, the primeval urge at once to scream and fling your arms in the air, the thrill of fear both real and imagined. Our sons, at eight and eleven assured us that it was "cool"; approaching middle age my wife and I found its defamiliarising physicality wonderfully alive. In Disneyland one is able to experience both the hyperreal illusions of virtual rides and the corporeal thrill of real ones; at no point were we

ever in danger of substituting the one for the other, or even in doubt about which offered the greater degree of pleasure.[8]

"Pirates of the Caribbean" is a very different kind of adventure, if that is the right word for it. You enter via the gate of everybody's idea of a Spanish fort: this one flies the Jolly Roger. From there the line snakes down through grottoes and tunnels decorated with skeletons, cutlasses, and such-like story-book pirate paraphernalia, to a large corralled cavern where the ride, in low-slung pontoons, sets off along a predetermined watercourse. Around the first bend a startlingly realistic lagoon lit by a large full moon appears, and it takes some effort to see that the starlit sky above is really a painted fibreglass dome. At first you are not quite sure what to make of the shadowy figures sitting at candlelit tables along the edge of the lagoon, but it soon becomes apparent that these are not pirates enjoying an uncharacteristic romantic evening but diners at (where else?) the Blue Lagoon Restaurant, one of the four upmarket eateries where wine and beer are served, and for whom the beginning of the Pirates ride is a permanent, themed, stage-set. As the boats pull softly forward, with that characteristic Disney motion in which the source of propulsion is concealed, hidden displays appear: a treasure chest from which an octopus peeps malignly, a comical jail scene in which the three prisoners hold out a bone to a dog holding a key in its mouth, and all the while the distant sounds of a rousing pirate song come closer. Just past the rising moon the boats tilt up along an inclined ramp, the song grows louder, punctuated by shouts and the crack of muskets and cannon. Far below lies a pirate ship, exchanging fire with the fort across the way, a Captain Hook figure urging his fellows onwards with pistol and cutlass. The boats slide down towards the ship, and as they drift under the prow there is a roar of cannon from the fort and huge spouts of spray rise alongside and astern, showering the visitors with water. Now you move into a narrow stretch into the middle of a full-scale battle. Screams, shouts, gunfire surround you while pirates, daggers between their teeth, swing across the boats on ropes, and on the wall of the fort beside you you see, by the movement of their shadows, a platoon of soldiers loading, taking aim, firing. In a typical moment of Disney whimsy, a cat, in an arc of terror, is whirled round and round on a floating crate. Another corner brings a new set of sounds: the drunken singing - "Oh, Ho, Ho, Ho, a pirate's life for me" - gets louder, accompanied now by a strange crackling noise. The scene before you is the sacking of a town: pirates are everywhere, engaging in age-old scenes of sacking, looting, rape and pillage: red-faced, drunk, loud and uncouth they sing, clutch at their jewels and doubloons, fire at the visitors with their pistols, while all around you the town crackles and dances in red and yellow flames. On the inside walls of a villa, again in shadow, a swashbuckling swordfight, full of the agility and derring-do of any Douglas

Fairbanks movie, moves up the stairs and into a room, via a swinging chandelier.

The scene collapses in one final conflagration before the boats plunge into a darker, eerie passage of caverns and caves. The skeleton of a pirate captain lies on an ancient, ornate double-bed while beside it an old upright piano plays, its keys moving to some invisible touch in a ghostly parody of the pirate song; in a graveyard to the left two pirate skeletons drink from a bottle, the rum pouring endlessly through their ribcages. To the right a cavern reveals itself, piled with a schoolboy's dreams of treasure: a mountainous cascade of gold coins, rubies, jewel-encrusted goblets and plates, topped by another obligatory skeleton: an eerie sentry brandishing his cutlass in comic rigor. A few more gentle, watery bumps and you emerge in the sunlight, where "cast members" in pirate suits help you out on one side as others embark awaiting visitors with polite firmness and spontaneous banter on the other. These human impersonations appear smaller, shrunken, lifeless in comparison with the display of Disney robotics that you have just witnessed, for every figure in the caverns behind you is an "Audio-Animatronic" robot, precisely programmed to move, speak, laugh, shout and sing in active mimicry.

Umberto Eco, clearly as captivated as we were by this outlandish scene, describes the experience very well:

> Everything you have seen was on human scale, the vault of the caves became confused with that of the sky, the boundary of this underground world was that of the universe and it was impossible to glimpse its limits. The pirates danced, moved, slept, popped their eyes, sniggered, drank - really. You realize that they are robots, but you remain dumbfounded by their verisimilitude.
>
> (Eco 1987: 45)

With this display, he goes on to suggest, Walt Disney has finally managed to "reconstruct a fantasy world more real than reality, breaking down the wall of the second dimension, creating not a movie, which is illusion, but total theater" (p. 45). With words and phrases like "reality", "more real", "illusion", "verisimilitude", "fantasy", and "total theater" we are in very deep water indeed. Eco is suggesting that theatre touches reality in ways that film cannot. The pirate figures in the caverns are certainly real in one sense: they are objectively there, constructed, solid, material, not the trick of some light playing across a screen. They appear human, but they are palpably not really human. Their inhumanity has been put forward by some functionalist analyses as the real reason that Disney uses them rather than real actors: they function tirelessly, repeating the same script without variation or mistake, and as workers they ask for no pay increases or coffee breaks, and join no unions (Bryman 1995: 119-

120). According to this line of argument, an ideal Disney park would be one in which every worker is an Audio-Animatronics robot. But whatever dubious political motive there might be for such a fantasy, it misses their actual aesthetic function.

Eco's suggestion that only the palpable image is real - indeed more real than reality itself - might be countered by the argument that the figures are in fact totally fictional - they are the simulacra of a childish idea of a pirate that never existed historically - whereas film is supposed, archetypally, to reproduce the real. But the ontology has yet to be discovered, or invented, which could distinguish with exact rigour the reality of documentary film and historical pirates from the merely fictional movie and simulacra-like characters in Pirates of the Caribbean. Indeed, Eco's own distinction is dubious. It is not that the Pirates of the Caribbean suddenly confront us with a fictional world that displaces or replaces our sense of what the real world is or contains. The real world contains objects like the pirates: in the sense they are as material as it is. Indeed, it contains *them*. But in remarking on how attenuated *as pirates* the human attendants at the end of the ride appeared, I wish to suggest that a great deal of the pleasure that one takes in the ride is derived from the knowledge that, while the figures are real in the sense that they are touchable, material things, they are constructed not out of reality but out of verisimilitude: they say over and over again, in every remarkable gesture and sound: "I am like the real, as close to the real as one can get; am I not wonderful?" But they also say: "I am not the real; if I were, you would not feel so much wonder, you would not enjoy this so much." Clearly, if the Pirates of the Caribbean were made up of human actors it would not be as enchanting a place, and this would not be because of a human weakness for coffee breaks, or pay rises, or an aversion to mechanically repetitive gestures. It would merely be theatre; not, as Eco puts it, *total* theatre, the purpose of which is to evoke wonder and pleasure at mimesis itself: at the very process and cunning and seductiveness of imitation which has to employ a double gesture by which it knows itself as imitation, and because of that, is even more engaging than the thing that is supposedly imitated. This is how, I think, Eco's perhaps misleading claim that the Pirates become more real than reality should be read: it is not as if our sense of the mundane (if that is a better word) is replaced by an illusion, but rather that the two engage in a dialectic, in the Greek sense, of a conversation. I suspect that the painted pillars and balusters at the Globe perform just such an act of mimesis, and those stuffy realists who find them inauthentic have a Platonic aversion to this double dance of mimesis and reality, in which, as Aristotle (1911) and Philip Sidney (in Duncan-Jones 1989) maintain, the former is always both imitative and productive. Such realists would loathe the Pirates of the Caribbean. They would,

in fact, not be seen dead in the place.

There is another, political, dimension to Pirates of the Caribbean that has surfaced in general, public discussion only recently, and has in fact forced Disney to change certain aspects of his buccaneer exhibitionists. In a column called "Off the Record", District Attorney General, Clayburn L. Peeples remarks that "the gender police have declared [the suggestions of rape] at the popular Disneyland attraction to be too politically sensitive, so the Walt Disney Company has responded by closing down the ride for two months so they can rehabilitate the lustful, besotted women chasing mechanical pirates who roam the cavernous ride and replace them with more gender sensitive, animatronic buccaneers .... The lascivious swashbucklers' animatronic urges to chase the young wench people in the tavern are to be sublimated by Disney engineers into simple gluttony" ("Taking the Passion out of Piracy" http://www.da28.com/-columns/taking.htm). As interesting as Disney's bowing to the pressure of political correctness is Peeples's description of what exactly it is that is now considered unacceptable about the Pirates. The Pirates was, apparently, the last exhibition that Walt worked on personally, and it is therefore surprising that the man who insisted that his parks should offer squeaky-clean American family entertainment should have allowed an exhibition in which both sex and violence are conjoined in such a clear, though obviously not graphic, way. As Peeples puts it, it is not only the "old mechanical pirates who chased the caricaturishly buxom young women around and around the tavern table trying to steal a kiss" that are gone forever, but also the depictions of women as lustful, even violent, creatures. The depiction of Pirates, even as simulacra, raises the problem of authenticity again, as we ask ourselves how one depicts a pirate authentically: in real life pirates were, and still are, horrible people, they perpetrated unspeakable cruelty in terms of a code that is morally utterly repugnant. They are hardly the role models for small children. And yet small children love them. Can the gender stereotypes and the submerged but not effaced suggestions of sadistic sexuality really be sublimated into mere cupidity and gluttony, as it appears Disney is now doing, without destroying something that - horribly perhaps - marks the very idea of a pirate, of the fantasy of a pirate? It is clear that the aesthetic wonder at mimesis, in terms of which I have analysed the adventure, cannot remain uncontaminated by very pressing political and cultural concerns: concerns about the darker side of fantasy, in which cruelty, violence, rape, torture are not hidden beneath the surface, but make up the play of surface itself. In other words, can the very idea of a pirate ever be cleaned up and sanitised, rendered blandly palatable for consumption in the name of another fantasy: wholesome family values? If not, what exactly is it doing in the "happiest place on earth" (Walt Disney's description of Disneyland)?

Two final issues arise out of this discussion. The one is the question of repetition, the other, of consumerism. I shall deal with the former first, which presents something of a paradoxical take on the latter. You cannot be in the Magic Kingdom long before you discover that everything is endlessly repeatable: barring such obvious constraints as the length of the lines and the duration of your Disneyland pass. Once inside the park, everything can be enjoyed as many times as you like without costing you any more, with the exception of the food and drink. Disney guidebooks are filled with injunctions and tips on how to make full use of the park: on how not to waste your time, on when to plan for off-peak periods on certain rides, even advising you that since most people tend to go automatically to the right rather than the left of two lines you should always bear left (this becomes counterproductive in a crowd where everyone is reading the same guidebook.) The consumerist notion that time means money is everywhere apparent, and the driving impulse is that, since you paid an arm and a leg to get in, you're going to get the surviving limbs into everything else to get your money's worth. It's a bit like deliberately making yourself sick at an eat-as-much-as-you-like buffet, and it is clear from the expressions and body language of many visitors in the park that they have done just that. The repeatability of the rides and experiences could thus be seen as just one more bit of evidence for the endlessly repeated critique of Disneyland's grotesquely rampant consumerism. There is much truth in the critique, but the repeatability opens up an area of pleasure in which few adults, and not many children past school-going age, can indulge in in the humdrum world beyond the parks.

The impulse to shop, to consume, may be the most repeatable experience we know in a globalised world, and in this case the pleasure of repetition has clearly been appropriated by an inescapable capitalist hegemony. It is perhaps ironical, then, that once you have abandoned the need to cram everything into your allotted time, Disney allows an unimaginable scope for doing something again and again, and again if you like, just because you feel like it. Despite the many telling critiques which point out that Disneyland offers no true carnival, the lack of the usual restraints of time, money, and duty, including the embarrassment in indulging in such childish behaviour, allow you to experience rides like Big Thunder Mountain and Pirates of the Caribbean in such a way that repetition becomes a pleasure in itself. Once we had decided which our favourite rides and experiences were, we abandoned the other attractions and indulged freely in them, five, six, seven times each. The initial terror of Big Thunder Mountain is subtly transmuted to mere excitement, and each time you repeat the ride, precisely because you have done it before, it brings a different set of sensations, a transformed sense of your body and emotions, so that by the time we took our final trip close to closing time at the end of the first day, the cool night air and

the darkness broken only by the lights of the other attractions, was pleasantly soothing rather than terrifying. In this form repetition was a liberating rather than a restricting experience, an all-too-seldom freedom from the constricting unicity of adult life.

Most academic work on Disney that I have read since visiting Disneyland Paris emphasises the enforced passivity of the experience, a passivity which is exemplified by Disney's globalising goal of turning everyone into the abject subjects of consumer fetishism (Bryman 1996; Klugman et al.; Marin 1984; Smoodin 1994). Susan Willis points out, following the Frankfurt School, that the kind of "amusement" offered is a "commodified negation of play" (Klugman et. al 1995: 185), and that "there is no possibility of anticonsumption at Disney World" because "all visitors are, by definition, consumers, their status conferred by the price of admission" (p. 191). True enough, but this could be said of almost anyone with disposable income in a postindustrialist economy. That Disney exemplifies this condition more than any other, is also probably true. But the pleasure to be got from the place, and the possibilities of resistance to its relentlessly capitalist culture, are both less compromised and more available than she allows for. Pleasure may have its problems, namely, a deep and unnoticed complicity with a hateful ideological system, as she points out, but its claims have nevertheless to be taken seriously.

I have already mentioned how the space for repetition may either intensify the consumer fetishism that Willis decries or offer modes of experience that are actually unavailable in the commodified culture beyond the Magic Kingdom. The pleasure of mimesis that marks the Pirates of the Caribbean, ostensibly a mere continuation of the themed consumable goods on display just beyond every ride or attraction, may in fact offer a subtle critique of such displays. The brilliance of the Pirates' own performance is such that the cheap plastic cutlasses and hooks, silly pistols and rattly blunderbusses that greeted us on the other side held no attraction at all. Our eight-year old son, an inveterate captive of commodity fetishism if ever there was one, passed over these tawdry goods after subjecting them to a practiced, critical inspection. He finally spent some of his pocket money on a Goofy cap, with ridiculous, floppy ears, that produced roars of delighted laughter from the students when he wore it to lunch in the Students' Union at the University of Geneva - an unexpected carnivalesque moment transposed from distant Disneyland. The rest of his money was bestowed on the energetic and meticulous Swiss, in the form of a Swiss Army pocketknife and a little hut with a woman in summer dress and a man bearing an umbrella that is now our main forecaster of rain or sunshine. Perhaps Disney's consumers, even the little ones, are more resistant, or more discerning, than could be recorded in Willis's (in Klugman et al. 1995) critical notebook,

even if, for all that, they remain consumers.

If I had to sum up the differences between authenticity at Disney and authenticity at the Globe Theatre it would be that Disney understands, and has always understood, that "authenticity" is a phenomenological and not a merely empirical phenomenon. Of course, a proper phenomenological analysis of the perception of authenticity requires an acute understanding of the historical and cultural forces that are brought to bear on how and whether we are to regard something as authentic. And in this regard the cultural critiques of Disney are perceptive and revealing. But the Globe Theatre, especially in its incarnation as Shakespeare's Globe, is as much part of the globalised, consumerist world as Disneyland. Its attempts to resist that world, laudable in themselves, are not, however, aided by the blinkered view of the authentic of many of its supporters. It may be that it is precisely because Disney has negotiated the gap between the authentic and the perception of authenticity so successfully that it now needs only to imitate itself to be authentic that the New Globe has sought to distance itself from anything that smacks of what will *seem* real, rather than *be* real. But in one sense of the word, the Globe and its performances are as unreal as the Pirates of the Caribbean.

In another sense, of course, the very things that make the Pirates so pleasurable are those which the early modern theatre attempted to problematise. The Globe remains a powerful experimental space in a way that the caverns of the Pirates are not, and could never be. This is a *new* space in which novel relationships between the fiction of a play, the reality of the space on which it is performed, and the ideality - in the phenomenological sense of the word - of the contact between experiencing audience and performing actor can always be renegotiated. Within a broader philosophical context, we should not miss the fact that Disney's unselfconscious willingness to treat the realistic reconstruction of Captain Nemo's cabin, or the tree-house of the Swiss Family Robinson, as an enterprise that cannot be rigorously distinguished from an exhibit in a local museum, comes down on Derrida's side in his famous argument with stuffy realism of John Searle (Derrida 1988). At the same time, we should note that if the trustees of the New Globe may be regarded as the heirs of Searle's (1977) and Austin's (1976) privileging of the "serious" above the fictional, there is no space in the whole Disney Kingdom that can even potentially match the capacity of the New Globe Theatre to re-energise our sense of the relationship between the real and the fictional. Such a potential lies wholly in the future, however; it is not buried in the past.

Postscript

On the Eastern shore of Lake Geneva, or Lac Léman, as it is known to the French locals, there is a tiny village called Yvoire. No more than twenty kilometres northeast of Geneva, on the French side of the lake, the village is touted by guidebooks and tourist pamphlets as a perfectly preserved medieval town, still surrounded by its ancient stone wall, its houses authentically preserved as they were five hundred years ago. No modern vehicles are permitted in the town which, the visitor is assured, has remained essentially unchanged since the fortifications were built by the military architects of Amédée the Great, fifth Count of Savoy. The drive up along the lake is a pleasant one, especially when at the end of it one is promised an authentic medieval village with none of the debilitating accretions - including one's mode of transport - of the twentieth, or even the nineteenth, century. The approach to Yvoire is, however, ominously familiar: a series of large, over-full car parks into which one is directed by officious police and in which finding a place is a struggle. Once you have paid the exorbitant parking fee, and you have rushed, along with hundreds of other visitors, to the main gate where, thankfully, the men in uniform merely turn back cars rather than charge an entrance fee, you are allowed to make your way through the crush of people, along cobbled streets, past an endless array of shops selling tourist bric-a-brac and fast food every bit as tawdry and greasy as that which lines Main Street USA. Not a single house is lived in, not a single shop is authentic: the town has no inhabitants, properly speaking. Everyone packs up at the end of the day and goes home to ordinary lakeside towns like Thonon-les-Bains, Evian, or Geneva itself, to return for opening time the next day, when more tourists will rush along the vehicle-free streets to get a taste of ersatz authentic history.

When I imagine Yvoire now, almost a year after my visit to France, I do not see cobbles and sandstone and flint worn with the patina of age. I see fibreglass walls and garish, plastic-looking geraniums, Walls ice-cream carts and hot-dog stands, and endless little objects, too trivial to remember, supposedly hand-crafted by local craftsmen whose skills go back for generations but actually mass-produced in China or Thailand or Taiwan. To return, finally, to the epigraph from Eco at the top of this paper, it appears to me that while the New Globe and towns like Yvoire have sought, unsuccessfully, to imitate history, it is Disney who, for better or for worse, has made it.

Notes

1. Karen Klugman glosses the term in the following way: "'Disnification', a term not yet in the dictionary, but understood as to refer to the application of simplified aesthetic, intellectual, or moral standards to a thing that has the potential for more complex and thought-provoking expression" (Klugman et al. 1995: 103).

2. The locations of Disney's four theme parks in the United States, Europe and Japan

3. Litigation

4. For an account of his struggle to do so, see Day (1995) and Wanamaker (1988).

5. Unlike the Rose, the complete foundations of which were discovered in 1989 (and which have subsequently been carefully covered and have had a large commercial building erected over them) the major portions of the Globe's foundations lie under a row of Georgian houses called "Anchor Terrace" (now renamed "Globe Terrace") and Southwark Bridge Road. After much debate it was decided not to uncover them (Day 1996: 203-16).

6. A Mori poll shows that ninety-nine per cent of the audience were satisfied.

7. Strictly speaking, only the section that duplicates Disneyland in Anaheim in the Florida park (a hundred times larger than the original, and consisting of other attractions, including EPCOT and MGM Studios) is called the Magic Kingdom. I have taken the liberty of using the name for all the parks built along the lines of the Californian original.

8. I have discovered subsequently that a similar ride in Florida, entitled "Splash Mountain", has been found to induce in the riders a less passive demeanour than is usually ascribed to them by cultural critics. At the most exhilarating and terrifying moment of the ride, a series of cameras take flash photographs of the visitors, and is a sign both of Disney's efficiency and its consumerism that those photographs, blown up to 10x12, are available for purchase, pinned up on a board at the exit as you leave the ride. It appears that some of the riders on Splash Mountain have taken to exposing their breasts at the moment the pictures are taken. These pictures, of course, never make it onto the public board, having been censored before such signs of subversive sexuality might contaminate the antiseptic innocence of the park. A renegade employee has, however, published these photographs on the Internet (http://www.flashmountain.com). They are a fascinating witness to an exhilarated spirit of insouciant exhibitionism that is not entirely out of keeping with the spirit of the place, whatever the Disney fathers

might think.

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