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*Build a Better Mousetrap and the World
Will Beat a Path to Your Door*

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Build a Better Mousetrap Images of American Utopia

*The City is the soul writ large;
the study of the ideal City will reveal to us
the ideal soul.*

PLATO, *Republie*

America is building utopias again. This time it is not in New Harmony or Oneida or even Levittown. No, the millennial last word in ideal Cities will be located near Orlando, Florida ten minutes from Disney World. It should come as no surprise that Mickey Mouse has dreamt it up, imagineered this brave new world. Walt Disney has been dabbling in what dreams are made of, urbanistically speaking, since the opening of Main Street, USA in Anaheim, California in 1955. Forty years later, the Disney Corporation is building a new City an 5,000 acres of land surrounded by 5,000 acres of parks, wetlands and golf courses. 1996 will see the opening of Celebration, Disney's model community. Celebrants or Celebrities (citizens of Celebration, sonamed by the CEO Michael Eisner's wife) will march in a parade July 4th through the shining new downtown past a theater, shops, a post office and town hall designed by Robert Venturi, Robert Stern, Aldo Rossi, Charles Moore, Philip Johnson, Michael Graves and Cesar Pelli. The First homes go on sale November 18th, Mickey Mouse's birthday. The project is estimated to cost \$2.5 Trillion and expected to include 20,000 residents.¹ More than that number have already visited the Celebration preview Center, the ultimate decorated shed. Potential home-buyers approach what appears to be a Colonial Revival mansion only to find that it is a life-size billboard with a real doorway leading to a prefabricated cubic space beyond. The space is filled with the trappings of an

empty living room centered on a television set playing a video extolling the virtues of lemonade stands, kick-the-can games and baseball. "If all goes as planned, Disney will have two Main Street USA's, one with inhabitants and one without, but both extremely profitable."²

Disney has borrowed liberally from the clutch of utopias and progressive plans conceived in 19th century America. If Main Street was merely a manifestation of Walt's hometown nostalgia, the overall planning of Disneyland and subsequent Disney World and their Japanese and European offspring owe much to Walt Disney's personal interest in World's Fairs and popular pedagogical models of ideal Cities. Disney's theme parks are verbatim realizations of drawings that Ebenezer Howard took the trouble to mark, "Diagram only." Howard's book *To-Morrow, A Peaceful Path to Social Reform* featured the radial Central City, the Garden City and the Three Magnets diagram illustrating his Town-Country invention and promising: "Beauty of nature, social opportunity, fields and parks with easy access, high wages, low rents, plenty to do, low prices, no sweating, field of enterprise, flow of capital, pure air and water, bright homes and gardens, no smoke, no slums, freedom and cooperation."³ In short, paradise on earth. The Three Magnet diagram is so central to the Disney concept that it echoes in its uni-versal icon: the mouse ears cap. The town and country ears are conjoined at the crown of the Town-Country brain. It is probably not lost on adults that the theme park is a City of vermin or children, each with their token cap, captivated by some Pied Piper.

A deep-frozen urbanist

Celebration is not the First urban plan embarked on by the Disney Corporation. Just before Walt Disney took his last breath - and had his body frozen for future cryogenic resurrection - his dying wish was that his successors carry on his most favored project, EPCOT: Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. The project had consumed Disney's focus for the last years of his life, far more important in his mind than the building of Disney World in Orlando, Florida. In many ways, Disney World was the pretense to buy swamp land and garner favorable public opinion in order to build EPCOT next to the theme park. The "Plan beyond the Plan," EPCOT was originally intended to be the housing for the huge staff that would run Disney World. Disney announced he would build an artificial lake and use the "fill" to construct a hollow mountain that would conceal a small City "where they [the employees] can eat, rest, swim, wash, sleep and breathe fresh, relaxing air that we will pump into the mountain's interior. It will be a sort of model community." Disney gushed that if the experiment worked it would expand into a City of Tomorrow,⁴ certainly not to be confused with Howard's To-Morrow.

Disney set up a secret EPCOT planning room in Burbank, California, lined with architects' proposals and strewn with notes. Disney lingered in the room for days on end communicating with consultants and confidants that he sent across the country to gather information and experts in future medicine, education, environment and city planning. At a rare press conference, Disney urged: "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

landowners and therefore no voting control. People will rent houses instead of buying them, and at modest rates. There will be no retirees, because everyone will be employed according to their ability. One of our requirements is that those who live in EPCOT must help keep it alive." EPCOT would control its own climate, recycle its own waste, feed, preserve and save its citizens from hunger, disease and perhaps even survive nuclear war.¹⁵ EPCOT would prove that if people lived in an enlightened and sanitized environment that they could enjoy every happiness and prolong life almost indefinitely, another growing interest for Disney. He urged for the completion of Disney World so he could see EPCOT finished in his lifetime. He personally scrutinized every detail of the planning hoping to ensure that the city would be built according to his specifications, all the while researching cryogenics as a means to come back and check on the city, fixing the mistakes his successors might have made.

Disney did not live to see EPCOT even started. The press condemned the community merely a rehash of American nineteenth century utopias, or what is worse, a form of socialism. Walt Disney's brother Roy dismissed the project as economically unfeasible. A dietetic version was realized by Roy's successors, at great expense, with the building of a Buckminster Fuller-esque geodesic dome and a fake prototype City in the form of living exhibits. No employees were housed at EPCOT because the technology was too expensive to realize Disney's architects' plans, save for the costly monorail. Local newspaper men wrote of the lost opportunity. Walt realized EPCOT would be monstrously expensive, but he said he didn't care about that. He felt he could get the money from American industry and perhaps the U.S. government for developing a prototype city. Walt always felt there was no point in trying to reclaim slums. He felt it was better to start anew with perfectly planned cities in fresh locations - cities that would enable designers to combine urban and suburban advantages in a single plan." Howard Means of the Orlando Sentinel: "Disney conceived EPCOT originally as a single city completely climate controlled, on different levels, with deliveries below and a hotel above. In fact, it is few of those things. Certainly it is not a module of a city complex, a community of souls living a quarter of a century into the future, while the rest of us watch. More's the pity, too, because extraordinary things could have been learned from such an idealized laboratory city... because if anyone in this century could have pulled off a successful Utopia, it would have been Walt Disney. To say that EPCOT would have survived and prospered as a Utopian community is not to say that one would have wanted to live in it nor even that those who chose to live there would have been in any way representative of the rest of us. EPCOT would, I think have been very much like the contemporary city of three million people that Le Corbusier proposed in the Radiant City."⁶

Fantasy into fact

The shift from the Fantasy Main Street of Disney World to the real Main Street of Celebration is predicated on the failure to build EPCOT as Walt Disney envisioned it. What makes Celebration more economically viable than EPCOT are the concessions made to the perceived market, the historic "look" is to sell well and to supposedly be available to more than Disney executives and their families. With no pretense to look high-tech, a great economy is achieved. The architecture is in utter agreement with the housing industry. Celebration is to look prewar, with all the amenities of the next millennium. The 8,000

homes of Celebration are to be built in the six Disney-approved styles: *Classical, Victorian, Colonial Revival, Coastal, Mediterranean* and *French*. Strict covenants and city codes will maintain the appropriate appearance of Celebration; Disney security guards will augment the county's force. Its school system will be the Harvard -- designed model of progressive education initiatives. Its hospital will be part spa, nurses available by video phone and computer. Each house will come with dedicated fiber-optic communications lines developed by American Telephone and Telegraph. The installation will feature the "broadband access architecture platform - the SLC-2000 Access System with FLX Switched Digital Video - leading edge telephony, cable TV, interactive digital multimedia and high-speed data communications services. Home security link, home energy management, interactive banking, voting from home, virtual office, high-speed internet access, and total interactive linkage between residences, health care facilities, schools, community facilities and retail establishments." ⁷ Students will be able to access notes from class, download homework assignments and e-mail term papers; forestalling any chance that "the dog ate it." This system will allow citizens to vote by straw poll, gossip via e-mail, order groceries or even have their vital signs monitored at a distance." ⁸

Something of a panoptic urge is satisfied in this forced modernization. As a means to monitor all cyber purchases, information traces or web-site visitation, the computer effectively serves as a constant, faceless, observer. The information super-highway, hard-wired into every home, is a perfect public space offered in isolation. Personal computer work stations, featured in Celebration homes in breakfast inglenooks and stair landings, "are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible." ⁹ The information super-highway at Celebration also functions as another Disney sanitizer. More than a high-tech version of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, the "net" will help to redefine the institutions of the community. Just as Bentham postulated that his invention could be integrated into many social functions (hospitals, schools, military barracks) the computer will effectively convert the street into a playground for children by erasing the need to shop or communicate in person. Other inversions would include the hospital's role as a spa (the sick neatly sent home and monitored remotely) and the cyber classroom, stripping the school of its primary function: socialization.

The information super-highway is a desirable medium for communication because it is controllable. If the Telecommunications Bill, an instrument of legalized censorship, is passed by the U.S. Congress it will block the transmission of objectionable material across the net. Ostensibly this is to protect children from downloading pornography, but the terms of objectionable material are so broad as to suggest objectionable texts will also be blocked and routed out of the system. Despite this emphasis on computers, the outward appearance of technology is so loaded in Celebration that even the car has been banned from the street. Every house has an alley-accessed garage to complete the effect of the hop-scotch, child-filled streets. This auto-less streetscape is what many find so attractive in Disney World.' ¹⁰ But for all of its retroactive pretensions, the community under the 19th century veneer is in fact predicated on the comforts and appeal of information age gadgetry carefully buried in underground cables with false pavilions housing cellular phone antennae. The city is more high-tech than EPCOT ever proposed to be. Celebration's success stems from the cheaper dressing of its silicon innards, every television Set in an antique wardrobe.

The seal

The seal or logo of Celebration is so innocuous and devoid of stylistic references that it is difficult to read in any symbolic terms, which is just what a heraldic device is supposed to contain. The medallion features in silhouette a girl on a boy's bicycle with a dog running behind her near a large tree and picket fence. All of this is featured above nine inexplicable subterranean lines. Walt Disney's original conception of EPCOT was to locate the community in a hollow mountain, a world hidden underground.¹¹ Many Disney amusement rides are partially or entirely located underground. The critic Robert Harbison writes: "Disneyland, like the most intricate garden, fits so much into its small bounds you wonder where all these pirate caves can be. Underground is the answer and the secret of the fantastic density, so when emerging from one of the 'rides' in semi-darkness one feels most the place's power to represent human imagination with its overlapping powers which take no space, as Disneyland, so artfully threaded through itself, seems a physical impossibility."¹² This is why maps of Disney parks seem inadequate: in truth, what lies beneath is equal to what lies above. This Hermetic principle was actually developed to the so-called *Hohlweltlehre* or Hollow Earth Theory by an Ohio infantryman, Captain J. Cleves Symmes, at the beginning of the last century.¹³ On his deathbed he announced that the earth was hollow and inhabitable within and open at the poles. The *Hohlweltlehre*, popular among many mystic societies, described telluric currents or underground energy bands that connected specific geographic points: Paris, Rennes-le-Château, Jerusalem.¹⁴ Perhaps EuroDisney is located on the telluric current and is in geophysical contact with Florida's Disney World built near Ponce de León's Fountain of Youth. More likely, the nine lines under the girl and the dog merely represent the fiber-optic and video links running underground like the plowed furrows of Romulus, describing the walls of a future Rome.

The pairing of the little girl with a boy's bicycle may be a graphic shorthand for the representation of both sexes in reference to women's liberation or, given the tree, an alchemic Eve; the portrayal of Celebration as Eden is merged with the American paradise of the Backyard and picket fence. Obviously, the bicycle is an affront to the automobile and accurately describes the desired means of transport in Celebration. It is also not without precedent in utopian fiction. The BBC cultclassic television series, "The Prisoner" of the late 1960's, used the bicycle as the seal of the ideologically oppressive town known simply as the Village. Double agents and political dissidents were taken to the Village in order to rub out their individuality, their names being replaced by numbers, their secrets all being confessed to a faceless Number One.¹⁵ The Prisoner was filmed on location in Portmeirion, Wales, a new leisure town of blended historic styles and mock ruins designed by Clough Williams-Ellis.¹⁶ The Prisoner's finale concludes with a journey to visit Number One located in caverns far underground beneath the Village through a maze of tunnels.

It is rumored that the emergency protocol at a Disney theme park requires an injured party to go to the nearest manhole be lowered underground until an ambulance circuiting the tunnels under the park arrives.¹⁷ This mitigates the chance that other park patrons will see anyone ill as well as hiding the offending emergency vehicles which would shatter the image of paradise.

East of Eden

If Celebration has Edenic aspirations, it would not be the first Disney project to do so. The writer James Howard Kunstler describes the arrival at Disney World in such terms: "The entry procedure strikingly approximates the American Protestant concept of going to heaven. One leaves behind the gritty real world and mills around a pleasant and familiar outdoor place of assembly [Main Street]... with a crowd of strangers all happily anticipating pleasures to come. Finally, there is that glorious moment of passing through the pearly gates! From a child's point of view, the day ahead must seem like an eternity." ¹⁸ Celebration, on the other hand, abounds with references to Eden, in both Biblical and later American revolutionary senses.

Downtown Celebration faces the artificial lake that Disney envisioned for EPCOT, and across the water on a man-made peninsula sits a rustic structure on the border of a reserve for the bald eagle which is at once a sign of original wilderness and the symbol of the United States. Part primitive hut, part turn-of-the-century train station, this primitive temple in the wilderness resembles nothing else in Celebration. It is the Community Center and in a town with no planned churches, synagogues or mosques, its civic role should be significant. Wood columns rise out of the ground, and while its muddy-colored walls and rough-hewn details are not purely from Filarete or Laugier, the point is clear: this is Arcadia. The building doubles as a civic forum and a recreation Center with a swimming pool nearby. As a Roman bath or a bridge to the forest, the center permits multiple and simultaneous uses: all focused an mitigated contact with natural elements, a model after Rousseau. The interior meeting hall is centered not on a hearth, but an a giant computer monitor, window to the world by way of the world-wide web. At once ancient and modern, the center offers what Eliade terms the Myth of the Eternal Return where "A periodic regeneration of time presupposes, in more or less explicit form - and especially in the historical civilization - a new Creation, that is a repetition of the cosmogonic act." ¹⁹

The design and consecration of Celebration parallels another traditional, albeit covert, American settlement pattern, the founding of the local masonic lodge. George Washington, as a Master Mason, presided over the founding ceremony of the national capitol, designed by another Master Mason, Pierre Charles L'Enfant. A Masonic lodge is not a particular building type but a certain configuration of architectural and symbolic devices based an the Solomonic temple and the Mosaic Tabernacle in the Wilderness. The lodge requires an enveloping wall, an entry flanked by two columns (representative of Joachim and Boaz), a font or basin of water, a checkerboard-like grid of tile, a meandering path or stair and a sanctum sanctorum, a realm within a realm through which initiates may pass. ²⁰

In many respects the design of the Community Cen-ter at Celebration supports a Masonic interpretation. The building is approached by a meandering path, is enveloped by a garden wall, includes an Olympic-sized font, and two columns mark each entry. The entire building is surrounded by a grid of square pavers turned 45 degrees at the Center and along the paths. It could be argued that the realm within the realm, the threshold to Enlightenment is here presented as the giant computer screen, the all-seeing eye of the omniscient God.

The Community Center will be the terminus of the July 4th parade that will mark the opening of the City. The celebrants will wind through the downtown and march along the shore to the primitive hut to inaugurate Celebration and view the miracle from the vantage point of the temple gleaming across the water.

Children's stories

Much of the "miracle" of Celebration, the obvious architectural homogeneity despite the various approved styles, is due in large part to a rigorous design Code. The architectural styles are outlined from the general massing proportions to the window details in the Celebration Pattern Book. The book is largely a graphic codex presenting itself as a helpful guide rather than a control device, despite its impermeable scope. Pattern books were widely used in rural America as late as the turn of the century as a means to introduce a semblance of architectural correctness to the hinterlands: "Made easy for the meanest capacity." These cheap compact manuals produced by and for building craftsmen offered brief, practical explanations of the new style and simple drawings of details such as doors, windows, and the like, that could be copied directly.²¹ Pattern books were widely distributed after the Revolution, Thomas Jefferson being chief among their proponents.

Downtown Celebration, however, breaks with the pattern book's academic historical models in favor of Post-Modern civic and commercial buildings. In the downtown, architectural wit and whim are permitted, in step with the successful Post-Modern commissions within Disney World proper. The commercial core is to be subsidized in order to bring merchants there the moment Celebration opens. As a matter of fact, the public spaces are anything but public - all parks and civic space will be owned and supervised by Disney.²² Similar to the blocking of pornography for the protection of children linked to the internet, the control of public space used by unsupervised juveniles may be a paternal gesture. Celebration's emphasis on children and maintenance of their innocent and clean environment is part of the Disney philosophy and the reason the theme parks and cartoons remain ever-popular. The expulsion of bars, the return of the streets to Saturday afternoon games, the inclusion of play areas at every turn through the city and the advanced school are all in reference to children and a culture that idealizes childhood. The sampling of architectural styles downtown and their easy proximity and mixability are like a child's conception of a city. The reason the downtown has been given over to Post-Modern architects is not in reference to the current establishment or even because it could be construed as even remotely avant-garde, but because the satirical or overblown town hall, post office, bank and cinema will approximate a cartoon-like streetscape, a child's image of a city with perky towers, bulging columns and a sunny palette. Here the post-modern is confused with a playful shorthand of classical elements that is so acceptable and reminiscent of obliterated real downtowns that no one registers this as a progressive or even identifiable architectural style. Rather, the Post-Modern is used to create a universal and farcical public space, especially pleasing to children. The success of the Swan Hotel or Seven Dwarves caryatids in Disney World only strengthens the choice of the Post-Modern as the architecture of the urban zone of Celebration. This is technofiction on a grand scale, if we translate *techno(n)* accurately as meaning 'child' (from the Greek *tikto*, to 'bring forth, 'bear', 'beget', akin to *tokos*, 'birth,' not to be confused with *techne*, 'skill,' 'craft' or 'art').²³ In other words, technofiction is a child's tale, the basis of Disney and Celebration.

When Susan Willis of the Project on Disney describes children running in terror away from Mickey Mouse at the theme park, she recalls Stephen Jay Gould's remarks about the evolution of Mickey Mouse from a lean, adult rat of the early cartoon shorts to the infantile, bloated mouse of today.²⁴ Mickey Mouse represents the antiseptic victory that Disney won over the small town fairs and circuses that always seemed to him so seedy and unhygienic. Converting

the ignoble pest, as Michael Sorkin points out, to "a hairless, sexless and harmless" clean mouse,²⁵ was a symbolic *Coup de grâce*. Whereas Charles Fourier chose Versailles, symbol of autocracy and privilege, as the shell in which to situate, his reformed urban society, Walt Disney took the trappings of the midway as material to invert and sanitize.

EPCOT, similarly, inhabits the Shell of the 1939 New York World's Fair. In many respects, the Experimental Community fails because its mission is to showcase the future in the present constantly; even a world's fair is temporary. Its technology is not always realistic, it is at best an image of modernity popular in sixties or a fiction of what technology of the future should be like. There is no substantive difference between the style of EPCOT and the style of Celebration, both project certain versions of popular imagery without real content. Both too are tokens of a potential future. The one encased in what technology is imagined to look like, the other merely encasing technology. The real difference is that Celebration seeks to fulfill the mission of EPCOT and house more than automata after hours, yet Celebration plans to be more than a designed Community, but the best of these. "The careful structure of entertainment and social relation at Disney World relinquishes its power to draw if it fails as an alternative to daily life. The Disney strategy, then, inscribes utopia on the terrain of the familiar and vice versa...Thus, its images never really innovate, they intensify and reduce, winnowing complexity in the name of both quick access and easy digestibility. What's being promoted is not the exceptional but rather the paranormal. Just like the real thing, only better."²⁶ As with the improbable metamorphosis of the mouse image, Celebration too is a hygienic inversion of a city.

Utopia/uchronia

To fully achieve the immaculate *urbs*, Celebration is placeless and timeless. Orphic and Gnostic sects taught that the soul will not live forever unless it is freed from the prison which is the body (*soma sema*): eternity is placeless. Conversely, a true architectural utopia must be timeless, a uchronia. Any utopia which is situated in a particular time (e.g. the various visions for a city of the year 2000) will lose its utopian potential in a short time. Whereas EPCOT has proven terribly expensive and difficult to update as the future never stays the way it was before, Celebration astutely situates its imagery in nostalgia. The Pattern book ensures that Celebration will look generally Southern, vaguely "old-fashioned," without ever referencing a particular place or time. Occupying Disneyowned territory, it even enjoys an administrative separateness from incorporated counties within Florida. Celebration is within the political and geographic sphere of Disney World which is a domain unto itself entirely. The new city is a simulacrum in the sense of Jean Baudrillard: eternal, simulated, without origin, where everything is image and universal.²⁷ As with the "animatronic" alligators in the theme park, the delight is in the astounding mimicry of the natural. The best recognized structure in a Disney theme park is the fairy tale castle, based on the castle of Neuschwanstein commissioned by Bavaria's King Ludwig II in the 1870s. The product of theater architects and opera set designers, Neuschwanstein is a Wagnerian dream of the Middle Ages, featuring theatrically-lit grottoes with mechanized cupids, mermaid automatons and swan boats.²⁸ Not to be outdone, Disney recreated not only the castle, but the subterranean follies as well. Each Disney theme park contains a version of Neuschwanstein, called the Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty Castle, despite the fact that the EuroDisney castle is minutes away from real castles. As is well known, Disney's Sleeping Beauty was named Princess Aurora after the goddess of dawn Eos who was sister of Helios and charioteer of the sun. Eos and Ares were caught in flagranti by Ares' lover Aphrodite who then cursed Eos to have a constant longing for young mortal men.²⁹ Perhaps it is more

coincidence that Disney hoasts its own Eos; Captain Eo alias Michael Jackson is still the permanent 3-D cinema feature at Disney World. It has been reported that Jackson, the King of Pop, is considering whether to interest Disney in a deal to replicate his Neverland ranch in California (a partial replica of Hearst's estate San Simeon in California) as an adjunct feature of EuroDisney. The alleged concept: Jackson would put up \$20 million to build a replica of Neverland and would live there - but when he wasn't around, it would be open to visitors as a Disney attraction.³⁰

Be that as it may, Jackson's interest in Disney is legendary. When he was taken ill in New York City in 1996 he requested that posters of Disney characters be delivered to his hospital room.³¹ His ranch maligned reconstruction of his appearance is not unlike the "hairless, sexless and harmless" development of Mickey Mouse. Indeed, Jackson has portrayed himself as Mickey Mouse in his own artwork.³²

The erasure of obvious signs of aging, race or sex, lends Jackson that timeless/placeless quality that makes him universally popular and one of the few humans allowed in the Disney pantheon of characters. The stripping of specificity from Jackson's face may also be construed an effort to replicate either the image of his mentor, Diana Ross, or his sisters Janet and LaToya.³³ The play of replication and simulation is however limited to his own appearance. He allegedly wishes to purchase a 15th century French castle, Chateau de Chabenne, because it looks like the Sleeping Beauty Castle of Disney which is itself a replica of Ludwig's replica of a Wagnerian fiction.

Tabloid accounts in the mid-eighties recounted Jackson's sleeping in a hyperbaric chamber to preserve his youth, a preventive alternative to the cryogenic methods preferred by Disney.³⁴ The glorification of children, the search for the Fountain of Youth, is central to the Disney experience. Jackson writes: "The Chaos, despair, and senseless destruction we see today are a result of the alienation that people feel from each other and their environment. Often this alienation has its root in emotionally deprived childhood. Children have had their childhood stolen from them. A child's mind needs the nourishment of mystery, magic, wonder, and excitement. I want my work to help people rediscover the child that's hiding in them."³⁵ Celebration capitalizes on the cult of childhood that Disney Supports, garnering favor with adults through their offspring. The opposite case was illustrated in the Disney adventure film "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" where children were banned from the City and imprisoned under a castle, shot an location at Neuschwanstein.

The eternal image

Celebration may Claim a share of "reality" because it is a replica of a replica, EPCOT. Echoing the dark forebodings of Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, Baudrillard writes that "Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the `real' country... It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. The imaginary of Disneyland is neither true nor false, it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate the fiction of the real in the opposite camp."³⁶ If Disney is the depository of reality, hoarding it to suspend the rest of world's disbelief, then it can authorize its patent town to be real instantaneously. The latent advertised tourist attraction at Disney World is the Disney Institute, a school offering courses in animation, video, cooking and gardening for the tourist who is bored with fantasy. "We're

famous for our ears. Now find out what's between them," the ad urges.³⁷ The trend at Disney is to offer reality as a consumable good.

The first building to be completed in Celebration is the office complex, designed by Aldo Rossi and housing the Disney company that is to oversee the development of Celebration. Rossi took inspiration for the design from Pisa's Piazza dei Miracoli, the Square of Miracles. "Rossi says the reference makes the connection between his project and a sense of the infinite within history and nature."³⁸

However, the centerpiece to the complex is a steep pyramid emblazoned with the carved words "Celebration Place." Undoubtedly, reference is deliberately made to a pyramid one hardly can avoid seeing America. On the dollar bill, there is a pyramid of the Great Seal of the United States. This pyramid is capped by a glowing eye and emblazoned with *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, New Order of the Ages; above the eye it reads *Annuuit Coeptis*, He favors our undertaking. The Base of the pyramid is marked with MDCCLXXVI, 1776 which is not only the year of the Revolution but also of the founding of the Illuminati.³⁹ While a few secret societies, including the masons and Rosicrucians, claim a role in the design of seal, the pyramid's replication at Celebration Place confers its meaning regardless of these associations. Perhaps ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny also in utopian planning and not only in biological development. Like the human Fetus develops through all the stages of evolution (at an early stage resembling a tadpole, somewhat later a fetus of a primitive mammal and so on) any utopia emulates all others by stages. Through the replication of the pyramid, Celebration is the culmination of every American utopia and project the imagery of each.

In fact, Celebration communicates its role as a millennial utopia chiefly through images; this is little surprising given that images are the favored medium of Disney. However, images can sometimes be misleading. In Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, the favorite opera of Ludwig II, the *Traumkönig* of Neuschwanstein, Isolde mistook a shadow of a tree for Tristan. If Celebration is not an ideal city, it is Isolde's tree: a veiled source that projects utopian imagery. EPCOT was a utopian plan from its inception, but manifested as a city of the past dressed in the future. Celebration, conversely, is offered as a city of the future wrapped in the past. Without knowledge of Celebration, the architectural critic Michael Sorkin writes: "Disneyzone completes the circuit of world's fairism by converting the celebration of production into the production of celebration."⁴⁰ The girl on the bike may be Isolde rushing headlong into the oak tree. Utopia or not, Celebration is breaking ground.

Notes

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- 2 *USA Today* via Internet. " Celebration Puts Disney in Reality's Realm." 23 March 1996
- 3 Rothchild, John. "A Mouse in the House." *TIME* via the Internet 4 December 1995, v 146, 23
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- 6 *Ibid*
- 7 *Ibid*
- 8 Cottrell, Kenny. "Celebration Frequently Asked Questions." The Ultimate Disney Link Page via the Internet. 1996
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- 11 Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. Tr. A. Sheridan. New York: Pantheon. 1977, p 200
- 12 Mosley. p 284
- 13 Harbison, Robert. *The Built, the Unbuilt and the Unbuildable, In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning*, Cambrigde: MIT Press. 1991, pp 95-97
- 14 Eco, Umberto. *Foucault's Pendulum*. New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1988, pp 512-514
- 15 *Ibid*
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