

This is an extract from:

Theme Park Landscapes: Antecedents and Variations

edited by Terence Young and Robert Riley

Published by

Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection

Washington, D.C.

as volume 20 in the series

Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture

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Trustees for Harvard University

Washington, D.C.

Printed in the United States of America

www.doaks.org/etexts.html

Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium
on the History of Landscape Architecture

XX



Window of the World, Shenzhen, China. Photo by Nick Stanley.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture (20th)
Theme park landscapes: antecedents and variations / edited by Terence Young and
Robert Riley.
p. cm.
“Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Achitecture XX”—P.
ISBN 0-88402-285-4
1. Parks—Congresses. 2. Gardens—Congresses. 3. Landscape architecture—
Congresses. I. Young, Terence (Terence G.) II. Riley, Robert B. III. Dumbarton Oaks.
IV. Title.

SB481.A2 D86 2002
712'.09—dc21

2002019400

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*Grounding the Myth—
Theme Park Landscapes in an Era
of Commerce and Nationalism*

Terence Young

The subject of theme parks offers an abundance of materials on this increasingly international phenomenon. The popular enthusiast can choose from a range of laudatory, sentimental videos about early and current locations, and demand is so strong publishers cannot seem to produce enough glossy, coffeetable panegyrics and guides to favorite destinations. The sales of Walt Disney World books, for instance, vaulted Jennifer Watson and Dave Marx's *PassPorter Walt Disney World* and Eve Zibart's *Inside Disney* high on amazon.com's booklist.¹ The theme park industry, large and swelling rapidly, publishes *Amusement Business*, *Amusement Today*, and *Theme Park Adventure* to keep track of developments, promote individuals, and identify key innovations. Scholars, just as curious and stimulated as the general public and the business community, have composed numerous explorations into individual parks and the phenomenon as a whole. The prevalence and influence of "theming" increased so dramatically during the 1990s that theme parks became a metaphor for postmodern urban life. In particular, critics apply the term "Disneyfication" to any landscape developed to communicate with several audiences, especially when that communication is an attempt to stimulate and direct consumption.² Nevertheless, few scholarly studies focus on the *landscapes* in theme parks. The origins, divergence, and significance of their spatial aspects are

¹ A search for "Disney World" on the Internet at www.amazon.com in January 2000 produced a list of 242 books. The 2 volumes cited here were ranked by sales at nos. 1,992 and 45,096, respectively, out of more than 2 million books.

² Some recent examples of the theme park metaphor are explored in Sarah Chaplin, "Authenticity and Otherness: The New Japanese Theme Park," *Architectural Design* 68 (1998): 77–79; Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: Dreams, Visions and Commercial Spaces* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997); Karal Ann Marling, ed., *Designing Disney's Theme Parks: The Architecture of Reassurance* (New York: Flammarion, 1997); and Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disneyland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

only beginning to be understood.³ Under what conditions did theme park landscapes emerge? How did they enter into mass culture? Why are they so popular? How are they connected to the social order? What functions do they serve? This volume's authors examine current and past, private and public, obviously and subtly themed landscapes in Asia, Europe, and North America in response to these and other questions. The essays were developed from the May 1996 Studies in Landscape Architecture Symposium organized by Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn and Robert B. Riley.

Most scholars agree that sixteenth- to nineteenth-century European gardens were the major progenitors of theme parks. Landscape designers such as Andre Le Nôtre and William Kent tapped their aristocratic clients' historic and contemporary sensibilities to transform villages, forests, and fields into spaces rich with visual references, innuendoes, hints, and winks. The grotto of Thetis at Versailles and the pantheon at Stourhead in England broke the representational ground for Minetown at HersheyPark, in Hershey, Pa., and Universal Studios Hollywood's Terminator 2:3D. In each case, designers rejected explicit language and extracted symbols from their visitors' cultural backgrounds to generate interest and promote responses. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, designers did not purposely attempt to instrumentalize culture but instead drew unsystematically from their social and environmental contexts. When John Evelyn or Dominique Girard created gardens in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they could tell their patrons what sort of style was best, but not how the specific elements in a design stimulated viewers. Their landscapes were arresting but not reflexively so. A critical step on the path to today's theme parks was finally taken during the late eighteenth century when, according to Richard Quaintance's thoughtful argument, William Chambers presented his psychological insights as "sinophilic" landscape theories and linked specific designs and features to particular states of mind. In the two hundred fifty years since Chambers, landscape developers have refined this mood-altering process and now calculatedly employ it in theme parks.

At least one theme—nostalgia—directly links European gardens to theme parks. The "Arcadian meadow," for example, was created around 1770 as a part of Ermenonville and arose, as David Lowenthal phrases it, from a yearning "to evacuate the present," which is opaque and turbulent, into a clarified, tranquil past. The meadow's particular trope, the pastoral, has never lost favor and continues to inform the landscapes explored by Michel Conan (at Sweden's cultural theme park, Skansen), Carla Corbin (in American agricultural fairs), and myself (at Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park that straddles Tennessee and North Carolina). Each landscape employs the past to proffer benign certitudes to visitors. These designs are more specific than the south landscape at Ermenonville, offering respective insights into Sweden and the United States rather than a generic Eu-

³ Although there have been few investigations, insightful essays include Susan G. Davis, "The Theme Park: Global Industry and Cultural Form," *Media, Culture & Society* 18 (1996): 399–422; Mark Gottdiener, "Consumption of Space and Spaces of Consumption," *Architectural Design* 68 (1998): 12–15; Yi-fu Tuan with Steven Hoelscher, "Disneyland: Its Place in World Culture," in Marling, *Designing Disney's Theme Parks*, 191–200.

3 *Grounding the Myth*

rope, but they are equally rustic in character. Another set of the authors pulls away from the countryside, illustrating how nostalgic landscapes need not be rural. The lost village or town is another common trope, styling the landscapes probed by Edward Chappell (at Colonial Williamsburg, Va.), Nick Stanley (in Chinese and Taiwanese folk villages), and Marc Treib (at Japan's Huis Ten Bosch). A civic but nonindustrial past is romanticized and presented as the open, attractive, supportive, honest, and reliable alternative to a modern city. This village trope is so close to the modern suburban ideal, Treib perceptively notes, that the developers of Huis Ten Bosch planned it as "a model for future *Japanese* dwelling" in spite of the fact the theme recalls a distant past and foreign land.

Performance also connects modern theme parks with European gardens of the sixteenth- to nineteenth-century. Occasionally an estate garden such as Chiswick, Claremont, or Rousham incorporated a theater or outdoor stage where family members, friends, or actors could entertain with a play, music, juggling, or some other amusement. These early theaters were small or designed to blend inconspicuously into the setting, but as the theme park emerged, the size and relationship between garden and theater reversed. We learn in Heath Schenker's discerning essay that the latter progressively expanded in the nineteenth century's commercial version of the estate garden: the public pleasure garden. Tree-lined walks, lawns, and flowers had dominated the earliest of these gathering spots, but aggressive proprietors built ever larger and more elaborate halls and stages over the natural features in order to meet public expectations. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, theaters often occupy more space in theme parks than do gardens.

Performances can also move off the stage onto the larger landscape. Marie-Antoinette and her court gathered to play at being shepherds and shepherdesses at the Hameau, her "model farm" near Versailles' Petit Trianon. Today performers can be found similarly strolling, playing, or "working" in many theme parks. Cades Cove, as I note in my essay, employs actors to represent and interpret historic or cultural figures but are not necessarily related to them. Conversely, the performers at the Chinese folk culture villages discussed by Stanley and at Corbin's agricultural fairs are neither actors nor individuals distantly related to the people they represent but the people themselves. Farmers attend fairs to learn about the latest developments, display products, and sell goods, but their utilitarian 4-H competitions and livestock auctions are also performances enjoyed by a large audience of suburbanites, who encounter the farmers as if they had stepped into a television documentary. Although the sensory experience of the fair is richer than television, it easily remains a one-way flow toward visitors unless they seek out a farmer for discussion. An agricultural fair's landscape is not organized to prohibit interactions between farmers and visitors but neither is it set up to foster them. The Chinese folk culture villages park, a more deliberately themed exhibition, displays the "villages" of two dozen Chinese minorities and, unlike most cultural parks and agricultural fairs, allows the subjects to be active interpreters rather than passive objects. Its landscape is arranged to encourage personal contact between the villagers and visitors. This dialectical relationship allows the minorities greater control over how they are portrayed and interpreted because a villager can bring up discussion topics or specific practices in light of a dynamic context. At the same time, the visitors' experiences are more personal

because their own questions, rather than the ones formulated by authorities, can be put to the villagers.

I do not want to overemphasize the European precursors to theme parks, since there are other regional sources as well. Traditional Chinese painting and landscape gardening focused on mountains, rivers, and other natural features common to Chinese theme parks. Many early gardens, such as Sui Yuan in Suzhou, included pavilions and belvederes. Chinese authors, like their European counterparts, were sometimes nostalgic escapists who, Stanley sensitively notes, praised the traditional village as “a life of rural simplicity.” Performances were known to occur in such places as the emperor’s garden in eighteenth-century Beijing (Pekin), which included a miniature capital city where actors recreated the daily life passing just beyond the garden walls.

Nor should anyone easily assume simple, direct links between past and present anywhere. In his erudite essay, Edward Harwood identifies several clear differences and warns that the form, history, and meaning of gardens and theme parks do not easily coincide. For one, the associations tapped in an eighteenth-century European garden grew out of the visitors’ formal education, whereas today’s associations spring from mass awareness. One is more likely to encounter Astérix than Odysseus at a theme park. For another, today’s parks generally exist to amass wealth through the manipulation of culture and leisure; where their garden forebears, by contrast, were displays of wealth and cultivation. Schenker picks up and develops these differences by using a hierarchical diffusion model. The nineteenth century’s pleasure gardens went from “fashionable” to “democratic” as the lower classes fused their own tastes with upper-class styles and landscapes. In the hands of entrepreneurs, who were less interested in a garden’s form than its potential to tap into a growing leisure market, Schenker suggests how an eighteenth-century vehicle for power and taste became a twenty-first-century cash machine, drawing vast crowds of visitors.

Theme parks attract so many people because they have become major pilgrimage sites within today’s mass cultures. Like other tourist attractions, they have grown into anodyne places where modern people can alleviate the anxieties in their lives and the crises in their societies. Such stresses develop whenever the prevailing sense of order is disturbed by intentional or accidental changes, which are common and normal in any complex society. To reassure “pilgrims” and create a haven away from the crisis, the causes of change are typically central to their experience of a pilgrimage site. In the past, pilgrims were more pious and often sought relief at the locus of a religious spirit who was believed to have power over a change, either sought or feared. Pilgrims might have been uncertain about the future in advance of a journey but gain confidence with a visit to Jerusalem or Mecca. Theme parks grew increasingly popular during the twentieth century as the world became more secular, the size and complexity of societies increased, and change became more prevalent and pervasive.⁴ In the modern world, people are more likely to attribute change to com-

⁴ The connections between secularization, pilgrimage, and early American tourism are developed in John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

merce and technology than to spirits, so the former are frequently highlighted in the theme park experience. According to Brenda Brown's sensitive investigation, the rides at Disney's Epcot Center brashly declare that commerce and technology are not to be feared; rather, they are servants that will carry everyone on voyages of profitable discovery. Although riders may have to relocate, reeducate themselves, or even lose their jobs to technological innovation, the change serves an important end—a better future. Conversely, an “authentic” historical park such as Colonial Williamsburg often bears witness to how much technological development has improved life. However, as Chappell wryly notes about such parks, the production of authenticity “can serve to limit [the authorities'] uncritical production of charm.” The re-creation of just a touch of the mud and muck that accompanied horse power goes a long way. Agricultural fairs paradoxically also reassure with technology. Despite the pastoral allusions of agricultural fairs, the economics of farming have been subject to dramatic, often volatile changes over the last hundred years. Harvests generally increased, but individual farm profits often declined because technologically supported competition steadily pushed commodity prices down. This brutal reality drove millions from farms around the world, yet, as Corbin poignantly notes, fairs continue to be based on “the positive benefits of progress.” Farmers, and likely the suburbanites as well, are drawn to the agricultural fair's confident message about technology.⁵

The agricultural fair offers a clear example of how contradictory myths are often intertwined at a theme park. On the one hand, the fair is a nostalgic retreat for suburbanites seeking temporary escape into a purportedly benevolent past. On the other, the fair attracts farmers who, looking to the future, want to learn about the latest agricultural technologies. Theme parks, being postmodern, not only speak to many audiences but also bring opposite values together in one place and present them as a normal pairing. As Conan insightfully points out, the landscape in one of today's theme parks often does more than simply recollect an existing myth; it creates popular culture's new ones.

Theme parks do not necessarily focus on technology or commerce, but if not, they must draw on some other widely shared myth or myths to generate a sense of well-being. These internalized meanings are culturally and historically specific, vary between parks, and are generally the elements giving coherence—a theme—to the whole. There are an indefinite number of possible themes, and I have mentioned several, but at least one—nationalism—runs through this volume and helps explain the appearance of theme parks in noncommercial economies. Colonial Williamsburg and Cades Cove both recreate the local buildings and landscapes from foundational periods of the American national identity while Skansen assembles regional samples so that a composite whole—Sweden—is foregrounded. In these three instances, the essence of nationhood is found in the culture, especially the material culture, of the nation. Skansen and Colonial Williamsburg both profit from these

⁵ For more on theme parks and pilgrimage, see Davis, “The Theme Park”; Alexander Moore, “Walt Disney World: Bounded Ritual Space and the Playful Pilgrimage Center,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 53 (1980): 207–18.

displays, but since Cades Cove is in an American national park (and thus an officially endorsed view of the country's origins), it is the most suggestive and nationalistic.

A similarly cultural approach to nationalism is taken at the five Chinese theme parks investigated by Stanley, but one in particular expands the definition and defines China in terms of its physical landscapes as well as its cultural ones. The nation, *Splendid China* asserts, is more than just its populace and their traditions; it includes such distinctive topographical features as the Stone Forest at Lunan and the Yangtze River gorges. *Splendid China* nationalizes nature by miniaturizing it and presenting it alongside artifacts made by the peoples within the state's territory. The spatial associations and coherence of its landscape suggest a national whole. *Splendid China* helps us to see how nature can be politically appropriated by the state and therefore why natural landscape parks like America's Yellowstone or Argentina's Nahuel Huapi are not simply nature preserves but also nationalist theme parks. Although these nature parks are not spatially mixed with the nation's cultural elements, they are nevertheless *ex cathedra* statements about how the nation arose from its scenic, recreational, and ecological landscapes.

A theme park's landscape gives form and narrative to a myth, but it also gives it a place. Typically the myth's disparate parts do not coalesce at any one location but are scattered across the larger territory or in many media. A theme park melds these elements so that, for example, the Japanese lore about Holland is made material in Nagasaki's Huis Ten Bosch. Its landscape designers tapped the region's Dutch past and all the material culture that this history suggests to a Japanese visitor to organize, adorn, and validate its hotels, shops, and houses. The landscape coordinates and situates the ideal and the real, providing a context that presents a useful version of the myth, enhanced visually and aurally. The spatiality of the landscape in particular gives myth weight and force. The tale becomes truer and the place, by implication, better as the former gains spatial extension. In contrast, a landscape can also take an incomprehensibly large area and its associations, reduce the whole and represent it in an intelligible, albeit biased fashion. Agricultural fairs, for example, capture the essence of farming, a practice spread across thousands of square miles, and affectionately tender it to visitors within a few acres. Fairs add instrumental value to the agrarian myth and whatever is associated, whether product, allegiance, or notion. But a theme park is much more than a simple location. It is a shrine to its message and to succeed must be bounded—*isolated from the ordinary landscape*—*unlike most places, which blend indistinctly into other places. It is unclear exactly where one begins and another ends. Nonetheless, pilgrims have to know when they enter the pilgrimage site. In the language of Victor and Edith Turner, theme parks are liminoid—thresholds between the chaotic, often conflicting forces of the everyday and the orderly world tapped in the myth.*⁶ If a distinction between special and ordinary does not exist, the former offers no control over the latter and fails to be a pilgrimage site. In simple cases, a fence with a gate may suffice to delineate inside from outside, but such devices are drably functional, lacking the drama and impact possible when

⁶ Victor Turner and Edith L. B. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

the partition involves the landscape. Disney designers understood landscape's delimiting power when they required visitors to ride a monorail into Florida's Magic Kingdom. Gazing out the window, one traverses land and water to arrive at the park's flower-festooned entrance. The sense of spatial distinction is heightened by the several minutes of approach and anticipation in the car. The Cades Cove entrance also draws on the drama of landscape. Visitors, driving on a park road, pass an official sign and turnout and proceed toward a short hill that blocks any further views ahead. Making a left turn around the base of the hill before swinging sharply back to the right, they are suddenly treated to a scenic pastoral meadow stretching hundreds of feet into distant trees and even more distant foothills. The moment is a transfiguring one. At both Walt Disney World and Great Smoky Mountains National Park, visitors know they have left the realm of the everyday to enter a unique place.

In addition to being bounded, a theme park must be removed in space and time from everyday life. It needs to be "away"—not anyone's place yet accessible, available to pilgrims if it is to serve as a social restorative. The pilgrimage is an inherently geographic phenomenon. A park must be distant so that the journey will take visitors out of their normal social hierarchy and into one where all are equal. Outside the park visitors may have high or low status, but after leaving the social relations of home and work behind and joining with other pilgrims at the site, everyone has the same opportunity to merge with the spatialized, materialized myth. In this vein, when visitors arrive at Skansen, they are encouraged to recognize one of two things: either they are Swedish along with all other state residents or that they are an "other," who can only marvel at that which is Sweden. A consequence of this egalitarian separateness, one often sought by designers and owners, is that theme parks tie a diverse, diffuse society into one community. Visitors may have different status levels, incomes, ethnicities, religions, or genders on the outside but inside they all become citizens, subjects, consumers, descendants, or collaborators of some sort. Theme parks position an exotic variety of cultures, histories, artifacts, styles, texts, architectures, and performances onto a single landscape and hitch it to a familiar, uniform message such as, "it is good to consume," or "it is good to be a member of the nation."

To foster melding with the myth, theme parks typically control behavior within their borders. Since a park is the site for ritual reconnection to the mythic order, action often must be encouraged, directed, or restrained lest the order be lost. William Chambers understood the need for spatial control in his eighteenth-century gardens, observes Quaintance. The landscape designer laid Kew's paths so that the visitor would have to view two sheep meadows and thus be reminded of Prince George's famous interest in sheep breeding. The landscape designers at the U.S. National Park Service also have a sense of how spatial order can foster a theme park's narrative. The one-way road at Cades Cove limits the ability to reinterpret the National Park Service's message. Visitors can diminish the experience by driving through without stopping, but the thrust of the narrative will remain the same because the spatial order is linear. The ultimate constraint is exclusion, which must occur if a park is to draw pilgrims. Like heaven, theme parks are good places, and traditionally a good place is not open to all. According to Harwood, eighteenth-century estate gardens

were visited only by the handful who had the leisure and wherewithal necessary for the sojourn. The early pleasure gardens, remarks Schenker, were similarly situated out of town so that the only visitors were those “who could afford to come by carriage.” Transportation costs limited access to a wealthy, mobile elite. When the gardens became popular haunts for the working classes, the wealthy avoided them because they were in unfashionable, disorderly neighborhoods. In both cases the character of the surrounding space restrained the use of these early theme parks. The first group was excluded because it was poor and could not cross the emptiness, but the other group stayed away because it was rich and feared to cross what had become a densely inhabited and impoverished city.

Theme parks also seem to be “outside” the everyday world because their landscapes, in contrast to other locations, appear timeless. Since the myths enshrined are supposed to be natural truths, beyond the influence of history, landscapes frequently appear frozen in some vague period. Depending on the theme, an era may be in the past, present, future, or some obscure “elsewhen.” As Lowenthal trenchantly observes, conflation is common to theme parks, especially when set in the past. Splendid China is an excellent example of a timeless landscape, for it presents samples from all over China and out of its rich history at a single site. However, to avoid any hint of aging, nothing modern is represented. Conversely, the time, or timelessness, of a landscape is also a potential burden: visitors can become bored, especially in those parks that rely heavily on entertainment. If new features and designs are not introduced, the landscape threatens to become an historic artifact, revealing the age of some messages. In a progressive landscape, for example, new elements must appear to support the virtues of the latest technology. Disneyland’s Tomorrowland in particular has had several such revisions. Alternately, an exhibition in a nationalist park that praises the current regime must disappear or be revised when it ends. Nothing should clearly declare that history led anywhere but directly to the positive, reassuring present.

This landscape-bounding, overriding commitment to order, spatial distance from visitors, and apparent timelessness allows theme parks to be secular *axes mundi*, but their distinctiveness also sunders or revises a theme park’s cultural, historic, and geographic connections to the outside world. Since the landscape of a park is carefully monitored and maintained in its own fixed time, nearby outside influences frequently have little impact upon it. For example, should the way of life among the locals change from agriculture to industry (as they did around southern California’s Disneyland), the park will likely remain intact. Disneyland withstood the force of change by directing resources toward its deflection. At the same time, however, a theme park tends to undermine local and regional identities either by appropriating their mythic essences and relocating them within the park boundaries or by transforming the surrounding landscape in response to the park. Washington, D.C., area residents, for instance, fought Disney’s proposed history theme park in northern Virginia in part because they feared a shift of the sacred from the nearby Civil War battlefields maintained by the National Park Service and in part because they knew the countryside around the new site would rapidly commercialize. Pilgrimage sites have long been associated with vendors, guides, innkeepers, and others catering to pilgrims’ real and imagined needs. As these services grow in number around a theme park, the region typically loses its

old character and comes to be seen in terms of the park and its associated features. Orlando, Fla., which had previously been known for its citrus and ornamental horticulture, has been almost entirely transformed into a region of theme parks. Its earlier identity is increasingly nothing more than another icon to be manipulated by merchants peddling goods to the pilgrims.

Theme parks did not spring forth *ex nihilo* during the twentieth century. Elements developed in Europe, China, and elsewhere over the last four hundred years. A characteristic trope at all these places has been a nostalgia for the country and small towns. It gives form to a visitor's dissatisfaction with an urbanized and, more recently, industrialized world. In these tropes people see a recapitulation of their society's agrarian and mercantile history. However, nostalgia for a wild, prehistoric, hunting-gathering past is not widespread. Perhaps because rustic life was lost recently while the hunting-gathering one was abandoned long ago or because the transition from country to city was not as dramatic and wrenching as the shift from a mobile to a sedentary ecology, urbanized societies can look back on the landscapes of their less urban, but still settled, ancestors and see themselves. In contrast, national parks and forests preserve wilderness, an untamed place, but not its people. These nature-themed parks often grew out of a recent nationalist nostalgia for the landscapes from the period when the modern state's territory was established. The nature park puts the pilgrim in touch with the physical world his predecessors wrestled with to create the country he now occupies. Frequently, as was the case in the United States and Argentina, native peoples were an impediment rather than a resource for the new life. They are not the predecessors to be praised, so they have been separated from their landscape in the park.

Whenever the lives of earlier peoples, whether native or immigrant, are presented in theme parks, the landscape is usually organized using one of three different audience-performer approaches. First, as at Walt Disney World, they can be fully choreographed, objectified, and produced for the visitor. All the practices, questions, and material-cultural artifacts are preplanned by park authorities. The result is an object or product for the visitors to perceive at a distance. This distance may be physical or psychological but the flow of information is like a broadcast medium—toward the visitor. Second, as at an agricultural fair, the performance is partly choreographed but not objectified nor produced for visitors. The order of events and how they occur is controlled but not as a product to be necessarily purchased, enjoyed, or appreciated by the public present. It is more open-ended, allowing for spontaneous, dynamic interactions between performers and audience. Third, as at the Chinese folk culture villages, the performance is partly choreographed and not objectified yet produced for the visitors. The performers maintain a presence and a set of practices within a fixed space but are not there simply to be observed. The design brings visitors and performers together for the former's satisfaction.

Landscape can be arranged to control drama, movement, and behavior in order to foster a park's messages. It is not merely an isotropic surface on which the park rests but an active shaper of the experience. The space inside and around a park can be thrilling (as on a ride), act as a dramatic threshold, or function as a barrier, whether empty or occupied.

Space is actively manipulated like the materials in it so as to recall earlier uses and stimulate responses.

We must, however, be careful not to conclude that form, historical function, and meaning easily coincide, especially since wealth seems to allow—even encourage—theming. Affluent societies now and in the past have had more leisure than poor ones and often used their resources to create themed environments. Thus we find nature gardens in eighteenth-century France and China. Most theme parks today are commercial, nationalistic, or combination enterprises, so as their numbers increase along with the world's wealth, we should expect an increasing portion of the world's local and regional landscapes to become uniformly commercial and national. Despite their postmodern aspects, theme parks are part of modernity, agents in the homogenization of places. The new ones will be especially influential because they are increasingly likely to be historic rather than futuristic facilities. History parks and fantasy parks will presumably gain adherents over future-oriented settings because they are less affected by the tension between a dynamic external world of easily jaded visitors and a purportedly timeless, authentic, and essential landscape. Change is less likely to affect features in a history park because they can, like Huis Ten Bosch, draw on existing lore. National identity can be fostered more easily by emphasizing historic connections between groups than by projecting future affinities. In addition, the past's technology is less likely to be questioned than the future's innovations. However, unless the people in areas near theme parks are willing and able to commit resources to contain their influence and direct it toward widely beneficial ends, local and regional identities will be steadily eroded and lost to park operators pursuing profit and national allegiance.

Contributors

Brenda Brown is a writer, artist, and designer whose work for many years has been concerned with time, our contemporary constructed “natures,” and the relationship of art and design, particularly as expressed in landscapes. She served as chair of the organization committee for *Eco-Revelatory Design: Nature Constructed/Nature Revealed*, a landscape architecture exhibit that opened at the University of Illinois in 1998 and closed in 2000 at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. She also edited and designed the exhibition catalog, which was a special issue of *Landscape Journal*. Brown’s analyses and photographs of contemporary landscape projects have appeared in *Landscape Journal* and *Landscape Architecture*. Her firm, Brenda Brown Landscape Design Art Research, is based in Gainesville, Fla.

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