

PREFACE

The assumption of this book is that there is no such thing as neutral media. Media in the form of entertainment—especially entertainment targeted towards children and families—either functions as an instrument used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into, as Richard Shaull describes it, “the logic of the present system, and bring about conformity to it”, or it offers subversive possibilities that advance towards a practice of intellectual and emotional freedom. While it is assumed in the following pages that fantasy is rich with subversive possibilities for the individual subject as well as for social practice writ large, *fantasy* as *Disney* has come to purvey it over the past four generations functions largely as a tool of Capital; that is, as the dream of “the capitalist unconscious.” This study is an attempt to offer a way of understanding *Disney fantasy* as an inexorable (though not inevitable) expression of Capital’s will to power over the Imaginary.

Ongoing social change has transformed the nature of academic disciplines. Media and cultural studies—and the study of Disney—was once the province of aficionados and nostalgics, but has since developed into an academic field of inquiry that continues to grow. Scholarly and popular publications proliferate at a steady pace. Over the same period, Disney as a corporation has expanded its already vast entertainment empire with acquisitions of properties such as Pixar Animation, Marvel Studios, and Lucasfilm, not to mention the opening of a new Disney theme park in Shanghai, China, in 2016. Disney ended 2016 with a record-shattering \$7 billion in box office returns, a record that seems

sure to fall in the years that follow. Disney's ongoing deployment of fantasy seems to know no bounds, and this alone makes it a topic worthy of continued study. Its success has made Disney one of the largest and most successful multi-media/entertainment corporations in the world. What does it mean that one corporation has taken responsibility for shaping so much popular mythology, for purveying fantasies that serve to script a child's primal Symbolic language?

This book is designed for students of media, children's culture, fantasy, film, and especially Disney. While my approach draws on fundamental ideas rooted in Lacanian psychoanalysis, my goal has been to reduce and adapt (without betraying or weakening) Lacan's key theoretical ideas as a way of understanding *Disney fantasy* as a function of ideology understood in terms of history, technology, and desire.

In completing this study, I have had the help of many people. I wish to thank Lori, Emily, Clara, and Jack for their generous support and collaboration over the years. I want to also thank Rhode Island College and my many students for the countless hours of rewarding discussions. I want to thank especially those various colleagues who have helped me at critical moments to realize this project, including Richard Feldstein, Kate Capshaw, Jack Zipes, Russell Potter, Michael Michaud, Kathryn Kalinak, and especially Sara Reilly for her steady and expert assistance.

Providence, USA

Joseph Zornado



<http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-62676-5>

Disney and the Dialectic of Desire

Fantasy as Social Practice

Zornado, J.

2017, IX, 260 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-62676-5