

If the conversation is to draw to a close, its a conversation worth sending off with a blessing, in my view.

Thank you to all who contributed diverse and thoughtful viewpoints---for me, the conversation has been an extended listening exercise, a sustained theological reflection arriving in my inbox amid so much that is not.

The conversation began not long after I read, in awe, of how [Disney characters liberated the voice of an autistic son](#), in the presence of the sustained, attentive, nonjudgemental listening of the parent. And it appears to be drawing to a close as I return to a space I recognize as thin, the vinyl-lined, fluorescent-lit waiting room of our family vet, where humans and their animals attend to each other in hope, fear, unconditional love and the agency of reason and science. Along with jail cells with a similar scent of antiseptic and fear, the vet's offices is, for me, as much a thin space, a place of 'earth as it is in heaven,' as any gauzy landscape shrouded in fog, high-desert monastery, or long offshore swim. God at work through us and in us, Disney and elsewhere.

To the extent possible, I, like many who have weighed in on this conversation, choose not to participate in the commerce and culture of Disney; that' a decision based on what values I want to see foregrounded in the economy, culture, and landscape my family (my species?) grows into. It might be wise, though, to not mistake those reasonable and secular choices for 'knowing' where God is at work, or not at work.

I appreciate and learned form the listening, and thank the listserve organizers. It has been, and I hope will remain, a place---safe, maybe even thin----for sustained meditations on these questions and others.

And Clark---let's talk thin spaces at Woodbury when there's a moment.

With thanks,

Hadley Arnold

**ARID LANDS INSTITUTE**

Woodbury University  
7500 Glenoaks Boulevard  
Burbank, CA 91510  
818. 394 3335 T

explore our new website at:  
[aridlands.org](http://aridlands.org)

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On Apr 6, 2014, at 2:21 PM, "Gusevich, Miriam" <[Gusevicm@CUA.EDU](mailto:Gusevicm@CUA.EDU)> wrote:

I concur. Enough!  
Let's change the subject.  
What is the etymology of sacred?  
Miriam

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 6, 2014, at 1:07 PM, "Michael J. Crosbie"  
<[faithandform@COMCAST.NET](mailto:faithandform@COMCAST.NET)<<mailto:faithandform@COMCAST.NET>>> wrote:

Make it stop, make it stop!!!!

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 5, 2014, at 2:39 PM, "Timothy K. Parker"  
<[tparker@NORWICH.EDU](mailto:tparker@NORWICH.EDU)<<mailto:tparker@NORWICH.EDU>>> wrote:

In light of Michael's comments here, I'd also add that while many places (or objects, events, etc.) appear to be experienced as sacred due to some quality of that which is encountered there, it is also the case that sacredness is attributed as a matter of human decision, practice, and tradition. In her recent book on the sacred (*Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*), Ann Taves aims to take seriously both aspects of such experience -- that which is somehow there in the thing experienced as sacred, as well as the process by which humans set apart some things as special and attribute sacredness -- by bringing along the discourses of neuroscience and others less commonly included in such studies. I think it's a promising approach...

best,  
Timothy

TIMOTHY KENT PARKER PhD  
Assistant Professor, History & Theory of Architecture & Art  
School of Architecture & Art  
Norwich University  
Northfield, VT  
[tparker@norwich.edu](mailto:tparker@norwich.edu)<<mailto:tparker@norwich.edu>> / 802-485-2629

On Apr 5, 2014, at 12:26 AM, Benedikt, Michael L wrote:

It is a Greco-pagan idea, revived by Heidegger, that gods are to be found in certain places and not others, and thus God too. In the Abrahamic tradition, there is one God and "He" is everywhere "as close as the vein in your neck" (which is how Muhammad put it). God is neither in "thick places" nor in "thin places;" neither in intimate places nor grand ones; neither at Disneyland nor Lourdes...necessarily. God is everywhere truth is being told, good is being done, and beauty is being made, not by nature or automatically, but by beings like us, free to do otherwise.  
IMHO, of course.

Michael

---

Michael Benedikt  
Hal Box Chair in Urbanism  
ACSA Distinguished Professor  
Director, Center for American Architecture and Design  
School of Architecture  
The University of Texas at Austin, Texas 78712  
512-471-9890

<http://soa.utexas.edu/caad>

<http://www.mbenedikt.com><<http://www.mbenedikt.com/>>

On Apr 4, 2014, at 8:00 PM, DAVID KRIZAJ  
<david.krizaj@HSC.UTAH.EDU<<mailto:david.krizaj@HSC.UTAH.EDU>>>  
wrote:

It is kind of trivial to blame Disney Co. for crass commercialism.

Wouldn't you say that beauty and the capacity for accessing "thin spaces" are in the eyes (and hearts) of the beholder? After all, we can recognize vulgarity and banality because they are in us as well.

If some people (& their kids) get a transcendent experience in Anaheim, more power to them. I am thinking of people living in Kibera or Dharavi, perfectly content and happy... perhaps happier than many of us...and able to find beauty in little things. One also could live at Piazza Navona, Faroe Islands or camp on top of Uluru and be oblivious & disconnected.

I wonder if believing that the sacred tends to hide in 'special' places is a contradiction in terms. What if these places are special because they allow those of us who are spiritually dense to get closer to that feeling-experience that is always already present?

David

--

David Krizaj, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Deputy Director of Research  
Dept. of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences  
John A. Moran Eye Center  
65 Mario Capecchi Dr.  
University of Utah School of Medicine  
Salt Lake City, UT 84132  
phone: 801-213-2777 office  
801-213-2770, 2774 lab

Fax: 801-587-8314

Email: david.krizaj@hsc.utah.edu<mailto:david.krizaj@hsc.utah.edu>

<http://krizajlab.vision.utah.edu><<http://krizajlab.vision.utah.edu/>>

From: <Tassinary>, Louis

<ltassinary@ARCH.TAMU.EDU<mailto:ltassinary@ARCH.TAMU.EDU>>

Reply-To: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit <AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>>

Date: Friday, April 4, 2014 at 1:06 PM

To: "AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>" <AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>>

<AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>>

Subject: Re: Disney Monastic

Honestly, I'm quite disheartened by the ease with which some folks appear willing to be apologists for the Disney Empire. The relatively recent book by H. Giroux & G. Pollock (2010) titled "The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence" pretty much says it all. Quite understandably, and completely consistent with their corporate status, if they can increase revenue by being sexist or racist they will...and if they believe that supporting gay rights improves their bottom line they will support gay rights...and if they believe that pandering to the christian community will open new markets that were possibly closed by their support of gay rights they will support Disney Monastics. From a social science perspective there may quite a lot to learn about what relatively well-off folks are craving by conducting research on both those who seek and those who avoid this new form of "spiri-tourism" but why believe that this is anything but a Potemkin Village? To quote from their website, "Subliminal world-view messages of Disney rides will help monastics see how these spiritual realities are captured and translated in images of popular culture." Really?

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Louis G Tassinary, PhD JD

Professor, VIZA

Executive Associate Dean, CARC

College of Architecture, TAMU

We're imprisoned by misperceptions and all kinds of tribal animus. It's exhausting. [Teresa Wiltz<<http://www.theguardian.com/profile/teresa-wiltz>>]

On Apr 4, 2014, at 8:43 AM, Brandon Ro

<brro.sonrisas@GMAIL.COM<mailto:brro.sonrisas@GMAIL.COM>> wrote:

This has been a great discussion thus far, but I must add my thoughts.

Having grown up going to Disneyland and watching their films as a child, the experience of that place (despite its 'plastic artificiality') did make 'real' some aspect of the fairytale, story, myth. In a sense, I was re-living, re-experiencing the story....the myth... I was going back to the beginning

of the time at the myth's conception, in illo tempore, as Mircea Eliade would say. Isn't this what religious rites and rituals attempt to do?

Over the course of time, my childhood perception of that place has been tainted, but I find an interesting parallel between the realm of the theme park and sacred architecture. Both are thematic in essence with their focus on commemorating a specific "mythohistorical" event, place, or individual(s), as Lindsay Jones would say. In each case, if we use the words of Karsten Harries, there is a representation or re-presentation of the myth. Some attempts, of course, are more plastic than others but all are attempting to paint an image of the imaginary, intangible, mythical, ineffable, numinous qualities of reality.

Having worked very closely with Walt Disney Imagineering (the designer think tank behind the magic kingdom) on a few projects, their approach to design is very much in line with Travis Price's design process for Spirit of Place projects (albeit with much different results). Both attempt to find the essence of a culture, story, place, religion, myth. Then, they seek to (re)interpret it and make it alive, visible once again in built form. Both are about creating a lasting impression through architectural experience (commercial motivations aside). I know individuals who have had extremely powerful or profound architectural experiences in the world of Disney as well as in sacred places around the world.

So perhaps there is a place for spirituality in the world of Disney (for some)...Disney Monastic is indeed an interesting phenomenon.

BRANDON RO

On Thu, Apr 3, 2014 at 12:24 PM, charles  
<charles@mcharlesbernstein.com<mailto:charles@mcharlesbernstein.com>> wrote:  
Thank you. I've heard it said another similar way:

The fool is happy when he gets what he wants:  
The wise man is happy for no reason at all.

<image004.jpg>

310 709 0499<tel:310%20709%200499>  
www.mcharlesbernstein.com<http://www.mcharlesbernstein.com/>

“You can never get enough of what you don't really need”  
- Harold Ramis

From: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit [mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>] On Behalf Of Prem Chandavarkar  
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2014 7:02 PM

To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-

L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Disney Monastic

Yama said: The good is one thing; the pleasant, another.  
Both of these, serving different needs, bind a man.  
It goes well with him who, of the two, takes the good;  
but he who chooses the pleasant misses the end.

Both the good and the pleasant present themselves to a man.  
The calm soul examines them well and discriminates.  
Yea, he prefers the good to the pleasant;  
but the fool chooses the pleasant out of greed and avarice.

Katha Upanishad  
Chapter 2, Verses 1-2

(For those who are not familiar with the Upanishads, see  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads> )

<image003.png>

On 02-Apr-2014, at 8:12 pm, Travis Price  
<Travis@TRAVISPRICEARCHITECTS.COM<mailto:Travis@TRAVISPRICEARCHITECTS.COM>> wrote:

I kind of like mommy kissing Santa Claus myself! Let's all go to Disneyland and sort it out!  
Rabelais would encourage humor at this junction! Travis

Travis L Price III, FAIA  
Travis Price Architects  
1028 33rd St NW – 320  
Washington, DC 20007  
202 . 965 . 7000

<image001.jpg>

[www.TravisPriceArchitects.com](http://www.TravisPriceArchitects.com)<<http://www.travispricearchitects.com/>>  
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[www.ArchaeologyofTomorrow.com](http://www.ArchaeologyofTomorrow.com)<<http://www.archaeologyoftomorrow.com/>>

From: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit [mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU] On Behalf Of D-D  
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2014 7:53 AM  
To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Disney Monastic

Hey Nobody is telling you to lie to your children.... I like Disney, Santa Claus, and the "Easter Bunny" .... if you want to tell them they aren't real then knock yourself out.... for me fairy tales are great.... and the sources of great literature... go Robin Hood....

If you want a great escape from all the crass political correctness in the world try the Magic Kingdom... for a spiritual experience... try church on Sunday....

On Tuesday, April 1, 2014 11:14 PM, "Michael J. Crosbie, Ph.D., FAIA"

<faithandform@COMCAST.NET<mailto:faithandform@COMCAST.NET>> wrote:

Ya just can't tell the real plastic from the fake plastic anymore....

Michael J. Crosbie, Ph.D., FAIA

Editor-in-Chief

Faith & Form

47 Grandview Terrace

Essex, CT 06426

860-575-4702<tel:860-575-4702>

[www.faithandform.com](http://www.faithandform.com)<http://www.faithandform.com/>

[www.linkedin.com/in/michaeljcrosbie](http://www.linkedin.com/in/michaeljcrosbie)<http://www.linkedin.com/in/michaeljcrosbie>

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: <http://twitter.com/faithandform>

---

From: "Travis Price"

<Travis@TRAVISPRICEARCHITECTS.COM<mailto:Travis@TRAVISPRICEARCHITECTS.COM>>

To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>

Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2014 9:41:54 AM

Subject: Re: Disney Monastic

Disney Monastic has got to be the most bogus rip off ever conceived, even using the word "conceive" is too kind. It reminds me of some tourists years ago touting how much fun it was at Christmas at Disneyworld to see how every culture in the world made its different Christmas Tree ornaments! Hindhu or Buddhist Christmas tree ornaments were the highest sellers.... The delusions of mercantilism cloaked in the worst veneer of cartoon theology. May everyone spend the same money or less, to go to a real spiritual place somewhere on the globe at least once. It would mean a lot to know what real wine tastes like instead of Disney Cool-Aid.

Travis

Travis L Price III, FAIA

Travis Price Architects

1028 33rd St NW – 320

Washington, DC 20007

202 . 965 . 7000

<image001.jpg>

[www.TravisPriceArchitects.com](http://www.TravisPriceArchitects.com)<http://www.travispricearchitects.com/>

[www.SpiritofPlace-Design.com](http://www.SpiritofPlace-Design.com)<http://www.spiritofplace-design.com/>

[www.ArchaeologyofTomorrow.com](http://www.ArchaeologyofTomorrow.com)<http://www.archaeologyoftomorrow.com/>

From: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit [mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-

L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU] On Behalf Of David Seamon  
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 7:20 PM  
To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Disney Monastic

Barbara Geiger's message reminds me of the following passage from Mircea Eliade:

“The most commonplace existence swarms with images and symbols. Let us repeat... that symbols never disappear from the reality of the psyche. The aspect of them may change, but their function remains the same; one has only to look behind the latest masks... The life of modern man is swarming with half-forgotten myths, decaying herophanies and secularized symbols... They are of no less interest for all that. These degraded images present us the only possible point of departure for the spiritual renewal of modern man. It is of the greatest importance... to rediscover a whole mythology, if not a theology, still conceals in the most ordinary, everyday life of contemporary man; it will depend upon himself whether he can work his way back to the source and discover the profound meanings of all these faded images and damaged myths.... (IMAGES AND SYMBOLS, 1969, pp. 16-20).

Dr. David Seamon  
Professor of Environment-Behavior & Place Studies  
Department of Architecture  
211 Seaton Hall  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66506-2901  
785-532-5953<tel:785-532-5953>  
triad@ksu.edu<mailto:triad@ksu.edu>  
www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/<http://www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/>  
<http://ksu.academia.edu/DavidSeamon>

From: ACS is a new scholarly forum on architecture and spiritualit [mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU] On Behalf Of Julio Bermudez  
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2014 11:56 AM  
To: AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU<mailto:AM-CARC-ACS-L@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Disney Monastic

Dear friends,

One of our ACS members, Barbara Geiger, asked me to post the following message. I just checked the reference and found the whole idea of “Disney Monastic” worth ACS consideration (although I am refraining from making a comment until you know more). Here it goes:

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A colleague of mine has published a book called A Disney Monastic (<http://www.disneymonastics.com/>). Kevin Goodman is an Episcopalian priest who finds amazing spiritual depth in Disney World. He has been exploring this topic for years, offers Disney World retreats, and manages to integrate spirituality with (what to me is) the height of American commercialism. It's kind of amazing.



I wonder if there might be some ACS members who would find this of interest--Disney World as a space/place, God in the reiterated American experience. height of American commercialism. It's kind of amazing.

I wonder if there might be some ACS members who would find this of interest--Disney World as a space/place, God in the reiterated American experience.

Thanks for considering.

Barbara Geiger

College of Architecture, Illinois Institute of Technology

email: <bgeiger@uwalumni.com<mailto:bgeiger@uwalumni.com>>

barbarageiger.net<http://barbarageiger.net/>

<http://barbarageiger.net<http://barbarageiger.net/>>

fermeornee.com<http://fermeornee.com/> <http://fermeornee.com<http://fermeornee.com/>>

-----  
Julio Bermudez, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

The Catholic University of America

School of Architecture and Planning

Crough Center of Architectural Studies

620 Michigan Ave NE

Washington, DC 20064

(202) 319-5755<tel:%28202%29%20319-5755> (phone)

bermudez@cua.edu<mailto:bermudez@cua.edu> (email)

http://faculty.cua.edu/bermudez (web)

"leap and the net will appear"

TIMOTHY KENT PARKER PhD

Assistant Professor, History & Theory of Architecture & Art

School of Architecture & Art

Norwich University

Northfield, VT

tparker@norwich.edu<mailto:tparker@norwich.edu> / 802-485-2629