Chapter 30 Tamara Organizing Frame of Storytelling Theatre

What is Disney's Tamara Theatre? **http://cbae.nmsu.edu/~dboje/papers/DisneyTamaraland.html has the complete text**

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Below is a set of excerpts from the main article.

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Who is better known, Jesus Christ or Mickey Mouse? Walt Disney enterprises is a storytelling organization par excellence. The happy stories organization members tell about themselves are as artfully constructed and as carefully edited as their legendary characters. But just as the question of the Wicked Witch in the film Sleeping Beauty ("Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all?") has more than one answer, there are contrary stories about Walt Disney and the so-called Magic Kingdom that do not fit the universal tale of happiness. My purpose was to form a theory about this storytelling organization, use postmodern analyses to resituate the excluded stories and voices, and then analyze their relationship to the dominant legend of an official, happy, and profitable Disney studios. This research goes behind the artful and managed happy constructions of the Disney storytelling enterprise to reveal a darker side: a Walt who was a tyrant, the crafting of an official history out of multifaceted reality constructions, the excluded voices of former employees, and exercises in story surveillance. In the past, management theorists have written stories without attention to plurality and economic context.(1) As writers, researchers are therefore complicit in marketing the happy kingdom stories to their readers. In the "management of writing and writing of management," the construction and choice of the happy story over competing voices is less a search for the truth than a naive political and economic complicity that marginalizes alternative stories. I demonstrate plurality here by describing Tamara, a play that is a discursive metaphor of the storytelling organization. Discursive metaphors "read" story plurivocality -- the potential for multiple interpretation -- back into the constructions that organizations collectively "write" as their histories. Therefore, the research question here is, What are the collective and historical dynamics of the storytelling organization, viewed as a Tamara, as it writes its story onto the employees and the public? Previous research has not explored the multiplicity and contentiousness of collective storytelling processes. This question also speaks to important and timely concerns that organizational theorists are raising regarding the need to craft organization theories on the basis of linguistic (e.g., text, novel, discourse, conversation), rather than mechanistic and organic metaphors (Hatch, 1993; Hazen, 1993; Kilduff, 2993; Thatchenkery, 1992).

… In Hollywood, a play called Tamara puts the audience in a special relationship with an experimental fiction.(2) In Tamara, Los Angeles' longest-running play, a dozen characters unfold their stories before a

walking, sometimes running, audience. Tamara enacts a true story taken from the diary of Aelis Mazoyer. It is Italy, January 10, 1927, in the era of Mussolini. Gabriele d'Annunzio, a poet, patriot, womanizer, and revolutionary who is exceedingly popular with the people, is under virtual house arrest. Tamara, an expatriate Polish beauty, aristocrat, and aspiring artist, is summoned from Paris to paint d'Annunzio's portrait. Instead of remaining stationary, viewing a single stage, the audience fragments into small groups that chase characters from one room to the next, from one floor to the next, even going into bedrooms, kitchens, and other chambers to chase and co-create the stories that interest them the most. If there are a dozen stages and a dozen storytellers, the number of story lines an audience could trace as it chases the wandering discourses of Tamara is 12 factorial (479,001,600).

For example, when attending the play I followed the chauffeur from the kitchen to the maid's bedroom; there she met the butler, who had just entered the drawing room. As they completed their scene, they each wandered off into different rooms, leaving the audience, myself included, to choose whom to follow. As I decided which characters to follow, I experienced a very different set of stories than someone following another sequence of characters. No audience member gets to follow all the stories since the action is simultaneous, involving different characters in different rooms and on different floors. At the play, each audience member receives a "passport" to return again and again to try to figure out more of the many intertwined networks of stories. Tamara cannot be understood in one visit, even if an audience member and a group of friends go in six different directions and share their story data. Two people can even be in the same room and -- if they came there by way of different rooms and character-sequences -- each can walk away from the same conversation with entirely different stories.

Finally, there is also an indeterminacy about each character. One thinks one is following a chauffeur, who in one discourse changes the rules and becomes a spy disguised as a chauffeur and who then becomes an aristocrat pretending to be a spy pretending to be a chauffeur. Now, in his love affair with the maid, is he indeed in love with the maid, is he using her to spy on the aristocracy, or is he toying with her as an exploitable subject?

STORYTELLING ORGANIZATION THEORY

Tamara provides a metaphor for a storytelling organization, what Pondy and Mitroff referred to as a "level 7 symbol processing system" as well as a "level 8 multi-cephalous" or "multi-brain" (1979: 4-8) system. Pondy and Mitroff asked the field of management to theorize beyond mechanistic (frameworks, clockworks) and organic (blueprinted growth) systems to language-based organizing models (symbol-processing, multi-brain systems). Recent attempts to move from mechanical to organic metaphors, such as Morgan's (1993) spider plant model, still focus upon hierarchical and mechanistic relations instead of a linguistic theory of organization.(3) Deleuze and Guattari (1987) analyzed the rhizome metaphor in a less hierarchical and less linear-causal fashion. Their alternative organic metaphor seeks to extricate roots and foundations, to thwart unities and break dichotomies (such as mechanistic-organic) , and to spread out roots and branches, thereby pluralizing and disseminating, producing differences and multiplicities, making new connections (Best & Kellner, 1991: 99).

In previous work, I defined a storytelling organization as "collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense-making and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory" (Boje, 1991a: 106). Gephart, in a study of leader succession, conceptualized the storytelling organization as "constructed in the above succession stories as a tool or program for making sense of events" (1991: 37). In sum, the storytelling organization as seen in Tamara is a wandering linguistic framework in which stories are the medium of interpretative exchange. Storytelling organizations exist to tell their collective stories, to live out their collective stories, to be in constant struggle over getting the stories of insiders and outsiders straight (Jones, 1991; Wilkins & Thompson, 1991). At one extreme, the storytelling organization can oppress by subordinating everyone and collapsing everything to one "grand narrative" or "grand story." At the other extreme, the storytelling organization can be a pluralistic construction

of a multiplicity of stories, storytellers, and story performance events that are like Tamara but are realized differently depending upon the stories in which one is participating.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Stories and Discipline Practices - Stories discipline by defining characters, sequencing plots, and scripting actions. Stories even precede people's birth and linger after their death. By a story, I mean an oral or written performance involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experience (Boje, 1991a: 111). In this definition, stories do not require beginnings, middles, or endings, as they do in more formal and restrictive definitions (Bruner, 1990: 43-59; Gephart, 1991: 35). Stories are referenced with a nod of the head, or a brief "You know the full story," or with a code word or two: "His way!" As in Tamara, the storyteller and the story listener are co-constructors of each story event as a multiplicity of stories get enacted simultaneously in a multiplicity of sites, of brief encounter, in and around organizations. Even these abbreviated and interrupted story performances yield plurivocity. "The notion of plurivocity, that there are multiple meanings in the story, is very empowering, because it gives organizational participants considerable flexibility to create their own interpretation of what is going on" (Thachankary, 1992: 231).

Because of the opportunity for multiple interpretation, much of management is about judging stories and storytellers and capturing story characters in a panoptic, interconnected network of interpretative-disciplinary relationships. Burrell described discipline as "discrete, regular, generalized and uninterrupted" sets of performances (1988: 227). Foucault called stories "the vigilance of intersecting gazes" (1977: 217). Stories discipline by being explanatory myths, qualitative simplifications, conceptual constructions, and perceptual themes that interpret and frame organizations and characters. The discursive dynamics of the storytelling collective are also revealed in the level of contestation among stories.

In sum, people do not just tell stories: they tell stories to "enact" an account of themselves and their community (Browning, 1991). Stories also shape the course and meaning of human organization. Yet, in recent years only a handful of organization studies have focused on the link between storytelling and organization (Boje, 1991a, 1991b; Browning, 1991; Gephart, 1991; Hawes, 1991; Jones, 1991; Martin, Feldman, Hatch, & Sitkin, 1983; Wilkins & Thompson, 1991). Although more research on organizational stories is needed, what is even more urgent is to propose models, such as the Tamara metaphor, that focus on the linguistic qualities of human organizations. The beauty of Tamara is that the choices surrendered by single-story interpretations of organization are returned in this discursive metaphor for organizational life. Organizations cannot be registered as one story, but instead are a multiplicity, a plurality of stories and story interpretations in struggle with one another. People wander the halls and offices of organizations, simultaneously chasing storylines -- and that is the "work" of contemporary organizations. More important, organizational life is more indeterminate, more differentiated, more chaotic, than it is simple, systematic, monological, and hierarchical.

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To deconstruct is to actually analyze the relations between the dualities in stories -- such as the positive and negative, the central and the marginal, the essential and the inessential, the insider and the outsider -- to show the ambiguity embedded in them and to show the storytelling practices used to discipline particular meanings. Only collecting the happy side of Disney organization stories, as do the official biographies, and only telling the dark side of Disney stories are both rather one-sided ways to analyze Disney storytelling. My approach was to look at multiple variations of the Disney stories to show how each version covered up a great deal of ambiguity. In this way, I could study how the Disney studios disciplined its storytelling. I redirected my analysis to look at the differences between the CEO and non-CEO stories, even gathering outsider stories of Disney to get at the other side….

In deconstruction, the artificial lines that separate the story from its contexts are challenged to reveal how permeable a story is to its broader environmental and historical contexts. In short, I looked beyond the stories of the happy executives and the official Disney histories. I began to view each story as one consensus, one totalizing account, one set of universals, one set of essential foundations, and one construction. In deconstruction, I looked for alternative views that overtook the consensus as the multiplicity of local stories struggled with the more official stories. In this way, I began to trace the ways in which the official accounts and the nonofficial accounts played with the same story elements but came away with very different readings.

As the analysis proceeded from 1989 through 1994, totalizing, universalizing, essentializing, and panoptic control became a major analytic construct (see below). I began to see how the stories I grew up accepting about Walt Disney and his Magic Kingdom were being resisted by marginal accounts. I therefore began to shift from a "functionalist" analysis (how stories sell) to a more skeptical one (how one side of a story masks other sides). Instead of affirming storytelling functionality, I increasingly looked for the exploitation, privilege, domination, power, discipline, and control practices of this storytelling organization. There is no mystery to the specific steps in this deconstruction. The only difficult step was to shift my own perspective as an analyst. One misses these details if one is not trained to look for them. To deconstruct the CEO stories, for example, meant reading for hierarchical categories and themes in the stories to see how one term dominated another, how one character commanded another, how one element shadowed the other, how one voice spoke instead of or ahead of the other voices. Much about deconstruction has to do with noticing voice. Who gets a voice in the CEO stories, whose voice is marginal, who gets no voice at all? It also means looking at those stories that are being concealed and marginalized within particular stories. To deconstruct is to challenge the functional and hierarchical role a story assumes within the Disney enterprise. To deconstruct is to unleash accounts that do not fit neatly within the official account of Disney. Deconstruction is not a quantifiable technique. That is my reconstruction story of the method used in this research.

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DISNEY: OFFICIAL DISCOURSE, SUBVERSIVE VOICES, AND POSTMODERN TALES

In this section, I present official Disney discourse (Walt's official stories and then subversive voices (Disney employees with another side of the story). This presentation will be followed by my own analysis of Disney storytelling, highlighting its cacophony and discord rather than the managed harmony of the official story. return to index

Voices

Postmodernists, according to Rosenau, "question the attribution of privilege or special status to any voice, authors, or a specific person or perspectives" (1992: xiv). Walt, in the official Disney discourse, rarely allowed any voice other than his own to be heard. He was the official spokesperson for Disney enterprises. Walt even referred to his wife, Lilly, as "Mrs. Disney." He may have done so out of the formality of his generation, but the term was a signal of possession nonetheless. Walt took ownership of everything about Disney enterprises. The musicians and composers of the music for Disney's movies and shorts were referred to as "my musicians"; cartoonists were "my artists." "My brother, my uncle, my father, my daughter, my pal" are all references Walt made, giving no personal name to any of the people thus referenced. Certainly no one of them was ever the voice of Disney's storytelling organization. There is one exception to Walt's possession of people and their talents: his characters. Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, Jose Carioca (a parrot) were all allowed voices in the Disney organization -- mostly because they were the organization. Walt recognized this. Eisner, in contrast, has given identity to other human voices. George Lucas, Michael Jackson, and Walt all have stories as actors and participants in the Disney organization. Whereas Walt used personal experience narratives, Eisner tends to tell third-person stories.

The following excerpt from a transcript of a stockholders' meeting shows Eisner invoking the Disney legend in a way that brings in others' voices:

In 1923, Walt arrived in Hollywood with drawing materials under his arm, $40 in his pocket, and a dream. Waiting for him at Union Station was his brother Roy, who would dedicate his life to making Walt's dream come true. Together with their wives, Lilly and Edna, working alongside them at night around the kitchen table, they struggled to keep a tiny studio alive.

Eisner further emphasized the Disney legend by voicing what Walt might have felt about a decision:

No one was more sensitive to change nor more attuned to its possibilities than Disney himself. I believe that Walt would take great pride in announcing with me today that our company has concluded an arrangement with George Lucas, whose film-making innovations have created the Indiana Jones and Star Wars series of movies. ... I don't know if Walt would be more pleased with this announcement because George today comes closest to the creative level of Walt himself or because George as a child was there 39 years ago at the opening day of Disneyland. ... In Disney's business the fundamental idea can apply to a motion picture, a Disney Channel, or network TV show, a new pavilion, a theme park attraction, or a merchandise offering.

On another occasion Eisner gave voice to the "guest's" side of a proposed change:

Actually on the 30th Anniversary night, I came down here with Frank (Wells) and the writer from the New York Times and I was proudly telling about all the things we were doing at Disneyland and I got to the George Lucas-Star Wars rides and having heard from Dick and other people the (most) attractive attraction which Disneyland ever had was during Inner Space, I told her we were replacing it. We're going to put in this great Star Wars attraction with technology that has never been seen before. It's gonna be the attraction that's going to replace that "dog," Inner Space. She said, "How can you say -- that dog? That's the most brilliant attraction ever at Disney. Walt Disney himself designed it. How can you ruin Disney?" She then dragged me to go over on it. We rode it twice. She called me a monster. And I haven't told anybody it's a dog. So it's not my fault. I just want you to know that it's not gonna be as good as the Star Wars attraction will be.

Eisner speaks for Walt and at the same time includes voices and personalities that Walt did not allow to speak. The theme of struggling to include more voices in Disney stories and decisions is not limited to Walt. It is replicated in Jeffrey Katzenberg, who joined the Walt Disney Company as head of Walt Disney Studios when Eisner took over in 1984. David Hoberman, an accomplished and creative Disney Studio producer and executive, finally emerged from the shadow of his micromanaging, workaholic, boss, Katzenberg. Hoberman had a reputation for expressing his opinion and challenging Katzenberg and Eisner on creative decisions. According to Hoberman, "Over the last 18 months, we have been able to include more voices in the process" (Ciron, 1993). The working relationship between Katzenberg and Hoberman, as well as Eisner's reinterpretations of Walt in stockholders' meetings, indicated an ongoing struggle between a modernist, single-voiced account of Disney and a more postmodern, multivoiced account. return to index

Marginalizations

Jack Kinney's (1988) stories of Walt's leadership style give insight into how Walt constructed his cartoon machine. Kinney, a marginalized character at Disney, an artist who did not get to sign his own work, offers one of the very few glimpses of the nonofficial side of Walt. Walt had a stenographer record story meetings. A typical story performance session could last from one to three hours and involve as many as 20 people. Walt not only gauged the story plots for salability but also assessed the neatness of the boards. By Kinney's account, Disney enterprises paid less than fair market value for art that is now sold for millions. A single frame of a thousand-frame cartoon drawn by Kinney commands thousands of dollars. Looking at Kinney's story allows deconstruction of Walt and Disney's side of the Disney monologue.

Walt's animated films did not carry screen credits. According to Kinney (1988: 9), most members of the general public thought Walt wrote the stories, made the drawings, and did the layout, voices, and sound effects. Jack Kinney worked for Walt from 1931 until 1957, and he was among the legions who drew thousands of cartoons for hundreds of films; however, both in and out of Walt's organization, these artists had no voice.

There is an official discourse and there are many marginalized discourses in every organization. In the official story of the Roy and Walt partnership, Roy has no character and no voice. In Walt's accounts, he alone developed the business. Eisner, however, does give Roy a voice.

It was a lovely spring evening in Paris. Roy Disney, Sr., and Jack Cutting had just finished a fine dinner and were taking a stroll. They talked of various subjects related to the studio, mixed with general small talk. They were relaxed and in a reminiscent mood, and finally Jack asked, "Roy, now that Walt is gone, why don't you take some of the credit for the development of the studio since the early days?" Roy stopped Jack with a hand on his arm and said, "Let me tell you a story. When Walt and I first started in business, we had a little studio on Vermont Avenue -- really a storefront, with a gold-leaf sign on the front window reading Disney Brothers Productions. As we prospered, we needed larger quarters and we found them in a building on Hyperion Avenue, close to our original store. One evening when Walt and I were discussing our move, Walt said to me, 'Roy, when we move to Hyperion, I'm going to have a large neon sign erected, reading Walt Disney Studios, Home of Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphonies.' He looked at me as if expecting an argument. I said, 'If that's the way you want it.' And Walt said, 'That's the way I want it and that's the way it will be!' And that's the way it was. So you see, Jack, I think it's a little late now, and besides, that's the way Walt would have wanted it" (Kinney, 1988: 198).

In the official story, Ub Iwerks and Roy Disney are marginal characters, as are cartoonists like Kinney, scriptwriters like Charles Shows; and story creators like Babbitt, Sorrell, and Hilberman. The official account makes Walt the inventor of Mickey Mouse and even animation, when by other accounts it was Ub Iwerks who did the early artwork and perhaps even created the famous Disney signature. The point here is not that the Disney version is untrue, but that it marginalizes and eliminates many characters with stories worth telling. return to index

Totalisms

A totalism is a historical account that privileges one relatively narrow point of view. To deconstruct, I looked at the stories that are not told as part of the grand story of Disney. Part of Walt's dominating voice at Disney enterprises is its official history. By history, I mean a recounting of events as seen and enacted by participant observers. The official Disney story is a commodification as well as a control device. It is a postmodern commodification because Walt is himself one of the characters of Disney, the way that Mickey Mouse is a character of Disney. It is modernist to the extent that it is produced by the micromanaging story machine. Walt's story is also a control device because it embellishes the Disney philosophy and conveys a code of behavior while obscuring other story constructions.

For Ron Miller, the CEO of Walt Disney Studios after Walt's death, the ghost of Walt remained at the helm. In the many committees that proliferated during Miller's administration, people would often say: "What would Walt have done?" They would tell the story of how Walt handled a similar situation and then do it that way. People called Disney studios the Mouse Museum, referring to both the perpetuation of traditional Walt-midwestern "PG" values and to their miserly deals -- people working on Disney film projects got paid less than industry standards. During Miller's term, Walt's story as told at Disney took on a life of its own. There was no room at the top of Disney for both Ron and Walt.

When I look at Eisner's approach to totalisms, I see more paradoxical accounts. The paradox is that Eisner can, in the same discourse, both reference Walt's history and attack Walt's strategy as out of date. Such statements do not make Eisner a postmodern man, but they do reveal an alternative to the totalizing discourse as well as a challenging dialogue with that discourse. For example, Eisner will invoke Walt's legend and then challenge it.

Here Eisner discusses how there were no scripts at Disney for animated films before he took over:

I couldn't follow it. I'd go down there and they'd go through the storyboards. And you go through one storyboard and they'd bring in another storyboard. And I'd sit there for hours and I couldn't remember what was in the first storyboard. And it was a hard process for me to deal with. I'd been used to working in the script area.

And I was a little critical of some of our animated films that had been done before Walt died. Because I think there were great scenes but a lot of scenes put together. But sometimes the art of the story (as he motions his hands back and forth in an arc in the air) didn't follow the way I was used to thinking about stories, or what I learned in school about the construction of -- the stories and all that. And I'd keep thinking about this.

And every time I'd say: "How was it done in the past?" And I'd hear about Walt. He'd just be there and he'd jump up and down and he'd go back and forth between things and so forth. And Roy Disney (Jr.) told me a story about how he (Walt) sat on his bed when he had the flu or the mumps or something and told the entire story of Pinocchio in the bed. And I finally discovered they did have a script (emphasis in original).

And the script was in Walt Disney's head. We didn't have Walt Disney. And therefore we didn't have a single mind, tracking the entire movie. We had (a) committee of minds. And that was the problem. And now we do scripts.

Eisner is telling his story in a way that deconstructs the Walt Disney story. He is pulling on one of the strings of the story's fabric, and in the process, unraveling the grand account. Eisner is also using the stories he hears about Walt as an inquiry into the Disney system. Tactics aside, Disney administration still espouses an approach best described as modernist.

Eisner is not a postmodern man. Rather, he opens up the modernist account that Disney enterprises has been living out for many generations to other interpretations. Observers can get some sense of the struggling discourses of a harmonious, happy, and total Disney and contrary local accounts in the following interaction between an anonymous employee and Eisner described on the Larry King program identified above.

Caller: Many of the theme parks' minor decisions are made at the vice-president level, but when filtered down to us, they do not make a lot of practical sense when dealing with a customer. How can you empower hourly employees to make things better at the park?

Eisner: I read every, or summations of every, letter we get at the park. We are constantly on top of how to improve this process so that all customers are satisfied. The caller has a valid comment and one I will continue to look at.

The history of animation at Disney still does not give much voice to the many artists and technicians who made the studio or developed the techniques. Kinney's (1988) version of the story of the animators describes how they lived in the most marginal quarters, away from the main lot in a dilapidated apartment building, and did not get their names on their work. Alternative accounts of the nonanimation side of the business include those of Shows (1979) and Schickel (1985). Finally, John Taylor's (1987) account, Storming the Magic Kingdom, relates multifaceted stories of how Disney changed as the leadership passed from Walt to Miller and then to Eisner.

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A universal is a grand principle, a sweeping statement designed to gloss over differences in other accounts. Walt advocated, for example, that Disney stay with the "G" movie market. He felt that it would be bad for business to get his cartoons, TV show, and theme park associated with "R" films, even though it was clear that the youth market was increasingly repelled by the idea of being caught dead at a "PG" let alone a "G" movie, the staple of Disney. The following quote gives a story of a story. Eisner, speaking at the 1984 stockholders' meeting, is recounting a portion of a speech that Walt once gave.

When I was 21, I went broke for the first time. I slept in chair cushions in my studio in Kansas City and ate cold beans out of the can. I took another look at my dream and set out to Hollywood. Foolish? Not as a youngster. An older person might have had too much common sense to do it. Sometimes I wonder if common sense isn't another way of saying, fear. And fear too often spells failure. In the lexicon of youth there is no such word as fail. Remember the story about the boy who wanted to march in the circus parade. The band master needed a trombonist so the boy signed up. He hadn't marched a block before the band master demanded, "Why didn't you tell me you couldn't play the trombone?" The boy said, "How would I know? I never tried it before."

Of course the speech was given by Walt Disney and it was entitled: "Take a Chance." Walt was already a grandfather at that time and concluded the speech this way:

"If I am no longer young in age I hope to stay young enough in spirit never to fear failure, young enough still to take a chance and march in the parade."

The universals here are the ways in which Eisner reshapes the story of Walt to fit his particular vision of Disney, the corporation; how it reacts to change, how Disney the man would have welcomed the creative genius of George Lucas, and how the Disney spirit lives on in the merchandise. Eisner is reshaping the "grand narrative" to send Disney down a new path. He is opening the doors of the Disney museum and letting new curators rearrange the exhibits. It is still the same story, but the base of participation is being widened by Eisner.

Walt had a universal vision of a vast empire; he saw his cartoons, characters, TV shows, and films as culminating in a theme park. The theme park was based on Walt's vision of a small midwestern town, the one he knew as a boy. Disneyland is Walt's archetype of an ideal American town. All facets of the Disney operation "synergized." The cartoons and movies produced the characters that became theme rides and exhibits and walking characters in the theme park. The TV show, movies, and cartoons sold the Disney characters and the TV series sold the concept of a theme park. As was noted in the postmodern section above, adapting this vision to European tastes has proven problematic and expensive.

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Essentialisms

An essentialism is similar to a universal except that it is a micro theory, an appeal to a fundamental essential of human character. Several essentialisms have already emerged in the accounts of Walt discussed here. Walt had the character to "accept the risk," "make the change," "act like a young man," "be the creative genius." These characteristics were held out to the employees, investors, and general public as norms.

In alternative accounts of Walt, such as those of Kinney and Shows, Walt is referred to as Der Fuhrer and Mr. Fear. A set of drawings called "the Seven Faces of Walt" circulated in the office (Kinney, 1988: 157). Walt was Simon Legree, Der Fuhrer, the Bountiful Angel, Mr. Nice Guy, Ebeneezer Scrooge, Beelzebub the Devil, and of course Mickey Mouse, with a dollar sign as the "s" in "mouse" ("mouse"). Jones (1991) suggested that employees create stories and characterizations that may not match an organizational culture to relieve stress.

Disney was stressful because it presented a strong ideational system in which people did not believe they were allowed to speak up about the oppression they were enduring. Again, a struggle among discourses is demonstrated.

In most nonofficial accounts, Walt is said to have ruled with an iron fist. If an employee disagreed with Walt, he or she could get fired. Employees who broke a rule of Walt's would be fired. Everything was owned by Walt Disney Productions. Walt was everything, including all people.

Frustrated by the noise of a lawn mower outside the conference room window ... Harry, a Disney executive, opened it and yelled at the top of his voice, "Shut off that goddamned machine and get the hell away from here, you stupid son-of-a-bitch!"

The roar of the power mower stopped abruptly. Once again, all was quiet. The Disney executives resumed their meeting.

Ten minutes later the session was interrupted again by a phone call. It was Disney (Walt). His tone was stern. He ordered Harry to come to his office "at once."

"Harry," Walt growled, appraising him, "I understand you just raised hell with one of my gardeners."

"I'm sorry, Walt," Harry shifted uneasily. "I guess I lost my cool."

Walt glared at him. "That old man has been with me twenty-two years," he snapped, "and if I ever hear of you cussing him out again -- I'll fire your ass!"

"I'm sorry, Walt," Harry murmured, shaken. "It won't happen again -- I promise." And he started toward the door.

But Walt stopped him in his tracks. "And another thing," he barked, "Always remember this -- I'm the only son-of-a-bitch around this studio!" (Shows, 1979: 70)

The official essentialisms are opposed by contrary essentialisms from alternative transcripts. Walt was, in alternative accounts, very intense and moody and not above using scare tactics in his meetings. He had strong likes and dislikes and held a grudge forever. What is interesting about this observation and the next story is the contrast between the grand story of Disney and the public personification of Walt as the nice guy who made it big by being creative and enterprising. It is like dealing with a family that denies that they have a perfectionist, workaholic member who often uses temper to keep the family in line. Schaef and Fassel (1988) wrote about the ways in which organizations exhibit process addictions and behave much the same as substance-abusing families.

Walt roamed his domain with a hard-heeled stride that, along with his distinctive cough, warned us of his arrival. He'd crash through the door, stride to a chair, sit down, and tap his fingers on the arm until one of the guys grabbed a pointer and proceeded to tell the story.

He'd usually allow the guy to finish, then all the boys would hold their breath until he started talking. We studied him the way he studied the boards. If he coughed, you knew you'd lost his attention. A slow tap meant he was just thinking, but a fast tap meant he was loosing his cool. ... If you had something good, Walt usually said he liked it right out. Then everybody could relax and get on with the meeting. Sometimes he could be very

enthusiastic, and all the guys would fly high around the room and pitch in to use his suggestions for tightening the stuff up, then help move the boards into the director's room and into production.

If he didn't like it, he'd want to get out before any more money was spent. He'd stomp from the room, leaving the poor guys responsible with egg on their faces (Kinney, 1988: 151).

Suddenly I heard the unit door bang open, and with a few coughs, Walt made his appearance, quickly sitting in front of the boards and immediately starting to drum his fingers on the chair arm. This was a surefire tip that he was in one of his gorilla moods. Frowning at the empty chairs, he lit a cigarette and said, "Okay, Jack, let's get going. What are you waiting for?"

So I started telling the story ... as each of the various groups gathered, they realized that "man was in the forest" (a line from Bambi) as they quietly seated themselves (Kinney, 1988: 93).

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Foucault (1977: 175-180) defined the panoptic gaze as a multiple, automatic, continuous, hierarchical, and anonymous power functioning in a network of relations from top to bottom, from bottom to top, as well as laterally, to hold an enterprise together. Walt made it a habit to keep his plans in his head and assemble each project part by part, team by team, while keeping central control. Walt was the king of his Sleeping Beauty Castle, and everyone who worked for him was his subject. There was not much middle management. The studio's hierarchy, an ideal flat structure, had just enough layers to be efficient and to leave Walt in control. Walt, by all accounts (Kinney, 1988; Shows, 1979), ruled by fear. But at the heart of Walt's panoptic device was storyboarding. It all began around 1931, when Webb Smith, not Walt Disney, pioneered the process of storyboarding. This story is excluded from the official accounts. Smith, it seems, was an excellent artist, but a bit messy for Walt's taste. He had the habit of sketching gag sequences instead of writing them down and would then toss the sketches in what looked to others like a confused mess all over the floor of his office. To avoid Walt's penalties for being untidy, Smith took to pinning his sketches on the walls. Walt was initially quite furious, proclaiming that "the holes will ruin the walls, that I spent good money redecorating" (Kinney, 1988: 62; Schickel, 1985: 148). Walt demanded a clean and tidy place, with a place for everyone, and everyone kept in their place. Smith then began pinning his rough sketches to two-by-eight-foot and later four-by-six-foot boards. He could easily reposition the sketches until the continuity of the story scenes had been achieved. Scene backgrounds and dialogue could then be pinned to the sketches. Hundreds of drawings on Webb's storyboards would get repositioned until the story was ready for telling at a story meeting. The idea spread, with Walt's advocacy, and every story meeting, every project, and over the years every film, theme ride, and layout was storyboarded. A group could work with a storyboard, perfect the story, and use the boards to coordinate production. Walt took the process a step further. It is no surprise that storytelling is itself a valued commodity at Disney, an organization that commodifies stories by buying options for children's stories at low prices, putting stories through the Disney machine, producing them as cartoons or movies, and then doing related merchandising and theme park exhibition. Walt, it seems, was an obsessive snoop. He made it his habit to roam the halls at night so he could take a peek at the progress of every project in his domain. Unit managers would also snoop and report to Walt. Walt could roam his kingdom, survey projects through the storyboards, and thereby oversee the workings of each departmental cell. Biographies such as Kinney's report that Disney people learned to internalize the gaze. Whether or not Walt had visited the night before, inspected what they were doing, and was getting ready to raise hell, they behaved as if he had done so. This internalization shows the workings of what Foucault refers to as Bentham's principle: power should be visible and unverifiable (Foucault, 1977: 203). Actually, Disney's cage of surveillance was less than perfect. People knew the signs of Walt's gazing rituals: Chesterfield cigarette butts would be everywhere since he was a chain smoker. Walt could also not resist messing with the boards.