

CHANGE(S) OF SCENE
Off-Site Excursions
ATHE 2019 Orlando

CHANGE OF SCENE Subcommittee:

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Brave the Florida sunshine to explore a terrain of consumer excess; Embark on a voyage to a past that never existed; Feast upon the exotic tastes of manufactured experience . . . Dare to be playfully analytical in Orlando.

The 2019 ATHE Conference Committee, inspired by the successful PLAYdates that occurred throughout the previous 2013 ATHE conference meeting in Orlando, searches the association for a new batch of adventurous members to embrace a change of scene and participate in a series of facilitated excursions to local themed destinations in our host city of Orlando. During these offsite seminars, Adventurers will leave the safety (and air-conditioning) of the conference hotel to visit four selected sites along with a facilitator and tour guides/discussion leaders.

Excursion groups of between 10-20 adventures each will participate in three stages of activity:

Stage 1, **Study**: Adventurers will examine pre-excursion reading material selected by the discussion leaders, respected scholar/practitioners whose research brings insight to the excursion site.

Stage 2, **Engage**: Individuals will travel to and experience the excursion site.

Stage 3, **Discuss**: Individuals will reconvene at the hotel at a determined time to critique the site and analyze their experience in a roundtable discussion.

The four following excursions are available. There are a range of options intended to be open and accessible to the widest range of membership possible. Please note that some require an admission fee that will fall outside of conference fees and must be paid by individual adventurers. The instructions for purchasing those conference rate tickets can be found at the following link at the bottom of the page: https://www.athe.org/page/2019_conf_hotel

Option #1

Neoliberal Dreams and Nationalist Fantasies in EPCOT's World Showcase
Patty Ybarra, Brown University, and Michelle Carriger, UCLA

Excursion: 8/7/2019 WEDNESDAY 4:00-8:30pm

Discussion: 8/10/2019 Saturday tbd

*Theme Park admission required

EPCOT's World Showcase promises guests a casual stroll "through 11 'countries' and 4,000 years of history, culture and food." As the marketing materials state, "from the streets of Paris to the Bavarian

countryside, Guests can immerse themselves in the architecture, landscapes, streetscapes, attractions, shops and restaurants of 11 themed pavilions—each staffed by actual citizens from these countries.” This Change of Scene explores the constructed nature of these experiences and encounters in light of contemporary discourse around neoliberalism and nationalism. Designed by imagineers in the image of World’s Fair exhibitions purportedly to celebrate globalism and highlight cultural diversity, the World Showcase provides a particularly charged site for an exploration of identity, representation, and national and global capitalism.

Option #2

Aristocats and Underdogs, Disney Resorts and Class

Jennifer A. Kokai, Weber State University & Tom Robson, Millikin University

(Co-editors of *Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience: The Tourist as Actor*)

Excursion: 8/7/2019 WEDNESDAY @4:00-8:00pm

Discussion: 8/10/2019 SATURDAY tbd

*Minimal Cost (\$10-20 for Ground Transportation)

Proceeding from the conference theme of Transitions, this Change of Scene will explore Disney resorts as transitional performance spaces into the immersive theatrical experiences of the theme parks. Paying special attention to the class-based elements of Disney theming, this excursion will visit three different Disney resorts, one at each of the company’s three pricing levels (Deluxe, Moderate, and Value) to examine the intersection between theming, immersion, and cost. How much Disney magic does each location buy you? Are higher paying guests given a more immersive and transportive experience? In what ways? How much do lobby spaces—and transportation options—invite the Tourist into the magic, or do they preclude it?

There is no cost to participate in this excursion, though participants will be required to arrange their own transportation to and from Disney property. A Disney park ticket is NOT required to participate.

Option #3:

Adventures in Post-Colonial Fantasy Worlds II:

Revisiting Disney’s Animal Kingdom 6 Years Later

Harvey Young, Boston University

Excursion: 8/9/2019 FRIDAY @4 -8:30pm

Discussion: 8/10/2019 SATURDAY tbd

*Theme park admission required

Restaging a popular excursion from 2013, join ATHE president Harvey Young and prepare to “go wild” and change scenes at Walt Disney World’s Animal Kingdom, a theme park that conflates the diversity of the African and Asian continents with the other planetary world of Avatar into a delightful daytrip. Adventurers will take advantage of late entry fees for conference goers to brave the theme park experience in the Florida sun. Simulated safaris and rollercoasters through the Yeti-inhabited Andes Mountains excite and confuse while offering earnest messages of conservation alongside a healthy dose of fantasy. The authentic and inauthentic collide in a mixture of living animals and cartoon characters, international performers wearing bedazzled “ethnic” costumes, and tourists hoping to learn and escape at the same time. Bring sunblock, light clothing, comfortable shoes, a camera, a begrudging tolerance for humidity, and a pith helmet.

Option #4:

“Scenographic Fantasies: Casting Bodies for Consumption”

Christin Essin, Vanderbilt University and Ann Folino White, Michigan State University

Excursion: 8/9/2019 FRIDAY 4-8:30pm

Discussion: 8/10/2019 SATURDAY tbd

*Moderate cost (\$50-100 suggested)

This Change of Scene explores one of Walt Disney World’s Resort neighborhoods—The Boardwalk—as a promenade theatre staging an ongoing repertory of consumerist fantasy. The Boardwalk neighborhood, including the Boardwalk, Beach and Yacht Club, and Swan and Dolphin resorts, provides the bodies of tourists with immersive spatial, tactile, and gustatory experiences outside Disney’s theme parks, casting them as characters in a nostalgic fiction of a time when wealthy white urbanites traded the sweltering summer heat in cities for the cooling ocean breezes off boardwalks or under the shade of beach cabanas. Disney’s resorts offer consumers the total vacation experience.

As we stroll laneways devoted to consumption, we will examine the ways in which the resorts’ designs and dramaturgy make assumptions about the tourist body and compels tourists to assume the character/consumer roles in which Disney has cast them. Though our own immersive but critical tour of the resort space, we will prompt participants to engage in a scenographic analysis of architecture, interior design, costumes, and soundscapes; and though eating and drinking from resort restaurants, we will further prompt participants to register the taste and feelings prompted by this consumption, including the discomfort some bodies might feel by ingesting this fantasy.

The Boardwalk resorts neighborhood is open to the public and required no admission price; we will be having dinner at one of the restaurants and likely drinks and dessert at others, so we suggest that participants budget between \$50-\$100, depending on their financial ability.

To apply for any excursion:

All applicants should write a short (100-200 word) statement wherein they discuss their rationale for wanting to join a CHANGE OF SCENE excursion. Please clearly indicate the excursion option for which you are applying. Applicants should also include a very brief (100 word max) bio. Applicants can participate in other conference events, but must list other conference commitments including paper sessions, roundtable discussions, focus group or committee meetings, etc. Applicants should NOT apply for an excursion that conflicts with their other scheduled sessions.

Applicants should email their position statement and bio to cab0023@auburn.edu by **Monday, June 10th**. Submissions will be reviewed by the organizers and final selections will be approved by excursion leaders and participants notified by June 14th.

Please email Chase Bringardner (cab0023@auburn.edu) if you have any questions.