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# McDonald's as a Disneyized Institution

## Global Implications

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*This article addresses the process of Disneyization as a parallel process to that of McDonaldization and raises the question of whether McDonald's restaurants can themselves be regarded as Disneyized as well as McDonaldized. It is suggested that McDonald's restaurants fit the notion of Disneyization well in that there is growing use of theming in outlets, the company offers a wide range of merchandising opportunities, McDonald's involves itself with other spheres of consumption so that there is dedifferentiation of consumption, and its staff are supposed to exhibit emotional labor. Some of the implications of the discussion for issues to do with globalization are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Disneyization; McDonaldization; globalization; McDonald's; theming*

**McDonaldization is a trend** that George Ritzer has argued is enveloping more and more spheres of contemporary society, but it is by no means the only way of conceptualizing change. Ritzer (1999) himself remarks at one point that for him it "is simply one important trend, one important way of thinking about contemporary developments" (p. 248). This comment provides an admission ticket for a number of different narratives of change. Such further ways of conceptualizing change should not be seen as contestants in a struggle for our attention but as additional ways of getting to grips with what is happening around us. They are not alternatives: They provide leverage on those areas that notions such as McDonaldization do not fully allow us to encapsulate.

One such additional way of thinking about change that I have suggested in earlier work is the idea of Disneyization. This notion was deliberately set up as a parallel set of changes to those associated with McDonaldization. Ritzer (1993) argued that McDonald's provided a paradigm whose underlying principles were spreading their tentacles around more and more sectors of society, even though the principles themselves preexisted the first McDonald's restaurant. In a similar vein, I developed the idea of Disneyization as "the process by which *the principles* of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Bryman, 1999a, p. 26). In

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other words, I substituted the phrase "Disney theme parks" for "the fast-food restaurant" in Ritzer's definition of McDonaldization in coming up with a definition of Disneyization.

An interesting twist on this issue is provided by several suggestions in Ritzer's work (e.g., 1993) that theme parks, and the Disney ones in particular, exemplify McDonaldization. Although I have expressed some doubts about whether the Disney theme parks fit the McDonaldization picture in terms of calculability, in other words, whether the parks emphasize quantity at the expense of quality, it fits well in terms of the other three dimensions (Bryman, 1995, 1999b). The Disney theme parks and all theme parks modeled on them provide predictable tourist entertainment, exert considerable control over their guests (including control through the use of nonhuman technologies), and are highly efficient in their processing of guests.

However, as with other spheres in which McDonaldization has wrought its impact, to describe the Disney theme parks as McDonaldized does not capture entirely their significance or impact. And, indeed, the quotation from Ritzer's work cited above leads us to think that he is unlikely to subscribe to such a view either. The notion of Disneyization was born out of this kind of reflection: What do the Disney theme parks express that is significant and that is having a growing impact on modern society? In formulating Disneyization, I came up with four dimensions or aspects:

1. *Theming*: the use of a narrative that is consciously imposed on a particular sphere and which envelopes consumers,
2. *Dedifferentiation of consumption*: denotes simply the general trend whereby the forms of consumption associated with different institutional spheres become interlocked with each other and increasingly difficult to distinguish,
3. *Merchandising*: a term I use simply to refer to the promotion of goods in the form of, or bearing, copyright images and logos, including such products made under license, and
4. *Emotional labor*: entails control over the employee so that socially desired emotions are exhibited during service transactions.

Walt Disney and the Disney company did not invent any of these principles any more than the McDonald brothers and Ray Kroc invented the principles of McDonaldization. Instead, the Disney theme parks exemplify these principles. The high-profile nature and huge success of the Disney theme parks may have played an important role in promoting the spread of the principles but the parks should not be seen as their wellspring.

It was previously noted that Ritzer depicted the Disney theme parks as McDonaldized. But could we turn the picture around and ask whether McDonald's is a Disneyized institution? The fit may not be a perfect one but the four principles that underpin Disneyization have come to the fore in more recent times than those associated with McDonaldization. The latter can be traced back, as Ritzer frequently observes, to F. W. Taylor and Henry Ford, but the

principles of Disneyization are much more closely connected with the rise of consumerism. If we take the view that, if nothing else, consumerism refers to people's purchase of goods and services they do not need and the sustained efforts of a host of organizations to supply consumers with these unnecessary goods and services, this is a collection of features that has become especially prominent in more recent times.

Can a case be made, then, that McDonald's is a Disneyized organizational form? We should not be overly surprised if this were the case because there are numerous ways in which the two are connected. They were both built up by visionary entrepreneurs, they both have strong corporate cultures, they both have universities, they both emphasize the advantages of automation, they both emphasize the family, and so on. It is even the case that when Ray Kroc joined the Red Cross at the end of World War I, he says in his biography that there was another young man who had lied about his age to get in. Kroc writes, "He was regarded as a strange duck, because whenever we had time off and went out on the town to catch girls, he stayed in camp drawing pictures" (Kroc, 1977/1987, p. 19). So, by a strange quirk of fate, the two men who nurtured two of the most prominent brands and companies of the last 100 years spent time together in a Red Cross company.

### MCDONALD'S AS A DISNEYIZED INSTITUTION

I will turn now to the question of how far McDonald's corresponds to the four dimensions of Disneyization that have been outlined.

#### THEMING

McDonald's can be viewed as themed in different ways and at different levels. As Gottdiener (2001) has observed, franchised chains of restaurants such as McDonald's essentially provide a theme that is themselves. This theme is expressed in the corporate decoration, modes of service delivery, staff clothing, and various architectural cues that are pervasive features of these establishments. Beardsworth and Bryman (1999) have referred to such theming as *reflexive theming*, whereby the theme, the brand, and its expression become coterminous. With reflexive theming, the organization does not draw on external devices for its narratives; instead, the thematic elements are internally generated and then continuously reproduced. "Each themed setting refers reflexively to itself and to the population of clones which reflect it and are reflected by it" (Beardsworth & Bryman, 1999, p. 243).

Such theming, then, is essentially self-referential and refers to those relatively rare instances in which a brand provides its own organizational narrative, a feature that also can be seen in the Disney theme parks and other realms of the

Disney empire. McDonald's as a company is acutely aware of its self-referential theming. It portrays its eating environments as experiences. Benjamin Barber quotes Jim Cantalupo, then president of international operations, who explains how McDonald's "is more than just price. It's the whole experience which our customers have come to expect from McDonald's. It's the drive-thrus . . . it's the Playlands . . . it's the smile at the front counter . . . it's all those things . . . the experience" (cited in Barber, 1995, pp. 128-129). When Ray Kroc once observed, "when you are in this business you are in show business" (cited in Fantasia, 1995, p. 227), he was drawing attention to the way in which the development of a brand was to do with turning the perception of it into an experience by which it becomes instantly recognizable. Certainly, both Shelton (1990) and Manning and Callum-Swan (1994, p. 473) have drawn attention to the way in which there are theatrical or dramatic connotations to a McDonald's visit. Thus, when it is suggested by the latter writers that "McDonald's is a brilliantly conceived dramatic production" (Manning & Callum-Swan, 1994, p. 473), it is the brand as a unique eating experience that is crucial. Similarly, in an interview for *Foreign Policy* in 2001, chief executive officer Jack Greenberg was quoted as saying, "When you enter the restaurant, you enter the brand. And so the challenge for all of our local franchisees and local management around the world is to ensure a minimum level of consistency" ("McAtlas Shrugged," 2001, p. 31). The opening in 2001 of the Golden Arch hotel in Zurich, where the headboards on the beds are in the shape of a golden arch, is an interesting illustration of the use of a brand as mechanism for theming (Turner, 2001). Such extensions of the McDonald's theme reflect the faith in brands such as McDonald's that have come to connote consistency of quality. As Twitchell (1999) has observed, with branding, "what is being bought is place, prestige, comfort, security, confidence, purpose, meaning" (p. 177). Thus, McDonald's as a company is acutely aware of the significance of its brand as a provider of meaning and organizer of experiences.

But theming in McDonald's does not rest solely at the level of reflexive theming. There are other ways in which theming reveals itself. One is that there is a constant overlay of a narrative of family in the advertising and images associated with the company. It is routinely depicted (or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it routinely depicts itself) as a clean, safe haven for families to refuel at relatively low cost. As Law (1984) points out, this appeal to families is emphasized through a tendency to personalize its advertising and through the suggestion that in this fun place the family will be reinforced (see also Fiske, 1994). Kincheloe (2002, pp. 50, 82) observes that family values are frequently deployed in McDonald's advertising as part of a nostalgic reference to an idealized past.

This familial discourse is a powerful one in that the company is well aware of its appeal to children and indeed engages in many tactics to enhance that appeal. The image of the family at McDonald's renders parents more amenable to

children's pester power and the association with low-risk eating in a safe environment provides a reassuring setting for families. Watson (1997a) also has noted the intensive use of family imagery in McDonald's advertising in East Asia.

However, there is also evidence of McDonald's becoming increasingly attracted to the use of external narratives in its restaurants. Chicago's own rock 'n' roll McDonald's serves as an illustration of the use of this kind of development. In 2001, an article in the *New York Times* announced that a huge McDonald's was planned for Times Square that would have the ambience of a Broadway theatre (Bagli, 2001). Schlosser (2001, pp. 233-234) wrote that when he visited the McDonald's near Dachau concentration camp, it had a Wild West theme. Yan (1997) describes a themed McDonald's in Beijing in which the restaurant was decorated like a ship and crew members wore sailor uniforms rather than conventional McDonald's garb. The narrative was one of Uncle McDonald's Adventure, which is meant to entail a round-the-world trip with Uncle McDonald. Also, the company has announced that it is going to refurbish some of its outlets as traditional diners (Waples, 2001), thereby drawing on a motif that is an extremely popular thematic focus for American restaurant chains. Bone reported in *The Times* that not only was Denny's remodeling some of its restaurants "to give the nostalgic feel of traditional diners" but McDonald's was doing the same and had just opened its "first diner-style outlet in Kokomo, Indiana, and customers are lining up to eat such old-fashioned American fare as turkey steak and mashed potato" (Bone, 2001, p. 9). A second has since opened in another town in Indiana. It remains to be seen whether these McDonald's diners will be rolled out more widely but the fact that they are experimenting with such theming is very telling about the directions that the company is considering.

A further sign of theming is the use of ethnic theming. In the United Kingdom, for example, the company often features lines that are themed in terms of Indian or Italian cooking (both of which are very popular among the British). Gordon and Meunier (2001) report that in spring 2000, McDonald's launched a raft of locally themed meals. In one month, the enthusiast could buy a burger with a different French cheese on each day of the week. The following month, "gourmet" meals were available in the South of France. Gourmet was signified by being able to eat burgers topped with ratatouille or by ice cream with a black currant sauce topping.

Therefore, in several ways, McDonald's restaurants can be viewed as themed. The growing use of theming that goes beyond reflexive theming and theming in terms of family may be due to a belief that although the company does provide a certain kind of experience, as Cantalupo suggests, it increasingly needs to do more in this regard. Pine and Gilmore (1999) have suggested that with regard to what they call the *experience economy*, companies increasingly need to raise consumers' experiences to new levels that will be highly memorable. Although it is unlikely that McDonald's would want to turn itself into a chain of themed restaurants that become destinations in their own right,

especially in view of the financial difficulties experienced by such chains in the past few years, the slow move in some of its outlets to a more distinctive kind of theming may prove an interesting long-term development in terms of Disneyization.

#### MERCHANDISING

There is evidence of merchandising in McDonald's as well as theming. It can be seen in the availability of a wide range of merchandise bearing its logos or characters. The McDonald's Web site has a very large amount of merchandise for sale at a variety of prices. These include clothing items such as baseball caps and t-shirts to nostalgia items such as cookie jars. The McDonald's in the Disney Marketplace in Orlando had a particularly wide range of merchandise when I visited the area in 2000. Merchandising has to a certain extent been extended by the McKids range of children's clothing. Referring to this range in his *Foreign Policy* interview, Greenberg said, "It happens to be licensed to Wal-Mart, but it's our brand and we get a royalty for it" ("McAtlas Shrugged," 2001, p. 36). Although merchandising in McDonald's is by no means as extensive as in Disney theme parks, there is evidence that the restaurant chain has incorporated this element of Disneyization.

#### DEDIFFERENTIATION OF CONSUMPTION

There are two main ways in which dedifferentiation of consumption can be seen in relation to McDonald's. One is through the way its tie-ins with companies such as Disney become the context for the distribution of toys or when it latches onto new toy crazes such as the Beanie Babies (Barboza, 1999). These toys have attracted enthusiasts who collect them; there is a Web site for sharing of information about them and an annual convention for collectors (Kincheloe, 2002, pp. 28-29). Most new Disney films are involved in cross-promotional tie-ins with McDonald's so that as Pecora and Meehan (2001) report in the context of their U.S. component of the Global Disney Audiences Project, "Given Disney's promotional agreement with McDonald's, the McDonald's in the mall had been decorated with *Hunchback* streamers and promotional displays. It offered special *Hunchback* meals with *Hunchback* place mats, napkins, paper cups, etc." (p. 315). But it is the distribution of free toys that is the key feature for us in terms of dedifferentiation of consumption. Wolf (1999, pp. 55-56) points out that the exclusive McDonald's/Disney alliance produced a 23% increase in Happy Meals in the United States. In 1997, this made for a 7% increase in sales. In the process, McDonald's became the largest distributor of toys in the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the participant researchers in the Global Disney Audiences Project (Wasko, Phillips, & Meehan, 2001) noted that their interviewees in several countries frequently noted the prominence of tie-ins with Disney films. However, it is not just Disney films that are tied in to McDonald's—films

such as *Space Jam* also have been involved in this way. Although writers, for example, Wolf, claim that such tie-ins can result in very significant improvements in food sales for McDonald's, the movie tie-in with food is by no means a recipe for success, as Taco Bell found with its cross-promotion with *Godzilla*. The significance of such tie-ins for the present discussion is simply that the distribution of free toys as a lure for children can be viewed as evidence of the dedifferentiation of consumption because it involves elements of the sale of both food and toys. It also should be noted that this form of the dedifferentiation of consumption is often a focus for criticism because it is seen as evidence of the manipulation of consumers and of children in particular. The Archbishop of Canterbury has criticized such tie-ins and singled out Disney for particular disapproval, saying, "The Disney empire has developed this to an unprecedented pitch of professionalism" (cited in Gledhill, 2002).

The second main way in which we find dedifferentiation of consumption in relation to McDonald's is the way in which it is frequently implicated in settings that bring together a variety of forms of consumption. Examples are the obvious ones, such as the presence of McDonald's in malls, but there are others too, such as its location in theme parks. Ritzer has observed that McDonald's is often found in the modern ballpark. He and Stillman (2001) depict the growth of food courts featuring McDonald's and other chains as one of the ways in which the modern ballpark seeks to make the overall experience of spectatorship "more spectacular and enchanted." Certainly, the company's plans in terms of this feature of Disneyization are ambitious. In the Afterword to Kroc's autobiography, Kroc's coauthor Robert Anderson (Kroc, 1977/1987) mentions the appearance of McDonald's in a hospital, tollway services plazas, military bases, shopping malls, and amusement parks. He quoted from the 1985 annual report, "Maybe—someday—McDonald's will be found on aircraft carriers and commercial airliners. In sports stadiums and fine department stores" (Kroc, 1977/1987, p. 209). As a strategy, this is not always successful, as the company found when it was forced because of poor levels of patronage to close many of its outlets that were located in Wal-Mart stores (Barboza, 1999).

#### EMOTIONAL LABOR

Emotional labor is a key feature of McDonald's restaurants. It is a component of the Quality Service and Value ethos from Ray Kroc's days that remains a central tenet of the faith. Its importance is drilled into franchisees and managers at the Hamburger Universities. Crew members at the customer interface are widely expected to engage with diners in a friendly way to enhance the pleasurable nature of the dining experience and to increase the likelihood of more items being purchased. Royle (2000), for example, on the basis of his European research on McDonald's, has written that the company's till employees "are expected to control themselves *internally* by being pleasant, cheerful, smiling and courteous to customers, even when customers are rude and offensive"

(pp. 63-64). It is very much part of the show business atmosphere that Kroc felt was such an important component of the success of the restaurants. It can be seen in the previously quoted remark by Jim Cantalupo, then president of international operations, when he refers to the significance of "the smile at the front counter." As Fantasia (1995) points out in connection with the reception of McDonald's in France, the American ambience is a very important aspect of its success there among youth, and it is the deployment of emotional labor that plays an important role in creating that ambience. It is striking that when Kincheloe (2002) interviewed a woman originally from Hong Kong, she explained how as a girl her enthusiasm for McDonald's was such that she used to play role-playing games in which she would "churn up a big smile, and say, 'How can I help you today? May I please have your order?'"

Emotional labor is not without its problems for crew members. As Leidner (1993) has shown, the scripted nature of interactions with clients and the need to act in a way that can be inconsistent with how one actually feels—especially in the face of difficult customers—can be a deeply alienating experience. However, the main point in relation to the current discussion is that McDonald's exhibits this dimension of Disneyization.

However, there is a further dimension to emotional labor at McDonald's, and it is one that was neglected in the original exposition of Disneyization (Bryman, 1999a). It is not just crew workers who are involved in exhibiting emotional labor; managers are also involved in a form of emotional labor in that they are trained and encouraged to become subservient to the McDonald's corporate ethos and culture. Leidner (1993) writes that the company seeks to produce managers with "ketchup in their veins" (p. 54; see also Solomon, 1996). The Hamburger University plays a significant role in inculcating this corporate spirit. In part, the training is conducted to instruct managers in the correct operational procedures to maximize the kind of uniformity of process and product for which the company is famous. But also, as Leidner (1993) observes, managers' zeal is worked on to ensure they understand as fully as possible the reasons for adherence to protocol so that they are more likely to ensure that there is no transgression. The training is concerned, therefore, with "building commitment and motivation" as much as instruction in McDonald's ways of doing things. The kind of company loyalty that is required and engendered is a form of emotional labor on the part of those who are required to exhibit it. Much like Disney's University, the managers also are introduced to the company's history and to the words of its founder to enhance the emotional appeal of the corporate culture.

## REFLECTION

There does, then, seem to be evidence to support my contention that McDonald's is a Disneyized institution. Once again, I am not suggesting that McDonald's has copied the Disney theme parks, although that may sometimes have occurred. In particular, it may be worth drawing a distinction between *structural*

and *transferred* Disneyization. The former “reflects a complex of underlying changes of which the Disney theme parks are exemplars” (Beardsworth & Bryman, 2001, p. 91). Transferred Disneyization is where the principles of the Disney theme parks are transferred into another sphere. A similar kind of distinction also could be made in relation to McDonaldization, although in practice it is difficult to distinguish between concrete cases of Disneyization or McDonaldization in terms of which process has taken place. However, the point is that McDonald’s exhibits tendencies that are *exemplified* by the Disney theme parks. There may be an element of imitation in many cases (as with transferred Disneyization), but this is by no means necessarily the case. These suggestions about the spread of Disneyization lead to a consideration of the broader issues with which it is associated, namely, its implications in terms of globalization.

#### GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

One way in which Disneyization and McDonaldization can be viewed as parallel processes is that both can legitimately be viewed as signals of globalization. Ritzer makes this point in relation to McDonaldization in his more recent work (e.g., Ritzer, 2001), and it is apparent that the dimensions of Disneyization outlined above are similarly spreading throughout the globe. But what is striking about the two concepts is that they do not refer specifically to the global diffusion of products. Much of the writing on globalization is full of hyperbole about the global spread and recognizability of prominent brands: Nike, Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Pizza Hut, KFC, Benetton, Body Shop, and so on. And, of course, one could hardly disregard the golden arches of McDonald’s or Mickey’s ears and Walt’s signature as involved in the global travels of brand names. But that is *not* what McDonaldization and Disneyization are about: They are concerned essentially with the diffusion of *modes of delivery* of goods and services. McDonaldization relates primarily to a mode of delivery in the sense of the *production* of goods and services. It is a means of providing an efficient and highly predictable product in a manner that would have appealed to people such as Ford and Taylor. It belongs to an era of mass consumption that is not disappearing but whose emphases are becoming less central to modern society with the passage of time. Disneyization is a mode of delivery in the sense of the *staging* of goods and services for consumption. It provides a context for increasing the allure of goods and services. Indeed, it may be that one of the reasons for the growing use of theming in the form of external narratives in some McDonald’s restaurants has to do with the limitations of McDonaldization itself. McDonaldization’s emphasis on standardization sits uneasily in an increasingly post-Fordist era of choice and variety. Theming becomes a means of reducing the sense of sameness and thereby enhancing the appeal of its products.

What is important about such a suggestion is that it is crucial to appreciate that McDonaldization and Disneyization are both *systems*, that is, they are ways of producing or presenting goods and services. One of the problems with tying

the names of these systems to well-known icons of popular culture—McDonald's and Disney—is that it is easy to make the mistake of lapsing into a discussion of just McDonald's and Disney. This is an error because the two companies are merely emblems of the underlying processes associated with their respective systems.

By emphasizing processes associated with Disneyization and McDonaldization as systems, it is possible to get away from the shrill but not always revealing accounts of the global reach of prominent brands. It can hardly be doubted that there is a clutch of high-profile brands that have spread through much of the globe, but systems such as Disneyization and McDonaldization are in a sense more significant than that. For one thing, their presence is perhaps less immediately obvious than the arrival of McDonald's restaurants or the impending arrival of a new Disney theme park in Hong Kong. Focusing on the products obscures the more fundamental issue of the diffusion of underlying principles through which goods and services are produced and then put into people's mouths and homes. Although McDonald's restaurants have been the focus of anti-globalization campaigners and Disney was given a decidedly gallic cold shoulder among intellectuals in France when Disneyland Paris was in the planning stage, occasioning the famous "cultural Chernobyl" comment, the spread of the fundamental principles that can be divined from an examination of what McDonald's and the Disney theme parks exemplify is much less frequently, and perhaps less likely to be, a focus of comment.

When considered in this way, it is striking how poorly Disneyization and McDonaldization fit into Appadurai's (1990) influential delineation of different forms of "-scape," that is, contexts for the flow of goods, people, finance, and other items around the globe. Appadurai distinguished between five scapes: ethnoscares (the movement of people), technoscares (the movement of technology), financescares (the movement of capital), mediascares (the movement of information), and ideoscares (the movement of ideas and ideals). Waters (2002) has argued that "McDonaldization infiltrates several of these flows" (p. 216). However, such a view does not do justice to the significance of McDonaldization and by implication Disneyization. In a sense, we need a new conceptual term for them, which we might call "systemscares," to refer to the flow of contexts for the production and display of goods and services. Although they incorporate elements of the five scapes, as Waters suggests, McDonaldization and Disneyization are somewhat more than this. They represent important templates for the production of goods and services and their exhibition for sale.

Of course, we must give due consideration to the charge that we are subscribing here to a simplistic globalization or Americanization thesis that depicts icons of American culture spreading by design across the globe and riding roughshod over local conditions and practices. Research on McDonald's, which can be treated as the *locus classicus* of McDonaldization, suggests that it is dangerous to think of a simple process of subsuming foreign cultures. Not only has McDonald's accommodated to local tastes and dietary requirements and

preferences but it is also used in different ways in different cultures. It is sometimes regarded as a sophisticated eating environment for special occasions or dating couples, as a meeting place, as an area for study, and so on (Watson, 1997a). Similar remarks can be made in relation to the Disney theme parks when they have been transported abroad. Raz (1999) observes in relation to Tokyo Disneyland that although it is invariably claimed to be a copy of the American original, it has in fact been Japanized. Thus, the Mystery Tour in the castle in Tokyo Disneyland is a Disney version of the Japanese ghost house. The Meet the World show is described by Raz as “a show about and for the Japanese” (Raz, 1999, p. 52). Similar adaptation can be seen in Disneyland Paris, where after a disappointing beginning, the company was forced to adapt the park to European tastes (Lainsbury, 2000, p. 133). The alcohol ban, in particular, had to be dropped. Such local adaptations and accommodations are frequently and quite rightly latched on to by the critics of a simple globalization thesis. They are also reassuring that the world is not becoming a single homogenized realm because there are signs of resistance even in the face of the momentum of two revered representatives of popular culture.

However, although reassuring, these indications of the continued relevance of the local for McDonald’s and the Disney theme parks should not blind us to the fact that although McDonald’s may be used differently in Tapei and that Tokyo Disneyland has adapted many attractions to the Japanese sensibility, this is not what McDonaldization and Disneyization are about. As previously argued, they are about *principles* to do with the production and delivery of goods and services. What the researchers who tell us about the different ways that McDonald’s has adapted to or been differentially appropriated by diverse cultures is how McDonald’s has been adapted to and appropriated, not McDonaldization as such. In a sense, Disneyization and McDonaldization are more worrying for the critics of globalization as a homogenizing force than the arrival of golden arches in far reaches of the globe or the transplanting of Disney theme parks abroad. They are more worrying because Disneyization and McDonaldization are potentially more insidious processes because they are far less visible and immediately obvious in their emergence than the appearance of golden arches or of magic kingdoms on nations’ doorsteps. As Ritzer points out in relation to McDonald’s, “The fundamental operating procedures remain essentially the same everywhere in the globe” (Ritzer, 2001, p. 170), a view that is largely endorsed by company representatives. Robert Kwan, at the time managing director of McDonald’s in Singapore, is quoted by Watson as saying, “McDonald’s sells . . . a system, not products” (in Watson, 1997a, p. 21). In other words, finding adaptations to and local uses of McDonald’s and Disney theme parks should not make us think that this means or even necessarily entails adaptations to and local uses of McDonaldization and Disneyization.

Turning more specifically to Disneyization, particularly in relation to McDonald’s, none of what has been said previously should be taken to imply that there are likely to be no processes of local adaptation or resistance or

culturally specific uses in relation to Disneyization. Emotional labor has been a particularly prominent site for resistance, as studies of the local reception of McDonald's demonstrate. Watson (1997a, pp. 27-28) has observed that during the early period of the restaurant's arrival in Moscow, people standing in queues had to be given information about such things as how to order. In addition, they had to be told, "The employees inside will smile at you. This does not mean that they are laughing at you. We smile because we are happy to serve you." Watson (1997b) also remarks on the basis of his fieldwork in Hong Kong that people who are overly congenial are regarded with suspicion, so that a smile is not necessarily regarded as a positive feature. Also, consumers did not display any interest in the displays of friendliness from crew personnel. It is not surprising, therefore, that the display of emotional labor is not a significant feature of the behavior and demeanor of counter staff in McDonald's in Hong Kong. Watson says, "Instead, they project qualities that are admired in the local culture: competence, directness, and unflappability. . . . Workers who smile on the job are assumed to be enjoying themselves at the consumer's (and the management's) expense" (Watson, 1997b, p. 91).

A somewhat different slant is provided by Fantasia's (1995) account of the reception of McDonald's in France. There, the attraction of McDonald's for young people was what he calls the "American ambience." Insofar as the display of emotional labor is an ingredient of this ambience, it may be that it is not that the French enthusiasts respond positively to emotional labor per se but that in the context of McDonald's they respond positively to the total package, of which smiling counter staff is a component. In other words, as the writers who emphasize local adaptations to global processes point out, local consumers frequently make their own culturally bespoke uses of the forces of globalization.

Clearly, there are risks with the foregoing argument. At a time when writers on globalization prefer to emphasize "glocalization" (Robertson, 1992) or "creolization" (Hannerz, 1987) as ways of coming to terms with the varied ways in which global forces have to run the gauntlet of local cultural conditions and preferences, it is unfashionable to suggest that impulses emanating from the United States are tramping over the globe. Indeed, as the previously cited evidence concerned with emotional labor implies, we do need to take into account the ways such global influences are working their way into and are being incorporated into local cultures. But Disneyization is a more invisible process than the arrival of brand names on foreign shores. It is designed to maximize consumers' willingness to purchase goods and services that in many cases they might not otherwise have been prompted to buy. Theming provides the consumer with a narrative that acts as a draw by providing an experience that lessens the sense of an economic transaction and increases the likelihood of purchasing merchandise. Dedifferentiation of consumption is meant to give the consumer as many opportunities as possible to make purchases and therefore to keep them as long as possible in the theme park, mall, or whatever. Emotional labor is the oil of the whole process in many ways: in differentiating otherwise identical goods and

services, as an enactment of theming, and as a milieu for increasing the inclination to purchase merchandise. It may be that as in Russia and Hong Kong, emotional labor is ignored or not effective. However, these are fairly small responses to the diffusion of these instruments of consumerism. And insofar as we can regard McDonald's as a Disneyized institution, the process of Disneyization has a high-profile partner that is likely to enhance the global spread of its underlying principles.

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