

NOTES ON DORFMAN AND MATTELART

LINKS

On Reading Donald Duck

<https://vimeo.com/234572740>

racist depictions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LibKOSCpIkk>

ants as africans

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfU2yV4h0bE>

ww2 Japanese

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWaf3dQxAfQ>

Japanese ww2 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIUld1yXKR0>

Porky Pig and Arabs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esfH-1nhrs>

Looney Tunes Africa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkFhZMa-8Xw>

GENERALLY

- Note that all this follows fairly directly from our last text on “The Spectacle.” The Spectacle saturates physical environments with ideological fare. It does so domestically, in great depth. But it ALSO (the U.S., and Hollywood... also) physically blankets the COLONIZED world. In this case we are seeing this blanket, critically, from the perspective of Chile, 1971.
- It was published under the socialistic Allende regime. When Pinochet (with U.S. backing and direction) carried out a coup and installed a dictatorship, the books was banned and burned, and the authors were exiled.
- Disney = a vehicle of American cultural imperialism.

(What Ideology Does:)

- Disney... or *is it the U.S.?*... “Dreams and realizes the dream of a particular class as if it were the dream of the whole of humanity”
- Disney is a “laundering process” allowing us to “consume our own contradictions in white-washed form”

Disney HIDES historical, dominator-dominated reality

Specifically it hides

- Sexuality/sexual reproduction

- Production/the working class/exploitation
- Colonization (as theft)
- The colonized (behind racist masks)
- History – instead Disney’s reality is unchanging/circular

REGARDING CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD (AND SEXUALITY)

We are supposed to believe that

- Childhood = “innocence”
- And that Disney represents this innocence
- That’s why kids like it—it’s like children

But what Disney REALLY does is to HIDE

- Actual childhood: trust, spontaneity, unconditional love, imagination
- ... and Disney’s “children” (provided they are “city children” and not “natives”) ACTUALLY represent the values of adult society
- So when children watch Disney, they identify with the “children” characters... but this really means being indoctrinated as adults (whose values are listed in the “Jr. Woodchuck Handbook”)

And Disney HIDES/disallows

- Solidarity among equals...
- Replacing it with ubiquitous COMPETITION

REGARDING WOMEN

- Females are always subordinate.
- Often they are trophies to be acquired.
- If they’re “good” females, they’re humble servants or they’re the constantly-courted beauty queens
- More broadly, they can be good—SNOW WHITE/Daisy duck... or evil ... Silvia/the vampire

REGARDING COLONIALS (NOBLE SAVAGES) AND COLONIALIZATION

- The Disney world is supposedly “natural”—it emphasizes nature, animals...
- But Disney actually uses animals to TRAP CHILDREN...
- Meanwhile nature is identified with “natives” who are a- and pre-historical... and like children in their character: carefree, trusting, naïve
- Specifically African, Latin American and Asian independence movements are mocked.
- Imperialist plunder and colonial subjugation are HIDDEN... instead conquest is SANITIZED... by taking stuff from native peoples, we return them to the state of nature, which is where they belong. They don’t need this stuff anyway. They’re backwards and stupid.
- Disney exploits tourist caricatures ... and then redistributes those stereotypes to the very people they purport to represent—producing double consciousness in those people (Mexicans, Africans, etc)... and weakening the solidarity of the oppressed.

REGARDING WORKERS AND THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

- Like sex, production is systematically HIDDEN in Disney. Nobody works to make stuff. They may work to sell, but the origin of wealth is hidden.
- The working class is falsely represented either as PEASANTS (who are just those “noble savages” again)... who are looked on as folk-guardians... or as CRIMINALS... who are always fat, dark, stupid.
- Wealth is always FOUND, and the discovery results from the IDEAS of the intrepid (1st world/U.S.) explorers. There’s always gold without mining...
- Workers’ organizations are portrayed as foolishness.
- “Good vs Bad” corresponds to the presence or absence of a RESPECT FOR PROPERTY.
- Unemployment? = the result of incompetence or free choice.