

The Jaded Rat:
A Media Literate Tour of MiseryLand.
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*Religious people are scared of going to hell. Spiritual people have been to hell—
Craig Kuse, a friend*

Billboard on wall at Airport: Live the Movies. What does this imply about life? Why not live life? What do movies have on Life? Are movies better, more entertaining, is this why we should live them? Then life must suck, huh? Good thing we have movies.

Billboard on Highway for the Kennedy Space Center: Tour Restricted Areas. Am I dumb or is this advertising? How can it be restricted if tours run through it. Maybe the restriction is that if you don't pay for the tour then you don't go into that area?

Virtually Alive: The Wonderworks. A neat concept that I would have loved if I was still a teenager or still on drugs (which is pretty much the same as still being a teenager). It's a science show of unusual things featuring disasters and killing. You can "experience" a 5.3 earthquake. Having lived through an 8.3, what can I say? I paid money to slide back and forth for a bit. Then there's a wind tunnel with 65 mph winds, just below a class 1 hurricane. That was fun, in an erotic kind of way. I like the way my face vibrated. What got my goat was the emphasis on how many people died in "famous" earthquakes and hurricanes from around the world.

Some of the weird science was cool—optical illusions, bubbles, an electric chair. One illusion featured subliminalism. After looking at a series of flashing lights, an image is burned into one's retina. Any accident the image was the Coke logo? I wonder if this technology is being placed in the movie scenes where lots of screen action and light effects are shown? Give them time. My friend told me of a documentary he saw on psychological warfare, including planes that emit an electronic frequency they supposedly stimulates fear in our brain centers. I've never heard of anything like this but it sounds like the technology exists and is already being used—on us, now. Think of the commercial applications of such a device in casinos, shopping centers, or voting booths.

Wonderworks also has a virtual roller coaster. You get strapped into a chair in a cubicle that has full 360 degree range of motion. A screen in front of you shows the coaster track. It was the usual nauseating fun I've come to expect from a roller coaster, except that it felt like being moved around in a machine in a cubicle with stale air blowing in my face. The feel of dropping a hundred feet down a track

wasn't there. I fully expect this type of ride to be the wave of the future. Our culture is so mediated that we will just be conditioned into thinking that mock reality is entertainment we want to have, even if it leaves us empty and wanting more.

My visit to Wonderworks ended with playing in the killing simulator—the world's largest laser tag arena. Here I could play at killing and being killed, working up a high score without ever knowing that death was more than a vibrating vest. While practicing my shots using a laser sight, I was totally immersed in the game. The thrill of the competition and the fun of running and killing friends and strangers was intoxicating. I can see why so many children try to recreate this virtual fun in their schools using real weapons.

Another spot on my tour was Race Rock, a restaurant that has race cars and boats and motorcycles hanging off the walls and ceilings. Another neat concept restaurant enabling the sale of \$10 hamburgers. Hanging over the entrance is a big Joe Camel speed boat. I thought Joe was dead. I guess this was one of his many memorials—all done in the name of “racing.” In fact, every car, boat and motor cycle was covered in advertising icons. Race Rock is such a good corporate citizen I'm sure they do this as a public service to the industries they promote. Neither my friend or I drink, which made the fact that the establishment's giant bar in the center of the everything kind of intriguing. The bar was literally half the size of the place. What's the message we're supposed to get from the Bud speed boat? Drink and Drive as fast as possible?

My traveling buddy on this adventure into manufactured experience is considering moving to Orlando. He started up many conversations with the people employed at these “attractions” and other locals. All the men mentioned how much they liked living here because there were so many fine looking women. Yes, much drool spilled from my mouth as well. It reminded me of Brave New World. SOMA and sex. Orlando provides this. King Henry's Feast is a dinner theatre set around medieval themes. The ads mention serving wenches. Who needs to go to the theatre for wenches? Our media system has trained an entire generation of beautiful young girls to show skin and slut for us. They are eager for the type of sexual adventures our media depicts as typical. I'm angry about this. Mostly because I was raised to desire such a lifestyle but was too dysfunction to live it. As I developed enough self esteem to move in this realm, I realized that my craving ran deeper. I wanted to find my soul, and it took me a while to learn that it wasn't housed in somebody else's body. Sadly, sex in the presence of denial creates more denial—denial that is deeply imprinted because of the emotional openness sex entails.

I confided in my girlfriend how cranky I was being in the “Happiest Place On Earth.” I was feeling jaded, as if I was being too cynical of all the attractions around me. Perhaps, I thought, I should just lighten up and have fun. In the old days this would have meant doing more drugs to numb my conscience away. Today it means feeling what effect the corporate media programming has on me. Being a therapist, my girlfriend told me to keep up what I was doing. She said it’s important. She had to go through the trauma of seeing through the cultural lies taught to us by Mickey Rat. All those harmless children’s cartoons deeply imprint us. In each of them the theme of romance rescuing us is profound. Do children’s movies need a love plot? As we grow up we become ever more cynical since real relationships rarely follow the formula of Dizzy cartoons. As adults we know this, but as children, we are emotionally imprinted for life by powerful images presented to us as children’s entertainment; images coming at a time before we have the cognitive ability to understand they are fantasy. I believe many people’s dissatisfaction with life and love are rooted in this fantasy sold to us in every Dizzy film.

I was appalled by the Rat’s take on the Hunchback of Notre Dame. Here was a film about a priest who lusted so much he kidnapped a girl. Great stuff for kids, right? Throughout the film, Mr. Bumpback was told over and over that he could do anything and be accepted by people. But after he rescues the girl, Mr. Charming Warrior wins her affections. Ugly people don’t get the girl in MiseryLand. Since seeing that film I have come to believe that Disney is the Anti-Christ. Please know the experiences I’m about to relate are based on this view.

I visited Epcot Center, assuming it would have more “adult” oriented attractions. The entire day I was torn between enjoying the spectacles presented and being offended at how I was being manipulated for profit. Walt Disney’s vision (the one touted in their PR) is long dead, it’s not about making kids and people happy, it’s about selling stimulation that maximizes profit. I tell you, being media literate has sure messed me up. Even Micky Rat has become a symbol of how much in my consciousness has been programmed.

I started my visit at Epcot bypassing the corporate sponsored attractions to visit the world exhibits. The world at Dizzy doesn’t include South America. Africa is an “Outpost,” which mostly has broken down Coke coolers with Arabic writing on them. Centered in the Coke junk pile is a rusted old truck loaded with Coke bottles. I’m glad to know that Coke is reaching the poor folks in the Outpost. While walking through this area, I complained to my friend that the only reason Africa

was even included in Misery World was as a promotional tool for the Tarzan movie. An elder Dizzy employee walking behind me agreed. He said the exhibit didn't even exist before the movie was released, and was scheduled to close in another 15 days since the movie was at the end of its run.

The staff in each foreign land consisted of young people Dizzy had recruited from their native countries. Misery World is populated only by beautiful people. All the women were droolish babes, and all the guys clean cut and hunky. It was as if Dizzy's Hollywood casting clones had combed the world to choose only photogenic types. Misery World isn't tainted by normal looking people like you and I.

Many of Misery's Uber-population spoke freely about their disgust for the commercialism surrounding them. One Moroccan fellow (who shall remain nameless to protect him from the wrath of the vengeful Rat) told me about how his eyes have been opened since he took a class in media production and manipulation techniques back in Morocco. I told him that in America, we don't teach those classes. Instead we create movie studio theme parks so our citizens can be impressed by just how wonderful the special effects techniques manipulating them really are. The shallowness of our stupid-centric culture was vaguely hinted at by most of the beautiful foreigners I spoke with. My favorite comment was about the British chap who was asked by an American what language they speak in England.

The centerpiece of Misery World is the American Heritage exhibit. I was so shocked by the Dizzy view of our history, that I practically cried. Mark Twain, one of the puppet hosts constantly smoked. I guess he needed the clouded vision and nicotine high to be able to say the trash he was programmed to spout. Pilgrims came to a vast, harsh, wilderness; devoid of the thousands of successful native civilizations. The only mention of their existence was Chief Joseph crying about why we can't live in peace—such a good spokesman for colonial genocide. Mentioning the topic of slavery (the Rat never even used the word) is a recent addition. A black gentleman sitting next to me said that part of the show wasn't there 12 years ago. And of course, the topic is presented from the point of view of a slave aspiring to be free, not from the view that we created a system of holocaust that lasted longer and affected more people than any other the world has seen. I did burst out laughing when the montage of visionary Americans showed Walt Disney dissolve into Albert Einstein. The strong tones of liberty expressed in this show were mocked in the front of the park. There corporations rule the world.

General Motors has its test track ride. A neat concept that uses lots of video of a personable control crew running you through a GM test track. After the ride is over you can play simulations of new “technology” GM will be selling us in upcoming car models. This spits you out into their show room and merchandise area. All the exhibits in this part of the park are corporate sales tools. Exxon, sign of the double cross, runs the energy exhibit. Met-Life owns health care. Etc. This rampant commercialism is carried through Misery World. Dizzy characters are featured in their “home” countries, so be sure to catch Pinnocchio in Italy. The Norway exhibit was a conundrum. Why even have a Norway exhibit? To market Royal Norwegian Cruises and Helly Hanson clothing, of course.

My night ended with the GE (We bring nuclear poison to light) Illuminations display, featuring lights, lasers, fireworks, and water fountains set to music. It was truly an impressive and scary display. While waiting for the show to start, I heard a teenage girl from New Jersey ask one from Australia, “Like what name brands are popular where you’re from?” The Aussie replied, “We have the same ones you have.” The future Miss New Jersey said, “Yeah, we have Nike, that’s really popular.” Yes, another generation around the world has learned it’s role is to consume and feel insecure about popularity. God Bless the Rat, we need His Divine Light if we’re going to see our way through the darkness of Misery World.