

Disney Land Colors.

The following thoughts are being submitted for consideration by the consultative body of the future "House of Colors" to be established in Sao Paulo, (and of which the author is a member). Since those thoughts might be of interest to the people at Disney, they are here being translated into English:

Why is it that dogs are not yet blue with red spots all over, and why is it that hares do not yet irradiate phosphorescent colors over nocturnal meadows? Why is it that animal breeding is still concerned with economy, and not yet with esthetics? Has nothing changed in the relation between man and his biological surroundings, ever since the neolithic revolution? This is the sort of question this paper is going to ask, and in order to do so it will put those questions into the following context:

On the one hand stock farming in Western Europe and North America is producing more than can be consumed, and on the other hand we now dispose of techniques which permit the creation of animal species according to program. In other words: on the one hand we have rivers of milk and mountains of butter and ham, and on the other hand we can now create artificial animals, living art works. Those two sides of the animal problem should be made to coincide, and stock farming should be transferred from peasants, (an almost extinct species anyhow), onto artists, (which breed like rabbits and have feeding troubles).

If you look at the Western European scene with a synchronizing glance, (if you make a film of that scene which accelerates millenia into seconds), you will see the following situations: First you will see a cold steppe where large ruminants migrate toward the north in spring and toward the south in fall, and are being chased by beasts of prey, (including humans). Then you will see an ever denser forest where people open clearings with fire and stone implements, because it is difficult to hunt in a forest. Then you will see the familiar scene of fields where edible grains grow, of meadows where edible animals graze, and of forests which may be transformed into news print. And if you project your film into the immediate future, you will see an enormous Disneyland where people made unemployed by automation try to amuse themselves, where they try not to die of boredom. The question to be asked is this: who is going to be the future Disney? The answer here suggested is: he will have to be a molecular biologist who has become an artist. This is the reason why such an answer is suggested:

Animal organisms secrete dye stuffs which have vital functions: they protect the individual, (protective coloring), and they propagate the species, (sexually attractive coloration). We are beginning to understand the physiological and chemical processes which govern that secretion, and we can formulate mathematically the distribution of those colors over the animal body. And genetic engineering is beginning to interfere in those processes and distributions. Which is to say that genetic engineers may handle those colors more or less like a painter does: they may mix them and spread them. Thus animal dye stuff secretion may acquire a new vital function: it may protect the human species from dying of boredom, by filling the future Disneyland with multicolored faunas.

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Do not say that this is fanciful thinking, (although "phantasia" is a word dear to Disney), but take a diving-bell and a torch-light instead, and dive into the deep of the ocean. What you will see are forests, fields and meadows of multicolored plantlike animals whose red, blue and yellow tentacles swing with the currents, where rainbow-colored gigantic snails walk, and where swarms of silvery, golden and violet crawfish overfly the scenery. The future Disneyland may look like this, because it has become almost possible to transfer the genetic information which programs this deep-sea coloring into inhabitants of the continental surface. This is why the future Disney will have to be a molecular biologist and an artist.

What he will have to do is a kind of super-dimensional land art. But of course this art will be far more complex, (and therefore more interesting), than what the land artists are doing at present. It is no longer a question of covering rocks with paint, but of computing a complex game of living colors in living organisms. An example for the complexity which is involved here: there is a species of potatoes which is pollenized by a single species of butterfly, and that butterfly feeds exclusively on that potato. The potato flower has exactly the same blue color as has the butterfly wing, although in the potato that blue is the result of chlorophyll transformation, and in the butterfly it is the result of rays being reflected by minuscule mirrors. There is an ecological feedback between those two organisms, and it results in exactly the same color. The future Disney will have to program such extremely complex feed-backs. The color of each of his beasts will have to reflect the colors of all his other beasts, and it will be reflected by them. In fact: he will have to program one single enormous color symphony, but one which will evolve spontaneously through endless "improvised" variations. Thus the future Disney land will become a living work of art with an as yet unimaginable wealth of beauty.

The present ecologists and environmentalists, (who stubbornly continue to be "green"), will object that such a Western Europe transformed into Disneyland will no longer be "natural", but will have become "artificial". But consider: when people began to open clearings within the forest, they began to make Western Europe artificial, and when they began to plant fields, they accentuated this artificialisation. Western Europe transformed into Disneyland will continue this process. Now this progressive artificialisation of Europe has resulted in it being the most fertile of all the continents, one where life is most active. May it not be said that art is a method to breathe life into nature? This was the real meaning of the initial question: "why is it that dogs are not yet blue with red spots all over?". It asks about the role art will have to play in the immediate future, where we are menaced not only by nuclear and demographic explosions, but equally by the explosion of boredom.