

DEFAMILIARIZATION OF THE AMUSEMENT PARK

An amusement park is a spatial location that contains within it a variety of large-scale mechanical devices. The spatial location is enclosed by a gate, and patrons are required to pay in order to enter. Otherwise, patrons can select rides once inside where they pay for particular rides. Once inside, patrons can walk in between the mechanisms at their own pace, and select, at their own pace, which mechanisms they want to “ride”. To “ride” means to enter the mechanism, sit or stand in an established place, and allow the mechanism to move you around in space at a rapid pace only afforded by large machinery. Some of these parks host internal economies, with token systems or more sophisticated digital interfaces that allow patrons to ride, dine, or shop. The park is run through a strict organization of lines, sometimes also with passes that allow those with more financial means to skip ahead of their fellow park-goers. Theme parks develop their rides around a particular theme, often inspired by fantasy or fiction, and will include in their activities people dressed in costumes who will interact with children while adopting personas other than their own. Every now and then, usually only when they’ve earned it, families will travel several hours to this special mechanical park. Most often, parents send the children onto these mechanical devices alone. They perform any variety of compound movements, spinning children quickly at fast speeds, occasionally to the detriment of their digestive health. In other cases, bodies are suspended upside down, midair. You can hear the screams of the many users throughout the park. “This is what you’ve waited for all year!” the parents proclaim. The food in this park is particularly strange. Children are fed large balls of fluffy cotton, often dyed any sort of whimsical color to make the foods’ appearance more attractive. They try to eat it in its entirety, often causing upset stomachs. This in combination with mechanical devices that induce adrenaline and dizziness (for fun!) can often make stomachs even more upset.

FEMINIST AMUSEMENT PARK



Form accommodating safety restraint system - Sarah

Amusement parks are fundamentally designed within restraints--restraints which are quite literally physical. Mechanical rides require safety precautions that prohibit movements that might put the park adventurer in danger. A universalized system of seat belts, lap bars, and over-the-shoulder restraints adopted by most amusement parks does not accommodate for the needs of all its users--particularly the many forms and shapes of its female patrons. A new, customizable restraint system in the feminist amusement park will allow users to choose which restraint is not only acceptable for the safety requirements of a particular ride, but also comfortable for their individual bodies. This system broadens the potential patrons of a ride, allowing the petite, the overweight,

the bodacious, to all enjoy the rides without the discomforts created by traditional restraints which too often assume, as a norm, men's bodies.

Reflecting on this exercise, I found particularly interesting how accustomed we are to certain standardizations—we often make the assumption that standardizing objects (small and large, architectural and personal) is required for feasibility of any project. This assumption is based (I think) in a very post-industrial world (with Modernism presenting a certain extreme of that type of thought) that has not been the status quo for a relatively long time, and yet is so ingrained into our way of thinking about any project (such as the amusement park) today.

Income aware dynamic pricing - Soji

The need to make room for social diversity is as important as the need to make our theme park family friendly. The economic dynamics of the different social groups can be managed through the mechanism of pricing, adopting the right pricing strategy thus becomes very important. The economic disparity between men and women within our society is still very much a problem, so we will adopt a pricing model that will adapt to the different economic profile of our patrons i.e. pay as you earn. The pay as you earn approach will enable us to maintain some level of fairness with the different minority groups especially women.

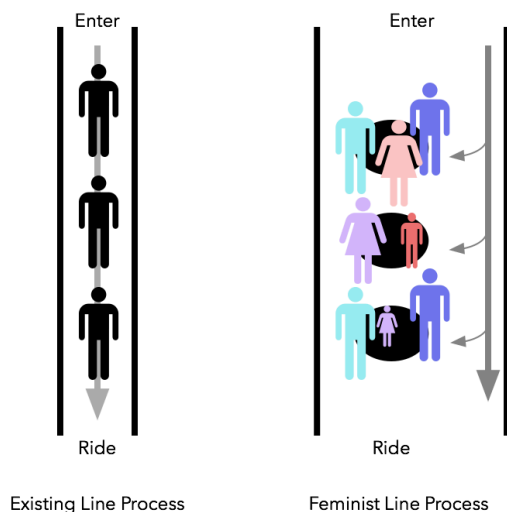
Family-conscious group waiting system - Savi

The lines in theme parks are often reflective of individualistic political discourse. If we make the concept of a line 'strange' again, what we see is a way of directing flows of people through to the rollercoaster, kind of like an assembly line in a factory that moves flows of products through the system in a single-file, linear order. The line functions in relationship with two other main objects in the system, the individuals (who are being "processed") and the destination (the rollercoaster). This current set up is built around the idea of individualism precisely because "agency" is baked in to the system a priori: the agency here is that if you're waiting in line, it's because you chose to do that, and used your freewill to navigate your body to the line. By using a thin demarcation of space, it makes sure that people adhere to the structure and are easily "processed": the wider the line, the more likely the "order" will get screwed up and potentially create conflict between people.

The flows of people are all "processed" in an assembly line-like manner: by freely walking up to the line, a person uses their body to express their desire to go on the rollercoaster, and they then wait their turn in the cue to be "processed". By process, I mean that they wait in line, and at the end, they take their turn on the rollercoaster, and then exit, ending the relationship between the parts in the system. The line serves up people in an order that is "first come first serve"—which has also been suggestive of a sort of individualistic democratic process. Lines are demarcations in space that suggest where to sit and stand in order to maintain this first-come-first-serve philosophy. In sum, the political discourse of the line is that individuals are in it, they are being served in a "first come first serve" form of equality that treats all individuals the same. But... a feminist might point out that this situation was clearly designed by White men,

who view themselves as absolute agents and individuals, who are projecting the a priori concept of “all people in the line are the same”. Feminists might claim that this is a sort of blindness to the fact that people are different and have different needs. In the illustration I made, you can see how the rhetoric of the line definitely suggests this principle of complete uniformity and “equal treatment” provided by the first-come-first-serve model when actually there are privilege structures baked into this concept.

From an intersectional feminist standpoint, we might want to design around the principle of “everyone has equal access to fun and equal opportunities to have fun”. Immediately one might notice that the old system really isn’t designed to accommodate the handicapped. To go on the ride, handicapped individuals need and require extra attention and effort even in something as simple as waiting in line—which may reinforce structures of ableism in which they are marginalized and othered. In our line, you can see that we demarcated space in a way that



allows for more flexible movement within the line structure, which would accommodate individuals with limited movement and thus need extra space. Also, in a line, there is the presumption that standing for long periods of time while waiting is easy for everyone, but the elderly are an example of someone who might like to go on the ride, but cannot stand up for that long. Since this isn’t necessarily true, we redesigned the line to have circular benches that will accommodate groups of different sizes, while still maintaining the order of first come, first serve.

Process also suggests that

individuals—not groups, or families—are the substance that flows through the line. So, one might guess what kind of heteronormative values would play out if a family has children that cannot go on the ride. This may be particularly complicated for mothers with children who do not want to go on the ride—or single mothers with young children. We came up with the idea of having a waiting space with trained specialists who can take care of children who do not want to go on the ride, which would enable patrons who have obligations to care for children to have their fun as well.

Public transit to the park - Adiel Benitez

The new feminist amusement park will make accessible the park as a type of social infrastructure. While many established amusement parks remove themselves from the heart of the city, this new park will site itself within the confines of the urban fabric and city center. The

strategic siting allows the park to be accessible by public transportation. This will allow the parks reach to expand to communities that rely on public transportation, with the hopes of allow it to be a recreational resource accessible to all. This would not be the first amusement park of its kind, but would begin to suggest that the typical amusement park, can be more inclusive and accessible. An example of an existing park, like the one being proposed would be the “Fantasilandia” amusement park in Santiago, Chile. This amusement park lies within the larger public park, Parque O’Higgins. The park has its own stop on one of the main metro lines, and doubles as public green space, amusement park, and concert venue. To make further accessible, the pricing of the park could also be variable, allowing for full day admissions at a particular price, or the option to pay per ride, which would allow for less spending if families do not want to stay the entire day. It give the visitor options to tailor their experience to their own budgets and preferences.

In reflecting on this particular exercise I found it surprising how many “norms” or established social organizations can be exclusive. In looking at the park through the feminist lense, it was surprising to consider how things like where parks are typically located, or even food portions, can inhibit access to people of different classes, or demonstrate tendencies to design experiences around what may be typical for male visitors. Take the design of amusement park ride seating, you can easily understand how their inherent bias can make a visit to an amusement park slightly uncomfortable or unenjoyable.