

My Disney Autobiography – A Visual Sociology Project

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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Abstract

This teaching artifact involves students visiting Walt Disney World within the context of an 8-week course. In the assignment, students practice visual sociology and conduct fieldwork observations on site. The course is focused on how our autobiographies are structured by the Disney universe. The assignment asks students to create their own Disney autobiography before the trip and then using the lens of a sociology of autobiography to focus their fieldwork observations while on site. After the trip, the students work together to create a presentation that draws on their individual autobiographies, their fieldwork observations, and pull it altogether showing how Disney structures autobiographical work.

Details

Subject Areas: Other

Resource Types: Assignment

Class Levels: College 300

Class Sizes: Small

Usage Notes

See files

Learning Goals and Assessments

LEARNING GOALS

Carryout fieldwork observations and visual research methods of the Disney universe

Create their own Disney autobiography and reflect on it sociologically

Work collaboratively with classmates to prepare a presentation that synthesizes their Disney autobiographies and fieldwork observations

ASSESSMENTS

Students will complete “My Disney Autobiography – A Visual Sociology Project.”

Resource Files

DOCX

PDF

PPTX

TECHNIQUE

My Disney Autobiography – A Visual Sociology Project

AS USED BY

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COURSES

Sociology of Disney
Sociology of Autobiography
Qualitative Methods
Visual Sociology
Sociology of Childhood
Sociology of Leisure

ABSTRACT

This teaching artifact involves students visiting Walt Disney World within the context of an 8-week course. In the assignment, students practice visual sociology and conduct fieldwork observations on site. The course is focused on how our autobiographies are structured by the Disney universe. The assignment asks students to create their own Disney autobiography before the trip and then using the lens of a sociology of autobiography to focus their fieldwork observations while on site. After the trip, the students work together to create a presentation that draws on their individual autobiographies, their fieldwork observations, and pull it altogether showing how Disney structures autobiographical work.

LEARNING GOALS

- Goal 1: Carryout fieldwork observations and visual research methods of the Disney universe.
- Goal 2: Create their own Disney autobiography and reflect on it sociologically.
- Goal 3: Work collaboratively with classmates to prepare a presentation that synthesizes their Disney autobiographies and fieldwork observations.
- Goal 4: Summarize and present major findings from the fieldwork observations of the Disney universe.

GOALS ASSESSMENT

- Students will complete “My Disney Autobiography – A Visual Sociology Project.”

RELATED TRAILS RESOURCES

Chernega, Jennifer N. and Aurea K Osgood. 2011. "Travel with Students: A Review of Existing Literature." Bibliography published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)

- Hare, Sara. 2010. "Classroom Exercise: Recognizing Abuse Behavior – “Beauty and the Beast”". Class Activity published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Originally published 2007 in *Family and Gender Violence*, edited by B. Keating. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Medley-Rath, Stephanie. 2020. "Decoding Disney: Sociology of the Disney Universe." Syllabus published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)
- Wright, Rosemary. 2010. "CHILDREN AND SOCIETY." Syllabus published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Originally published 2003 in *Children & Childhood*, edited by S. M. Wright. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>)

ASSIGNED READINGS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Fieldwork Observations and Visual Research Methods

Readings

- McLeod, Saul. 2015. "Observation Methods." *Simply Psychology*.
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/observation.html>
- DeVault, Marjorie L. 2000. "Producing Family Time: Practices of Leisure Activity beyond the Home." *Qualitative Sociology* 23(4):485–503.
- DeLand, Michael and David Trouille. 2018. "Going Out: A Sociology of Public Outings." *Sociological Theory* 36(1):27–47.
- Rose, Gillian. 2012. "Ethics and Visual Research Methodologies." Pp. 328-44 in *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Kawulich, Barbara B. 2005. "Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 6(2). <https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/466/996>

Learning Objectives

1. Describe participant observation methods
2. Practice doing participant observation methods
3. Explain how sociologists have observed leisure in public

Autobiographical Occasions and Autobiographical Work

Readings

- Medley-Rath, Stephanie. " 'Tell Something about the Pictures': The Content and the Process of Autobiographical Work among Scrapbookers." *Symbolic Interaction* 39(1):86-105.
- Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1997. "Social Memories." Pp. 81-99 in *Social Mindscapes: An Invitation to Cognitive Sociology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Zussman, Robert. 1996. "Review: Autobiographical Occasions." *Contemporary Sociology* 25(2):143-8.

- Zussman, Robert. 2000. "Autobiographical Occasions: Introduction to the Special Issue." *Qualitative Sociology* 23(1):5-8.
- Zussman, Robert. 2006. "Picturing the Self: My Mother's Family Photo Albums." *Contexts*. 5(4)28-34.
- Zussman, Robert. 2012. "Narrative Freedom." *Sociological Forum* 27(4):807-24.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain and give examples of autobiographical occasions
2. Explain and give examples of autobiographical work
3. Practice doing autobiographical work

Sociology and Psychology: Emotion Work and the Presentation of Self

Readings

- Goffman, Erving. [1959]2015. "*The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life: Selections*." Pp. 119-28 in *Sociology, Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life: Readings*, edited by D. M. Newman, J. O'Brien, and M. Robertson. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3):551-75.
- Van Maanen, John. 1991. "The Smile Factory: Work at Disneyland." Pp. 58-79 in *Reframing Organizational Culture*, edited by P. J. Frost, L. F. Moore, M. R. Louis, C. C. Lundberg, and J. Martin. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe emotion work and identify examples from the Disney universe and other settings
2. Describe the presentation of self and identify examples from the Disney universe and other settings
3. Read about emotion work and the presentation of self among employees at Disneyland
4. Practice observing emotion work and the presentation of self by going to different campus offices and asking for help

The Roles of Gender and Social Class in Autobiographical Work

Readings

- di Leonardo, Micaela. 1987. "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship." *Signs* 12(3):440-53.
- Shaw, Susan M., Mark E. Havitz, and Fern M. Delemere. 2008. "'I Decided to Invest in My Kids' Memories': Family Vacations, Memories, and the Social Construction of the Family." *Tourism, Culture & Communication* 8:13-26.
- Goodsell, Todd L. and Liann Seiter. 2011. "Scrapbooking: Family Capital and the Construction of Family Discourse." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40(3):318-41.
- Harwell, Drew. 2015. "How Theme Parks Like Disney World Left the Middle Class

Behind.” The Washington Post, June 12.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2015/06/12/how-theme-parks-like-disney-world-left-the-middle-class-behind/>.

Smith, Kyle. 2018. “Disney World is Proof the Middle Class is Booming.” *New York Post*, March 17. <https://nypost.com/2018/03/17/disney-world-is-proof-the-middle-class-is-booming/>.

Learning Objectives

1. Establish and analyze the gendering of family memory making, travel, and leisure
2. Investigate how social class status is established through participation in the Disney universe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for generously sharing syllabi and other resources they had compiled for similar courses: Jamie Oslawski-Lopez, Indiana University Kokomo; Jeffrey Seymour, Carthage College; and Robert B. Pettit, Manchester University.

ESTIMATED TIME

STEP	ESTIMATED TIME
Step 1. You will conduct a visual sociology project that takes inventory of all the Disney products in your home (or your family's home).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About three hours to locate and photograph items • About an hour to put them into Google Slides
Step 2. Reflect back on your life as it relates to the Disney universe. You do not need to answer every question listed below. These are simply jumping off points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About two to three hours
Step 3. Connect your Disney autobiography to sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About two to three hours
Step 4. Observe the ways in which you and others do autobiographical work at Disney World.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of about five hours over the course of the trip
Step 5. Copy and upload field notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies – a few minutes if notes are already sufficiently detailed; longer if students are adding more detail to their fieldnotes at this point
Step 6. Select photographs and prepare narratives about your time at Walt Disney World.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About two to three hours
Step 7. As a group, prepare a presentation of our Disney Autobiographies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two 75 minute class periods plus one to two hours outside of class time to prepare presentation • 15-17 minutes for the presentation

PROCEDURE, POSSIBLE PITFALLS, AND ASSESSMENT

Notes on the Steps of the Project

Step 1. Disney items

Students had some struggles photographing Disney items. Two students were not living in their childhood home and those items were either at their home far away or in storage. In one case, a student had her dad take photos for her because her childhood home was too far to return to for the assignment. I was surprised by this because we are a commuter campus. This portion of the assignment would likely need to be adapted or eliminated altogether for students on a residential campus. One adaptation would be for students to browse for images online or take photos in a retail store as a substitute.

Another student had access to items from her childhood but struggled with locating any that were actually Disney products. It was incredibly surprising. I did this step myself and took 70 photos. Many photos had multiple Disney-items. I had lots of Disney stuff and I do not identify as a Disney fanatic in any way. Many of these items were my child's but a surprising number were my own.

I encouraged students to think widely. Do they subscribe to Disney+? They could take a photo of their TV with Disney+ displayed. I also told students they could use any Disney-owned property. This expanded their options to Marvel, Star Wars, ESPN, and ABC. Few of my students used items from these properties in their Disney autobiographies in this step. Disney may own these properties but students do not immediately identify them as "Disney."

In the future, I would encourage students without items to photograph, to provide more written narrative reflecting on the many different ways Disney has been a part of their life.

I created "My Disney Autobiography" as an example to share with students. It is included as a PowerPoint with this artifact as an example. You could share this example with your students, but I encourage you to go through the same process as your students and learn alongside them. The example also includes tips for students for creating their own version. Please note that none of the images from this PowerPoint may be removed and used in any other way. The PowerPoint is meant as an example and may only be used in the context of sharing an example with your students.

Step 2 and 3. Reflect and connect.

For the most part, students were able to reflect on how their life is connected to the Disney universe. However, they struggled with applying the sociology of autobiography to their own experiences. Due to the limitations of the course (i.e., interdisciplinary and only 8-weeks), it made it difficult to give students sufficient exposure to the sociology of autobiography and enough practice with applying this area of study to the Disney

universe and their lives. I recommend eliminating the interdisciplinary component, expanding the course to 16-weeks, or designing it as a hybrid course.

Step 4 and 5. Observations at Walt Disney World – Time Constraints and Quality of Fieldnotes

I adapt steps 5-8 from Robert B. Petit, which was a tremendous help to begin considering how and what students might observe at Walt Disney World. I have been to Walt Disney World (WDW) three times before this trip, most recently in 2012. How a person experiences WDW has changed significantly since my last visit. The park is more crowded, for example. Unlike other tourist sites, there is no way to do it all at WDW in terms of time or money in a single trip.

I originally planned to meet students each day to discuss their observations. I found it difficult to make the time to meet with my students outside of the College Program classes (see “Decoding Disney: Sociology of the Disney Universe” syllabus – also on TRAILS). The time to get from park to park made it difficult to ask students to meet me on the hotel property at a certain time each day. The students split up from each other and from and were not always in the same park to meet at a park.

Everything at WDW feels like a once in a lifetime opportunity. If you do not get in line right now for this popular attraction, it is a very real possibility, that you will not get the opportunity again. It was difficult to pull students away from this reality. Given that two of my students had never been to WDW before, I wanted to make sure they got the full experience of being at WDW. FOMO (fear of missing out) is incredibly pronounced at WDW because you are always missing out on something.

I would likely trade the College Program classes so that we could do fieldwork observations as a group. Observations take time and my students found it difficult to make the time themselves. In a future trip, I would require students to observe with me at a particular location for a set amount of time, then give them time to write up their notes, and immediately debrief.

I do believe there is great value in taking students to WDW to do fieldwork observations but making the time for this observation work is difficult. As a result, the quality of fieldnotes varied dramatically. Most students’ notes were at least somewhat acceptable, but it was clear that no student had spent very much time observing or writing their fieldnotes.

Step 6 and 7. Final part of “My Disney Autobiography.”

This class was part of a larger interdisciplinary group (see “Decoding Disney: Sociology of the Disney Universe” syllabus – also on TRAILS). During the last week, of the course, each group was allotted 15-17 minutes to do presentations about the trip and course. These presentations were open to the public. We invited all stakeholders to attend (Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Deans, Chairs, other faculty in our departments, and so on) because this trip and course came with significant expense for the institution. Some

disciplines split their students into two groups. I opted to keep all six of my students in one group for this presentation.

I reserved the week prior to the presentations to work on the presentations together. By having one group this accomplished the practical consideration of not splitting my attention, but also it allowed us to see the commonalities more fully in the autobiographical work we were all doing. I found that students did not engage enough with each other's narratives. They needed to spend more time looking at the data – our fieldnotes and photographs. They had a difficult time seeing patterns because they were mostly focused on their own experiences and observations. Having students work together with my presence, allowed me to help them make these connections. We could more easily see the ways Disney structures our autobiographies because we had more data to work with.

Other Comments on the Overall Project

Disney Memory Maker

I include this section in the usage notes for the syllabus, too. I am mentioning it again, because this purchase is very important to complete this assignment. Access to Memory Maker means that students have photos from their trip and allows them to more closely observe how the Memory Maker photographers work to get people to pose in particular ways and demonstrate desired emotions in the photos.

Adaptations

This assignment could easily be modified to leave out Step 4 and 5. Most students should have sufficient interaction with the Disney universe to be able to successfully create “My Disney Autobiography.” Courses without a trip, might study the WDW website and social media feeds to observe commonalities regarding how park guests do autobiographical work and how the company encourages certain types of autobiographical work.

Students could also interview people who have been to WDW. They could do photo-elicitation interviews using the person's social media or scrapbooks from their trip (with consent). They could ask how and why they took particular photos and how and why they shared them to learn more about how others do autobiographical work. Students could work together to analyze their transcripts and compare results. They will likely find similarities in the types of photos shared. Instructors should consult with their IRB to determine if the assignment would need to be IRB approved. Richer projects would include sharing examples of photographs from participants, with permission (and possible IRB approval).

Students could study how and why people plan a trip to WDW. There are numerous blogs and social media groups devoted to getting the best deals and sharing insider tips to make the experience more “magical.” Students could analyze these sites. When I mentioned I was going on this trip on social media, I had one Facebook friend reach out who helps people plan their trips for free. She goes to WDW about once a year with her

family. It is likely she gets some sort of compensation through discounts or referrals from WDW, but I would have paid no fee to her for her help. My point is that most people likely have someone in their network highly involved in planning or going on trips to WDW that could be tapped as a resource for the course. The instructor could likely locate a guest speaker who plans Disney vacations. Importantly, the guest speaker should be briefed on how they work to make the trip memorable as opposed to the nuts and bolts of trip planning (e.g., hotel reservations).

THUMBNAIL IMAGE

Image is by the author.

My Disney Autobiography – A Visual Sociology Project

(70 percent of Final Grade)

Our focus on the Disney Universe will be about the role of Disney and autobiography. For many Americans, a trip to Walt Disney World is a dream come true and a once in a lifetime experience (if it happens at all). Many people save for a long time to fulfill this bucket-list item. Consider that “[w]ith plane fare, accommodation, meals, car rental, and so on, a family of four can expect to spend close to \$5,000 for a week’s vacation, and that’s if you take it easy on the souvenirs” (Smith 2018).

A trip to Disney World may serve as a “turning-point” in one’s autobiography. Disney World is the destination of many honeymoons, senior class trips, and family reunions. However, a trip to a Disney-theme park is becoming increasingly out-of-reach for the average American household. For example, “Orlando tourists’ average household income peaked at about \$93,000, more than \$20,000 higher than the average U.S. household wage” (Harwell 2015).

Despite the expense of this once-in-a-lifetime trip, “Magic Kingdom at Disney World in Florida was the world’s most-visited theme park in 2018, with a whopping 20.8 million visitors” (Jordon 2019). Animal Kingdom (ranked 6th), Epcot (ranked 7th), and Hollywood Studios (ranked 9th) are also in the top 25 most-visited theme parks in the world. Twelve of the top 25 most-visited theme parks are Disney properties (Hunter 2019).

No American (if not all) childhood is complete without immense exposure to the Disney Universe that starts the moment a child is born (if not sooner!). Babies can wear diapers festooned with Mickey Mouse on them. Infants and toddlers watch *Doc McStuffins* on Disney Junior, while their older siblings consume *Liv and Maddie* and *High School Musical*. Children and adults can eat Mickey Mouse-shaped goldfish crackers, ice cream, pancakes, and more. Adults and children could watch a whopping 19 Disney-owned films in the theaters in 2019 (in addition to films made directly for release on the new Disney+ streaming service). Your Google Home can be used to enhance bedtime stories with sound effects paired with Disney Little Golden Books. Birthday parties, Halloween costumes, weddings, and even funerals can be Disney-themed. One’s entire life can be Disney-themed without ever visiting a Disney park.

Disney is simultaneously becoming less accessible (i.e., the parks) while also becoming inescapable (i.e., the products and media). What does this mean for the role of Disney in your own autobiography?

For this assignment, you will do several things:

Step 1. You will conduct a visual sociology project that takes inventory of all the Disney products in your home (or your family's home). (10% of final grade)

1. You should organize all of your photos into a digital collage.
2. Select a minimum of 15 photos to write a narrative that explains what the item (or items) is and how it relates to your life, sense of self or identity, or both.

NOTE: It took me about three hours to locate and photograph the Disney items in my home. I took about 70 photos and grouped like items together.

If you have photographs that include elements of the Disney universe, you can scan and document those, too.

Format: Throughout this project, you should use Google Slides.

Step 2. Reflect back on your life as it relates to the Disney universe. You do not need to answer every question listed below. These are simply jumping off points. (10% of final grade)

- a. Did you ever have a birthday party that was a Disney theme?
- b. Did you ever dress up as a Disney character for Halloween or playing dress-up?
- c. Did you ever use Disney-themed products as part of your home décor?
- d. Was there a particular Disney movie or movies that defined your childhood or has a special place in your heart?
- e. Have you ever been to a Disney-theme park before? What were the circumstances?
- f. Did you play with Disney toys? Describe.
- g. How does the Disney universe fit into your life as an adult?

Your reflection should be built into your visual sociology project. You might not have photographs to support all the ways in which Disney has been a part of your life. You can use the 15 photos you selected in Step 1 to do this elaboration, select additional photos, or both.

You may also ask biographical others to help you with your autobiography. It is likely that a parent, grandparent, or older sibling have stories to share with you about your early life and Disney. Use your photos to help spur those stories. If you visited a Disney-theme park with others, ask those biographical others about their memories. How do their memories support, enhance, or conflict with your own memories of the same experience?

Step 1 and 2 are due by 11:59 pm on Jan. 23.

Step 3. Connect your Disney autobiography to sociology. (10% of final grade)

- a. How do the Disney-themed parts of your life reflect other aspects of your identity (e.g., social class, gender, race, age, sexual identity, and so on)? Do you find your "self" reflected in the Disney universe? Why or why not?

- b. How do the Disney-themed parts of your life make you feel? What emotions do these items trigger? Do you think that this was intended on the part of the Disney company? Why or why not?
- c. Who are the biographical others in your Disney autobiography?
- d. Does your autobiography contribute to a sense of membership in any groups (e.g., family)? Explain.
- e. How does a trip to Disney World serve as an autobiographical occasion for you?
- f. Any additional sociological insights from this activity?

Your sociological analysis should be built into your visual sociology project. Again, you can use the 15 photos you selected in Step 1, select additional photos, or both.

Overall, you should have an in-depth narrative that focuses on a minimum of 15 photos that reflects the questions listed in Step 2 and Step 3.

Step 3 is due by 11:59 pm on Feb. 6.

Step 4. Observe the ways in which you and others do autobiographical work at Disney World. (15% of final grade)¹

1. You are expected to visit all four parks. You are also expected to observe parades and special events (e.g., Disney Festival of Fantasy Parade, Happily Ever After, 2020 Epcot International Festival of the Arts, Extra Magic Hours, rope drop). You should go on rides, meet characters, and attend shows. You should visit the shops, even if you have no intention of making a purchase. Explore our hotel, too. Our hotel is not just a place to sleep but is also Disney property and is part of the experience.
2. You are expected to do a fieldwork observation of popular photography spots in three of the four parks:
 - a. Animal Kingdom: Tree of Life
 - b. Magic Kingdom: Cinderella's Castle
 - c. Epcot: Spaceship Earth
 - d. Hollywood Studios: Star Wars Galaxy's Edge

You should plan to spend at least 20 minutes observing three of these popular photography spots. Pay attention to role of the Memory Maker photographers and how individuals make photographs. How do they get everyone in the "frame"? How do families, couples, individuals, groups of friends, etc. pose? Do people make selfies differently than if someone else is taking their picture? Is everyone smiling? How do photographers get everyone to smile (even if they do not appear to actually be having a good time)? Remember, you also need time to process your observations and write more notes. Plan for an additional 20 minutes to write-up your notes.

3. You are expected to maintain overall daily observations as they relate to the topics of this course and any additional sociological insight. Be sure to reserve at least 20 minutes each day to make your notes. Remember, our focus is on how the Disney universe shapes our autobiographies. With this in mind, pay attention to the ways

¹ Points 5-8 adapted from Petit, Robert B. 2016. "Disney and American Culture Syllabus." Manchester University.

guests (visitors), cast members (employees), the architecture, and so on result in similar methods of autobiographical work. For example, be sure to observe the role of:

- a. Matching group t-shirts
 - b. Picture-taking of others and things and selfies by guests
 - c. Overheard conversations: Do you hear anyone asking if others are “having a good time?” How do people handle others who are not having a good time?
 - d. Memory Maker photographers
 - e. “Instagrammable” elements
4. Make daily reflective notes about that autobiographical work you did you each day. What kinds of photos did you take? Did you share on social media or via texting? How does this sharing support your autobiographical work? Were there particular WDW experiences you sought out to support your overall narrative of your “trip to Disney World”? Did you purchase food or souvenirs to support your Disney autobiography?
 5. The purpose of doing fieldwork observations at Walt Disney World is to connect what we are learning in class to this field site. Be sure to include reference to specific course concepts and readings in your fieldnotes. You might not add this level of detail to your fieldnotes until returning to your hotel for the evening or even until returning from our trip. Fieldnotes should include both general observations and the specific. Be sure to include lots of detail.
 6. You should tour the parks with at least one other student. Interpretation and understanding are collaborative efforts, and you need to be constantly processing what you see, hear, and experience with other class members. Because this is an interdisciplinary trip, it is important that you document in your field notes who is in your group along with their discipline. Each discipline provides a unique lens in which to view Disney World and will likely influence your own interpretations and understandings.
 7. Carry a small notebook and pen with you to log all your activities each day and to jot down your observations and significant details. At the start of every field note session, put the date, time, and location of your observation. You may also use a smartphone to record your notes.
 8. Enjoy. Have fun. Give yourself over to the Disney experience. But don't disengage your critical intellect. Remember: In general, it's better to know what you're doing. And the first wisdom of sociology is this: Things are not what they seem.

Type of WDW Observation	How Frequently	How Long
Overall Daily Observations	Daily (including travel days)	Varies – a few minutes each day
Observations of three popular photography spots	Three of Four days at WDW	20 minutes of observing + 20 minutes of writing field notes
Daily Reflective Notes	Daily (including travel days)	Varies – a few minutes each day

Step 5 Copy and upload field notes. (5% of final grade)

You need to make a copy of all of your field notes or type them up and upload them to Canvas by 11:59 pm on Feb. 18.

Step 6. Select photographs and prepare narratives about your time at Walt Disney World. (10% of final grade)

Once again, select a minimum of 15 photographs. Only this time, you should select photographs from your time at Walt Disney World. Refer back to the questions in Steps 1, 2, 3, and 4 to help guide you on your narrative of these photographs. While, you will provide an autobiographical narrative to accompany these photographs, you should also include a sociological narrative. Use evidence from your field notes to support your narratives.

Step 6 is due by 11:59 pm on Feb. 20

Step 7. As a group, prepare a presentation of our Disney Autobiographies. (10% of final grade)

How does a trip to Walt Disney World shed light on the practices of autobiographical work, emotion work, the presentation of self, and the gendered- and classed-based ways in which all of these phenomena occur? You will use photographs and narratives from the earlier Steps in this project in your presentation.

The presentation will be a 15-17-minute Google Slides presentation. You will present these to our class and public during the last week of class. The other sociology faculty (and others interested in the trip/course), will be invited to attend. Presentations will occur at the IQ wall and open to the campus community.

Step 7 is due by Mar. 5.

References

- Harwell, Drew. 2015. "How Theme Parks Like Disney World Left the Middle Class Behind." *The Washington Post*, June 12. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2015/06/12/how-theme-parks-like-disney-world-left-the-middle-class-behind/>.
- Hunter, Marnie. 2019. "World's Most Popular Theme Parks." *CNN*. May 31. <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/most-popular-theme-parks-world-2018/index.html>.
- Jordan, Adrienne. 2019. "These are the World's Most-Visited Theme Parks." *USA Today*, May 23. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/news/2019/05/23/disney-world-magic-kingdom-world-most-visited-theme-park/1206310001/>.
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Stephanie Medley-Rath, PhD

My Disney Autobiography 2020

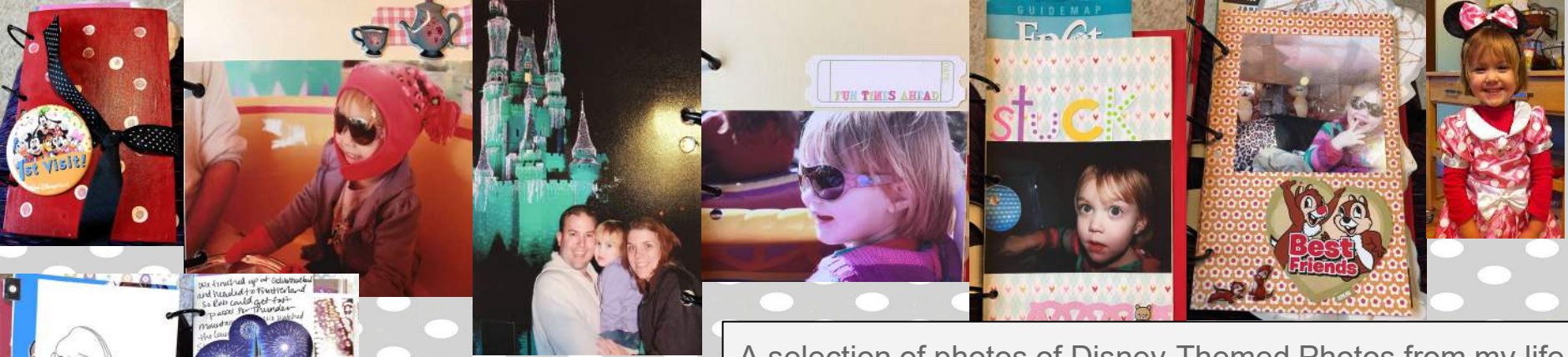
Photographing Your Disney Autobiography

- Take photos of all the Disney items in your house
- You can include photos of photos, too
- Pro-tip
 - ◆ Group like items together before photographing
 - ◆ Group all items (or as many as is reasonable) into one photograph
 - ◆ I ended up with about 70 photos. In hindsight, I should have grouped many more items into fewer photographs, too.
- Collages
 - ◆ One for all the things
 - ◆ One for a selection of photos of photos

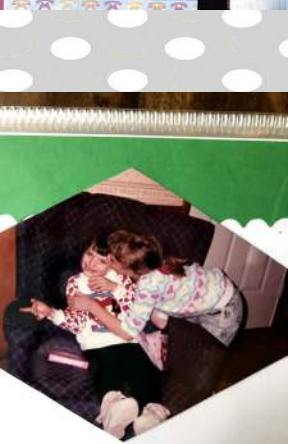


Types of Items

Blankets	Toys	DVDs, VHS, Blu-Rays
Jewelry (charm bracelet, pin)	Clothes (t-shirts, socks, pajama bottoms)	Disney+, ABC
Christmas tree ornaments	Antique toy	Video games
Books	Key chain	Legos
Puzzles	Playbills	Cups
Coloring books	Framed art	Sheet music
Office supplies (pencils, folders)	Posters	Stickers
Scrapbook supplies	Souvenirs	Beach towel
Comic books	Fridge art	CDs



A selection of photos of Disney-Themed Photos from my life



Tips

- Download Google photos for your phone
- Create a folder in Google photos for your My Disney Autobiography
- Backup your photos (from phone to cloud)
- This will make it seamless to add your photos to your slideshow
- Locate your photos in slides (Google photos)
 - ◆ Drag and drop into your slide
 - ◆ Right click to crop down some of your photos
- If your photos are not loading your on slide, try Firefox
- Use an app like Scannable to scan any printed photos

The Stories

The likely volume of Disney items in one's home means that it is difficult to write about each item. Instead, select some of the items to tell stories about your life.

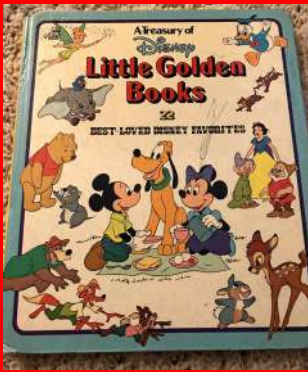
By doing this individually and then bringing it together, we can start to see how our Disney Autobiographies are socially patterned.

I selected photos that went together in some way or used individual photos. My Disney Autobiography is just that a DISNEY Autobiography. There are plenty aspects of my life not linked to Disney. However, I have photographs showing Disney as part of my life since at least age two until the present.



A Selection of Stories

My mom and dad gave me this for my 2nd Christmas.



I have all 4 of the Bambi Happy Meal toys. This one is still with R's toys. I think the rest are in storage.



I still use this blanket!



My Disney Childhood

I loved *Lady & the Tramp*. I got this print when the film was “released from the vault” during the 1990s. If you pre-ordered the movie at The Disney Store, then you received four movie stills. This one hung in R's room until this past summer.



I don't remember the circumstances of getting this pin, but I remember wearing it on my jean jacket as a kid.





Photo 1: Mickey and Minnie are on my sister's sweatshirt. It appears to be Valentine's themed.

Photo 2: On my 7th birthday, I had a Mickey & Minnie birthday cake. I have no idea why. I don't recall picking it out, but I must have. The cake was made by a family friend that used to make birthday cakes.



Photo 3: I dressed up as Minnie Mouse for Halloween. I don't recall picking out the costume. My mom probably made the outfit because she made most of my Halloween costumes.



Disney at Holidays and Celebrations

My 1980s-era Minnie Mouse costume was homemade (at least the skirt) for Halloween. Note, Minnie's skirt was red and white.

My daughter's 2010s-era Minnie Mouse costume was bought from a store. Minnie's outfit is now pink.

The change from red to pink costuming for Minnie is an example of how pink has become so strongly associated with girlhood in the United States.



Minnie Mouse through the years...

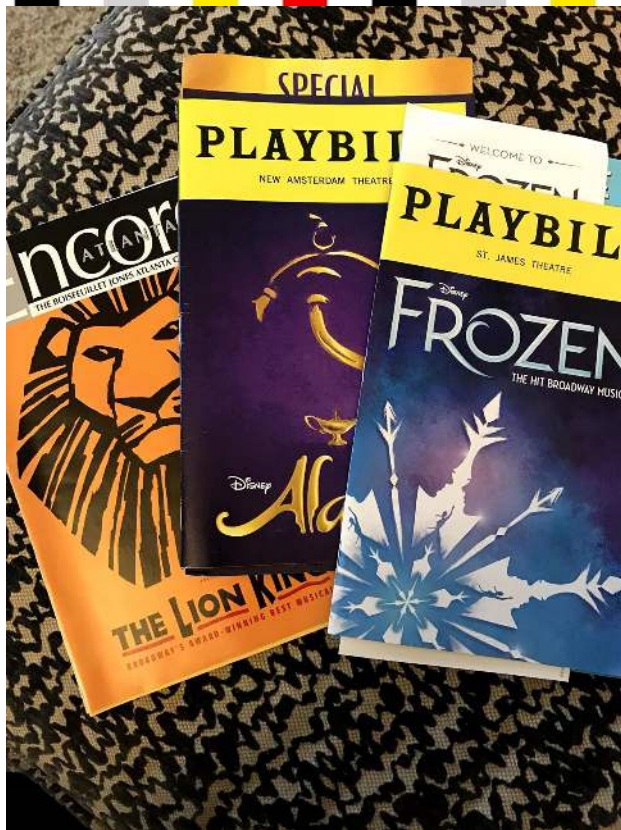
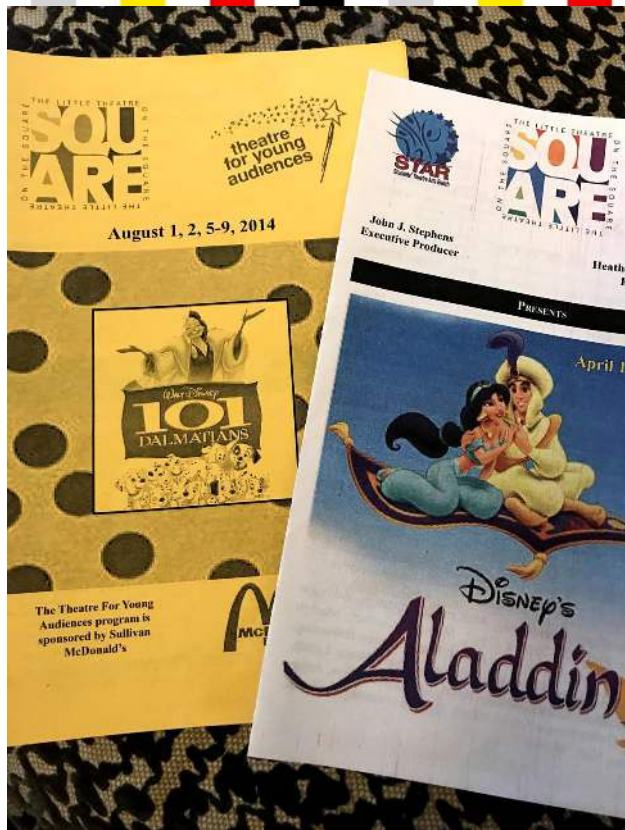
Find the Puppy

R picked out this souvenir from *The Pirates of the Caribbean* ride at Walt Disney World. She was 3-years-old and had never seen the movie. But, how could she resist adding a puppy to her collection?

At home, we played a game called “Find the Puppy” with either myself or her dad. R could spend hours playing this game. One of us would hide the puppy in her room and then the other would have to find the puppy. It was such fun to try to find new places to hide the puppy.

We recently watched the film, and this dog is in the movie.





I've seen several Disney musicals. When we lived in Sullivan, there was a professional theatre. We saw many shows there, including several that were just for kids. When we lived in Atlanta, Rob and I went to see *The Lion King*. And, lastly, on our trip to New York City we saw two shows on Broadway (*Aladdin* and *Frozen*).

Disney on Stage



R's Favorites

R loved *Frozen* when it came out. She saw the movie in theaters and then went back when they did the sing-along version of it. She grew her hair long like Elsa. Her new room in Kokomo was decorated from *Frozen*. We even went and saw *Frozen on Ice*. However, before *Frozen*, she loved *Cars* and *Bolt*.

Star Wars + Legos



R's favorite toys are legos. She has dozens of sets, including several Disney-themed. A few are Disney princess, but mostly Star Wars. Her favorite *Star Wars* characters are the droids and the porgs. She used her money to buy her first porg. It talks (well makes porg sounds). She received her second port as a gift for taking care of Oreo, the neighbor's cat, while the neighbors took a trip to Disney. R dreams of a having enough porgs for her very own porg army.

R adds:

There will be many types of porgs in the porg army. The army will be unstoppable. There will be Christmas porgs, St. Patrick porgs, porgpuppies, porgkittys, birthday porgs, etc. The porgs will have a book too. The book will be written by me. It will be called *Porg Wars*.



What's missing from this stack of VHS are my copies of *Dumbo* and *Robin Hood*. They were recorded off of TV. What's also missing is the VHS of shorts that I would always pick out at the video store. My other favorites were *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and *The Lion King*. I watched them over and over again and had their soundtracks.

The DVDs are mostly R's collection.

Childhood Movies

An Antique Toy

I bought this last summer. There is one exactly like it at my parent's house. I'm not sure where it came from, but it has always been in their house. Now I have one of my own.



The Music



Many a car ride was spent listening to *The Muppets Movie* and *Frozen* soundtracks. R loved the movies and of course the music from the movies.

Growing up we also had this 4-disc set of Disney music. It includes music from the movies, parks, classic, and contemporary Disney. I bought it for R because I remembered really liking it. She still listens to it on occasion.

My First Trip to Walt Disney World

I first visited Disney World when I was in 7th grade. We went to Magic Kingdom, MGM Studios, and Epcot. We also visited Universal Studios and the Kennedy Space Center. We went over Christmas. Orlando had record lows and frost in the morning. It was on this trip that I flew for the first time. I saw a 3-D film (*Captain EO* with Michael Jackson!) for the first time.

One the souvenirs that I got was a Cinderella's Castle charm for my charm bracelet. I did not get Mickey ears. Those were a souvenirs that you did not wear outside the park, so they were not an option. Infamously, Lindsey wanted a Mary Poppins doll and broke down crying in the shop. She got the doll.

I really only remember the 20,000 Leagues under the Sea Ride and Haunted Mansion rides. I remember the rides at Universal Studios more (*Jaws! Back to the Future! ET! Earthquake!*)

My parents say that went at this point because they were not going to take us there until we would be old enough to remember it. In hindsight, we went the the year after my mom got a full-time job teaching. Our household income improved and this trip serves as evidence of that change. I was one of, if not, the first in my class to go to Disney or fly on a plane.



My 2nd Trip to Walt Disney World

I visited Disney for the second time on my senior class trip. Animal Kingdom was open on this trip.

Angie sprained her ankle the day we left for Florida, so she used a wheelchair for a lot of the trip -- and helped move us to the front of the line on occasion.

Several of my classmates were already 18, but Matt's mom pretended to be me and Jenny's mom one night so we could all go to Pleasure Island.

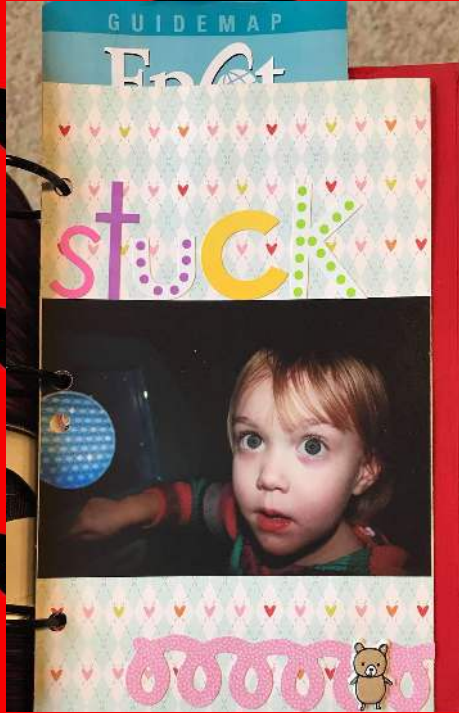
This time around the weather was warm so I got to ride Splash Mountain. I think that was the longest line of the whole trip.



VACATION FUN



My 3rd Trip to Walt Disney World



We went to Disney World in 2012. We took this trip as part of a trip to see Lindsey. Plus we got to go to Disney for free! Our friend Michelle works there and got us in for free! We went to Magic Kingdom and Epcot. R loved It's a Small World. I think we rode it three times. She only remembers getting stuck in the giant "golf ball."

Lindsey and Donny came, too, so we all hung out at Disney before heading to Fort Myers.