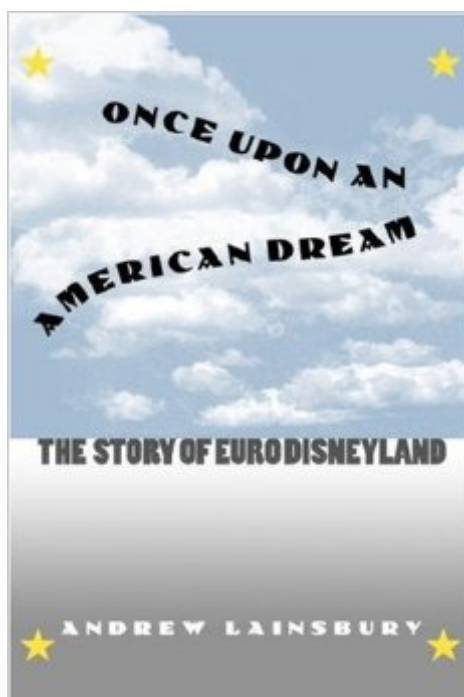


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# Once Upon An American Dream: The Story Of Euro Disneyland



## Synopsis

Branded a "cultural Chernobyl" and the "tragic kingdom," the Euro Disney Resort has been on its own thrill ride since opening in 1992. The much publicized version of the Magic Kingdom gave Europeans alcohol-free "mocktails," surly employees, even colors too muted for the Disney image. Facing financial disaster, was it any wonder that Disney execs found themselves wishing upon a star for answers? After so many knee-jerk criticisms of Euro Disney, this book combines firsthand experience and research to shed new light on claims that the park is nothing more than a form of American cultural imperialism. Andrew Lainsbury, a former Euro Disney employee who knows what the park meant to its visitors, goes beyond media bites and academic scorn to examine Europe's love/hate relationship with Euro Disneyland and some of the undiscussed issues surrounding it. *Once Upon an American Dream* is a story of global capitalism on a grand scale. Lainsbury has plumbed company archives and interviewed key players to give readers the real view from Le Chateau de la Belle au Bois Dormant (Sleeping Beauty's Castle). He cracks open the Euro Disney controversy to reveal the park not as a tragic experiment in exporting American culture but the result of European efforts to import a popular form of American entertainment. Lainsbury tells how the Walt Disney Company came to build a European park and locate it in France, how political negotiations affected its design and development, how it was promoted to continental audiences, and what caused its widely publicized financial woes before being rescued by a real prince from Saudi Arabia. He reveals what it took to win back the hearts of skeptical Europeans—such as serving wine, selling flashy merchandise, and placating disgruntled workers. Finally, he looks into the magic mirror to speculate on the role of Euro Disney and the Walt Disney Company in the twenty-first century. Ultimately, Lainsbury shows that cultural imperialism is not an exclusively American phenomenon but a global corporate strategy—and that global corporatism, by needing to be responsive to consumers, is so complex that it may not be as monolithic as feared. *Once Upon an American Dream* is a fairy tale for our times, reminding us that, for all the critical huffing and puffing, the creation and marketing of pleasure is what Euro Disneyland is all about.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

So this is the real story of EuroDisney... I have to admit that I never even thought (hoped ? forget it...) to find such a well made book on this particular topic. It's fascinating, how Lainsbury packs all the different contents and perspectives into a single, compact book. Comprehensive, informative and above all, entertaining; you'll really enjoy reading it. It's too sad that it only consists of about 200 pages, but hey... it's really well worth a try. If you are curious about the history of EuroDisney/ Disneyland Paris and searching for a comprehensive, interesting source, this is your book of choice.

This is the result of thorough research. All the sources I once used for my own literature report have been used in this book and added to that information, are interviews with people like Tony Baxter, Ward Kimball, Bill Cottrell, Tim Delaney and Card Walker; people who were in key positions when important decisions were made about this European Kingdom, as negotiator, designer or imagineer. A lot has been written about the park, and many people still believe it was a mistake to build it, primarily based on negative journalism. This book sticks to the facts and is intended for people who like to go beyond those rumors. If you are looking for a book to help you plan your trip to Disneyland Paris, this is not the book for you, but for researchers into international marketing and business, this is an essential volume.

This is a great book, well documented and footnoted. Plenty of information for the Disney novice. There are anecdotes and paraphrases which imply first person research, but the notations are useful in clearing up issues. A strong argument in favor of the theme park as a diversion and entertainment and not as an entity to spread American philosophy or forced culture. This is a compelling thesis for a talented author. A little pricey, the book is a fine compliment to other books in the Disney library.

Lainsbury is a brave author for not following the mainstream thought of attacking Disneyland Paris, just because it has seemed the thing to do since the project was first announced. He used a complete library, and did a good job of compiling the sentiments contained in those other works. Having written a literature report on Euro Disney myself, I appreciate the references he has included in this book and the added information from first-hand interviews with big names like Marty Sklar, Tony Baxter, Bill Cottrell, Tim Delaney, Ward Kimball and Card Walker. Don't look for any pictures in this book and one third of its pages are bibliographical notes, but if you are seriously interested in the real story of Euro Disney Resort, this book should be on your shelf.

If you're a theme park enthusiast, the description of the design phases of Eurodisneyland are particularly detailed. If you're a Disney fan, this is a rare chance of looking backstage to discover hidden aspects that will boost your respect for the genius behind the magic. If you're a marketing student, this case history is enough to feed your thoughts for years. And if you're a sociology scholar, "Riding the Black Ship" is better. Warning: no mice, fancy photos and/or hypocrisy inside.

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