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Hidden in the Open: Disney's Overt Secret Messages

by

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Preface

The Disney princess is an institution in American culture. She is what girls mean when they exclaim: "I want to be a princess". She smiles at us from the covers of their products in the aisles of the supermarket and the bookstore, from the covers of DVD's, and from the shelves in children's and teens' clothing stores. I typed the words "Disney princess" into the search box on youtube and got 141,000 results!

Like any other archetypal character, the Disney princesses share most of their physical and mental features and change only slightly in age and personality as time elapses. For example, Snow White looks slightly younger than Mulan or Belle. However, there are many characteristics and principles that apply to most if not all princesses. Like the princesses, the Disney movies they are placed into reinforce and adhere to conventions with regards to their depiction of society, values, gender roles and each class and its functions. Since Snow White came out in 1937, there have been trends and fluctuations in the way stories are told and the way they relate to politics and occurrences outside the fantasy world. In what follows we will explore the patterns that are stable over time in an attempt to see what Disney has been hiding in the open for over 70 years.

A note about the clips:

I have made an effort to describe the points I think are central to each clip in the text. Therefore, it is not necessary to watch every clip. However, I felt that it was important to show you, the reader, what I saw, and present you with evidence of the veracity of the points made.

Disney movies: Preservation of the Social Order

Courtship: Courtship is a major part of the animated Disney films because most are centered, or appear to revolve around the love plot. Furthermore, courtship is central because it is one of the two main male-female relationships that exist in Disney movies. We rarely see the inner workings of families after the culmination of courtship in marriage, and we rarely see how father-daughter relationships develop after the daughter has reached maturity (demonstrated by marriage). Moreover, Disney is one of the main disseminators of cultural information about courtship, as seen by multiple references to it in other popular forms like TV shows, live action movies, including feature films not made by the Disney corporation (an example of Disney's major role in other movies is a scene in "9 to 5", where the copy of the costume doesn't have to be exact, nor does the word Disney have to be mentioned for us to know Lilly Tomlin's character is referencing Snow White because her image is enmeshed into our collective cultural consciousness). Let us therefore take a closer look at the process of courtship.

The ritual of courtship, at the center of many Disney plots, though presented as idyllic, gentle and romantic, is not as innocent as it appears. In Sleeping Beauty Philip hears Aurora's voice and decides to follow it, in essence stalking her…He plays a voyeur role, watches her sing to herself, eavesdrops on her inner monologue, and then appears from behind her and inserts himself into the situation. Because it's Disney she doesn't protest while he sings and dances with her. At the end of her "reverie" she attempts to pull away with the rather inane excuse (which completely infantilizes her) that she's not supposed to speak with strangers, to which he replies that he's met her before "once upon

a dream." Even in our patriarchal society this response would have earned him a kick in the teeth, but it doesn't in the movie. (See Clip 1)

The lyrics to the song "I wonder" (which is sung right before the scene described above) establish that the ritual of courtship is natural and necessary, that it's the way of the world, and since nature is always a good thing in Disney movies, courtship, which we watch the birds enact, appears positive…

I wonder, I wonder
I wonder why each
Little bird has someone
To sing to sweet things to
A gay little love melody?

I wonder, I wonder
If my heart keeps singing
Will my song go winging
To someone who'll find me
And bring back a love song to me?

Interestingly, as Aurora sings the words "and bring back a love song to me" a castle appears. Once again, like in all the great romance plots, there's a subliminal message here that ties love to the home, the proverbial (and in this case literal) castle. While a female villain could also technically be seen staring longingly at a castle, which would then be interpreted as a symbol of power, this never happens. It is always the princess's dream to get the castle through the man, and this is always presented as love. The ritual of courtship is so "natural" that the animals even bring it about. Furthermore, while love is about castles for women, it is clearly not so for men, not even in nature. When Aurora tells the animals she's fooled her guardians and she has met someone, the owl winks at her and says "who", and since he is the one who plays the role of the "prince" in her fantasy, it is fair to assume the owl is male.

At first she playfully flirts with the owl saying, “you know, I’m really not supposed to speak to strangers, but we‘ve met before”. The exact line Philip uses on her! Thus, Disney is making her fright/ refusal seem ridiculous even before she makes it. It signals that she will be coy later, not serious about her refusal, which she isn’t. This leads to the classic stalker/patriarch mentality whereby no doesn’t really mean no. The lyrics of the song also advocate for love at first sight, for no real reason, reaffirming that women want the castle and men want the sex, or else why would they love someone “at once”.

Aurora’s exclamations of surprise at the prince’s appearance might almost sound orgasmic, and her retreat is just to stare shyly backwards. However, this is not entirely consensual even given this situation. She releases herself from his grasp and he grabs her around the wrist. He even says, “I’m awfully sorry, I didn’t mean to frighten you” (i.e. she does look a bit frightened). Once she raises the stranger argument and he throws her line back at her she gives in, is completely silenced and she even smiles slightly as they dance. Within thirty seconds, she is resting her head on his shoulder, gazing at the castle with him. Only then does he ask her for her name! So the perfect dream prince isn’t really concerned with a woman’s name or thoughts, just with her being docile and attractive. Once he asks for her name she comes to her senses and starts running away, only to have her docility return less than a second later when he asks her “when will I see you again?” she first says “never”, he then says “never?” at this point he doesn’t even have to grasp her wrist, she instantly changes her mind “well, maybe someday” “when, tomorrow?” “Oh, no, this evening” “where?” at which point she reveals where she lives.

<u>Beauty and the Beast</u> also demonstrates that courtship is coercive. The beast takes Belle as a prisoner in her father’s stead and woos her while she is in captivity. This can

hardly be called consensual. In fact, at one point in the movie after he has been particularly violent and abusive, Belle decides she must leave, but is then attacked by a pack of wolves; from which the beast rescues her resulting in his injury. His incapacity touches her nurturing spirit and she comes back to her abuser even when she could have escaped. The beast has been violent and abusive towards her, and yet, within a short time he declares he loves her. While one could argue that we are meant to see time stretch in the movie, seasons barely even change. A rational observer would find it very hard to believe such a change happened in so short a time. However, a powerful sorceress cast a spell that "guarantees" the verisimilitude of the change. What's more, as in Sleeping Beauty, the affair develops quickly. The importance of riches is emphasized not only in the form of a castle here, but also in the form of books. The Beast gives Belle his library. However, the library is merely a symbol of status; in fact, there is no evidence that the beast is educated at all. In this case, not only is there no meeting of the minds to speak of, which we might have assumed there was given that Belle's main complaint was that her town was provincial. We are shown that there is no way Belle would be compatible with Gaston (the movie's villain) by the fact that he continuously throws books around or puts his dirty feet on them, despite the fact that they seem to be important to Belle. However, since the Beast isn't cultured or educated, there is little in the Beast's favor, other than his wealth and status, his ability to provide amply for any need that might arise, and his physical strength.

Since he obviously needs it, the Beast gets dating advice from a talking clock. Cogsworth, the clock shaped servant says "well, there are the usual things: candles, chocolates, promises you don't intend to keep" and then he thinks of the books as a

means to lure Belle into the love trap. This demonstrates that the Beast doesn't even know his lady well enough to guess what she'd like; his servants do that.

A parallel is also made in the movie between Belle's story and that of the heroine in the book she's reading "it's my favorite part because you'll see: here's where she meets prince charming, but she won't discover that it's him till chapter 3." This parallel is strengthened by the fact that the same musical theme that accompanies it is the song that marks the shift in Belle and the Beast's relationship later in the movie "Something There" (see clips 2 and 3). One could argue that a subliminal connection is formed. However, this begs the question of whether the Beast is, indeed, prince charming when she meets him; evidence points to the contrary. In which case, the movie is planting a false idea in our heads that he really is a nice guy despite his selfishness, violent temper, and extreme withdrawal and defensiveness (Clips 4 and 5). The movie is arguing that he wasn't that bad of a guy all along, despite the intro to the movie, where he clearly is (Clip 6). If she meets prince charming but " won't discover that it's him till…" then there's the implication that he started out as prince charming, while, at the same time trying to demonstrate that he grew throughout the movie (into a lovable, sensitive guy). This message is contradictory. Moreover, his doppelganger, Gaston, isn't so different from him. The only difference between them is that the beast is wealthier. Gaston's methods of courtship are to announce his nuptials before asking the woman, physically towering over her, and plopping his dirty socks on her table, while announcing they will have 6 or 7 children and some dogs. Belle is often seen as independent and feminist because of her rejection of this domestic rustic ideal. However, she falls for it 30 minutes later. The only difference between Gaston and the beast is their physical appearance, which causes

Gaston to be vain and the beast to be disgusted with himself. Both approach courtship with a caveman attitude (Clips 7 and 8).

Aladdin, in turn, is so obsessed with status that he pretends to be a prince not because that's what will attract the girl, but because that's what *he* thinks is attractive. Furthermore, that's what will attract her father. There is no attempt to obscure patriarchy's role in marriage in this movie, except after the sultan is impressed he can change the rule about princesses only marrying within their class, and become the benevolent patriarch we all know and love. As for Jasmine, she falls in love because Aladdin's flying carpet allows her to escape the confines of the palace (thus gaining a false sense of freedom) and because he wants her for her body and not for the status marriage will afford him. She forgives him for deceiving her about his identity and agrees to marry him.

While women can often be villains in Disney movies, the "good" women must be submissive and at least appear powerless or have limited power. Therefore, as is the supercultural imperative, men end up fighting the good women's battles for them, battling the evil woman. Even women with supernatural powers need men to actually fight, even if the fight is against other supernatural women. In Sleeping Beauty the fairies are really the ones fighting Maleficent, but they cannot be aggressive. They can turn arrows into flowers, or burn through handcuffs, but they cannot actually kill Maleficent. For that, they create the shield of virtue and the sword of truth, which they give Philip. You'd think that if they can create a sword and bless it, that they could use it. However, that is left to the man in the story. In The Little Mermaid this is even more obvious. Through her desire for the man, Ariel loses her ability to swim and her ability

to fight back. To do that she needs Flounder, whom she saved from a Shark earlier, who is paranoid, out of shape, and scared of everything, to get her to the ship, and even the clueless seagull does a better job of destroying Prince Eric's wedding (to the villain) than she does. She becomes everything Disney expects of human women: submissive, very pretty, helpless and dependent on men, whom she trusts. The whole time her male friends are helping her cause, she looks on. She doesn't even put up a fight when Ursula grabs her and drags her back into the ocean. The most she does is dodge Ursula's triton blow and spurts, and to save her man, she moves the triton (a woman is only allowed to fight for a man (or on her own behalf) if there are no men around to help her.) It is Sebastian, Eric's (the prince's) dog, who bites the locket containing Ariel's voice off Vanessa's (Ursula in disguise) neck, Ariel can't even get her voice back on her own. It is ironic that male characters give Ariel her voice back and a female character (debatably, Ursula was modeled after a drag queen) who takes her voice away. However, when Ariel has a voice, she doesn't let men capitalize upon it (accidentally), she certainly doesn't let men dictate her whereabouts or her hobbies, until she falls in love with a human (higher class male). She then loses her curiosity and her passion, and is content to give up her family and personal status for the chance of marrying into a higher class.

It is almost always the case that the way to climb up the social ladder is to marry a man. In The Little Mermaid Ariel is of the Merfolk, who have characteristics of under classes. Firstly, they have undefined musical tastes and instruments, they are colorful and sing, dance and are generally merry (Clip 9). Humans, the upper classes of the movie, eat many fish and sea creatures. Ariel is fascinated by human objects, even though, from the few mer objects we see, they aren't all that different. In fact, there are very few cultural

differences between Merpeople and humans. However, Ariel likes the objects people make (consumerism) and so is fascinated by humans (so the stereotype that women like shopping is true of mermaids as well).

All Ariel wants to be is "part of your (his) world" (Clip 10). In order to assimilate, she needs to act like a human female and does not hesitate to trade in her culture for one that views itself as superior: she is taught how to affect feminine flirting by Sebastian the crab[1] (Clip 11), learns how to dance from Eric, and though the fact that she accepts the advice of any male (even if not an authority on the subject matter) sometimes causes social faux pas she learns how to be a human female, down to painting her nails a pale pink! Her assimilation into human culture is very quick.

Interestingly, Eric is even the object of desire (usually a female role) in this movie. He finds Ariel's voice alluring, but she thinks he's beautiful. Importantly, though, it's not what she *says* that matters, just the timbre of her voice. Unlike Ariel, who desires Eric as an individual, he will take any female body. The male form is really stressed in this movie: we see Eric, then we see his sculpture, then the face is broken off the sculpture. We are inundated with Eric's features. In Beauty and the Beast, too, Belle is drawn even to the torn portrait of the prince. Women don't even have a monopoly on beauty, just on objectification. Eric's body is never scrutinized and broken up into parts as Ariel's is in "Part of Your World". The camera glides across her body in what is very reminiscent of the way music videos on MTV present the female body.

[1] He can teach her because he is Caribbean (not European), and foreigners always aren't as masculine as Anglo-Americans.

It is emphasized that the road to female success, to social climbing and acceptance is through marriage and perpetuation of the social order. Even Tiana from The Princess and the Frog, who never wanted a husband, needs to marry in order to fulfill her dream of opening a restaurant (which she feels the need to do because it was her father's dream). First the hero turns her into a frog (because he thinks kissing her will solve his problem), and then he needs a princess to kiss him, so they marry. In fact, to compound the conservatism of this movie, she gets her restaurant because she finally gets the prince to commit and so they get his parents' financial backing. Once again, the social order is restored by preserving the existing hierarchy. Moreover, if this were indeed a racially liberal movie, one could conceivably imagine the prince being white, but of course he can't be.[2]

When female villains refuse to obey men as a means to climb up the social ladder, trouble ensues. Moreover, their struggle for power is always framed in a bad way, and as completely illegitimate and crazed. For example in early drafts of The Little Mermaid, the audience was given the information that Ursula was Triton's sister, who had been banished due to an attempt to seize the throne. It would then make sense that she would feel some right to it. That piece of information was removed and in the final version she therefore appears power hungry without any legitimacy. Moreover, Triton could appear

[2] On a side note, the idea that daughters need to protect their fathers and fulfill their dreams for them has been a major theme in Disney movies of the last few years (Mulan, The Princess and the Frog, Beauty and the Beast, etc…). Once again, women learn their place by listening to, helping, and obeying men.

to be unfeeling for banishing his only sister from the kingdom instead of employing better strategies to reconcile his needs with hers. Of course, patriarchs don't negotiate, so that information was conveniently removed from the movie.

Moreover, when younger women want to be set free from the bonds of the older patriarch the new man forms an attractive alternative. Evil women however, usually exist outside of society, but are still restricted by it; they are usually older, and less fertile and motherly. They therefore are not good candidates for the marital solution to the problem of their desire for agency. Therefore, their desire to be free is presented as a boundless lust for power through status, control or money. However, except for their desire to control their own fate and be influential the villainesses are usually well off financially, or appear to be, so it is hard to empathize with their plight.

Another common theme in Disney movies, is the depiction of the heroine as intellectual until the right man comes along; she then joins forces with him and loses all her prior interests. One could argue with the claim that Disney heroines are intellectual in the first place. While Ariel is really curious about humans, one gets the sense that her interest is motivated by her father's mistrust of them and by the fact that they make many desirable objects, which she likes to collect. There is no evidence whatsoever that she has ever researched the uses humans might have for their trinkets. In the song "Part of your world", she says, "I just don't see how a world that makes so many wonderful things could be bad." This is a very consumerist outlook. Besides the fact that consumerism often doesn't fit in with intellectualism, there is further evidence of her more materialistic point of view later on: "wouldn't you think my collection's complete? Would you think I'm the girl who has everything...I want more." Ariel then reveals she wants to really

belong to this upper class of humans, to watch and interact with them, to be part of Eric's world:

"And ready to know what the people know
Ask 'em my questions and get some answers
What's a fire and why does it - what's the word?
Burn?"

She isn't exploring the human world as an anthropologist does, examining cultures different from her own. She wants to become human and experience life outside the ocean, she has a desire to change and assimilate, this is not an intellectual curiosity, but a desire for social ascension, common to many Disney characters.

Belle, too, appears to be intellectual, Disney staff even stick a book in her hand. But it is a storybook she has read three times before; it has a romance plot, and has pictures in it. If Belle is of marriageable age, she might be reading thicker, more demanding books, especially given that her father is an inventor. Let us give Belle the benefit of the doubt on her choice of reading material. Intellectual people are intellectually curious outside of the realm of reading; when Cogsworth gives Belle a tour of the castle she is uninterested, she just wants to go where she is forbidden. She passes up on the oppotunity to visit a well-stacked library, in favor of her desire to breach someone else's privacy. While in some editions of Beauty and the Beast, Belle re-teaches the Beast how to read (which is a curious addition, given that he is of a higher class, and therefore presumably has had more of an education than she has), she generally appears to enjoy strolling outside, eating nice meals and dancing more than she enjoys reading or asking questions about the castle, its history or any number of other intellectual matters that could come up in this sort of situation.

However, even given the assumption of intellectual interests before meeting "prince charming", after meeting him, the emphasis of the heroine's life changes. In Ariel's case, she wants to become part of his world, and win his love. The way to do this, it is made clear, is to be submissive and sexually available. In Ariel's case it would be almost impossible to demonstrate intellectual curiosity/ability in Eric's presence due to her loss of voice. In Belle's case, though intellectual conversations could happen, they don't. Even the mere semblance of intellectualism is rare. Belle mothers the beast, while getting to know him better. Even in the scene where they are reading Romeo and Juliet, there doesn't seem to be a discussion of what is read, just reading. In other movies, especially later movies, like Mulan or Atlantis, there is no question of intellectualism in the heroine's case. In Mulan neither is she particularly intellectual, nor is she required to be. In Atlantis, while the hero's intellectualism in greatly emphasized, Kida (the princess) is not meant to be seen as intellectual. Her knowledge comes inherently and she is not even aware of her country's own history in full, she needs a man to explain her own culture to her! She is interested in fulfilling her duties to her people and being a good daughter. In fact, she is even less liberated than the other princesses because she becomes an object during the movie and there is no development in the love plot. Women, even villains, are generally not permitted to be intellectual in Disney.

Furthermore, even when the men are intellectual, the topic is always framed as brains vs. brawn. Could there not be a big guy who is really intellectual and bright, too? Not in Disney. It is no wonder, then, that females are given the outer veneer of curiosity, so the man can then teach them something, in Ariel's case, or supply them with potential knowledge, in Belle's case, but there is no real meeting of the minds or thoughtful

exchange. As Ursula states in a section of The Little Mermaid's "poor unfortunate souls" number (Clip 12):

> "You'll have your looks, your pretty face.
> And don't underestimate the importance of body language, ha!
>
> The men up there don't like a lot of blabber
> They think a girl who gossips is a bore!
> Yet on land it's much preferred for ladies not to say a word
> And after all dear, what is idle babble for?
> Come on, they're not all that impressed with conversation
> True gentlemen avoid it when they can
> But they dote and swoon and fawn
> On a lady who's withdrawn
> It's she who holds her tongue who gets a man"

This is problematic on two levels; the first is that all female speech is relegated to "blabber" or "gossip". Women can't possibly say anything of substance under this paradigm. Furthermore, Ariel is supposed to use "body language" (with a suggestive hip thrust) to get a man, while shutting her mouth. The idea of being beautiful and silent even works for Ariel later in the movie, so Ursula turns out to be right in her assessment of courtship strategy. Disney does not like intellectualism; a girl who can refrain from speaking (and he constantly puts them in situations where they can't really speak all that much) is more likely to reach the ultimate goal of getting a man.

This disapproval of intellectualism is not surprising, given that many times women are not given any agency at all. Women are a commodity and are often traded by men; a central aspect of marriage is that it strengthens the ties between two males by their trading a woman. In Beauty and the Beast the Beast trades Belle's father for Belle, with her consent. However, pretty soon Disney disguises the fact that she's a prisoner. She moves from the tower, where she's behind bars, to a nice room with a talking wardrobe. Belle is the traded item between two men. In fact, even her father doesn't have that much

say in the matter; the more powerful patriarch accepts the deal offered by Belle, who sacrifices herself for her father.

In The Little Mermaid Triton, the mer king doesn't like humans at first, but once he acquiesces to his daughter's desire to be with a human, he not only approves the marriage, but it looks a lot like the classical political marriage between two royals (Clip 13). There are many humans and merfolk there to witness the event, and Triton even shoots a rainbow (sign of peace) out of his triton-shaped scepter. The two monarchs also exchange physical pleasantries (bows/waves). The marriage facilitates better diplomatic relations between humans and merfolk. More importantly in The Little Mermaid Ursula uses Ariel as a bargaining chip from the start. She uses Ariel to get to Triton, in order to get power. So, once again, a woman is a token used to amass power.

In Sleeping Beauty Aurora is promised to Philip at birth, she has no choice in the matter. The two kings arrange the marriage politically. Once again, a woman is traded among men; of course, in this case some would argue that Philip, too, is not consenting. However, he tells his father he won't marry Aurora and rides off on his horse. His father reluctantly accepts this. Aurora, on the other hand, is broken hearted but would ostensibly have gone along with her parents' plan had Maleficent not intervened.

In Aladdin, Jasmine clearly carries the throne together with her hand; that is clearly half of her attraction, at least for Jaffar (the villain). Towards the end of the movie the sultan changes the law so that the person the princess marries does not have to be of royal birth. However, this equalizes the playing field so that a person who is not nobly born can rule Agraba, but it still doesn't detach the throne from the princess. The Sultan also implies that this would not even be a problem if he had had a son, and

vocalizes his exasperation with only having a daughter. Once again, the woman is a symbol of male power agreements. The movie's theme strengthens this idea by proclaiming Aladdin very clearly and repeatedly as "a diamond in the rough", reinforcing the meritocratic view that the worthy characters end up in power. Therefore, once again, Aladdin's marriage to Jasmine can be considered politically. This is a story about how a male peasant ascended the throne; again, not just a love story, but a story about power and class.

Motherhood: A common characteristic of Disney's heroines is that they always demonstrate their maternal instinct, no matter how aloof or "unfeminine" they seem at the beginning of the movie. This is because being maternal is an important part of Disney femininity. Snow White demonstrates empathy for young animals; she also gets the dwarfs to wash up and cooks for them (Clip 14). Jasmine gets in trouble for handing a hungry child an apple, and Belle teaches the Beast how to eat at the table, dresses his wounds, and interacts well with Chip, the boy-turned-teacup. She also mothers her father and pats a child on the head absentmindedly in the opening scene.

The importance of being maternal cannot be overemphasized, because it is a major aspect of attractive femininity, as demonstrated by the king's fantasies in Cinderella (Clip 15). Throughout the movie whenever he talks about marriage it is made clear through text and visuals that what he really wants is grandchildren. He even tells his assistant "I can't understand it! There must be one who would make a suitable mother, I mean a suitable wife!" (Clip 16.) Since most Disney movies surround a love plot, and this patriarch is representative of others, since he is constructed in the fatherly conventions, the parallel between wife and mother that he makes applies across the

board. When Cinderella walks into the ballroom in her enchanted garb, while the sentry's heads turn, the king watches the prince's reactions, and then, once he is assured that the romantic scene is set he trots off to dream of grandchildren. Marriage and motherhood are thus bound together, and since marriage and princes are related, motherly instinct is an essential every princess must have to preserve the family line, and indeed they do possess the necessary qualities. Even Penny, the little girl from The Rescuers mothers her teddy bear, tucks him into bed, kisses him good night, and defends him, even when it is risky.

Maternity is one of the most important roles women fill in every society. It is one of the central characteristics that separate women from men; women have the ability to give birth, men do not. As a result, in our society women often end up raising children. However, in Disney animated movies the mother is often absent or appears completely insignificant in her child's upbringing. Very often this happens because she dies before the start of the movie (Cinderella, Snow White). Other times, she is present, but cannot raise her child due to external circumstances (Sleeping Beauty). However, as we will later see, maternity is central to Disney's concept of the family and of society. It is one of women's major roles, and defines every woman that appears in Disney: Is she a mother, will she be a mother, is she likely to be a successful mother?

How then, does Disney treat the concept of maternity and its influence on society?

Maternity is a threat unless it's sanctioned, which is the reason queens/villains cannot be functional mothers; they always fail at it. Evil women are ugly (therefore aren't likely to conceive) and menopausal (unable to conceive), therefore they aren't a threat to "getting" prince charming. For example, in Cinderella, even the dead father

figure does a better job parenting than the stepmother. She tries to parent her daughters and fails miserably (Clip 17). Is this because the male is missing? Possibly. More likely, as Disney does in most of his movies, there is an almost genetic meritocracy, whereby being beautiful, graceful and talented comes naturally. The stepsisters are not talented or cultured, and no matter how much instruction they receive they cannot match Cinderella's natural abilities (Clip 18). Even the stepmother, who clearly comes from a noble family, and is polished and well mannered, can carry out a conversation with the king's aid, but not with the king or the prince. Moreover, her polish is clearly a thin veneer of grace, and under it she is just like her daughters.

Males in Disney are mainly interested in sexuality or ability to rear children, hence their interest in younger, fertile women. No Disney hero ever falls, even momentarily, for an older woman (she cannot be the mother of his children). When the patriarch is not around, queens are always evil (they cannot possibly have merit other than as mothers or wives). They either have power and want to keep it (in which case the explanation for their powerful position is often that they employ the power of dark magic) or they don't have enough power and want to acquire *more* power in which case, they are presented as calculating and coldhearted, for not being maternal or for not being otherwise involved with a man.

The only song in Disney directly referencing motherhood is "Your Mother and Mine" from the movie Peter Pan (Clip 19). The lyrics are very telling:

> Your Mother and Mine
> Your mother and mine
>
> The helping hand that guides you along
> Whether you're right, whether you're wrong

Your mother and mine
Your mother and mine

What makes mothers all that they are?
Might as well ask, "What makes a star?"
Ask your heart to tell you her worth
Your heart will say, "Heaven on earth"
Another word for divine
Your mother and mine

In Peter Pan, motherhood is portrayed as a warm, supportive, and sacred institution that is ***tied to patriarchy.*** Disney's definition of divinity is always a white old male with a beard (and it is portrayed that way in Hercules). Here, motherhood is portrayed as a "hand that guides you along", a quality often attributed to divine /saintly figures sent to guide humanity (or a portion of it) to places God wants them to go, or get them to carry out the divine plan. Furthermore, tying mothers' worth to "heaven" semantically links them to divinity, angels, and God. Mothers are summed up as "another word for divine", linking the ideas together. The mother in Peter Pan, Mary, is more in tune with her children's feelings, and she negotiates their rights and needs with the patriarch, who looks a lot like Captain Hook, the villain. The maternal figures in the movie are indisposed for the great majority of the plot; Nana, the dog, is tied up (by the father), and the mother goes to Mr. Darling's (the father's) office party. It is therefore easy for Peter to, essentially, kidnap the children. Wendy then assumes the mother role; she puts her brothers and the Lost Boys to bed, provides a moral compass and nurtures everyone. She even sews Peter's shadow back on. Most importantly, she signals when it is time to go home, though the patriarchs have the final say in that matter. The message we get about motherhood in the movie is that every woman (who isn't half naked/foreign/not human) has a little mother in her. Men enjoy being mothered in the

movie; they enjoy hearing stories about themselves and about other patriarchs, told admiringly by a pretty woman. More importantly, the mother figure is the one who keeps the community in line with the patriarchal goals. Wendy cautions the Lost Boys not to join Captain Hook's crew because Peter will come and save them.

All the mothers in Peter Pan are supportive of the men they work with. The children's mother, Mary, is very supportive of her husband, George. She backs his decision to remove Wendy from the nursery despite all her children's resistance, saying "now, dear, don't worry about it any more tonight" when Wendy protests she doesn't want to grow up. She will change her mind later in the film, once she has seen what perpetual childhood leads to, and has her "fun" when she is forced to be a mother, and is taught she's the responsible one. For example, while the males get to dance around the fire and smoke the peace pipe with the Indian chief, Tiger-Lily, and the Indian men, an Indian woman tells Wendy " squaw no dance, squaw get them firewood", she obeys and goes to get firewood, only to come back and see Tiger Lilly kissing Peter. She, of course, gets jealous and walks home. She is not allowed to dance and be part of the male group, as Tiger Lilly is, due to her elevated status as princess. Wendy's job is to prevent Michael from smoking the peace pipe because he's too young, and to collect wood, and then go home and wait for the men to return, put them to bed, and tell aggrandizing stories about Peter. However, Wendy realizes that she won't get the perks of motherhood, because Peter is not prepared for a committed relationship. It is then she announces that they are going home because they need their mother, and she is not their mother. It is then Wendy's turn to deliver the song "your mother and mine" (above). When the children get home, it is then the *real* mother's job to straighten things out, and

then the father changes his mind, deciding he wants to keep his daughter a child as long as he can and condescendingly pats her on the head, infantilizing her, despite the fact that she announces she is ready to grow up (Clip 20).

At the end of the movie, Wendy describes the experience as *positive*; she says Peter Pan was "The most Wonderful of all." Disney re-colors the entire experience, including Wendy's feelings of jealousy towards Tinkerbelle, Tiger Lily, and the mermaids. In the re-telling of the story these all become colorful adventures and experiences. The father, exasperated by the entire hullabaloo goes to bed, leaving the mother to take care of their overexcited daughter. Moreover, the father has clearly been drinking, as he trips up the steps, and clutches his head at his daughter's chatter. This is significant for two reasons, the first being that as the male authority figure, the father can go to a party, drink and have his fun, and then come home and leave his wife (and his dog) to take care of his children, whom he does not listen to; his role enables him to lay down the law, and Nana and his wife make sure his wishes are obeyed without him having to really interact with his children. The second is in his similarity to Peter Pan in his reluctance to really *listen* to his daughter. Yet Wendy describes Peter as "the most wonderful of all" and is confident in her trust of him, despite the fact that he causes most of the trouble she gets into. The father even recognizes seeing Peter Pan's flying ship (usurped from Captain Hook) when he was "very young." There is an implication that he joined Peter Pan (or maybe even *was* Peter Pan, as is suggested by movies like "Hook") in his younger days. This strengthens the connection between the three faces of patriarchy in the movie (The father, Peter and Captain Hook).

A connection is also clearly established between Wendy, her mother and the dog, Nana. All three have the same shade of eyes and hair color. They all nurture and take care of the men in their life, forgive the father, George, for his trespasses, and are generally passive and cater to male needs. Nana even gives George the rope to chain her in the yard with, while looking at him with mournful eyes, as he tells her she's not a nursemaid, but a dog (Clip 21). All the while, it is his money that bought her the nursemaid cap she wears and he decides what role she plays at his convenience. Moreover, she tidies the nursery, gives the kids their vitamins and generally looks after them, all things a nursemaid does. There is clear anthropomorphism here, and yet the patriarch denies Nana her rightful role. Moreover, as the caregiver the children clearly feel more empathy with Nana. When the father bumps into her and havoc ensues, it is Nana who gets the family's sympathy, which is why she is cast out by him.

There is a clear hierarchy, where Mary, the mother, takes care of the father's needs and upholds her role of tidy prettiness, while Nana looks after the children, because it doesn't matter if she doesn't look tidy for an office party. When the kids sully George's clothes, it is Mary who wipes them clean and takes care of his needs. Moreover, George is not careful about his physical occupation of space. When he messes things up because he steps on the children's toys, he expects sympathy and is peeved about the obstacles in his path, as opposed to Nana, who tries to get out of everyone's way as fast as she can, tidying after the father and boys, clearly walking on eggshells whenever it comes to humans or their property. When George bumps into her and she flies across the room and into the wall, she never takes an aggressive stance towards him, yet he resents not being at the center of attention, despite the fact that he created the mess in the first

place. He expects his needs to be taken care of first, everyone always caters to him, and when Nana "steals" the limelight due to his actions, he punishes her and casts her out. Women are the experts on serving men's needs in this movie, especially the mother-types. Tinkerbelle is the mistress type. She cares about Peter, but is not motherly towards the Lost Boys, she is part of the gang, in a sense, and is worried about her looks and status as the preferred female and therefore does her best to remove other threatening females.

Disney mothers often wear their hair in similar ways, they wear similar clothes, and all are tidy and rather pretty, especially if they are the hero/heroine's mothers. It is the lack of a mother that gets many princesses into trouble. This is most true of the earlier princesses, like Snow White or Cinderella, where the death of the true mother allows a "fake" (step) mother to come into the picture. This is bad because it contaminates the bloodline, which is a main concern of Disney's. Even if the stepmother is aristocratic, she isn't motherly, and uses offspring for personal gain. In Cinderella, Lady Tremaine uses Cinderella as a maid, but even her *own* daughters are means to an end. She uses them as rungs to climb up the social ladder by marrying them off. To this end, she invests time in their cultural education, even though they clearly do not possess musical gifts. It's as if she refuses to acknowledge that their talents lie elsewhere (or nowhere). She fulfills her role as a duty she has, but is not really nurturing.

It is probably for this reason that her daughters, Drizella and Anastasia, don't turn out that well. In fact, her daughters are created in her image; they are busy destroying Cinderella's happiness and chances, rather than increasing their own. They want their needs met, and that is all. Even the prince is clearly not an object of lust in their eyes, in

and of himself. They want their comforts taken care of. As such, as an actress who dubbed one of the sisters acknowledged in an interview, they have freedom of expression very few female characters have. They look out for their own interests (how inherently un-female). Disney establishes a "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" mentality. The idea is conveyed that the right genes can imbue someone with all the most desirable qualities, even despite a severe lack of nurturing and education.

Another way to view the upbringing (nature vs. Nurture) question is to see fathers as (secretly) better at rearing daughters, because the ultimate goal is to make them desirable to other men. Daughters must learn how to be submissive and attractive, and since men are experts on what other men want, fathers are inherently more qualified to teach their daughters how to please men. This is demonstrated constantly in Disney movies. The most attractive women in Disney movies are usually raised by men, the presence of a maternal figure is rare (The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin). Ariel knows what Eric will want because she grew up with a patriarch. The world revolves around men. Strong women are not good at rearing children because they are not examples of submission and caring. How are Drizella and Anastasia to learn submission and servitude when there is no one for them to serve? It's a house of women.

The lyrics Disney offers about motherhood in Peter Pan, the lyrics of "Your mother and mine" demonstrate the universality and interchangeability of mothers. "*The helping hand that guides you along, Whether you're right, whether you're wrong*" highlights the unconditional love and caring that maternity offers. We should remember, though, that a girl sings this to boys. In Disney movies parents love their *male* children

unconditionally. The boys are looked after no matter what they do. However, *girls* exist for the purpose of serving men, and the environment pressures women to marry or be suitable marriage material. "*Another word for divine, Your mother and mine,*" this line emphasizes the patience and caring motherhood implies. Perhaps not accidentally, the mother's name in Peter Pan is Mary, as opposed to the father's name, which is ordinary, George. She indeed possesses an unimposing beauty, serenity and caring qualities. She looks after other people. Motherhood is described as "heaven on earth" and "divine"; this reinforces the biological imperative of motherhood, handed down from the heavens and reinforces the tie to the biblical Mary.

Women and Nature: Good female characters are tied to nature. The princesses can communicate with animals, have an affinity with birds and mice, and with wild animals that usually shy away from humans. Later princesses, like Jasmine, may have a pet animal that is hugely protective of them personally, but is very threatening to everyone else (Clip 22). Women are also portrayed as attuned to nature in other ways. For example, the three good fairies in Sleeping Beauty, Flora, Fauna and Merryweather, are each skilled in magic specifically related to the area indicated by their name. Flora, aside from the general tasks her wand can accomplish, creates flowers; Fauna and Merryweather (though we never see this) ostensibly create and maintain processes that respectively create well-being for animals and good weather. When Maleficent's lackeys shoot arrows at prince Philip, Flora turns them into flowers, when they throw big rocks at him, she makes them into bubbles. She, in fact, is usually the one who saves him, in accordance with the unmentioned hierarchy that seems to be related to the fairies' age, or

appearance of it. Merryweather is the youngest-looking, and she is last in the chain of command.

The fairies' magic is limited in that it can only do good, they cannot harm people, that's what they need Philip for, as they cannot act against Maleficent directly. They are linked to nurturing (Clip 23), as can be seen by their enthusiasm to bring Aurora up in the stead of her parents. That is, despite the fact that there are no available males that would suit the fairies they are perfectly happy with raising a child, and seem to do a rather good job of it, too. Furthermore, they choose an abandoned woodcutter's cottage in the forest as the place to bring Aurora up, because of its anonymity; the fact that they know there is such a cottage suggests they are in tune with nature.

The fairy godmother in Cinderella, too, can turn animals into people, and is kind and nurturing. She imbues Cinderella with hope. She, too, has powers, and a wand. But again, she is limited in her powers; she can't extend her spell beyond midnight. Furthermore, unlike the evil stepmother in Cinderella and Maleficent in Sleeping Beauty (who, though they are middle aged seem to be vibrant and in good physical shape), the fairies and fairy godmother, regardless of their age, can already be classified as post – menopausal. In a sense, then, all good women are tied to motherhood, whether they end up being surrogate mothers, nurturing figures or potential future mothers. This is portrayed as the princesses' destiny due to their arranged marriages and natural connection with young and helpless creatures. Motherhood and nurturing are the mark of a good woman, whether or not she can biologically give birth. The whole of nature seems to push princesses in that direction and seems to indicate that women in general are nurturers.

Women who are not interested in small animals or nature and are not attuned to caring for others are clearly the antithesis of the good woman; they defy the natural order. These women, however, have far more power and agency, as they have the power to counteract the work of their rivals. Flora, Fauna and Merryweather can create beautiful flowers, and Maleficent can, according to Merryweather, destroy Flora's creations with one frost. Furthermore, she isn't in charge of just one thing, she creates thorns, can turn herself into a dragon, and is in general, as she says "the mistress of all evil" (Clip 24). It takes the work of *three* fairies and one prince to foil her plan. She is bigger and has unlimited power. According to Fauna her weakness is not understanding love, kindness and sacrifice. I would argue that her weakness is that she is, still, a woman. As such, no matter what she does, the man will always be able to foil her plan, even if all he has are a sword and shield (which are, supposedly, the sword of truth and shield of virtue, but there is no evidence that they have special powers).

Sleeping Beauty demonstrates time and again that women can battle until the end of time (as the battle over what color Aurora's dress demonstrates; it continues as the closing credits descend on us), but men settle matters with women's help. In the end, the men's plans that their offspring shall marry is carried out, with a few difficulties, true. However, it does happen. Philip manages to defeat "the mistress of all evil" with a phallic object, and hits her in her lower stomach, too (Clip 25). In the end, all that is left of Maleficent is blood spattered around a sword/ phallus.

Women succeed in getting their way only when they have a man (or men) on their side. Pocahontas can "sing with all the voices of the mountains" and "paint with all the colors of the wind" (be attuned to nature), but if John Smith hadn't thought she was

attractive, she would not have had the slightest effect on either group of men, despite the advice of her oaken godmother figure.

On the other hand, evil characters often use more scientific methods of getting what they want. While fairies use wands and little rhymes to get their wishes, witches use spells from books and have longer spells, or labs in which they brew potions. It is definitely unfeminine to have an extensive education in lieu of a connection to the natural.

Foreign Females: Non-human or foreign beauties exist within different boundaries. Their bodies are allowed to be more exposed without them being considered "sluts" or villainesses. Thus, because Jasmine is an Arabian princess, her midriff can be exposed. She is also aware of her sex appeal and uses it as a tool to distract Jaffar, the villain (Clip 26). She still exists on the same plain as the rest of Disney's princesses, however, in that she is not sexual, she doesn't desire Aladdin sexually.

Tinkerbelle was created when the pin-up was being popularized. The instruction was to make her as naked as possible without getting into trouble. Her dress is little more than a corset. She was modeled after the playboy centerfolds of Marilyn Monroe, and it shows. The difference is that while Marilyn Monroe seems comfortable in her body in most of her movies, Tinkerbelle can be seen agonizing over her figure in front of a mirror and being petty and mean due to her jealousy of Wendy (Clip 27). Furthermore, the mermaids, also very sexualized figures, do the same (Clip 28). In most of Marilyn Monroe's movies women stick together; in this movie, however, Peter Pan definitely enjoys being fought over and sought after; he enjoys the little rivalries between the

women in a way only a patriarch can. Wendy receives preferential status because she is brought to Never Land to be the lost boys' mother, and motherhood is looked upon kindly by patriarchs, especially when it is sanctioned and supervised by men. Wendy can stay home and cook and take care of everyone just as long as Peter can go on his adventures and sleep in peace. Tinkerbelle can be exposed, and to, an extent, so can Tiger Lilly, but Wendy has to be properly covered, and she is throughout the movie.

Disney undresses his foreigners more and more the closer to the present day we get. Pocahontas' attire exposes most of her legs, and in Atlantis the princess is in little more than a bikini. In fact, any Baywatch chick would be proud to sport such a tanned, shapely and exposed body, complete with platinum blond hair, very dark skin, and sapphire blue eyes. We get the idea that the foreign beauty is nice to look at, but cannot be with someone of high rank in Anglo-American society. Pocahontas is a princess yet she falls for a commoner (which is possibly a reason she doesn't end up with him); Kida (the princess in Atlantis) is understood to sort of "be with" the nerdy hero at the end of the movie, however, marriage is not on the table.

Princesses do not have body image issues because they belong to the beauty meritocracy, women who are naturally beautiful, good, and graceful. They do not need to work out or put effort into being pretty. Because Tinkerbelle is not the heroine of the movie and isn't human she is allowed to be dissatisfied with herself, and thus be more similar to the average viewer, who is often meant to have the kind of relationship with the princess that the animals do, where they adore and look up to her. Tinkerbelle's jealousy, however, seems petty and is looked down upon by the young patriarch of this movie; in fact, Captain Hook capitalizes on it. The movie therefore sends the message that, as

usual, the meritocracy should be upheld. If you are not the princess, you should serve her and hover around her, be her friend. You are not supposed to be jealous. Also, as a woman, you should worry about your more rounded figure, and should aspire to a pre-pubescent body, while exposing yours for males to ogle at their leisure. Furthermore, as a non-heroine and an exotic being, Tinkerbelle or "Tink" is meant to give Wendy her fairy dust so she can fly, but what does she get in return? Not much. Heroines in Disney movies are served by everyone and never have to return the favor. Through Tinkerbelle and the mermaids' attitude, Disney introduces female rivalry while, at the same time, condemning it as petty and rather childish.

In The Little Mermaid Ursula introduces weight out of nowhere in her "Poor Unfortunate souls" number (Clip 29):

> Poor unfortunate souls
> In pain, in need
> This one longing to be thinner
> That one wants to get the girl
> And do I help them?
> Yes, indeed

Why should someone "long" to be thinner? Seemingly, it has to do with love, as love is the subject matter of this song. Visually, we get a rather unattractive pair who, upon being given more attractive physiques, transforms into a happy, loving couple. The message here, which is universal to Disney movies, is that one cannot be part of the "love plot" unless one is attractive, and attractive always means thin.

Silencing: A noteworthy theme regarding women is that some have no voice and need a man to interpret what they say. There are two cases in which a female character literally does not have a voice for a large section of the film. The first is, obviously, The Little Mermaid and the second is Peter Pan. Ariel literally cannot talk and we need men

to interpret her every thought. To even find out her name Eric needs another male to whisper her name to him (Clip 30). For 25 minutes the "heroine" of the movie doesn't say a word, males are interpreting the situation, her thoughts, and giving us information. The truth is, her voice isn't really missed. Throughout the first part she says very little of any substance whatsoever, her voice is not crucial. Neither is Tinkerbelle's voice in Peter Pan. She tinkles no matter what mood she's in, and it's always Peter or the Lost Boys who interpret what she says. Disney effectively shuts up two of his most famous and well-known female characters! Two of the most beautiful, successful characters in Disney are subservient, and can be ignored and frequently misinterpreted.

This idea is significant because this is what happens behind the scenes as well. Throughout the Disney movies the major creators of the movies, of the characters, have always been men, and they put words (and often interpretation and intonation, which is not the directorial custom in theater, where it is considered in bad taste to give line readings) into female actresses' mouths; there is usually not a single woman on the major creative team of most Disney classics' movies. On a metaphorical level then, men always interpret women, whether or not it is transparent.

Women are often silenced in these movies. We have talked about the literal ways in which production teams can silence women. However, male characters silence female characters often. For example, when Peter tells Wendy "girls talk too much", once she realizes what he's said, she continues to sew his shadow, but remains quiet (for a little while, at least) (Clip 31). She never scolds him for messing up the nursery and breaking things. She learns her lesson. When Triton shatters Eric's statue he lays down the law and shuts down any rebellion. It becomes clear to Ariel that she cannot argue with him

under these terms, where he has all the power. Ursula uses this lack of ability to communicate to exploit Ariel as a bargaining chip. Triton's lack of willingness to compromise lands him in trouble, but then Eric saves the day and maintains male dominance. Essentially, Triton and Eric silence the film's women; they manage to get Ariel to submit and shut Ursula up forever.

In Mulan, the title character talks very little for most of the movie. In the very beginning of the movie she doesn't speak very often because she is not expected to express her own opinions, just to recite social texts. Later, it is because she needs to affect a male voice to fit in, and is not very successful at it, so she doesn't speak unless she must. Also, the role of a soldier is not to talk back to his commanding officer (interestingly though unsurprisingly, in this case the commanding officer is also the love interest). In this way, she can be shut up throughout the movie, whether she plays the male or the female role. In 101 Dalmatians, the "feel-good" culmination of the movie is when Jasper, one of the dognappers, tells Cruella "oh, shut up!"

Schematization: Its Benefits and Importance

Appearances: The schematization of a plot makes it easy to perpetuate. If all characters that play an archetype have similar features or physical characteristics, it is easy to identify the role of each player within the first few minutes of a movie. We always know how each Disney movie is going to end. We know it'll end well. We also know a couple will come together. There are no complications. We know from our first glance at a character (sometimes beforehand) what their role is in the plot. How? Because Disney characters are so formulaic it doesn't take thought to figure them out. Disney obeys the conventions of cinema. Villains often enter cast in shadow or casting a shadow, green smoke surrounding them. Additionally, they look alike. Women have streaked hair. They start out attractive if a bit vampy and intimidating and end up ugly, resenting the beauty they lack, but striving for it. Interestingly, the prettier the woman, the more covered she is. The vile villainesses are always dressed in slinky, revealing dresses that expose the lack of proportion in their bodies; their vocal patterns often start softly and then attack the viewer's ear, creating a lurking fear of the next attack (Clip 32).

There are also conventions of the kinds of shots we get of them (Clip 33). There are usually extreme close ups of their eyes, sometimes their eyes emerge from the darkness, or are the only thing remaining aglow in the shadows. Female villains have changed their "look" over time, but once it changes it stays consistent. Since Cruella De Vil villains have usually been lanky and insect-like, ill proportioned, and have primping rituals that are emphasized but fail to improve their looks. Ursula is the exception to this rule, but one could argue that since Ursula was modeled after Devine, a drag queen, she isn't really totally female. She also isn't strictly human (she's a squid).

The beautiful woman disguised as a hag also always looks the same as her predecessors. The complete, wrinkled and bent hag with the walking stick is almost always an evil woman in disguise. Two examples are the mean queen from Snow White (Clip 34, 34a) and the enchantress who teaches the prince from Beauty and the Beast a lesson about kindness and hospitality by turning him into a beast (or does she?) (Clip 35). They are both younger women, although in the second case because the story is told through animated stained glass, it is impossible to tell exactly how old the enchantress is. Either way, both women wear a dark cloak and carry a cane. The older woman always offers an unsuspecting victim a symbol of femininity (red apple/pink rose) that is not what it appears to be (Clip 36). Interestingly, the Beast refuses the rose and his life (i.e. his line of heirs) might end if he cannot find a young woman to love him and fall in love with her. In Snow White's case the apple might function in an opposite way. She wishes for "the one she loves" to find her, he shows up and they exchange a kiss by messenger. She then bites into an apple (evoking the idea of original sin), which puts her into a sleep of death from which only the kiss of true love can awaken her. It is the apple, then, that tests whether the prince truly loves Snow White. The older women make procreation possible by forcing men to love a young maiden. The women need the change of garb to hide their own sexuality; Snow White's queen has red pumps before the transformation and she takes great care to hide every aspect that might be alluring: her garb, her voice, her hands, her face and her power. So does the "beggar woman" in Beauty and the Beast. When she doesn't get her way she reveals herself to be a gorgeous (but cruel) enchantress and casts a spell on the prince.

Really old hags are therefore apparently really powerful because they have the power to influence the mating ritual in ways only men do in other movies. Furthermore, at least in Snow White, the queen's power comes from magic she learns from books. While one cannot call it intellectual activity per se, she is an educated woman in a movie from 1937! The power these old crones have is so immense that the movies might be warning the young men that old ladies' fragility is not to be trusted. They've lived lives--ostensibly, at least in Snow White's queen's case--with men and know the social hierarchy and how it operates, and yet, they have navigated their way through it and retained power. Moreover, unlike the menopausal middle-aged women, the crone is often a disguise for a younger, sexually mature woman, which is the real danger to princes and patriarchs! The lesson patriarchs might take from this is: be kind to everyone, but trust no female unless she's pre-pubescent!

All the Disney princesses share a sense of playfulness and empathy towards animals and other small, helpless creatures. They don't usually relate as much to bigger animals like horses or cows, they befriend birds and mice, sometimes dogs, in other words, small-to-medium animals. In earlier movies in particular they have a knack for communicating with very young animals, like fledgling bluebirds. In other movies, they sew clothes for animals. This serves two purposes; the first is to demonstrate human superiority. Good animals talk, dress and behave like humans; they also share the same values. The second is to demonstrate the heroine's suitability as a mother. A good woman is attractive, obedient and maternal.

Villains: While some earlier Disney villains might be considered attractive (until they turn into a crone or a dragon in order to cause harm to the heroes of the movie), they never were and probably never will be maternal or obedient. Their failure to be willing to sacrifice themselves for men, put others' needs before their own (i.e. the fact they behave like Disney men), and their lack of submission are their fatal flaws. In order for the social order to return, they need to be trampled upon and humbled. The world is only a safe place if women remain in the home and remain servile. If women make too much money or aspire to too much power, they pose a threat to society.

In movies from the past few years, villains are clearly darker than heroes. The emperor is probably the (naturally) whitest of the figures in Mulan, a fact compounded by his beard, as opposed to the Hun villain, who is very dark, possesses a black eagle and is often cast in shadow in the movie (Clip 37). In fact, he is almost bestial/apelike. He has claws, not fingernails, and there is something inhuman about his eyes, as well. In Aladdin, Jaffar is pretty dark, despite his British accent. While Lady Tremaine is still rather fair skinned (due to Cinderella being an early movie), she is often cast in shadow, so she appears darker than she really is. While Disney unabashedly makes mice brown (possibly due to their slave-like status), he cannot give non-white people high, threatening status. They therefore are darker than the heroes, but not very dark. Additionally, most of the female villains are middle aged, or around their 40's. The grayish tint makes them look older and less attractive, as if their skin has lost its luminous quality, and is about to get wrinkled.

Another staple in the depiction of the female villains is that they often have canes/tritons or other phallic objects that they assert points with or use to beat or

intimidate others. Medusa has a cane in The Rescuers, which she uses on her crocodiles, on Penny and on Mr. Snoops (Clip 38). In The Little Mermaid, Ursula gains control when she has the Triton, at long last. She tries to blast Ariel, but she escapes. Possibly, Ursula isn't skilled enough with the use of the Triton to manage to defeat anyone with it. Interestingly, King Triton's crown is no good without the Triton. This implies that rulership has to do with having a phallic power object, whether magical or ordinary (when Medusa is impaled upon the pole, she does not have her cane at hand). Maleficent, too has a cane, which she uses until she becomes a dragon; Philip then throws the sword of virtue straight at her, like a large dart, and it enters her body and kills her. Interestingly, women's powers, prior to overtaking men, are usually located within round objects like potion bottles or cauldrons.

Ursula is based on a drag queen and is therefore not quite as organically feminine as other characters. Her voice gets even lower when she uses the Triton, and she gets larger. Earlier in the movie she uses her power to transform others, she now transforms herself. Her body never quite functions like an ordinary female body; her breasts punctuate her speech, but move unnaturally. As she inflates, her body becomes even more of a blob. Perhaps the problem with Ursula is that, as usual, she is not attractive and she is old, and therefore the only way to get her hands on power is to, essentially, steal the phallus. However, she cannot control it properly and watch out for other phallic objects, the way men do, and she is therefore defeated. Interestingly, her pets are eels, which could be conceived as pliable phalluses or as sperm. When Ariel causes her to accidentally shoot the eels, she gets really angry. Interestingly, the helpers are usually male, not female companions. When Ariel causes Ursula to shoot her eels, she has a

feminine reaction at first, she gets really upset "my babies! My little poopsies" her eyes then get bloodshot and she releases ink (menstrual fluid) as she gets bigger and uses her Triton to control the water. She is giving up emotion and femininity as she turns into a huge angry being, her voice gets lower, and she becomes even darker. Once again, she is stabbed by a phallic object in her lower abdomen, because she isn't watching her soft spot enough, like patriarchs have learned to do (Clip 40).

In 101 Dalmatians, Cruella De Vil dominates the scene with her cigarette and its holder. She even figuratively turns a man into a Dalmatian with her fountain pen. She uses short phallic symbols all along, and is then unable to be killed, only humiliated. In Cinderella the veneer of manners and sophistication that the music lesson Lady Tremaine gives her daughters is destroyed both by their lack of talent and by their brutishness. Drizella whacks Anastasia with her flute, essentially announcing visually that she is masculine; she is beating her sister on the head with a phallic object. In Mulan, we know the Hun leader is defeated when his (crooked) sword is out of his control. Mulan can then handle it without fear because firstly, she's been posing as a man for most of the movie and secondly, because she gives the sword to the emperor, who then gives it back to her, and then she gives it to her father! She refuses to keep the phallus and accepts her place in the home.

Before her "Poor Unfortunate Souls" (Clip 41) number Ursula fixes her hair and applies color to her lips. She then puts on an act of compassion, a cabaret show of all the good deeds she's done and convinces Ariel to give her her voice in return for a pair of "legs". She is almost overly, vulgarly feminine during this number. Her breasts punctuate her speech, she rocks her hips, and when she is acquiring the voice she has a

look of lust on her face. Apparently, the voice is what holds femininity together in this movie. Eric is drawn to Ariel's voice and once Ursula uses her voice she can also bewitch herself to become attractive. Once the voice is taken away, she doesn't bother to deceive Eric anymore, and goes back to her true form. Also, the seagull can see Ursula in a mirror while she's disguised as Vanessa. Primping is a disguise hiding the real villain.

Medusa, during her speech to Penny about how she's too ugly to be adopted, is taking off her make up (Clip 42). Beforehand, her voice is high pitched and cordial, but as her makeup comes off, so does her warm and cheerful air, she becomes more threatening. Are ugly women, therefore, more manly? Is makeup the disguise we all wear to conceal our true, evil natures? Is that why princesses don't wear makeup? Is it because they are naturally cheerful, motherly, and loving? Princesses often don accessories and jewels, but never makeup. Beauty treatments and makeup are relegated to older women, who are trying to be beautiful but fail at it. The message is that women who try to hide their aggression behind makeup fail and women's voices get a bit lower and they get more aggressive as they remove their makeup.

Most old-time villains do not need to wear makeup; they are sexual enough without it. They embody the female-double idea, where one half is young, innocent and pretty in a fresh pubescent (and submissive) way, and the other is older, vampy and more sexualized. In fact, many movies in the 30's and 40's followed the female double model. This meant that there were two female characters that were related and had many similar physical characteristics. However, one was a femme-fatale and a danger to society, and the other was the good submissive woman. Disney villainesses follow the femme-fatale model first by being seductive if dangerous (in that they are true women, who have

curves, and full lips, clingy dresses, and occasionally even red pumps). Later villainesses allude to this tradition in that they still attempt to dress in the femme fatale convention, but this time their aggression is more overtly masculinized. They therefore fail the beauty test altogether, and are often no longer the flip side of the good woman, but just the menace to society.

After the Ursula era, however, we get mostly male villains. As mentioned, when we do get a female villain, she is really ugly, to the point where she almost looks like an insect. This feature is accentuated by Yzma's (the villainess from The Emperor's New Groove) long pointed eyelashes. There is a point where she is surprised in her sleep, and when she comes out of her tent she is the epitome of rich, old and unattractive women trying to beautify themselves in the most visually cliché manner (cucumbers on eyes, creamed face, hair ridiculously gathered up). This reinforces the idea that Yzma has power and money and begs the question of the origins and reasoning behind her quest for power, yet again.

When Ursula says she's practically starving and we see her eat a little shrimp-like creature, as it cowers, and then see her rouging her lips and moussing her hair, we wonder as to the veracity of her claims of poverty; and yet, maybe the question is a question of villainesses' feelings of entitlement. The movies with primping villains all suggest that their sense of entitlement is false.

Cruella De Vil, one of the monumental female villains everyone loves to hate, is a good example of how the animators make female villains appear more heinous by making them seem foreign in their environment (Clip 43). This "otherizing" makes it easy for us to mentally push the villainess outside the boundaries of the movie's society

and its norms. Cruella has a few elements that make her seem foreign. Her fur coat has tails on it (later, her handbag), which are reminiscent of scalps. Furthermore, her hair is a more extreme version of the streak typical of earlier female villains, half-black half-white hair. Furthermore, the green smoke that follows her everywhere lends an almost mystical air of dread and usually precedes the appearance of her face. Roger's song about her also demonizes her

> If she doesn't scare you
> No evil thing will
> To see her is to
> Take a sudden chill
> Cruella, Cruella De Vil

This stanza establishes her as an otherworldly, indefinable evil creature. When one thinks of "evil things" one thinks of vampires, werewolves, demons, etc…and she is pronounced the scariest of them all. Given the images of her face during the car chase, or even sitting at home with curlers in her hair, one sees Roger's point:

> The curl of her lips
> The ice in her stare
> All innocent children
> Had better beware
> She's like a spider waiting
> For the kill
> Look out for Cruella De Vil

Cruella is compared to a spider, and given the "black widow" spider's tendency to kill its mates with its deadly venom, one cannot but imagine Cruella in that capacity, since her poison seems to be directed mostly at men. It is Roger who incurs most of her scorn (possibly because Anita doesn't stand up to her, but mostly because she finds the idea of him as a patriarch ridiculous). Furthermore, her entire environment is composed

of red black and white, trailed by her yellowish-green cigarette smoke. Red, white and black are the colors of death and mourning.

Cruella's face is skeletal and grey. Furthermore, her accent, clothing and demeanor place her in the upper echelons of society. The mention of "innocent children" makes her even more menacing. There are no children in this movie, only puppies, which are the equivalent of children, seeing as they are anthropomorphized. Everyone treats the puppies as human and the male dog (Pongo) and the female dog (Perdita, a name not dissimilar to that of her owner Anita) even get married in church together with their owners. We treat them as humans from the start of the movie, and so "innocent children" is probably a reference to the children watching the movie and to the puppies about to be born.

At first you think
Cruella is the devil
But after time has worn
Away the shock
You come to realize
You've seen her kind of eyes
Watching you from underneath
A rock!

This verse reverses the idea that first impressions are untrue and is meant to be witty, but reinforces both the not-so-subtle hint of her name, which signifies that she is a she-devil-snake. Then comes a reinforcement of the imagery from the first verse, of Cruella as a spider:

This vampire bat
This inhuman beast
She ought to be locked up
And never released
The world was such

A wholesome place until
Cruella, Cruella De Vil

Now we come back to the idea of the eerie mystical creatures with the word "vampire", even though it's coupled with the word "bat", a real animal. She is then called an inhuman beast, definitely dehumanizing Cruella, and then comes the pronouncement that she should be removed from society.

We get these words from Roger before Cruella has even entered his home, ostensibly based on prior interactions. However, this is based on a theme he's been composing to which he couldn't find lyrics and that he is performing for the amusement of his dog and his wife, who is slightly embarrassed by his behavior. Roger is remorselessly denigrating Anita's "schoolmate", which Perdita calls "that De Vil woman". Anita tries to silence him and get him out of the way and he bangs on the keyboard upstairs to keep Anita on her toes throughout the first few seconds of Cruella's visit. Is this the way we expect a loving, caring husband to behave? True, Cruella is rude and not really interested in her friend, but in puppies' fur coats, however, even Anita says she'd love a fur coat but has other priorities. What makes Cruella evil, then, is not her love of fur, but her willingness to do something about it. She doesn't pretend she doesn't know where it comes from.

Furthermore, what clearly makes Roger dislike her is her disregard for him. She ridicules the notion of their little apartment as a castle and Roger as the knight in shining armor. She ridicules the middle classes for their white picket fence dream (Clip 44). When she bargains for the puppies later in the movie, she keeps referring to Anita and disregards Roger, and he actually has a hard time standing up to her, especially after she turns him into a Dalmatian himself by staining him with ink from her fountain pen. He stands up to her for his pets, but shakes and stutters while he does so. Furthermore, she

denigrates his ability to provide for his family, a grave insult to every man. She actually laughs out loud when Anita tells her they can afford to keep the puppies on Roger's composing abilities. Anita on the other hand, falls all over Roger after Cruella is gone, for being the hero and defending them, but does not appear as shaken as he is by Cruella's behavior.

This is classical wifely behavior, praising her husband and telling him he's wonderful for solving a problem, when she could have done it perfectly well without him. Girls watching this movie absorb information about the way to flatter men's egos, as well as how horrible it is to be as determined and unyielding as Cruella is. She actually threatens and rants at Roger and Anita, and follows up on it in illegal ways, too!

Some consider Cruella one of the most fearsome Disney villains and yet, she has no super powers or special talents. Her ferocity lies in her complete rejection of the expectations of women of her social class and time. She wears fur coats and red gloves, smokes cigarettes in cigarette holders, and dresses in black cocktail dresses, but that ends her similarity to an English "lady". She is aggressive, isn't afraid to speak her mind, and she doesn't get what she wants sweetly or coyly. When she wants to get a man to do what she wants him to do, she doesn't seduce him, she threatens him, steals from him, bribes him or storms in and out of his house; in short, she employs "manly" strategies, which is what makes her so abnormal and "beastly".

Another stereotype about women that Disney upholds is the idea that women can't drive, and that they endanger their environment when they do. Cruella De Vil is a prime example of a bad driver, and she drives throughout the movie. In fact, the final climax (Clip 45), which--until that moment would have involved Cruella turning into some sort

of monster in an attempt to overpower her male opponent--turns into a car race between her and a driver who doesn't even know the Dalmatians are in the back of his truck. Importantly, yet again the driver of the opposing vehicle is male, and turns out to be a better driver than Cruella. Another useful detail is that what thwarts her plan is her two assistants, who cross her path and drive her off the icy road. Furthermore, one would expect Cruella to die after such a cataclysmic car accident. Not only is Cruella not wounded, when she screams at her assistants for foiling her plan (which, from her perspective, is legitimate) they tell her "Oh, shut up" and she does. She is finally silenced. That is why she cannot die in the movie; the ending has to subdue her and deprive her of the advantages money and social standing have given her throughout the movie. When it comes to pure skill, men get the better of her, and once she is defeated, she can be trampled upon, as a regular woman, and not a skeletal vision of determination, as she appears during the car chase.

Unsurprisingly, Medusa is not that different from Cruella when it comes to her entrances and exits from frames. She, too, is a terrible driver, whether in a regular car or a swamp mobile (Clips 46, 47 and 48). She always ends up slamming on the breaks, due to her impatience and recklessness, which results in a cloud of black smoke enveloping her figure. Another time, she loses her suitcase because she drives into a construction project. Clearly, she is so determined to get wherever she is going that she does not care what it will take. This would have been portrayed as daring determination if a Disney male character was driving (imagine countless Vin Diesel movies, only animated), but because she is evil and female, the interpretation is that she just can't drive.

Medusa is also defeated as she's chasing the heroes, clinging onto a rope protruding from her vehicle (which they are driving). In essence, she is water skiing. The rope then gets torn, her crocodiles, which she is standing on, part, and she is basically impaled onto a large pole, all the while, Mr. Snoops, her lackey, is rowing away, holding the end of an oar and laughing at her. Looking at this scene's imagery, the man finally gets his oar/ phallus back, whereas she is impaled on a pole/phallus. Throughout the movie she moves from driving a car to a swamp mobile, to riding her crocodiles, to not having any transportation. Her prize, the Devil's Eye diamond, eludes her. Her world collapses and the man who was her underling the entire movie, ends up laughing at her.

One could claim, at this point, that bad driving is only an incompetence of evil characters. However, in The Little Mermaid Ariel clearly has the same reckless attitude towards driving, despite the fact that she is not intent on getting anywhere. She is learning to be human, and is overeager, driving over an abyss, she clearly has Eric worried for a second, but then she learns to calmly drive the carriage along, and he settles into resting as she drives him to their destination. One might claim that if she learns she is not a bad driver. However, male characters always have a knack for driving, one never sees them struggling to mount a horse, drive a car, or even fix a car. While Bernard, the male mouse in The Rescuers has great trouble uncorking a large bottle, he has no issues identifying what mechanical trouble is preventing the Swamp Mobile's ignition system from working, and he's a mouse!

Another feature of the Disney female villain is that not only is she mean, one could claim she is completely insane! The villainesses behave in completely irrational ways, creating a do-or die situation and risking their entire lives and reputations for the sake of one goal. One could question whether it makes sense for Cruella to risk her social standing and her friendship with Anita for yet another fur coat? Why can't Medusa be satisfied with smaller diamonds, that are present in abundance, and would be easier to smuggle out and sell than a huge diamond like "The Devil's Eye", and yet she is completely obsessed with that particular diamond, and instead of living on the margins of petty crime, she kidnaps an orphan and keeps her in the Devil's Bayou against her wishes, and ends up losing everything. This is because these women's goals become obsessions. These women act beyond the bounds of reason, they quite literally go mad. Medusa is named after the Greek monster, and Cruella's last name also makes her seem supernatural. Other villains can cast spells, and so are also tied to the supernatural. By "otherizing" these villains to the point where they aren't human Disney is sending us the message that villainy results not from calculation of risk and taking chances in what we would see as a series of economic decisions, but irrational decision making processes that create extreme obsessions that do not make any sense. In essence, Disney is saying that women who operate outside the bounds of the social order are not just mean, but mad! They are so dangerous because as long as they are alive, they will never give up their objectives. Moreover, as Davis aptly states in her book, Good Girls and Wicked Witches "Evil in Disney is not just meanness—it is a symptom of madness, embodying as it does various levels of paranoia. (Pg.109)"

Good and Evil Desire: Disney constructs his ideal female as uninterested in power or in sex. The best women are interested in supporting the system or another person. The "good daughter" heroines are interested in preserving family honor, usually by pleasing and encouraging their father. None of the positively portrayed women is interested in escaping their oppressed status as females. Even Belle, who sings, "I want much more than this provincial life", ends up beamingly happy in a castle in the middle of the woods. The Beast is no more cosmopolitan than the rest of the people around her; the only difference is that he is wealthier. Princesses are granted their wish, as long as it only extends to getting material gains, like castles. However, they never fully get their wish for more agency and freedom, they get the mere semblance of it. When Jasmine says she wants freedom, Aladdin takes her on a carpet ride, she sees the world and escapes the walls of the palace for a night, but in the morning she is still bound by the same restrictions, she still lives under the same patriarchal system, she just chooses the next man to determine her fate, she still needs to play by someone else's rules. Women in Disney never *truly* desire more agency than they have. They want to escape their father's authoritarianism, but like Wendy in Peter Pan, they often end up where they left off, acquiescing and accepting their role as second-class humans in exchange for material comfort. They are still protected by a man (only this time their husband in place of their father), they still have to be supportive of and please someone else.

Sexuality in Disney movies is even more deceptive. The love plots are always expressed physically by dancing and kissing. One assumes that because things *we* interpret as sexual happen the princesses are sexual. However, the princesses never

express desire towards their chosen partners, or any other man, for that matter. Women are presented as objects of desire, but not as desirers. When women express desire they are portrayed as very undesirable. For example, in his first song, Aladdin falls into a woman's arms, as he's running away from the guards (Clip 49). She is misshapen and unattractive; she sings, "Still I think he's rather tasty". He would rather run into swords than stay with an unattractive woman who shows interest in him. Her voice is squeaky and unpleasant, and if that isn't enough, she is toothless. Gaston (the villain in Beauty and the Beast) is not interested in the women who melt whenever he walks by. Jasmine is clearly interested in freedom rather than in sexual activity of any kind. Women never initiate the kiss, either. When women are sexual they are always evil and/or unattractive. To be the sexual aggressor means to assert oneself in a relationship, which would violate the status quo in the Disney patriarchal system.

The villainesses, however, use suggestive garb and body language, they are not afraid of being vulgar or imposing their will/taste on other people. The queen in Snow White wears red pumps, she has full, red lips, and she wants to be the prettiest around, and will go to great lengths to get what she wants. Ursula clearly isn't shy about her body. She rouges her lips and mousses her hair; she rocks her hips and wears clothing that exposes herself. Ariel doesn't even have genitals as a mermaid, which she discovers when she gets "legs" (Clip 50). When Ursula gives herself a human body, she primps in front of the mirror dressed in a slip, glorifying in her body, yet again. The villains are never afraid to assert their power, strive for more power or express their desire for other people. Disney avoids the issue entirely with the princesses. They might say that a prince is "beautiful", but not attractive, nor will their first step be to touch him or chat him up.

Eric's first line when he meets Ariel is "you look familiar", the most trite line in the history of courtship!

Jealousy plays a critical role in the origination of evil in Disney. In Snow White the evil queen only decides to kill Snow White after she sees the prince courting her, as she watches from behind her curtains, and then when the magic mirror confirms her fears that Snow White is fairer (note: they keep the word "fair" as opposed to the word "beautiful" or "pretty"). Furthermore, her jealousy pushes her to turn herself into an ugly woman despite her goal of being the fairest. Brode makes the point that there is no assurance that she can turn herself back into her former appearance of beauty (Brode, Multiculturalism and the Mouse, 2005). However, that point is very arguable, since she doesn't use an experiment, she reads the instructions for the potion from a book that, ostensibly, would also have a reverse spell. Furthermore, Brode claims the motivation for this act is self-absorption rather than jealousy. However, the entity rendering judgment is the male magic mirror. Disney doesn't blame males for this, nor the tyranny of the "beauty myth", but I believe it is shortsighted to blame self-obsession for the queen's obsession with being the fairest and giving the final authority on the matter to a male. Another good example of jealousy breeding bad consequences is when Captain Hook uses Tinkerbelle's jealousy to convince her to reveal Peter Pan's hiding place. In Sleeping Beauty, Maleficent punishes the royals for excluding her from a party, i.e., she is jealous of the people who did get invites and decides to take her revenge. Jealousy, seems to be relegated to female characters, probably because men deal with slights to their egos by physical means or harsh words and then calm down, whereas women are more subtle in the way they handle conflict.

While male villains in Disney can be tactically manipulative, (for example, when Captain Hook uses Tinkerbelle's jealousy to convince her to show him Peter's hiding place, or when he dares Peter to fight him without flying) female villains are usually emotionally manipulative. For example, Medusa tells Penny she is too ugly to get adopted because she wants her to concentrate on finding the Devil's Eye diamond. If Penny doesn't believe she deserves love, she might not be in such a hurry to leave the bayou. In Cinderella Lady Tremaine doesn't say Cinderella can't go to the ball, she just makes it impossible for her to do so, and when she manages to get a dress after all, she finds a way to get her daughters a legitimate reason to ruin it (the materials the mice stole were theirs). Nearly all Disney female villains use emotional manipulation to get their way, with the possible exception of the earlier villains, like Snow White's queen and Maleficent, who are so powerful they don't really need to manipulate anyone.

Many Disney patriarchs have a bad temper and a ferocious nature. Triton destroys things without thinking when he is angry (Clip 51). The Beast, too, throws things and rips them apart when he is enraged. Both do so to frighten and to get back at women for doing what was forbidden (Belle goes into the west wing, Ariel collects human objects and seeks to satisfy her curiosity about humans). In both cases, this results in foolish impetuous behavior, which endangers the women. The female behavior is depicted as an error in these movies; however, the male behavior, that drove the women away in the first place, is excused because the men pay a price for their behavior (Triton later has to deal with Ursula, and the Beast fights wolves on Belle's behalf). Moreover, the Beast's ferocity allows him to fend off the wolves who attack Belle and Gaston is admired by the town for his ability to shoot animals and take "cheap shots", get what he wants at any

price. When men go to extremes to get their way, we consider them brave, and they have a real chance of it ending well for them.

When women are willing to do anything to get their way we consider them too ambitious or ruthless. On a basic level, every female villain is just doing what male heroes do all the time, the only difference is, they are women and they're playing the game like men. Women who have bad tempers suffer the consequences. Maleficent gets angry for not getting invited to a party and she ends up dead. Cruella is enraged because she wanted a fur coat and was prevented from getting it; she then tries to get revenge by breaking the rules and acting aggressively, and she ends up losing everything: she loses her status and the advantages her class gives her. Ursula wants power (just like Simba in The Lion King, only he's seen as having a claim to the throne because he's male) and plays rough to get it, but she ends up dead, too. All female villains have a bad temper, which appears as more of a character flaw, it almost makes them look insane, as opposed to male characters, who are still able to fix relationships and return the peace. Female villains are ferocious, too; however, they are never as physically threatening as the men, and yet we see them as more unreasonable than men. In the end, the characteristics that serve men well, make them authoritative and help them achieve high status, are precisely those that are the downfall of the female characters.

Social Hierarchy and Servitude

In the early animated movies a clear social hierarchy is established. The evil character delegates all chores to the heroine, who then does the chores, but whenever she can, she gets help from her animal "friends". For example, Cinderella gives the mice clothes, and they then sew her a dress, drive her to the ball (despite the fact that it involves personal transformations that are quite daunting, as may be seen by Gus's half-hearted attempt to escape the fairy godmother's magic wand as she transforms him into a horse). Furthermore, during the opening scene Cinderella doesn't even dress herself! She is bathed and dressed by two birds (Clip 52). In Snow White most of the work witnessed during "whistle while you work" is performed by animals while Snow White supervises and makes sure that the work is being done properly, without actually getting her hands dirty. In 101 Dalmatians Anita seems to sit around the house and drink tea, while the housekeeper cleans and does other chores, including cooking, and Roger composes his music.

In later movies, Ariel doesn't have chores at all. She wanders around looking for pretty objects (shopping), while her father orders the smaller fish and sea creatures around and makes sure entertainment is provided for the merfolk. Belle, too, is free to walk around and read books, and the only chore she does throughout the movie is feeding the chickens. In fact, later in the movie, she doesn't even pick her clothes out for herself. Mrs. Potts takes care of tea, other people are in charge of making food and cleaning the castle, and everyone sings and dances while they do their work. This has always been the case in Disney movies, the heroine usually doesn't do chores, aside from cleaning/feeding animals, and she usually gets a lot of help. The only princess who

deviates from this schema is Tiana (The Princess and the Frog.) This is easily explainable; not only is she not a princess, she doesn't belong to any aristocracy whatsoever. She comes from a working-class background. Moreover, she is African-American, which means she naturally fits in with the working classes. In fact, throughout the movie, she is a waitress and then a frog; she only becomes a princess through marriage.

The division of labor is clearly based on race and class. Let us examine, for example, the mice in The Rescuers (Clip 53), versus the mice in Cinderella. The main mice in The Rescuers are white. They have board meetings in the UN building and have funds available for flights across the US. They know how to go about getting information (can read), and have luggage and clothes. Bianca has purple fur-lined coats, a raincoat, perfume and other luxury items, and she's not a stranger to flying. The mice in Cinderella are brown; they use materials available in the house, there is no evidence that they can read. Furthermore, they are constantly on the run from Lucifer, Lady Tremaine's cat (Clip 54); they clean, sew and scrounge for materials left around by Drizella and Anastasia. They eat the same food the chickens and other yard animals eat, and often fight to keep their food. Cinderella makes standard-sized clothes for them. Gus's clothes are therefore too small for him, and Cinderella doesn't indicate she is planning to make him new ones (Clip 55). These details make clear that brown mice have far less agency and means than their white counterparts do, despite the fact that they are just as industrious, useful and kind.

Not only do the animals in Disney reinforce the social order the movies advocate, they instruct us on social dynamics. The female mice in Cinderella say "leave the sewing

to the women, you go get some trimmin'." One could say the female mice are ordering the male mice around. However, that is because the project at hand has to do with sewing. Additionally, the animals dress, bathe and sew for Cinderella, and they're all so *happy* about it. It's not just that they're willing to make a sacrifice for a friend, even change their shape. They seem to *enjoy* risking their lives to taunt a big mean cat in order to get *trimming for a dress!* They are happy house-slaves.

Lumiere, the servant-turned-candle in Beauty and the Beast illustrates the happy slave phenomenon further in the song "Be our guest" (Clip 56):

"Soup du jour
Hot hors d'oeuvres
Why, we only live to serve"

The rhyme here masks the bottom line of the entire song, the fact that the servants' function in life is to serve the upper classes, yet once again, they seem so *happy* about it.

"You're alone
And you're scared
But the banquet's all prepared
No one's gloomy or complaining
While the flatware's entertaining
We tell jokes! I do tricks
With my fellow candlesticks

Chorus:
And it's all in perfect taste
That you can bet
Come on and lift your glass
You've won your own free pass
To be out guest"

This is the classic male strategy: one overwhelms a woman with riches and entertainment to the point where she forgets that she is really still imprisoned. She might get rich food cooked by the best of chefs, and the servants might be putting on a colorful cabaret, but she still cannot go home and see her father. Moreover, everyone is so

cheerful, the woman would feel like a spoilsport if she sat there and complained or was gloomy, especially to servants, who aren't the ones responsible for her situation in the first place. Moreover, the words "own free pass" make it seem as if she has won the lottery! She should thank the gods for the opportunity to be imprisoned in a castle belonging to a selfish, ill-mannered and abusive man who took her father prisoner! And it's all free!

> "Life is so unnerving
> For a servant who's not serving
> He's not whole without a soul to wait upon
> Ah, those good old days when we were useful...
> Suddenly those good old days are gone
> Ten years we've been rusting
> Needing so much more than dusting
> Needing exercise, a chance to use our skills!
> Most days we just lay around the castle
> Flabby, fat and lazy
> You walked in and oops-a-daisy!"

What is being explained is that without someone telling the servants what to do there is no point to their life. If a master isn't in charge people's skills will go unused. Moreover, servants are naturally lazy if one doesn't keep them in line, keep them busy, they get "flabby, fat and lazy" (all, apparently, bad things). Who makes the masters work? No one. Yet they are not "flabby…lazy", they can supervise themselves. Why? They were born into the upper classes. Once again, Disney's justification of social class: a meritocracy of the aristocracy. Moreover, masters complete their servants' lives; a servant isn't "whole" without a master. This sounds a lot like the "you complete me" philosophy, where women do not have a reason to exist without a husband. Every individual must follow the rules dictated by their gender, their class and their race.

Another interesting aspect is that the servants in the castle were turned into furniture, cutlery and cooking and cleaning utensils when the prince was bewitched. However, we never hear any sounds of dissent or resentment. Everyone is focused on helping him, so that they can all be human again. No one ever expresses outrage that they were turned into objects because he was bewitched! No one ever wonders *why* that happened, possibly because they were so tied to him and belonged to him before as human objects. They were functions, and so the change wasn't as drastic as we'd think it was. Additionally, whenever the Beast makes a faux pas that endangers the success of their plan they mediate between Belle and the Beast (Clip 57). The social system dictates that even when the patriarch behaves inappropriately, the most productive way for the servant to react is to gently coax, cajole and assist the man, because the servant has no power to change the situation for himself. If the Beast made a mistake with Belle, they couldn't say "run while you can!" because they would then remain objects forever. They had to suck her into the system of their servitude to the master.

Chorus:
Be our guest! Be our guest!
Our command is your request
It's been years since we've had anybody here
And we're obsessed
With your meal, with your ease
Yes, indeed, we aim to please
While the candlelight's still glowing
Let us help you, we'll keep going
Course by course, one by one
'Til you shout, "Enough! I'm done!"
Then we'll sing you off to sleep as you digest
Tonight you'll prop your feet up
But for now, let's eat up
Be our guest!
Be our guest!

Be our guest!"
Please, be our guest!

Once again, Belle is practically *begged* to join the upper classes and not lift a finger. They will feed her, put her feet up for her and sing her to sleep. Of course, that comes with pleasing the master of the house, and in essence becoming a servant too, which is an aspect Disney women conveniently do not verbalize. When she breaks her deal with the Beast, Belle faces wolves who cannot be reasoned with and who almost eat her alive. The Beast gets wounded while defending her, and so she feels obligated to stay and take care of him (Clip 58). In essence, what makes her stay at first is protecting her father and allowing him to escape (i.e., serving her first master) and the second time what makes her stay is her instinct to take care of the weak, even though once the Beast heals he is, again, much more powerful than Belle will ever be. It is bonding with the patriarch that keeps her in captivity.

Disney uses anthropomorphism in a manipulative way. By making mice and other small animals so human that they often talk and have clothing he creates a situation where as audience members we identify with the animals so much that we take cues of how to respond to events from them. Instead of using the sitcom model, where canned laughter dictates our response, Disney, like directors of other forms of cinematic musicals before him, creates a model where an audience on film dictates our reaction (Clip 59). Furthermore, because they get emotionally involved and react, so do we. Moreover, there is a separation between fully anthropomorphized, sentient (often clothed) animals, who relate to our heroes and function as characters, and unclothed "dumb" animals, that play a part in the movie as background filling or drive the story forward by balking at the sight of danger, but are not fully-fledged characters and aren't as anthropomorphized.

Furthermore, all animals protect and aid the heroine, they worship her and do their best to help her, and view her as a benevolent motherly figure. By placing the animals as an inner audience and causing us to empathize with them, Disney creates a situation where audience members, mostly kids, see the characters of the heroes as role models. Disney even capitalizes on this and makes costumes and other products where we can literally don the heroes' clothes and "walk in their shoes" (literally) for a day. How many little girls have we all heard say they "want to be a princess"? Yet, the princess belongs to Disney's purebred meritocracy, and by creating the double identification (with the animals because they are an inner-audience and with the princess because she is human) Disney creates a situation in which we are willing to serve the Disney princesses and at the same time aspire to become one of them. All Disney movies share the hope formula, where the dream or wish the heroine makes always comes true (Clip 60). We get the message that we should follow the heroine's examples: we must keep working within the current social order, helping the current upper classes; if we do this and are worthy, we will get what we have wished for, the formula posits. The submissive wisher who follows orders belongs to the meritocracy and therefore gets their wish in every single Disney movie.

The double identification also creates a situation where we, the moviegoers are trapped into being the worshiping lower class, and aren't even aware of it, because the worshiping lower classes are usually animals/talking objects in the great majority of the movies.

The Illusion of Hope: Disney heroines dream, wish or pray at least once during every movie. This is usually at a point where their spirits are very low. Penny (The Rescuers) never forgets God even in her despair; she makes her teddy bear kneel and pray. Snow White sings "I'm wishing for the one I love to find me today" into the wishing well. Cinderella sings, "A dream is a wish your heart makes." What is significant about all these ways of conveying desire for something is that none of these women *does* anything to realize her wish, and it comes true anyway, because men make it come true. Prince charming just magically shows up two seconds later, and Philip happens to be riding nearby while Aurora sings in the woods (Sleeping Beauty).

Penny's case is more complicated because she is still a child. She isn't a woman yet, and, as Amy Davis (Good Girls and Wicked Witches, 2006) points out, she can therefore be a bit more proactive, just as Wendy is just a bit more proactive than most Disney heroines in that she wants to meet Peter, and therefore hides his shadow. However, this independence needs to be put into context. Penny's main song is "who will rescue me" and Wendy can be in control within the home, as a surrogate mother, and be authoritative within the home, the way mothers are. Heroines do drudgerous work and wish for a better, more fulfilling life. By modeling submission and acceptance, the heroines teach us how patriarchy would like us to behave. The princesses never rebel or upset the social order. Snow white even instructs us to "whistle while you work", as the dwarfs do later in the movie. When she's forlorn and lost she sings "with a smile and a song". The idea is that if one plays by the rules their life will be fulfilling and their dreams will be realized. This works for heroines in Disney movies because they're

expected to be submissive, that is their role. The princes, however, don't wish or pray at all. They act. Moreover, when all men do is pray, whatever it is they are praying for is bound to go wrong. Mulan's father prays for her success with the matchmaker and of course, it's a complete failure. He's a man, he isn't supposed to pray, he is supposed to act to promote his wishes, or send someone else to do his bidding.

Faith is also important in Disney. Cinderella tells us at the very beginning "No matter how your heart is bleeding, if you keep on believing the dream that you wish will come true." When even Cinderella despairs her fairy godmother tells her "nonsense! If you'd lost all your faith I wouldn't be here". The idea is to find faith where there is none. Cinderrela even says earlier "well, there's one thing they can't do-they can't order me to stop dreaming". However, why would they want her to? As long as she is dreaming, she isn't rebelling or doing anything to further her cause herself.

Also, gratitude is very important. Less than a minute after she has been left on the side of the road in tatters and will have to walk home, she discovers the remaining slipper hasn't been turned back into an old shoe and she seems ecstatic as she looks up into the heavens and says "thank you, thank you so much, for everything."

Disney brings clever manipulation to new heights in Cinderella. He gives us an example of a very active character with a realistic approach and makes even their wishes come true, however, there is a catch. Jacques, the head mouse, shows wisdom and foresight a la Invisible Man at the beginning of Cinderella when he says "yeah, keep her busy! You know what? Cinderelli's not going to the ball…you'll see, they'll fix her", and of course, they do. The Tremaines keep her so busy she can't possibly find suitable attire on time. Furthermore, when the mice intervene and make Cinderella a dress, they

destroy it. However, despite his wisdom about the system, designed to keep slaves running in pursuit of their goals, but keeping the goals just out of reach, Jacques keeps running for his princess and of course his hopes are rewarded because Disney rewards passive behavior and work in service of the upper classes. Significantly, though, Jacques never wants anything for himself, which is why he gets his wish. Disney provides a counterattack to his "invisible mouse" approach by granting Cinderella her wish. However, this is elegant trickery because Jacques never even dreamed of making a wish for himself. He is created in the model of the proud house slave who identifies with his owner.

The pets of characters usually reflect on their owners. They will often have names that mirror their characteristics like Nero and Brutus, Medusa's pet alligators, who keep Penny in check and police her. Their treacherousness is also highlighted by the fact that when Medusa loses her balance and grip, rather than bump into a pole, they swim in opposite directions, knocking Medusa into the pole and, in essence, impaling her upon it. Flotsam and Jetsam reflect Ursula's desire to cause upheaval in the social order, and their voices, which are electronically altered to create a double-voice, reflect Ursula's mixed gender identity (she is a woman in the movie and has a female actress reading her part, but is modeled after a drag queen). Lucifer resembles Lady Tremaine in his green eyes and his crafty and calculated malice. Evil pets' characters reflect those of their masters; this reinforces the tie between servant and master. Furthermore, the death/foiling of the pet foreshadows the villains' defeat, once again tying the servants' destiny to its master's. The tie of the good pet to the good human and the bad pet to the evil person creates a dichotomy, which polarizes society. There is not much wiggle room in terms of which

side one belongs to. One can either be good or bad, but not have aspects of both. This makes our overall view of society extreme. One can either help the good or the bad, because one is *inherently* one or the other. This begins with character name, but often extends to species (cats, for example, are usually evil, as are alligators and other reptilian species), making it less a matter of choice and more a matter of biology. This reflects the Disney view of innate characteristics, which reinforces the view that character is an almost genetic phenomenon, which in turn reinforces the meritocracy approach.

Masculinity

When men aren't alpha-males they are often presented as foreign or effeminized so they do not reflect badly on masculinity. The exceptions to this rule are the alpha males who will be retired and pass on the torch to the new alpha male during the movie and the ones who are prepubescent and therefore not expected to be fully masculine. The Little Mermaid offers excellent examples of the masculinity continuum. Ariel can make fun of Flounder and say he's "such a guppy" because he isn't fully-grown and is of a lower class than she is. Louis, however, is a fully-grown man. In this movie there is a female villain so there can't be a struggle between Mr. Right and Mr. Wrong, he therefore needs to be taken out of the masculinity race. Louis is therefore made foreign, is given the job of cook (not a very classically "masculine" profession) and belittled by the fact that he is defeated by a male crab not once, but twice, who is ten times smaller (Clip 61). By the end of the movie, Louis' has been defeated *twice,* (the second time we see the physical damage: a big pole hits him in the mouth-very evocative of oral sex, and he just collapses to the ground). If defeat at the pincers of a crab is not emasculating enough, Carlotta, the head servant then comes in and scolds him as if she were his mother, so he is belittled even further. We thus are reassured that a proper "male" does not work in the kitchen; this is a Frenchman, an underling. Grimsby, aside from being old, is presented as frail from the beginning of the movie, when he turns green and vomits into the ocean. He is the only high class male in the movie besides Eric and so he must be presented as less masculine. Sebastian (the crab) teaches Ariel how to pout and bat her eyelashes; this takes him out of our consideration as a proper male character. Furthermore, his cowardice and reluctance to stand up to Triton lets us know Triton is the alpha male

underwater (if the opening scene with Sebastian's funny long name and small carriage wasn't enough to hint at his lack of masculinity.)

In Cinderella the kings' aid is foreign as well. He also has a monocle, which breaks at certain points in the movie to make him ridiculous and emasculate him. Furthermore, there is a scene in which the king is angry at the aid (whose legs are spread), and he slinks suggestively towards him. The king is moving aggressively forwards, the aid helplessly tries to retreat (Clip 62). The suggestion of sexual threat is hardly subtle. Given that the king is so happy after the ball that he waltzes with one of his guards, the whole male undertone in the palace seems homoerotic, which builds a contrast to the prince's manliness.

In Mulan, the pompous councilman, the only outwardly chauvinistic character, and the only male young enough and powerful enough to be any competition for the love interest, faints when he hears the emperor is giving Mulan his job. He thus becomes not only ridiculous, but undermines his own claims to male superiority.

The male foreigner is usually more effeminized/gay than the older "American men." First off, the only thing foreign about him will be his accent; secondly, both British and French men seem a bit pompous. For example, Cogsworth in Beauty and the Beast is pompous, boring and has a rivalry with Lumiere. At the very end of the movie Lumiere kisses him, and he tries to fend off the kiss, but then his wig swivels awkwardly across his head. A woman with whom Lumiere flirts throughout the movie tempts him. However, Lumiere is the one who gives the Beast courting advice, so he cannot be gay, just French and therefore slightly ridiculous and very flirtatious; so much so, that he is not really alpha-male material. Add to that that he is a cabaret performer in the "Be our

Guest" song and you get a charming foreigner who, of course, doesn't compete with the alpha male. Interestingly, the movie clearly takes place in France yet aside from the words "bonjour", "baguette" and some of the character names, it could happen anywhere. Moreover, Mrs. Potts and Cogsworth are British and Belle, the Beast and most of the other characters have American accents. Therefore, the requisite effeminacy of the "foreigners" stands out even more. Once the alpha male is identified, the movie is about transferring patriarchy from one alpha to the other through the means of the love plot, i.e., acquiring the attractive female. In Beauty and the Beast there is less of a patriarch because the Beast had the power at the start of the movie and squandered it. He needs to set his priorities straight and is therefore given a sort of doppelganger in the form of Gaston, the alpha male par excellence. The movie therefore is the Beast's journey to acquire the woman destined to be his to begin with from her aging and eccentric father, which is not very difficult to do. However, he must learn the civilized ways of courtship and the veneer of attention and caring that most normal men have absorbed by the time they reach maturity. In every other movie with a love plot, there is an aging male who (by marrying off his daughter) will pass the torch of patriarchy to a younger, more virile suitable man. Getting the woman is important because one has to continue the line of alpha masculinity by choosing the most attractive woman who will be a good mother and submissive trophy wife. Sometimes, the journey involves getting the woman to submit, a task which is usually not all-that challenging, because that is part of the heroines' attraction, in the first place.

In the original tale of "Beauty and the Beast," Beauty is the main character in the story. The Beast is "good natured" and there is no reason for the curse that turns him into

a beast. Disney changes the story and turns the Beast into the main character; the movie becomes the story of his transformation into a kinder person. Everything supports this. In the Disney version the Beast has servants, to reinforce his rule and power. He becomes someone's "master". In the original story the idea is that he needs to get someone else to love *him,* in Disney it's all about *him* learning to love someone else and put someone else's needs before his own, as well as getting her to love him. Once again, whether his transformation is an altruistic one is questionable. It might be more about grooming him to be a patriarch and learning to love a woman as a way of producing heirs.

Part of the process that enables the alpha male to be dominant and assert his status is obtaining the best mate. However, in movies from the 90's on, the ideal mate isn't always the *most* submissive, so the alpha male's job is to get her to submit. Sometimes this means appearing to change, like the Beast or like the hero of The Princess and the Frog, prince Naveen. At first, Tiana isn't interested in him at all and he needs to pique her curiosity. The same happens with most of the more modern princesses. The hero therefore needs to offer something she doesn't have. Tiana gets a man to support her restaurant, Jasmine gets the illusion of freedom, and Belle gets a library and riches. Getting the woman is always entangled with getting power, because it means getting something other males want, and it means getting children, which is what the older patriarchs are interested in (i.e. what the system dictates). In Kronk's New Groove the equation for success is made very clear: an alpha male needs a house, a woman *and kids* to be successful and get the seal of approval from his father.

Upon closer observation of Peter Pan, one notices that the patriarchs are clean-shaven and that Captain Hook often has a five o'clock shadow. Considering the general tendency to cast villains in shadow and give their skin a darker tint, we can conjecture that due to the strong resemblance between Captain Hook and Mr. Darling the animators decided to give Captain Hook a fairly constant five o'clock shadow in order to convey that he is a villain. The heroes of Disney movies never have facial hair. In earlier movies like Snow White this would have made sense, because the heroine was supposed to be sixteen. If the hero had facial hair it would make him look much older than her and destroy our illusion of the propriety of the match (we don't tend to see matches between younger women and older men as love matches). However, as time goes by there is a sense that heroines ages go up a bit, they've had time to fall in love once before meeting the hero (Meg in Hercules), have refused other suitors, and look a bit older than Snow White did.

Furthermore, our societal conventions have changed and it would no longer be acceptable for a woman to be married at age 16 in most communities in the USA. There is a consensus that the princesses would be in their twenties, especially given that the most recent Disney heroine has had the time to acquire the money to purchase a space for a restaurant, we naturally assume she is not a teenager also due to the power-balanced relationship with her mother. It would therefore not be inconceivable that the hero would have facial hair, and yet, facial hair seems to be the mark of older men and their assistants, not of the love interests. This might be due to the general dislike of body hair and secondary sexual features (like ridiculing Yzma's armpit hair in Kronk's New

Groove). It also might be due to the fact that facial hair would make the heroes' faces look darker, and shadow signifies villainy in Disney, as does darkness.

Disney and his Socio-Political Stance

Disney movies function to reinforce societal convention, which is probably why they are seen as "safe" for children. We know what the ending will be; we know all of the characters, even their faces and appearances change only in minor ways from movie to movie, possibly because the same animator usually supervises the same type of character in every movie until he retires. As a result, most heroines have the same proportions and general facial features. The main differences are in coloring and clothing.

There is also a pattern in the relations between generations and how this advances the plot. The movie starts with the hero/heroine desiring a change in the social order; they usually disagree with the master plan for their lives, as seen by their father/parents. However, by the end of the movie the patriarchal design is carried out despite the younger generation's original protests. Moreover, the patriarchal design usually proves infallible. In the few cases where the younger generation is proven right despite initial fatherly disapproval, we are always reassured that his approval *is* obtained in the end. This reinforces the notion that older ruling males are always right and that they will always settle their disputes by the end of the movie; alpha males always agree.

Disney movies reinforce social schemas and societal knowledge. A few minutes into the movie we know what it is going to be about, and we know who most of the main players are. The end, too, is predictable. There is always a patriarchal design that meets with initial opposition and is then carried out, to everyone's joy and betterment. For example, in Sleeping Beauty the two kings decide their offspring will marry when Aurora is born. Philip and Aurora object, but end up falling in love with each other without

knowing each other's identity, or in Aurora's case, not even knowing *her own* identity as a royal. This legitimizes the idea of pre-arranged marriage because it reinforces the idea that parents inherently know what's best for their children. Furthermore, it reaffirms the class divide because the royals fall in love with each other, not with peasants.

Even in cases like The Little Mermaid, where the older patriarch disapproves of the heroine's choice at first, the Disney team stresses that his approval is granted in the end. In fact, he creates a slinky seductive dress for Ariel to wear when he gives her legs, and then he creates a rainbow to signify peace between humans and merfolk. He also effectively hands his daughter over to Eric at the end of the movie. Even when patriarchs disagree among themselves, they will always come to an agreement by the end of the movie and therefore men will always appear to be right, no matter what their advice is. For example, in Cinderella the king wants his son to marry in order to continue the family line and produce grandchildren. The prince doesn't want to marry for any reason other than love, and appears to be in no hurry to marry. From the moment Cinderella appears on the scene they are both in agreement that she is an appropriate choice. This is because everyone acquiesces to what the alpha male says. Sometimes the Alpha Male changes during the movie and then the position of the other patriarchs change accordingly. A good example of this is in Beauty and the Beast; Maurice, Belle's father, encourages her to befriend (marry) Gaston, the alpha male of the town, but once the Beast becomes a prince again (i.e. reasserts his alpha status by defeating Gaston), Maurice smiles as his daughter dances the final waltz with the prince, and agrees that they will live happily ever after.

Pure Breeding: Disney's animated movies advocate for pure-breeding, both in animals and in humans, with regards to social class and race. The most blatant example of this is in the beginning of 101 Dalmatians (Clip 63). Pongo and Roger are looking out the window and Pongo shakes his head at each unsuitable pair of females that pass, until a Dalmatian and a white, pretty, young woman walk by. It is plain that they are the right match for the two males, they look alike, behave alike and clearly come from the same backgrounds. Furthermore, the females play the female role very well. Clearly, this is a match made in male-heaven.

This philosophy is also evident in the latest Disney animated film, The Princess and the Frog. There was much talk and hype online and on television shows about Disney finally portraying an African-American princess, the first in Disney history. First, Disney tried to make their princess at least sound a bit more Caucasian than she is by calling her "Maddy", but her name was then changed to Tiana. The prince in the movie is, of course, not white. Instead, he is of unspecified colored origin, from an imaginary country, Maldonia. Furthermore, since Tiana is about to ascend the social ladder, he is also lighter than she is.

Other movies emphasize the importance of marrying within one's general class. Their parents betroth Aurora and Philip at Aurora's birth. Disney legitimizes this by arranging the plot so they fall in love without knowing each other's identity. Philip doesn't *really* fall in love with a peasant woman. There is a sense that marrying within one's class is preordained, and is the rightful way of the natural, harmonious world. Disney presents the love plot amidst animals and so it appears that it would be a biological anomaly not to mate within the appropriate range of suitable partners.

The only movie that, at face value, negates the pure breeding philosophy is Pocahontas. However, John Smith is a commoner and Pocahontas is a princess. A British commoner is equal to royals of other nations/races, which reinforces the idea of racial/national supremacy. Another example of this is seen in The Rescuers, where the Hungarian Beauty (who, by the way, does not have a Hungarian accent), who is sought after by males of every nation, chooses a lower-class American. Once again, a common, regular American male surpasses the best males of other nations.

Foreign races are presented as more lecherous and sexual in Disney movies, compared with European races. In The Rescuers, as Bianca enters she attracts everyone's attention, but it is the Arab mouse who removes his sunglasses to ogle her.
Other races are also presented as less refined and generally less cultured and well behaved than the Americans and the British. In The Rescuers, as the camera pans across the entrance to the UN an African woman jingles change in her palm, even though she is dressed in a white evening dress.

Furthermore, white princesses are less aware of their sexuality than princesses of other ethnicities. Jasmine, for example, is the only princess who uses her sexuality to lure a villain into a false sense of security. No other princess is as aware of her body or her allure as she is. This might coincide with the fact that she is the most exposed of the Disney princesses. One cannot say that Jasmine is aware of her sexuality because she is a "modern woman." The plot takes its inspiration from Arabian Nights, a collection of stories that takes place during the rule of a sultan (i.e. in ancient times). Claiming she is sexualized as a modern female character due to the film's relatively recent release in 1992 is not valid because Tarzan's (released in 1999) female counterpart, Jane's, midriff

is not exposed (neither is the rest of her body). The only reason left to consider is that Jasmine belongs to a group of princesses of non-Eurocentric origin. As a "foreign beauty" she can be as exposed as the male animators like. Disney animators allow themselves more freedom to depict non-human or foreign beauties as sexualized/naked because they do not see their women in them. These princesses are not part of the Anglo-American in-group.

Another aspect of racism that emerges is the treatment of other species. The dwarfs in Snow White are treated as men in that they act protectively towards Snow White and conform to male stereotypes, but are treated as another race in that they are treated with less respect than the regular Disney male. Grumpy is the main misogynist: He objects to Snow White's stay at their house, resents her intrusion into their space and habits, and often mutters indignantly under his breath. For example, when he enters the house with his companions, the pot of stew Snow White has made in their absence is bubbling over the fire. Grumpy says "Don't touch it you fools, it might be poisoned. See? It's witches' brew." Grumpy is distrustful of the unfamiliar, especially anything linked to women. He mutters about feminine wiles and distrusts Snow White. His fellow dwarfs punish him for his suspicions and for clinging to his ways.

If one were to examine the situation putting herself in Grumpy's shoes, one would likely assume a very different attitude than the one portrayed as the correct interpretation by Disney. Imagine a stranger coming into your house uninvited, touching and sorting through your personal things, cleaning your house without your consent and sleeping in your bed. Now imagine your housemates decide she deserves to occupy your bed permanently, while you have to sleep on the floor or in the cupboard. Then imagine she's

made food in exchange for your hospitality, but she insists you wash your hands and face before you eat, and when you refuse to adapt to norms and customs that are not your own, you are unceremoniously tossed into cold water and scrubbed by six pairs of hands. Wouldn't you be grumpy if someone violated your personal space in similar ways? Snow White orders the dwarfs around as if they were children, not grown men who labor tirelessly in a diamond mine. And yet, no one ever questions Snow White's actions and she never apologizes for breaking and entering into the dwarfs' home. Moreover, even Grumpy comes around when she kisses his bald head goodbye as he is leaving for the mine the next morning.

On the other hand, the suspicion with which Grumpy treats Snow White because she is a woman, and the dwarfs' acceptance of her role as a homemaker teach us about the role of women Disney is teaching us to accept. Moreover, while Snow White isn't sexualized the way Jasmine will be later on, it is made very clear that the dwarfs are pleased when she kisses them; Dopey keeps trying to get in line for another kiss. Moreover, Snow White has two tones, the first is very didactic and she uses it as she parents the dwarfs and the animals. The second tone she uses when she is musing to herself, sounds very breathy, it is reminiscent of the way Marilyn Monroe talks in many of her movies (Clip 64). Moreover, when Snow White sees the dwarfs' house for the first time she exclaims "Oh it's adorable!...just like a doll's house". That is, indeed, the role she is expected to play; the role of a pretty and amusing housekeeper who busies herself around the house and waits for her family to come home, but is not really an influential member of society (see Ibsen's A doll's House).

Weight and Age: Another marginalized group, also treated with a lack of respect are the overweight characters. From the very beginning of Disney movies and continuing until today, fat characters are not treated like other characters. They are either evil or they are sidekicks, to be disparaged and made fun of. Merryweather, the pudgiest of the fairies in Sleeping Beauty is constantly ordered around and ignored, even when she is clearly right. For instance, she is realistic about the fairies' ability to bake and sew without using magic, yet she is ignored until the other two have failed miserably (and wasted a lot of time). Additionally, Aurora's father, king Stephen, is less ridiculous and more dominant because he is thinner.

In Cinderella Gus *constantly* gets into trouble because he cannot fit through holes and because he tries to accumulate food. Disney makes a point of showing how his clothes don't fit and how tiring he finds any kind of exercise (Clip 65). In reality, if one took a human and expected him to climb 3 flights of stairs that are over twice his height, the man would be as exhausted as Gus is. Yet, the other main male mouse, Jacques, is presented as so much more resourceful, brave and admirable than Gus.

Mr. Snoops is pudgy, and this is capitalized on in the way Medusa sticks her fingernail into his nose and it bulges, in the way his body looks in tattered clothes, and in the way he walks. He is the awkward, clumsy villain so Medusa takes most of the audience's blame. His awkward gawkiness is achieved mainly by making him fat.

In Aladdin there is a moment when he falls into the arms of an overweight woman who desires him, and her desire seems so ludicrous that it doesn't strike us as odd that he'd rather run into guards with swords than come into her house with her and wait till the guards go away. This is because overweight women cannot possibly be considered

attractive or normal in Disney. In The Little Mermaid they keep showing how small Ariel's waist is; her body is on display all the time (See Clip 10). Ursula is the villain and she has the bad sense not just to be fat (and say she's "practically starving"), but also to wear an open-backed dress. Disney emphasizes Ursula's weight by focusing on the movement of her hips and of her large breasts, which move of their own accord to emphasize what she says. He has her primp and mousse her hair before our eyes-and remain ugly and overweight. Another interesting factor is the way Disney chooses to reveal that "Vanessa" is Ursula. She, again, primps in front of the mirror, but the reflection in the mirror is the less attractive Ursula (what she really looks like). This doesn't seem to bother Ursula at all, but to us, the viewers and later, the audience at the wedding, the contrast is quite striking, when Vanessa splits her dress open and Ursula emerges. This would be every woman's nightmare, but she doesn't care because she's in control. To a western audience, that's the ultimate sin, women who give up their good looks to get something else, as a means to an end, and quite a few Disney villains do it.

For men, too, being overweight takes away from their status. Aging patriarchs are often fat (and often short, too), which makes them look weak next to the emerging patriarch, who is always taller and thinner. Thin characters are always more desirable, craftier, and often squeeze into holes to get away from their pursuers (The Little Mermaid tricks a shark at the beginning of the movie, Jacques tricks Lucifer multiple times throughout Cinderella). In general in Disney, smaller is better. Evidence of this is that when the Beast is about to assume his role as patriarch to humans, not objects, he has to transform into a smaller, more compact, normal-sized version of himself (and into a human, which is the supreme life form in Disney.)

Older women in Disney movies cannot keep everything up. They gain abilities and agency as they grow older; the *good* older women often need the help of a man to accomplish their goals. However, the older women who are attractive and powerful aren't motherly and cannot get male approval (even from a magical mirror). If they are a bit older, they are often motherly and have some agency, but are no longer attractive. Moreover, these states always appear permanent. No one ever shows how post-menopausal women looked at younger ages, or what they did. Nor do we see our heroines 20 years later. It is impossible to have it all, which gives males even more power. All men need to be attractive is very few good manners and a considerable amount of money. Moreover, once men have achieved patriarchal status they do not have to be concerned with maintaining their looks or status, no woman will ever attack a patriarch directly unless they have no choice, they'll always go for another woman first.

Musical Conventions: Even musically Disney follows the conventional approach to scoring films. The males are always represented by French horns or other brass instruments; women get the more "emotional/lyrical" violins for their themes. Additionally, themes connect different parts of the movie to each other, even though the audience might not remember the details. For example, the B theme from the opening song in Beauty and the Beast, the lyrics for which are "here's where she meets prince charming, but she won't discover that it's him till chapter 3", is the same theme that will indicate Belle's perception that the Beast is changing in the song "Something There". She will even reference the previous occurrence of the theme when she sings "true that he's no prince charming, but there's something in him that I simply didn't see." By the

repetition of motifs, and structuring them in traditional ways, as well as orchestration and stylistic musical choices, Disney follows the tradition of the musical to a T. Disney follows the formulas in every aspect of moviemaking, not just in text and plot.

Interestingly, there is a consensus that most people do not remember lyrics to a song unless it's one of their favorites and they have taken the time to memorize them. True, many people know Disney songs complete with lyrics and have even done covers for them on youtube. However, the lyrics are not the focal point of a Disney movie, if they weren't obscured by spectacular images and catchy tunes, more people would listen to what is actually being said, and objections might be raised. Rhymes also desensitize us to what is actually being said because the meter takes over. What's forming our impressions and opinions in Disney are the images. Since the illustration happens after the vocal recording, the illustration always highlights aspects of the text, so one would associate the tune with images of Cruella stepping into the house and with Roger performing a whole range of movements, and a dance that highlights how evil Cruella really is. Often, though all aspects complement each other well and illustrate everything being said, the real message is absorbed but not recognized, acknowledged, or even precisely remembered.

Conclusion

Parents and viewers consider Disney movies safe because they transmit a type of social mores and customs that have been around for centuries; the movies' schemas change only minimally with time. Disney has become such a pervasive force in our culture, that now parents do not even bother to read the original fairy tales to their children, they buy the Disney movies, and then they buy the watered-down versions in the form of merchandized books based on the movies. And so today's children have lost access to the original tales of multiple cultures. Disney has saturated the market and our culture to the point that it has become an institution above suspicion with regards to the messages it transmits. In fact, even academics are now publishing books in defense of Disney, painting the corporations' positions as very liberal and even somewhat socially progressive, and subversive of the status quo in relation to issues like race, class and gender (Brode, 2005)! The reason viewers do not see what is so apparent is that most people view movies are a form of entertainment. As such, we go to the movies, especially to musical features, to hear some catchy tunes, see pretty images and go home feeling satiated. We come only for our dose of sugar, we do not look at the fine print or read the entire list of ingredients. We do not go to the movies with our inner critics prepared to observe and resist the constant reinforcement of Disney's ideal social structure. Therefore, the music washes over us, and we *buy* into Belle as independent and strong because she rejects her first suitor, despite some pressure. We see Ariel as liberated because she is capable of criticizing her father's views. By the time the women show their true colors of submission, if our mind was active for the first few minutes, it has long been turned off. We know what will happen, and are eagerly awaiting the final

battle and the kiss that will seal the deal with prince charming and his castle. Disney's reactionary messages are not hidden, they are on display at all times, we just choose to look away, enjoying the music and the colors.

For example, the fact that we only see characters for a tiny span of time, and never see far into their future, leads us to accept Disney's meritocratic philosophy and accept the status quo as it is. We accept that princesses are just beautiful and deserve to be admired, helped and adored. We also therefore blindly accept the edict that every princess reinforces, the edict of hope: if you wish hard enough, your wish will come true effortlessly (provided you abide by the system's rules). Their wish is always tied to getting a man and so we too learn that if we wish for anything, we should wish for marriage and then maybe we can feel like a part of that select meritocracy of Disney princesses, be queens of a household. The older women fail at the impossible task of being pretty *and* motherly *and* staying young, all at the same time. The message is that though some are natural princesses, we can all fill the night sky with all of our wishes upon all of our stars.

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