

Longwood University

Digital Commons @ Longwood University

Spring Showcase for Research and Creative Inquiry

Office of Student Research

Spring 4-14-2021

Disney Princesses and Gender Expectations

Miranda Carter

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/rci_spring



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carter, Miranda, "Disney Princesses and Gender Expectations" (2021). *Spring Showcase for Research and Creative Inquiry*. 154.

https://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/rci_spring/154

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Student Research at Digital Commons @ Longwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring Showcase for Research and Creative Inquiry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Longwood University. For more information, please contact hamiltonma@longwood.edu, alwinehd@longwood.edu.

Disney Princesses and Gender Expectations

Miranda Carter

Introduction

I plan on exploring the gender roles that Disney Princesses provide for girls. I want to explore how most of these princesses give girls a false sense of hope for a happily ever after. I chose this topic because it thoroughly intrigues me. I have never felt this way about Disney princesses

Objectives

My project aims to show the older generation of Disney princesses' problems and how they are changing the narrative to give girls more agency. In some research, I have learned that "Disney Princesses represent salient, powerful, attractive characters who tend to be portrayed as conforming to gender stereotypes and are rewarded for their gendered behavior" (Coyner, para9). Most girls identify with older princesses like Snow White or Cinderella than newer ones who give women more agency. I believe this is a topic that needs to be discussed more because it significantly affects girls and their identities. It is something that I feel most people disregard because they aren't real princesses, but they are woven into almost everything. Disney Princesses are adaptations of other cultures' princesses. This is something no one pays attention to because they group it into everything issues with young girls and their adolescent problems.



Materials



According to Condis (2019) that, "animals provided the perfect foil for the princess. They were a class of peasantry whose simplicity and devotion proved the princess's worthiness as a ruler and a role model. The princesses proved they were exemplary (human) women by demonstrating their benevolent superiority over their animal subjects" (p.40). With princesses being shown as nothing more than animals who must submit to those of higher wills then theirs then it correlates to Mirchandani (2016) "Women are seen as beautiful objects when submissive and weak; however, powerful females are often portrayed as ugly or evil" (p.7). However, it would seem that Davis disagrees as she states "the princesses of today's Disney films are no longer reliant on men to receive an act of true love" (p.52). This relates to my initial thesis question because of the progression of Disney to rework their mistakes and provide better role models for young girls. I believe the audience will be interested to know what strides they made and how they chose to go about correcting it such as Cinderella to Frozen.

Results

The data shows the implications that these stereotypes give young girls, such as "Young girls are less likely to realize that they can deviate from these social norms, and those who intrinsically feel that they do deviate from typical gender roles may avoid expressing different roles for fear of disapproval" (Davis, 8). I believe that young adults who are just starting as parents would be most interested in this information because it will give them the stuff to consider. It will help them distinguish between what role models are suitable for their young child. My goal is to inform my audience to look more closely at who their child looks up to, as a Disney Princess is a big shoe to fill. Once they are aware of the implications, this can have on their loved ones. Then they will look for a better role model.



Conclusions

In conclusion I have reached so far based on the research I have is that Disney princesses affect young girls in ways far more significant than we thought. They provide for a lot of young girls' personality traits that they take into life. This was a surprising conclusion. After all, I had to examine myself and conclude that I have some characteristics from Princess Belle because I idolize her. This has made my views change. I initially believed Disney princesses do little harm to girls, but now I can see that they do harmful things and put them in a box full of expectations. They need to keep the progress going to redefine the standards they have put in place for young girls. The audience will be able to take away from this research that we can't let standards define us. We must give the girls of our world different role models of women who can stand on their own without their love interest saving them. Disney should make a Disney princess movie without any males in it whatsoever. It should be only regarding a girl and her journey, this was represented well in the film Brave, but it failed because most do not see it as a Disney movie. After all, Pixar produced it. No one takes it as canon because of a different label. Disney is making strides to create a better role model for young girls.



References

- Condis, Megan. "She Was a Beautiful Girl and All of the Animals Loved Her: Race, the Disney Princesses, and Their Animal Friends." *Gender Forum: An Internet Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 55, 2015, pp. 39-54.
- Davis, Maegan M. "From Snow to Ice: A Study of the Progression of Disney Princesses from 1937 to 2014." *Film Matters*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2014, pp. 48-52.
- Mirchandani, Kiran. "And They Lived Happily Ever After?: A Female's Identification with a Disney Princess and Her Assumed Gender Role and Romantic Beliefs." *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, vol. 78, no. 10, Chicago School of Professional PsychologyProQuest, Apr. 2018.