Repackaging the Disney Princess: A post-feminist reading of modern day fairy tales

Sarah Wilde

Abstract

This paper examines the repackaging of contemporary Disney princess fairy tales in a post-feminist era and explores the extent to which these princesses are portrayed as post-feminist. Undertaking semiotic analysis and utilising Propp’s (1968) character theory it examines the initial UK marketing material of Disney’s most recent princess animations Tangled (2010), Brave (2012) and Frozen (2013). Drawing on the evolution of fairy tales and historical Disney princesses the analysis focuses on romantic love, the positioning of protagonist relationships and gender ideologies. It revealed that contemporary princesses, especially Brave surpass many traditional notions of gender. Evolving from a tale of a “heroine of life who has no story” (Tatar 1999, p.293), to one of an empowered and autonomous heroine. Yet some of the initial promotional material overshadows strong post-feminine ideals and thus subjects the princesses to the traditional resolution of romantic love.

Keywords: Post-feminism, Disney, semiotics, feminism, princess

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References


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