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The (de)Evolution of the Disney Princess

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The Disney Princess franchise does a remarkable job of asking girls to picture themselves as princesses, reinforcing the question: What else would a little girl want to be? The reality of this Disney fantasy is one of gendering young girls to embody a social construction of hyper-femininity through misguided film representations and princess play toys. This research looks at media influences on girlhood through a close reading of the Disney princess. I argue that Disney has focused less and less on the genuine qualities and faithful morality of their princesses, and instead, on the prince-princess dichotomy of finding true love.

"…and the prince and princess lived happily ever after." Or, so children are trained to think as they watch the lives of beautiful cartoon people. The beloved stories about handsome rescuers, finding true love, and marrying off in the most beautiful wedding dress ever seen, is a common escape for many children, especially little girls. Fortunately, for the population of little women decked out in pink sparkles, red lipstick, and glittering wands, Disney has provided the greatest gift of all; not just a film series, but an entire franchise designed to capture every girl's inner-princess. How fitting—literally—plastic heels and faux-satin dresses emblazoned with the face of that favorite princess, designed *just for you*! The Disney Princess franchise does a remarkable job of asking girls to picture themselves as princesses, reinforcing the question: What

else would a little girl want to be? The reality of this Disney fantasy is one of gendering young girls to embody a social construction of hyper-femininity through misguided film representations and princess play toys. This research looks at media influences on girlhood through a close reading of the Disney princess. I argue that Disney has focused less and less on the genuine qualities and faithful morality of their princesses, and instead, on the prince-princess dichotomy of finding true love. Society as a whole declares that children can become the things they wish to be if they have a role model; someone to aspire to that proves to children that hard work, a strong moral ground, and a positive outlook on life can get you far. Yet, when children see images of girls and women that are inconsistent with this aspirational model, adults claim that children cannot and will not understand. Are those not contradictory statements? This research on the Disney Princesses will highlight that children, especially young girls, are affected by the lack of strong, independent female leaders. Compared to other characters in a Disney Princess film, the princess is typically the weakest, most dependent, and genderized character in the film (Clark, 2002). How, then, does this create a character that provides a decent role model for young girls? How does this illustrate that Disney puts emphasis on the aspirational qualities of a princess? The fact of the matter is, Disney falls short and focuses much more on perpetuating consumerism and gender stereotypes than delivering a happy, healthy, self-efficient girl role model.

When looking at children's media—both in literature and films—there is a lot of quantitative research done about the roles, body types, and actions of men and women characters. There is little research done in the qualitative nature—looking at how and why their body types are so stereotyped and "standard" (in the sense that they are all the same and reflect common beauty ideals), why their actions are so gendered, and if and how the roles of men and women in children's media are playing into gender stereotypes. Qualitative research gives reason and understanding into the social constructions that create these gendered expectations. In my studies at The College at Brockport, I have become involved with the Women and Gender Studies Program, as well as the Interdisciplinary Arts for Children Department. The combination of these two studies has brought me to an

intersection where I want to focus on gender issues within our modern day society, but especially hone my skills towards the affects these issues have on children and where children become exposed to these issues. Social grooming comes in all shapes and sizes, but my focus on children's media has directly led me into the princess population. *Frozen* (2013), the most recent princess film Disney has flooded the market with, has been noted as the "most progressive" princess film for a number of reasons, but especially because of its "strong independent princesses." On the contrary, these princesses have done no more (or are even less independent and adventurous) than most of the other princesses in Disney's line up. These gender roles touch on everything from the hyper-feminine and clearly stereotypical body shape of a princess—which is a terribly important topic in the study of young girls—to a princess's goal of finding true love.

Sex and Gender

Sex and gender are highly complicated topics. Unless you are in the midst of gender studies, there is a good chance that you don't quite know what's what. That is not uncommon; however, it proves that our society is highly problematic. Judith Butler (2005), a well-known feminist author and lecturer, states:

> In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance but produce this *on the surface* of the body, though the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that is has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality (p. 500).

With this statement, Butler argues that gender is not only a performance by an individual, but it is also performative, meaning that people mimic the dominating societal ideals about gender and create a set of behaviors. These behaviors are, in American society and especially in media portrayals, strictly categorized into masculinity and femininity. This is the gender binary. Sex, on the other hand, is determined by the body, and "preexists the acquisition of its sexed significance" (p. 496). With this statement, Butler makes

it clear that gender and sex remain separate. Society, to enforce the gender binary, dictates that sex and gender should match up; that if you are a man you must be masculine, and if you are a woman, you must be feminine. Consider the cartooned depiction of the "Genderbread Person" in Figure 1. This cartoon character simplistically, yet efficiently, outlines the differences that media typically takes for granted. It shows that sex is the biological aspect—what your anatomy looks like. Gender, on the other hand, comes into play when describing how people perform and how that performance is repeated. Perhaps if mainstream media,

like Disney, would incorporate the illustration into their own characters, they would be less likely to swing to gender binary extremes.

The gender binary also is a concept that is so engrained in our society that you might not even notice there is something fundamentally wrong with it. Indeed, the gender binary is the socially accepted rules and regulations of how masculinity and femininity are presented (Butler, 2005).

Unfortunately, anything and everything in between these opposites is discouraged; in fact, societal standards typically do not even address that men and women could be anything in
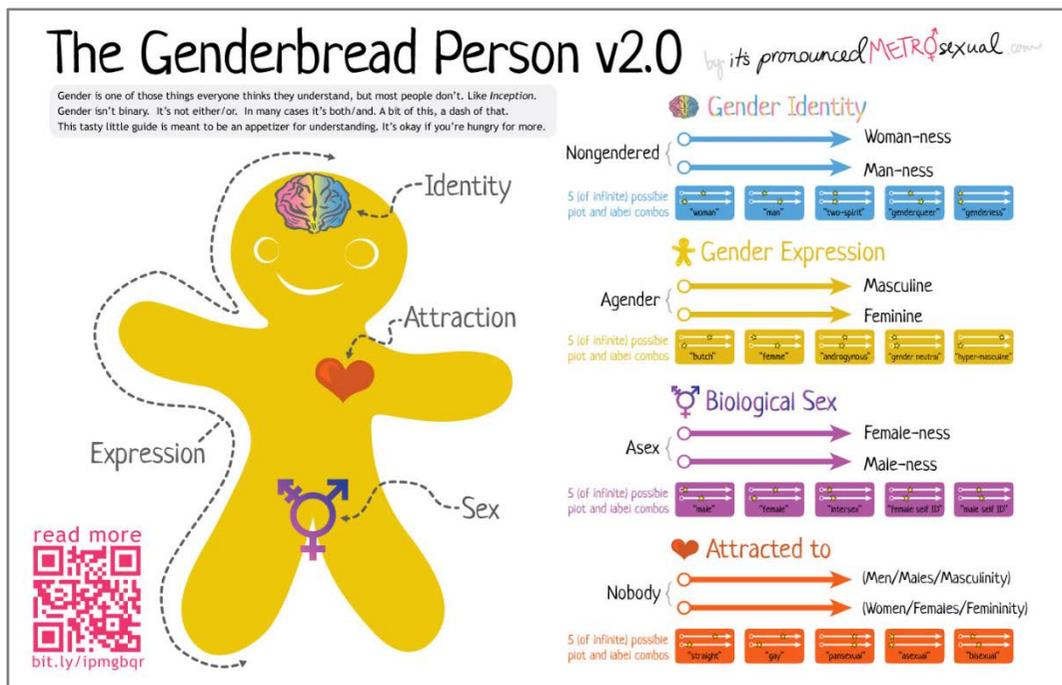

Figure 1. The Genderbread Person v2.0 (Killermann, 2015).

between. This creates a sort of polarization of the terms masculinity and femininity, so that the images that we see on a day-to-day basis, especially in media productions, are extremes.

Media Literacy

The cultivation theory analyzed in "Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses" states

> … exposure to television content helps develop concepts regarding social behavior and norms…higher levels of exposure to gendered messages are likely associated with stronger effects on children's gender socialization (England, 2011, p. 557).

This theory highlights the importance of socialization of children through media, and the simple fact that if media creates a gender stereotyped space, children will take those messages away from whatever they are watching. Further, the process of encoding and decoding examined in *Gender & Popular Culture* by Milestone & Meyer (2011) allows for power in both the hands of the media and the audience. Milestone & Meyer (2011) state:

> …the media as producers have the power to encode a text with particular meanings and messages. The meaning which they intend the audience to get is called the preferred meaning. When audiences read media texts, they engage in an active process of decoding meanings and messages. (p. 156-157)

Granted, while young children aren't as educated or well versed on the efforts of the media to persuade its consumers, they still definitely pick up on the messages through strategies employed by the media. Disney, for example, usually focuses its main messages on some sort of moral issue. Therefore, morality is Disney's preferred message. However, Disney does, through emphasizing morality, give power to who should be the one to perform on moral ground. Typically, morality is granted to both the prince and princess; they do what they can to be together in the end, and defeat whatever the evil temptress represents. The ways in which the prince and princess stand their moral grounds, however, are different, and Disney slides this message of who-should-perform-how in subtle yet powerful ways.

In my own personal life, Disney has played a large role. The Disney Princess movies were near and dear to my heart all throughout my childhood. I watched them all, and as I grew older, I re-watched them with my own little sister, Cassidy. As Cassidy recently approached her twelfth birthday, I could not help but notice her constant

policing of self. She babbled on about what she had accomplished in her latest dance class; how far she could bend and how much she had sweat. In the same token, she discussed how she needed to go on a diet to keep her figure in check and what types of clothes suited her body type the best. It's true, my sister is quite the "girly girl," but I never realized that an extension of her ideals also could be making sure that she fits well into the sphere of the real girl. This is exactly what concerned and prompted me to focus on the effects of children's media on consumers. I can acknowledge that Disney alone is not to blame for my sister looking at her own waist in a negative light, but Disney films certainly have influence over her and millions of other girls worldwide. Disney Princesses manipulate their audiences into thinking that true femininity is exactly what they portray, and if Cassidy cannot fit that mold, then is she failing as a girl? Will she fail to be a successful woman? If girls are taking life lessons from their favorite Disney Princess, then yes, they might be apt to fail.

Development of our Princesses

Girls have indeed changed over the years and in a way that promotes the same type of thinking that consumed my sister (and, if we're speaking quite frankly, me too). Brumberg (1997), in her book entitled *The Body Project*, states that "The emphasis on "good works" as opposed to "good looks" meant that the lives of young women in the nineteenth century had a very different orientation from those of girls today" (p. ix). This observation has been noted from comparing the diaries of American girls in the late nineteenth century to those of girls growing up in the late twentieth century. Instead of wanting to improve upon their diligence, work ethic, social skills, and learning, girls today are much more focused on pleasing themselves and others through their physical appearance. Brumberg refers back to the girl of the twentieth century, quoting, "I will try to make myself better in any way I possibly can…I will lose weight, get new lenses, already got new haircut, good makeup, new clothes and accessories" (p. xxi). Society has pushed girls and young women further away from the importance of their actions and towards the policing of their bodies. While girls and young women (and society) claim that they have greater liberation in today's day and age, it seems as though they are actually halted by simply appearing as if they are liberated.

Indeed, girls' bodies seem to have become "a primary expression of their individual identity" (Brumberg, 1997, p. xxi). But why have girls become so preoccupied with their bodies? True, girls have been physically maturing at younger and younger ages, which to some can create an issue of having a body that one simply does not know what to do with. On top of having a well-developed body at a younger age, girls are constantly being barraged with media that tells them how to treat their bodies, as well as how their bodies are supposed to look. Disney is no exception; the bodies of their princesses are strictly maintained, upgraded, and refurbished.

What is a Disney Princess, exactly? Currently, there are eleven members of the line-up (I will be focusing on thirteen princesses), which includes Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora (also known as Briar Rose in *Sleeping Beauty*), Ariel, (from *The Little Mermaid*) Belle (from *Beauty and the Beast*), Jasmine (from *Aladdin*), Pocahontas, Mulan, Tiana (from *Princess and the Frog*), Rapunzel (from *Tangled*), and Merida (from *Brave*). Each of these princesses has been through a "coronation" ceremony that allowed their induction into what Disney refers to the official princess line-up ("Disney Princess,"

2015). The latest Disney movie, *Frozen*, has two princesses, Anna and Elsa, a princess who actually becomes the queen of their kingdom. Disney has announced that both characters are to be inducted into the line-up later in 2015, so for all intensive purposes, I include and analyze them with the rest of the princesses. The Disney Princesses are set apart based on their specific franchise created by Andy Mooney in 2000. According to Mooney, the definition of a princess is "so broadly constructed that it actually has no meaning" (cited in Orenstein, 2012, p. 14).

Look like a Princess

Truth be told, the Disney Princesses all have a great number of things in common: their stories are mostly similar in their bare-bones structure, and they embody loyalty, kindness, courageousness, and so on and so forth. Perhaps the most peculiar (and most problematic) similarity within the Disney Princess line up is their physical attributes. Indeed, all of our Disney Princesses look the same. After their redesign in 2013, there is an even greater striking similarity between them all, even Disney's "cultural" princesses. Figure 2 illustrates the differences

Figure 2. Disney Princess, before and after 2013 redesign ("Disney princesses," 2015)

between the princesses before and after the redesign.

Common factors among all of the princesses include a much more feminized look. There are: more pink, more glitter, more curves, and more skin. Their body types have certainly altered—look at the waists on the characters—even arm, neck, and hand size have been altered to create a slender, young, and small figure. Over the years, most of the princesses have lighter skin tones, even princesses of color. Their features, including bigger eyes, widened faces, smaller noses, and completely changed shapes of their heads and faces, have been "Europeanized." All of the princesses

have also been sexualized—look at their body positioning, especially their hip-to-hand location and the face tilt (Cohen, 2015). Longer, luscious hair has been added to multiple characters, which furthers the idealization of sex appeal. Even their red lips are a factor in this heightened sex appeal—red lips have been known to symbolize strength and independence in a woman; however, the bright red color also symbolizes sexual availability and sex appeal. Historically, prostitutes and actresses were the only women who wore red lipstick, especially in Europe (where most of these stories originated). Together, they seem less like a group of strong and independent women, and more like glossed over figurines of femininity. There isn't even a sort of solidarity between the princesses, which is actually supposed to be there in storyline (Ebrahim, 2014). Andy Mooney stated that he formed the picture of the princess so that "Each stares off in a slightly different direction as if unaware of the others' presence" (cited in Orenstein, 2012, p. 15). This apparent devolution of the princesses is unmistakably sexist.

Act like a Princess

All of the Disney Princesses (except Elsa) have been nominated heroines because of their actions in the films. But what exactly makes them heroines? They show morality, and they are sometimes super brave, but their actions are diminished with the arrival of their savior-like princes. Some princesses don't really do anything---Sleeping Beauty? Sleeps. Snow White? Sleeps. Anna and Elsa? Well, Elsa freezes her kingdom and almost kills her sister while Anna abandons her kingdom (leaving it in the hands of, yes, her betrothed, who she had just met that day) to convince her sister to return to the kingdom, which she fails at doing. Most of the Disney Princesses do have real hopes and dreams, and Disney makes sure that all of the princesses declare these hopes and dreams—essentially, what they strive for throughout their stories and always achieve at the end—in a sing-along. However, instead of singing about solid, self-improving goals, the first ever Disney Princess, Snow White, and the latest princess, Anna, both sing about wanting to find "the one." In "I'm Wishing," Snow White sings

I'm wishing
(I'm wishing)
For the one I love
To find me
(to find me)
Today

(today)
(Churchill & Morey, 1937).

Disney Princesses have, in some cases, become more goal-oriented, but the very first and very last princesses have not displayed determination, practicality, or anything outside of romance in their "goal song." Merida is the only Disney Princess who does not have a goals song in her movie, but she does *technically* sing throughout the entire movie—her voice actress sings "Touch the Sky" and states:

> Lead me out into the light…
> I will ride, I will fly,
> Chase the wind and touch the sky,
> I will fly…I will hear their every story,
> Take hold of my own dream,
> Be as strong as the seas are stormy,
> And proud as an eagle's scream
> (Mandel & Andrews, 2012).

These lyrics are definitely her own voice, declaring what she intends to do. First, Disney has Snow White sing of her longing for a lover. In the middle of the line-up, other princesses sing about things besides men—including Mulan's "Reflection" where she states:

> On that day, I'll discover someway to be myself,
> and to make my family proud.
> They want a docile lamb,
> No-one knows who I am.
> Must there be a secret me,
> I'm forced to hide?
> Must I pretend that I am someone else for all the time?
> (Wilder & Zippel, 1998).

Mulan is singing about how she cannot be the figure of femininity that everyone expects, and that she wants her family to see her for whom she truly is. At the end of the film, we certainly see that she has achieved that goal, with the help of her "prince" (Whelan, 2012).

Other princesses, who are not so well known for being so active in their stories, also have strong goal songs— like "Belle", who sings, "There must be more than this provincial life!" She wants to escape her small town in France and make the adventures in all of the books she has been reading her reality. At the end of the movie, the Beast (her prince) has provided her with an expansive library and the means to do whatever she wants with her life.

Unfortunately, Disney did not stay on the track of characterizing strong and reasonable goals for princesses that did not revolve around men. If Disney were really on the road to a more progressive storyline, you would think they would have a great, intense, roaring, and meaningful song for Ana, right? Wrong. In fact, her goal song is

entitled, "For the First Time in Forever," and she sings:

> I suddenly see him standing there,
> A beautiful stranger, tall and fair…
> For the first time in forever
> I could be noticed by someone
> And I know it is totally crazy
> to dream I'd find romance
> But for the first time in forever
> At least I've got a chance
> (Anderson-Lopez & Lopez, 2015).

This song is about the opening up of her kingdom and how happy she'll be to break her lonely life, but then, it turns into a song about finding "the one." She's gone from happiness created from friendships and an open community to finding her sudden and heteronormal man lover.

Once a princess sings her goal song, there is almost always (the one exception being *Brave* in 2012) a prince that helps her to reach her goals; without him, she would not have accomplished what she intended to do. This is especially true for the princesses whose true focus is finding her true love. There is certainly nothing wrong with asking for help, or receiving it, but it becomes problematic when Disney suggests that a princess cannot accomplish her goals if she lacks the help of a prince. This, Disney claims, is her fate. Fate also is mentioned in nearly every Disney Princess movie, and it determines where the princess will go on her journey (Whelan, 2012). The message that Disney sends to young girls with the concept of fate is essentially that they can never escape their fate, no matter how hard they try. The extremely gendered nature of the princess movies creates an even bigger issue; it tells young children (boys and girls alike) that they have to stay in their assigned role because that is what the world has set up. This is not actually the case when in the real world, but in their princess line-up, Disney completely dismisses gender fluidity, and instead, pushes gender inequality to an extreme that is based in consumerism.

"Supporting" Characters

The Disney Princesses have also quite obviously been known for their counterparts, the handsome princes. These princes are not always princes, just like the princesses are not always princesses; however, they are always there, side-by-side with the princess -- or, like in the case of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), -- by themselves, facing the dangerous journey with strong hands and a winning smile. Similar to the princesses, the body types of Disney men are stereotyped to the extreme.

Men in Disney Princess films are hyper-masculinized and look the exact opposite of the princess. Typically, the prince staggers above the princess at a much taller height, holds himself upright, and has wide, angular shoulders and arms and a strong jawline. Essentially, the Disney prince is there to take up space. In almost any picture portrayal of a Disney prince and princess, the prince is pictured standing over and usually holding, or in close proximity to, the princess. He is placed there to shelter and protect her. But how can Disney claim that their princesses are strong, independent women if they have to be literally guarded by a man? Even in depictions of Ana and Kristoff (her love interest) in *Frozen* (2013), they are standing so that she is turned in towards him, while he looks confidently outwards, taking up at least twice the amount of the frame than she does.

Perhaps the most frustrating difference is the size of Kristoff's hand when holding the princesses. In nearly every Disney Princess films, and especially in the later of the films, when a princess takes the hand of any man, there is such a great difference that it looks like the hand of a child in the hand of a full-grown man. This difference furthers the prince's ability to be physical, because he has hands (and feet) that are proportionate enough to his body so that he can actually do activities. Granted, people do have all

Figure 3. Anna and Kristoff (Disney, 2013)

sorts of body shapes and types, but if every single woman looked like a Disney Princess, they wouldn't be able to play sports or do normal activities because of their frail, feeble bodies. Likewise, if all men looked like a Disney man (especially one in the prince category), they would really only be comfortable doing manual labor or professional wrestling because of their huge bodies.

While all of these issues are clearly problematic, there is one more piece of the prince-princess dichotomy that

Disney has kept up with throughout almost all of their films: finding true love in the first man you meet. The relationships between the princes and princesses are based on a short length of time; in fact, sometimes they spend literally no time together before they supposedly fall in love. This formula is apparent in every Disney Princess film besides *Brave* (2012), which is a highly unusual princess movie anyway, because of Merida's lack of love for a man and her determination for her own agency, which really go hand in hand. In *Frozen* (2013), Ana is smitten with Hans, a prince from another land, and she gets engaged to him a mere few hours after meeting him. While the other characters do find fault in her engagement (and it is eventually broken off), it shows just how focused she was on finding a prince. Towards the end of the story, she presumably dates the other male suitor who ventured alongside her. This still places her focus on affection from a man, and still a man who she does not know that well, although there is a slight compromise in not writing in another betrothal.

While the morals that Disney focuses on for their princesses are great, it's not the message that really pulls children into the stories. In fact, the reason so many little girls play princess is not so that their friends will be nice to them; it is so that they can gather positive attention from their peers and adults for looking beautiful and taking on hyper-feminine characteristics, including being a good host, being patient and waiting their turn to speak and talk, and wishing for "the perfect man" (Wohlwend, 2009).

Villains, on the other hand, are typically much more flexible characters than the princesses (or even the princes) of Disney stories. Villains have a lot of terrible qualities, including vanity, greed, and ruthlessness, but they also possess a lot of great qualities, including determination, worldly smarts, and aggressiveness. This aggressiveness could be seen as a bad thing, but the way Disney shows this aggressiveness, it is usually perceived more as a persistence of fortitude rather than hurtful aggression. The villains may have greater goals and are much more focused and driven. While villains sometimes have henchmen, they predominantly rely on themselves to get the job done. Overall, villains are much stronger, more independent characters than any of the Disney Princesses have been thus far.

Villains

The villains in the Disney Princess films certainly do play into gendered stereotypes, but beauty is typically not their main focus, and if it is, its emphasis is on the princess's beauty. For example, the Evil Queen's goal is to be the most beautiful in all the land, and therefore, Snow White's beauty is also accentuated within the story. Likewise, in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Gaston is extremely vain, and only wants to make Belle his wife because she is more beautiful than any other woman in their village. Male villains, like Gaston, are usually competing male suitors, who typically use force to try to get the princess to love them. When this happens, the princess might stand up for herself once or twice, but it takes the help of the prince (or man friend) to get rid of the evil villain. This does not teach girls to stand up and fight for themselves; rather, to run away and find another man to fight their battles for them. Only Merida, from *Brave* (2012), fights off unwanted men without the help of a current lover, but she also does not approach her unwanted lovers directly. The men competing for her hand are also not necessarily the villains in the story -- in fact -- one could argue that her parents are the true villains. It is true, Disney plays on a sort of poor parenting stereotype that is present in

almost every Princess film, especially related to the mother-daughter rift that is supposed to occur when girls are teenagers (all the princesses are fourteen to nineteen years of age).

This leads into another rather problematic part of Disney's villain complex: who is the true villain? In *Frozen* (2013), Elsa and Ana's parents essentially tell Elsa that she is a danger to other people. Are they the true villains? There is also Hans, who plans to steal the kingdom for himself after killing Anna and Elsa. He is the one character that is supposedly the villain of the story—but then again, there is also Elsa—who freezes her kingdom, abandons it, and then almost kills her sister. Elsa is being inducted into the Disney Princess line, but she does not seem to fit the mold of the Disney Princess beyond her looks and being born into a royal line within the story's plot, a variable that, technically, is not a requirement for being a princess. If Disney really were trying to give girls a valid and respectable princess without putting emphasis on a princess's outward appearance, perhaps Elsa would have had more character development, or even a redeeming quality that did not surround her eventually (and reluctantly) saving her sister.

Dealing with Disney

There are hundreds of blogs, news articles, forums for parents, teens, and children alike that are all raging out because Disney hasn't provided a strong enough female character in the Disney Princess line. While the page has now been debunked, there used to be a feminist blogger who created a "This is What a Disney Princess Should Look Like" campaign, where girls and women of all different ethnicities, ages, sizes, and interests sent in their pictures, proving that none of them were quite alike and neither should be any of the princesses. The 2013 redesigns of the Disney Princess line-up does not encapsulate the true messages that Disney is supposedly trying to send to young girls, but rather, reinforces infantilization and sexualization of young girls in the media, supposedly made to "modernize" the characters. If modernization is equivalent to furthering gender stereotypes and gender equality, perhaps society should turn to look at itself. The consumerism that Disney is really trying to feed is letting go of any progress that has been made within regards to a more fluid and equal view of gender, and creating a system that benefits from stifling the prospect of solid role models for young girls (and young boys too). The Disney Princess has not evolved into a true and morally upstanding role model for young girls. Even England (2011) states in "Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses" that:

> The gendered messages did not consistently move away from traditional themes in more recent movies. Whereas some movies showed a number of non-stereotypical gender qualities, all of the movies incorporated some stereotypical representations of gender (p. 564).

As gender equality becomes more and more acknowledged in greater American society, the media that influences the youth is still holding steadfast to old beliefs on femininity and masculinity. This is highly problematic as we push further and further into an age where body image is everything.

Media encourages love for your body (the body you were born into), and at the same time requires constant maintenance to upkeep. Edut (2003) puts this entire conundrum into an individualistic but relevant statement when she says:

> …how significantly the myths of our culture influence our lives. Most of us intellectually know what fashion ads and airbrushed models are unrealistic and that very few people look like Kate

Moss, including the model herself. Yet, emotionally we're in denial about it. We must be, or we wouldn't spend so much time and money trying to look like something that doesn't even exist. Perhaps there's a deeper layer of mythology that we need to uncover—our own (p. vi).

This final statement attests to not only the way media, like Disney, infiltrates our minds, but also the way in which society dictates how we, as individuals, are socialized to forego our own aspirations and intentions for a consumerist, shallow society ideal. In this statement, Edut (2003) reminds us not to engage in cultural obsessions over body type—and, in broader terms, not to succumb to the way we are supposed to act within our own gender, and instead, focus on taking back our true selves, whatever we may look like within the gender binary and beauty ideal.

But what can be done to change the images that the Disney Princesses uphold? Perhaps a new redesign of the princesses in their original glory, or a stronger position with greater solidarity between each other would help to alter their image. I do not think this is a strong enough solution, however, with their stories being so genderized. Instead, Disney could feasibly focus less on changing the original stories, and instead, alter them so that the princess is a stronger, more relatable role model of young girls. Recalling Orenstein's (2012) Andy Mooney quote about the construction of a princess, there is no specific definition for a princess; maybe America simply does not need any more princesses. The power that Disney has is so, so powerful. They should use that power of influence and nostalgia to create princesses that embody morality and leadership characteristics, not employ and perpetuate gender stereotypes and hyper-femininity.

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