

The Evolution of Critical Approaches: From Snow White to Frozen

Disney movies have mesmerized audiences for decades, taking us on magical journeys into enchanted worlds and teaching us valuable life lessons along the way. While they may seem like simple, innocent tales on the surface, a closer examination reveals layers of critical approaches embedded within these beloved films. In this article, we delve into the evolution of critical approaches from the classic masterpiece Snow White to the modern phenomenon Frozen.

1. A Feminist Retrospective: Snow White

Snow White, released in 1937, was Walt Disney's first full-length animated feature film. While it dazzled audiences with its colorful animation and memorable characters, it also perpetuated traditional gender roles and stereotypes. A feminist analysis of Snow White reveals the passive nature of the female protagonist, who relies on the prince's kiss to awaken from her eternal slumber. The film's portrayal of Snow White as the ultimate damsel in distress sparked debates about the representation of women in Disney films and raised questions about the empowerment of female characters.

2. Unveiling Racial Stereotypes: The Jungle Book

The Jungle Book, released in 1967, took audiences on a captivating adventure through the Indian jungle. While the film is beloved for its catchy songs and memorable characters, it has been subject to criticism for perpetuating racial stereotypes. Baloo, the laid-back bear, and King Louie, the jazz-singing orangutan, both voiced by white actors, have been criticized for their portrayal of racial caricatures. This calls for a critical examination of how Disney films have

sometimes perpetuated harmful stereotypes and the need for greater diversity and representation.



The Disney Musical on Stage and Screen: Critical Approaches from 'Snow White' to 'Frozen'

by Julie Fain Lawrence-Edsell (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1211 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 268 pages



3. Deconstructing The Disney Formula: Beauty and the Beast

Beauty and the Beast, released in 1991, was a groundbreaking film that challenged traditional gender roles and subverted the damsel in distress trope. This critical approach focused on the character of Belle, who was curious, intelligent, and forward-thinking, defying the expectations placed upon her. The film also introduced complex themes such as Stockholm Syndrome and the transformative power of love, inviting audiences to question societal norms and look beyond surface appearances.

4. Queer Reading: The Little Mermaid

The Little Mermaid, released in 1989, is often hailed as the film that ushered in the Disney Renaissance. However, a queer reading of the film exposes underlying themes of self-discovery, identity, and forbidden love. The character of Ariel, who longs to be part of the human world, can be seen as a metaphor for

individuals navigating their own queerness. By examining the relationship between Ariel and Ursula, a strong, independent villain, we can explore the hidden complexities and subtext of this seemingly innocent and enchanting tale.

5. Breaking Stereotypes: Frozen

Frozen, released in 2013, revolutionized the Disney princess narrative by subverting traditional tropes and placing emphasis on sisterly love rather than romantic relationships. Elsa, the Snow Queen, defied expectations by embracing her powers and becoming a strong, independent character. This critical approach highlights the importance of challenging gender norms and the impact of sisterhood as a powerful force in storytelling. Frozen shifted the focus from a princess seeking her prince charming to a princess finding her own inner strength. The film's success paved the way for a new era of Disney storytelling.

The critical approaches that have emerged throughout Disney's filmography have played a crucial role in shaping the way we view these timeless stories. From Snow White to Frozen, these films have evolved and adapted to reflect changing societal values and address various criticisms. By engaging in critical analysis, we can appreciate the impact and significance of these films beyond their surface entertainment value. Each film offers a unique lens through which we can explore important themes such as feminism, racial stereotypes, societal norms, and queer representation. It is through these critical approaches that we gain a deeper understanding of how Disney films continue to be relevant and influential in our lives.

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The Disney Musical: Critical Approaches on Stage and Screen is the first critical treatment of the corporation's hugely successful musicals both on screen and on the stage. Its 13 articles open up a new territory in the critical discussion of the Disney mega-musical, its gender, sexual and racial politics, outreach work and impact of stage, film and television adaptations. Covering early 20th century works such as the first full-length feature film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), to The Lion King - Broadway's highest grossing production in history, and Frozen (2013), this edited collection offers a diverse range of theoretical engagements that will appeal to readers of film and media studies, musical theatre, cultural studies, and theatre and performance.

The volume is divided into three sections to provide a contextual analysis of Disney's most famous musicals:

- DISNEY MUSICALS: ON FILM
- DISNEY ADAPTATIONS: ON STAGE AND BEYOND
- DISNEY MUSICALS: GENDER AND RACE

The first section employs film theory, semiotics and film music analysis to explore the animated works and their links to the musical theatre genre. The second

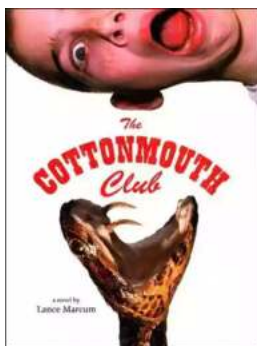
section addresses various stage versions and considers Disney's outreach activities, cultural value and productions outside the Broadway theatrical arena. The final section focuses on issues of gender and race portraying representations of race, hetero-normativity, masculinity and femininity in Newsies, Frozen, High School Musical, Aladdin and The Jungle Book.

The various chapters address these three aspects of the Disney Musical and offer new critical readings of a vast range of important works from the Disney musical cannon including Enchanted, Mary Poppins, Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Lion King and versions of musicals for television in the early 1990s and 2000s. The critical readings are detailed, open-minded and come to surprising s about the nature of the Disney Musical and its impact.



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