

Jack zipes and his connection to walt disney

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The Distortion of the Fairytale

One of the longest thriving gatherings in the world has been storytelling. Originally storytelling was just what it sounds like: telling a story. Sitting with a group of people in a community and telling a fable about anything from a tortoise winning a race to a common servant girl going to the ball. The story itself has changed immensely from the days of oral story. When thinking of tales such as Snow White or Cinderella, we tend to immediately associate the stories with the Disney productions and animated characters, never acknowledging the writers and collectors that they originated from. In “Breaking the Disney Spell”, Jack Zipes displays his negative attitude towards Walt Disney, whom he believes has demoted to original works of popular folklorists such as Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. Walt Disney, according to Zipes, distorted and demoted the original story and the original folk tales and turned them into his own personal stories. Zipes dives into the drastic change of the novel and how Walt Disney himself was the father of this change. The Disney animated films, in Zipes’ eyes, defeat the original purpose of the fairy tales and give the writers little to no acknowledgement where “[Disney] sought to replace all versions [of stories] with his animated versions and that is cartoon is astonishingly autobiographical” (Zipes 29). He supports this claim through logos by comparing the films to the original publications, pathos by informing the audience of Disney’s life in his peak of popularity, and ethos by explaining Disney’s trickery through personal branding, hoaxes, and creating the empire that is Disney.

Throughout the essay and heavily in his opening paragraph, Zipes' negative attitude toward Disney makes readers feel contradictory about their thoughts of the movies and the franchise as a whole. Zipes uses words that have connotations that are contradictory such as "stranglehold" and then saying that Disney is "revolutionary." So why would Zipes open up with such negative feelings? Why does Zipes tear down Disney in his very first paragraph? Perhaps it's to ensure that his readers will feel this way and hope that they will start to make their own choices. Zipes continues throughout the essay pulling at the heartstrings of his readers and then refuting his own words saying that Disney is a "demigod" of change. Surely Zipes must have known that his readers, assumingly, love Disney and his empire and yet Zipes continues to tell the history of the idea of the story and how the superpower destroyed the story and completely revamped it. In an ironic twist, Zipes spends about 2 paragraphs talking about the well-known story of how Disney grew up with his brother Roy and dealing with a loving but abusive father. This is where Zipes inserts what actually seems like normal human emotion but then continues on in his quest for the deconstruction of Disney. He reveals that it's no surprise that Disney became a superpower because "Disney identified so closely with the fairy tales he appropriated that it [makes sense that] his name virtually became synonymous with the genre of fairy tale itself" (Zipes 28).

Jack Zipes' biggest logos argument is that Walt Disney himself, has demented the original story and used them to tell his own story. His argument begins with the explanation of an oedipal complex, informing the reader that most of the plots of earlier movies were seeded at the deepest

oedipal desires of young boys and men. “ The son humiliates and undermines the father and runs off with [the father’s] most valued object of love, the daughter/wife” (Zipes 33). The most relevant of this oedipal complex seed being the story of Puss in Boots and Charles Perrault’s original compared to Disney’s variation. Perrault puts his focus on the cat as the cunning hero of the story whereas Disney portrays the young man as the hero and the cat as a cunning sidekick. The overall Disney hero in the older media is “ the enterprising young man, the entrepreneur, who uses technology to his advantage” (Zipes 33). Zipes argues that Disney’s typical hero is one who deceives the masses and deceives the king or the ruler of the story and created a perception that anyone can do anything through deception. The young man’s characteristics in the movie mirrors Disney perfectly in his younger years and the story line closely matches similar situations that he had encountered in his life. The logos of this argument is almost so clear that it’s hard to refute: there are obvious similarities in the Puss in Boots story and Disney’s own story. Using a movie media to closely comment on oedipal complexes, Disney also touches on democracy, technology, and modernity. Many animators identified with their movies and tried to add morals and underlying messages in their movies and shorts and stories. But did Disney add any other message other than to show audiences that he endured something similar? Did he do anything other than depict himself as the hero who came in and saved humanity and open their eyes to the world of is movies? Or did he simply put a spell on humanity to only see his movies and forget the origins of stories? Zipes answers this by disclosing that Disney “ rob[bed] the literary tale of its voice and change[d] its form and meaning” (Zipes 32-33).

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The Brothers Grimm have always written what we now consider to be demented and cruel stories. As a society, we see Disney's stories as the originals. The Brothers Grimm always wrote stories to teach lessons and to use issues that were current at the time. One of the largest differences in stories is Disney's *The Little Mermaid* versus The Grimm's *Little Mermaid*. In the Grimm's version the little mermaid is named Sirenetta. The prince almost drowns and Sirenetta saves him and pushes him toward the beach where a woman finds him. When Sirenetta makes a deal with the sea witch, she goes to land with legs and feels torturous pain every step she takes and every movement she makes. In order to live, Sirenetta must marry the prince. The prince sees her when she faints on shore and then takes her back to the castle, but thinks of the woman he believes that saved his life. As Sirenetta falls in love with the prince, the mysterious woman comes to the castle and the prince asks the woman to marry him. Sirenetta accepts her fate and gets her voice back when she dies. Knowing the Disney version, there are obvious and clear differences between the two versions. Was Disney's objective to just simply make the story happier? Could he have made it happier but not changed as much? The answer in accordance Jack Zipes: no. Walt Disney made the conscious choice to change the story of the little mermaid so drastically that it completely and utterly replaced the original in a similar fashion to *Puss in Boots*.

A plethora of movies nowadays have special effects and computer-generated imagery and so many elaborate hoaxes that it's difficult to distinguish between reality and fantasy. The blur of the line between fantasy and reality was established by none other than Disney himself. Zipes argues that “

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animation is trickery” and that with all the trickery and hoax-making, “people can no longer envision a fairy tale for themselves.” Disney throws images of happiness and what we refer to as a “happily ever after” ending when in reality, many of the original stories did not end happily or remotely in a happy manner. The reason why Disney was so successful was his revolutionary use of animation, sound, and when it made a rise, Technicolor. “As long as [Disney] controls the images, [he] can reign supreme, just as the hero is safe as long as he is disguised.” He reveals that the audience is deprived of envisioning their own characters and connecting with the story on a deeper level. By making these movies, audiences can’t place themselves in a story as a main character or compare how they envision the main character. From this point on, whenever someone reads a novel after seeing the movie, they envision the movie version of the character and not their own. Zipes channels emotion when he argues that because of Disney, we as a civilization, have lost contact with each other because of this drastic shift from oral storytelling to big screen storytelling. Zipes says that we have lost a sense of community and lost the commonality, when in reality, there are a lot of people who can relate and find common interests thanks to Disney and his superpower of a franchise (Zipes 33).

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is Jack Zipes’ largest source for argument that Disney is a demigod of evil-doing. Zipes begins his argument by informing the audience that before Snow White, Mickey Mouse came along. At the same time Mickey Mouse was developed, this was around the same time that Disney decided to be his own boss and be in charge of his own productions. Disney became profoundly “known for introducing new

inventions and improving animation." Disney's overall goal in improving animation was to make it seem as though the audience was watching a live-action film with real actors instead of an animated film. His goal was to engross the audience so closely that his films blurred the distinction between reality and fantasy. In order to wow and impress audiences, Disney decided to make history and begin the very first full-length animated film and so the concept of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was contrived. "Disney did not leave one stone unturned" to begin his quest in making history. He pulled out all the stops and hired the best people in the business and the best inventions in the business as well. Once again Disney completely changed the story to fit his own agenda and changes major details from the original Grimm's story. The final scenes of Snow White where the prince saves her is directly correlated to how Walt Disney swooped in and saved the world from the drab storytelling. However, similar to how the dwarves have the princess taken and then have to go back to work as if nothing happened, Zipes argues that the same thing happened to the workers Disney hired. In this very first scene of the movie, Disney's name is the largest similar to how the prince makes a grandiose entrance to save Snow White. The dwarves do most of the hard work in the movie, caring for Snow White and still working. The dwarves are symbolic of the employees who didn't get very much credit in the end and had to move on to the next job as if nothing happened (Zipes 34-36).

Jack Zipes employs ethos, pathos, and logos to further his argument and make people believe him and side with him. In "Breaking the Disney Spell", Jack Zipes displays his negative attitude towards Walt Disney. Walt Disney

distorted the original story and folk tales and turned them into his own personal stories. Zipes plunges deep to find the seed of Disney's obsession with forcing such a drastic change of the novel. The Disney animated films defeat the original purpose of the fairy tales and give the writers little to no acknowledgement. Zipes uses examples from Puss in Boots as well as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs to show just how much of a villain Walt Disney is when it comes to refuting the native purpose of storytelling.