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# Is Snow White Still the Fairest of Them All? How Once Upon A Time Reinvents the Image of the Disney Princess

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Is Snow White Still the Fairest of Them All?

How *Once Upon A Time* Reinvents the Image of the Disney Princess

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May 9, 2013

Is Snow White Still the Fairest of Them All?

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*ABSTRACT: A modern fairy tale drama on the ABC network, Once Upon A Time recasts the animated Disney princesses as live-action heroines. Building on Disney scholars' research, I study how the company uses synergy to establish a connection between a primetime television show and a children's franchise. Through a textual analysis of the show's main princess, Snow White, I discover that Once Upon A Time's Snow White establishes a more modern, dynamic image of the original princess, indicating that the Disney Company is moving in a new direction. However, the show still preserves the character's status as a traditional Disney princess who upholds the company's brand.*

Once upon a time, Disney was known solely for its creative cartoons, particularly the shows starring a black mouse with big ears. Established in 1923, Disney is now recognized for its myriad of enterprises ranging from live-action films, theme parks, television shows and of course new cartoons, such as the animated Disney Princess Franchise. In ninety years, the Walt Disney Company transformed from a small production company into a multinational corporation. Currently, Disney is made up of five distinct business segments: The Walt Disney Studios, Parks and Resorts, Disney Consumer Products, Disney Interactive and Media Networks. Owned by two different divisions, the Disney/ABC Television Group and ESPN Inc., the company's Media Networks is comprised of a variety of broadcast, cable, radio, publishing and digital businesses ("Company Overview"). Due to synergistic processes, the influence of the Disney Company can be detected within the advertising and even the content of these various holdings. On some of its holdings, Disney's influence is subtle, while on others it is clearly evident. For example, Disney's influence on ESPN is more subtle, while its influence over the ABC Television Network is more noticeable.

The ABC network produces its own shows and programs, but I would argue that Disney's influence can be detected within the content of individual shows, particularly on the show *Once Upon A Time*. ABC's *Once Upon a Time* is a relatively new television show that explores the lives of well-known fairy tale characters who have been transported by an evil curse into the modern world. Some of the characters include Belle, Sleeping Beauty, Jiminy Cricket, Prince Charming and, of course, Snow White. During its primetime premiere on October 23, *Once Upon A Time* earned a 3.9 adults 18-49 rating, the network's highest rating for the fall (TVbytheNumbers: "Updated TV Ratings"). Aside from other external factors, I argue that the show initially drew a large audience because viewers were entertained by the show's characters who recall memories of popular childhood Disney cartoons, particularly the princess cartoons, found in Disney's animated fairy tale films. I believe that ABC's *Once Upon A Time* functions as an extension of the Disney Corporation's original Disney Princess Franchise. Similar to many of Disney's advertising campaigns for its theme parks and other products, *Once Upon A Time* extends the princess franchise to an older demographic in an attempt to allow viewers to relive their childhood memories. However, while the show extends the franchise to older audiences, it may also extend the stereotypical or traditional ideas associated with the Disney Company and its franchise.

The Disney Princess Franchise is often criticized for its stereotypical or traditional representations of women and society. These traditional ideas originate from the founder himself, Walt Disney. According to Thomas Inge, Walt Disney reshaped classic fairy tales so that they reflected values about the stability of the home and loyalty to the family. Disney's cartoons, particularly his princesses, reflect these traditional values. Disney's characters also reflect -his society's mainstream ideas about the role of women. As illustrated by his first princess film,

*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney's society believed that a woman's place was as a nurturing mother who takes care of the home (Inge 140-141).

While becoming increasingly complex, Walt Disney's traditional ideas are still supported by the Disney Company and its princesses. In order for *Once Upon A Time* to function as an extension of the Disney Princess Franchise, I will examine if the show's princesses also need to continue to endorse Disney traditional ideas. As a member of the target demographic of *Once Upon A Time* and a lifelong follower of the princess franchise, I am interested to discover if the show's versions of Cinderella, Belle and Snow White simply recycle the images of the older princesses or if *Once Upon A Time* could create new, more dynamic, postfeminist versions of the original princesses. By focusing on the main princess of the show, Snow White, I will study to what extent *Once Upon A Time* maintains or modernizes the traditional and somewhat stereotypical characteristics of the Disney princesses.

### **Disney's Super Power: The Company's Synergistic Tactics**

In order to further establish the connection between the Disney princesses and *Once Upon A Time*, it is important to study the Disney Company's use of synergy. According to Campbell, Fabos and Martin, synergy is "the promotion and sale of different versions of a media product across various subsidiaries of a media conglomerate" (404). Disney has been widely recognized for its synergistic tactics using its various holdings to promote its multitude of products. Janet Wasko points out that synergy is nothing new for Disney, whose strong brands and characters have been marketed in various forms, from films, merchandise, theme parks and television (71). At the Disney Company, synergy has always been an essential business tool. In his analysis of Disney's synergistic tactics, Mike Budd states, "Considering the highly developed

corporate synergy in which every Disney product is both a commodity and an ad for every other Disney commodity, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that each story the company tells, each theme the company deploys builds the Disney brand” (1). It seems that at Disney, one product is used to promote another. Every film, television show and character has to in some way promote Disney’s other products, but also promote the company’s brand as a whole.

With its purchase of the ABC network in 1995, Disney acquired another method of promoting its products and its brand. Wasko argues that ABC provided Disney with new opportunities to promote Disney-produced programming, such as *The Wonderful World of Disney* and *Disney’s One Saturday Morning* (60). Disney even used some ABC shows to promote trips to Disney theme parks. Disney’s use of ABC television shows to promote the company, its products and its brand is clearly a common practice. Building on Budd and Wasko’s arguments, I conclude that ABC’s *Once Upon A Time* seems to function as a continuation of this practice as the show recalls images of one of Disney’s most popular products, the Disney princesses.

### **Once a Princess, Always a Princess: Disney’s Capitalization of Nostalgia**

Disney’s first princess appeared in the full-length animated feature *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. However, it was not until after several more princesses appeared, including Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Ariel and Jasmine, that Disney began capitalizing on the popular cartoons as a franchise. In their studies of the Disney Corporation, Henry Giroux and Janet Wasko discover that Disney products, such as the princesses, are a part of practically every female’s childhood. In his analysis of Disney products, Giroux refers to the Disney Princess Franchise as the ““leading lifestyle brand”” for girls, ages six to nine (19). Within the princess

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franchise, young girls have access to a myriad of products ranging from the films to dresses, backpacks, and even bedding.

Wasko and Giroux recognize that this princess lifestyle no longer ends with childhood, but it can also extend to adulthood. Giroux notes that Disney promises to fulfill the dreams of girls of any age, even brides-to-be (19). From teapots and aprons to wedding dresses styled after Cinderella and Snow White, the Disney Princess Line now caters to adults, particularly females. Wasko questions why adults still continue to enjoy these Disney products, suggesting that perhaps the products bring them back to their childhood memories where they can escape once again into a happy, pleasant world of fantasy (223). With the Disney Princess Franchise products, women can relive the fantastical days of their childhoods.

By marketing its princess products to adults, Disney capitalizes on these consumers' childhood memories. While Wasko seemingly appreciates Disney's marketing strategies, Giroux critiques the overwhelming influence of the company on its consumers. Giroux believes that Disney's franchises, referring specifically to its theme parks, function as "nostalgia machines" that capitalize on the memories and lost hopes of adults (8-9). With its theme parks and other products, the Disney Company is capable of bringing adults back to their childhood and allowing them to achieve dreams, such as flying to the moon, visiting the wild west or even becoming princess, that they were never able to fulfill. While Giroux notes that Disney's capitalization of nostalgia may possibly be losing its strength, I would argue that *Once Upon A Time* continues to rely on this popular marketing strategy. Similar to the princess dresses and fantasy weddings, this television show also seemingly capitalizes on people's memories of their favorite Disney princesses. However, *Once Upon A Time* is a more complicated "nostalgia machine" because it doesn't simply use people's memories to promote one Disney product. With *Once Upon A Time*,

Disney continues its synergistic cycle by using audiences' memories to market two products: first and foremost, the show, but also the princess franchise. The show uses memories of the franchise to attract viewers. By doing so, the show essentially becomes an advertisement for the princess franchise, encouraging viewers to relive their childhood. *Once Upon A Time* relies on the Disney Princess Franchise to market itself, but it also functions as an extension of the princess franchise.

### **The Passive Princess: Stereotypes Embedded in Disney's Franchise**

While *Once Upon A Time* seemingly extends the princess franchise, does the show also ~~revive or~~ rehash the stereotypical images of women represented by the Disney princess or does it attempt to reinvent and modernize these images? In their quantitative study, Dawn England, [Lara Descartes](#) and Melissa Collier-Meek discover that the animated princesses maintain stereotypical gendered behaviors and characteristics. The authors analyze gendered behaviors and actions of the princes and princesses in animated Disney films ranging from the original *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to *The Princess and the Frog* (2009). In order to decide if the characters conform to gendered stereotypes, they developed a list of feminine and masculine characteristics to analyze. Some of the masculine characteristics include strength, assertiveness, independence, bravery and leadership. The feminine characteristics include being physically weak, submissive, nurturing, and sensitive as well as collapsing in tears and being a victim (558-559). Discovering that 65.32% of the princesses' characteristics remain feminine (560), the authors conclude that stereotypical gender roles and characteristics are still prevalent among the Disney princesses (563).



These feminine stereotypes originated with Disney's first animated princess film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Walt Disney created this film during the 1930s, a time when women were still associated with the domestic sphere and for the most part stuck in traditional gender roles. Thus, due in part to societal conventions, Disney's first princess was characterized as a passive, nurturing and innocent heroine. During his in-depth analysis of the first princess film, Thomas Inge confirms [England](#) et al.'s findings about the stereotyped princesses. He discusses the idea that *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* "continues the tradition of Western culture of portraying women as passive vessels of innocence and virtue" (141). Inge believes that Snow White reflects the conventional ideas about women in the 1930s as she assumes the role of the mother as well as the role of the passive princess (141). As [England](#) et al. discover, these conventional ideas do not stop with the original princess, Snow White. However, I note that Disney may be attempting to recuperate this original, stereotypical image of the passive princess.

### **From Stereotypical to Spunky: Snow White's New Image**

In their study, [England](#) et al. also found that in more recent princess films the depiction of the princesses is becoming more complex as the characters display both feminine and masculine characteristics (563). In fact, even Inge argues that while Snow White is generally perceived as a stereotypical feminine character, she also shows more spunk than most fairy tale princesses (141). Perhaps during their analysis of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, [England](#) et al. failed to notice that Snow White is somewhat resourceful and self-reliant as she runs through the frightening forest or helps the dwarfs (Inge 140). These hints of spunk evident in the Disney's original depiction of the fairy tale princess now appear fully fleshed out in the character of Snow on *Once Upon A Time*. The female characters, particularly Snow, in *Once Upon A Time* are

complex as they display stereotypical princess behavior, but also know how to fight and survive the wilderness. For example, Snow still wears feminine clothing, pink sweaters and frilly white blouses, and she maintains her nurturing, sweet nature as a school teacher. However, there is a new edge to the once passive princess as she swings swords and fights the evil queen.

### **Holding Swords While Wearing Skirts: Postfeminist Ideas in *Once Upon A Time***

Attempting to disregard the passive princess stereotype, *Once Upon A Time* seemingly transforms the original Snow White into a modern heroine who fights evil, but also maintains her femininity. The presence of strong heroines on prime-time television shows, like *Once Upon A Time*, is fairly a recent phenomenon. Amanda Lotz notes that it wasn't until the 1990s that networks began carrying an abundance of shows with female-centered dramas (2). These shows provided women with a slot on prime-time as well as new, more powerful images of their gender. Many of these new images were centered around the idea of postfeminism. In her analysis of one of the 1990s female-centered dramas, *Ally McBeal*, Laurie Ouellette defines postfeminism in the context of the show as “a flexible subject position for a new era in which the women’s movement is presumed successful, but feminism is “other” and even threatening to contemporary femininity” (316). Rather than portray women as manhating, antifeminine feminists (319) or traditional housewives, Ouellette argues that *Ally McBeal* grants women empowerment, equality *and* femininity (320). The female characters on the show don’t have to choose between mini-skirts and equal pay; they get to have both the feminine clothing and the salary.

However, Ouellette recognizes that there are some downsides to this compromise. In the postfeminist world of *Ally McBeal*, these downsides include difficulties reconciling feminist

images (318) and underestimating the serious inequalities that women still face (328). I believe Ouellette also fails to recognize the emotional distress some female characters or women face when trying to balance their postfeminist identity. Despite these issues, the postfeminist ideas in *Ally McBeal* still attempt to introduce women to a society where they can support feminist ideas, such as equality and respect in the workplace, but they do not have to sacrifice their make-up, dresses, and high heels to do so. The female characters in *Once Upon A Time* also seem to uphold these postfeminist ideas. While Snow and her fellow princesses may be stronger and more independent than their predecessors, they also seemingly maintain their femininity as they wear feminine clothing, like elegant dresses and pink blouses and display feminine characteristics, such as nurturing attitudes. Like the *Ally McBeal* characters, *Once Upon A Time*'s prime-time heroine, Snow, can still seemingly maintain her feminine costumes and behaviors, but she can also be treated as equal to all the kings, princes and wizards in the land.

### **Home is Where the Heart is: Upholding Disney's Traditional Ideas**

As the *Once Upon A Time* princesses, particularly Snow, reflect such modern postfeminist ideas, do they also continue to reflect Disney's traditional ideas about the home and family? While the princess may possibly reject Disney's stereotyped female behaviors, she could possibly still serve as a representative of Walt Disney's traditional ideas that form the basis of the Disney Corporation. In her analysis of the Disney princesses, Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario notes that while Walt Disney is dead, "his signature is constantly re-inscribed on the corporate ramparts" (35). While Do Rozario is most likely referring to Disney's famous "D" signature, his signature ideas about love, family and dreams are also continually embedded in the Disney brand and its franchises, such as the Princess Franchise. Inge recognizes that the original princess Snow White

displayed several of the traditional Disney ideas, especially “allegiance to the home and family” (141) as she cared for the dwarfs and started a new family with the prince. While Inge does not reference it specifically, I also believe that true love is another traditional Disney idea as it is the chief storyline for most of the animated Disney princess movies, including *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In the original animated film, Snow displayed the importance of true love as she dreams about the day her prince will come and is saved by true love’s kiss. Despite possibly representing postfeminist ideas, *Once Upon A Time*’s version of the original princess, called Snow, also seemingly maintains these traditional Disney themes and ideas. While Snow fights with swords, hunts with bows and arrows and even saves her prince, she often does these things in pursuit of love or in service of her family. If Snow uses her postfeminist status only to protect a traditional Disney idea, does this minimize the extent that this princess’s image is modernized? *Once Upon A Time*’s Snow may adopt stronger, more modern characteristics, but by maintaining some of Disney’s ideals, she could simply remain a passive princess. Functioning as a nostalgic revival of the Disney Princess Franchise, *Once Upon A Time* continues to present the princesses as vessels of Walt Disney’s traditional ideas. These traditional ideas include the stereotypically feminine characteristics, but also larger themes, such as the emphasis on the importance of love and the family. However, with this revival, the ABC show also seizes the chance to complicate the traditional image of the very first Disney princess. By analyzing *Once Upon A Time*’s main character Snow~~ww~~, it becomes evident that the show attempts to recuperate and modernize Disney’s traditional ideas while simultaneously upholding the themes embedded in the Disney brand. Snow does not completely abandon her ancestry<sub>z</sub> as the traditional Disney characteristics and ideas are still present. Instead of erasing her past and her roots in the Disney brand, *Once Upon A Time* capitalizes on Snow’s status as a Disney princess while providing audiences with a

new, postfeminist image of the famous fairy tale character. With its attempts to recuperate the image of the original princess, ABC may also indicate that the Disney Company is headed in a new direction.

### **Method: How to Study a Princess**

To study how Snow functions as both a traditional and modernized princess, I searched for and analyzed specific behaviors, actions and characteristics that uphold, dispute and complicate Snow's image. While analyzing the character of Snow, I looked for the traditional characteristics and ideas typically associated with the princesses and also the unconventional, more modern characteristics and ideas [that](#) the Disney princesses do not typically display or represent. Similar to the study conducted by England, [Descartes](#) and Collier-Meek, I created a coding sheet that outlines and describes the specific characteristics and ideas I studied. For the traditional characteristics, I focused on the behaviors and actions formulated by Walt Disney's traditional ideas. The traditional characteristics include:

- *Innocence*: showing a lack of knowledge about evil, asking questions, specific costuming, such as white dresses, pink blouses
- *Passivity*: not taking action when necessary, not volunteering for dangerous tasks, standing back in the crowd
- *Motherly Instincts*: to take care of other characters emotionally and physically, to help foster another character's development, to display soothing behaviors
- *Acting as the Damsel in Distress*: needing to be rescued by someone, particularly a man, being unable to save herself

Some of these characteristics may overlap, but overall they indicate the traditional characteristics and ideas behind the original version of Snow White. Each characteristic reflects the passive and even submissive image of the original princess [that](#) I searched for in *Once Upon A Time*'s version of Snow White. For the non-traditional characteristics, I used several of the masculine behaviors and actions from [England](#) et al.'s study. The researchers' study listed a variety of

characteristics, but I chose four that best summarized the study's long list and would best apply to *Once Upon A Time* and the character of Snow. The non-traditional/modern characteristics include:

- *Assertiveness*: challenging other characters, claiming what is hers, being demanding
- *Physical Strength*: lifting heavy objects, particularly weapons, wielding any sort of weapon with skill
- *Leadership*: being able to take charge of situations, directing fellow characters through difficult or dangerous situations
- *The Ability to Rescue*: being able to save others or herself from dangerous situations

Once again, these characteristics may overlap at times, but they present the opportunity to study whether or not Snow White develops a modern image. While studying Snow, I also analyzed how her characteristics, behaviors and actions contributed to the themes embedded in Disney's brand. Another section on the coding sheet includes the traditional and non-traditional ideas represented by Snow. These dueling ideas include:

**Traditional Ideas:**

- *Emphasis on Family*: any direct reference to the family or the home as important, any action in defense, protection or restoration of these things, any affectionate interactions between family members
- *Pursuit of True (Romantic) Love*: showing emotional or physical affection to another character, saying "I love you," actions or behaviors that champion love

**Non-Traditional Ideas:**

- *Disregard for Family*: sacrificing relationships for the greater good, abandoning or ignoring family members
- *Rejection of True (Romantic) Love*: denying the importance or necessity of love, purposefully isolating oneself, refusing to pursue love

To search for these characteristics in the character of Snow, I analyzed ~~ten~~twelve episodes of *Once Upon A Time*. I acquired some preliminary knowledge of the show by watching the entire first season and the beginning of the second season as a casual viewer. To determine which episodes I wished to watch and analyze, I read the episode summaries and focused on the episodes where Snow plays a large role. I chose ~~ten~~eight episodes from the show's first season

and two episodes from the show's second season in order to show the character's progression.

After choosing which episodes to focus on, I watched each of the twelve ten episodes and took detailed notes using my coding sheet. On my coding sheet, I included an additional observation section in order to record anything I found interesting, but which didn't fit into my categories.

With this method, I am able to interpret and analyze the different sides of Snow and discover if she continues to function as a Disney princess or if she has become a whole new character, indicating the future direction of the Disney Company.

### **Visiting the World of *Once Upon A Time*:**

In order to study the new version of Snow White, I had to delve into the complex world of *Once Upon A Time*. The show was created and produced by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz. As storytellers behind *Lost*, the producers were able to create another complicated, yet entertaining, show for the ABC network. Similar to *Lost*, *Once Upon A Time* consists of two different storylines. One storyline follows the fairy tale characters' lives in Storybrooke, Maine. The characters were transported to the town of Storybrooke by the Evil Queen's curse which ruined the characters' traditional "happily ever afters" and caused them to forget their fairy tale identities. For example, Snow White is no longer aware that she is a princess in love with Prince Charming. She believes that she is a single schoolteacher named Mary Margaret. No one but the Evil Queen Regina, Rumpelstiltskin and Henry (Snow's grandson) are aware of the curse and the characters' true identities. With their present lives tainted by the curse, the second storyline recounts the characters' previous lives back in fairy tale world. This storyline uses flashbacks to fairy tale world to reveal the Storybrooke characters' true identities —and provide more information about their pasts to the audience. In each episode, the two storylines function

simultaneously as the viewers watch the Storybrooke characters go about their lives while also learning about their pasts in fairy tale world.

During the show's first season, the main plot concerns lifting the curse and helping the characters remember their true identities. The curse can only be lifted by Snow White's daughter, Emma. In the first episode, Snow had to give up her newborn daughter, Emma, and send her to another part of the modern world in order to save her from the curse and allow Emma to fulfill her destiny of later saving the rest of the fairy tale characters. Emma, like the other characters, is unaware of her true identity as well as her destiny to break the curse. However, with the help of Henry, Emma's estranged son, Emma finds her way to Storybrooke, finally becomes convinced by Henry's story of the cursed fairy tale characters and breaks the curse. In the second season, the dual storylines continue as characters remember their true identities, but they must still fight against the Queen in the present and past order to maintain their "happily ever afters."

While the characters have different names and more modern identities, they still maintain the same personalities and demeanors of their true fairy tale personas. While she may have a new name, Mary Margaret is still Snow White. The character of Snow White/Mary Margaret maintains the physical image of the Disney princess as the curse has prevented her from aging, so she is still young and beautiful with pale skin and dark hair. Snow also maintains traditional Disney princess characteristics of innocence and kindness. Snow White/Mary Margaret's feminine clothing indicates her innocence as she wears modern clothing, such as pink sweaters, frilly blouses and knee-length skirts to more fairy tale appropriate attire, such as long, white gowns. The character also displays her kindness through motherly actions, such as working as a schoolteacher, offering advice to her daughter and defending her friends. Whether in



Storybrooke acting as Mary Margaret or in fairy tale world as a princess, Snow maintains some characteristics of the traditional Disney princess.

However, *Once Upon A Time* seeks to complicate the image of this popular Disney fairy tale character. Already, the show has complicated the image of the princess by bringing her in to the modern world of Storybrooke and giving her a new name. The show furthers the character's complexity by providing her with new characteristics, such as physical strength and assertiveness. On the show's website, Snow's bio states, "Who doesn't know the story of Snow White? The innocent girl who ended up cursed to an endless sleep by her stepmother, the Evil Queen. But our Snow is no delicate flower; she's a warrior" ("[Snow White/Mary Margaret](#)").

While she may be innocent and kind, Snow White is also capable of fighting armies, scaling walls and punching Prince Charming. She can be aggressive with her fellow characters and even has an affair with a married man who is actually Prince Charming. Rather than remaining simple and innocent, Snow becomes a complex character with flaws and other new dimensions.

As [England](#) et al. found in their study, the animated princesses were also becoming increasingly complex, maintaining both stereotypically feminine and masculine characteristics. However, in the end the princesses' feminine characteristics dominated. In the case of *Once Upon A Time*, Snow's modern and traditional characteristics do not necessarily dominate one another, but rather they coexist in order to fulfill her image as a postfeminist princess. In order to study Snow's opposing characteristics, I analyzed her traditional and modern images and then discussed how the two images function together to create a postfeminist princess whose main purpose is to uphold Disney's brand.

### **Acting as a Traditional Disney Princess:**

As Inge discusses in his analysis of the original version of the princess, Snow White is typically characterized as innocent, passive and domestic. She is a motherly housewife waiting for her prince to come sweep her off her feet. *Once Upon A Time*'s version of the Disney princess maintains some of these characteristics. In the pilot episode of *Once Upon A Time*, the audience is presented with a traditional image of Snow White. Viewers first see Snow White encased in a glass coffin. Like her animated ancestor, the princess lies there passively waiting for her prince to save her from an endless slumber. As she awaits her savior, the image of the princess also recalls the traditional princess characteristic of a damsel in distress. When Prince Charming arrives and gazes at his princess, the camera captures a close-up of Snow White's serene face whose body is clothed in a white gown symbolizing her innocence and purity. Conforming to the ending of most Disney fairy tales, the prince saves his princess with a kiss of true love and they go on to live their "happily ever after."

With this first scene in the pilot, the show uses a traditional image of Snow White to attract its viewers. As discussed previously, *Once Upon A Time* functions as a nostalgia machine, attracting its audience by capitalizing on their memories of the Disney princesses. The audience's memories are of the original Snow White, who was a passive, pretty heroine. If *Once Upon A Time* strayed too far from this interpretation, audiences might not recognize the connection between the show's version of Snow and Disney's original princess, which would harm the effectiveness of the show's nostalgia tactics. Hence, with this first scene, *Once Upon A Time* introduces its audiences to a traditional image of the princess, an image that continues to develop throughout the first season.

As the show's first season continues, Snow displays other traditional characteristics, such as motherly instincts. Originally, Snow White was never actually a mother; however, she did display motherly characteristics as she cooked, cleaned and looked after the seven dwarfs. *Once Upon A Time* continues Snow White's life by depicting her as an actual mother. In the pilot, Snow holds her pregnant stomach tenderly and cries desperately when she must give her daughter up in order to protect her. In Storybrooke, audiences are introduced to Snow's cursed identity, Mary Margaret, who works as a schoolteacher and volunteers at the hospital. In Episode 7, Snow/ Mary Margaret continues to display motherly instincts as she helps her daughter discover her feelings for Gram, another fairy tale character, while in Episode 15 she offers the recently evicted Little Red Riding Hood a place to stay. Snow cares for her fellow neighbors, her fairy tale friends and even animals. In Episode 10, Snow saves an injured dove and returns it to its flock despite an impending storm. With these characteristics, Snow conforms to the traditional representation of the Disney princess as a caring, tender mother who selflessly takes care of others.

While Snow appears to maintain the conventional princess characteristics of acting as a mother, she also occasionally displays her traditionally passive and innocent behavior. These two characteristics are less present, but they can be seen in several episodes. For example, Snow is quite passive in Episode 14 after she is accused of being a tramp. Snow/Mary Margaret has been having an affair with David, who is actually Prince Charming. In Storybrooke, David/Charming is married, but he and Snow/Mary Margaret find it difficult to stay apart and they carry on an affair. When the town finds out, Snow is labeled as a tramp and home-wrecker. Instead of attempting to defend her actions, Snow accepts the town's criticism and takes no action to defend her relationship with David. While occasionally acting passively, Snow also remains innocent. In

Episode 16, Snow has been accused of murdering Katharine, David's wife in Storybrooke. While insisting that she is not guilty, she also displays her purity as she says, "I would never hurt anyone." Dressed in a pink blouse and white lace shirt, it is difficult to doubt her innocence.

Snow has a difficult time conceiving of the idea of murder as she would never murder anyone, not even the Queen who cursed her.

In addition to these characteristics, Snow also continues to represent the Disney princess as a damsel in distress. Traditionally, Disney princesses are often saved by another, particularly a prince. In *Once Upon A Time*, Snow continues to be saved by others. In Episode 10, Grumpy, the dwarf, saves her from the king's prison while in Episode 7,7; she is saved by the huntsman.

However, it is Prince Charming who most often comes to Snow's rescue, as h-he "will always find her." In Episode 16, the Prince saves Snow once again, but he also saves and maintains her image as a Disney princess. In the episode, Snow suffers as she is unable to be with the prince.

She decides to take a potion that erases her memory of him and their love. While the potion erases her memories, it also erases Snow's kind, caring personality and she becomes bitter, angry and even vengeful as she goes to kill the Queen, the cause of all her sorrows. Her dwarf friends try to stop her from her seeking revenge, but it is Prince Charming who eventually saves the princess from making a grave mistake. Dressed in a black cape, Snow shoots an arrow straight at Regina, but her revenge is thwarted as Charming jumps in front of the arrow. The prince tells her, "I would rather die than let you fill your heart with darkness." Touched by his actions and sealed with a kiss, Snow remembers the prince and her love for him. Rather than overcoming the potion's magic herself, Snow needed Charming to help her see the truth. She needed the help of a man to return to her traditional state. In her potion-induced state, Snow was far from being the traditional Disney princess as she didn't care for her friends, was extremely bitter and even

sought out murder. In order for Snow to continue to function as any sort of Disney princess, the prince had to save her and return her to her conventional self. This return could be read as oppressive or even stifling since Snow is not allowed to express her anger or bitterness without it being immediately suppressed or controlled. Unlike the *Ally McBeal* characters Ouellette describes, Snow doesn't appear free to express herself. Traditional Disney princesses, particularly Snow White, do not get to be angry, at least not for long, as it is deemed out of character. In order to remain a traditional Disney Princess, it seems that Snow must continue to be a damsel in distress waiting to be saved from any potential harm to her image. However, Snow challenges and even changes the traditions of the Disney princess as she develops her modern image.

Snow may seem to continue to represent the traditional Disney princess, but starting with the pilot, *Once Upon A Time* hints at the fact that this princess is no longer completely traditional. The show indicates that she will become increasingly more modern, fulfilling England et al.'s prediction that females will be depicted less stereotypically in future movies (565). For example, during the pilot, the Evil Queen Regina crashes Snow and Prince Charming's wedding and threatens their happiness. Snow reacts aggressively as she grabs a sword hanging from the prince's waist and points it at Regina. While it is Prince Charming who eventually throws the sword at Regina, it is Snow who was the first to respond to her threats. This action could seem impetuous and rash, but I believe it is an example of Snow attempting to escape her passive state as she takes initiative and is assertive. Snow may appear to be an impetuous damsel in distress, but she soon develops her image as an active, assertive rescuer. Just as Snow's traditional image continues to unfold during the first season, this more modern

side of Snow also grows progressively. While she may initially appear to conform to Disney's traditional image of the princess, Snow develops another, more dynamic side to her character.

### **Acting as the Modern Princess:**

Snow may still be the kind and caring princess audiences remember, but she is also an assertive leader who is capable of rescuing herself and her prince. Throughout the first season, *Once Upon A Time* develops Snow's complexity as a character that can wear a dress, but swing a sword. Typically, it seems that during the flashbacks, the show establishes a more modern image of the original princess. For example, in Episode 3, Snow displays physical strength during her first encounter with Prince Charming. She first meets Charming after she steals his jewels and he captures her. Before he captures her, she escapes his grasp by whacking him in the head with a rock and later also manages to push him into a river. In Episode 3 of Season 2, Snow knocks out a knight and even kills an ogre. Snow displays more strength in Episode 16 as she knocks out Regina's knight and Episode 21 as she scales a castle wall and sword fights with knights in order to save the prince.

The flashbacks also reveal Snow's new image as an assertive leader. For example, she leads Charming to the troll bridge in Episode 3, telling him to "Follow me and keep quiet" and even suggests later in the season in Episode 22 that they take back the kingdom. In Episode 21, Snow leads her fellow fairy tale characters during a siege on the castle where the prince is being kept prisoner. The characters gather behind her and do not abandon her even when they learn the Evil Queen Regina is within the castle. The characters respect Snow and will follow her despite the danger. Rather than passively following others, Snow is able to direct and lead her own followers.

In these fairy tale world flashbacks, it seems that Snow is able to adopt a new, more modern image. Typically, the fairy tale world would be seen as old and traditional, especially in its views of women, while the modern world would be seen as more progressive and advanced, granting women more freedom. However, *Once Upon A Time* tweaks this stereotype as the modern world or Storybrooke is meant to be seen as an oppressive prison. The fairy tale characters are trapped in the cursed world Storybrooke, their identities lost and their “happily ever afters” ruined. Snow is not often free to express her modern behavior in Storybrooke as she is not even aware of her true identity. She and the other characters are dominated by the Evil Queen, unable to fight against her and her oppressive reign. The modern world does not provide any of the comfort or freedom of Snow’s true home. Instead, it comes to symbolize a world of unrecognized problems and chaos. In Storybrooke, Snow and her fellow characters are unaware of their true personalities and are thus easily subdued by the Evil Queen. Snow falls prey to the Queen’s plots as she is incapable of fighting back. However, in the fairy tale world flashbacks, Snow is aware of her true personality and she can act as a strong, assertive leader. In fairy tale world, Snow can escape the problems of the modern world or Storybrooke as she is free to fight back against the Evil Queen and also free to express her true self. By associating her modern image with the fairy tale world, the creators establish a new, more positive image of the fairy tale world. While Snow gets a new image, so does her traditional depiction of her home. The world of fairy tales and its characters are no longer so traditional; instead they are both seemingly acquiring the positive aspects of modern society, such as more freedom and equality.

While *Once Upon A Time* may establish a new image of Snow and her home during the flashbacks, Snow’s modern behaviors and actions do not always lead to success. While she may display assertive leadership in Episode 21, this leadership eventually fails as the prince has

already been captured by Regina. In Episode 3, Snow may display physical strength while attempting to evade Charming, but he ends up capturing her and even saving her. Snow certainly combats the passive princess stereotype, but her actions may be in vain if they often fail. In order to function as a successful modern princess, Snow's actions and behaviors must have some element of success or else her revised image will seem hollow and could be dismissed by viewers.

Snow's modern actions may not always be successful, but she does display success when she rescues her prince. Perhaps one of Snow's most unconventional behaviors is her ability to save Prince Charming. During their first encounter in Episode 3, Snow must save the prince from the trolls while in the same episode back in Storybrooke, she saves John Doe/Prince Charming after he leaves the hospital in a shocked state after waking up from a coma. In Episode 21, Snow must save Charming from the Evil Queen Regina. By acting to save her love, she abandons the passive role of the damsel in distress and develops a more modern image of the princess who is able to act as the rescuer. Snow must often save her prince because their relationship places them both in danger. The prince is supposed to marry the daughter of King Midas in order to save his father's kingdom. However, when the prince and Snow meet, they fall in love and can't stay apart no matter how hard they try. Due to their strong bond, they often end up in trouble and have to save each other. The rescuing is a mutual activity, but it does allow Snow to occasionally escape her role as the damsel in distress.

However, in order to save her prince and attempt to escape her traditional role, Snow often must make sacrifices. To save him from the trolls, Snow must sacrifice her vial of dark magic that she was saving to use against her nemesis, Regina. In Episode 21, her sacrifice to save Charming from Regina is even greater. Regina offers Snow a deal; she can eat a poisoned apple



that will put her in a painful slumber or she can let Prince Charming die. Rather than being tricked or easily persuaded like the original animated princess, Snow makes a conscious choice to sacrifice herself. Her ability to make an active decision combats the traditional image of the passive princess. She is not some innocent princess who trusts strangers; rather she can make a conscious decision, aware of the risks and benefits.

While Snow may be able to make conscious, active decisions, these decisions occasionally lead her back to passive, traditional actions. She may choose to sacrifice her life, but this decision leads her to passively await rescue as she sleeps in a glass coffin waiting for Prince Charming to save her again. In fact, while Snow may be acting as the rescuer, she never really fulfills the climatic rescues. In their study, [England](#) et al. discovered that the princes often performed the climatic rescue of the movie. In *Once Upon A Time*, Prince Charming also often performs the climatic rescue, especially when he saves Snow from her endless slumber. By performing the minor rescues, this minimizes Snow's role as rescuer and the strength of her modern image. Snow's role as rescuer is further complicated by the fact that the prince is usually in danger because of Snow. In effect, Snow is seemingly "cleaning up" her messes or fixing her mistakes rather than taking on a bold, valiant role as rescuer. It appears that despite developing modern characteristics, Snow also cannot completely escape her image of the traditional princess.

#### **Acting as Both the Traditional and Modern Princess:**

While Snow makes some sacrifices, she *does not* sacrifice her image as a traditional Disney princess in order to uphold this new image of a modern princess. In fact, both the old, traditional image and the new, modern image of Snow White exist within *Once Upon A Time's*

character. Snow maintains some traditional characteristics, such as her motherly instincts, purity and need to be saved while adopting more modern characteristics of physical strength, leadership and the ability to rescue. By maintaining both traditionally feminine behaviors and adopting more modern or stereotypically masculine behaviors, Snow comes to represent the ideas of postfeminism. Like the protagonist in Ouellette's discussion of *Ally McBeal*, she can wear feminine clothing and display feminine behavior, such as kindness, weakness or innocence, but also simultaneously display masculine behaviors of bravery, assertiveness and leadership.

In Episode 3, the audience receives both images of Snow White. On one hand, they see Snow White as an angry thief awaiting the day she can gain revenge on Regina. She must survive in the woods by herself and she displays aggression and assertiveness when dealing with Prince Charming. Back in Storybrooke, the audience is presented with the conventional image of Snow White/Mary Margaret as she kindly offers Emma a spare room and fondly takes care of John Doe, an unknown patient in the hospital who is actually Prince Charming. In Storybrooke, Snow's aggressive attitude is replaced by her more recognizable personality of kindness and compassion. Snow also displays both modern and traditional characteristics in Episode 7 as she outwits the huntsman trying to kill her, but ultimately gives up trying to run away and instead depends on his pity and humanity to save her. In this episode, she displays modern behaviors of cunning and the ability to save herself, but ultimately she reverts back to a passive state and allows the huntsman to save her.

In Episodes 13, 14 and 16, Snow further develops her contrasting, postfeminist behaviors as she explores her sexuality, but still tries to maintain her innocence and purity. During these episodes, Snow displays unconventional behavior as she carries on an affair with David/Prince Charming and is later charged with murdering David's wife. Snow states, "I've never been a

home-wrecker before,” and certainly this is a new role for the Disney princess. On multiple occasions, Snow tries to end the affair, but she cannot deny the emotional and sexual connection between her and David. Unlike her original ancestor, Snow faces different challenges, particularly regarding her sexuality. Snow’s behavior of having an affair does not carry positive connotations, but it does indicate Snow’s postfeminist behavior as she acts on impulse and somewhat explores her sexuality. In the postfeminist world of *Ally McBeal*, Ouellette states that the show presents “unmarried, sexually active female characters who have multiple and even anonymous lovers outside the sanctioned boundaries of marriage and long-term relationships” (325). These women are allowed to express their sexuality without having to worry about the feminine need to have a boyfriend or a husband. I believe *Once Upon A Time* tries to create this world for Snow, but instead of a sexually free atmosphere, it becomes one of judgment and shame.

Instead of being free to carry on her affair with David, who is actually her real husband, Snow is punished for her promiscuity. She is labeled a tramp and eventually a murderer all because she acted on her sexual and emotional impulses. Even in *Ally McBeal*, Ouellette notes that the characters are occasionally punished for being too sexually aggressive or forward (326). It seems that postfeminist characters have to find a balance between their femininity and more modern, sexual behaviors or else face the consequences. Snow does attempt to find this balance by trying to maintain her innocence despite being labeled a tramp. Snow’s affair was not one of selfishness or just raw sexual desire. Snow and David/Prince Charming are actually married, but they cannot remember this due to the curse. Their affair may appear unethical, but in reality the couple is meant to be together. As the audience is aware of this, they continue to view Snow as innocent and pure because they know she is only trying to be with her rightful partner. In fact,

she even wanted David to tell Katharine, David's wife, about the affair, but David failed to do so. When Snow is accused of murdering Katharine, she insists on her innocence and says, "I have nothing to hide." Snow displays shock and dismay over the accusations, but she obeys the law and goes to prison. Eventually, viewers learn that she was set up and her innocence is partially restored. While Snow may be capable of having an affair, she does not completely destroy her purity by performing murder. After the characters' true identities are restored, Snow's label as a tramp and adulteress is also erased completely. While Snow may make attempts to develop a new modern image, she continues to be pulled back into the traditional world of Disney. Even when she is supposedly carrying out an affair, she is really allowing her heart to guide her to her true love, which of course is a traditional Disney theme. On the surface, Snow may appear to be a postfeminist princess, but underneath her surface appearance, Snow remains a vessel of Disney's brand.

#### **The Postfeminist Princess with Traditional Motives:**

Appearing as a-postfeminist princess, Snow seems to have it all. She can wear the feminine clothing, but still be skilled with a sword. She can carry out an affair, but still maintain her innocence and purity. She can maintain her motherly instincts while leading a troop of her fairy tale friends. In season one, Snow can even avoid the emotional distress that may come from acting as a postfeminist character as her dual personalities exist in different worlds. Her more docile, traditional side is present in her Storybrooke identity, while her aggressive, modern side appears more often in the past in fairy tale world. When these two identities combine in season two, Snow's emotional distress becomes more apparent as she struggles to balance her feminine and masculine characteristics.

While she may be representing modern postfeminist ideas and struggles as she swings swords in dresses, she does these things in service of traditional Disney ideas. Whether her actions are traditional or modern, each action is performed with a motive of supporting the traditional Disney ideas of the importance of true love and the family. For example, Snow attempts to adopt a more modern persona as she actively chooses to sacrifice herself for the prince. Little Red Riding Hood states, “She sacrificed herself for true love,” but Grumpy the dwarf recognizes that “She sacrificed herself for all of us.” In the end, not only does Snow’s sacrifice place her in a passive position (sleeping in a glass coffin), her sacrifice was also done in service of family or friends and her beloved. By eating Regina’s apple, Snow saves the prince and her loved ones, and upholds the traditional idea of the importance of love and family. While upholding this traditional Disney idea, Snow’s image as a postfeminist character becomes secondary to her image and role as Disney princess. For Disney, it is more important that Snow uphold the ideas surrounding their brand rather than postfeminist ideas, which do not directly correlate to their company. Snow’s postfeminist behaviors are often secondary to her desires for love and family. In Episode 3, Snow/Mary Margaret upholds the Disney brand’s ideas about love and family as she admits, “I want kids, marriage, true love. I want it all.” While her actions may support other ideas, ultimately the character of Snow supports the Disney brand.

Snow’s actions and behaviors often connote a direct representation of the company and its ideas about true love. In Episode 3, she may act aggressive towards Prince Charming, but at the end of the episode, it is clear she is falling for him. She tenderly takes care of John Doe, but she can feel a connection between the two of them. Her actions support a traditional Disney idea of the importance of finding love. In Episode 16, Snow and Prince Charming kiss, overcoming the magical potion that made Snow forget all about her love for the prince. In this episode, Snow

and Charming's love is so powerful that it is capable of defeating magic. Love wins once again in Episode 21 as Snow sacrifices her life for love and is later awakened from her sleeping death with a kiss of true love from the prince. In Episode 22, love is restored to the community of Storybrooke when Emma breaks the curse. Snow and Prince Charming remember each other and share a passionate kiss in the town square. Snow also tries to help others find love as she provides advice to her daughter Emma in Episode 7 and listens to Little Red Riding Hood in Episode 15. In Episodes 13 and 14, Snow suffers for love as she is labeled as a tramp for having an affair with David, who is actually Prince Charming.

Aside from love, Snow's character also emphasizes Disney value of family. The beginning of Season 2 of *Once Upon A Time* particularly champions the family as the characters' remember their true identities and reunite with long lost relatives. In Season 2, Episode 1, Snow and Prince Charming are reunited with their daughter Emma after living apart from her for 28 years. After the curse ends, several characters ask Snow what she will do next and she says, "Now I find my daughter." Affectionate hugs are exchanged as the family reunites. Snow and Emma continue develop their mother-daughter relationship throughout season two as they are transported back to present-day fairy tale world. Back there, Snow and Emma face many challenges that facilitate and strengthen their bond as mother and daughter. For example, in Episode 3, Snow saves her daughter, Emma, from an ogre. She displays physical strength and an assertive attitude as she tells the ogre, "Step away from my daughter" and proceeds to kill him by shooting an arrow in his eye. In this episode, Emma begins to understand what her mother Snow White has sacrificed in order to protect her. After seeing the destroyed remains of her old nursery, Emma tells her mother Snow, "You gave up everything for me." By sending Emma away to the modern world, Snow sacrificed the opportunity to be with her daughter and watch

her grow up. She made this sacrifice in order to protect her daughter, her family and her country. As Emma begins to understand her mother's sacrifice, the audience witnesses another instance in which Snow has upheld the Disney idea of the importance of the family.

Snow's conformity to the Disney theme of family may be seen as a failure to fully comply with the ideas of postfeminism. While discussing the development of postfeminism, Ouellette cites S.D. Walters who argues that "the media presented the stereotypical career woman as an unhappy, 'lost soul' who had rejected her most important role in life: motherhood" (319). Instead of acting as a postfeminist character and combatting this stereotype, *Once Upon A Time's* Snow appears to comply with the stereotype. By supporting traditional Disney ideas, particularly the theme of the family and the home, Snow returns to the domestic sphere of motherhood. However, it seems that in the stereotype, these women return to the conventional housewife roles -as they cook, clean and take care of their family. . Snow may choose to return to and reunite her family, but she does so by adopting the role of the supporter and protector, rather than the passive role of the housewife. For example, in Season 2, Episode 1, Snow adopts the role of protector as she goes after Emma who gets sucked into a portal that leads her to fairy tale world. Snow follows her daughter through the portal, saying, "I'm not losing her again!" Back in present day fairy tale world, Snow and Emma both try to get back to their family while fighting witches, pirates and various other dangers. Snow expresses the importance of her family not by cooking and cleaning. Instead, she defends them from ogres and evil queens. Her character develops the traditional role of women in the home and changes the sphere in which they typically exist. Snow White is capable of supporting her family while performing the role of protector outside the traditional barriers of the home. She still supports the traditional idea about the importance of the family, but does so by adopting a new, more modern household role.

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### **A Disney Princess on a New Adventure:**

Despite perhaps creating a more dynamic princess, *Once Upon A Time*'s version of Snow White continues to display traditional Disney princess characteristics and ideas and ultimately functions as a ~~vessel and~~ symbol for the Disney brand. The show's version of Snow White still functions a mother, a damsel in distress and occasionally a passive, innocent heroine. This princess does not abandon the image of her ancestor nor does she stray very far from the brand of the Disney Company. By upholding the traditional ideas of the importance of love and the family, Snow continues to function as a Disney product. She cements the connection between her character and the company as she falls prey to true love's kiss and often makes sacrifices for her family. While *Once Upon A Time*'s character of Snow White may not be a direct product of the Disney Company, she still falls under the brand of the media conglomerate. As discussed, Disney uses synergy to promote its products on various platforms, but also to promote the company as a whole. An angry, selfish, unromantic version of Snow White ~~may~~ undermine would certainly undermine Disney's synergistic tactics, but a truly assertive, determined and sexually free version of the princess also seems to be beyond the scope of the Disney brand. Instead *Once Upon A Time* continues to support the Disney Company's brand by creating a princess that maintains several traditional characteristics and ideas.

While she functions as a Disney princess, the modern characteristics present in *Once Upon A Time* still significant. Snow may continue to resemble her ancestor as she cares for her daughter, Emma and needs to be saved by Prince Charming, but she is also now capable of saving her prince, fighting with swords and actively protecting her family. Rather than a short, animated film, *Once Upon A Time* is a television show capable of creating multiple narratives



that establish a more dynamic image of the original princess. This format provides audiences with the opportunity to see different sides and traits of their beloved fairy tale princess. In one episode, Snow can be sweet and innocent, while in another she displays her strength and aggression. As Inge discussed in his study of the original animated princess, Snow White was made in the stereotypical image of 1930s women (141), which meant that the princess was demure, docile and domestic. Instead of continuing to present the same, antiquated image of Snow White, *Once Upon A Time* attempts to revamp the princess and establish her as an image of modern females who often struggle to balance their femininity and their desires to acquire more stereotypically masculine traits and roles. While remaining loyal to the Disney brand, *Once Upon A Time* still establishes a new, more modern image of Snow White.

As England et al. discovered in their study, the increasingly complex Disney princesses indicated that the company was moving in a new direction (563). I believe my findings about *Once Upon A Time*'s version of Snow White reflect another step in this new direction. My analysis of the revised princess indicates that the Disney Princess Franchise and perhaps even the company as whole is moving away from stereotypical representations of woman and attempting to create more dynamic, well-rounded characters. Disney is often criticized for being stereotypical, sexist and racist, but it may be creating new characters, shows and other products to combat these criticisms. *Once Upon A Time*'s Snow could be one of these new characters that combat criticism while indicating that the company is revamping and modernizing its brand. *Once Upon A Time*'s Snow is not Disney's only attempt to modernize and reinvent its characters. Other shows on the ABC network, such as *Modern Family* or *Revenge* depict different, untraditional images of females and even families. Outside the network, Disney also seems to be revising the image of Disney Princess Franchise by introducing a movie, *Brave*, in which the

princess displays a strong sense of independence and does not want to get married. Despite their modern and dynamic appearances, the characters on the ABC shows and in the movie *Brave* still uphold the company's brand by supporting traditional Disney ideas such as the importance of family and love. The characters might differ from older, traditional Disney characters, but their function is essentially the same. Disney characters and shows are products of the company and therefore must uphold the company's brand or else the company would be undermining itself. While *Once Upon A Time's* Snow may indicate that the company is moving in a direction with less stereotypical representations, the princess and other new or revised characters will continue to support the company that produced them.

My method enabled me to analyze the character of Snow and assess her potential impact on the Disney Company and its future. However, there were limitations to my method as I only analyzed ~~twelve~~ episodes and focused my attention on only one of the show's characters.

During my in-depth analysis of Snow White, I was not able to analyze her relationship with other characters. Particularly, it would have been interesting to study her relationship with the Evil Queen or with her daughter Emma who, due to the curse, is the same age as her mother. I was also unable to delve into the show's current season during which I believe Snow begins to display the emotional distress of her postfeminist image.

While I focused my analysis on an in-depth study of one character, other characters may further complicate my findings. Particularly, it would have been interesting to study the character of Emma, Snow's White daughter. Emma functions as a foil to her mother as she maintains extremely masculine characteristics. While Snow may initially appear more feminine, Emma is a bounty hunter who always wears a leather jacket and jeans. Unlike Snow, Emma maintains a harsh attitude and even a disregard for her family. However, as the show continues, Emma seems

to adopt more of her mother's more feminine or traditional characteristics. An analysis of Emma or other characters may lead to further insight about the show's future portrayal of the princess franchise.

While future research may lead to different conclusions about *Once Upon A Time* and the Disney franchise, my own experiences also provided me with insights into the show and Snow White's gradual metamorphosis. Before analyzing *Once Upon A Time* with a scholarly perspective, I was first a fan of show and also fit their targeted age demographic of 18-49. I also have personal opinions concerning the Disney princesses as I grew up as a fan of the franchise.

While my personal experiences could have influenced my analysis, I believe that my experiences also led me to develop and also confirm my research. My findings indicate that the princess from my childhood is still alive, but they also reveal that this princess has grown up. I find that *Once Upon A Time* fulfills my needs for a princess that still upholds the beloved Disney brand, but also captures the struggles that I face as a modern woman. While I may find it difficult to identify with the idealistic Snow White, I can relate more to this revised version of the princess as she faces similar struggles with her role in society. While my personal experience reveals a revised image of Snow White, my analysis further complicates Snow's new image as it indicates that the princess continues to support the Disney Company and its brand. Snow White and the other Disney princesses will likely always remain vessels of Disney. However, the Disney Company will hopefully continue to develop the complexity of their trademark characters and provide their fans with the chance to admire more dynamic, modern princesses. *Once Upon A Time's* Snow upholds the traditional Disney brand, but she also indicates the future path of the company as it attempts to create more dynamic, modern characters

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| ~~Very good edits. Shouldn't take long at all to do the final pass. A~~

~~And once that's done, let's definitely talk about submitting a proposal for that book project I forwarded to you! I'm sure you'll be busy preparing for your new job, but I'm happy to co-author it so it shouldn't be too time-consuming.~~