



**EDUCATION AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE EVOLUTION OF  
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND ITS INFLUENCE  
IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF DISNEY PRINCESSES**

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**Abstract:**

This article, framed by the changes that accompany evolution in Education and Comparative Literature, aims to clarify the strong relationship between the character and posture of the Disney princesses and the role of women in the society of the corresponding era. Since the launch of the first Disney movie industry, the success of this company is notorious and deserved. These films have fascinated generations, and much of this charm owes much to illustrate the concerns and desires of the female audience. This article aims to explore and explain these factors based on the distinction of the three types of princesses: classic, rebellious and contemporary, with the aim of understanding and paying attention to the social and historical factors that motivated the construction and evolution of the Disney Princess stereotype to their posture and reflection of society, deepening the study on the origin and social status, clothing and appearance, posture and attitude and message and teachings of a princess of each type Cinderella, Mulan and Merida, respectively, always confronting the analysis with society of its time.

**Keywords:** education, comparative literature; Disney princess

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## 1. Introduction

In this day and age, there is much talk about gender equality and feminism. But why, after all, will these topics be so troubled and debated? Above all, and in spite of what has always happened, in the last decades women have seen an emancipation and a concern to equalize their rights. For Arruda (2008, p.9), *"our time is one of great transformation towards a more just, free and egalitarian society. The processes of ruptures that this imposes will know the ever-increasing participation of women"* and that *"they want to live in a reality where their social role is respected and valued, thus contributing to the construction of a more just and egalitarian society"* (p.13).

In the old days, it was up to the women alone to take care of their children and the household tasks, being prevented from working or educating themselves. In the period, especially of the Second World War and with their husbands, women began to leave the house to work, because it was necessary to support the family. Muller (2015, p.15) states that

*"...in the period from 1930 to 1940, which encompassed part of the Second World War, some achievements were achieved. Women were able to vote and stand for election, and their share of the labor market was valued as men were being sent to the front lines."*

But the end of the war marked a new period of submission for women. In the 60's and with the appearance of the pill, the female could finally control her own body and decide whether or not to have children, and from that moment the true feminine revolution begins with many women studying more, even entering universities. In her work, Diniz (2009, p.1542) notes that *"the feminist actions that began to become common in the sixties, had long been part of the discussions of some minority groups of women"* and that *"the first steps for the construction of feminist studies were being given. New fronts of struggle have emerged, working with claims, aimed at the inequality of women against men, in the exercise of civil / political / labor rights."* (p.1543)

It is this, then, the great mark of the change and struggle that still remains, women dedicate themselves to equality of rights, of wages, worry about leisure and with their affective life, they are engaged in studies and in the entry into the labor market, becoming in addition to mothers, ex-workers. Although there is much to fight, equality begins to be noticed and to be something evident, due to the effort of thousands of women for many decades.

This change of thinking was transversal to all areas and, as such, the film industry was no exception, and the seventh art also suffered changes in the role of women presented in this. Since cinema is an art that has as a rule to mirror society and to deal with the problems that live in it, the emancipation theme of women has come to stand out in this world:

*"The Disney industry is a great example of this, being obvious and profound the changes that have been occurring in the plot of these films. In addition to this power in seducing*

*the viewer through the stories he brings to life, this industry is still brilliant in the way he does it. The Walt Disney Studios' animated classics have found an infallible formula for audience success: they combine the enchantment of the technique with captivating stories. No wonder they have been remembered by children and adults for more than 70 years."* (Breder, 2013, p.20)

Many of her works are based on fairy tales that eventually encouraged women to idealize love and to note in their role of subservient and passive wives, as Tomé & Bastos (2011) wrote:

*"...the cinematographic adaptations of some fairy tales by Walt Disney in the first half of the twentieth century helped to consolidate this representation of the female subjects and to perpetuate in contemporary societies the romantic ideals of love spread by those literary productions."*

Nowadays, the search for the "enchanted prince" is still present, but this is no longer the focus of the plot, but rather the concern of the female figure with her career and the pleasure of enjoying life. In this way, it is possible to distinguish three categories as regards the classification of the princesses in relation to their attitude towards the time when the film comes out: classic, rebellious and contemporary. The princesses include Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora, from the rebellious princesses, Ariel, Beauty, Jasmine, Pocahontas and Mulan, and from the contemporary princesses, Tiana, Rapunzel, Merida, Anna and Elsa.

The classic princesses are the oldest and since, as has been mentioned, there is a cross-between between society and the Disney industry, they are also those that mirrored the most remote society. In these princesses, beauty, ingenuity, submission and, above all, passivity stood out in the waiting for their prince savior. According to Canton (1994, cit. By Cechin, 2014, p.135):

*"Disney's earliest princesses were inscribed in an ideal of civilized, noble behavior, with special attention to etiquette, decorum, and hygiene. This "social distinction" was expressed by "noble sentiments," and was exteriorized by being beautiful, docile, polite, passive, laborious, and controlled."*

Allied to the feminine emancipation, appears the film *The Little Mermaid*, in 1989, that marks the beginning of a new model of princesses. The rebellious princesses are then princesses who fight for their rights, are brave, ambitious and do not live to be found by the prince enchanted, fight before for being happy and for a true and real love. They are not protagonists by the correct posture, the beauty or the ideal of princess, but by the active and crucial role that they play in the history, being they, often the one who save the princes:

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*“Thus, under the influence of this new period, with innovative feminine aspirations, Disney created princesses tied to the current reality - independent, questioning, determined and obstinate - watching over the ethnic difference, which met the patterns of globalization that emerged in the period. These princesses - Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, Pocahontas and Mulan - do not expect the prince charming with “crossed arms”; they guide their destiny and assume the role of salvation and redemption of their loved ones to live their love story.” (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.8)*

Finally, and since, despite many achievements, there are still many, there are still parameters where the discrepancy between the sexes is remarkable, also the Disney films continue to follow these trends side by side. Thus, in this last group, the princesses are seen as independent and fair women, who often do not reveal the need for male love, but a true love within the family, for example:

*“Still, one can not deny the autonomy, freedom and financial and social independence achieved by the female figure, a tendency followed by the latest Disney productions, which reflect these changes, creating new representations and identities, even unrelated to the need of the male figure to find happiness. Some plots, as will be seen below, show the relationship of love within the family, which also presents a resignification of the feminine role.” (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.10).*

## **2. Influence of the role of women in society on the Disney princesses**

The evolution of the role of women in society has always been accompanied by developments in other parameters. Literature, painting, sculpture, music, cinema, among others, have always related to the problems experienced in each era, to satisfaction and approach to the public.

With respect to the cinematographic art, namely to the Disney industry, many have been the authors to note in the similarities between the behavior of the princesses and the behavior of the woman of the time in which the film left. Thus, it is intended in this topic to evidence, report and particularize all the analogies found. As already mentioned above it is possible to distinguish three types of princesses present in the Walt Disney films: the classic princesses, rebels and contemporaries.

### **2.1. Classic princesses**

In 1937, Walt Disney's first film, entitled *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs*, was a real success in the world of cinema and the beginning of what would become one of the most important reigns in cinema and a milestone in history of the animated films, in particular:

*“Snow White’s success was such that it became irrelevant to enumerate his awards and market achievements. With Disney, the animation had reached its artistic maturation, defined as a “separate art within another art”. The animation finally emerged as a valid*

*form of artistic expression and showed all its power as entertainment."* (Barbosa Júnior, 2002, pp. 119 cit. By Lopes, 2015, p.31)

All this success motivated the production of other films, followed by *Cinderella* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, in 1950 and 1959, respectively. These three films then mark an era of princesses, the classic ones. Being fairy tale adaptations and produced at a time when the role of the woman was to care for the family and to respect and serve the husband, it was unthinkable that this literary genre did not espouse such situations. According to Aguiar & Barros (2015, p. 3), "*fairy tales awaken the imagination of children and adults, but also have a connection with the real world that can be easily perceived if the context in which insert*".

They are three naive princesses, with a life of much suffering, humble, beautiful, clean, hated, mistreated and true martyrs waiting to be saved by the perfect prince and, therefore, the true definition of the woman of the time. It was hoped, therefore, that women would feel understood by watching these films and note what it was right to do so that, like the princesses, they could be exemplary and upright women in the thought of this period.

Since these films go back to the period before the Second World War, these were the characteristics that should stand out in a woman, although, in *Cinderella*, many of the tasks have already been performed by obligation, which ended, as was supposed, to translate the opinion of women: the beginning of the revolt and the notion of injustice in the face of what was their position in society. So, even Snow White, do the housework with pleasure, the same is no longer true with *Cinderella*:

*"The first sees in the care of the house a way of expressing gratitude to the dwarves for letting her hide in her house in the middle of the forest, since her stepmother is looking for her to kill her. She cooks, sweeps, dishwashes, among other tasks, showing satisfaction. It is a clear reflection of the idea of "ideal woman" propagated until the beginning of the twenty-sixth century: the woman who stayed at home, taking care of the domestic tasks (and, in the future, also of the children), and should not only do it for obligation, but demonstrating pleasure in such activities, taking pride in being a good housewife. She is the princess of a pre-World War II world, when women were still far from the job market. Cinderella, however, behaves quite differently. For her, household chores are a terrible obligation imposed as punishment by the stepmother."* (Breder, 2013, p.33).

## **2.2. Rebel Princesses**

After a troubled period, in the early 1990s a new Disney film called *The Little Mermaid* appeared, leaving four more films by the end of that decade, respectively, *The Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995) ) and *Mulan* (1998) who fit into this group of princesses. In a social context totally different from the previous one, since it is now the end of the eighties and mid-1990s, the princesses are fighting for their goals here. The woman had already entered the job market, could decide if she wanted to get pregnant, and was not below the man, but by her side, as equals.

In the 1990s, under the aegis of a social reality totally unrelated to submission to the male figure, women, who have autonomy and freedom to make decisions, occupy a prominent personal, professional and social position, outlining a clear shift in the representation of its role. (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.7).

The princesses of this new era are characterized as determined, courageous, curious and adventurous, just like the women of this age who had the power to outline their future and make their choices autonomously. However, they still reveal the need to find a love to be complete, in the end they all end up married. Only this time of its own volition, not by imposition of society:

*“Thus, under the influence of this new period, with innovative feminine aspirations, Disney created princesses tied to the current reality - independent, questioning, determined and obstinate - watching over the ethnic difference, which met the patterns of globalization that emerged in the period. These princesses - Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, Pocahontas and Mulan - do not expect the prince charming with “crossed arms”; they guide their destiny and assume the role of salvation and redemption of their loved ones to live their love story.”* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.8)

For Lopes (2015, p.44), this is big change:

*“This change of behavior of the princesses, this “rebellion”, can be explained by the change of values promoted with the development of the consumer society. Establishing a new culture that prized individual happiness, these new values disqualified the old stereotype of woman from home and secured a new female social model that no longer depends on the traditionalist influence of men. Women become protagonists of their own lives. Thus, the rebellious princesses leave behind the old model of woman of the classic princesses and they mold according to the “third woman”, of Lipovetsky.”*

Ariel, from *The Little Mermaid*, reveals herself to be a very curious and fixed-minded young woman who is able to face her father in order to take her to the fore, saving her prince and even getting her father to agree with you and let her transform you, in one human. In this film, it becomes clear that we are facing another kind of princess, but not only, also the male figure, although it resists, initially, showing its power, ends up yielding to the female will beyond the fact that it is Ariel who save the prince, not the other way around.

Beauty decides to save her father from the claws of the monster by renouncing his chosen man, who reveals himself to be a macho man who wants her to be his submissive. The princess ends up falling in love with the Monster who shares the same passion as his: the taste for books. In addition to denying marriage to the man who was against his ideals, this princess reveals a peculiar taste for a woman, reading, since until a few decades ago it was unthinkable a woman to read, as a consequence of increased knowledge that would take her to new thoughts and ways of looking at the society around her. Jasmine, of *Alladin*, a princess with an important statute in the society,

revolts against the father by this program a marriage with someone that this did not want, falling in love with a small thief, Alladin. He can persuade his father to change the law of marriage, making it possible to marry whom he wishes without this influencing his position. It reveals from the beginning of history a characteristic hitherto nonexistent: it is the first princess with a more privileged social position than the male figure. Just as Ariel confronts her father, but this time about the marriage he had scheduled with the so-called "ideal husband." This princess also breaks the stereotype of the typical fair-skinned princess, since she is a young Arab, with a darker skin tone, new robes and traditions.

The young Pocahontas is the first representative of indigenous culture in the Disney princesses and, like the rest, has her fiancé. He ends up falling in love with an Englishman who intends to confront the Indians by convincing him that this was not correct. Again, the imposition of promised marriages on the part of the protagonist is evident, as well as the power to influence and modify the opinion of the male figure. Mulan, the last of this age, comes to reveal another culture, the Chinese, although it does not agree with this one: it does not intend to marry; it does not like its clothes, make-up and customs. Still, he accepts everything for the family. More than presenting a new culture and renouncing any typical habits of a woman, this princess decides to fight for his people, disguising himself as a man:

*"(...) is the only princess who rebels against gender inequality and, in the course of the narrative, deconstructs her role, since she goes to war and her performance is better than the battalion's men, even saving the life of his general, Shang, and winning a major battle."* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.10)

In addition to the difference in the attitude of the princesses, leaving the submission and acting in favor of their wishes, this group is marked by the presentation of new peoples, aesthetically and culturally, as well as the realities they suffer. This is due to the fact that, socially, we are entering a period of globalization and multiculturalism in which respect for difference and gender equality are present factors:

*"Jasmine, Pocahontas and Mulan inaugurate the trend toward ethnic diversity in the stereotypes of princesses, exhibiting the Arab, Indian, and Chinese beauties that escape the then Western pattern."* (Lopes, 2015, p. 46)

As Breder noticed:

*"In an increasingly globalized world, Disney begins to create princesses of different ethnicities, aiming to broaden its public. It begins to look for, therefore, other inspirations beyond the classic fairy tales. Jasmine, Pocahontas and Mulan appear."* (Breder, 2013, p.36)

### 2.3. Contemporary Princesses

This last group includes the princesses present in the most recent Disney films, including *The Princess and the Frog* (2013), *The Entwined* (2010), *Brave* (2011), *Frozen* (2013) and *Moana* (2016).

These princesses reveal, like the previous ones, the same characteristics, and to these are added the reinforcement of financial autonomy, the freedom of choices and decisions and the lack of a male figure at their side, but a true love. They are seen as women "*independent, certain of who they are and their goals. Their relationships are complementary. Even in true love, these princesses seek relations of complicity.*" (Lopes, 2015, p.47).

Tiana, from *The Princess and the Frog*, is an African-American woman who works hard to fulfill her dream: to open a restaurant of her own. She does not yearn for a prince, but ends up marrying one, Naveen, whose characteristics stand out in all that are opposed to hers. To make this opposition more typical of the typical classic princesses, Tiana, has a friend who follows these ideals, constantly talking about them. It is the first Disney film with a black princess, being another model of difference, which demonstrates racism and the importance and influence of color in the status of society. This point is reinforced by Cechin (2014, p.143) who states that in regard to "*questions of ethnicity and social class, the black community is represented conformed with the hegemony of white ethnicity, which occupies positions and functions of power in the film*".

In the film *The Entwined*, Rapunzel resembles, aesthetically, the typical princess, in skin tone, in social position and in clothing, and in the fact of suffering in the hands of a female figure. His greatest dream was to be able to free himself, putting, like the rest of this group, the love for a prince, aside. Also in this work, it is the female figure who ends up saving the prince and not the other way around. Once again, it is Rapunzel's dreams and ambitions that command his life, even though he appears, as does Tiana, a prince, which leads Lopes (2015, 46) to find that:

*"In the face of a society that daily lives conflicts of values, where progressive ideas clash in more and more traditionalist thoughts, contemporary princesses follow the model of a woman who seeks the balance between her already incorporated individuality and her emotions, tending to revisit some traditional values. Merida, of Brave, comes to prove that true love may not be a male figure, but a familiar figure, in this case the mother. The films of contemporary princesses, however, bring the novelty that true love is not always a romantic love. Princess Merida, for example, lives in conflict with her mother, who tries to impose traditionalist values on her. Adversities cause them to know each other, to understand each other, and they establish a relationship of complicity focused on brotherly love."* (Lopes, 2015, p.47)

Despite being a princess and dressing as such, Merida is unable to comply with the rules of etiquette and act as someone at court, her personality being mirrored by her beautiful, wild hair, just like her. Fearless, independent and disrespectful, she is able to



fight against everything and against everyone to carry her wishes to the end and not marry her betrothed. After several disagreements with his mother, who refuses to contradict her, Merida wants her to change, eventually making her a bear. The plot is then the resolution of this tragedy where love wins in the end and both try to understand and respect each other. In this film, the mother has, also, more protagonism than in any other film.

To reinforce the importance of true love as love within the family, came the film *Frozen*, which tells the story of two sisters who were separated, Anne and Elsa, thanks to a power that Elsa had, that made everything on ice, ending for crippling her sister. When her parents die, Elsa returns to become a queen, but a discussion of Anne's acceptance of her to marry a prince she barely knew makes Elsa lose control, freezing the whole Kingdom. This one decides to flee and exile, but Anne insists on not giving up the sister and the love that unites them. After many confrontations and tragedies they realize that their love for one another is capable of overcoming everything. The prince who would marry Anne is condemned to prove Anne's naive and impulsive attitude:

*"The traditional conduct of the classic princesses, such as Snow White and Cinderella, presents itself in this plot as impulsive and inconsequential, bringing the representation of the present society, which presupposes a consolidated relationship in order to arrive at marriage."* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.12)

Moana, the last Princess Disney, stands out above all for her intuition, genuineness, solidarity, generosity, concern for others and perseverance. He fights for the common good and for his people, never gives up, but knows how to ask for help when needed. This character also reveals the importance of relaxing and knowing how to recognize the qualities of other people, but always taking care of their intentions. Although it coincides with the other princesses with regard to the free spirit, fearless and fighter that characterize them, this film also points out other important characteristics and to take into account in life in society: the importance of helping others, common good, to believe in your potential, but never act without reflection and relaxation.

That said, the similarities between the princesses' personality when confronted with the time when the film came out are striking. This proves the power of cinema to be able to walk side by side with society, but more than that, to reinforce essential characteristics to be a good citizen and criticize and alert to problems of minorities or cultures present in this:

*"The media have a privileged and prominent position to have the power to communicate in various ways with every society. It has the ability to spread and form ideas, as well as incite thoughts. Communication, therefore, must be a means by which people feel identified, especially social minorities, so that they will cease to be minorities one day. Communication must produce plural and diverse representations. In this way, we want*

*the people to feel integrated and that, from the communication, the feeling of belonging to the community and its identity are reinforced. The cinema is a cultural product capable of generating meanings, so this work wants to reinforce the importance of the role played by this vehicle, by showing complex female characters with various facets and content. It is defended the construction of a cinema that does not reaffirm old stereotypes related to the women.” (Muller, 2015, p.9)*

In order for the comparison and evolution of the characters over the decades to become as clear and obvious as possible, they are divided into four fundamental aspects: character origins and social status, clothing and appearance, posture / attitude and the message / teachings that the princesses transmit, always confronting with the time in which they are.

### **a) Origin / Bylaws**

In this parameter we want to focus on the diversity of the origin of the three characters and how this may be related to the society of the time. Cinderella lives with her stepmother and her two daughters, who make her black life and make her their maid. This is a time when there were kings and queens, and how, such a castle and a kingdom fitting the literature and oral tradition of the time. Already Mulan, the daughter of a Chinese, ex-war hero and, as such, influential in the village, despite not being a princess or wanting such, rather yearning for freedom and justice between genders. In the 1990s and with globalization at its doorstep, the Disney industry tended to expand and increase its number of viewers, making a difference. The Chinese tradition is thus mirrored in this film based on a very ancient Chinese tale. Merida *"is the princess of the kingdom of Dun Broch, in which they are apparently barbarians, in the medieval era"* (Muller, 2015, 61), treating themselves as such of someone important and with a higher social status in the kingdom.

Thus, the changes in this parameter and the extent to which they accompany society become the most notable. The first princess mirrors the typical princess, who only becomes such, after rising status, thanks to her humble personality and who, like all women of the time, accepts his status despite not liking this and yearning for another. The second, included in the category of rebellious princesses, reveals this, the existing rebellion despite its social status and the need to revolt against the social patterns of the time, as it is in society in this period: increasingly courageous and rooted in the struggle for their rights, women will rebel by demanding justice, equity and valorization.

In the last one, even if it goes back to a more remote time, it is the personage who reveals the ideals and thoughts that intends to pass, not being so valued the context, only the fact of being princess and not behaving as such.

### **b) Clothing and Appearance**

With regard to the clothing and appearance of the three, this is essential, insofar as the evolution of this throughout history marks important facts that help in establishing the

influence of society at the time in the art of film. Cinderella, a housewife, wears old, dirty and spoiled clothes that are still unable to dazzle her natural beauty. With the kingdom party for the princess's election, her fairy godmother decides to congratulate her on a beautiful dress and equally beautiful accessories. Blond and white-skinned, this princess, demonstrates, first, what the woman of the time possessed and represented and then the desire that all of them had:

*"It may be observed that Cinderella suffers from the envy that other women have of her beauty and charms, so she is subjected to a routine of servitude and humiliation, but she accepts with sweetness and hope that someday everything will change in a magic, since she is passive in the face of suffering. The help comes through the fairy-godmother, but with a detail of normalization: "respect girls" can not stay on the street until late and must obey the time to go home (...)" (Muller, 2015, 47)*

Mulan, initially has long hair, wearing typical Chinese clothes and having a very fair skin, common among the people of this country. Her willingness to fight in the army compels her to cut off her long black hair and wear armor to resemble a man. *"She cuts her hair, wears men's dresses, abdicates her feminine weaknesses - faceirice, dodges, scares - girdles her breasts and hips, treats her wounds in secret, as well as bathes hidden"* (Galvão, 1997, p. by Breder, 2013, p.29)

The princess of Brave, dresses like such, with long and beautiful dresses, but its hair reveals itself throughout the indomitable film, being this, aesthetically and outwardly, that shows its freedom, courage and naturality:

*"Her curls reflect her hectic personality, which can not be tamed. When Elinor wants to turn them into a proper princess, her hair is trapped under a veil. But Merida insists on releasing a bunch, as a way to demonstrate her revolt."* (Breder, 2013, p.54)

As evidenced above, the costumes and outer appearance are fundamental to the characterization of the princess, but also to the evolution of the character. Through the evaluation of this parameter, in Cinderella, the reality of women in the society of the 50's and the desire and dream that they all shared were verified. Already Mulan reveals, in this factor, how far a desire and will can lead us, the sacrificial and dedication that imply the change of mentalities and the revolt for freedom, a factor that could no longer be present in a decade in which the feminist movements begin to the suffering of so many women in the fight for their rights. In Merida, clothing is relevant insofar as it contradicts and denies the ideals of this princess, being, for her, a real challenge to wear such costumes. On the other hand, it leads the spectator to perceive that the appearance sometimes deceives, in a world where, although the opposite is expected, more and more one judges and stereotypes the appearance.

### c) Posture / Attitude

The attitude and attitude of the characters are the characteristics that most help and contribute to the construction of the same, but also to the analogy of these to the society in which they were portrayed. Cinderella is the typical fairy tale princess: docile, naive, suffering, humble, beautiful, dreamy, but passive and conformed to her life. Muller (2015, p. 47) affirms regarding the position of this princess who:

*"(...) Cinderella suffers from the envy that other women have of her beauty and charms, so she is subjected to a routine of servitude and humiliation, but she accepts with sweetness and hope that someday everything will change in a magic pass, since she is passive in the face of suffering."*

The Chinese princess does not accept the fact that she has to respect etiquette and that she has to marry someone. She is fearless, brave, fierce, ingenious, beautiful and genuine who does everything to defend her family and take her ideals forward. It stands out "initially for not being able to absorb the obligations of a "perfect wife "and to be considered" sided "by matchmaker, goes against the traditions when entering, transvestite of man, in the Chinese army, where it stands out" (Lopes, 2015), p.44). Although very secondary, in the end, reveals a young woman in love with a man who, however, had known in the army, with whom, by the way, eventually married. Merida resembles Mulan in courage, in the struggle for her goals and in the repulsion over marriage and the demands of her status and the female figure.

At one point, the disagreements with the mother make the young woman disrespect her, hoping that Elinor, her mother, will change, in order to regret what she had done. As she grows up, she envies the freedom of her boyish brothers, since, as a princess, she must learn to be like her mother: delicate, feminine yet firm. Another of his duties is to marry the firstborn of one of the neighboring clans and his intentions, therefore, they visit the kingdom for a disputed tournament of his hand. Since the competition is for the "firstborn of the clans", she decides that she can participate too, fighting for her own hand and the right not to marry any of them. His mother, Elinor, is outraged by the shame the daughter makes the other clans pass - especially because she wins. (Breder, 2013, p.41)

In this way, it is clear contribution of the analysis of personality and attitudes of the character for the demystification of this and for the construction of the relation with the society of the time. Cinderella is representative of the typical woman passive and conformed to the life that leads, dedicating itself to the housework, just like the women of this period. Mulan revolts against the macho society of the time, proving himself capable of better defending the people than the men's soldiers themselves, mirroring the emancipation of women and warning of their valorization as an equally capable genre in all respects. Merida, reveals, above all, the importance of valuing the family, go in search of their interests and dreams, struggling to conquer them, despising the need to have a male figure at their side to achieve it, a practice so common among women, still, in the days that run. Breder (2013, p.42) highlights Merida as an example for

children, as she *"has strong personality, fights for what she wants, values family love, does not care about her own appearance, escapes completely from the stereotype of the gentle and delicate princess waiting for the prince."*

#### **d) Message / Teachings**

Both, the origin and social status, as well as the dress and appearance or even the posture and attitudes are focal points and many contributors when it addresses the message and the teachings present in each work. Along with the contribution of the princesses, the other characters in the stories, with the same factors as these, collaborate in the construction of the message that the film intends to transmit to the viewers. Thus, in *Cinderella*, it is intended to highlight, above all, the suffering that affected the women of the time, the submission and conformity that characterized them, the obligation to perform the domestic tasks since it was forced to perform housework *"which served as a demonstration of" their kindness and graciousness*" (Breder, 2013, p.44), not taking advantage of the life and constant evasion of these women to a world of dream, luxury, happiness and much romanticism, although some traces of revolt and indignation of these models, since it is about a time when change was craving and approaching.

*Cinderella* and *Aurora*, both of the 50's, although bringing with less force the exaltation of the model of the woman of the home - which is justified because they were idealized in a period of retreat of this model in favor of the woman consumer -, also exhibit the stereotype characteristic of the classic princesses, who values the beauty and the dependence in relation to the man. (Lopes, 2015, p.43)

In *Mulan's* film, it is intended to mirror the revolt of women and the fruits of it. Being forced to disguise herself as a man to prove herself capable of fighting for the nation, *Mulan* reveals how conservative machismo and ideals limit men's notice of women's capabilities and rights. *"The film openly discusses how women are expected to play a role while men occupy another. She also questions these roles, showing a much more capable heroine than her fellow men"* (Breder, 2013, 38), emerging at a time when, increasingly, women are fighting for their rights and gender equality:

*"The analysis of the discourse inspired by the film shows that women have as much capacity, courage and strength as men, and can perfectly assume any role that, by a man's ideology, could only be played by the latter. The criticism of the repression and diminution of the feminine figure is forceful, being *Mulan* the unique princess of this period who opposes to the current model to protect and to honor its father and not by love to a prince."* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.10)

Globalization and multiculturalism are also evident in society at this time and so this film shows the public the culture and traditions of other people, but where the inferiority of women continues to be equally felt. The last princess demonstrates, above all, the importance of never giving up on what is intended, a motivating factor in a society so competitive and unjust to which, even today, it is seen as well as the value of

the family that comes again to be discussed and pointed face to a society driven by interests and luxuries that sometimes tend to overlap with really important values such as love:

*“Merida conquers the right to choose with whom she will marry and does not end with an enchanted prince, which differentiates this plot from the others, since here the role of independence and freedom assumed by the woman makes her desire, cultivate and strengthen the family ties with the parents, rather than guiding their happiness and well-being in a loving relationship.”* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.12)

Given this, it is unthinkable not to associate the evolution of the role of women in society with the evolution of the Disney princesses, being evident, when compared to princesses of the three existing dominances, the similarity of thoughts and ideologies to the temporality of the society of each one:

*“The study of Disney Princess films portrays how these characters are transformed over the decades, which can be perceived through their discourse, influenced by new traditions and social configurations, in a scenario where beauty is the least relevant attraction, valuing the autonomy and independence of women.”* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.13)

#### **4. Conclusion**

In short, it becomes safe to affirm the transversality of the evolution of the role of women, including, therefore, in the cinema. The distinction of three groups of princesses within a large group of Disney princesses demystified and clarified these similarities and concordances. The first group portrays in a perfect way the woman from the 40s to 60s, evolving with her and therefore mirroring from the passive woman and totally submissive to the woman who performed her duties, but who began to become aware that you deserved more. Breder states, with regard to this group of princesses, that:

*“Cinderella can not be blamed for just waiting for her prince to rescue her - she is a Foucault emphasizes, each historical period has a different discourse. For this reason, the princesses of the studio allow us to observe the evolution of the role of women in society throughout the twentieth century, which Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda calls “the century of women””* (Breder, 2013, p.7)

Lopes reinforces these characteristics, evidencing her maternal role, housewife and total dedication to her husband:

*“Created in the mold of a traditionalist society, it is possible to see that the Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora princesses fit the “second woman” model defined by Lipovetsky. Corresponding to the stereotype of the mother in the home, the classical princesses are*

*exalted women, idolized, idealized by men according to the "wife-mother-housewife" profile, whose sole purpose is to find true love and, dedicate to their only reason to live: to take care of the husband, the children and the happiness of the family.*" (Lopes, 2015, p. 42)

By contrast, the ensuing group of princesses was marked by rebellion, revolt, and striving for their interests. If classical history brings the gallant prince who saves the defenseless maiden, things seem to change in more recent productions. In all the movies, there is at least one moment where the princess saves her prince. Ariel prevents Eric from drowning in a shipwreck, Pocahontas prevents John Smith from being convicted, Mulan saves Shang from an avalanche. (Breder, 2013, p.50) The last group of princesses reinforces the characteristics of the princesses of the previous era, distinguishing themselves from them by the detachment and disinterest they reveal in the quest or necessity of a prince, focusing, mainly, on the family, on their social and financial position, and in the fight and valorization of their interests, but, returning to show some traditional aspects:

*"In the face of a society that daily lives conflicts of values, where progressive ideas clash in more and more traditionalist thoughts, contemporary princesses follow the model of a woman who seeks the balance between her already incorporated individuality and her emotions, tending to revisit some traditional values."* (Lopes, 2015, p. 46)

In this way, the links between the two themes developed throughout this article that have proven to be a true world to be explored are obvious:

*"In these cinematographic productions, the social representation of each princess reveals the yearnings of the woman of her time, reflecting her role in society, although the stereotyped beauty in these stories is still a pattern that the current woman wants to achieve. In spite of this, the female role undergoes significant modifications, placing women at a level of equality, deconstructing the difference of genders and presenting a new feminine identity: the haughty, determined, and capable woman to face the new social reality without necessarily needing of a man at his side."* (Aguiar & Barros, 2015, p.13)

Thus, cinema has the power, not only to portray social evolution and its problems, but also the potential to modify and demystify them and, therefore, to make society a place of equal opportunity, acceptance of difference and respect for others. For Muller (2015, p.29) *"it is important to think of cinema as a form of education and expression of culture. The cinematographic gaze can reflect and foster gender differences, as well as demystify them."*

So many other equally important aspects remain to be developed, in the hope that opportunities will arise one day. But with the certainty that, *"in the light of Bauman,*

*in times of liquid modernity, where values constantly change in shape, trends towards the profile of a new woman - for the stereotype of a new princess - are uncertain ."* (Lopes, 2015, p.50).

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