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Subliminal Messages in Disney Movies

Before starting my oratory presentation, I would like to make a couple of warnings. The content of this speech is not appropriate for the overly emotional or faint hearted. After hearing it you might be shocked, forever traumatized, or even faint. Though your reactions may be different, this is a speech that touches all of us to our very core. It talks of ourselves, of you and I, and all of our earliest memories, dreams and fantasies. Don’t say I didn’t warn you, but this speech might just ruin your childhood. Have you guessed what its about? The magical world of Disney. Or rather, the perverse, sickly-warped, sexually charged, and overall, completely inappropriate world created by that old lunatic, Walt Disney. A world saturated with subliminal messages.

Some of you may still be confused about what exactly I am blabbering about. Disney? You mean my all-time favorite movies? The ones I can still sing along too, the ones I fell asleep thinking about and woke up dreaming of when I was younger? Yes. That very same Disney. It has been recently discovered, that while it was the fuel to our young and naive imaginations, at the same time Disney was sending out quite a different implications through a strategy called subliminal messaging. Subliminal messages are words, pictures, or noises designed to target and stimulate and reprogram our subconscious, and are consequently ignored by our conscious mind. We cannot be aware of them, and though we have no conscious knowledge of their existence our subconscious definitely does. In fact, our subconscious mind is not only able to perceive them but also meticulously stores them away in the depth of our psyche. Forever. Thus, hidden messages can be embedded in movies to evoke a secondary effect, that we have absolutely no control over. And the majority of the time the idea that is being deeply entrenched in our mind is one: sex. Scary isn’t it?

I see a lot of skepticism in your eyes… you don’t believe me? Well I am sorry to have to do this, but I am going to bring back some of those childhood heroes of ours in order to show you just how powerful yet apparently invisible these messages are. So hold on tight.

When it first came out in theaters in 1992 as the 31st Walt Disney Animated Classic, the musical and family film production of Aladdin, was a huge hit. The most successful film of 1992. Both a sweet and adventurous story of young love and self discovery, Aladdin teaches kids to always follow one’s dreams and that we should never conform to what others think of us. Oh, and did I mention that it also encourages young girls to take off their clothes? Yes, you heard right. The magical story that inhabited your greatest dreams, that made you jump in delight at the sight of Persian carpets, and really made you like excessively puffy pants, has an underlying sexual meaning urging for the exploitation of little girls. Do you remember the scene when Aladdin is trying to win Jasmine’s heart by taking her on a romantic and exhilarating carpet ride across the suggestive Arabian dunes? Yup, that’s when you hear him whispering “Good teenagers take off your clothes”… In the book *Are Disney Movies Poisoning our Youth* the expert Matt DeMarco explains how this is a prime example of a verbal hidden message. This garbled and whispered portion of dialogue that could barely be heard the first time in theaters was to be replicated millions of times through the eyes of millions of tiny, gullible, and innocent little kids. Of course you’re thinking: I never heard that before. But it doesn’t matter if you don’t remember it, or in other words, if your conscious mind was not able to pick it up, because your subconscious had already recognized it and stored it away years and years ago the first time you watched the movie.

Not enough for you? Oh I have tons more. Here comes another Disney classic: the “Little Mermaid”. Once again, apart from the lessons of “always follow your dream” and “true love always prevails” there are some very strong sexual connotations in the form of images not only in the movie, but also in the promotional posters. What is most worrisome, says Jeff B. Copeland, journalist of Times Magazine in 2007. is that these images are not even well concealed. The two greatest ones include penus-shaped towers in the golden underwater castle, and a clear erection of the bishop during the wedding scene.

I know all of this may be quite overwhelming, but I have one more example, and this is the one that has touched me the most. “The Lion King” is still my favorite movie, I have it on VCR, DVD, and uploaded on my computer, and every now then I like to watch it, even now, as a 16 year old young-adult. Yet this movie was also the center of huge controversies because of its underlying sexual messages. The biggest one being the giant letters S E X projected across the screen in one of the final scenes.

“Subliminal perception is a subject that virtually no one wants to believe exists, and -- if it does exist -- they much less believe that it has any practical application” said Wilson Bryan Key, professor of University of Western Ontario in 2005. Though we have no recollection of these images, sounds, and words, our young minds have absorbed and have been absorbing such messages throughout the course of our lives, allowing them to scurry freely within our subconscious, and ultimately even controlling our thought patterns. This speech was not intended to scare you half to death, and just because you used love the old Sultan, Sebastian the crab, and Simba doesn’t mean your mind has been plagued by sexual messages or that you were a perverted little kid. This speech is a warning sign, for you as a person, and possibly a future parent. Next time you are picking out a movie to watch with the family, do your kids a favor, and make sure it’s not Disney.