

# DO NOT DITCH DISNEY

The editorial is an opinion held by the editorial board of the newspaper and is a collaboration of the board. It needs a simple majority to pass.

This month's vote was 4-2.

Recently on the Ellen Degeneres show, actress Keira Knightley opened up about her decision to ban her daughter from watching certain Disney movies, of these being Cinderella and The Little Mermaid. “[Cinderella] waits around for a rich guy to rescue her,” Knightley said. “Don’t. Rescue yourself! Obviously.” She then continued on to criticize The Little Mermaid. “I mean, the songs are great, but do not give your voice up for a man, hello!” Knightley said.

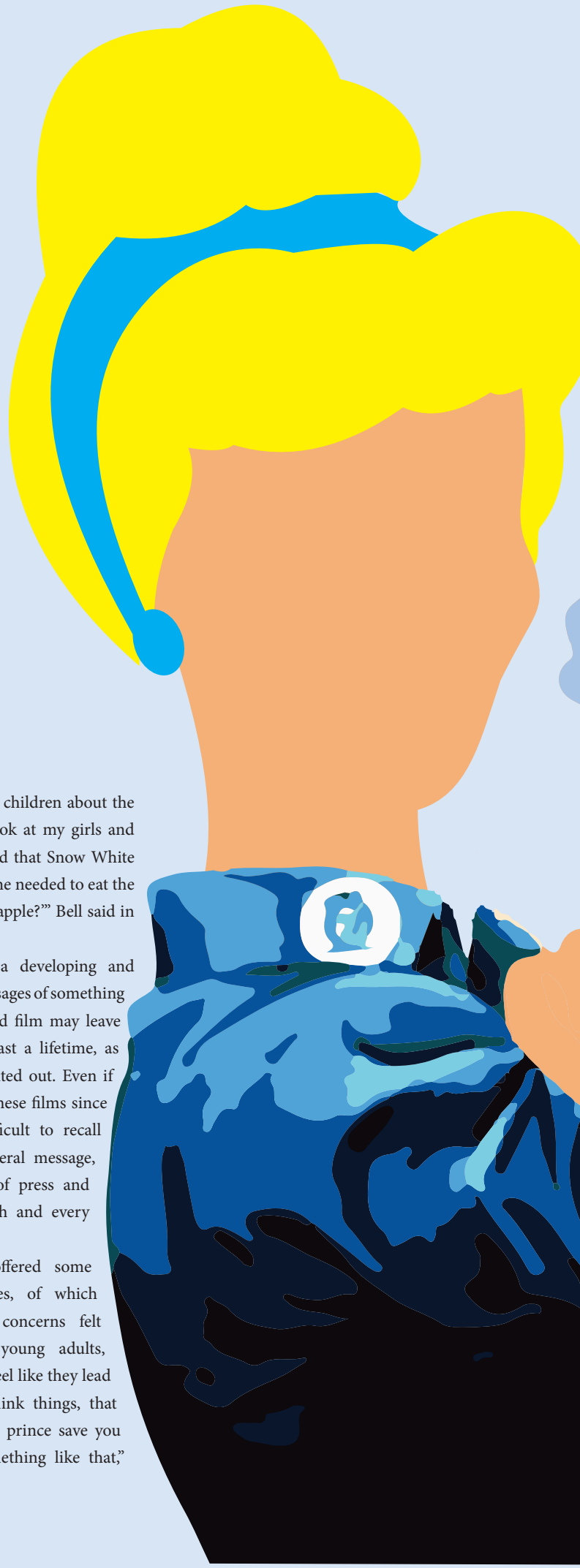
It is common among pop culture to sift through classic stories to try and find a deeper meaning, particularly a not-so-nice one, as Knightley pointed out in both Cinderella and The Little Mermaid. While these themes of women not being able to free themselves or express themselves without the help of a man may have been common in past Disney films, the most recent Disney movies have strived far away from that mindset, and Disney deserves some credit for such a dramatic shift in storyline.


Knightley isn't the only celebrity to express disapproval toward a Disney film. Recently, Frozen star Kristen Bell made some criticisms of the beloved 1930s film, Snow White. Bell said

she uses the film to teach her children about the importance on consent. “I look at my girls and ask, ‘Don’t you think it’s weird that Snow White didn’t ask the old witch why she needed to eat the apple? Or where she got that apple?’” Bell said in Parents Magazine.

As a small child with a developing and impressionable mind, the messages of something so simple as a short animated film may leave imprints on the brain that last a lifetime, as Knightley and Bell have pointed out. Even if someone hasn't seen one of these films since its release date, it's not difficult to recall the overall story or the general message, given the massive amount of press and expectation surrounding each and every film to come out of Disney.

Emily Bertlshofer '21 offered some criticisms of Disney movies, of which essentially summarize the concerns felt by parents, and possibly young adults, regarding Disney movies. “I feel like they lead children to do things, or think things, that aren't practical, like having a prince save you from your problems or something like that,” Bertlshofer said.





"Men speak 71% of the time in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991); 90% of the time in *Aladdin* (1992) 76% of the time in *Pocahontas* (1995)."

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28 out of 41  
disney movies  
pass the  
bechdel test

[www.her-campus.com](http://www.her-campus.com)

While underlying themes in past Disney movies might have sent the message that every woman needed a man, it is unfair to equal the Disney of the past to the Disney of today.

Look at *Frozen*, for example: a simple story of two sisters learning the importance of expression and putting aside the need for a knight in shining armor to save them, instead choosing to save themselves. Released in late 2013, it established a desire in audiences for an original story with an inspiring message, particularly for young girls. Since then, numerous films have been released following the same pattern, like *Moana* and the live-action *Beauty and The Beast*, both of which were two of the most successful films to be released in the last few years, and continue to hold relevance.

The *Wreck-It Ralph* sequel, *Ralph Breaks the Internet*, made news when its trailer came out, not only because of its anticipated success, but because of one scene featuring some of the most noted Disney princesses, including Snow

White, Cinderella, Pocahontas, and many others. The scene featured all of the princesses gathered around one of the main characters in *Ralph Breaks the Internet*, little girl and video game character Vanellope, with each princess presenting their own mocking take on their individual fairytale story, trying to determine Vanellope's princess status.

Rapunzel ended the interrogation with one simple question: "Do people assume all of your problems were solved because some big, strong man showed up?" Rapunzel asked in the scene. When Vanellope replied yes, all of the princesses rejoiced at discovering that she *is* in fact a princess.

Now that modern Disney has made their position quite clear on the themes of past Disney films, in which every woman needed a strong man to save them, Disney deserves some credit for changing up their thought process and the themes provided by their films. Instead of continuing to criticize the Disney of the past for some slightly controversial underlying themes, we as a society should start looking forward in the direction of modern Disney, which is continuing to make dramatic changes to its storyline.