Beauty Myths in Disney's Short Film "Reflect": A Semiotic Analysis

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: myth, female beauty, Reflect (film), semiotic analysis	The portrayal of female beauty in media often establishes rigid standards that influence societal perceptions of ideal physical characteristics. Women who do not conform to these ideals are frequently marginalized and treated unfairly. This research aims to explore the myth of the ideal female body as depicted in Disney's short film Reflect. Utilizing qualitative research and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the study examines how beauty myths shape societal expectations. The findings reveal that societal standards of beauty—typically white, tall, and slim—are perpetuated through media representations. The film's protagonist strives to challenge these norms and redefine beauty standards within the ballet world.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of beauty, heavily influenced by societal and media portrayals, often imposes unrealistic standards that equate physical appearance with worth. This is evident in many Disney films, where idealized beauty is commonly depicted. Women, as portrayed in these narratives, often face societal pressure to conform to these standards, which are frequently reflected in the media's portrayal of physical attributes like slimness, height, and fair skin.

Disney films, known for their powerful storytelling, have historically depicted female characters with a narrow range of beauty standards. Characters like Snow White and Sleeping Beauty were initially portrayed with a focus on physical beauty and traditional roles, while later films, such as Beauty and the Beast, began to incorporate more nuanced portrayals of female independence and intelligence. This evolution reflects a growing awareness and critique of rigid beauty norms.

The short film Reflect is a notable addition to Disney's portfolio, addressing body image issues through the character of Bianca, a ballerina struggling with self-doubt and body dysmorphia. The film, directed by Hillary Bradfield, showcases Bianca's journey to overcome these internal struggles, emphasizing body positivity and self-acceptance. The choice of a dance studio setting highlights the role of mirrors in reinforcing or challenging one's self-image.

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory provides a framework to analyze how beauty is constructed and perceived in media. Barthes' distinction between denotation (the literal depiction) and connotation (the emotional and cultural meanings attached) is particularly useful in understanding how Disney's portrayals of beauty are both reflective of and influential on societal standards. Denotation captures the straightforward imagery of beauty, while connotation involves the underlying myths and cultural values that shape perceptions. Analyzing Disney's Reflect through Barthes' lens reveals how it challenges traditional beauty myths and encourages a more inclusive and positive view of self-worth.
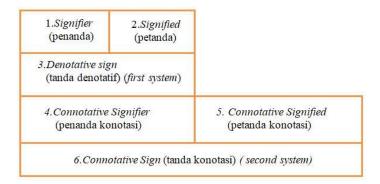
METHODS

The author uses a qualitative method in analyzing the Disney short film entitled "Reflect". In collecting data, the authors take several methods:

1) Identity contains information related to the film, such as title, genre, director, cast name, and publisher;
2) Orientation contains an overview of the issues to be reviewed;
3) Interpretation containing a synopsis of the film so that readers get an overview of the film's storyline;
4) Evaluation explaining the author's views or opinions on the film to be reviewed;
5) Summary provides a conclusion from the entire writing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In researching the myth of beauty in the short film Reflect by Disney, the researcher uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to find out the significant meaning of beauty, starting from denotation, connotation, and myth. It consists of two, namely, the signifier and the signified. Semiotics is qualitatively interpretive. It only focuses on signs and texts as a research study.

Semiotics is a science that studies behavior based on signs and how these signs work. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory consists of denotative and connotative. Denotative signs (markers and signifieds). While the connotative sign (connotative marker and connotative sign). Analyzing signs and markers in beauty myth research makes it easier for researchers to find their meaning.

1.*Signifier* (penanda)	2.*Signified* (petanda)	
3.*Denotative sign* (tanda denotatif) (*first system*)		
4.*Connotative Signifier* (penanda konotasi)	5. *Connotative Signified* (petanda konotasi)	
6.*Connotative Sign* (tanda konotasi) (*second system*)		

Based on the results of Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis in the scene that has been selected and found its markers, it can be seen that the film Perfect contains many myths about female beauty. The film Perfect itself tells the story of the beauty of a ballet dancer that is not seen from a physical perspective but from self-confidence, Bianca's determination to face her inner fears to achieve the goal of her love for ballet. So that the beauty standard constructed by the media in general for a ballet dancer is having white skin, a slim and tall body, long hair, and an aquiline nose. However, in this film, the director wants to break this stereotype so that women are more confident with their biological diversity.

Myth plays a significant role in shaping ideologies and societal perceptions, particularly in the context of beauty standards. In semiotic theory, myths are more than just traditional stories or legends; they are complex systems of communication that convey underlying values and ideologies prevalent in a particular culture or time period. According to Roland Barthes, myths function as a form of communication, perpetuating dominant values and justifying societal norms rather than reflecting an objective reality.

Barthes posits that myths are not grounded in unreasonable or inexplicable realities but are instead crafted messages that serve to reinforce and normalize the prevailing ideologies. This process involves interpreting and representing aspects of everyday life in a manner that aligns with these ideologies. Myths thus serve to perpetuate certain narratives, presenting them as natural or self-evident truths, even though they are socially constructed.

In the realm of female beauty, myths often portray an idealized image characterized by specific physical traits, such as light skin, straight and shiny hair, a sharp nose, and a tall, slender physique. These traits are not just seen as desirable but are often considered the benchmark for beauty. Women who do not conform to these standards may be deemed less attractive or not beautiful according to societal norms. This narrow definition of beauty creates a myth that excludes those who do not fit the idealized image.

Another prevalent myth is the notion that beauty is primarily a genetic trait inherited from one's parents. This belief implies that beauty is an inherent quality rather than something that can be cultivated or altered. As a result, women who do not meet these genetic standards may feel marginalized or insecure about their appearance. This perception can lead to a sense of inadequacy and social ostracization, reinforcing the belief that one's worth is closely tied to their physical appearance.

The pressure to conform to these beauty standards can lead women to invest considerable resources—both time and money—in attempts to meet societal expectations. This can involve various cosmetic procedures, fashion choices, and other forms of enhancement aimed at achieving the idealized image of beauty. The pursuit of these standards often reflects a broader societal expectation that women must conform to specific physical criteria to be accepted and valued.

The influence of myths extends beyond individual self-perception; it also impacts how women are perceived and treated by others. Media representations and cultural narratives frequently reinforce these beauty standards, perpetuating the myth that certain physical attributes are inherently superior or more desirable. This can create a cycle where women feel compelled to meet these standards to gain social acceptance, while simultaneously being judged and valued based on their ability to conform to these ideals.

In conclusion, myths surrounding female beauty serve as powerful tools for conveying and reinforcing dominant cultural values and standards. By portraying specific physical traits as the epitome of beauty, these myths shape societal expectations and individual self-perceptions. Understanding the role of myths in shaping beauty standards can help challenge and deconstruct these narratives,

promoting a more inclusive and diverse definition of beauty that values a broader range of physical characteristics and individual qualities..
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CONCLUSION

After researching the myth of beauty in the film Reflect through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, this study concludes that Film Reflect tells about the standards of beauty attached to Disney films. Many stereotypes have developed in society due to media exposure regarding beauty standards, making some women required to change their appearance according to these standards to be accepted in society. However, the beauty depicted in this film is not just physical but also having self-confidence, fighting against inner fears, and having good ballet skills are part of inner beauty. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the myth of the beautiful woman in the film Reflect is characterized by the existence of beauty standards that society must believe in and follow so that the main character becomes insecure when his friends and ballet teacher come. When in fact, women have a diverse physique. So, the beauty standard of white skin, long hair, tall and slim is no longer a benchmark.

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