



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



Fondul Social European
POSDRU 2007-2013



Instrumente Structurale
2007-2013



MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI ȘI
CERCETĂRII
ȘTIINȚIFICE

OIPOSDRU



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

Investește în oameni !

FONDUL SOCIAL EUROPEAN

Programul Operațional Sectorial pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane 2007 – 2013

Axa prioritară nr.1 „Educația și formarea profesională în sprijinul creșterii economice și dezvoltării societății bazate pe cunoaștere”

Domeniul major de intervenție 1.5 “Programe doctorale și post-doctorale în sprijinul cercetării”

Titlul proiectului: **“Cultura română și modele culturale europene: cercetare, sincronizare, durabilitate”**

Beneficiar: **Academia Română**

Numărul de identificare al contractului: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/136077

PhD Research Report

Supervisor:
Professor Ilie BĂDESCU

PhD candidate:
Ana-Maria NICULESCU-MIZIL

Bucharest, 2015



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



Fondul Social European
POSDRU 2007-2013



Instrumente Structurale
2007-2013



MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI ȘI
CERCETĂRII
ȘTIINȚIFICE

OIPOSDRU



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

Animation as neocolonialism. The construction and reception of worldviews in fictional products for children

**Supervisor:
Professor Ilie BĂDESCU**

**PhD candidate:
Ana-Maria NICULESCU-MIZIL**

This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/159/1.5/S/136077.

Bucharest, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. RESEARCH CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE: CULTURAL AUTHORITY, PUBLIC DEBATE AND MEDIA CONTENTS.....	3
2. KIND WOMAN, WICKED WOMAN, EVER-CHANGING FACES OF FEMININITY IN TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING. FROM CHARLES PERRAULT TO WALT DISNEY.....	15
2.1. REMEDIATION AND TRANSMEDIALITY IN POPULAR CULTURE. A NEVER-ENDING STORY.....	15
2.2. SLEEPING BEAUTIES, WAKING SORCERESSES. THE FACES OF FEMININITY.....	19
3. THE 'PRINCEST DIARIES'. A 'MIDDLE-EASTERN' READING OF AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE.....	23
3.1. 'ALTERNATIVE MEDIA'. 'THE NEWS THAT DIDN'T MAKE THE NEWS'.....	23
3.2. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVE. FROM CRITICAL RECEPTION TO 'CRITICAL MEDIA'.....	28
3.3. THE 'PRINCEST DIARIES'. PARTICIPATION THROUGH MEDIA.....	30
3.4. BREAKING THE SHELL: MAINSTREAM URSULA AND THE VOICE OF THE UNVOICED.....	31
3.5. 'ONCE UPON A WAR': GLOBAL ISSUES OF PUBLIC DEBATE.....	35
4. CONCLUSIONS.....	40
5.REFERENCES.....	45

ABSTRACT

Elaborating on the assumption stated by Bolter and Grusin (1996) that the amendment of means and cultural practices determines the way social representations are restructured, this paper aims to map the flow of media content in (1) the increasingly fluid production – reception relation and (2) the axis that stands between Europe – USA – Middle East, from the critical lens of a Romanian young researcher. Consequently, it develops on two complementary levels of analysis necessary for a panoramic approach, both theoretical and methodological. The first consists of a comparative study of the the fairy tale “La Belle Au Bois Dormant” (Perrault, n.d.), a fantasy animated feature film of Walt Disney’s Productions, “Sleeping Beauty” (1959), and Walt Disney’s Production “Maleficent” (2014) from the perspective of the remediation theory (Bolter and Grusin, 1996), of transmediality (Jenkins, 1992, 2006; Ryan, 2013) and "reusable ready-made cultural goods" (Spiridon, 2013). The second direction of research explores the concepts of “critical reception” and "alternative media” (Fuchs, 2010) with appliance to the artistic work of the Middles Eastern digital artist, Saint Hoax, based on Disney’s content.

Events with worldwide impact, such as the attack that took place on January 2015 at the satirical French Charlie Hebdo publication headquarters and the entire social movement "Je suis Charlie" that shifted through social networks highlights the need of studying animated representations, in general, and from the perspective of it’s potential “technological representation” (Latour 1993 cited by Bolter and Grusin, 1996, 353) also with socio-political stakes, but as well as a form of criticism, revolt and boycott. The current study emerges in the context of public debate around the influence of femininity models advanced by Disney's fictional products upon young girls, the so-called *little princess syndrome*, reflected in articles like *What’s Wrong with Cinderella?* (Orenstein, 2006) in *The New York Times Magazine* or *Are Disney Princesses Evil?* (Mechanic, 2011) in *Mother Jones* and Disney's recent paradigm shift in constructing the so-called *independent princess: No princes required: Independent Disney princesses not seeking romance* (Associated Press, 2014) in *Fox News* or *Daughters inspire independent Disney princess* (Associated Press, 2014) in *The Buffalo News*. Walt Disney's productions have been of interest not only for their aesthetic style and animation features (Pallant, 2010) or for their marketing practices or development strategies, but also related to issues of gender, race or ethnicity in Disney's discourse about the world and life (Faherty, 2001; Craven, 2002; Hurley, 2005; Lee, 2006), sexuality and 'queer sensibility' (Griffin, 2000) or Disney's influence upon children's culture (Giroux, 1995). This current research is being placed, thanks to its theoretical desideratum regarding the colonial stake of occidental animation productions in the contemporary global context, as well as the methodological means and the

research corpus at the confluence of certain study areas that are as diverse as they are complementary, such as cultural studies, communication sciences, sociology, gender and visual studies.