Commentary on "A Frog of a Different Color"

Melissa Cherry

Denison University

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to play where they could – brothels, speakeasies, and other areas with poor reputations.” Disney skews the depictions of African American consequences in *Princess and the Frog* in inaccurate ways through musical performances, but also through the relationships developed in the movie.

Even though *Princess and the Frog* represents a decade of some sort of normality in interracial marriage, “in the United States prior to a 1967 Supreme Court decision, interracial marriage was banned” (CSMonitor.com). The dispute over the ethnic origin of Naveen is heavily argued by critics. The olive complexion and Brazilian accent lead me to believe that the prince is not black. By creating a prince with the physical characteristics of Naveen, Disney satisfies their need for a traditional white hero, however, they try to blind their audience by making him diverse enough to not be seen as white. This unrealistic image depicted by Disney has skewed what the 1920s social norms and prejudice was truly like. If Disney wanted to get the point across that multicultural marriage happens, and like Mama Odie says, “it don’t matter what you look like,” then the time period and location of the movie shouldn’t have been set in 1920s New Orleans. Now, yes, non-segregated relationships happen, but during the time of the movie people were murdered or lynched for having relationships with someone of a different race.

Another racial relationship issue that rises in *Princess and the Frog* is the friendship between Charlotte and Tiana. Someone of Charlotte’s social and economical status wouldn’t fraternize with an African American, let alone an African American with the economic stability of Tiana. In my opinion, Disney places Tiana in the situation of being Charlotte’s best friend because they want to make the comparison of your typical white princess and the new and improved black princess very visible. Although I understand the reason why Disney would want to enhance the idea of moving away from the original white princess, they did it in all the wrong ways. The illustration of Tiana’s mother as a servant to the rich white family is very realistic, but the chances that the daughter of the poor, African American servant would befriend the rich, spoiled, white daughter of the wealthy family are slim to none. If a kinship were formed between these two different worlds, then the most common consequence would be lynching.

In conclusion, Disney’s initial idea of creating the first African American princess is tremendously applauded. However, the presentation of time period and setting in *Princess and the Frog* alters the perspective of the viewer analyzing certain actions and consequences depicted in the movie. If Disney really wants to broaden the mind of the viewer today, they should continue moving towards stepping outside of the norm, and not retreating back to what is comfortable for them. When will Disney be brave enough to have a plus size prince or princess? Will they have the courage to have two princes or princesses? If we want to move towards an accepting future we need to stop grouping people into categories with a negative innuendo and stop judging something before we know everything there is to know about it.

In her paper, “A Frog of a different color,” Lydia not only demonstrates her knowledge of the film *The Princess and the Frog* but also makes many insightful comparisons between the film and relevant historical and current cultural tensions. Lydia addresses the topic with a clear voice and strong structure, both of which help to enforce her points. Her paper starts with an intriguing opening sentence which simultaneously grabs the reader's attention and situates the paper in its historical context. The introduction also contains another critical element for a successful paper, the thesis. Lydia’s thesis is arguable, yet defendable, leaving the opportunity open for her to make her arguments. The way she goes about supporting her points is organized, succinct and ultimately effective. She concludes her essay by asking some critical questions of her audience to keep them thinking, even when her words on the page have ended.

-Melissa Cherry, Writing Center Consultant