



# Mouse Morality: The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film

*Annalee R. Ward*

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"Through the worldview perspective, this book comes to grips with the incongruous moralities in Disney. It enables both parents and educators to gain a critical understanding of Disney content without being judgmental or promotional for the wrong reasons...Mouse Morality is a pleasure to read and discuss in itself, but shows the pathway to media criticism of the first order." Nfrom the Foreword Kids around the world love Disney animated films, and many of their parents trust the Disney corporation to provide wholesome, moral entertainment for their children. Yet frequent protests and even boycotts of Disney products and practices reveal a widespread unease with the sometimes mixed and inconsistent moral values espoused in Disney films as the company attempts to appeal to the largest possible audience. In this book, Annalee R. Ward uses a variety of analytical tools based in rhetorical criticism to examine the moral messages taught in five recent Disney animated filmsNThe Lion King, Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Hercules, and Mulan. Taking the films on their own terms, she uncovers the many mixed messages they purvey: for example, females can be leadersNbut male leadership ought to be the norm; stereotyping is wrongNbut black means evil; historical truth is valuedNbut only tell what one can sell, etc. Adding these messages together, Ward raises important questions about the moral ambiguity of DisneyOs overall worldview and demonstrates the need for parents to be discerning in letting their children learn moral values and life lessons from Disney films.

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