



# Mouse Morality: The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film

*Annalee R. Ward*

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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 films—*The 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 leaders—but male leadership ought to be the norm; stereotyping is wrong—but black means evil; historical truth is valued—but only tell what one can sell, etc. Adding these messages together, Ward raises important questions about the moral ambiguity of Disney's 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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