Media as Practice Approach to the Disney Media and its Fan Audiences

Master Thesis

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Abstract

This study researched Disney fans and their interaction with the Disney media in their everyday lives. The aim was to find out through which channels do Disney fans have contact with Disney and how often do they interact with the Disney media. Media as practice apporach was taken to investigate the connection between the fans and the media. Also, corporate identity and globalisation were set as one of the key concepts besides media, fan audiences and Disney. Additionally, the perception and to some level the influence of Disney was examined. In-depth interviews and deductive analysis were used to gather and analyse the data. The results of this research found that the Disney fans interact with the Disney media at least on a montly basis, often more. The influence of Disney, in the eyes of the fans, was rather minimal but in every case positive. Furthermore, the results showed that Disney has managed to create an image and reputation so strong, that fans from different backgrounds perceive it the same way.

Contents

Introduction

Media has over the decades become an inseparable part of people's lives. People expect to gain information, entertainment and communication through media. There are many types and layers of media, different corporations playing a role and obtaining a position in the audiences' lives. One of those companies is the Walt Disney Company. As Disney has a significant role in a large part of the world's population's life, it is also important to investigate how big the actual role of Disney is.

Most people, at least in the Western countries, have contact with Disney since they are small children to the extent that one does almost not notice it anymore. Disney, as such, is a very broad term and can mean different things to different audiences. Parts of Disney can be the movies, comic books and shows which are considered a normal part of everyday life to a noticeable proportion of people. Disney has sneaked its way into regular supermarkets and stores, far beyond the starting point of special Disney stores and the cinemas. This gives them the opportunity to reach the audience at almost any stage of their day. Nevertheless, movies can still be considered of utmost priority within these factors, as they are easily spread and reachable to a wide audience. When watching the movies, people may realize that they are being affected, but they still keep going and watching those movies, thus taking in the Disney.

The Walt Disney Company is rapidly evolving and reaching people's lives on a regular basis. Until this point, Disney has been a subject to many different theoretical and empirical works. Just to name a few: "Damsels in Discourse: Girls Consuming and Producing Identity Texts through Disney Princess Play" by Karen E. Wohlwend (2009), which discusses how children enact what they have heard and seen in their real life play; "Beauty and the Belles" by Allison Craven (2002), which investigates the Disney heroines and their focus in the stories; "Do Animated Disney Characters Portray and Promote the Beauty-Goodness Stereotype?" by Doris Bazzini et al. (2010), where they discuss over the feminine stereotypes in Disney's productions; "Challenging the Disney Myths" (2001) and "Understanding Disney" (2001) published by Janet Wasko, which both take the company as a whole under investigation and Wasko discusses their potential influence and power in society. Wasko's works are also discussed in the current thesis. Most of the previous works have mainly concentrated on the influence of the Disney media on the construction of society and society's behaviour. Those researches also concentrate on the depiction of different societal categories within Disney media, mainly emphasizing the portrayal of women. In some cases the influence of the Disney movies on children has been taken under investigation and the

understandings of society and children have been discovered. The influence of Disney media on its audience is definitely important, as it can affect how people communicate and behave with others, however it should also be analysed how people themselves perceive the Disney media and what do they carry away from it. Furthermore, almost none of them have concentrated on how people interact with Disney in their everyday lives. Keeping in mind how much research has been done on the influence, the personal interaction has been left aside. Mainly the indirect influence has been focused on, but the way how people let the media in their lives and what they do with it, has not been researched enough. The author feels that the aspect of influence has been researched to an almost fulfilling level whereas the subject of the audience's perception and communication with the Disney media has been left out. This is why this research has promise to be one of a kind.

The aim of this master thesis is to analyse how people negotiate with the Walt Disney Company media in their everyday lives. In this case, the Disney media can mean anything that the named company produces, starting from comics to movies and the Disneyland theme parks. It generally depends on the audience, what they perceive as Disney and how they let it in their lives, that is also what the author tries to investigate in this research. Thus the most important research question is:

How do people negotiate with the Walt Disney Company media in their everyday life?

It is evident that a lot of people do interact with the Disney Company if not every day, then frequently. When negotiating with the Disney media people watch Disney movies, read their comics, collect their items or visit their parks. The list is a lot longer as negotiating with the Disney media is essentially any contact the people have with it on their everyday life basis. The main concentration in this thesis has been put on the fans of Disney, regardless of age, as it has no significance to the current research. As discussed further in this thesis, fans are obtaining a considerable role in our society, being active participants and communicators, thus even the leaders of the media flow (Jenkins, 2007). Of course it was important for the research that people would be knowledgeable of Disney and would have contact with it almost on a daily basis. Fans are also not just blindly following the company (Brown, 1997), but as they are passionate about it, they investigate it, and are often also more sceptical about it as regular people would be (Thebérge, 2005). They often have ideas how to improve the stories or the company in general, thus are also willing to provide a little criticism. Fans can

also create a unique view on the subject as they are talking about something that is close to their heart and they feel warmly about.

In addition to the main research question, the author tries to find out what is the relation of a person, who is fond of Disney, to the Disney media. It is important to see how much contact the person has with the Disney media in order to analyse how do they perceive it and act with it in their lives. Also it has been taken under investigation whether the person has focused their attention only on the Disney movies or is also a fan of the comic books, theatre plays and the rest of the products. Furthermore it has been researched whether people differentiate between the Disney media, as an example, whether they choose which kind of media they choose to let in and what are the reasons for that, as this might have an effect on how they communicate with the Disney media. Also the author tried to see whether there was a connection between the fans and the Disneyland Paris parks, and how did the respondents feel about the parks and visiting them in general as well. Disneyland Paris parks were taken into consideration because the research was done in the innate area of the parks, which also suggested that the respondents might have a connection with the parks. The author also tries to differentiate between different types of Disney fans. For example the notion whether the fan is also a collector of Disney items will be taken into consideration. In this case it is necessary to research why that person is a collector, since it might have its roots as well in the Disney media. The first research question is the basis for the whole thesis and the sub-questions are supportive aims throughout conducting this research. No hypothesis was set, as this was an open research, a qualitative one, and the author did not set any expectations of what would be the outcome. Furthermore the author tried to approach it with no prejudice when talking with the participants. This helped to keep an open mind and personal opinions away from the project.

In the theoretical aspects of this work, the author has used literature reviews completed previously by other authors. The key to the whole thesis lies in the work of Nick Couldry, who started to develop a theory called media as practice, which investigates on a general basis exactly what has been done in this thesis – it takes a look at how people interact with media in their everyday lives. The rest of the theoretical materials have been gathered together from various American and European authors, from many different countries and even disciplinary backgrounds. Furthermore an overview of media in general and its presence in the society is provided, creating a background for understanding the importance of media in the everyday life. Corporate identity has been investigated as well, since their presence in the media, their identity formation, also affects what kind of messages people gain from the media. It can

directly influence the perception of a company by its audience and the opinion towards it. As Disney presents itself mainly through media both of those aspects are of high importance to them, as this is how they can influence people's understanding and perception of what Disney is. Moreover, the fan audiences in general and Disney as a company have been discussed as well. Also, a brief look has been taken on the concept of globalisation as Disney is an American brand spreading all over the world, it appears to be necessary to investigate the trends and patterns occurring in the process of globalisation.

A qualitative approach was taken and an empirical research was conducted in order to see how people interact with the Disney media. To this end, the author has carried out in-depth interviews with 10 people. The author found these people through social networking sites, which included fan sites for Disney, Disneyland and Disneyland Paris. The research was based in France, Ile-de-France, since the people there can also have easier access to the Disneyland Paris parks, which gives yet another angle to the level of negotiation they might have with the Disney media.

The thesis composes of two big sections: the theoretical background and the empirical research. In the theoretical background, the author introduces various works previously done in similar and linking topics. Within the theoretical section the method will be explained to a further extent as well. The second section is the empirical research, which provides the reader with an overview of the results gathered during the research process and analysis of those said results. In the appendices the author has brought out the interview questions and the transcriptions of the in-depth interviews conducted.

This kind of a research design allowed the author to see how do people perceive and negotiate with the Disney media and thus initially what is the role of a big media corporation, like Disney is, in their audiences' life, making the research tangible and socially relevant. Furthermore, it gave the opportunity not just to see, how the company makes its way through society, but how people perceive it and accept or deny it. Hence, it can be said that this research provides a different perspective into a topic that has been widely discussed over the past years. As such, it carries relevance to the media scholars, the Walt Disney Company itself and the larger realm of society who are interested in similar matters.

1. Theoretical framework

1. 1 Media in society

1. 1. 1 Introduction

Just twenty years ago, media could not have been considered as an inseparable part of our lives. At least back then, it was easier to choose which information to let in, and which to leave out. It seems that nowadays media is flowing in from everywhere, almost uncontrollably, with such rate that we are not even noticing it anymore. Media has become such a part of our lives, that it has become natural to us. The everyday life is currently lead by consumption (Silverstone, 1989) which thrives through mass media. As the structure of the society becomes more complicated, people do not bother to acquaint themselves with the society as a whole, and thus they stay stranded and often aware of only their own community within the society (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Hence, those that do not contribute to the creation of media, do not often even recognize the construction of it (Couldry, 2004).

Media are not something that exists somewhere outside of the society and that affects us, it is right in the middle of our society, affecting us from within, to the core of culture (Hepp, Hjavgard, & Lundby, 2010). In every step of our lives, does not matter if in public or private, the media and publicity follow us (Poster, 2004). It is through media that private worlds become social and public. Through media people consciously share experiences, which can make those experiences seem more real than the things we do in our individual lives, as we do not share those ones with others (Couldry, 2001). Disney is a media company, thus understanding the concept of media and its presence in society is essential for understanding how a company can make themselves seen through the media. As media has such power, it is of importance to follow how is media constructed and what people do with the outcome.

1. 1. 2. People and the media

People are generally dependent on the information sources of the media. Dependency can be noticed when one side's fulfilment of needs and achieving satisfaction hangs on the resources of the other side (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1986). Medias' main aim is to raise its profit and for that they need to satisfy the needs of the audience. Through that it is important to media industry that people become dependent on them, which until now they have been relatively successful in. The more people are dependent on the media, the more of an effect it can have

on their thoughts, feelings and even behaviour (Bell-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1986). People evaluate the options of gaining information available to them. They use different media according to their various purposes. If a medium is more likely to fulfil their needs or serve a function useful to them, people are likely to choose that medium over the others. Even though information is usually the grandest need people search to fulfil through media, entertainment and possibilities for time passing can be just as important when choosing a medium (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). An illustration of that is definitely the youth, who often use media for entertainment and development of their identity (Ferle, Edwards, & Lee, 2000).

The dependency on media, for which ever reason, entertainment, information or both, indicates that media can and probably does have a noticeable effect on its users. It is not just the media that influences the people, rather the relationship between the people, media and society combined. This relationship initially makes people dependent on the media, which leads to its influence. Being dependent is a consequence of the sociocultural system, people's needs and the uniqueness of the media as an information provider (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Media even has an influence on the way people communicate (Hepp 2011). The popularity of the Internet, another form of media, has had a great effect on people's way of communication, which has changed the usefulness of the traditional media and also the everyday lives of the audience (Dimmick, Chen, & Li, 2004). Communication is the basis of the construction of the reality and society, people create their realities through communication, which also means that they do not build it on their own, but in cooperation with other communicators – people. Media gets power through the actions of people and through moulding these actions (Hepp, 2011).

Moulding forces of the media are always in relation with human action, including communication. These forces become apparent through different forms of communication (Hepp, 2011). In a mediatised society, the moulding forces of the media become also a ground point for social construction (Hepp, 2010). Mediatisation in itself is not just about the change the media inflicts on the society, but it is rather about the long-term process between the media, cultural and social change (Hepp 2011; Hepp et al., 2010). Currently, mediatisation is trying to encounter the increasing involvement of technology in the societal sphere (Hepp, 2010), through which it is gaining gradually a new meaning. Virtual media has taken the mediatisation and moulding forces to a new level that is yet hard to assess (Hepp, 2011). Hepp (2010) has differentiated between three levels of mediatisation: the temporal, the spatial and the social level. The temporal level represents the growing amount of continuous media available to people, spatial level refers to the spreading of media use throughout people's lives

and the social level represents the usefulness of media within almost every social sphere (Hepp, 2010). Furthermore, the effects and the level of mediatisation vary in every social field (Hepp et al., 2010). However, it can be seen that people are already holding back personal material from the media and are resistant to putting everything out there in the wide space of the online world. This way, people are protecting the once used boundaries of not shifting everything personal into the realm of the public (Couldry, 2008).

Nevertheless, all this indicates that media has at least some kind of a power in our lives, this influence does not have to be necessarily just one directional, and most likely it is not just a direct and pure form of media influencing people, but rather a mix of what media is sending out and what people make of it. However, some theories have been developed and in one of which three levels of effects have been brought out. First of which are the cognitive effects, which is divided into many parts. When information is gathered through the media, a certain level of ambiguity can pertain as this information might not be sufficient for the particular audience to form opinions or understanding of the matter. Interestingly enough, it is the same media that can take care of the ambiguity by filling in the gaps. Also it is up to the media to decide which information is presented, thus restraining the audience to make interpretations based on a specific set of information. This leads to agenda-setting (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Media has the power to frame and bring to people's attention discourses that otherwise may have not appeared in everyone's daily life (Couldry, Livingstone, & Marhkam, 2007). This appearance of media exists everywhere, in every social sphere, be it political, economic or social. People have access to everything that is going on around us through media (Couldry, 2009b). This indicates that media has also an effect on attitude formation, as media brings matters into the public attention and helps to form opinions towards those issues. Furthermore, media can also have an effect on the audiences' values by giving the audience certain types of conflicts to ponder upon which finally will set the ground for value clarification. Second set is affective effects, which indicates the influence on audience's emotions. As last, behavioural effects exist, which refer to the activation or de-activation of the audience, as a consequence of something gained from the media (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). All this indicates that media will keep on framing not just the society but also start framing the actions of the individuals (Couldry, 2009b).

1. 1. 3. Internet and traditional media

Internet has become one of the leading media in communication and information sharing (Dimmick et al., 2004). Over the last decade the audience for online news has rapidly grown

and has now become relatively large as it is continuously expanding (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Internet has developed to become quite different from the rest of the mediums, as it is able to combine the qualities of the other mediums into one and as it facilitates two way communication. Thus Internet creates many opportunities that were unattainable for the audience before just through one medium (Ferle et al., 2000). As people are searching for their needs to be fulfilled by each medium, the new medium will compete with the traditional media for that position. Not only is the audience being fought for, but the advertisers as well. The audience has literal value to the media industry, as their time is sold to the advertisers, meaning that when audience numbers decrease so do the profits of the media industry (Dimmick et al., 2004). When trying to compete for the audience, it is important to keep in mind that people would rather be active than passive users of the media, which is why even the traditional media has started to provide interactive options to their audiences (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000).

Hence when a new medium appears, the audiences will evaluate it, based on their own satisfaction needs and see whether the new medium is in any way better than the old mediums that have been in use so far (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). A new medium can only survive by satisfying its audience. The Internet has an advantage in this point, as it is able to provide the widest range of satisfaction to the audience than any other media (Dimmick et al., 2004). This can lead to the displacement of the traditional media, as increasingly audiences turn to the Internet for fulfilling their needs for information and entertainment (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Internet has gone so far as to some extent replace the actual experience with learning material online for teens, who would rather gain knowledge online than take the risks of the actual experience itself (Ferle et al., 2000). Some say that the traditional side of media is gradually fading away, as people can now participate by posting their thoughts, commenting on and sharing ideas that they like and can have access to media through online sources.

The biggest hit from the transition to Internet is being taken by television and newspaper press, which are being displaced by the new media. The Internet simply fulfils more needs of the audience than the two others do, making it more favourable to the people (Dimmick et al., 2004). It may occur that large parts of the audience switch from newspaper news to online versions of news, as it is much more convenient for the audience, as it has more information and is always accessible. Also the searching and using of information and news, is more under the control of the user than in the case of traditional media. It is up to the audience to see, which kind of information they want to search for, which news they want to

read and when to do it. The audience generally has two main needs: their need for information and need for control (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Interactivity can even be considered as a form of controlling the flow of information (Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998), thus it is evident that Internet does complete those needs rather easily. In the light of those main desires, people are setting up their own mass media, which can lead to interpersonal media being one of the primary modes of connection (Couldry, 2009a). Even though this might indicate the disappearance of the traditional media, there are also other factors that intersect with the interpersonal communication and hence also prevent the traditional media from collapsing (Couldry, 2009b). However, even though the needs of the audience might be met, the people also have to have the knowledge on how to search for information online and how to go about with the technology. Also, even though it is harder for the traditional media to reach consumers, new methods have been developed to reach high-value consumers, who are being targeted by tracking their online movements and providing them with advertisements tailored just for them based on their preferences (Couldry, 2009b). This gives the traditional media still the opportunity to keep track of the consumers and also keep the consumers hooked on their products.

Furthermore people often use Internet foremost as a source of entertainment than anything else, which shows that traditional media still has its place. Also it has been noted that the parts of audience who gain their information from the online sources often also turn to the traditional ones, in a way doubling their information flow. This indicates that the result of the competition between the new and the traditional media will rather depend on individual users than the whole society (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Even though the online sources provide a whole range of satisfactory aspects to the audience, overlap also exists between the traditional media and the Internet (Dimmick et al., 2004). It seems that only a relatively small part of the current traditional media audience will leave it completely for the online medium (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2000). Hence instead of one side collapsing, media is becoming a fighting arena between the traditional and the new (Couldry, 2009b).

1. 1. 4. Digital divide

Digitalization and the wide spread use of media online has in the past years become a relevant part of the society. Due to digitalization and the spread of high-speed Internet access, every spot on the world is connected with another through some sort of media and that connection is usually not just a one-way street, as both of the ends might be seen as the receiver and as the sender. That is also one of the greatest changes that is happening to our media, there are no

strict boundaries anymore between the producer and the consumer (Couldry, 2009b). However, not all the places are part of that network as the digital divide is still rather noticeable. Until now digital divide has been mainly applied to the gap that exists within a country between the people who have access to the information and communication technologies (ICTs) and have the skills for using them and those who do not have such privileges. However, just as important is the digital divide that exists between nations and their people (Cullen, 2001).

When to consider the access to ICTs it should be looked at from the individual's perspective. It is important not to confuse the access to ICTs with the actual use of it. Even if the community or nation has access to ICTs it does not necessarily mean that the individuals within that community are taking advantage of that access and know how to use the technology they have been given. Furthermore, even if the individuals take use of the ICTs, it is not sure to say to which extent they are using it and whether they are obtaining the full potential of the ICTs (Selwyn, 2004). There are no simple solutions to digital divide that could be applied, either between nations or within them. Solving a digital divide is rather a long term process (Cullen 2001). The complexity of the digital divide derives from the aspect that there are different levels of it, and they all develop independently, as one widens the other can disappear (van Dijk & Hacker, 2003).

1. 1. 5. Media as practice

All of this makes it rather difficult to comprehend and grasp the effect media can have on its audience and their everyday lives. One way of discussing and discovering the effect of media is through media as practice theory developed by Nick Couldry.

Media practice introduces a different way of understanding media as a practice, not a text or a structure. It sees media not just a strictly closed set of media known to us already, but this theory suggests that media is also the practices relating to and revolving around media. Couldry (2004) suggests that the until now mostly investigated subject of media effects is actually insoluble thus he is trying to avoid it with his new theory. It appears that this theory is completely new in its essence of not being dependent on any textual models and analysis (Couldry, 2004).

The goal of the paradigm is to take away the focus from the media texts and structures and concentrate more on the practices linked to media itself. The difference in this theory lies in trying to understand what people are doing and how they categorise their actions (Couldry, 2004). It might be at first confused with well-known audience studies, but in fact media

practice theory concentrates more on what "are people doing in relation to media across a whole range of situations and contexts" (Couldry, 2004, p. 119). The theory does not look at media as an object, it concentrates more on "the contributions the media practices make to the social practice" (Couldry 2004, p. 130). To understand how the media is intertwined in the social and cultural life, we need to start discovering the perspective of the practice (Couldry, 2004).

1. 1. 6. Conclusion

All in all the effects of the media form a full circle. Firstly the audience has needs that they search to be met by the media. Once they find what is suitable for them, the media start adapting itself to the needs of the audience, to keep them connected, all the while influencing people's needs, behaviour, values and in general, their characteristics (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Furthermore, as media practice theory suggests, it influences how people think, talk and act in reference to a certain subject. Although it is yet difficult to comprehend to which extent the media has a role in society and the lives of its members, it is quite evident that the effect, in one way or another, whether influencing peoples' needs and values or directly having an effect on their actions and their everyday practices, exists and thus needs to be investigated even more.

1. 2. Fan Audiences

1. 2. 1. Introduction

In the nowadays society, people spend gradually more time with the mass media, sometimes even more than with interpersonal communication (Livingstone, 2003). Through the media, they find information, they entertain themselves and they communicate. Media provide a basis, a groundwork, for people to find the band, show, product or anything they are fond of, which might lead them to becoming a fan. One big part of that mass media is the Internet. When a decade back, the Internet was just a place to publish and search for information then by now it has become a medium for communication (Manovich, 2009). Internet makes it easier for fans of certain products or people to connect with each other and find information about the subject of their admiration. For this thesis fans are of utmost importance as the relations between the Disney fans and the Disney media have been researched.

1. 2. 2. The meaning of a fan

Mass entertainment is currently such a big part of people's lives, that it often affects its audience in ways that make them become fanatical about a certain subject (Brown, 1997). It is remarked that fandom could not exist without the occurrence of the star culture. Without the existence and making of a star, or a star product, people would not have anything to be a fan of (Théberge, 2005). In general that is to say, that fans need something to be a fan of, be it then a particular person, show or even a company. Most fans are usually so active in following the news of their object of admiration, in creating fan clubs, writing about their passion and communicating with other fans that it can even be said that fans are the lead users of media (Jenkins, 2007).

Fandom as such is an amplification of the known popular culture. Fans take that known culture to the next level by giving it greater importance in their lives than other people. They are not just regular audiences for the popular culture, but they develop their own culture from it. It creates a specific culture that acts according to the same rules as the regular culture but it gives the fans the opportunity to gain the position in the community they might be denied elsewhere (Brown, 1997). Fandom is not just a desire to follow the admirable subject and become just the same, but it is more about deliberate excessive consumption and creating one's own meaning around it (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). Academia has even recognized that fandom derives from a mixture of interest in the subject and of anger towards it. That is to say it evolves from the acceptance of some core values but yet on the other hand from changing

some others to fit the needs and interests of the fan. Fans generally tend to accept the core values of their subject of admiration but that is not to say that they agree with everything, thus often they also alter the story to their own likings (Jenkins, 2007).

Being a fan is never just blind admiration of a certain object, it rather gives the fan the opportunity to express oneself through the communication with other fans (Brown, 1997). Fans evolve from the feeling of pleasure, the feeling they get from the subject of their admiration, as long as the feeling is real, the fandom is as well (Sperb, 2010). Individuals and even groups develop a personal relationship with the subject that for some reason seem to satisfy their needs, thus giving them the feeling of pleasure (Brown, 1997). Often, however, fans do alter their personal appearance or the environment around them, in order to achieve maximal proximity with their subject of admiration. One of the problems of highest importance to the fans is the emotional closeness with the persons or companies they like, but who have almost always no idea of the fans individual existence. Fans often know everything about their favourable person or company, but as usually those subjects have more than just the one fan hence they have no clue about the existence of the individual and the individual's preferences, thus creating an unequal relationship (Narvaez, 2007). Lately that has been changed a little by the emergence of Internet and the possibilities it provides for communication.

The digital revolution in general, has had a great effect on fandom, especially by bringing the producers closer to the audience and their fans (Pearson, 2010). Internet has taken fandom to a new level, giving them new opportunities to express themselves and interact with the whole community. Siapera (2004) has differentiated between six different categories of the audience online, among others is also the group of fans. This indicates that fans have gained so much power over the Internet, that they have started to stand out from the rest of the audience. Fans have now become a special target group in the online media. Homepages of shows and performers often offer personal information of the artists, upcoming projects, and even some have created platforms for fans to communicate in (Siapera, 2004).

Becoming a fan is usually a gradual process, that people do not remember happening, as no conscious decision of becoming a fan is usually ever made. Through becoming a fan, they are, however, willing to take over the identity attached to the fandom of the subject and be proud of it (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). Nostalgia generally plays an important role in the reasons of becoming a fan, as it provides the person with happy memories from the past (Sperb, 2010). Being a fan for many years, increases also the likelihood of becoming an even greater fan than the rest of the community (Brown, 1997).

One indication of that is being a collector. Collectors usually have a special status amongst the fan communities. Being a high profile collector indicates knowledge and ability to make a difference between items that are worth something and items that are not. It is generally conceived in the fan communities as having impeccable taste (Brown, 1997). Collecting can be considered already a part of obsession, but it can also be seen as preserving history and constructing one's identity (Théberge, 2005). Gathering items of admiration is mainly about gaining the exceptional, not just everything that is set out there for the audiences to buy. On the other hand, collecting can also be seen as an investment in the future and as business, since knowing what to buy and when to sell it, can bring in considerable amount of money. Although these kinds of investors are considered as villains within the fan communities and their contribution is not appreciated (Brown, 1997).

1. 2. 3. The fan's creations

Internet has become the playground for fans, allowing them to interact with each other, while searching information, posting comments and photos about their object of admiration. It is not known how many fan clubs exist for one performer, mark or product, let alone how many fan clubs exist in total (Théberge, 2005). Fandom and fan clubs create a network of information flows (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). Fans often take part in discussions about their passion. Online fan clubs have created a new meaning to the fan club. In addition to the communication between fans, it gives the fans the opportunity to interact with their idol, which was almost impossible before the Internet became so available in the everyday life. What makes the communication even more special in a way, is that it is ongoing and immediate (Théberge, 2005). It can even be said that online fan clubs have a certain power over their object of admiration (Siapera, 2004), as the creators are often willing to change and shape their products according to the requests of the fans (Manovich, 2009). Fans and producers are now cooperating as opposed to the previous state of always being against each other (Théberge, 2005). Also online fan clubs create audience loyalty, which is not that common as usually audiences are rather mobile and change their minds quite often (Siapera, 2004).

Most fan clubs are very similar to each other, regardless of the object they are devoted to. They often provide the opportunity for the fans to purchase various kinds of merchandise, they share exclusive information of upcoming events or releases with the fans and even in some cases the fan clubs promote other events or products that are favourable to the image of the subject itself. Of course the most uniting factor between all fan clubs is still

communication. Many fan clubs also often produce their own publications and as those publications are mostly independent from the subject, they can often reveal aspects that would have kept hidden by the company or artist (Théberge, 2005). Fans also produce fan fiction, which means they take the time and write a second story line, an alternate ending or a sequel for the original creation, be it then a movie, a book or something else. Fan fiction often elaborates on elements, that fans believe should have been discussed more in the original. It often depicts the characters of the original creation in completely different situations and even with other characteristics that one would account to the original character. That kind of writing often gives basis for slash, which is a form of fan fiction, where heterosexual characters are shown in homosexual relationships. Fan fiction is not just a method for fans to live out their fantasies, but it is to allow them to criticize and comment on the society. The authors of fan fiction often present their ideas on gender roles, politics and other important questions in the society (McCardle, 2003). Of course there are also fans who have no interest in engaging in any conversation nor in producing their own content. They just wish to enjoy the creation of their admiration subject (Pearson, 2010).

Active fans, who have an outlet for their admiration and who are engaged in the conversation with the company or artist are also much more willing to defend the subject of their admiration than a regular audience member. Fans are not defending their admiration subject on the basis of whether they did anything wrong or not, but on the basis of the feeling that the subject generally gives them (Sperb, 2010).

1. 2. 4. Criticism towards fans

Although this might not be apparent to every group in the society, fans are usually viewed as mindless followers, as fans in general are often connected with popular culture and popular culture is already considered as something that should not be taken seriously. Fans are degraded as they have too much interest in popular culture (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). The so called elite is offended because fans admire Hollywood movies, comics or other similar products with such affection as should be given to classical literature and similar forms of art. Fans challenge the regular understanding of good taste and they supposedly disrupt the familiar cultural and societal discipline, recognized by the larger part of society, and for that they are degraded (Brown, 1997). However, what most people tend not to notice is, that almost everyone takes part in some form of popular culture, and often even enjoy it, nonetheless this is usually considered taboo (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008).

Fans are often reluctant to noticing the negative aspects of their subject of admiration. Be it the deeds of an artist or the content of a film, fans often not just feel the need to defend it, but they just fail to recognize the aspects under criticism. This might be because the creators have trained the fans to think and comprehend the society in a certain way, favourable to them (Sperb, 2010). However, in general, the notion that being a fan is a disgrace is being disputed about by the academia (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000) and one can hope that the degrading attitudes will one day change.

1. 2. 5. Conclusion

In a nowadays society, the fan is becoming the ideal consumer. The old ideal might have been the regular couch potato, but as fans are willing to promote the product, the fan is what every creator wants to have on their side (Jenkins, 2007). Fans willingness to seek information in depth makes fans an important feature to the society, as with their knowledge they can critique and create awareness (Théberge, 2005). They should be considered important as they can have an effect on how the cultural industry operates (Jenkins, 2007). With their potential to influence the society, fans should not be degraded but rather be seen as an equal group in the society.

1. 3. Corporate image and identity

1. 3. 1. Introduction

To comprehend the success of Walt Disney Company and its popularity, one must look at the basic standards of creating and branding a big company. Walt Disney is a well-known brand for most of the world, and everyone creates one's own discourse around it. However, this discourse almost always matches in the most important points, making it the discourse of Disney. This is where creating a corporate identity and branding come into play.

Defining corporate identity is not an easy job, as a lack of unified understanding exists of the meaning of corporate image, communication, reputation and how they are related with each other (Balmer, 2001). Corporate identity has been considered the way the organisation presents itself to the exterior, especially to its stakeholders (Markwick & Fill, 1997) and it refers to aspects that make the corporation different from others. Furthermore, it is probably more accurate to speak of one corporation's many identities rather than just one, as the creation of them is complex and yet not completely understood (Balmer & Wilson, 1998). The primary goal of corporate identity is to gain an advantage over the other companies and be a competitive organisation on the market (Balmer & Stotvig, 1997). Even though corporate identity seems to be all consuming term, differentiation has been made between the image and the identity of a company. Identity is something what the company wants people to see and the image is how people perceive the identity. Identity is concerned with making a brand unique while image is focused on the perception of the brand (Harris & de Chertnatony, 2001). Noticeably there is a close link between the two, as one is the basis for the other (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

Corporate identity should carry the essence and goal of the organisation and thus it encloses many characteristics of the said company. Those characteristics include its values, history, culture and the industry the organisation is active in (Balmer, 1998). As these aspects provide a basis for an identity, the identity is the groundsel for company communication, reputation and image. However, it is important to keep in mind that corporate identities are never fully formed, but they are actively evolving, as the companies have to keep working even after the identity is formed to maintain it. For any company a good corporate identity can be a platform for success (Balmer, 2008). Corporate identity is in general something what makes a company unique, it consists of many different aspects including design, communication, behaviour, culture and hence it is strictly related to the image of the company (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

1. 3. 2. Formation of corporate identity

There are many aspects that define corporate identity. Some of them being the organisational type, the quality, location and culture (Balmer, 2008). Melewar (2001), has differentiated between seven different categories of organisational identity, that have been basis for many further researches (e.g. Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). The seven categories that comprise the corporate identity are communication, design, culture, behaviour, structure, identity and strategy (Melewar, 2001).

Communication includes all various sorts of interaction that the company has with its stakeholders and the exterior world (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). It consists of controlled communication and uncontrolled communication. Controlled communication is usually what people within the company say to their audience, this includes not just the management but also the regular employees who communicate on the behalf of the company. The uncontrolled communication is the spiral that spins off the controlled communication. Most commonly that is noticeable in the case of media, as what is said there and how it develops is usually out of the hands of the management (Melewar, 2001).

Second important feature is the corporate culture, which indicates how the employees feel being in the corporation and what they think about it. A strong culture is fundamental to the success of the organisation. Thirdly, connected closely to the corporate culture, is the corporate behaviour, which includes yet again the management and all the rest of the employees, how they present the company and behave in front of their audience. Corporate behaviour has a clear effect on the identity and image of the company, as how the company and its employees act, defines what the company is (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

Another important factor is the corporate structure, which consist of branding and organisational structure. Branding strategies are used for making an organisation unique and thus noticeable and competitive on the market. Organisational structure consists of the hierarchy and the lines of command, which directly links it to the branding structure. However, structure can be changed, meanwhile changing identity or culture are far more difficult tasks and would most likely require the change of the company at its core (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

Also the identity of the industry can influence the corporate identity. An industry that has a very clear identity may strongly influence the company who is yet trying to form its identity, thus similar identities and furthermore images might be adopted. The ease of having the same identity as the industry that is being operated in, is made clear also when looking at

the corporate strategy, which usually marks the goals and strategies for a competitive organisation (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). Yet it is the identity and image of the industry, that set the rules on how wide it is being considered by the audience. For example, in the case of Disney, industry could be considered as narrow as animation or as wide as mass media. Corporate strategy sets the rules on what the company produces and how much profit should be made on those products (Melewar, 2001).

1. 3. 3. Managing corporate identity

It is important to keep in mind that the corporate identity is not just a corporate resource that replicates itself when no effort is given. Instead corporate identity is a very complicated phenomenon and managing it takes skill and time. Effective corporate identity management will lead to having a positive image and reputation (Balmer & Wilson, 1998). In general corporate identity management involves applying consistent corporate behaviour, implementing corporate communication and making the company visible (Simoes, Dibb, & Fisk, 2005). It is no secret that every corporation would like to have a good reputation to be more competitive in the market, thus a positive reputation is what managing a corporate identity is most often aimed at.

Reputation has a great influence on the stakeholders and employees. It differs from image in the aspect that reputations are formed on long-term opinions and understandings of a certain company, while images can be formed on a short-term basis. Thus reputations are also more durable and help the company keep its good name even when something unfavourable should occur (Markwick & Fill, 1997). Nevertheless, the connection between the two is obvious, as the reputation is based on the history and behaviour of the company over time, people form their perception of the company based on those same activities, thus forming the identity and initially the image of the company (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). However, images can be changed quickly when changing the principles and communication, but reputation sticks with the company and is thus not so easy to alter (Markwick & Fill, 1997).

When still trying to create a reputation, creating an identity and image is essential to the process. Having an identity that works can give a competitive advantage in the market (Simoes et al., 2005). To make an identity work effectively it requires consistent reminders to stakeholders and the audience about the brand's identity (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Identity management consists of messages about the brand, products and prices (Simoes et al., 2005). This indicates the importance of communication, within the identity management, as what the company says or does not say, defines what the identity is and will be. The

communication has to be entwined with messages about the company's mission and values so that the aim of the company would be clear (Simoes et al., 2005). Communication is the link between the corporate identity and formation of the reputation (Balmer & Gray, 1999). It is the key to creating favourable perceptions and effective communication can also be of help to resolving some unwanted perceptions (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). However, communication can be tricky, as the senders and receivers always translate it through their own cultural backgrounds. Not only is the message sent out interpreted by the cultural heritage of the sender, but the receiver adds also meanings to it, that could not be in the agenda of the sender (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

Another important aspect of corporate identity branding is making the company visible and creating an identity through these aspects. The aspects of visual identity include the company name, logo and slogan. A distinctive design can help to attract stakeholders and customers, enhance the publicity the company gets (van den Boch, de Jong, & Elving, 2005). The visual identity can affect how stakeholders, employees and consumers see the company and how they perceive it (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). The visual identity carries the essence, the meaning, main beliefs and initially the nature, of the organisation (van den Boch et al., 2005). Visual identity and symbolism is not anymore only about visibility but has increased to be a part of communication of corporate identity (van Riel & Balmer, 1997). The logo is the base for visibility, but the literal things that the logo is attached to provides the basis for the image and reputation of the company (van den Boch et al., 2005). Corporate visual identity is considered an essential part of selling the brand to the customers and stakeholders, also on an international level (Melewar & Saunders, 1998).

Constructing a new corporate visual identity can be seen as a first step towards building a new corporate identity and reputation (van den Boch et al., 2005). For instance Disneyland Paris illustrates how the change of visual identity can help to change the whole course of the company itself. When Disneyland Paris was created, it was known as Euro Disney. However, the business did not thrive, which led the company to believe a change was necessary and that peaked in the audience's eyes with the change of the name to Disneyland Paris. After the change of identity, the company started gaining power and is until now one of the most visited tourist attractions in Paris (d'Hauteserre, 1999; d'Hauteserre, 2001).

Creating a positive image internationally can often be rather difficult, as shown by the case of Disneyland Paris. International companies have to choose between the local and the international managers in forming an image that would be pleasing to both. Furthermore, when a company is well-known while trying to enter an international arena, like Walt Disney

was, it probably has to keep on portraying the same values as up until that point, making it on one side easier to integrate, as the brand is already known which makes it easier to accept, but on the other harder, as the known brand might not fit into the existing environment. Standardisation can be considered the basis for globalisation (Melewar & Saunders, 1998). This is also shown by Disneyland Paris because although they did localize some aspects of their company, the main philosophy and values stayed the same.

1. 3. 4. Employees and the corporation

Employees are the basis of every organisation, as they make the organisation what it is. Organisational culture involves all the employees at all hierarchical levels (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Employees who have accepted the values of the organisation are usually willing to even spontaneously act in the favour of the organisation (Balmer & Wilson, 1998). Identity is comprised of the organisation's unique factors, which derive from its members, employees (van Riel & Balmer, 1997). It can even be deduced that the identity is how the members perceive the organisation. Usually, as a result of a well-managed corporate identity, the company values at its core are understood the same by everyone (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

However, there can be some deviances from that. Even though the message of corporate identity is spread by the management the same way to everyone, when trying to understand the perception of the employees, the cultural background needs to be taken into account once more. Not only will the employees interpret the message according to their own culture, it is important to keep in mind that the employees are also often part of groups that lie outside of the organisation and thus attaching meanings to the message through those groups (e.g. special interest groups, consumers). Also, if the gap between the corporate identity and image is too big, the employees might take notice of this and thus starting to communicate unfavourable remarks to outsiders. Thus comprehending how the message will reach the employees will help to manage how they will influence the corporate identity and culture (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

As many companies are not just selling their products, but also the emotions, norms and values that accompany these products, the employee involvement becomes vital. Employees are the ones who are able to carry these aspects on the most immediate level to the consumers and stakeholders. Employee behaviour and communication influences the company's identity at all stages which is why recruitment and training are an essential part of managing corporate identity (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Employees are becoming of more

importance to creating a positive reputation, with an image and identity that will match with it.

1. 3. 5. Conclusion

In general, corporate identity is a "product" that will never finish developing and it can also never be completely managed to every detail. Corporate identity consist of creating an image through cultural values and products, which are all individually perceived, making the complete control of an identity rather difficult (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Nevertheless developing an identity, which people can relate to, will help a company to motivate its employees, attract investors and customers (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). Having a well-planned positive corporate image and reputation, is what initially makes a company successful and able to compete in the local and international markets.

1. 4. Globalisation

1. 4. 1. Introduction

Globalisation is yet a rather vague concept and different disciplines are invested in studying globalisation. It is everywhere but yet nowhere at the same time. It is not something that some people wish to do or to accomplish, it is a process that is happening to everyone, whether they want it or not (Bauman, 1998). The term globalisation has often been marked with a negative connotation, however as every occurrence has its positive and negative aspects, so does globalisation. In this case though, it is difficult to quite yet to decide which of the two aspects is dominant, hence now the process should be accepted as it is.

1. 4. 2. Globalisation and glocalisation

Nowadays media is revolving around multi-media corporations, that are often multi-national, or around large national companies (Arsenault & Castells, 2008). Until now the United States media keeps dictating what is known as global. The US media is in some extent available to almost all people in all parts of the world, making its influence global as well. The United States is the lead exporter in media products, a big part of which lies of course on the film industry (Thussu, 2007). Hollywood films are shown in most countries of the world and they usually as well dominate the market share of the movie industry (Miller et al., 2005 via Thussu, 2007). Furthermore, the films and TV shows are currently spreading through illegal sources, as they are often being downloaded through the Internet. Illegal or not, the US media is due to the sharing online gradually reaching a wider audience. This illustrates the importance of the American culture and its movies since they are spreading and thus also influencing people all over. Although the receivers have a choice of what to watch and what to take in, it is often a choice between the same provider's products, which is especially the case in the Western world. Even though people can choose when downloading a series or going to a cinema, the choice they have been given is more often than not between Hollywood productions.

Seeing and defining globalisation boils down to two main perspectives. One of them saying that globalisation leads to a homogenized world, which is led by a single culture and that all other cultures and differences are bound to disappear (Khondker, 2004). On the other hand is the view that states that globalisation does not stand for the disappearance of all cultures nor for the appearance of a global culture, but rather for the emerging of a whole new

world with new cultures, which have been combined and mixed from the old cultures (Bauman, 2008). Although it is currently hard to state which of those two theories will pan out, it appears that the current situation lies somewhere on the crossroads of the possible theories. As the United States presumably has the leading culture of globalisation it could be seen that a lot of other cultures have become more similar to the US one. However, it could be also noticed that a lot of mixes have been made of different cultures, thus new forms of cultures may have been raised.

Although the US does have an important role in globalisation it is also essential to keep in mind that globalisation does not necessarily mean westernisation. In every country where the American culture is trying to push their way through, the people form their own views and understandings of the American way. Also often a counter-flow occurs, where Americans take over cultural aspects from the rest of the world (Thussu, 2007). The Americans have taken over some concepts of TV shows, which are one of the carriers of culture that are most easily transmitted across borders. However, the Americans also often change the concept and turn it in a way "American" and export it much more than the original ever was, meaning the rest of the world will still see it as the American product (e.g. the TV show *Ugly Betty* originated in Colombia).

Nevertheless the US is still dominating the globalisation platform. Globalisation has been taken so far that the largest media organisations own a lot of properties through which they deliver their content to the people, using an increasing number of different outlets for it. Furthermore, the barriers between the traditional media and the new media companies are diminishing. Everything is becoming digital and media organisations are keeping up with the trend, thus moving to the Internet (Arsenault & Castells, 2008). Digitalisation makes in a way peoples life easier, as the necessary information is always at hand and people can arrange their business from the comfort of their homes. Hence for companies who have managed to keep up to the trend, it is gradually easier to reach people and make them consumers without anyone even realizing it, as often they are not doing it directly from their own name. Furthermore, many of those companies, like Disney, have partnerships and investments with others, thus they enlarge the area of their impact even more (Arsenault & Castells, 2008).

While the companies themselves are globalized, their content is usually customized to the specific place they are acting in. The adjustments made still revolve around the original, saving its essence (Arsenault & Castells, 2008). Glocalisation is the cooperation between the global and the local (Matusitz, 2010). It essentially means trying to make a product or a concept acceptable to a certain area while keeping its global ambiance. Media is the factor

that makes it all easier, as people are in touch with other cultures on a daily basis, without ever crossing borders (Roudometof, 2005). As it might seem in the complete benefit for the local areas, it is actually just done for commercial success (Thussu, 2007), as people accept new things that are already somehow familiar to them more willingly than completely new concepts. Moreover, the core of glocalisation lies in the understanding, that forcing people to accept cultural values that they are not accustomed to, does not always work (Matusitz, 2010), thus discovering new ways to implement a product is necessary. In general it can be said that companies who wish to succeed on an international level have to adapt. The companies have to show respect towards the local preferences (Matusitz, 2010). It means that even though companies usually have very strict boundaries on what is allowed and what not, while operating abroad, those borders should be loosened (Lam, 2010). When the rules are a bit more flexible, the product itself becomes more acceptable to the people. Eventually globalisation and glocalisation lead to cosmopolitanism (Roudometof, 2005). All this combined is affecting mostly the young members of the society, as they are the ones who mostly interpret the global information and put it in their local context (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006).

Ritzer (2003) brings another concept to the much talked about globalisation and glocalisation. To his opinion, there exists a third one – grobalisation. Grobalisation is not just about being successful with one product on an international level, but the main interest would be to see one's influence and profits grow all over the world. He also distinguishes between grobalizing nothing and grobalizing something. Nothing, in his opinion, would be emotions and experiences, and something is a certain product, be it then a play or an art exhibition. While the nothing can be defined with lack of distinctive content then the something is rich in content. It appears that grobalizing nothing is much easier than grobalizing something, as nothingness is more appealing to a larger audience. Something is expensive, but selling nothing, is selling an emotion, which makes it even more desirable for the audiences. Thus grobalisation of nothing is also the key to consumption. The general rule is that the bigger the grobal market is, the lower the price is that can be charged (Ritzer, 2003). Although, there are also some exceptions to this such as the Walt Disney Company and Disneyland. They are definitely selling their brand and emotions first, through which they also sell their products. Even though their grobal market is immense, the prices still remain high and their products are not by far reachable to everyone. In total, grobalisation has its advantages but also, as it is making the global nothingness more popular it is pushing aside the local something, which succeeds in the loss of the value of something in culture (Ritzer, 2003).

1. 4. 3. Conclusion

All in all it can be noted that glocalisation is fairly important. It has had an effect on many companies and their success, including Disneyland Paris. When Disneyland Paris started as Euro Disney they were about to close their doors until they got introduced to the idea of glocalisation, which brought the company to a new life by bringing the concept of the American Disney closer to the Europeans and mainly to the French and that made it easier for them to accept it as a whole and consider it as a vacation destination. Now over 12 million visitors go to the parks every year. Also Disneyland Paris has extended so much over the years that it has now become one of Europe's most visited tourist destinations. Although the French people were at first hostile towards the whole concept of Disney in their remote living area, thanks to the localisation that has diminished (Matusitz, 2010). In general, globalisation is heading in the direction of generalizing cultures, but glocalisation is making it all a bit more complicated and giving globalisation a new face.

1. 5. Disney

1. 5. 1. Introduction

With this chapter the author creates a background to understanding Disney and the creation of it. The chapter will be widely based on Janet Wasko's work, mainly on her book "Understanding Disney: the manufacture of fantasy", as she is one of the leading authors dissecting Disney and also her work regarding Disney is touching on a wide variety of subjects that have been linked together.

Walt Disney, the founding father of the Disney Company, has described the company as follows:

> Disney is a thing, an image in the public mind. Disney is something they think of as a kind of entertainment, a kind of family thing, and it's all wrapped up in the name Disney. (…) You see, I'm not Disney anymore. I used to be Disney, but now Disney is something we've built up in the public mind over the years. It stands for something, and you don't have to explain what it is to the public. (…) They know they're gonna get a certain quality, a certain kind of entertainment. And that's what Disney is" (Jackson, 1993 as cited in Wasko, 2001a, p. 221).

Although those might be great words, when discovering the meaning of Disney, it is still necessary to keep in mind that it is not only magic that has taken the public mind that far in understanding the concept of Disney. Furthermore, the Disney image does not just miraculously appear, but it is manufactured and created by one of the largest media companies, just for their audience (Wasko, 2001a).

Disney Company's ability to create an image took the world so far that by the mid-1930s, Mickey Mouse was a widely recognized image with a whole story around him. It led the academia to investigate the phenomenon of Disney and even talk about the creation of the Disney Universe. This illustrates the global reach of the company and that Disney has almost created a new universe with its own norms and values which keep appearing in their movies and characters (Wasko 1996, via Bryman, 1999, p. 28). To grasp this phenomenon an overview of the Disney history is provided.

1. 5. 2. Overview of the Disney history

The Walt Disney Productions was officially formed already in 1923, when Walt Disney and his brother Roy Disney started producing cartoons. Later, in the 1980s, the enterprise changed its name to Walt Disney Company. Although the company started out as only producing

cartoons, the relevance of merchandizing and other areas of development became visible to them already at the end of the 1920s, when the company was divided into four parts: production, film recording, real estate and licencing and merchandising (Wasko, 2001a).

During the time of the division the wide growth of the popularity of Mickey Mouse began and with Mickey as the face of the company the whole company was on its way up. The Disney Company happened to start its business at the same time as the motion picture business was on a rise in the whole area, which made their way a bit easier. Even though Disney was quite small compared to the other movie producers at the same time, it managed to break its way through. It can not be denied that a big part in this was played by the Disney merchandize which helped to promote everything the company did or produced. However, Disney had some creations that others had not yet accomplished, Disney was the first who showed the audience a full-coloured cartoon. It led the Disney mania so far that fan clubs were created and already by the beginning of the 1930s, there were one million members in the Mickey Mouse Clubs (Wasko, 2001a).

Disney himself saw the company and its products also as a part of the education system. During the Second World War and after that, Disney was one of the companies to produce wartime education. This included short films about war and even training (Disney, 1945).

By the beginning of the 1960s, the company had developed so far that it was already mixing and synchronizing its different varieties of businesses, including movies, television and merchandizing. That gave certainly way for the later known flourishing period of Disney of 1990s – the Disney Decade. It was the time when the company was in fall, but when the new team, the Disney Team, turned the cards around and brought the company back into its former glory and further, extending it to an even greater, international, level (Wasko, 2001a).

1. 5. 3. Disney now

It is important to every once in a while try to draw attention to the fact that Disney is, and will remain a business. The aim of the company will always be to try to expand its Universe and similarly to other companies to bring in as much money for its stockholders as possible (Wasko, 2001a). Disney's goal is to make a profit and they are succeeding in doing it as to see which kinds of fields Disney has meddled with and is currently active in. Disney creates theatrical films, home videos, television shows, theatrical productions, audio productions and music publishing (Wasko, 2001a). They operate through two divisions – the Disney/ABC Television Group and ESPN Inc., reaching millions of people

(http://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-companies). Disney's holdings also include studio entertainment (like Miramax or Buena Vista, different record labels and Broadway shows), consumer products, Internet and direct marketing, theme parks and resorts and various media networks (Wasko, 2001b).

One of the most noticeable of these ownerships is definitely the investment in ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network) sports network (Wasko 2001a), which is broadcasted in 200 countries and territories internationally (http://www.espnamerica.com/fr/f2/help-feedback/about-espn-america/). Partnership with Hearst media (Hearst Corporation, USA) in the ESPN is surprising and in a way dangerous, as one might not even come to think of it, that Disney's hands would reach that far, hence also its influence on people might be wider than the audience realises. Furthermore, Disney has interests in various media networks all over the world, including Scandinavia and Japan (Wasko, 2001a).

As if that would not be enough, Disney has six theme parks, that are accompanied by tremendous resorts, including hotels, sporting and vacation opportunities. The Disney people know nowadays has grown so big that the Walt Disney World Resort in the United States of America is not just popular among tourists but also represents a hot spot for corporate tourism (Wasko, 2001a). Even if theme parks might seem out of their area of expertise, it still represents one of their main goals. Namely, even though the creation of the resorts was costly, they now bring in more money than probably most of people could even dream of (Davis, 1996).

1. 5. 4. Marketing

To maintain the image of the Disney brand and to keep people interested, Disney needs a wide network of marketing that would accomplish their goals, while not destroying their image of a non-profit organisation aimed to entertain and promote family values.

To achieve that, they have created online business, consumer product marketing (which is clearly illustrated by how Disney products are available almost everywhere) and publications (e.g. lifestyle books, novels and comics). Having their business extended through many different areas, gives Disney the opportunity to also do marketing through and within all those areas. Thus Disney is just not advertising its creations but carefully promoting them through many arenas, both in the US and internationally. Disney is especially well trained in creating special events at any step possible, starting from promotions of a movie to children's

festivals that have no immediate connection with any new up and coming product of theirs (Wasko, 2001a).

It creates a synergy which in Disney's case is rather remarkable, as all their areas promote others, often in very secretive way through product placement in TV shows or character figurines in the parks. Theme parks, with their live shows, attractions and characters walking around, offer an enormous amount of opportunities for cross-promoting. Theme parks have become the place to be for new product introduction and their promotion (Davis, 1996).

The merchandizing Disney produces, or licences others to produce, is definitely not an easy business. Everyone, who is allowed to produce Disney products, is carefully selected and Disney still owns control over them and what they create. Every Disney product has to be created by the same standards, so that they would look the same, and be recognizable as Disney's everywhere. Disney's products are sold in over 700 Disney stores all over the world, with Mickey being still the most popular character, appearing on over 7500 items, and this does not include publications (Wasko, 2001a). Seeing the wide reach of the Disney products it is safe to say, that if the film industry would stop working, Disney would still have heaps of money flowing in from other sources (Bernstein, 1989 via Wasko, 2001a, p. 98).

It is clear that the company has been so successful because of its productions and products, but a big part was also played by the man behind it – Walt Disney (Wasko, 2001a).

1. 5. 5. Walt Disney

Walt Disney owned the company and played an important role in its development and management over time until his death in 1966. As his image was at times bigger than the company's, it might often be difficult to separate the man from the company (Davis, 1996). However, it is mostly agreed upon that Disney's pitch to the company was story editing and development as he had an understanding of what people liked and how to communicate with his employees to make the ideas come true (Wasko, 2001a). It can be surely said that knowing what to produce and how to make it clear to those actually doing the work are at least one of the key elements in running a big company. Nevertheless, there is some criticism given to those, who believe Disney to be the genius behind Disney's creation. As he was not for the most of the time active in the art section nor was he alone in producing the movies (Wasko, 2001b).

However, it does seem a bit hasty to take all the credit for the company's success away from him. Walt Disney indeed had workers and took most of the acknowledgement for their

work, as he was the face of the company, but he was also the one who managed to put everyone to work according to his wishes and meanwhile take all the fame for it. It can thus be said that he still was a genius in his own way, as he was brilliant in leading a company.

Moreover, focusing on Walt's identity and not on the mere goals of the company, helps Disney to distract people from setting their eyes on the business part of Disney. The myth of Walt Disney as an art genius and the literal creator of many characters in Disney serves the purpose of promoting Disney's image and identity (Wasko, 2001b).

1. 5. 6. Identity and image

It can definitely be said that Disney is one of the most recognizable media brands. Disney usually gets direct approval from people, with no hints to criticism, as Disney is a company for family fun, so they have no ability of doing something wrong. Even though if Disney means different things to each one in the audience somehow the meaning of Disney, the entertainment part of it, is understood similarly by everyone. This image of a company distant from all that is bad has not just appeared but has been created by the company itself. Disney keeps telling us through various outlets, that they are all about the magic, family, happiness and fun (Wasko, 2001a).

The Disney brand is presented to the audience through its products. Everything from dolls up until box hit movies or Broadway shows represents what Disney is about and what they create. Hence Disney's audience is constantly consuming their products or services and through that adopting the point of view pressured on by the company itself (Wasko, 2001a).

Disney has managed to create such a strong image that it has slipped the eyes of many that a tremendous part of their products is not even aimed at children or families (Wasko, 2001a). As mentioned before, Disney is the proud owner of many radio and TV stations and also some well-known movie productions, hence distributing content that is far less suitable for children. However, Disney is producing it from under another name (e.g. Touchstone), which helps them to maintain their own identity intact.

Not only is Disney keeping its image in place, but they have also managed to make it so strong that it is hard to break by any force. This has led to the creation of Classic Disney in the public mind, which represents a specific type of story and characters. Classic Disney character is an individual with a goal, who has to face troubles to reach that goal and who gets the well-known happy ending (Wasko, 2001a). In addition to characters, Classic Disney involves also themes that can be considered typical to Disney. Mainly the stories revolve around escape, magic, romance and the fight between good and evil. Yet again the parks have

given the company the opportunity to emphasize those themes even more in a new and exciting way, which is unreachable through the movies (Wasko, 2001a). Repeating those images in any possible way has led Disney to its presented goal as the promoter of fun, magic and family values. Interestingly enough, although family values are highly appreciated within the company, almost all the Disney heroes and heroines come from broken families (Wasko, 2001a).

In addition to the heroes and heroines and the image of Walt Disney, the current face of the company is Mickey Mouse. Although Mickey used to be the central figure in animated cartoons, his main objective now is to be the logo of the company. Over the years, he has become to mean much more than just another character (Wasko, 2001a), he is now more of a character who was there when Disney was created and who has seen all the magic happen from the beginning, giving him an extra pinch of magic. Obviously Disney takes advantage of Mickey's wide spread reputation, keeping his image well protected (Wasko, 2001a). Due to all this well done image branding, it is difficult for many to see Disney as a business aimed for high profits (Wasko, 2001b).

1. 5. 7. Disney and the world

The Disney Universe is a wide spread phenomenon, reaching all sorts of areas of media and entertainment activities (Wasko, 2001a). It has led to the appearance of Disneyization, a process by which the ideals of Disney are becoming more dominant all over the world. Disneyization has many aspects to it, one of the most important ones being *theming*. Theming was not created by Disney, but they have just adapted it well and also made it famous as it is. An example of theming is apparent in the Disney parks, where one enters a world, where no detail is out of place (Bryman, 1999). All attractions, restaurants and shops follow some kind of a strict theme. Theming has taken Disney so far, that its parks are not known as amusement parks, but rather as theme parks (Bryman, 1999).

Theme parks are yet once more a great place to cross-promote everything that is going on in the company. Disney is making their own products, and not just only based on the characters from the movies or cartoons, but also more and more producing shirts and all other kinds of memorabilia based on the parks themselves (Bryman, 1999). This might appear as magic itself, as originally the parks were not a brand on its own, they were created as a way to bring in money and to promote the movie production. Over the years it developed to have a distinct identity. As such Disney has set a great example of the success that they can bring

through product sales, as other media conglomerates have been buying or building theme parks as well (Bryman, 1999).

Wasko (2001a) brings out that as it is complicated to comprehend how far the influence of Disney reaches, it is difficult to assess who it is exactly aimed at and who precisely likes it. While trying to understand the audience, it is important to keep in mind the widespread brand of Disney and to try to understand the connection the audience has had with it already during childhood. Especially because Disney makes people feel nostalgic. The adult fans often get their childhood back for a while with Disney (Sperb, 2010), often not even realising that Disney was the one that put those nostalgic elements there in the first place (Wasko, 2001a). Furthermore, people who feel this way about Disney are often also willing to defend Disney from all sorts of criticism, as they are not just protecting the company but they are guarding their own happy memories related to the company (Sperb, 2010). It appears that often the Disney audience has no idea of how much they are actually exposed to the world of Disney (Wasko, 2001a).

However there are some exceptions to that rule, which is why Wasko (2001a) differentiates between seven fan (or people) categories: fanatics, fans, consumers, cynics, uninterested, Disney resisters and antagonists. Nevertheless it seems that throughout those categories, people still see Disney more as wholesome and fun rather than business (Wasko, 2001a).

1. 5. 8. Criticism

Although Disney has a great reputation, it can also become a menace. A good reputation can make an organisation an easy target for all sorts of claims and complaints (Best & Lowney, 2009). The most visible aspects to the people are of course the movies and fairy tales Disney tells which makes them also most open to critique in the whole Disney. The fairy tales have gained a lot of criticism from folklorists as Disney changes the original concept of the fairy tale to suit its image, altering the actual story and moral line of the tale (Wasko, 2001a). Intellectuals often criticize that Disney has made so much changes that every story is blend and look alike, forming a dull popular culture. However, they seem to fail to keep in mind who are the fairy tales for and that too intense stories just would not appeal to children (Best & Lowney, 2009).

Following the fairy tales, Stone (1975) argues that Disney portrays women only as bad or good, never leaving any grey area. Also that Disney has distorted the original tales so

much, that the heroines portrayed in them do not need anything else besides their pretty face to win the fight as opposed to the original stories where the women had to have courage and wit. These kinds of depictions of women can be considered important to notice, as according to Stone (1975), fairy tales are much more than just dreams, they provide an example for children's behaviour.

As far as feminism issues go, it can be assumed that Disney will continue to gain complaints from feminists as long as Disney is sticking to the Classic Disney model (Wasko, 2001a). However, Disney is also getting attention from a lot of other societal groups. American critics have also emphasized on racial and gender stereotypes as well as not presenting the American history to its full extent, leaving out crucial parts, like brutal battles that took place at the same time period that some of the Disney movies were situated at (Best & Lowney, 2009). Stereotypes have been one of the main focuses for Dorfman and Mattelart (1971) who argued that Disney portrays different nations according to very strong stereotypes. They criticised that in Disney's comics, Mexicans are always wearing ponchos and sombreros. However, it seems that when concerning children, some stereotypical behaviour is not definitely negative, as children may gain a better understanding of the world and different nations through those stereotypes. That is not to say that presenting stereotypes should be utterly accepted, but to illustrate the different options of using stereotypes.

Furthermore, progressive critics see the so called decent content as the problem of Disney and its fairy tales. They argue that set of ideals portrayed promotes capitalism, racism and unconditional acceptance of traditional values (Best & Lowney, 2009).

On the other hand, Disney has gained criticism from Christians, who argue that the Disney fairy tales are suitable and decent in almost every way, but it is the other content that they produce, through other movie production companies, like Miramax or Touchstone, that is not suitable and that it is inappropriate to let the dapper families who watch children's movies fund the rest of the movie industry with indecent content. According to them, Disney wants to have it all, by trying to keep its good name while producing questionable movies as well (e.g *Coyote Ugly*) (Best & Lowney, 2009). Be it as it may, this clearly indicates that Disney is foremost a business and tries to gather money from every resource possible. Which means that they do not see an ethical dilemma while asking money from children and their parents so that they could initially produce movies that are not for the same audience. As Disney's goal is to make a profit, it can also be understandable why they are not concerned with such aspects.

All this illustrates that for a company of Disney's size, it is nearly impossible to satisfy everyone's' needs and expectations about the norms, values and principles Disney presents. There will always be someone who does not agree to the choices made. Disney attempted to make a movie, which would satisfy everyone – *Pocahontas*. That movie was supposed to portray women as independent, it even did not have the Classic Disney happy ending and it depicted American history. However, it still raised some criticism, as the depiction of the American history was not accurate enough (Wasko, 2001a). If to take a look at the real story of Pocahontas, it was a much more violent story, which would make it inappropriate for children. Thus being liked by everyone can be considered a dream on its own.

Another aspect often criticized is all kinds of labour that comes with Disney. Guests come in contact with emotional labour in the Disney theme parks, which has been considered a major point of criticism on Disney. Emotional labour is seen as forcing the employees to be happy and polite at all times, even if they have had a bad day and do not wish to do so (Best & Lowney, 2009). Although that is true, employees of the parks are asked to smile at all times and be polite to every and each guest, it should not be considered anything spectacular because the same rules apply to every other customer service field as well. The only difference often being is that Disney has found a way to implement those rules, as some other companies might lack in that area.

Moreover, Disney has also been critiqued for its lack of social justice (Best & Lowney, 2009). As Disney is trying to raise its profits, like many other companies, Disney has brought the manufacturing of its various products to third world countries. It is beneficial to Disney as in those regions (e.g. China, India) the production costs are low, which means that the profit for them is bigger. It could be said that as they are a company with such reputation and great value, more attention should be brought on how they manufacture their goods and they should use their reputation to bring the world's attention to such kind of an abuse of human labour (Wasko, 2001a). On the other hand, Disney is just a money thrived company, thus it can be comprehended why they, as many others, are not willing to bring their manufacturing to their own home, where it would cost many times more. However, that does not justify their actions, just sheds a bit of light on why a profit driven company might choose to act this way.

All in all Disney is blamed for many things including simplification, homogenization, globalisation, manipulation and hybrid consumption. Yet it seems that Disney's good reputation has managed to keep the whole company's head above water and dodge all those various attacks (Best & Lowney, 2009).

1. 5. 9. Conclusion

The result of all the image branding and even the criticism is that Disney is associated with everything good and proper, much more than any other profit driven company (Best & Lowney, 2009). Even though Disney's productions are not by far only for children, they still manage to keep the image of family entertainment and thus Disney is still dominant in this branch even though it is spreading to other areas as well. Nevertheless, Disney is not just about entertainment, they have the power to influence the society and its norms and values (Wasko, 2001a).

The Disney Company has expanded not just in America but all over the world by controlling their products and developing their reputation as a family brand. The Classic Disney has been promoted and spread through the consumption of the various array of goods. The high level of marketing of Disney and its products has taken the company much further than anyone could have dreamed in the very beginning.

2. Research method

As a method deductive analysis is applied. This method helped to describe and analyse in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher in order to find an answer to the research question.

Qualitative methods were chosen for this research as it gave the author the possibility to investigate the respondents' attitudes and feelings to a greater extent than any other method would have. In-depth interviews were chosen as a part of the qualitative method, as it gave the opportunity to talk more with the interviewees and discover their emotions and feelings about the subject. In the case of quantitative methods, which consist of collecting data in numbers and restricted figures, much of the information gained from the interviews would have been lost. Qualitative methods, and deductive analysis, allowed the researcher to deduce meanings from the interviewees' responses and to try to figure out the meaning behind their words. Quantitative methods lack the possibility of open result gathering and analysis, which are crucial in this case. Hence the qualitative methods were chosen to analyse the interviews. Although those methods can be considered less objective than quantitative methods, it is still definite that interviews are never completely objective which indicates that using a method which leaves room for meaning deduction is, in this case, more appropriate. Analysing interviews relies often upon feeling and subjectivity and thus deductive analysis was chosen as it will give the author more freedom and opportunity to analyse all the nuances of the interviews.

In-depth interviews were considered a good way for gathering information about the fans' connection with Disney in their everyday lives. They consist of open ended questions, which allow the researcher to modify the interview according to every respondent (Guion, & Diehl, & Debra, 2011). The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the main questions were formed beforehand, but time was left also for other questions appearing during the interview. The researcher often asked extra questions that were not originally in the interview plan. In-depth interviews are usually trying to reach the deeper core of the interviewee's answers. It is not just to create a simple question-answer form, but to see how the respondents feel about a certain subject and react to every question (Guion et al., 2011). The interviews were held in three different languages – French, English and Estonian. Respondents tend to feel uncomfortable and are often not so open when the interviews are not done in their native language. Speaking their mother tongue, helps the interviewee to feel culturally closer to the researcher and thus also possibly enclose information otherwise left out (Song & Parker,

1995). Hence the researcher tried to, when possible, to communicate with the respondents in their mother tongue. In one case that was not possible as the researcher did not speak the language of the respondent but in that situation the interviewee was fluent in English thus the language barrier supposedly did not pose any problems.

The data was collected by doing in-depth interviews with people who are fond of Disney. At first, the researcher relied on the respondents own opinion of their fondness of Disney, as no previous assessment of their fandom was possible, and later the researcher confirmed their fandom during the interviews. Those people are chosen because they are more likely to be in contact with the Disney media on everyday basis that those people who feel nothing or negativity towards Disney. In-depth interviews were also chosen as a method as this gave the researcher the chance to spend one-on-one time with the participant, as opposed to conducting for example a survey, and hopefully obtain more opinions and views on Disney. During personal interviews it is easier to gain information from people who are shy, afraid to talk and express their mind in front of a lot of people. Also, in-depth interviews have an advantage to the researcher due to the lack of resources possibly necessary for using other methods. The Walt Disney Company itself and what they portray in their media was not the focus of this research, although it has been acknowledged that it can have an effect on the people. Rather the focus is set on how the people perceive the media and how they work with it in their lives.

All together 10 people were interviewed. Although 10 is not a large number, surprisingly the answers of the respondents were beginning to repeat themselves already in the early stages of the whole interviewing process. Thus the author believes that 10 interviewees were sufficient in this case, as not much new information was surfacing after conducting the last interview. Those people were recruited through the social networking site Facebook, the official fan page that Disney has on Facebook and through personal acquaintances. The respondents did not merit anything by answering the questions, hence everything was done voluntarily which can also be an indication of the people's fondness of Disney and willingness to spread their opinion. Out of the 10 respondents six were French, three were Estonian and one was Finnish. The culture differences are not in the focus of this research, all the nationalities shared a common ground of being fond of Disney and living in Paris for already at least five years, which made them qualified for this research. The age of the respondents was between 20 and 50 years and the gender was mainly female, out of 10 respondents only three were male. Also, most of the respondents, 6 out of 10, were quite young, between 20 and 25 years of age. However, the age and gender did not seem to have

great significance within this research. The interviews were held in various cafés around the centre of Paris. Often the location was suggested by the interviewee, which suggests that it was a known place to them, thus presumably creating a more comfortable atmosphere for the respondent. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one and a half hour. The difference between the duration can be explained by the characteristics of the interviewees, as some of them tended to either speak a little and rather fast and others were more open and spoke calmly, which also affected the duration of the interview. All the interviewee's were promised anonymity, thus also further on in the analysis they will be described by age and gender but no further information about the respondents will be given.

The time period of the research does not make a difference regarding this specific master thesis. People either have Disney as a part of their lives, even if a little, or they do not, a time frame does not change the outcome of the research. When interviewing the people the aim was to see whether they are connected with the media in their everyday way of life and to find out what do people think about Disney and its media in general. The research was conducted over a couple of months in the first half of 2013, during which the interviewees were recruited, interviewed and the material analysed. The field work took place in Ile-de-France, where also Disneyland Paris is situated. Doing the research in a nearby area to the parks, gave a certain advantage to doing it in other areas, as people and fans who live close by to the parks apparently also tend to visit the them, which might not be the case with other French people or Europeans. This gave an interesting aspect to the research as visiting the parks is also a part of those people's lives and it indicates how they interact with Disney. The central questions were about the people's habits concerning Disney. This included their regularities of watching the movies and visiting the Disney parks. Some questions were centred also around their perception of Disney, the values and norms they convey but the main focus was set on their everyday life and the connection to Disney.

After the gathering of the data, the author transcribed all the in-depth interviews which can be found in Appendix 2, accompanied by the interview questions in Appendix 1. Textual deductive analysis was done after re-reading the transcripts. Textual analysis was found appropriate as it allowed the author to extract the meanings given by the respondents indirectly through phrase selection, reaction or emotions given during the interview. Prior to the analysis the author brought out the most important answers given by the interviewees. This has been done in three sub-categories: Understanding of Disney, Influence of Disney and Presence of Disney. All those categories correspond to the respondents' answers and try to give an overview of the general answers and emotions given by the interviewees. That will

make it easier for the reader to grasp the analysis. The research is definitely a subjective one, but the interaction with the Disney media is subjective as well and depends on a certain person which suggests that the subjectivity of the thesis might even be helpful to fining an answer to the research question.

By using these methods, the author was able to in the end answer the research question chosen. Combining the in-depth interviews and textual deductive analysis, the author was able to find patterns and discuss how people negotiate with the Disney media in their everyday life.

3. Results

The current chapter will provide the reader with an overview of what the respondents said during the interviews. The general answers of the interviewees will be described, including their emotions about and reactions to the questions. Full interviews can be found in the appendices. This chapter will make it easier for the reader to understand the analysis done by the author in the next chapter, where the answers of the respondents will be discussed and analysed in relation to the theoretical framework.

Altogether 10 respondents were interviewed, who were all more or less fond of Disney. After conducting the interviews it can be seen that Disney fans generally have the same view of Disney. This can be attributed to the successful media portrayal of Disney or just that perhaps the respondents were somehow similar in their way of thinking. Whichever the case, it appears that the perception of Disney is often the same. However, the presence of Disney in the fan's life depends highly on the fan. Even though all respondents considered themselves to be fans, not all of them had contact with Disney on the same level.

3. 1. Understanding of Disney

In general the interviewees had at first difficulties in understanding what the author means by Disney. Every respondent had in their own mind a picture of Disney that often meant just one component that to them was the most important one. However, when that was elaborated on with the question of how would they describe Disney, was meant the general Disney, with all its components, it did not pose any problems. Interviewees had usually divided Disney into two to three categories, more often than not those components being the movies, the parks and the feeling Disney creates. Those aspects were presented without the initiation of the interviewer, the respondents brought out the three components after they were asked what Disney is to them. All the interviewees described Disney by giving a positive description and lacking of words when trying to explain the feeling that Disney gives them. However, all of them also explained that the feeling is definitely a positive one, a happy emotion.

Furthermore when the respondents were asked whether they believe that every person should be a part of the Disney magic they almost always found that to be the case, regardless of neither age nor gender of the interviewee. A couple of the respondents explained that Disney has an important role when growing up, which also means that people who have not been in contact with Disney when they were small are lacking something from their life. None of the respondents, however, managed to explain exactly what that something was and why

precisely is it so important, but almost all of them admitted that it is crucial. They even said that the lives of adults could be made better through Disney as well. The interviewees mentioned that Disney can make adults more relaxed, happy and help them to see life in brighter colours. Although there were some respondents who did not attach any great significance to Disney, apart from entertainment, in the adult life. Some interviewees even indicated that adults could learn from Disney how to enjoy the simple things in life, however, most of them thought that adults do not have that much to learn from it. On the other hand all of them agreed that Disney can have a great effect on children and there is much to learn from Disney. When asked the question what children could learn, more than half of the respondents answered without hesitation that the main lesson to be learnt would be that good always wins over evil. It appeared that the black-and-white portrayal of good and evil did not bother any of the respondents as they did not see it as a problem in children's education. Another theme that emerged from the interviews was that children can learn how by being good and believing in yourself you can achieve anything. Although it has to be mentioned that some respondents had not at all thought about those matters and thus were unable to answer these questions. They did not deny that adults and children have nothing to learn but they just admitted that they rather interact with Disney for pure entertainment and have never thought about those topics before, thus would be incompetent to answer the questions.

The norms and values represented by Disney were generally understood the same way as what adults and children can learn from Disney. The basics that good wins over evil and believing in yourself can make you achieve your goals were the main aspects the interviewees brought out. On the other hand, yet again, some interviewees had not thought about what exactly is Disney portraying. When told that some people say that Disney promotes racism and sexism almost all of the respondents took a defensive position and started protecting Disney. In their opinion, sexism is more left to the early years of Disney, when it was also understandable because of the society back then was much more different than now. In their view, sexism can not be noticed in any way in the products Disney is producing now. However, one respondent, a 23 year old female, recognized that Disney still has to develop to make it to the same level as the society currently is in regard to women and their position.

As far as racism goes, there was some doubt. It could be noticed that some interviewees were a bit hesitant to answer those questions as it can be considered a somewhat delicate matter. The answers were roughly split in two, one side who said that this is not true, because Disney has also princesses and characters from other ethnicities throughout their movie making history, and others who said that they are not sure how to assess this, as they

do not know how much would be sufficient and where to draw the line between racism and regular character creation. Furthermore, a 24 year old male respondent brought out that even though there are not too many black characters, Disney is not sending out any racist messages neither, thus they can not be considered racist just because they do not have more characters with different ethnicities. In general people accepted the norms and values presented by Disney and agreed with them as well, saying that they promote the same values and norms in their life. They did not see anything controversial or something really negative about the story morals Disney teaches. Even couple of the interviewees mentioned that they refuse to interact with Disney in a negative way, meaning that they just do not want to see the negative in Disney. For them it is a happy experience and they like to keep it that way, no matter what the reality might be, this is the reality for them.

Furthermore about Disney's image and the perception of it, the researcher asked questions about the respondents understanding of Disney as a business. Surprisingly all of the interviewees were very well aware of the fact that Disney's main aim is after all to make a profit and some respondents were even remarkably happy about it. When constructing the research and the interview, the researcher was expecting this question to be somewhat controversial and raise doubt in the eyes of Disney fans, but it came to have a completely different reaction. One of the interviewees declared that the more products Disney makes, the better, as then they will be able to buy them all, indicating that even if Disney is a business, the audience as consumers are benefiting from it as well, as the audience can buy and enjoy the products Disney makes. Furthermore it appeared that the respondents seemed to be aware of the fact that Disney is producing toys, memorabilia and placing shops in the parks and by the attractions just to make the guests buy products, however it did not bother them at all, as they said that people are invited to buy, but they are not forced to do so, thus making it everyone's free will and hence giving no reason to complain. Understandably these statements were made by respondents of 25 years or older, as they seemed to be financially more secure than the younger interviewees.

All of the respondents agreed, that for making the entertainment they love, Disney needs to be a business as making it costs money. Although all of them agreed that it is understandable why they want to make a profit, it was rather the younger audience (under 25 years of age) who felt more uncomfortable with the fact that Disney is foremost a business. However, Disney being a business did not diminish the magic of Disney in their eyes, nor the eyes of the rest of the interviewees, at all. Many of the respondents remarked that as Disney has been such a successful company in the past years, it has to do something right and also

because people believe it to be real, it instantly becomes real. Also, a couple of fans, yet again belonging to the age group below 25, brought out that it is not just Disney who is creating the magic, but Disney just provides the tools for it and it is the audience who actually creates the magic "bubble". Thus the fact that Disney is foremost a business did not alter the view of the company, in the eyes of the fans, whatsoever.

3. 2. Disney in the everyday life

The interviews were held with Disney fans, thus first of all the researcher tried to find out what kind of a fan do the respondents consider themselves to be. Some interviewees wished to get some clarification, what kind of fans even exist. After giving them a short description of a fanatical fan, they understood what the question was about and started portraying their own habits. None of the respondents though considered themselves to be a fanatical fan. In most cases that was also true, but in one case it was debatable, as the respondent, 30 year old male, had a Disney themed tattoo and was collecting movies. However, he did not see himself as fanatical because in his opinion fanatical was something much more than just collecting products and making body art. In most of the cases, the respondents agreed that they are bigger fans than any other person on the street. Some of the interviewees were thriving for complete film collections. Movies were the only thing the respondents for this research were collecting. Comic books, figurines and other products of Disney did not seem to play such a role in their lives. Many of the respondents had to admit however, that they have not seen all the movies, which in their own opinion sometimes made them less of a fan and they believed that when being a fan, they should see all of them, as otherwise they would be missing out on an experience.

There were also respondents who believed themselves to be quite simple fans, just liking Disney and nothing much more, those were the interviewees of 35 years or more of age, indicating that the more passionate fans were generally under that age limit. The interviewees sometimes also said that it is not definitely Disney that they are especially fond of, but it is the animated movies, which means that they are also fond of other companies that produce these kinds of films, but Disney has just made it more easily reachable for them. Furthermore, the respondents did not have any strong feelings about being a fan. None of them hid it from their friends and family, stating that it is not something to be embarrassed about. Although a couple of interviewees did reckon that they understand why some people might think that, as being a fan of something like Disney in adulthood might be considered out of the general understanding of normal. One of the respondents, a 24 year old female also

brought out how some people might find it shameful to be a fan of something that is promoting Americanization. However, even so they did not hide it in any way and their friends and family knew about them being fond of Disney. Thus none of the respondents actually felt that this is shameful, rather they enjoyed talking about it and showing off a little that they are in fact, fans of Disney.

The researcher also tried to find out about the interviewees' connection with Disney online. As most of the interviewees were found through the social networking site Facebook, it was more than appropriate to ask them whether they were connected with Disney on that site. Only three respondents, a 27 and 46 year old females and a 39 year old male, said that they were not linked with Disney through social networks. The rest said that they are somehow linked to Disney pages on Facebook, be it then the Disneyland Paris site or the official Disney fan page. However, those who were connected to Disney on Facebook rarely interacted with that media more than just reading the information posted. Only a couple of respondents said that they had reposted, liked or commented on the posts made by the fan sites. Facebook was also the main connection interviewees had with Disney online, only a couple of the respondents said that they are also somehow otherwise linked with Disney through a forum or the Disneyland Paris webpage and they were also mainly those interviewees who were not connected to Disney through social networking. However, not much content was created by those respondents either, the membership of those pages was rather used for information gathering and leisure, not for active participation. When the interviewees were asked about their participation in offline activities in relation with Disney, they mostly grinned and said that they do not have time for that. It seemed that the respondents would consider this weird and did not quite know what it even should be that they create. When explained about fan fiction they did not appear to quite understand why they would even need to do this. None of the people interviewed admitted to having ever created any sort of content offline about Disney.

The respondents were also directly asked how is Disney present in their everyday lives. This question did not raise any problems answering and all interviewees understood it the same way. None of the respondents were hesitant answering and they all seemed to share this information quite freely. Most of the interviewees admitted that the main connection they have in their everyday life is through the movies. Comic books were none of the interviewees' favourites, although some admitted to being fans of those when younger. Now however, movies dominated all the other aspects of Disney. There was some difference between how present Disney movies were in the people's lives, as some respondents said that they usually

do not watch the movies very often, rather on a monthly basis or every couple of months. Interestingly enough, some of those who said that they do not often watch the movies, were the collectors of them, which made it somewhat controversial. They themselves did not see it that way. However, there were also interviewees who admitted to watching movies on a weekly basis. The general answer was still that they watch movies every once in a while, not too little but also not too often.

The frequency of watching movies seemed to have also depended on whether the respondent had children, which was the case for a couple of interviewees. However, for that to have an effect the children would have to be of right age, which only appeared to be so with one respondent, a 27 year old female. It was directly noticeable that the person with a small child was much more in contact with Disney than other people, and she also knew much more about Disney than the rest of the interviewees. Furthermore, she was more willing to speak about it and share her experience. Her child was constantly watching Disney movies, on a daily basis, which put the respondent in a position of having to watch the same movies as well. However, the interviewee did not seem to have any problems with that, rather it was enjoyable for her and she did it with pleasure. Having a young child also increased the contact through toys and books, which although not meant for adults, were still in the household thus existent in the respondent's everyday life. Another aspect that the respondents touched upon while talking about Disney in their everyday lives was talking about it with friends and family. There was no definite consensus between the interviewees on how much and what they talked about with their family about Disney, as some said to be doing that quite often and others almost not at all. However, it appeared that most people would share the experiences of watching movies, visiting the parks and buying Disney products. Thus generally people did not discuss anything too philosophical about Disney and rather kept to the points in which they directly were in contact with Disney in their life.

Visiting the parks seemed to be a very important experience for most of the respondents, mainly of course for the interviewees under the age of 30. It did not even matter whether the respondents had done it just once or did it on a monthly basis. For almost every respondent visiting the parks was an important part of being a fan of Disney and enjoying the atmosphere Disney provides. Just one interviewee, a 39 year old male, admitted that he is in general fond of amusement parks and if some other one was just as good and closer, he would visit the other one. All the rest of the interviewees said that it was precisely Disney why they went there and why they would go there again. The importance of the parks was especially high for the younger respondents, under 30 years of age, and they described the experience to

more detail. It seemed that being there meant more to them than it did to the other interviewees. All of the respondents said that they definitely would visit the parks again. Most of the interviewees, when asked about Disneyland, opened up more and gained a certain shine in their eyes. It seemed that they were talking about something that they really liked. Somehow, for most of them, the parks had a special meaning that raised the whole quality of Disney in general. Even if they found flaws within the parks, like that it still needs much renovation, they did not criticise it in general and were still very fond of their experiences there. The aspect of a happy feeling was raised in many interviews. People mentioned how being in the parks is an escape away from their everyday complicated work lives and when entering the parks neither negativity nor worries can exist. The respondents made the parks seem a magical place, where anything can happen and everything that happens is definitely good. They also mentioned quite often the Disney "bubble", which is like a different universe where you enter when you pass the gates of Disney. It was also brought to attention that Disney has managed to create a feeling of safety, which adds to the positive energy gotten from the parks, since parents do not have to be worried about their children nor their possessions.

Being able to meet with the characters was another aspect some of the interviewees mentioned as being crucial to the whole Disney ensemble. According to them it brings about the feeling of being a child again. Furthermore, the feeling of being a child again was considered very important by many interviewees, followed by the reasoning that people are generally very entangled with their work lives and complicated problems, that they often forget how to enjoy the little things. Respondents mostly agreed that Disney and Disneyland were reminding people how to do that and how to feel positive again. Most of the respondents visited the parks several times a year, including those interviewees who did not have any strong feelings towards the parks. As all the interviewees were residents of Paris, they had easier access to the parks and they also used it, as much as some respondents visited the parks at least a couple of times a month. Most of them also were owners of the annual pass or had some other kind of so to say cheaper access to the parks, like having a relative or a friend who works there. Nevertheless, when all of those respondents, who thanks to their acquaintances got free access, were asked whether they were willing to pay as well for the visitations even if it would mean paying the amount many times per year, they all agreed and said that they would definitely pay if necessary.

All in all the respondents said that they usually do miss the parks and the Disney experience in general if they have not been in contact with it for too long. There were some

exceptions to that from people who were fans of Disney mainly because of the entertaining reasons, not because it meant something more to them. Those who were searching something more from Disney than just entertainment, thus most of the interviewees, said that they definitely miss Disney and being in the parks when they have been away too long. Also it appeared that some respondents did not even know how to answer to that, as they had never been away for too long, however they imagined that if that would ever happen then definitely this would be the case. Those who were searching for just entertainment could fulfil their needs elsewhere, but those who were reaching for the experience needed Disney to accomplish that. When the respondents were asked whether they are satisfied with the position of Disney in their lives then the general answer was yes. This question, however, always raised some thinking as people wanted to go over their contact with Disney in their mind before answering. Having this question at the end of the interview helped them to do so, as they had been talking about Disney in their life for approximately an hour. Some remarks were made jokingly that if they could they would visit the parks more often but the general feeling was that everyone was happy with the position of Disney in their lives. Also when asked about if they would change anything in Disney, then none of the respondents said that they would change the concept. There were some wishes of change concerning the entrance fees to the parks, the state of the parks or the sequels of the movies, but none of the respondents felt the need to completely change the idea of Disney itself and what they produce. Also all of the interviewees said that they would definitely recommend Disney to others, as it is a pleasant experience everyone should enjoy.

3. 3. The influence of Disney

Although the influence of Disney on the respondents was not the focus of this particular research the author still asked some questions about this to help to assess how aware the interviewees are of the presence of Disney in their lives. The respondents divided into two groups, those who didn't believe any influence could exist and those who believed in some influence being possible. Some of them also stated that they have not even thought about the possible influence, but pondered upon it right then during the interview and ventured an answer. People who believed that Disney has had no effect on them were reluctant to believe, even when asked follow-up questions, that Disney even could have anything to influence with. Disney was just seen as an entertainment, not as a project offering life lessons that could somehow alter one's behaviour. This opinion was especially strongly voiced by a 39 year old

male interviewee who was reluctant to believe that media can have an influence on its audience.

The others, however, seemed to believe of some kind of a possible effect. Some respondents, who had been in contact with Disney since they were children, believed that a subconscious effect could have existed but they were unable to assess it now, as they would not know what kind of people they would be if they would not have been in contact with Disney in their early childhood. However, they all seemed to believe that even if this effect existed, it was definitely a positive one, making them the people they are now and as they all seemed to be happy with their current selves there was no critique thrown towards Disney on this matter. That was also apparent when talking about the respondents' children. All of the interviewees who had children also said that they did not believe the influence to be a negative one and definitely did, do or will show their children the world of Disney. When asked about how is Disney influencing them currently, yet again some respondents did not believe that Disney had any effect on them besides making them visit the parks or watching the movies. Others however, thought that Disney have made their life easier and helped them to see their problems more lightly. In general the respondents acknowledged that influence is a process which makes assessing it on the spot quite difficult, no matter whether it has started from childhood or adulthood.

4. Discussion

In the discussion chapter the author will make a connection between the theoretical background and the empirical research. The author will also analyse the current state of the Disney media in people's everyday life. The chapter is presented in three sub-chapters, as also seen in the previous, results chapter. The chapter aims to create a picture of how current day fans interact with Disney media on their everyday life basis, and analyse whether and how the daily practices of the fans reflect on the theoretical framework created so far.

4. 1. Understanding of Disney

Balmer (1998) has brought out that corporate identity should carry the essence and goal of the organisation and it includes many characteristics of the company. Identity is what the company wants the audience to see and image is how the people actually see it (Harris & de Chertnatony, 2001). A good identity can be a platform for success (Balmer, 2008), which is evident when also analysing how the Disney fans saw and understood Disney. Reflecting from the interviews it can be seen that even though the respondents were of many different backgrounds, French, Finnish and Estonian, they all gasped the identity of Disney in the same way. All respondents brought out up to three main components that Disney consists of and they all also managed to recognize the goal of Disney as making movies and giving the people the feeling of happiness and relaxation. The components of Disney's identity brought out by the interviewees were always more or less the same, patterns could be detected.

The image of the industry can also influence the image of a certain company (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). In Disney's case, the image of being a part of an industry that produces animated cartoons played a big role in creating a picture in the minds of the fans. Some respondents referred that they are fond of animated movies and cartoons in general, thus indicating that they also follow other companies that occupy themselves with the same business. However, they did not claim to be fans of those other companies, rather just Disney. This indicates that corporate identity is what makes a company unique (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006) and that Disney has very well managed to do so, as even though the same kind of products are offered to the audiences, the people still often prefer Disney although they can not bring out any obvious reasoning for that. It is not to say that they discard all other companies completely just that with Disney they have managed to create a connection. This illustrates how Disney has successfully created an image for themselves that often precedes them.

The image that precedes them can also be seen as their reputation. Reputations are generally more durable than images and become to be especially important when the company or the image is somehow attacked. Reputation is not so easy to alter as is an image, thus it often withstands the negativity thrown towards the company (Markwick & Fill, 1997). This was especially apparent also when talking with the interviewees. Many of them acknowledged that there has been some negativity towards Disney, but they often neglected to see it. Even if they accepted that everyone has their own point of view and right to have an opinion, if it was a negative one, they did often not agree with that opinion. Also, the researcher asked questions about Disney being a business and having its factories in China, where they are allegedly taking advantage of the cheap workforce (Wasko, 2001a). As Wasko (2001a) mentioned, it is important to remember that it is not just magic that got the company thus far. However, the interviewees accepted those points as just being part of the business world. Also the fact that Disney is foremost a business and up for making a profit did not seem to change their view of Disney. Most of the interviewees were even happy with the large product market and others just saw it as a part of the business world and as a necessity for making movies.

Disney has extended its business through many different areas giving them the opportunity to create and market their image through all of those as well (Wasko, 2001a). Most noticeable of that is of course the character toys they sell in their parks and Disney stores. Although that can be considered just a marketing trick, most of the interviewees were not bothered at all by that. Even so, one of the respondents, a 27 year old female who has a small child, mentioned that she is happy that they make so much products and sell them everywhere, as that gives her the opportunity to buy it all. Furthermore, another interviewee, a 46 year old female, stated that even though it is a business and all those toys and stores are set everywhere to lure in customers and their money, it is still everyone's free choice to buy those items, so it can not be said that Disney is forcing people to purchase their goods. All in all Disney's reputation is so strong that some interviewees straight up said that they deny anything negative said about Disney and that they do not believe it. This indicates, that Disney has definitely managed to create such a strong reputation that even if the people are shown the business side of it, they just look past it and still keep to the Disney magic.

To make a corporate identity and reputation work, it needs constant reminders to the audience about it (Harris & de Chartony, 2001). It seems that Disney knows this as well, as they are repeatedly sending out messages through different outlets (Internet, movies, newsletters) about who they are and what they are about to their audiences. The respondents reflected on this as well, as they all were in one way or another connected to Disney and

getting some information from them on a regular basis. Thus communication is a crucial part of creating an identity, as what a company says or does not say will define what it is (Simoes et al., 2005). However, communication can be complicated. First of all it consists of controlled and uncontrolled communication (Melewar, 2001), which partly as the name says is rather hard to manage. Furthermore, senders and receivers of a message always translate it through their own cultural backgrounds. The sent message is interpreted by the culture of the senders and moreover the receivers add own meanings to it according to their culture (Hatch & Schultz, 1997), indicating that Disney can not always have control over what message will reach their international audiences. However, this did not seem to matter in this case. All the respondents, even though they all lived in Paris, they were often from different cultural backgrounds, gave same meanings to Disney. As mentioned before, they all saw Disney in a certain way, which often included the three aspects of the movies, parks and the feeling. Although these three can be seen as fairly different, the interviewees always brought them out together as comprising one big whole – Disney. Very rarely the answers deviated from this pattern.

Communication becomes also vital as many companies are not just selling products but the feelings, norms and values that accompany those products (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). It is clear that Disney is one of those companies that wish to sell more than just characters of their movies. They also want to sell the so called magical feeling that would make people continuously visit their establishments and buy their products. Thus far they have also succeeded in this, as many respondents said the feeling to be a very important part of the Disney experience. Some interviewees mentioned that the positive energy was the exact something that kept pulling them back to Disney. They said that Disney provides them with a couple of hours of escaping time from their everyday lives that are generally packed with problems. Thus the feeling of happiness and the ease of life is one of Disney's main merchandising items, as it is that feeling that pulls people back to them.

Disney has created an image of being a company of family and fun, thus also an image of being unable to do anything wrong. Furthermore, their image suggests that they are only meant for children but actually they have a variety of products that are aimed rather at adults than children and families (Wasko, 2001a). This was also backed up by the interviews conducted for this research. Frist of all, none of the interviewees mentioned anything related to other sorts of movies or products that Disney creates than those made for families. Only on a couple of occasions the buying of Lucas Films appeared, mentioned by two male respondents, but it was not further discussed in relation to Disney creations. When talking

about Disney in general and the messages, values and norms Disney gives, none of the other kinds of products appeared in discussion, thus it shows how well has Disney managed to keep its identity and image strictly related to this one part of the whole mechanism they are running. The public mind revolves around Classic Disney, which carries certain themes and characters that are considered typical to Disney. The stories mainly revolve around love, magic and the fight between good and evil (Wasko, 2001a). Understandably enough, these were the same themes the interviewees had noticed in the films. When respondents were asked about which kind of morals, norms and values does Disney portray then almost all of them gave the same answer. To the interviewees Disney mainly showed the fight between good and evil, how good always wins, also when believing in yourself and the possibility of magic, anything is possible and love will conquer everything. These are the exact things that Disney wants its audience to take away from the experience, and as is shown, that is what the people are doing. The black and white portrayal of the evil and good did not pose any problems to the interviewees, they saw it just as a simplification of life and did not see any harm in it being shown like this.

When the values, norms and morals were put under question by the researcher, the respondents did not cave in and stood up to defend Disney and its image. This was especially the case when talking about the portrayal of women in Disney's movies. It has been argued that Disney portrays women in a sexist way and in very extreme measures, either very good or very evil (Stone, 1975). Once more the interviewees did not perceive it as such. When this matter was brought to their attention they always said that this is an aged understanding of Disney. Many examples were brought, including the heroine of *Tangled* and *Brave*, to illustrate how Disney has changed its portrayal of women, thus also saying that calling Disney sexist is out of date and unnecessary criticism. This once more leads to the notion as if Disney can do no wrong (Wasko, 2001a). Although one respondent, a 23 year old female recognized that Disney still could change more in favour of women, but in general even she was content of the change already made within the history of Disney.

The interviewees usually did agree though that good characters are portrayed as beautiful and bad characters as ugly, although they did bring a new dimension to understanding this, which has not been touched upon yet. A 27 year old female respondent elaborated on that theory to a wider extent as she had noticed this new side to the comprehension of the stereotype when interacting with her son. In her opinion, this kind of a portrayal gives the understanding that it is the goodness of the characters that makes them look beautiful and thus also the badness of the characters that makes them look ugly. To her it

was not Disney's way of making things overly easy but rather giving the explanation of what is considered beautiful – being good. Thus even though this could be considered as solid criticism, as no ugly good character can be found in the films, the fans did find an explanation to this as well. Thus it seems that the good reputation of Disney has managed to dodge various attacks and criticism sent their way (Best & Lowney, 2009). This indicates that Disney has very well managed their corporate identity, as it seems to bring about the same picture in different people's minds.

4. 2. Disney in the everyday life

The interviews were conducted with people who saw themselves as fans of Disney. The level of fandom was not set clear, thus some respondents considered themselves to be just fans who liked Disney, others who were a bit more attached to the whole company. As people are usually dependent on the information sources of the media (Bell-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1986) they turn to media more and more every day. This means as well that it is gradually easier to reach people through the sources they have already grown accustomed to use. Furthermore, people turn to the media on a daily, even hourly basis, which makes them so used to it, that being connected to media is a part of their lives. Mass entertainment is such a big part of people's lives right now, that it often pushes them to become fanatical about a certain subject (Brown, 1997).

Fans evolve from the feeling of enjoyment, the feeling they get from the subject they admire (Sperb, 2010). As the results of this research show, this was very evident in the case of Disney. People repeatedly mentioned the feeling that Disney creates. Many of the interviewees, regardless of age, even said that an important part of their fandom is that Disney gives them the opportunity to escape from their everyday lives, feel happier and forget their troubles. This indicates, as Sperb (2010) said, that people like Disney because of the feeling that it gives them. Becoming a fan is a gradual process, generally people do not make a conscious decision of becoming a fan (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). Yet again, this could be noticed when talking with the fans of Disney. None of them pinpointed exactly a time or place when the fandom began. Many of them however, could indicate a timeframe, or they did know approximately when did they begin to watch the movies or be in contact in some other way with Disney. Still, none of them could say an exact moment of becoming a fan, for all of them it was rather a process that they knew when it started but they had no idea when it was completed.

It was also evident in some cases, that in addition to the positive feelings that Disney gives the fans, nostalgia plays an important role as well, surprisingly enough this was not just the case with older respondents but also already interviewees who were under 25 years of age indicated that being in contact with Disney brings back memories from childhood and creates nostalgia. This is generally noticeable with Disney's adult fans who through Disney often get their childhood back (Sperb, 2010). The respondents indicated the same kind of an opinion. There were interviewees who said that they had no memories of Disney from their childhood, but the majority of the respondents still acknowledge the presence of Disney in their youth, or in some other earlier life memories. These memories appeared to be especially important when talking about Disney. All of the interviewees who had had contact with Disney for already years, and admitted to having nostalgic feelings about Disney, attached great importance to regenerating the feeling they felt when they were younger. Furthermore, some respondents said that it is not just the nostalgia, but the child-like behaviour and emotions that Disney brought out in them and that they were fond of. According to some of the interviewees, adults often forget how it felt to be a child and what it meant, thus being in contact with Disney helps to recreate that and thus also bring back the happy memories and the feeling of simpler times. All this leads back to the feeling of happiness and a world without problems, which was proven to be important to the fans as well.

There are many indications of being a fan, besides just people saying that they are fans. One of those aspects is being a collector (Brown, 1997). It can also be seen already as an obsession (Théberge, 2005). The researcher had the opportunity to interview a couple of collectors as well, a 30 and 39 year old men and a 21 year old female. Interestingly enough, they did not see themselves as being greater fans than the rest of the people. Even though they had a full movie collection, or were thriving towards one, they still believed themselves to be quite regular fans who just liked movies. The collectors interviewed for this research were collectors of movies, which in their opinion was not as exceptional as for example collecting figurines. Films were seen as quite regular objects and collecting them was rather seen as a hobby than an obsession. When questioned whether they would consider themselves to be fanatical, they usually laughed at it and denied the possibility of ever going that far. Furthermore, this was also the case with the respondent who had a tattoo of Mickey Mouse. According to Wasko (2001a), that would definitely qualify under a fanatical fan. However, the person himself, a 30 year old male, did not see anything spectacular about that, since his tattoo did not yet mean anything special for him, it was just to signify his liking of Disney. Even though he was planning to widen his tattoo collection with a Minnie Mouse, he did not

believe it to be anything extraordinary. It could be said that the respondents were quite reluctant to consider themselves fanatical, even when that could have been the case, as it seemed that fanatical meant for them something much more than just having a full movie collection or a couple of tattoos, to them it appeared to be filling one's life with Disney and only with Disney. It might indicate that the fans are somehow embarrassed about their choices and are reluctant to show what they really feel.

Fans are often degraded in society for being fond of popular culture (Sperb, 2010). However, the fans that were interviewed for this research did not share this opinion. None of the respondents felt in any way undermined by others. They all stated that they are definitely not ashamed of them being a fan of Disney. Nonetheless, they did acknowledge that others might think that while being an adult and a fan of Disney, or being fond of a company that is spreading Americanization is something that should be an embarrassment. However, a 27 year old female said that even though most of French people were at first against building Disney they soon discovered its merits and started enjoying its products, indicating that by glocalizing Disney learned to adapt, which is of utmost importance to international companies (Matusitz, 2010). All in all most of the respondents added that even though they are adults they see nothing shameful in watching animated movies, as they are a perfect mode for relaxation and help for getting away from the everyday life. The interviewees said that they were open with their friends and family about their fandom and had never tried to hide it either. Furthermore, some of them, mainly the younger respondents, even said that the majority of their own friends are as well fond of Disney, thus there is absolutely no reason to hide anything. Hence it can be said, that even though fan culture might have been seen as degrading thus far, this is changing, at least for Disney fans. Also the notion that the respondents were reluctant to call themselves fanatics does not seem to have any connection with being ashamed of their fondness of Disney. It rather indicates that to them the meaning of fanatical is a bit different than defined in theoretical works so far.

Being a fan does not mean aiming to become just like the object of admiration, rather it is creating one's own meaning around it (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). It is not blind admiration of a subject (Brown, 1997), fans just are fond of something but they are also open for criticism. The respondents interviewed for this research agreed with that statement. Most of the interviewees did find smaller or bigger aspects to criticize about Disney, whether it was about the quality of their products, the Disney Channel or the state of the parks, yet none of them let those things change their affection. All the respondents mentioned that they respect other people's opinion and they realize that there might be something to criticize but they

stated that they might not just often agree with that. It was also said during the interviews that even though there are aspects to criticize it is not necessary to constantly focus on those aspects. Moreover, some respondents said that they simply do not understand the criticism towards Disney. This might be as fans are often reluctant to noticing negative aspects concerning their object of admiration (Sperb, 2010). However, this was definitely not the dominating case. Most of the interviewees agreed, regardless of age or gender, that even though there might be some aspects to criticize, they just neglect it and continue to enjoy the magic Disney brings in their lives.

It has also been noted, that fans often do not defend their subject of admiration based on whether they did anything wrong or not, but rather on the basis of the feeling the subject generally gives them. Thus they are not defending the company but their memories in relation to the company (Sperb, 2010). This could definitely be noticed in the case of Disney. The interviewees stated as well, that they do not care whether there is something to be complained about Disney or not, as to them Disney gives a positive feeling which they enjoy and want to keep enjoying. Any negativity towards Disney they somehow dodged by either saying that it is part of the past, the business world or it is someone else's opinion, but not theirs. This way they did not accept the criticism about the factories in Asia, the aim for profit making or the criticism towards Disney movies and character depictions. Some of the respondents clearly stated that they do not want to have any part of the negativity as they see no use for it. However, some of them also brought out criticism about Disney themselves. One interviewee, a 24 year old female, strongly criticised the content of the Disney Channel and said that it has nothing to do with the Classical Disney that Disney actually should be. Nonetheless, it did not alter their view of Disney and they still admired Disney in general for what it was. Those respondents said that even though Disney has its flaws it still creates the joyful atmosphere and that is enough for them. All this might be of course because the creators have trained the public mind in a certain way, favourable to them (Sperb, 2010). Within this research that aspect is hard to measure, as the influence of Disney was not specifically evaluated. However, the respondents did not mention of the possibility of this option, they stuck to their view that Disney brings them happiness, thus any criticism, even if in its place, is unnecessary for them.

Fans have an option to be linked to the subject of their affection through online sources. Internet is one of the leading mediums for communication and information sharing (Dimmick et al., 2004). The importance of Internet is also shown when looking at fan relations with Disney in this research. All of the respondents were somehow connected to Disney through an online source. Most of the interviewees used Facebook for that and were

connected by liking either the official Disney page or the Disneyland Paris page. They indicated that through those pages they get information about what is going on in the parks, and entertaining messages about Disney in general. Some of the respondents were also active in other online sources than Facebook. Fan clubs and forums are often spreading information that is usually not known for the wider public (Théberge, 2005). One of the interviewees, a 30 year old male, was a member of a Disney forum, where people were regularly posting new information about the movies, parks, other products but were also talking about some entertaining facts that otherwise might not be known, which was also the main reason he decided to join this forum. This indicates that the fans, at least those interviewed, are using Internet more for information and entertainment than for communication, although communication is not completely neglected either. Thanks to the information sharing of fans an information network has been created online (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008). The usefulness of media has made it to almost every social sphere (Hepp, 2010), which was shown by some respondents who said that they are members of the official web page of Disneyland Paris, and were getting regular newsletters from the site and also offers for cheaper tickets. Thus being connected through online outlets with Disney aids the fans even financially, making it not just entertaining to be connected with those pages, but also useful in other ways. Interestingly enough, Internet has started to dominate so much, that none of the respondents were active in offline fan activities. When asked, they could not usually even say what would have been the options for these kinds of activities and what could have been the use gained from them.

Creating a fan relation with a company, rather than with a person, did not seem to pose any problems for the respondents. It appeared that the interviewees did not see Disney as a whole company but rather consisting of various pieces that the fans became attached to. This way they were not creating a fan relation with a company, but with different aspects of the company. Of course the well-known characters of Disney helped to strengthen this relationship, as often the fans were fond of the characters of Disney as well. Meaning that even when they were actually creating a relationship with the whole company, in their minds it was still the movies and the characters of the movies that they were fond of. When talking about what they liked about Disney and why they were fans, they often brought out that it was because of the feeling the movies give them. Movies are presented through the characters, who have certain personalities. Thus at least in this case, it seemed that being a fan of a company did not differ that much from being a fan of a certain person. Of course they were also fans of the non-living aspects of the company, such as the parks, but the parks were to

them a reminder of how the movies made them feel and it gave them the opportunity to meet with the characters as well.

The main connection people had with Disney were the movies. All the respondents said the movies to be one of the most apparent Disney components as well. It appeared that all the Disney fans had contact with the Disney media at least a couple of times a month, usually more, and that was mainly created through watching the movies. There were also interviewees who said that they watched the movies weekly and even daily. Although daily might seem a bit too much, it was because of the respondent's child, who insisted on watching the cartoons every day. However, the interviewee, a 27 year old female, admitted that even without her child, she watches at least one movie per week. This illustrates that when people are fond of Disney they tend to keep themselves in contact with Disney quite often, as even other respondents admitted to watching movies at least once a month. Of course when with children the contact with Disney was increased also by having toys or a few books around the house, but the movies had still a dominating feature in the Disney fan's households. Moreover, one fan, a 23 year old female, believed movies to be so crucial that she felt it to be important to see all the movies in order to be a real fan. That was not to say that when not having seen all the movies, they would feel degraded in the eyes of other fans, rather that when they have seen all the movies, it would give them the opportunity to share more conversations about these subjects. Communication with peers was another factor through which fans were in connection with Disney in their daily lives. Many respondents said that they talk about Disney with friends and family quite often. However, they almost never talked about philosophical topics concerning Disney or the hidden meanings in the movies. Their main conversation topics were just new movies, offers and experiences in the parks or other Disney products.

Furthermore, the fans are especially fond of the Disneyland parks. The parks have given the company an opportunity to emphasize their products and themes even more, in a way that was not possible through the movies (Wasko, 2001a). This has attracted people to visit the parks, yet again on a monthly basis. The fans interviewed for this research said that they visit the parks rather regularly, once a month. There were also some exceptions who said that they visit the parks more or less. Although some respondents were hesitant about how much they visit the parks, the general line still was that they would go there at least 12 times per year, or more if possible. What attracted the fans most about the parks was yet once more the feeling that the parks gave them and the attractions and this was the case with all the respondents. The interviewees brought out that they are especially fond of the so called Disney "bubble", which to them was like a different world that you enter when you go to the

parks. The feeling can also be explained by theming, which is very apparent in Disneyland, where no detail is out of place (Bryman, 1999). The concept of order and perfection rose in many interviews as a factor why people like to visit the parks. Some respondents stated that their own life was problematic and confusing so getting a way to a different world where everything is set into place with care and where nothing bad can happen was their way of entertainment and relaxation. Yet again the concept of the "bubble" arose, as within that "bubble" problems and worries did not exist. The importance of the feeling and the "bubble" could be noticed by respondents of all ages and genders. The interviewees also brought out that they liked to visit the parks to meet with the characters as well, which indicates also that they do not see Disney just as a one big company but rather as composed of different aspects and characters. They even indicated that when being away from the parks and the Disney experience in general they tend to miss it. Furthermore when asked whether they were happy with the position of Disney in their lives, they all agreed that they would not change anything. All of the respondents were happy with how much Disney was existent in their everyday life and were rather willing to make this part greater in their lives than diminish it.

4. 3. The influence of Disney

The respondents were very closely in contact with Disney on their everyday life basis, that it became relevant to investigate how they see the influence of Disney on themselves. Although it was not the main research aim of this thesis, it was of importance to see, how the interviewees assess the influence, as this helps to explain how they interact with the Disney media. Media are right in the middle of our society and affects us from within (Hepp et al., 2010). Media follow us in every step our lives and it is almost impossible to avoid (Poster, 2004). The respondents of this research were well aware that media in general plays a big role in their lives and that it also could have an effect on them. However, it appeared that not a lot of people had thought about what the effect can be to a greater extent.

It seems that Disney fans often have no idea how much they are actually exposed to the worlds of media, Disney and their effects (Wasko, 2001a). This was evident also when talking to the interviewees of this research. Even though during the whole interview the respondents talked about how much they are in contact with Disney, how much they visit the parks or how much they watch the movies, they did not see any way how Disney media could currently influence their lives. Only one respondent, a 24 year old female, brought out a direct influence that she felt by Disney. She stated that Disney has influenced the whole society in a way that it is sort of a pressure to know who Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck are. Any other

effects that Disney media could have were discarded. Although, some respondents did say that influence is a gradual process thus making it hard to assess on the spot. Those who talked about the process were generally these interviewees who had been in contact with the Disney media already when in childhood. However, even then they thought that probably this influence was not that big. Those interviewees who became to be Disney fans when in adulthood generally denied Disney having any effect on their lives. They saw themselves as already characteristically grown people, thus in belief that media can not have any effect on them. However, some said that Disney has made their life happier and given them the positive energy and taught them how to look at their problems more lightly. Those aspects were not considered as influence though, rather as something that the respondents have learned from Disney.

However, what they seemed not to notice, is that even when they learn something from the media and start acting accordingly it could also be considered as influence. The more people are in contact with media the more it can start affecting their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Affective effects can have an influence on the audience's emotions (Bell-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1986). Thus the happy feelings the respondents claim to feel might be considered as an influence from the Disney media that they have constantly been in contact with. It is often hard to comprehend how far the influence of Disney reaches and who it is actually aimed for (Wasko, 2001a). It seemed that the respondents were more willing to believe that Disney would have an effect on children, which could have many various reasons. One of those being that Disney's image implicates that it is aimed at children, thus it might make adults also believe that whatever message Disney is sending can just not affect them. On the other hand it might also be that they believe that they are formed personalities already, which is why they will not be affected. Which ever the case it seems that the Disney fans are generally unable to see the possible extent of the influence Disney can have on their lives.

Furthermore, media can influence not just people, but also relationships between people, media and the society (Bell-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1986). Moreover, media has the power to bring aspects to people's attention that otherwise may not have appeared in their agenda at all (Couldy et al., 2007). All of the Disney fans interviewed also mentioned how they often talk about Disney with their friends and family, thus indicating that Disney is making its way through not only just within the media, but it is also appearing already in interpersonal communication. Hence the media is influencing to some extent what people say or do. However, once more none of the Disney fans saw it as a way of influencing or affecting their lives, it rather was just another choice of conversation, which definitely is true as well,

but it is still important to keep in mind that Disney is being talked about and the importance of Disney media in that can not be undermined.

4. 4. Conclusion

The results of the interviews and the analysis show, that fans of Disney have generally a very close relationship with Disney. Furthermore, it appeared that sometimes fans are resistant to admitting the connection they have with Disney, or even, have not noticed how great that link is. It can be said, based on the results of the research that Disney has a firm position in their fans lives which often even derives to be a dominant one. The fans, however, when realising how big the proportion of Disney is in their daily lives, take it as a positive notion and they do not seem to mind the often over thriving presence of Disney. The fans are generally not able to estimate the influence Disney and its presence has had on their lives. Even when they do try to evaluate the effects, they generally bring out options for positive influence rather than anything else. It can be said that fans negotiate with the Disney media on a very regular basis, sometimes weekly, most often monthly. Their main way of communication is either through movies or the amusement parks.

Another factor that seems to be similar between all fans is the perception of Disney. Even though interviews were made with people from different backgrounds, cultural and societal, the results appeared to be very similar. It seems that Disney has made their goals and mission understandable to everyone the same way. Mostly, fans saw Disney consisting of movies and the parks. As far as the norms and values they teach, the fans emphasized the fight between good and evil in which the good always wins. This presents that the perception of Disney is generally the same no matter whom, when and where is in contact with it.

5. Conclusion

The current master thesis investigates how Disney fans negotiate with the Disney media on their everyday life basis. This study aimed to contribute to the research previously done on Disney, the influence of the media and the perception of a well-known corporate brand.

The theoretical part of this thesis consisted of various parts all linked with the main research aim, the company and people researched. A general overview of the nowadays media was provided which showed how much people are actually intertwined with the media on their everyday life basis, often without even noticing it. Furthermore the importance of digitalization in general was highlighted which indicated that more and more companies and people are moving and should move online to fulfil their needs for information. Companies in general were also taken a look at. It appeared that corporate identity is never completely and fully finished, it is always developing over time and is moulded by the companies' actions (Balmer, 2008). Also, that the identity and image should be dependent on the cultural and general background of the audience, as everyone filters the information according to their own way of thinking and understanding (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). The audience was also paid attention to and as fans were in the centre of this research, they were also investigated in the theoretical part, which indicated that fans are becoming more important for the society as they are willing to seek more information on one subject, thus are also more able to critique and spread awareness on their subject of admiration (Théberge, 2005). Even more, they are becoming of interest also to the companies and creators, as they are willing to freely promote any product they are especially fond of (Jenkins, 22007). Also an overview of the Disney Company itself was provided which illustrated how well Disney has until now managed to create and maintain their image. Furthermore the globalisation and glocalisation aspects were briefly touched upon, showing how international companies can make these concepts work for them and how even Disneyland Paris would probably not have survived if they had not glocalized their parks at least to some extent.

The media as practice theory was used as a basis for this research. Media as practice focuses on people's actions in relation to media, what they do with the media and how they think of it. The notion of influence has remained secondary in this particular theory. Thus as the main aim in this research, the author wanted to find out how do Disney fans negotiate with the Disney media on their everyday life basis. The results showed that the presence of Disney is rather big in the fans' lives. Moreover the connection with Disney has mainly been created through the movies and the amusement parks. Furthermore, it surfaced that the fans

comprehend Disney quite the same way as a family company who gives people a positive feeling. Even though researching the influence of Disney was not the main aim of this thesis, it helped to provide an overview of how people comprehend Disney. It appeared that the fans did not believe Disney to have a great influence on their lives or themselves, they generally saw Disney just as innocent, effect free entertainment. However, when influence was detected, then the fans stated it to be a positive influence. Thus in total it can be said that Disney has, with its brand management, image creation and marketing been able to create a company that is present in many people's lives and that most perceive similarly.

For further research it would be interesting to take a closer look at adult Disney fans and the reasons why they have become fans. The author believes that his might give a better look into the notion of how people interact with the Disney media, it would provide an insight in why they are even doing so. Furthermore it could be intriguing to research how other audience groups interact with the Disney media and how big is the proportion of Disney in the lives of others, besides fans. Those would be interesting aspects to study in further detail.

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Appendix 1

1. 1. Interview questions

1. How would you describe Disney?
    a. What is Disney to you?
        i. Is it just movies?
        ii. Is it something more than what they produce?
2. What does Disney mean to you?
    a. How does it make you feel when somebody talks about Disney?
    b. How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?
    c. Do you talk about Disney with others?
3. Do you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?
4. Why do you consider yourself as a fan of Disney?
    a. Which kind of a fan do you consider yourself to be?
        i. Are you a fanatical fan (Fanatical = make your life around Disney, have tattoos of Disney characters, belong to clubs, etc.)?
        ii. Do you collect items (statues, pins, magazines etc.)?
        iii. Have you seen all the movies?
        iv. Do you have a favourite character?
        v. Do you remember when you became a fan?
        vi. Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney (e.g. see all the movies, work at the park, visit all the parks etc.)?
5. Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?
    a. Are you a member of any official fan club?
    b. Do you belong to a fan group on Facebook?
        i. If yes, do you comment on their posts/pictures?
    c. Do you post anything online about Disney?
        i. Where?
        ii. What?
        iii. How often?
6. Do you create any other kind of content concerning Disney (e.g. fan fiction)?
7. How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

    a. Are you proud?

        i. Why?

    b. Are you ashamed?

        i. Why?

    c. Do other people know you are a fan?

        i. Why do you/do you not tell them

8. In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

    a. How do you feel about those values and norms? (for example: family values, norms that men should be superior?)

    b. Would you promote the same things yourself?

9. Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

    a. Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

10. Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

    a. Why?

11. What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

12. Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

    a. Why?

13. Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

    a. Which ones?

    b. How many times?

        i. Do you have an annual pass?

    c. What does visiting the parks mean to you?

        i. Why do you visit the parks?

    d. How did it make you feel to be there?

    e. Would you visit Disney again?

        i. Why?

    f. Do you miss the parks/experience when you have not been there for a long time?

14. How is Disney present in your everyday life?

    a. Do you watch Disney movies a lot (see every movie, watch them repeatedly)?

    b. Do you talk about Disney with your friends/family?

        i. What is usually the topic for discussion?

    c. Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

15. Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

    a. How?

16. What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

    a. What?

17. If you have children, do they like Disney?

    a. Do they have any kind of Disney products at home?

    b. How is Disney present in their everyday life?

        i. Do they watch movies daily?

        ii. Do they read comics daily?

        iii. Have they been to the parks?

18. What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

19. If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

20. Have you ever thought about what kind of effect Disney has had on you (by effect is meant whether your actions are influenced by what you experience with Disney)?

    a. Do you think that Disney had an effect on you when you were a child?

    b. Do you think Disney is still having an effect on you?

        i. If so, what do you think that effect is?

        ii. How does this effect change your life?

21. Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

    a. How do you feel about that?

    b. How do you feel about it that Disney's main aim is to make a profit?

    c. Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

    d. Do you believe that their magic is still real?

22. Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

    a. How would you want it to change?

23. Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

    a. Why?

Appendix 2

2. 1. Transcripts

2. 1. 1. Interview #1

How would you describe Disney?

You mean the park?

No, I mean Disney in general, if somebody says "Disney" to you then what pops into your mind?

(Pause) To me It is just this very happy feeling, you know like that that everything is well, somehow utterly positive, like without any negative shade (laugh).

What does Disney consist of for you?

To me Disney is, Walt Disney like the person (laughs), then the parks and then the cartoons are separate, so there would be like three different parts of Disney.

What about comic books?

I have no idea about comics, or I mean, that those Mickey comics I used to read when I was a child, in Finnish though, as in Estonian they did not exist back then but my uncle's children had them, they brought them from Finland. At some point they started coming to Estonia as well, something like in the beginning of 90s, then for some crazy amount of money we could buy them, but this has stayed a bit in the beginning of 90s, like after that I did not buy them anymore. I don't even know why.

Right now, Disney for you is the movies, the parks and the guy, right?

Yes! (laughs) and the guy!

How big of a role does Disney, the man, have in Disney for you?

I don't know, may-be here in Europe you can't really feel it, but for me he was a genius, I mean in his own time to really create this whole universe around Disney, like a Disney city and where everything is proper, everything is clean and people have no problems. I think his idea was super good, I think that people need the fairy-tales nowadays, like life is so hard for

us, only bad news on TV and movies about the end of the world and, like I think we need this positive part added to it as well.

What does Disney mean to you?

(Pause) Oh god, what questions! (laughs). I don't know, a well spent time with my family!

So if you think of Disney, then you usually think of time spent with your family?

Yes, family, because like before when we went without the children and men and it was just like a simple free time activity, but now life has become so complicated, that now it is just, I don't know, a place where you are happy you know! Like if we go to Disney on a Saturday, or on a Sunday, or even in the middle of the week, we take a free day from work because then there is not so much people and less stress as well. And then, well then somehow you step through the gates and everything is just wonderful straight away, not that I am that naïve, but somehow you just can't think of your troubles there, I don't even know what it is, but you just don't think of your problems and that's it.

How does it make you feel if somebody criticises Disney?

Well, it depends how they criticise. For example, as I have visited the park so many times, like really two times, even three times per month sometimes, then you start to see things that you didn't notice at the first time, for example how many things are actually broken and how much there would be, like I think that Disney should be shut down for three months and just paint and renovate and fix and plant flowers and things like that, to wipe dust. To compare Disney with other parks that are around here, then those look somehow better, they are cleaner, I don't know, they are somehow more well-kept. I understand the negativity towards that, if you see many light bulbs that are broken or well these little details that start to bother you at some point. I don't know towards what else you could be negative. For sure, to me in some movies, I don't like the excessive violence, I don't know what is wrong with them there in America, but why do you always have to? In many movies the evil is like really evil, in some movies they have that, it's weird, I don't know.

Do you have an example may-be?

Well I mean the evils, like every cartoon has a good and a bad, but the bad is sometimes so so evil or so so terrifying, that once in a while I see, how my little boy if scared of this evil a lot.

For example in those Mickey Mouse cartoons, I think there is too much of this violence, that they grab each other from their asses and well, something is bothering, I don't like it.

Thus if people criticise you don't mind it if it is directed at the right spot?

No, I mean I don't mind, for sure there are mistakes and if there wouldn't be that would be weird as well, of course we can talk about the commercial aspect and the selling and like that they are only aimed at selling the toys. I mean, if you would search you would find.

But should people be searching?

Yes, exactly! I don't think so, that we should be searching for mistakes, of course, of course, if you can make money, then why shouldn't they. I go to Disney and I also buy toys to my child with pleasure, of course you can say that it has been forced on me in some sense, that there are so much shops around me and how can I go home now empty-handed. But on the other hand, we don't always go home, god, if you go to Disney three times a month, then you don't have the ability to buy all those toys with you, but sometimes it is still like this that you look and see that oh darn, those potatoheads, they are only 19.- let's buy some, so it still happens that we walk home with some stuff that we actually don't need. But what can you do…

…If you like it?

Yes exactly! You don't have to go to Disney if you don't like it.

When did you start liking Disney?

Well you know it is weird, when I was a kid I was raised like that you have to read books and then some books and then study and then books and then in between you definitely have to go to the church and the cartoons are a complete waste of time, so actually I haven't been raised on Disney cartoons. But when I met with my current partner, then we both worked here, in Chatelet (authors note: Chatelet is an area in central Paris), and then next to our workplace was a video store and then every night we went by there and took a new DVD. And this is how we started also taking well, because the Pixar and Disney movies and their cooperation movies started coming out, that were not just aimed at children but well where there was some good things to see also for adults, so we started buying one after another and then finally before our child was born we had a huge collection of Disney cartoons. It is even embarrassing to say, that two adults sit and watch cartoons together and when we went to the

DVD store to rent the movies, then they knew very well that we didn't have a child and then there were two adult people who rent Disney cartoons one after another (laughs). Well but we both just like it, we have just happened to be together so well. There is where it began with the renting and buying, this is how it came. And then of course we went to Disney together a few times and then, I can't say that we would be complete Disney fanatics, that we would buy all the Mickey Mouse figures and that all our dishes at home would be with spots, but I think, that life around us is just so complicated and now we finally have a child and we have a reason to go to Disney!

So you are not a fanatic fan who would arrange their life around Disney or who would have tattoos about Disney?

No, not in this way, but this of course that I have for example a pen at work that has Mickey's ears on them and a cup with Mickey's nose, like those small things.

Do you consider yourself then a bigger fan than the average?

Well, if you take into account that I gladly watch Little Mermaid 2 on a Sunday afternoon, or whatever other cartoon, then yes, I guess I have to say that I am a fan (laughs).

When you said that you have pens with Mickey's ears, do you collect some Disney things?

I collect those same pens, they have those pens that have Mickey ears like this (author's note: the interviewee makes a gesture indicating the shape of the pen, where the ears come straight out of the pen in one line), just these. They have many different ones like these, I don't collect those pins or anything.

Sorry, I didn't get that well, do you then collect the pens or not?

If there are the pens, then I will probably buy them, but it's not like I would specially go there and buy the pen, than not. Voila!

Have you seen all the Disney movies?

No, I don't think I have, I haven't seen those dogs, the ones who eat the spaghetti.

Lady and the Tramp?

Yes, exactly, Lady and the Tramp, I still haven't seen them, and I think that there are more of those that I haven't seen, the old ones as well, Cinderella and Snow White, I haven't seen those, I mean I think that I won't ever buy them either.

Why wouldn't you buy them?

Well I don't know, I mean, I think that it is for the quality, I mean the new films, they just have a much better quality, they are different.

What do you mean by quality, the content or the graphics?

No, no, not because of the content, because of the graphics, it is just that it just bothers, somehow, well if the picture is not like in the TV right now (author's note: the interviewee is referring to the picture in the TV playing in the café the interview is being held at), then well it bothers. I really like those, that they now have done together with Pixar, those computer animated ones. Interesting.

Do you have a favourite character?

(Pause). Emm, that is a good question, I don't think so, I mean we have bought all those sequels, like Toy Story 1, 2, 3 and 4, well yeah, it's not just that we only like Disney, I also like Dreamworks and other, I mean, just cartoons.

I mean that if I go like home on a Friday night or on a Monday night and then my lovely partner tells me that: "you know, I downloaded it, new move is ready", and then when you go see and oh god, it is a cartoon, I am not at all surprised and we gladly watch it together, we put our baby to sleep and we watch the cartoon together just the two of us. Like as we both have a hard job and starting from September 1st work alone at two people's position, every once in a while all those people change around me but nobody stays, because the job is damn hard and then sometimes there are these students, so I mean, I have this quite stressful job at the moment.

What kind of a job do you do, if I may ask?

I work at an insurance company, so in general the job is not, there is no stress anywhere, but as there is just so much of work to do, then that creates stress, like there is nothing complicated, nothing too complicated, but yes, as by the end of the day you are so tired and don't want to see anything negative or anything like that.

Do you have some kind of a dream in relation to Disney?

I would like to buy a home in the Disney city.

In California?

No, not to California, here in Paris, to the euro… what's its name, oh god I can't remember anymore. Well next to Disney.

Val d'Europe?

Yes, Val d'Europe, I would like to have an apartment there. But my darling doesn't want to move because he says it is too far and you just can't make it to work to the real Paris.

Do you want to move there because it is close to Disney?

No, no. I like it that the city is Disney, I mean it is a part of Disney. Oh well yes, there are not Mickeys everywhere, but I like the idea that everything is clean and proper there and there is no dog poo on the ground and everything is new and smooth, even too much already, may-be that even bothers even, it is not like the old Paris, where the history takes our breath away and so on, but I like the fact that it has everything there, everything you need, you have there, that you can't say that I don't have a kindergarten to put my child to because they don't have places and well it's like it is made like this that everyone would be happy and calm there, I would like to move there just because of comfort, that it would be like, you look out of the window and it is pretty.

And Disney is nice and close?

Yes exactly, Disney is nice and close. And it has all the malls and centrums and so many good things are close by and and, the TGV, the speed train, you see all that, the infrastructure is also so good around there, so it is such a good place to live there with your family.

Do you participate in some activity online in relation with Disney?

You know, I haven't even liked their page on Facebook!

Even not on Facebook you have no connection with Disney?

No, no connection! No, no, no. But I have a big photo album "Disney". Yeah, I just really don't have anything. Well I am the Disney, their own page's member, but I go there very rarely.

So you are a member on Facebook still?

No, no I am a member on their official Internet page, there I have registered

Oh, to get the newsletters and so on?

Yes, exactly, and we have the annual pass, with what they send all kinds of offers home by post. But this is also it.

What about offline activities, do you create something offline?

Oh no, no no no no, far from that! My life is too complicated as it is, I couldn't take any extra responsibilities (Laughs).

Then about Internet, do you post yourself only pictures if you go to Disney and so on?

Yes.

How does it feel like to be a Disney fan?

You know, I don't know, I still go to work sometimes with Mickey t-shirts, I think that they make so cool shirts for adults and all sorts of clothes and other stuff, so no I am not the online one. Already in my team, I have three people who, well not that they are openly Disney fans but every now and then you yet again see some small thing here or there, I mean also because our company has those special deals with Disney, and then our, the department who takes care of the workers, I have no idea how to say that, well they send us all sorts of offers, for example wines and other stuff and cosmetics and then also Disney tickets and annual passes and then sometimes they send us an e-mail saying that they have, I don't know, five Disney annual passes to offer and who makes it first to them gets the passes. So well, already in our team there are three people who have the Disney annual pass.

So you don't feel embarrassed?

No, I think that I don't feel embarrassed.

Do you keep it a secret from some people?

No no, everybody knows that I go to Disney every other week (laughs).

What kinds of norms and values does Disney represent according to you?

That good wins over bad.

That is the principal for you?

Mm, I don't know, (pause). May-be in the States you would see it more than here, in Paris, that keep smiling and (pause) well may-be yes this, that all the clouds have a silver lining. They definitely emphasize on family, that mom-dad and two children, may-be it will take some time before Disney makes a movie where the child has two fathers. Of course we will see, if you take the same Toy Story, then I was very surprised that you never see a father there. Have you ever seen a father there? Never will you see a father. There is a single mom with two children.

Have you ever thought about it that the Classical Disney movies never have a mother?

Yes, the mother is always dead! (Laughs) so now they want to change that around. Like generally a strong sense of tolerance is apparent in the movies.

Do you support the same sorts of values?

I don't know, I don't have anything against it, well I mean, it is such a complicated topic, of course I would be sad if my dear son would come home one day and say: "Hello, mom, here is Michel", of course I would be sad but he would still be my son after that, well I don't think it is normal or well, I accept that it exists and I have a lot of acquaintances who are in many ways abnormal (laughs), but I am tolerant.

Thus it could be said that you are supportive of Disney's values?

Yes, because I think that it is rather natural you know, so yeah, I haven't been watching the Disney movies from that angle, may-be that could be the topic of a research and I should watch the movies from that angle that what kind of values they present.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think of that?

No, I think that Disney promotes those traditional values yes, that may-be have been a bit left behind in time if you watch the movies now. But on the other hand they were accurate when they were released, like I think the newer movies that they have done now are much more

different, like Brave, about that you couldn't say that. I think that now they promote the independent women, who go to chase their faith or like they have changed, their orientation has changed, so you can't just say it like that, they still are following the trends.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about some Disney product, be it a movie or something else?

Well this, that they have sent all their production to somewhere in China and the last time we bought two cars, small cars that have a controller and we switched six times before we could find two that worked, so everything has a really bad quality I think, well the prices are crazy, the prices are actually very high and for that price you could get a descent toy.

About China, is it just the quality that is bothering you or also that they are taking advantage of the cheap workforce?

Just that it has no quality. I mean, even in China you can make products with very high quality I think. But sometimes it feels like they are trying to cut every corner to earn just a little bit of money. And this that the local workers get a very lousy pay, I mean that the work of a customer service person is very hard and they don't get any tops, nobody leaves dips for Disney workers. This bothers me sometimes, well we of course have the annual pass, but if to think that you come to Disney and pay like 70.- for your ticket and well you see that everything has been done so cheap, like for example the restaurants, the food there is just terrible. You can not eat at Disney, of course if you go to the restaurants but then you pay for that a crazy price and for something that you pay this price for the quality is not worth the name of the restaurant, so that bothers me, a lot. Especially in France, where food is god and where people respect good food and are willing to pay for good food but if there is the food even worse than somewhere in McDonalds, then I think that is a big negative side. I think that the price they are asking for the food is despicably high. Not that money is a problem, but it is just somehow unfair and that bothers me.

Which messages or morale do the Disney movies carry for you?

(pause). That all bad you do will come back to you. Mmm that everything ends well, but then in the way if yourself you are good, then everything ends well for you, because you can't say that for bad everything ends well.

Do you believe in it yourself, that this is what happens in real life?

Well I believe very strongly in karma, that good things happen to good people, this is just how it is. (Laughs). If yourself you are positive then the world around you is positive as well.

What do you think, should every people get to be a part of the Disney world?

I don't know, I feel just sorry for this, that we have some acquaintances who don't take their children never there, they looked at us if we said that we go like often to Disney with our child, he is now three, and then they were looking at us very weird that how can that be, like well, that our child watches cartoons together with us, that "ooh, your child watches TV at home? Such a small child..", so we have gotten a lot of negative feedback from other parents. That how can that be, that your child isn't scared in Disney, or I don't know some other weird questions. So I feel sorry for those kids sometimes, who live with those parents who don't take them to Disney or those who are really against Disney, they don't want their child to have this commercial way of thinking, or I don't know what else, I feel sorry for those who don't get a part of this.

Why?

(Pause). They make your life interesting. It definitely gives a new perspective or I mean that well it is nice if kids only read books and play only with their toys and wooden blocks, and whatever else and everything is very educative and nice, but may-be them as well want to just watch Disney cartoons. So yes, I feel sorry for those children, like if I look at my own sweetie and him playing, I mean, it might not be so developing, well a lot of parents have told me that my child's fantasy won't develop if he watches Disney cartoons where everything has been provided, that he should be like creating himself through his play everything, like with his own fantasy, but if I watch how my child plays with all the different characters at home and also plays through the cartoons, I think it is super cool, I don't know.

So you couldn't say that Disney somehow limits his fantasy?

Well every once in a while he does play the cartoons through scene by scene, but on the other hand he has completely different dialogues and activities for those characters who he is playing with.

I understand that you have visited the parks as well?

Yes, we go there about two times a month, and we made the annual pass last year in august, that before that we paid for the visiting and then when going to the park we discovered, well

there they were promoting this very big, that like before we didn't even know that this card exists really. A very negative point for Disney (laughs). We didn't know that this card exists because you don't always read the price list through and that it was marked there somewhere in the end and nobody hasn't suggested it for us neither. But in the end of august there was this campaign that buy a ticket and you will get the card by paying 29.- more. Of course when we started buying it, it appeared that if you pay only 29.- more, then you can only use the card when they tell you, well that there are certain periods when you can go and then it came out that during Christmas we couldn't go and during my birthday we couldn't go and during my child's birthday we couldn't go and half the summer we couldn't go and then the next level of the card we also saw that Christmas is still left out and my birthday is also still left out as I am born on the 31st of October, then we couldn't go to the park on those days when we wanted and then we still had to pay a lot more but they have a possibility that you pay every month a little.

Thus it is still cheaper to buy this than every time a single ticket?

But of course, I think that already with three times we were even, yes three-four times and we had our money back for the annual pass, I mean it was even then. We did the card so late in august, that now next year we won't make a new card, well only for the winter period, like in September there is snow and it is cold and then we will do it again in April, or at the end of May, or at the end of March or in April sometime next year, so that a couple months we will be without.

You will try?

We will try, because we thought that in the winter it is too cold there, but we have gone there also with heavy rains when we all have the white, Disney, jackets on, so well we have gone there really with any weather, but well in the winter it is still cold, you are just so cold and wet that you don't enjoy the park like you would during the summer, but of course, it is positive that with bad weather there are about 10 people less in the park than with good weather. May-be the queues are a bit of shorter, but truly just a little bit, of course we thought that if we go there with bad weather, then Disney would be empty, but no! Far from it, then you were just standing in the line with bad weather.

But you still go?

I still go, we went many times in the winter and October and when there was Halloween. Of course we were disappointed during Christmas, that there wasn't too many decorations, we somehow expected more, I think even Halloween was more decorated, well it was beautiful but I know, some friends have told me as well that they have had snow cannons that blow snow down from the roofs, but this year we just did not see that. So we were a bit disappointed in Christmas, we would have expected the true Winter Wonderland. Voila!

Have you also visited the other parks?

We would really like to go to the United States

But you haven't been there?

No, haven't been there, we don't have the money, I mean I would like that sweetie would be a bit bigger so that he could enjoy it a bit more, that to make such a big trip with him, he is a good traveller, he flies gladly, mainly sleeps only, but yeah, we would wait until everyone in the family would enjoy it more. Oh, my new colleague who just started, she worked in Disney! May-be if people don't talk about it like publicly but if somehow we start to talk about this then those people who doesn't like Disney or have never been there, those people are hard to find.

I imagine it is especially like this in Paris?

Yes, here in Paris, because it is so close to here. My colleague of course worked in the United States, well there had to be such a park where there are different themes and, I don't know, where you have restaurants according to different countries.

But Paris has that as well, no?

Well, yeah I don't know exactly, in any case I'd like to go to the United States.

Why do you visit the parks?

(Pause). I like it there (laughs).

What do you like there?

Eee. I even like to stand in the queue there. I mean I don't even have anything against standing in line there, usually I don't stand queues and it seems so unfair, that it seems so

short, and then you get inside and there is this zig-zag-zig-zag and it is super long, I find it to be very unfair, but I am even willing to stand in this unfair queue. I don't know why.

You just like it? The surroundings then or?

I like the architecture there as well, I mean that we have been to the park also just to walk around, we haven't been to any attractions, as it is near to our home, we live where is the RER A (author's note: Disneyland is situated by the train line RER A) and it takes us just 30 minutes to be there, may-be even 25, especially now when we don't have to pay for NAVIGO in the weekends (author's note: NAVIGO is the transportation card and according to the new law, weekends are free for the owners of a monthly pass), which makes it completely free for us. Like if before we would have paid 24.- to get to Disney and come back then now we don't pay anything and then every once in a while that you ask: "sweetie, where are we going? Let's go to Disney! Let's go to Disney!" and then we just go there to eat there and our sweetie goes to bed in the stroller and then we just walk around, we just like it in Disney.

How does it make you feel when you are in the parks?

We never fight in Disney! We never fight in Disney! That is why we go there so often, at home we only fight and here in Disney we never fight and then it is good. No, that was now a lie, we don't fight all the time at home, but well yeah, we actually never do fight in Disney, we have talked about it as well at home that if we have noticed that we have never fought in Disney? Well, you know usually when you go somewhere with a car, for a trip, then you always find some little thing that goes wrong somehow, I don't know traffic or some other small thing, like always some kind of quarrelling but we have never quarrelled in Disney, even not on those topics, like usually he always tells me that I waste money at home, but if I buy myself a Potatohead in Disney, then he, like it wasn't even a problem, he is like: "buy, honey, as much as you want", but of course when we get home it is like, did we really have to take all this stuff away from Disney, but yes we don't ever fight in Disney.

Do you miss Disney if you haven't been there for a while?

Yes. Aah, actually we had too much of Disney at some point. It was somewhere in December, in January and February we didn't go even once to Disney. I think I lied now, I think we went one time. What I meant by this is that we didn't go every weekend (laughs), and then we had a bit of too much and the weather was really bad and we felt that we just don't want to go for now, we didn't have the feeling that you'll go to the park and then you'll have this wonderful,

like this different feeling or well ohh, you get this feeling but the feeling was starting to fade away, you just went to Disney and again was raining, and in Disney it is always very cold, like if in Paris it is warm, then in Disney it is always cold and if in Paris it is cold, then in Disney is even colder.

Yes, it is between the meadows

Yes, exactly, it is on the fields there you know and always wind blows from somewhere. And well then we had this moment that we went to Disney and we went home an hour later because we had had enough and then we decided that we won't go for a while.

But in a regular situation?

But yeah, now we would totally like to go back!

So you do miss it every once in a while?

Yes, somehow I don't know, it is already when you see your sweety there. Ah important! I feel that my child is safe in Disney! Already this that you can leave your very expensive stroller and you can put your purse with your money on the stroller and nobody will take it! The feeling of safety is really important for me, the fact that I feel safe. May-be already a fact that all the people who are there, they have the money to buy, to come there with the ticket and they have all been checked or like I can let my child run around without fearing that someone will steal him or something will happen to him, the feeling of safety, Voila! That is why I go there!

Is the feeling of safety based on something?

If I would have seen those cartoons when I was a child then may-be there would be some connection, but I wouldn't say it comes from there, may-be they just insert to you with the cartoons that everything will end well and we only have happy endings (laughs), may-be that is what makes, I don't know… Because all the people who are there, are somehow happy, it of course depends, I think that you won't see anywhere else as many children crying at the same time, we have a problem here right now, you don't see nowhere so many children crying than in Disney. Well a lot of children cry but I think the problem might also be in that, that many families have come to Disney, they have been up the whole day and they are just tired. Well we have always tried to put our children to bed during lunch time but for it is just that we will go next week again, but if you have come from somewhere far away, to spend a day

in Disney or two days in Disney, then you can't put your child to sleep for three hours in the middle of the day, so may-be that's why the children are tired and crying and so on. There are a lot of children who are less than six years old and really small, so you see a lot of children crying, but at the same time I feel that my child is protected there, he can run wherever he wants and I don't always have to run after him. If you would compare, we just went to the Bois de Trone (author's note: a Tivoli that is moving around France), but there is it so hugely big and there I don't even dare to put my child down because I am so afraid, it's like well, you already see the SWAT team and hundreds of them walking around in pairs, well the music is also super loud well you just can not compare this kind of a park with Disney, where yes, may-be to go to the park it is more expensive, but at the same time you can be calm and you don't have to fear anything as when in a park that you enter for free, because you don't even want to put your child down because oh god what can happen to him! I am completely sure that in Disney they have security in private gear, there have to be, because you don't see them anywhere. Well yes, for me that, the first time I guess when we went there, I saw that everyone have left their strollers, really like 50 strollers, take which one you want, you just leave your things there, well your wallet may-be not, but you can leave everything on the stroller and when you come back, you have stood in the line may-be for two hours and well it takes really a long time, but it is still there, so this kind of a secure and positive, you don't have to worry about anything.

How other than the parks, is Disney present in your everyday life? I understand you watch movies a lot?

Yes

Do you have a favourite movie that you watch repeatedly?

We are forced to watch repeatedly the movies that our sweetie currently likes. It may happen that, well we try that he wouldn't watch cartoons all day, we are not that horrible parents either, we still do stuff together with him, so he isn't only watching cartoons, but yeah he has some periods where he is only willing to watch one certain cartoon, like Tarzan we watched a whole week, every night and every morning he had to watch it before going to the kindergarten, it was necessary that Tarzan would play. Then of course we watched it all together.

Do you speak with others about Disney?

At work every once in a while.

What do you talk about?

Emm, (pause), last time we were talking about how my friend bought a whole collection of dishes, those spotty ones, they have those with Mickey, really pretty and I would to the exact same myself but one plate costs like 10.- so.. well we just talked about that I shouldn't worry because they have sales once in a while, that I will get my spotty dishes.

Do you discuss the movies or something like that as well?

No, we don't talk about that, no philosophical topics, that where we think is the true meaning hidden, that not. To be honest, I am tired of thinking that everything has a deeper meaning, like the towers in America were destroyed by their own people and, well I just don't want to carry these kinds of things in me anymore, I live in my pink bubble and I don't want that anyone would burst it for me, I don't search for a deeper meaning from cartoons and of course in many movies you can find political and exactly like you said before discriminating and other thoughts, that it has been put there subconsciously or consciously written in there, I agree with it completely but I just refuse to watch those movies like that.

If you have been away from Disney, do you miss it?

Well, we do, I mean I usually watch at least one movie in a week and plus those that we are forced to watch together with my child when cleaning or washing dishes or what ever, I often sit alone at night and watch Beauty and the Beast, well yeah, it is weird that I consider myself really a fan, may-be it is that I am like an alcoholic, that I, *name of the interviewee*, am a complete fan of Disney. But what can you do? I do miss it, you can say that, I have to say that after watching a Disney movie I feel more relaxed, you are not nervous about your problems, it is like, the sun will start shining again, actually I have thought many times about this that why do I watch all of these TV shows that don't have any connection with reality, just someone has put it together but it just makes me think of something else than my problems, which we all have too much and just to ignore the problems of your life for one and a half hour is very good.

Do you feel that Disney has influenced your life?

I am much happier now! No, seriously! I mean, I feel that it has somehow given my life a lot, not that I was missing something before, but I didn't know to miss it before. But now I do miss it every once in a while.

So it has given you peace of mind and positivity?

If to say that starting from tomorrow I can't ever go to the park nor watch any movies then I definitely would miss it, may-be I would start then reading fairy-tales, emm, I have always liked fairy-tales. Yes, it has influenced me in a positive way. May-be I needed something sublime. At first I watched a lot of series, FOX was my favourite channel, but life gets more complicated and complicated and you get the feeling that you need something better, something even easier, something where you don't have to think. On the other hand I don't like simplified banal comedies, I absolutely can not watch them, they irritate me and I don't like them.

You like the beautiful stories then?

Yes! Disney! On the other hand my parents read fairy-tales to us every night, may-be there I created some kind of a connection already

You mean that the influence started already from your childhood?

Yes, fairy-tales have always been, they have this content, well they have different themes, but the point is always the same, that in the end everything will be fine.

Those weren't Disney fairy-tales as I have understood?

No, no definitely not, not one Disney fairy-tale, even not one of those classics like Cinderella or something like that, but they were, we had those different books, fairy-tales from all around the world. We also had those old Estonian fairy-tales, you know, all those Estonian ones, those they read us to us as well, but not Disney fairy-tales, but in general there is no difference between them.

Do you think that adults have something to learn from Disney?

You know, I don't think so, but I think they can influence children.

What do children have to learn then from Disney?

That you have to be good, that you can't do bad to other, that you have to take others into consideration, and even if you are in the worst situation, you have a step-mom who sends you, I don't know, in the middle of the night, in the winter to the forest to pick strawberries, like everything is possible if you really want it, if you are good and you try, then everything is possible, like that good people are not disappeared from earth. Like really, think, it will probably stay somewhere in your subconscious, I don't know, that when you are adult, you know the reality, but may-be this just helps you to ignore this.

Some people have said that stereotypical setting of the characters has a negative influence, what do you think about that?

Yes, that the princess is always thin and pretty, right. Pause. I think it takes a little bit of time. Here is the thing that Disney is a bit stuck in the 50s, where really the housewife woke up in the morning and had makeup on and hair done, like children see that at home that reality is a bit different, like I personally think that all people should thrive for goodness and that nowadays people go too far with being tolerant, if a person is 200kg heavy then there is nothing to be tolerant about, well of course tolerant towards the person self, but it is clear that he needs help, I am not saying that the princess can also be very pretty and with nice curves and wear a clothes size 44 but if the number is already 48 then that is not normal anymore and on the other hand may-be beauty equals with goodness, we all want to be prettier and beauty is still in the eyes of the person, like I don't think of myself as a princess but if my boy sees a princess in Disney then he said: "Ah, look – mommy!" then you say also to your man like, hey, princess! And at the same time dad is a prince, like in a sense that him, although he doesn't resemble with a prince and I don't resemble with a princess, but to him it equals with good. I don't think they have wanted to set in there that all the girls have to be like Barbie dolls and think and so on, but probably it will more and more go to the direction where the characters will become more contemporary, well those stories about princes and princesses originate from centuries ago where they did wear corsets and their stomach was pulled together and so on, that the contemporary fairy-tales probably will change those stereotypes that seem to be very strong in those stereotypes. Or if somebody reads you a fairy-tale and there is talk of princesses and brave princes, you don't picture the brave prince as gay and I don't know or you still picture him like a beautiful prince, like if a prince comes to rescue you then you imagine him to be the most beautiful man on the earth and also the princess has to be the prettiest.

And this was like it for you already in your childhood, as I understand, already before Disney?

Yes, of course! Look, if somebody reads fairy-tales to you then you imagine good characters, or good people to be the best and bad ones are, like one side is of course is that the book describes you the person in some way but your fantasy adds up to it and makes the character. Oh and Disney also did the movie about the dark skin coloured princess as well, so definitely couldn't say that they are racist. Like times are changing and may-be soon we will see also a rather round princess as well, I mean that yeah, I think that it reflects the stereotypes that surround us, that all the models are super skinny and that we consider a skinny, sportive and well trained person a beautiful and healthy person.

I understand that you have one child, right?

Yes

I am just repeating so that I understand correctly. He watches Disney movies daily, right?

Basically every day, yes.

And when you visit the parks he is always with you?

He is always with us.

And the comics aren't also for him of importance?

No, we have some books that we have bought, but not because we would know that there are comics in there but because it comes with a DVD or with something else, like we actually have just bought a DVD and a book has come with it. But we don't read comics at all, I don't know, may-be I should buy them. But I haven't thought about that at all.

So it could be said that the presence of Disney is pretty big in his life?

Well yes, he already has a toy collection that is pretty big, I don't even know which one is true, whether his parents are buying toys for themselves or for him (laughs).

So he has also a lot of toys?

Well, the characters yes, Buzz definitely and actually just the characters he likes and for example I have discovered that the main character is never his favourite character, for

example he doesn't like Woody, he likes Buzz much more, he has those characters, and also he doesn't always like the good character, he often likes those who do a little bit of menace, but those who are not really bad.

Like?

Well from other cartoons, those who are slightly bad.

If you could change something about Disney would you?

Yes, I would shut down Disney, like I said before, I would shut it down for many months and renovate it.

But about anything else, if to talk about the general concept and image?

No I wouldn't change, I wouldn't change a thing. If it was up to me they could have even more fairy-tale like stories and well, I think people need this.

About the influence, you said that Disney has influenced you in a positive way, but has it somehow affected your behaviour?

(Pause). May-be it has actually influenced me in a way that I feel much more calmer and better, I feel that I sense my problems much more lightly that generally people do. My friends also have told me a lot that I live my life in a way like I had no problems around me, like everything was okay (laughs). One friend said to me that if you'd only know how much problems you have! (laughs). That I will remember for the rest of my life that was so interesting. Of course I know how much problems I have in my life, but you can look your life from a negative angle but I refuse to do that.

And Disney helps to do that?

Yes exactly. I like my pink bubble, I know that the world is filled with starving children and homeless people and what ever else but I try to make the world a better place by like recycling, I think if every person would give their small contribution, the world would be a much better place.

I will try to burst in to your bubble now, have you ever thought that Disney is foremost a business?

Yes, I mean, as long as this business brings benefits to me and Disney then everything is fine. Of course one can say, like someone actually did, that don't you see, that the cartoon is just made to sell the toys behind it but not to make a cartoon for kids or a cartoon in general. I really don't care! Even better if they make toys, then I can buy those to!

So it doesn't bother you at all that they want to make a profit?

The only thing that bothers me is that if I go to the park, I expect them to work more for that, darn I know that the park has been in near bankruptcy for the past 20 years and never makes a real profit but still, they should work more on the details, but may-be I am too into details.

But in general that doesn't influence your view of Disney?

Oh, not at all, let them make their business and if I get a benefit from their business, then I will enjoy being there and it gives me a sort of a relaxing feeling, then everything is fine.

What do you think, is the Disney "magic" still real, or is that as well just a business?

(Pause). I think that the Disney magic would be, it would be better for example, well if I think about the first time when I went there, and then when you go there, you expect that you can Mickey Mouse on every corner, that there would be more of that there. Well I think it's crazy that Mickey Mouse has to walk around with a security guy because otherwise all the masses of people would just run all over him. But on the other thing I think that the magic does exists, that if you hug Mickey, it's AHHH! Of course there's a person behind the mask but you still act like a child there, seriously, should feel embarrassed (laughs). So yes, I think I would expect more than that, that they would work a little more on it, put more money in it and people will come and pay more as well.

So if the magic exists is it real for you?

Yes, have you seen the show that they show every night?

Yes, the one on the castle.

You really feel how you have chicken skin and you can watch it every night again and every night you get the same feeling, there has to be something there. Oh, and I think that music is also very important, like the songs from different movies and those, and I think this creates this whole big bubble, so I would say that the magic exists.

Are you generally satisfied with the position of Disney in your life?

Mm yes.

There is not too much of it or too little?

Well, I mean we try to go there a bit less right now, we just went too much, may-be there would be a problem if two completely different people would live together, when one doesn't like it at all and the other does or vice versa. May-be the point is that I don't want to get old and I have the feeling that I will be really old soon. I don't want to get old, may-be that is why I try to stay as childish as possible, I don't know.

Would you recommend Disney for others?

I would, I would. I think it has done a big favour to France and Paris.

What do you mean?

I mean that, yes, Disney makes money but it also brings so much money to France. After all it is the number one tourist attraction. There has to be something, that there are so much of those people, who have said that they won't even go to Paris, they go straight from the airport to Disney and back to the airport, well, there is clearly a problem there, still should visit Paris as well. And I even have some friends who live here in Paris and who go to Disney for the night to stay in their hotel.

You haven't done that?

I would really want to, but if I'd go then I would like to stay in the main hotel in front of the castle and we so wanted to do that for my birthday, but the price, the night in the hotel is so crazy expensive and with our cards, we get a discount with them, but it is only then when the hotel is not fully booked and it didn't fit for us and the price was so expensive that we just couldn't, we would feel sorry for ourselves. (laughs).

Thank you for having this discussion with me, you were a lot of help!

2. 1. 2. Interview #2

How would you describe Disney?

Disney to me is mainly about the movies. I know that a lot of people also are a big fan of the parks, but to me the movies and the characters are the main thing.

Is it something more than what they produce?

I guess it is also the feeling that it creates around it's movies, but that it is to every person different. For me it is just super fun, I just get so excited about the characters and the movies. And well actually the characters are the main reasons why I visit the park as well, to see the characters.

What does Disney mean to you?

It doesn't have this special meaning to me, it is just another company, only the difference is that I really like Disney. I started watching Disney movies when I was about 15 or something like that, so it has been already 15 years (laughs) but it doesn't have this meaning to me like many people say that it makes them nostalgic or that it brings them happy memories, but to me it is just an entertainment.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?

Okay, I have to say that even though I don't have a special connection with Disney I don't like it when people criticize Disney. Of course there are things that can be criticized about Disney, like that, for me, the movie freak, the old movies are still not with the best quality (laughs), but I am not going to punch someone if they are criticizing Disney, it is their business and they have their opinion but I don't have to like it.

Do you talk about Disney with others?

I do, with my wife and friends mostly. My wife of course has no chance because we have all the Disney movies at home so she just has to talk about them with me. Luckily she likes it too, not as much as I do of course, but she still does. Not all my friends are Disney fans but some of them are, so often we speak about Disney with them as well. Mostly about the movies and the DVDs or VHSs and who bought what and things like that.

So I understand you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?

I definitely do

Which kind of a fan do you consider yourself to be?

A bigger on than the regular Disney fan. But I guess I am different, many people that I know and that like Disney are especially crazy about the park and want to always go there, but as I said for me it is always been the movies and I think it will always be the movies.

Do you have any tattoos of Disney?

I actually do! (Laughs). I know I am 30 and a guy so may-be it is not the most normal thing that every other guy has, but yes I do.

What kind of a tattoo do you have?

I have a Mickey on my back, the whole Mickey, not just the head.

Anything else?

No, just that, for now (laughs)

Do you plan to get anything else?

I am not sure yet, I have thought about getting a Minnie next to my Mickey, especially as I am married now, the Mickey I got before I got married, so well, yeah, so now it would be reasonable to get a Minnie as well, but I am not too sure about that yet.

Do you collect items?

I collect movies. But I don't know if that, if it is collecting, because there is not so many different one's as there are Mickey statues, but I, yes collect movies, all the movies they put on DVD or VHS, I have to have them, those cartoons that have never been put on the DVD don't interest me, but, (laughs) of course it is hard to get them as well, that might be the reason for that.

Have you seen all the movies?

I am afraid to say yes, because I am afraid that there are some movies that I am not familiar with but I am 99% sure that I have, so you can just write down that you have met at least one fan that has seen all the movies (laughs).

Do you have a favourite character?

No, I don't. I don't watch the movies because of that. I just like the movies themselves, so well anyways no, I don't have a favourite character.

Do you remember when you became a fan of Disney?

I think it was around when I was 15, but then I just started watching the movies. I don't really know when exactly was the point that now I am a fan, but I guess I could say that it started when I was about 15.

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

I guess seeing all the movies is a dream, but I think I have achieved that. It is of course a continuing dream because they keep making new movies, so I can't ever say that I have finally achieved my dream. But other than that there is nothing.

Would you consider yourself to be a fanatical fan?

No, not really. I know that I have the movies and the tattoo, but I don't think it is fanatical, I don't act all crazy about Disney.

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

I am a fan of their page on Facebook and of one unofficial forum as well.

Why did you join those pages?

Well the Facebook was just that I could show other people that I like Disney and get news from Disney as well through Facebook, but the forum is just to read about the new movies and even old ones, the people there often post some unknown facts and things like that, and I think that is interesting.

Do you post anything there yourself?

No, I don't, I don't know any new Disney trivia that they don't already know there, so it is just for me to read there.

What about Facebook, do you like or share or comment on their posts?

I sometimes "like" them, but I am not very active in their community.

Do you post anything else online about Disney?

No, nothing really.

Do you create any other kind of content concerning Disney?

No I don't, I don't really know why I should, so I don't.

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

What do you mean?

Some people say that being a fan is somehow degrading and you should be ashamed of it?

(laughs) well I see their point, I am 30, married and just had my first baby and I am watching more Disney movies than my little cousins do. But I am somehow not ashamed of it, I like it and it doesn't change who I am and if they like me then we are friends but if they don't like me then fine (laughs), I am not willing to hide it or change myself just so people would like me more.

Do other people know you are a fan?

Yes, they do.

Why do you tell them?

They are my friends and family, so why shouldn't they know? As I said there is nothing to be ashamed about so I am not and I tell other people. The movies are a big part of my life, big part, yes even when my friends come visit me they see my movie collection, so even if I haven't told them, they are going to see this.

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

I have never concentrated on that very much, but if you ask me now then I would have to say that good always wins over evil. I think that theme always goes through the movies, that even if you have it very hard then in the end, if you stay good and don't give up then you will achieve your goals.

What do you think about the norms they promote?

What do you mean by norms?

Well, I mean that some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

Oh, yes, I have actually heard that too, but as I said, I haven't really watched those movies with that perspective. But I have to say that I don't agree with the sexism thing, take the

newest movie Brave for example, she is very independent and saves her whole family, she knows exactly what she wants and just goes for it. But about the racism, there are different characters as well, for me it is diversified enough but I don't know, may-be someone else feels offended by it.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

I don't know, I think it is nice to believe that if you are good and do good then good things will happen to you as well. I think it's a nice message to teach your child.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

Well, they did buy Star Wars (laughs)

Why does that makes you feel uncomfortable?

(laughs) well it actually doesn't that much, I just like Star Wars and I am curious to see what they make of it. I don't think they will put Mickey running around in space but I am just curious whether it will have some Disney touch.

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

No, not really, besides the Star Wars thing. I don't really watch the movie with this kind of a look, I just watch it for entertainment so I don't look for any deeper meaning and so there is nothing to make me uncomfortable.

What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

Like morals?

Yes.

Hmm, I think it's the same thing what they promote that good is better than evil.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

I haven't really concentrated on that, it is everyone's own business what they do and I would in a way recommend Disney to everyone, because I like it and I think their films are entertaining, but well, I think everyone, it is their own business.

Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

Yes

Which ones?

Just in Paris

How many times?

I don't even know exactly, I started going there about 5 years ago when I moved to Paris, before that I lived far away so I didn't get the chance to go before, but now I have been maybe about 20 times or something like that.

Do you have an annual pass?

No, I don't.

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

Well, I don't really have any special connection with the park. I just like the movies and the characters, but what I like about the park is that I can make pictures with the movie characters in the park, I don't have a special photo collection or anything like that and I don't have to see all the characters all the time, but if I have the chance I will make a picture of them. And well, the rollercoasters, I like them too, I like the adrenaline, but this is not because of Disney, I like all the rollercoasters.

Why do you visit the parks?

Just for the entertainment and the rollercoasters.

How did it make you feel to be there?

I have no special feelings about that, it is just like any other park for me. I also go to the park Asterix and Futuroscope that are nearby Paris, so it is not just about Disney.

Would you visit Disney again?

I would, for the characters and rollercoasters.

Do you miss the park when you have not been there for a long time?

No, nothing like that. I'll just go to some other park.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

Well, I have a collection of the Disney movies at home, so they are there every day and they are a part of my life.

Do you watch those movies a lot?

Quite often, I'd say every week I usually watch one to relax after a work week. I think it is one of the best ways to entertain, especially because the choice is wide. I guess though when my boy grows up a little I will be watching them a lot more than I am now (laughs), may-be then the moment will come when I feel that I get too much Disney (laughs)

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

Yes we do, we usually talk about the new movies that have come out and things like that but nothing too much or too serious, we usually have other things to talk about as well.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

Yes I miss the simple entertainment, luckily until now I haven't had to stay away for too long so I don't really know how it feels like if I can't watch the movies for a long time, but I think if I couldn't watch the movies, then I think I would miss them.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

I think it has made my life a bit more relaxed.

What do you mean?

I mean that when I have had a very hard week at work or something then it is nice to watch a movie like that and just calm down and take my mind off of work. It is nice entertainment, I know the movies already and they always make me laugh, so nice and relaxing.

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

No, I don't think so. No, probably not.

I understand that you have a son, is Disney somehow present in his life?

Yes, I do have a son, but he is was just born so he is still a bit young to watch the movies, play with those toys or go to the park. But when he grows up a little, then definitely I will show him the movies and take him to the park, especially because I have already all the movies at home so it is easy for him to watch them as well.

What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

(laughs) such philosophical questions. I think they can learn what we talked about before, good wins over evil may-be, but I am not sure, because I haven't thought about that much.

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

Make more movies! (laughs). No that was just a joke, for me Disney is just fine, I wouldn't change anything.

Have you ever thought about what kind of affect Disney has had on you?

I haven't thought of that really but if I think about it now, then I don't think it has really influenced me, because how could it? Okay, may-be it could have influenced me when I was a teenager, may-be it helped me see as well that being good is good (laughs), but I don't know that now. Right now I don't think it influences me, of course I do watch the movies so I spend much time with Disney so if that is influencing my behaviour then Disney has influenced my life, but other than that I don't think so.

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

I know that Disney is a business, but I have never really thought about it.

How do you feel about that?

It doesn't matter to me, so what that they are a business, every other company that makes movies is also a business and I watch their movies as well so it doesn't change anything to me that Disney is a business. I pay for other movies, I will also pay for Disney's movies.

Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

No, not at all. Entertainment is entertainment, doesn't matter that they make money, if I enjoy it and they enjoy it, then there is no problems.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

Yes definitely, I like to watch those movies, I like buying them and I like watching them again.

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

I would, it is a nice way to pass the time and a bit different kind of entertainment with nice stories and always something for adults and children.

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me.

2. 1. 3. Interview #3

How would you describe Disney?

Well at first I think of the park straight away, together with its red castle and then of course all the movies, the Disney movies and the world of magic.

Does it make you feel something when someone says Disney?

Yes it actually does, it makes me feel like in a fairy-tale, kind of like this childhood world may-be.

What does Disney consist of for you?

(laughs), what a question!

I mean, is it just the movies, parks or something more?

It is definitely a feeling, because when you are in the park, you are a part of the life in the park, but it is a complete other feeling that they are producing actually and it is not just so easily describable, it's not just that you watch a movie, that is something else, it has like an after effect.

What does Disney mean to you?

It means to me.. can I think for a little?

Of course!

It means to me this different world, a bubble, a fairy-tale bubble (laughs).

How does it make you feel when someone criticises Disney?

I understand that people have different opinions, and well they do have the right to their opinion, but to me Disney is something special. And I respect what they do, so if somebody tells me that they don't like Disney movies or they don't like what Disney does, their parks, their themes, then I don't understand that, because to me it is something special that they have given me but may-be other people, who don't respect it that much or who are not fans, then for them, I actually feel sorry for them, because may-be they haven't just understood that.

How does it make you feel when somebody talks about Disney?

I get this "oh yes!" feeling, then I at least have something to say as well, that yes, I know what you are talking about and I also know some stuff about it.

Do you talk about Disney with others?

Mm, when it comes up then yes, or it is actually a good topic always that do you like Disney, do you go there or do you watch the movies, what are your favourite Disney movies. It is always this kind of a topic that can start a discussion because people talk a lot about movies, so I can always say as well that for example my favourite movie is Finding Nemo and that's how the conversation goes.

Is that your favourite movie?

Yes!

So just to be clear, you consider yourself a Disney fan?

Yes, you can say that.

What kind of fan do you think yourself to be? Are you a fanatic?

No not at all, I don't think that I am fanatic, I have heard a lot about those people who are actual fanatical Disney fans, but to me it is just something related to free time activities and not something crazy. For me it is a part of my life, not a very important one, but it is still something that it is important for me, but I am not a fanatical fan.

Do you collect some kind of Disney products?

No, I don't collect anything.

Have you seen all the Disney movies?

Most of them for sure, but not all of them. But I do feel that I should watch them all.

Why is that?

Because I feel that if I talk with other Disney fans, then sometimes I get the feeling that for example because I haven't seen Toy Story and I haven't seen some other cartoons, then it always seems to me that I should watch them, because it means already being in this world and it needs me to watch all the cartoons, then I could talk with others even more about these things and be in this world even more.

Do you have a favourite character?

Yes! Those turtles from Nemo, who are there in the Australian Current! Totally (author's note: the interviewee is indicating to the phrase that the turtles are known for).

Why are they your favourite characters?

Because, I personally like different accents of people and I think that their Australian accent is so genius that it is hard just not to notice, to me it is just this cool dot on the I.

What about their characteristics?

Yes, I like it, because I personally like the Nemo movie so I also like all those characters in there, they have thought those characters through so well, and they have been thought through in a way that they are also suitable for adults at the same time that they are suitable for children and it has been done so well that the personality of the characters, there is every time something new if you watch the movie so every time it is new and exciting.

What kind of things are there for adults in those movies?

I think that there are those specific jokes (laughs) that you notice, well may-be not on the first time, but there are also those jokes that are only understandable for adults, or these kinds of language plays that are only understandable for people who speak a certain language, like if you watch Disney movies in English, that have been translated to French, then they are not at all the same jokes, you just can't make the same joke. So I think that in the original it is much better and it is just genius how they have been able to create those jokes.

Do you remember when you became a fan of Disney?

Oh, I have no idea! Absolutely no idea!

Do you have some kind of a dream concerning Disney?

Yes, I would like to work in Disney in the USA – I would like to try it, I would even like to be a character or something.

Why is that?

I don't know, it seems such a glamorous job, I would like to tell my kids someday that you know, I worked in Disney once, I think that would be so awesome.

What kind of character would you like to be?

(Pause) I don't even know, I really like Jasmine, but as my skin colour and other appearances don't really match, but I like her costume so that's why I'd like to be her, but that is clearly not possible, so I don't know, may-be sleeping beauty, that would be such a classical choice, it would be nice to say one day that yes I was sleeping beauty (laughs).

Have you ever participated in an online activity concerning Disney?

I am not a member of any official fanclub, but on facebook I am a member of the Disney group.

If they post photos or text, do you like them, share them or comment on them?

I usually like them, and as Disneyland Paris has her own site, then I am their friend as well and if they post these quotes or texts like "Did you know that…" and sayings about the park, that are always interesting to read, that you actually won't find out when you are in the park, only on the Facebook page, then these ones I like pretty often.

Do you post anything yourself about Disney?

Mm, well yes, I mean if I go to Disney then I always write on Facebook that I am there and who I am with and if I make any pictures then I'll put them up on Facebook so others could enjoy may magical world as well (laughs).

Have you ever posted anything on Disney's site?

No, I haven't.

Are you active outside of the online world in creating something in relation to Disney?

No, I haven't gone that far.

How does it make you feel to be a Disney fan?

Well, I am proud, because, I have this feeling that if one day I will get older, then I have something to talk about, because I have been a part of it. May-be in 20 years Disney doesn't exist anymore and it will be nice to think about that one day, that we had this world where you could go, I am so happy about that I have been a part of this, those movies and the world and also the Disney concept in general.

Why do you think that there won't be Disney in 20 years?

No I don't mean that, I meant that what if it doesn't exist anymore, then at least I have been a part of this.

So you are not embarrassed of being a Disney fan?

No, not at all.

Some people say that it is embarrassing to be a Disney fan if you are an adult, it doesn't bother you?

No, not at all, I mean at least the current generation feels proud about it if they can watch Disney movies, those animations and cartoons and say that they have seen it, and even a lot of older people watch those movies and there is still something to see and nobody feels embarrassed about it and it is nice.

So your friends and family know that you are a Disney fan?

Yes, completely.

Do you have a reason why you tell it to others?

No, the thing is that most of the people I communicate with, who are my friends, they talk about it as well, which means that they are fans as well so we have that kind of a friendshop.

So you have no reason to hide it?

Nope, no reason to hide it.

What kind of values and norms does Disney in your opinion portray?

Oh god, I don't know, I think for me the primary thing that Disney represents is that everyone is equal. There is no difference between sexes, but still women and girls are being treated as princesses.

Do you portray the same values and norms?

Mm, to me it is important that men would treat women as princesses but not always it is true or it is not always like I would wish. But mostly yes, I value the norms and values of Disney. Well I think that Disney also represents through its films the importance of good relationships with parents, between children and their parents, because we see from a lot of movies how it is important, that yes, there is the difference of age and generations, but still in Disney movies, in many movies, it appears how children get along with their parents.

Have you ever thought about it that often they just have one parent in the movies?

I have never thought about that before. True, I have never thought about that.

If you think about that now, then what do you think?

But Brave lived together with his mom and dad. May-be a new generation, may-be the cartoon creators have changed.

Some people say that Disney represents sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

Mm, I don't agree with that, I haven't even noticed it myself (laughs), but to me, I would say that it's not true.

But if you watch like Cinderella or Snow White, and it's the woman who cleans?

I don't think it's a sign of sexism, I think it's rather that, that those stories are stories, they have been made during the time when the society was different, so it wouldn't have been possible to make those movies too different, the people of that time had to like those movies, so in today's Disney's movies we see a different situation. We can talk about a situation in history when mm women cleaned and so on but we also can see progress in the Disney movies and a different situation and, and a society.

What do you think about the current situation, does it mirror the actual situation in the society?

Mm, in someway definitely yes but we also have to keep in mind that everything that Disney does is based on fairy-tales so we can not really talk about a real society or some real situation.

If children watch those movies, what do you think can they form an opinion based on the movies and the stereotypical setting of characters?

Of course it can influence them, of course, but I don't think that Disney movies would have something contradictory that would influence the children so greatly that we should be worried about that.

Have you ever felt inconvenience about something that Disney does?

I can't remember right now anything like that. Until now everything I have been in touch with has been positive for me.

What do you think, what kind of message do the Disney movies portray?

Like I said before, then a lot of movies present the importance of family and the relations between children and their parents, and how important are relationships in general, like the socialising between each other and the importance of communication.

Even though there is only one parent?

Yes, even then, because if we take some movies then it is important that the characters would get along between each other, not just with the parents, and would reach their goal, that has been set for them, together. It's important how they communicate between each other.

Do you think that everyone should get a part of the Disney magic?

Yes, of course

Why is that?

You can not have a childhood without Disney. It is an important part of growing up and being an adult, it is important because thanks to that we can find the magic in our reality as well.

Magic is very important in childhood?

Yes, even very much so.

What do you think, is it possible to develop this magic and fantasy without Disney?

May-be we could develop it some other ways as well, but as I am such a big Disney fan then I think that Disney offers such a wide range of options, with such a wide spectrum that it is enough for youngsters, old people, generally for everyone. It is like this big world that fits for everyone.

How does Disney make you feel?

Good feelings. It is a feeling that I'd like to be a child again and start watching the movies again and again go for the first time to Disney and all these feelings that I'd just like to be a child forever.

Could it be said that you are a bit nostalgic?

Yes, yes definitely.

Have you ever visited the parks?

Yes.

Which ones?

The one in Paris.

You haven't been to the other ones?

No, not yet.

How often do you go there?

Mm, many times a year, let's say, at least four times a year but sometimes more often. Let's say four to seven times a year.

Do you have the annual pass?

No, I don't but because I have friends who work in Disney, then I can use their free passes.

So usually when you go to Disney you get in for free?

Yes, that is usually so.

Would you be willing to pay?

I would.

Even seven times a year?

Yes I would, it is completely worth it. Especially if I would have a family, if I'd have kids, then I would be willing to pay a lot.

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

To me, it means a very special day, which I can't do very often, but it means like the escape from my everyday life and something special, you can not compare it with regular entertainment, it is just getting away from your everyday life.

What do you mean by escaping from everyday life?

Because Disney is like this fairy-tale world where you can escape when nothing else goes well and Disney is such a bubble where you can escape from everything else, from everything else bad.

Why do you visit the parks, because of the bubble?

Yes, exactly! It is the bubble that attracts me.

Would you visit the parks again?

I would, definitely!

Why?

You can never have enough of Disney, I would say that I'd visit it because, it's the same like with Disney movies, it is the same with Disneyland, that every time you go there you will discover something new that you have never noticed before, so it is always exciting to go back there.

Do you miss the parks if you haven't been there for a while?

Sure, I kind of get nostalgic, that I could go again and I remember how good it feels to be there, I always want to go more often that I do.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

Hmm, in my everyday life, I am not sure

Do you watch movies repeatedly?

Yes, sure, I mean I have the Disney movies on my computer and if I have nothing else to do or something else to watch, then I again watch the Disney movies.

Even if you have seen them already?

I really do watch them again.

And with pleasure?

Yes, of course!

Do you also talk about Disney with your friends and family?

Yes, because all my friends and family are exactly the same as I am, so also Disney fans.

What do you usually talk about?

Mm, I don't even know. We sometimes talk about the movies, or our jokes come from the Disney movies and from those characters, like sometimes how someone is, like that you are exactly like him from that movie and all like these kinds of sentences appear every day.

You said you miss the parks, do you also miss Disney if you haven't been in contact?

Sure I do, it is like some difference from your everyday life.

Is that to say that it is like getting away from your problems?

Yes, you can say that.

Do you think Disney has influenced your life in some way?

Of course it has, Disney has had a very big part in my life, I think that some values and some understandings have still come from the Disney world.

Can you bring some examples?

I don't know, may-be the princess thing comes from the Disney movies. And like the family values as well I think.

Do adults have something to learn from Disney?

Of course they have! Disney hasn't been created just for children, it is also for adults so for sure there is something to learn.

Have you learned something from them yourself, as an adult?

(Thinking) I have learned that, that there is always some place where you can feel calm and relaxed, a place where you can escape when the reality just is too much, or when you just need a change for a while, for me Disney is just like this place when I need a change to my world, I need to be calm, something else. It has taught me to also find those moments in the real life, or activities that would make me feel like I feel in Disney.

You don't have any children, am I right?

Yes, you are right!

What do you think, what do children learn from Disney movies?

Disney portrays a lot of important topics in their movies and they have a lot to learn from the movies, it can be said that it helps their parents to grow up their children.

Some people say that Disney sets a black-and-white picture, a stereotypical one, what do you think of that?

I wouldn't say that this is completely true, that princesses and princes are pretty and the rest are ugly, that there are only two sorts of people ugly or pretty, look at many films, it can be seen that they don't depict only princes and princesses, there are a lot of other Disney movies and cartoons in general, so I think that it still teaches children different values and understandings and that it is not that black-and-white as people say.

If you could change anything about Disney, would you?

No!

So you like Disney as it is?

Definitely!

Have you ever thought what kind of affect has Disney had on your life or behaviour?

To some extent definitely yes, some things just affect you even in your subconscious level, when we watch the movies or go to that Disney world, some things affect us still, so yes I think that they have influenced us.

Can you rate that somehow?

May-be the childishness, that has definitely been affecting me, like I am 23 years old but I have remained also childish, like every time that I watch the movies again, and I feel that I still have this child in me and I can understand the movies.

And that is important for you?

Yes, it is important.

Why?

Because when people get older and become adults, then they always have this understanding that we also have to become older in our minds and souls but actually it is important that we could also maintain this child in us, that we could be good and childish in our souls.

Why is it important for you?

I think it is the basis for getting along with other people in the adult world.

Have you ever thought about that Disney is foremost a business?

Yes, sure I have. But they do their business so damn well, that I haven't really had the reason to condemn it.

How does it make you feel that Disney's main goal is to make a profit?

But nowadays who wouldn't want to make a profit? All businesses have been built for the same reason, to make a profit, and Disney is one of them. And entertainment business is nowadays one of the biggest, so it doesn't give me any contradictory feelings.

Does it affect your vision of Disney in any way?

Not at all.

What do you think, is the Disney magic still real, despite the fact that they want to make a profit?

I believe that the magic is still real, because it just wouldn't be possible that one company, whose aim isn't true could last that long and so real and to portray it so well as they do it.

Are you happy with the position of Disney in your life?

Yes I am.

You don't want to change it at all?

No, not at all.

Would you recommend Disney to others?

Yes, definitely.

Why?

The world that Disney offers is just so worth it, even though it is expensive, it is worth the money, even if it is time consuming, it is worth the time and even if it is too far it is worth the going, taking the time, paying the money, it is a part of our lives that will always stay with us.

Thank you very much for taking time to speak with me. You were of great help.

2. 1. 4. Interview #4

How would you describe Disney?

(Thinks). Disney is a company who produces mainly movies, also has comic books and theme parks in different parts of the world.

What is Disney to you?

To me Disney is something much more than just the things that they produce. It is the fairy-tale like universe that they create, it is the feeling they make me feel, the feeling of peace and safety, somehow secure feeling.

What does Disney mean to you?

Disney, is like I said the fairy-tale universe and that is what it actually means to me as well. I think the main aspect is definitely the feeling that it creates. Although I wasn't in contact with Disney when I was a child, as it was a completely different time then, it still makes me feel

magical, never mind that I am way past the general audience of Disney by now. Somehow they still make even me believe in fairy-tales and the possibility of happy endings.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticizes Disney?

I have to say, I really don't mind. I know what I believe in and I know what is true to me. When others criticize Disney, it is their opinion and I respect that, nevertheless I don't often understand their criticism, but I accept it as it is how they feel about Disney. However, of course I know that that there are some aspects that are even worth criticizing, but I don't want to focus on these aspects. Life is hard enough as it is, so I don't want to make it even harder by thinking of negatively about things that I actually do like.

Do you talk about Disney with others?

I often talk about Disney with my daughter, she likes Disney very much as well, and she even works there. So we often discuss different things with her and of course because we do that at home, then my husband joins the conversation as well. More than that, really not, because the rest of the people that I communicate with, like colleagues, are not especially fond of Disney so there is nothing more to really discuss. Of course if a new film comes out, and one of us has seen it then we do talk about that and give each other suggestions.

Do you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?

I do not actually know where to draw the line between being a fan and just being fond of something, but according to my own standards I do consider myself a fan, as if a Disney film comes out then I definitely want to see it, as many of my colleagues who are also fond of Disney are willing to skip those movies.

Which kind of a fan do you consider yourself to be?

I am not sure, but I am not this extremist fan, like some people, who have their house filled with different Disney themed statues and books and videos only on Disney topics. I just like Disney a normal amount, so to say (laughs). Life is so busy as well that I do not even have the time to express my liking of Disney, although if I did, I do not even know if I would do anything differently. I wouldn't like to have my life covered in Disney, although I do like that they are present in my life.

Do you collect any Disney items?

No, I really don't. I never have and I probably never will either.

Have you seen all the movies?

Definitely not all the movies, but a lot. When my daughter was small we used to watch all the Disney movies together, so already that is why I have seen that many of those. Even now, whenever we have the chance with my daughter we watch the movies together and definitely if there is some new movie that has come out. Often she of course she sees it already before me, but as I said, she is a fan as well, so she doesn't mind watching it many times, so if the movie is good, we rent it and watch it together. I don't really have anyone else to watch these movies to do this, because I can not say that my husband cares too much for those movies, but luckily my daughter does, it is kind of like reliving her childhood together.

Can it be said that it creates some kind of nostalgia?

Yes definitely, even though I didn't have the chance to watch the movies when I was a child, I did it together with my daughter and watching and those movies together now creates this extremely nostalgic feeling, as she is my only child then it is nice to relive the experiences that we had together when she was little. It also helps to keep the child alive inside of me, which I believe is important.

Why so important?

Because we are all now living a serious lives, chasing after our careers and I can also see it on my daughter that she is so occupied with work and school and everything that we just sometimes need to be connected with our inner child again and feel relaxed and joyful. That is why I believe it is important to every once in a while remind yourself how it was to be small and live life without worries.

Do you have a favourite character?

No I don't but I do like Lion King a lot, I think that this movie has such heart in it and it has everything from the importance of family and friends to the importance of believing in yourself and never giving up in it. I think this is amazing.

Do you know when you became a fan?

It was really a long long time ago, my daughter was still quite little then and it was actually because of her that I started watching Disney. I think it grew from there that I eventually became a fan.

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

I don't think so, I do not have anything special in mind concerning Disney.

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

No, I don't. I am probably the last in Paris who doesn't have a Facebook account (laughs). I am not very active online, I just use it for work, I am even one of those people who still reads papers and watches news on the TV. Oh, but I am subscribed to their newsletter on their official website. So yes, actually this way I am active. When you asked this I started thinking about the social networking sites, because everyone is always talking about those, but completely forgot that I have actually subscribed on their own page.

Are you a member of any official fan club?

Like the Mickey Mouse Clubs?

Yes.

No, I am not. And I don't think I am that big of a fan that I should be a part of any of those groups.

Do you create any other kind of content concerning Disney?

No, I am too busy for that, work and everything, plus I really don't see the point of that for me, although when my daughter was small, then I used to create fairy-tales for her, but now I think there is no need for that.

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

I have no special feelings about this. Me being a fan is just how I feel, or what do you mean?

I meant that for example some people say that being a fan of Disney as an adult is embarrassing, what do you think of that?

No I don't believe that, of course on the other hand I am not especially proud of it either, meaning that I don't go running around the city, screaming that I am a fan, but I don't feel

ashamed. If someone would ask me if I am a fan, I would tell them, or if Disney comes up, then I would talk about it freely as well. I definitely don't keep it a secret.

Why do you tell them?

As I said I specifically do not tell people, but I don't feel the need to hide it either. I don't think I should hide it, it is just another thing that I like, and of course it is not just Disney movies that I like, I as well like DreamWorks and other children's productions as well and my friends know about this as well and I have never heard any bad reaction about this, so I am not even sure why I should feel embarrassed.

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

I believe that they promote the importance of family and friendship, also how you should believe in yourself to be successful. It is how I mentioned the Lion King, there as well, Disney had raised the question of the importance of love and family and how not respecting your family can result in a disaster. Also they have showed how friendship can bring you out of any situation, however hard it may be, if you have good friends then you will overcome this. Of course Disney in general promotes the power of good. Disney always creates fights between good and evil and of course, good always wins. Yet again this is the case in Lion King as well, being envious, greedy and plotting evil plans only brought misery to everyone, even those who the evil held dear, which means that even if you are being evil and think that finally you will feel good, that is not true. Disney is saying that being good always pays off, even though it might be hard at times, you will be rewarded for being good.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

I definitely do, I believe that these things that I just mentioned are really important and I believe in it that if you are good to others and do good things, then good will happen to you as well.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

I definitely do not agree with that Disney promotes sexism. Racism is may-be a bit a bit debatable, because of course, most of the characters are, mmm, Caucasian, but this has some exceptions, they have the movie with Chinese and also one of the new princesses is, mm, darker, but the fact stays that most of the characters are still Caucasian. Of course as I am myself Caucasian it is hard for me to assess where to draw the line, when is the balance

perfect in a way and we couldn't talk about racism anymore, it doesn't bother me that most of the characters are Caucasian but it could probably disturb people with other ethnicities. However about the sexism, I definitely do not agree with that. I have heard many comments about how Disney always makes its princesses work and be just beautiful, but I think this is an aged perspective. The cleaning and cooking of the princesses is always in the older movies, when people were expecting to see that, Disney couldn't have created anything too different, because that was what their audience expected to see. Now they have a lot of princesses who stand their ground, have bigger dreams and step out for them. I think that the development can be seen very well and it is great. But of course the princesses are always pretty, but would we really want to see an ugly prince? I think that the beautifulness is rather connected with the goodness in the princesses, it is not just that all people who want to be like the princesses have to be skinny and very very pretty, it is more that being a good person makes you pretty.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

May-be a little about the portrayal of Little Mermaid, because as I said, usually the picture that women are only about their looks and being good stayed in the beginning years of Disney, but Little Mermaid is a rather new movie, so I would have expected that they would have done it a bit differently as well, because all the other princesses from that time have much more independent characters. Although so does Little Mermaid, but in the end she still gets the prince and her dream just based on her looks, not even because of her being good, because she didn't have the chance to present that. I really did like the movie, but I felt a bit uncomfortable of how this was done.

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

It is rather the same thing that I already said just now, but I can not say that I disapproved the movie, I did show it to my own child, so I didn't mind that much.

What do you think what kind of morals do the Disney movies convey?

I think it is combined of the same things I mentioned before, but the main message would be, that if you are good to others, good things will happen to you and also of course that if you believe in yourself you can make anything come true.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

I think it can not be forced on anyone. If they don't like it, they can not get the same feeling from it, the same kind of magic, as do those who like Disney. So it is hard to say, of course it would be nice if everyone would have open hearts to magic and fantasy and would be willing to take in the positive sides of it, without constantly focusing on the negative.

Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

Yes, I have.

Which ones?

The one in Paris and also the one in California.

How many times?

To California I have been only once, obviously it is not as easy to go there all the time if you live in Europe, also when I went there it was a part of a whole vacation, I didn't go there just for Disney, but on the other hand it was definitely one destination where I wanted to go in California, I wouldn't have wanted to miss out on it. To Disneyland Paris I have been many times, I started going there already in the 1990s, when my daughter was small and now I still often visit it, especially now again, because as I said, my daughter works there, so the entrance is often free for our family.

Do you have an annual pass?

I did used to have it before my daughter went to work there, now there is not that much point. But I think I will buy one next year again, because I would like to go more than my daughter can take me and also currently we are not sure how long will she stay working there, so it seems that buying the annual pass is reasonable.

So you are willing to pay for the parks even though you have been entering for free for some time now?

Oh, yes I definitely am. I knew from the start that having a free entrance to the park was just temporary and I don't mind paying at all. I believe the experience I get in the park is worth the money.

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

It gives this nostalgic feeling. It is a world where there are no bad things, and everything is going well, because no other way exists. Going to the park, is somehow for me like travelling back in time to when my child was still small and we went there together. It is great to see how there are so many children there who enjoy this park so much and who truly believe in the magic, they have no room for criticism and negativity. That is what I like, the absolute positivity.

Why do you visit the parks?

I like the feeling that it gives me, it is sort of a Disney bubble you enter, a whole different world. I am not a big fan of the big attractions, but of course I do some of the more regular ones, or quieter ones, I really enjoy those, it is just the rollercoasters I don't like.

How did it make you feel to be there?

Like I said, it is a bit of a nostalgic feeling, all happy memories. Also it is as if nothing bad can happen when you are in the park, even if there are some small mistakes in the park, like the paint is peeling off from somewhere, it doesn't really bother you, it doesn't decrease the magic.

Would you visit Disney again?

I definitely would.

Why?

Because of the same things I mentioned before, because of the magic and the happy feeling I get when I am there.

Do you miss the parks when you have not been there for a long time?

Hmm, I don't even know. I really do like it in a park, but I can not say that I would especially miss it when I wouldn't be there. I believe that if there would be a break that lasted for years, then I would probably miss this but now I go there ever year many times, so I haven't really been given the chance to miss this.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

Besides the fact that I every once in a while watch movies and go to the park, I guess it isn't present in any way anymore. Of course it used to be present more in my life when my child

was little and we used to watch the movies together, but now that she has grown up, like I said before we just watch the new movies, we don't watch the same movies all the time over again, like we used to.

So you don't watch Disney movies a lot (see every movie, watch them repeatedly)?

There are of course movies that I have seen more than once, but was already some time ago. Now I just watch the new movies, so I don't really know how often that is, every time the come out with a new movie, I watch it, so I definitely don't watch those movies every week, rather just a couple of movies per year.

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

I think I mentioned this before as well, but yes I do, especially with my daughter. Of course it is not the main topic of our conversation but it still happens that sometimes we do talk about Disney. Because she works there, she often tells me about her day, but I don't know if that qualifies under talking about Disney. Other than her work, it is usually movies we talk about and the new parades or shows in the park. We never really have serious conversations about Disney, any philosophical topics or so. It is rather just what we think of the new movies, the new parade or things like that.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

A little bit yes. There are so many movies nowadays that are just about killing, explosions and chasing and Disney just helps to balance that out for me. I like going to the cinema and seeing different movies but sometimes I just need to see this easy entertainment that has a funny story and always a happy ending. So if I haven't seen a Disney movie in a while, I do miss it, I just want to sometimes see something simple and fun.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

In some ways definitely, but I don't think it has had a very great effect on my life, because I came in contact with Disney for the first time when I was a grown-up, I think it could have influenced me more if I had started watching Disney when I was a child. But I do think it has made my life somewhat more positive and happier, it has helped me to just see the simplicity in life and how problems always have solutions.

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

It's like I said, I think that adults can learn to appreciate the simple things of life through Disney and learn to find their happiness again. Everyone is so concentrated on their careers in these days and nobody really appreciates their family and smaller things in life. I think that Disney can teach people how to do that.

I understand that you have one child and she likes Disney as well?

Yes she definitely does.

And as I understand that she is not living at home anymore?

Yes that is true as well.

What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

Definitely, I think I have already mentioned all those things before, but it is that good wins over evil and doing good brings good to yourself as well.

Some people say that Disney portrays too stereotypical characters that don't create a real picture of the world. What do you think about that?

I think that is in some way true. Disney has very stereotypical characters and very often everything is very black and white that is not true in the real life. But I also think that children have their parents for showing them how the true reality works. I can see it on my child, she was watching Disney cartoons when she was small, but I couldn't say that she has any trouble grasping the reality now. It is still up to the parents to grow their children, not just some movies on TV, so it is up to the parents to make sure that their children know what is true and what not.

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

I think I wouldn't change anything.

Have you ever thought about what kind of affect Disney has had on you?

I haven't really thought about that, but I must say that I am not very sure about it either, whether they even have had a great effect on me or not. I don't think that it has influenced my actions in any way.

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

I haven't concentrated on this, but I do understand that it is a business.

How do you feel about that?

I can't say that it bothers me. Everyone is after their career in these days so I understand as well that Disney is also one of those companies. It is not anything surprising, because to make all those movies and the parks, they need to make money to keep it all running. So I'd say it is understandable that they are trying to make money and after all, they are not forcing us to buy their products, there are people who boycott everything that Disney does, so we do it voluntarily.

Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

No, I don't think so. I have always liked what they do, so the fact that they are making money on it doesn't change anything about that.

Do you believe that their magic is still real?

I do, they have created the magic, even if it is for making money, it is still there and it is still real, it still makes people happy, so it is definitely real.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

I am.

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

I would, may-be it would help them to see the positive sides of life more easily as well.

Thank you very much, I appreciate that you took the time to do this interview with me.

2. 1. 5. Interview #5

How do you describe Disney?

The company as a whole... for me it is foremost an artistic company of cartoons.

What does disney represent to you?

It is a company that produces the cartoons and it has a certain coherence between all the different films it makes. Even if they are different and have nothing incommon, there is

always something that is similar and recognisable about Disney, it is a certain manier of Disney. It is like a school of Disney who is representing their image, their characters. Also there is a certain humor that is typical to disney. Even if we can distinguish two different eras within Disney – there is the Classic Disney, when Walt Disney was still alive and the modern era, where the products are not just aimed at children but also to adults, all the audience can appreciate their work to the different degree.

Is it for you just the movies or is it something more for you?

Well, it comes down to the films, cartoons, but there are also the other products like the figurines and the theme parks, but it generally there is the entertainment that is important. Right now it is of course more diversified, right now it is not just anymore a company of cartoons, there is more to it, everything that they produce, everything audiovisual and every park.

What does disney mean to you?

It's a, I think it's a, comparing to the other companies that do the same thing, they really have a history, so even the old people now, they have seen Disney when the were small, it has alwats been present since we were born and it has been there all the time.

And this is why that it is important for you as well, that it has always been there?

But of course, because we have a certain familiarity with disney and I also like the fact that I can always see even their old films and I can collect them, I like it that I can have a complete collection, the fact that it exists from the 30s it gives to me a certain importance, a value, to the company.

And the history is important to you?

Oui, it means that everything they have done has been succesfull, and everything they do has a quality to it, because they still exist. People from all generation still love it, and the company is developing all the time. And in its time it has been always of high quality. Everything they did, was new and exciting and never done before.

What do you think, which role did Walt Disney as a man play?

(pause) Eumm, I don't know the history exactly. But what I think I know is that in the beginning, he had the idea of Mickey and he created the company and the idea to create the movies, but of course he didn't do everything on his own, but he passed on his ideas to others.

How do you feel when somebody critiques Disney?

It doesn't bother me. I am not going to protect Disney, everyone has their right to their opinion. I know there are people who don't that much criticise the movies but rather the characthers and the things that can be seen as a bit embarassing about the past of disney, their role in the war and I actually know someone who boycotted all the Disney movies because he said that they had connections with the Nazis and he (walt) was a Nazi, I am not sure but for me it doesn't matter, as it doesn't effect the cartoons he has made. Now he is dead but the company still continued, it got a new directeur and went on. Oh and also about the Disney park, it was built in Paris and I know there are a lot of french people who don't like it and consider it as an invasion of american culture to France.

And you don't believe that?

No, not at all. It doesn't bother me, if you don't want to go to the park, you don't go. There are a lot of tourists that are not french so and there are also a lot of other nationals here, english, dutch, whatever, but americans they don't come here, they have their own park.

So the critique doesn't bother you?

No, not at all.

I have understood that you consider yourself a fan of Disney

Yes, I do.

Which kind of fan do you consider yourself to be? Are you fanatic?

No, not a fanatic, not yet. I like other stuff as well, not just Disney. I stil have some Disney things, that I have bought.

You said that you are also a collector?

Yes, of films

And it's only disney films?

Yes, the cartoon classics

Do you have all the films?

No, not all, but I have the complete list, so may-be one day.

So you have a dream?

Yes, I want to have the collection already just so that I could say that I have the complete collection of Disney movies.

Only classic films or also modern?

Eum, Yeah I like both.

And for the collection you would like to have only classic?

Only the classics that have been shown in the cinema. They have done a lot of secuals, like *Pocahontas 2*, I can see them, just for fun, but it doesn't interest me really to have them in my collection. The films that have just been shown on TV or on DVD, but I want the cartoons of cinema.

And the modern films tha thave been shown in the cinema?

Yes.

And they are also on the list?

Yes they are.

Do you collect anything else?

When I was young, about 10 years old, when I was in school, then I bought every week the Mickey magazine, but right now it doesn't interest me anymore.

Do you have a favourite character?

No, I haven't even thought about that. I don't like one more than the otehr, I don't even have a favourite film.

Do you participate in some activities in online?

I don't have the club card of Club Mickey. The only thing I have is the annual pass, because that's so much more reasonable and also the queues are so long that it has more point to have the annual card and go many times per year, even if to do just one attraction.

Are you a member on facebook or something?

No, not at all.

Do you put online something about disney? Photos, texts etc.

I have put some photos, when I have been to Disney, toghether with a character, it was Jack from Nightmare before Christmas, but that is it.

So you don't do much online with disney?

No, not at all.

And fan fiction?

Also nothing like that.

How do you feel about being a fan of disney?

I don't know

There are people who say that being a fan of disney is a bit embarrasing what do you think of that?

No that doesn't bother me at all

Do your family and friends know that you are a fan?

Yes, they know that I have the list, we do that together

So you don't hid it?

No, I don't think that it is degrading, you shouldn't be embarassed, like liking disney is reserved just for disney or like it would be naive to like disney. In any case, as well with disney, when we say that we adore something then we are always seen as fools for being a fan. For being superior they say that they are not fans.

Do you believe the same?

A, no it's just that some people say that if you are fan then it means you ave no sense of criticism and they have to say that everything has its mistakes and we like it, but we are not fans to show that they have the sense of criticism, that they are still superior. But to me it doens't bother me.

Would you critique something about disney?

Eumm

Would you change something if you could?

No not really

You like it as it is?

Yes

Some people say that disney expresses sexism and rascism what do you think of that?

It's not true anymore, we can clearly see the evolution of Disney, when to look at the first films of disney when there were the stories with the classic princesses, the girl was always saved by the knoght. But right now it is completely different now. The girl is completely taking part in the action, like the princess from Tangled, rapuncel, we can clearly see that she doesn't let her be pushed arounf. It has developed, it depends on the era.

And the values, according to you which values it gives?

I have not really thought about that, I am more interested about the movies in general, but I think they have always tried to give the image of that for a good life, you have to have courage, have to respect your family. There is also a sense that the bad always loses. So may-be they show kids that they have to be nice.

Can adults learn something from the movies?

Eum, besides the humor and passing a nice time, may-be it can give some examples what to say to their children, but further not so much.

Some say that disney gives rasciste values what to you think?

I haven't really noticed that. Now it can be seen that they are diversifying their heroines, it's not always the European girls, there was the indian-amercian, there was the asiatic mulan, the

black with tiana – they have to see that the public of disney can identify themselves with the characters and have to find a bit different characters. So we can not really say that it is completely just one sided and identical.

Have you felt uncomfortable about something that disney has done?

(pause). Well they have bought now Star Wars, I am wondering what they will do with it now (laughs)

Are you afraid of the outcome?

Hahaha, we just don't know what will come from this, if they will change the whole universe or what.

Do you think that this is what they will do?

No, I think it's just a technical and ecnomic question not so much of artistic one.

It is stilla bit weird for you?

Eum, well, there have been already connection with this, there is Star Tours in the park and there are characters with Star Wars so it didn't really surprise me but... well if that is what it took to keep making other Star Wars movies then why not.

You told me that you visit the parks and have an annual ticket?

Yes.

Do you have visited other parks?

No, never. Only here in France. It is to say if I am going it is not just because it's disney, it is because they have a passe annuel and it's there and there are attractions that I like.

So you do't go because it's disney you go just for disney?

Yes, if it would be anything else, I would still go, its not because it is disney. Of course it is interesting to see the movie themes but it is not especially because of disney, if it would be very far away, I wouldn't go to Florida just to go visit Disney.

How many times have you visited the parks?

I don't even know, I try to go at least 10 times a year

Why?

To get even from the money of the pass! I thought now to go on Saturday, but if I think well, then I will go at least 5 times, but often I go 1 times every month or every other month.

If you don't go there for a long time, will you miss it?

No, not really, if you go a lot then it doesn't give you the same experience. If you go just automatically.. but I go, often I do just one thing just because I can, I don't stay the whole day, I can go there at noon and leave at 16.

So disneyland is not something very important to you?

Well I like it very much, but the problem is that if I don't find anyone to come with me, I wouldn't go. I sometimes go with my sister, as she has the year pass as well, but she doesn't like to big attractions so I need to find people who like those kinds of these. But if I had friends who had also the pass and would like the attractions I would go more often.

There are people who say that if you go to the parks you have a special optimistic feeling. What do you think about that?

It's because there is music everywhere! Because I go very often.. in the beginning it is different, you feel like you are in a different world, you don't feel like you are in Paris anymore. But now I don't feel like that anymore, I feel like I am someone who works in the park. There is not that intent magic anymore, because I know it all. When they made the second park it was nice to discover that. But yeah, I haven't done everything yet, so there are things to discover and magic to be seen.

So that is may-be the second dream?

Yes! To do everything, one day I will go there and do everything in the park. So that i could say that I have done everything. There are of course things where there is no fast pass, so you have to wait very long to do them and that there is where i use my pass, because I can go only to do this one attraction.

Why do you even like Disney?

(pause) Well, I like disney because, well, I don't like just disney, it is a group like any other, I like the movies so it is Disney as well who produces these movies that I like. I like it because

of their history and when you see Disney you know already before that you will have a nice time. Often they redo the fairytales that are already been done, they don't invent fairytales, they just redo them, they adapt them to the Disney universe and even if they change a lot, I like them because they have the capacity to adapt the old stories to the current university. And make a film that is typical to disney. I like the choice of stories that they adapt to their world. I don't know if Walt Disney started this but I like that it is the adaptions of the old stories.

How is disney present in your life? Do you watch the films all the time, speak about it

No, I don't really talk about Disney with anymore mutch nor do I watch the movies all the time, I watch them if I haven't seen one since 20 years, then I do watch them. Or when I go to disney and do an attraction like peter pan or pinocchio, and then I always think that I don't even remember what they were about so I should watch them again when I get home, but then I always forget. So usually i watch them if I don't remember all the details anymore, when it has been a long time since I have seen them, then I watch them again may-be to observe the things that I haven't noticed at first.

So you don't watch them like every week?

No, I have a lot of other stuff to do and watch as well

Do you have children?

No.

If you could change something on disney would you?

No, only to make the entrance to the park cheaper, but in the concept of Disney nothing. Oh I would stop them making the sequals and make them do the new films. Of course the sequels work commercially because people like the characters and they want to see them again, but for me it poses no interest. It's exactly because the sequal has nothing to do with the original story that inspired the first movie, it has been completely just invented, it is nice for passsing time and entertainment but I like the others more.

Have you thought which influence has disney had?

No, I don't really think so.

Even not hen you were small?

I don't really know how or what it could have influenced. I don't see the influence, of course it is a process. But I really don't see know that it has influenced me somehow

Have you thought about disney about as a business that they want to earn money?

Now, the goal of disney is to make money?

Yes.

Well that is the case of course, the have to do it, to make new creations, but if it would be only that... I think there is more to it.

For you what is the goal of Disney?

I hope that they still have the artistic spirit and wish to continue what Walt Disney started.

So for you the business doesn't bother you, it doesn't change disney?

No, but we are all obliged to pass by that. You can not survive without the business.

Are you happy with the position of disney in your life?

mm. yes. (laughs).

Thank you for your time, you were of great help.

2. 1. 6. Interview #6

How would you describe Disney?

Of course it is the things that they do, the movies and the park, but it is also the feeling that they create. I mean, it's like what it makes you feel, it is not just the things that they produce, it is what the things that they produce make you feel.

What does Disney consists of for you?

Well, it is of course the movies and the parks, but as I said as well, it is also the feeling that the things you do with Disney, how they like make you feel. But mainly, it is the movies and the parks. Well, actually also the comic books, because when I was a child, my parents always used to buy me the comic books, but well I don't do that now anymore, but I guess it is still true that the comic books are a big part of Disney as well.

What does Disney mean to you?

To me it means this good feeling and memories. Every time I think about Disney I get this happy feeling and a bit of nostalgia, but somehow it always makes me feel happy, you know? I mean that it is like this whole different world for me that you can just run off to.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?

Hmm, I guess, everyone can have their own opinion. I don't mind if somebody criticizes Disney, but what I don't like if they just criticize it because it is "cool" to criticize Disney.

What do you mean?

Well I mean that it seems that people sometimes criticize Disney just because they want to criticize it, you know like it is too mainstream to like these big things, so they just criticize it to be different. But I don't know. I mean sometimes they have actual things that they can criticize, like that lately I have heard that people don't like it that Disney moved it's production to China, I mean for me it is like, of course I don't like it, but like, hmm how can I say this without seeming like an idiot (laughs), I mean that of course it is bad that they do that, but I still enjoy Disney, because what can I do? So if people criticize that then I don't mind, but if they start searching for problems, like that Disney forces you to spend money or something, well cause like, they give me possibility to spend money but they don't tell me that if I don't buy their stuff then I can't like them, I mean, it is after all still my choice.

So it doesn't bother you if somebody criticizes Disney when it is about the right thing for you?

Yes exactly, I mean nothing is perfect, so how could Disney be, but I don't like it if people are trying to burst my bubble, I do want to live my bubble and I don't want anyone to break it. Even if there is something wrong with Disney, as long as it isn't killing anyone, I think I am fine with that.

Do you talk about Disney with others?

Sure I do, I mean a lot of my friends are also fans of Disney, so we often talk about that. Especially if there is a new film that came out, or something like that. And then like we sometimes talk about the film music, there's a lot of things like that. And jokes that come fro Disney movies, that is also sometimes, but yeah, so it's not like we talk all the time but sometimes still we do that.

As I understand it you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?

Well, yes, yes I do (laughs)

Which kind of a fan do you consider yourself to be?

What do you mean?

For example are you a fanatical fan, who has tattoos or organises your life around Disney?

No, not that much. Although I have been thinking about getting a mickey tattoo, I saw this really nice one on the Internet, like only in black so it is not that big, but I don't even know, does that mean I am a fanatical fan? (laughs). I have seen like photos of people who are covered in Disney tattoos, so I would not be the same, may-be a light fanatic then? (laughs)

Do you collect items?

Hmm, not anymore. As I said I used to collect comic books, but well it wasn't really me who was collecting them, it was my parents who were buying me those so I don't know if it really means collecting. But I did have all the comics since like 1992 until 2000 or something, but right now nothing anymore, so to make it short (laughs), no!

Have you for example seen all the movies?

Emm, I don't really think so. I am not even sure, because I mean, I, well I don't think that I even know all the Disney movies. They have made in the beginning all this other kinds of cartoons and stuff that I don't think that I have seen everything. Even now, I am quite sure that I have seen the first two Toy Story's but I don't think I have seen the rest of them. There are definitely more movies I haven't seen. But on the other hand those that I have seen, I have seen many times (laughs)

Do you have a favourite character?

Yes, Belle from Beauty and the Beast.

Why her?

I don't know I just like her, she has a pretty dress (laughs), I mean she was really, she knew herself what she wanted to do and who she wanted to be and that I think the film is also like a step towards the new generation in Disney.

Do you remember when did you become a fan of Disney?

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Probably when I was born (laughs). No, seriously, I have no clue. Some time when I was really small I think.

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

Hmm, I don't think so. When I was smaller I wanted to work in Disney, just to be in the magic of the Disney, but as time passed then that changed as well so I don't think I will do that now. So I guess I don't have any specific dreams.

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

I belong to their Facebook group, the Disney one in general and then the Disneyland Paris group as well.

Do you repost, like or comment on anything that the Disney groups post?

No, not really. I mean I keep an eye on their offers and photos they post, just to see what is going on in the company or in the park, but I don't really do anything with that info. Well already in general, I don't post a lot on my facebook, I don't really want to put anything on my page, so I don't do that either. The only thing I do, is may-be I write a private message to my friends about something they posted and tell them to take a look.

Do you post anything concerning Disney somewhere else?

No, I am only active in a way in Facebook and as I said I don't post anything there.

Are you a member of any official fan club?

No, I wouldn't even know how to become one, it somehow seems like this secret union or something (laughs), but I don't even know if I'd wanted to be a part of a fan club. I only like stuff like that if I get something from it (laughs) but right now I am completely satisfied with everything so I don't know if they could offer me anything that I'd want to join (laughs).

What about in the offline world, do you create any other kind of content concerning Disney?

No, nothing like that. I am not that creative (laughs)

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

Mm, I mean it is who I am, it is kind of like a part of my personality, so what do you mean?

Some people say that being a fan of something in general, or being a fan of Disney is a bit embarrassing, what do you think of that?

Oh no, I don't think that at all. Why should I be embarrassed about that? I mean, yeah I am a fan but that doesn't mean I am naïve or stupid or something. As I said before, I can see that Disney isn't perfect, but it doesn't mean that I don't like it. So it is like, well no I am not ashamed of it, it is just who I am so I don't feel actually anything about the exact thing that I am a fan.

Do other people know you are a fan?

Oh yes, definitely.

Why do you tell them?

You know, it is actually funny, because, well not that I want to, but even if I wanted to hide it, I couldn't because how do you hide something you like? I mean, everyone talks to their friends and family about stuff, so I of course talk to them about my stuff and Disney is my stuff, so well, mmm yeah, I do talk to them because why wouldn't I. and well yeah it is a part of my life, so they just have to hear about that (laughs)

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

Hmm (pause). I think it is kind of hard to say. I mean to everyone it is different. But well yeah, the question was in my opinion right, so I should give you what I think. So what do I think (laughs). I think that it kind of promotes the happiness in life, that even when things are going very bad, then in the end if you believe in yourself and continue trying then everything will be fine in the end. Also that good wins over evil, so it kind of like makes you want to be good.

But what about the norms?

Hmm, I haven't even thought about the norms really. I mean is there anything really that much that they set for the society.. Anyways, to me, I don't think there are any set norms in there.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism as norms, what do you think?

Oh the sexism, yeah, I have heard about that but I don't agree at all. I mean sure, like Snow white and Cinderella are the housewife types that make dinner and clean at home, but like, okay, you know, when were those films created? Somewhere in the 50s right, so what do you expect. Of course they have those kinds of characters and they are not going to change those fairy-tales anymore. So I don't think so, that this is an issue. But yeah, what about the new films, well there is like the Toy Story, and Tangled and Brave and what else do they have? The new Alice in Wonderland… if you think about those, then that sexism is not true anymore, it is so clearly seen.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

I do agree with Disney yeah, because like there is nothing like dangerous in their movies, it is just what everyone takes out of them and this is how I see it and I agree with the fact that people should believe in it, the fact that everything is possible, I think the magic is necessary.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

Hmm, I always thought that Peter Pan was kind of an a**hole (laughs), but that is not really being uncomfortable, I just didn't like the character because he was so full of himself and didn't really think about others, at least at first.. well in the end it was better so I guess yet again the characters grow. But anyways, the back to the question, no I don't think that I have had anything like that.

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

No, not that I can think of anything.

What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

Just like that believing in yourself is important and that family is important and that doing good to others is important. I think these are the main things, just believe in yourself and be good then good things will happen to you as well.

Do you think this is true also in real life?

Yes, I actually do. I know of course that not everything is also that nice in real life, but I just like to believe.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

Yes, I do.

Why?

I think that this magic is just important for every person to experience, I mean like it just makes you happy, so why not take part in it?

Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

Yes, I have

Which ones?

Both ones in America, in Tokyo and in Paris

How many times?

Well, those in America both once, and Tokyo also once, but the one in Paris I can not even count, I think I go there at least like 10 times per year, but during the summer I go like two times per month, or even more, so this number can be higher.

Do you have an annual pass?

No I don't, but I have a lot of friends who work or have worked in Disney so usually when I go there I get in for free, that's why I can afford to visit it that much (laughs)

Would you pay to visit the parks?

I definitely would if I could, but I mean right now I am a student so I couldn't really afford it, but if I would have a family and a nice job and some money then I would be willing to pay for it (laughs).

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

It means getting away from my own world. I mean I think we all have those things that we just don't want to deal with and yes I know, people say that you shouldn't away from your troubles, but I kind of like it every once a while. I have this all the time that oh yeah, I don't have any money, too much to do at school and everybody keeps asking me what will I do after I graduate and I have like no idea, so when I go there I just forget those things and it feels nice to just relax every once in a while and when you have this world where you don't have to worry about that stuff.

Why else do you visit the parks or is that the main reason?

Well, that is a very big part of why I go there, my life is a mess so at least there everything is in order (laughs), but also of course because of the attractions (laughs). I just love rollercoasters and all that kind of stuff. And well yeah Disney doesn't have very many huge rides, but they still do have some pretty damn good ones so I definitely also go to the park for the rollercoasters. I also like it how every rollercoaster has a theme, you know. It is not just that here you go, here is a rollercoaster, but the workers have really lived into the character of the ride itself, which makes it so much more fun.

How did it make you feel to be there?

Kind of magical, like everything is well in the world and troubles just don't exist. I mean you just can not be unhappy in Disney, when you already go there, there is this happy music and stuff so you just feel happy – you have to! (laughs)

Would you visit Disney again?

I definitely would

Why?

For the same reason I said before, that I like the happy feelings I get there.

Do you miss experience when you have not been there for a long time?

I really really do! I just miss the feeling, the happiness and to see how everything is just working and fine and nice and in order, that I don't have to worry about anything when I am there.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

Hmm, I don't know really. I mean I do watch the movies and whenever I can I go to the parks. Also my phone desktop is mickey! (laughs)

Do you watch Disney movies a lot (see every movie, watch them repeatedly)?

Well, I have a lot of Disney movies, and I do watch them repeatedly, but I can't say I watch them a lot. I watch them every once in a while, but not like that I would watch them every week, rather like every month I watch something of Disney's that is sure.

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

Like I said before I do, and usually about the new movies or the jokes or something like that. Sometimes we even talk about some "deeper" topics, like what are the hidden meanings or if one of us has read some academic stuff about Disney then we talk about that, what they believed in the book to be true and if we agree with that or not. Usually we don't though.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

I think I mostly just miss the park and the feeling the park gives me. Of course the movies give me the same effect, but it is a smaller note. I mean in the park you get like all this happiness at once and it lasts for a while, but when you watch a movie then it lasts only for a little while, so I guess I do miss the feeling that Disney gives me but if I start missing it then I want it all at once and then I usually just go to the park not just watch a movie.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

Okay, I am not so naïve to think that it hasn't but I have no idea how it has. (laughs) I mean, I don't know how I would have turned out if I hadn't had any contact with Disney when I was a child, but I kind of like how I am right now (laughs) so I guess I have to say that it was a goof influence on my life.

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

I think they may-be can learn how to be a bit more happy, but I am not sure if just watching the movies would have that affect. I don't think that they can learn anything from that, I mean the personalities have been formed already, but well yeah just to be happy you know, to find that peaceful moment in your life to be happy.

Do you have children?

No, I don't.

What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

I think they learn the same values and norms we talked about before. And I think I said that as well, that although all this happily ever after is not always true or it is not as easy as in Disney, as mm Disney puts it, but like, well mm yeah children have their parents to tell, they,

to show them that this is not always true, you know. That it is the basic truth of life, but sometimes you have hard times as well, it is always not that easy, so yeah. They can learn something from Disney, the basics, but the harsh truth they still get from their parents (laughs).

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

I don't think I would change anything. Let me think.. well of course I would like it if they didn't use the Chinese workers but I mean, it's a business and everyone is doing business so yeah, but to change something in Disney itself, (thinks) I don't think there is anything.

Have you ever thought about what kind of affect Disney has had on you, like behaviour?

Well, I do go to Disney much more often than I would otherwise, if I didn't like Disney, but that is kind of logic I think. Otherwise I don't think so that I am somehow different because of Disney.

Do you think that Disney had an effect on you when you were a child?

Yet again, I am not sure, I have no idea how I would have turned out when I didn't read them. Although, yes! I learned to read thanks to Disney! Or well partly, I mean I liked books when I was little, so I used to sit on a couch with a pile of comics and books and just used to look at the pictures, and I remember that one time when I opened up one of the Disney comics I suddenly understood what it said. So if that is influence, then Disney taught me how to read (laughs).

Do you think Disney is still having an effect on you?

Well, as I said I do go to the park a lot more often if I would when I didn't like Disney. But other than that, I don't really know, I think I have my personality now, so I don't know if they really can change anything anymore, I am who I am.

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

Yes I actually have.

How do you feel about that?

Hmm, it doesn't really bother me.

But how do you feel about it that Disney's main aim is to make a profit?

Okay, this sounds bad, but who doesn't want to make money. Everyone does and Disney does as well, and people are not forced to give them money, I do it voluntarily. I know that they just try to make me give me their money, but they are doing it good and I want to give them my money, so no problem with that.

Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

I don't think so. As I said, it is entertainment, so all other sorts of entertainment, like, let's, yeah, like TV shows, I mean, you have to pay for them as well, if you buy them on DVD or even if you watch them on TV you still pay for watching the channel, so you pay for all sorts of entertainment so why shouldn't I pay for this entertainment. And anyways, even if there is something to criticise, about the business or about the movies or something, I just

Do you believe that their magic is still real?

Of course it is! As long as the people who visit it like it, and people enjoy the magic they create then I guess it is real, if it is real for the people then it has to be real you know.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

Yes, I am. If I could though, I would go to the park much more than right now. I probably will get myself one of those year passes, then I don't have to rely on my friends to let me in every time, so yes, I would go to the park more often.

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

I would, let the magic in and be happy! (laughs).

Thank you for your time, you were of great help!

2. 1. 7. Interview #7

How would you describe Disney?

To me Disney is the movies and the parks. The movies have an excellent graphical quality and the stories have been written in a way that they kind of hide a bit the hard reality from children so that they let children dream of a better day. It is a big part of the education. The children and well also the adults can escape from reality or jump to their memories and remember that there is much more to life, that life is not just ugly. And I also like the first

Disneyland Paris park, which reflects the universe of Disney. However, it is still a lot about marketing, just like the sequels for the movies.

What do you mean about the sequels?

I mean that there are a lot of sequels made, that you can just see that they have no story or not even a real Disney story in them, they have been just made because the first movie was successful and now they can make money with the second one as well, but the movie itself is not good anymore.

Have you seen those movies?

Of course, otherwise I wouldn't know that they are bad (laughs), it is still Disney so I want to see them.

What does Disney mean to you?

It is a happy and positive feeling. I have watched Disney movies since I was little, so it kind of always reminds me of my childhood and when everything seemed to be much simpler.

How does it make you feel when somebody talks about Disney?

I like it when people talk about Disney, I like it so much myself that when someone talks about Disney, good things of course, then I feel an instant connection. Oh, and when we talk about talking, I feel admiration, passion and even envy towards the people who have given their voices to Disney characters. I have always dreamed that I could give my voice to a character.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?

I think those people are not mature enough. Especially the ones who say that they don't like Disney because it is childish, those people are actually the least mature themselves, they just don't understand the point of the movies.

So it bothers you?

I can't say that it bothers me, I just don't care about those people who don't like Disney at all. Of course there are these people who are not just fans of Disney, but still like it, or I mean don't have anything against Disney. But I don't care about people who say that Disney is only for children and it is stupid, I just don't talk to them (laughs).

Do you talk about Disney with others?

Yes, every time I have a chance to talk about Disney, I do! But unfortunately there is not very many people who are interested about talking about Disney all the time.

So as I understand you consider yourself to be a fan of Disney?

Yes, definitely. Well, I don't actually know at which point does just liking something turn into being a fan of something, but I can definitely see that I like Disney much more than the people around me, so that is why I think I am a fan.

If you see yourself as a bigger fan than the rest of your friends, do you also consider yourself fanatical?

Oh no, definitely not. I think a fanatical person is much more than I am. Yes, I do like to talk about Disney, I do like to go there and I do like to watch the movies, but I don't know, it seems that for me there needs to be so much more to become fanatical. You like need to chase Mickey in the park and push the children away from him or something (laughs).

Do you collect any items of Disney?

Yes, I do collect the films.

Do you have a full collection already?

No, not yet. I am still missing some from the earlier years. Now of course the access to the movies is much easier so I have the new ones, but yes I still have to work on getting some of the older ones.

Have you seen all the movies?

I don't think so, but I definitely have seen most of them.

Do you have a favourite character?

Yes, Mortimer Mouse for everything he is.

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

Like I said, I want to give my voice to a Disney character and I also would like to work in Disney, I think that would be cool.

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

I am a member of their Facebook group but not much more.

Do you comment on their posts or pictures?

No, I don't. I am just a member of their page and I really don't do anything with it. When their posts appear on my wall I read them, but I never share or like them, and I don't comment on them either.

Are you a member of any other official fan club?

No, I don't even know why, but no.

Do you post anything online about Disney?

No, as I said, I just read what they write but I don't say anything about them myself. Oh, well if this counts then I sometimes put up pictures of me in Disney but I just put it in my own album, not like on their page or anything.

Do you create any other kind of content concerning Disney, like fan fiction?

No (laughs), not at all. I don't do it even online, so definitely not offline.

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

I feel great about it. Well even if I would believe that he, Walt Disney, supported communism, he was still a genius and he was the innovation and he gave the beauty to the characters and stories. So I feel great about being a fan of something and someone like that.

So it can be said that you are not ashamed of it?

No, absolutely not, I don't see even one reason why I should be.

Do other people know you are a fan?

Yes they do. I even used to choose my boyfriends according to that, if he was a fan of Disney or not (laughs) and I could I could see their personality straight away according to their favourite Disney film.

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

I think family values and friendship are important in Disney movies.

Some people say that the values and norms show that men are superior and women have no rights, what do you think about that?

That the man should be superior is completely not true, because the films put always women first and in their time, Disney was ahead of its time. Okay, sometimes the man does get the woman out of her boring life and that might give the idea that the man is absolutely necessary and there comes the idea of sexism as well that has been talked about, but I don't see it that way. Yes, men support women in the movies but it is not like that without men the women couldn't do anything. Disney puts a lot of emphasis on the family, and family is always important in the Disney movies, well me myself I am not very family centred but I guess it is good for the children to educate them.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

I guess it is nice to be close to your family and friends, but in my family, we are quite far from the idyllic Disney that you see, we have to do everything without the support of a man.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

I don't think so, it is nowadays like that, that people look back at the movies and think, that oh this is so sexist, but in their time, those movies were so much ahead of their time, and now it has changed as well, they don't make the same kind of movies like they did in the beginning.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

No, not at all. The only thing I don't like is the people saying that Disney is sexist or racist or whatever, like I explained, it is not like that at all.

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

Yes, the sequels to the movies, they have only been made to make some more money. Of course there are exceptions like the ones for Toy Story or Bambi, where you can see that they have really put some thought into the movie and have tried to create something wonderful and Disney-like.

What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

I think they give somewhat religious messages as well, like that are based on respect and trust and that you are not supposed to leave your family behind.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

Yes, definitely, it would give them some stability in their reality.

What do you mean?

I mean that when they watch the movies or are a part of the Disney world they have the chance to escape reality and it will make them think of the happy and positive things in life so they can get the stability in their everyday life, that not everything is stressful but there can be good things as well.

Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

Yes I have.

Which ones?

The ones in Paris.

How many times?

I think about 10 times.

Do you have an annual pass?

No, I don't.

So you pay the full price every time you go there?

Yes I do, and I will probably do it 10 more times. Of course, because I am a student, I can't spend all my money on Disney, but I do it as often as I can, and sometimes like my boyfriend takes me there for my birthday and so on, so I don't always have to pay, but mostly I do. And it's great! (laughs)

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

I don't know if it means anything that special to me, it is just that I like to visit it and I like to see the other world that Disney has created, but there isn't like this special meaning for me, at least I can't think of one right now.

Why do you visit the parks?

I always have a great time when I am in the park. It's like you jump into a completely different universe and you forget everything that is going on outside that little bubble of Disney. And that makes you always have a great time.

How did it make you feel to be there?

I disconnect myself from the reality and I really like that. Everyone has problems, with school and work and money and everything, especially when you are young, so it is nice to just go some place where problems literally don't exist. You just go there and you are in your world and no bad thing can reach you.

Would you visit Disney again?

Yes, for sure. I just feel much better there than I do in the regular sad and basic world. Like I said, Disney is a whole other universe with no bad things, at all.

Do you miss the parks when you have not been there for a long time?

A little bit, yes. It is not like I cry into my pillow every night (laughs), but I still do miss it. I miss the feeling, the happy universe over there.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

I watch the movies a lot. I can watch movies repeatedly, even if I have seen them already a thousand times I can watch a thousand times more. They are just so fun!

How often do you watch them?

It is hard to say. Sometimes at least one per week, but sometimes less, it depends on the life period that I have, like if I have exams then I actually watch at least one movie per week, because I have been studying all day and may-be an exam went bad so that is a good way to forget about that and just relax. But in general I think I watch the movies a couple of times a month.

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

Not really. All my friends and family do like Disney, but nobody is a real fan like I am, so we don't have much to talk about that, you know? Of course sometimes small things about some

new movies or when I am going to the park, I let my parents know or then I go there with friends and then we talk about Disney, but not like in a way that we just discuss Disney.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

I don't miss the so called lessons of the movies. I mean the values or that kind of things, because everything they teach right now in their movies, I am already like that. But I just sometimes miss it when I am sad or things are not going well then I want to be closer to Disney but right now I am pretty close so I don't miss it too much right now.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

Yes, it has helped me to understand life better and to be careful.

What do you mean by that?

Well, of course, now I am already an adult, but when I was smaller, Disney movies showed me how life is. Disney made reality somehow a bit softer, but at the same time it still showed all the bad things as well. Like that you can not always trust everyone, and all the people you think are your friends or family might not be that actually and that you have to be careful and pay attention to people around you. But it also showed the good things like that you have to be good and then good things will happen to you too and if you are nice then others are nice to you too, things like that I mean.

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

No, not really. If they understand the movies well, then everything should be quite clear and there is nothing new to learn in a way.

Do *you have any children?*

No, I don't. A bit too soon for me (laughs).

What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

Yes of course they can. Like the same things that I have mentioned as well about family and friends and how you have to keep them close, but at the same time you have to be careful because there are also bad people and some of them might be in your family. And then that you have to be good because if you are good then good things happen to you.

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

No, I wouldn't change anything, I like it just how it is.

Do you think that Disney had an effect on you when you were a child?

I think so, because I did watch a lot of Disney movies, so if I believe now that it can teach something to children than it must have taught something to me too. So I think it influenced as well how I saw life and family and friends.

Do you think Disney is still having an effect on you?

Yes, I think so. I think it has kind of changed the way I think. I mean that now I think more positively about life and I know how to put away my problems for some time or deal with them in a much more relaxed way.

How does this effect change your life?

I am happier now (laughs) and calmer and "chill" (laughs)

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

Yes I have. Everything they do is about making money.

How do you feel about that?

I feel a bit bad about that. I know it is true and that this is how things work now, but still, it is a bit sad that they just want to make money.

Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

No it doesn't. Yes, they want to make money, but it is normal, everybody does and so do they, so I just make the max out of it what I can and that's it.

Do you believe that their magic is still real?

Definitely, it is what they create. It doesn't matter that it is about money, they still make it and it still exist, so it is for sure real.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

Yes I am, I wouldn't want to change it, I am happy that I am a Disney fan and I think it is cool (laughs).

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

Yes, because it would help people to open up their minds and spirits.

Thank you very much for your time, you were a great help.

2. 1. 8. Interview #8

How would you describe Disney?

I would say it is the main characters, Mickey Mouse and it's world.

What do you mean?

Like it's world, Disney's world, the castle, the environment and the friends.

So you mean mainly the parks?

Yes, but not alone the park with the characters but also the attractions and the whole happy environment that you have there, the feeling when you are there, the positive emotions. Yes! The positive emotions that is Disney.

What about the movies?

Of course the movies as well, it is such a big part of Disney, but I haven't seen a lot of them, so for me it is mainly about the park and then about the movies and then about the rest, although I don't even know what the rest is (laughs).

When somebody says Disney to you, what do you think of?

Disneyland, because my father actually works there and I have been there a lot already since I was a child, so whenever I think of Disney this is the first thing that comes to my mind.

What does Disney mean to you?

As I said for me Disney is mainly Disneyland and so it is like a playground I guess. It is a world for children, it is also of course for us, but first it is for children. You know, when we were children we used to watch all the movies and we didn't even know that it was Disney, so

Disney is like a child's world and it has stayed like that for me as well. I know I am an adult now, but somehow still, it stays a child's world where I am now living in.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?

I don't mind when people criticize Disney. I just listen to what they have to say and then I usually don't say anything back to them. Because I like Disney and even though I think that they have some mistakes I don't think they should be utterly criticized by that and hated. Everyone has mistakes and so does Disney but they make so much more good things than they do bad things, that it would be naïve just to turn your attention to one side of the story.

What kind of negative points do you mean?

Well, I have always thought that the business side is may-be becoming a bit too visible, especially in the parks where you just walk around from one shop to another and you can't even leave an attraction without passing through a shop. But on the other hand, it is a business and they do what they need to survive. Also even though there are shops everywhere, they are not forcing me to buy anything. More often than not I just walk through those shops and don't even look at what they are selling. And if all the things that they are selling makes people happy then that just shows that they do good things more than bad things, so in general they are just making people happy and that is always a positive thing.

Do you talk about Disney with others?

Sometimes I do. At home for example, but then of course our discussion goes around my father's work for example, so it is a bit different discussion than other ones would have I imagine. But I never discuss like the true meanings of movies or something, never anything too deep, just the regular: "It was a cool movie, you should see this one", talk and like that.

Do you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?

Yes I do, definitely do.

Why do you consider yourself as a fan of Disney?

I think I just like Disney more than most of other people, so that makes me a fan, right? So if I just like Disney that much, it has to mean that I am a fan, well yeah, that is why I consider myself to be a fan.

Which kind of a fan do you consider yourself to be?

A normal one (laughs). Well I do like Disney more than most other people but I think that if you compare me to other fans all over the world then I am quite an ordinary fan, I don't do anything crazy or specific with Disney, I just like it and I just watch the movies and visit the parks.

Do you collect any Disney items?

No, I don't. When I was smaller, my father used to bring me all sorts of pins that I then put on my school bag, but not anymore. I still have them somewhere though, but he doesn't bring me them anymore and I don't buy them either, so no, I don't collect anything.

Have you seen all the movies?

No, definitely not. I would like to one day, but it is not my mission.

Do you remember when you became a fan of Disney?

I think it was around when I was like 3, because that is the first time I kind of remember the visit to the park, it evolved from there.

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

(Pause). I don't think so. I am quite happy with how everything is in my life right now and how Disney is in my life, so I don't think I wish to change that somehow. Well yes, as I said I wish to see the movies, but it is not something that I desperately want to do, it is just something that would be cool to do.

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

I am a member of their Facebook group, the park's group not the official Disney group.

Why not the other one?

I don't even know, I haven't really thought about that. It is just that I go to the park very often so it is nice to see what is going on there, they give me information in a way, it is useful for me, but if I am a member of the other group then I just show everyone what I like and there is no use in it for me.

Do you post anything on their page or like or comment on what they post?

No I don't, I just take the information they give there and that's it. I don't share it either, if somebody is interested in what they wrote there they can find the page themselves, so I don't do anything with that. I am just there, a member.

Are you a member of any official fan club?

The Mickey Mouse clubs?

Yes.

No, I am not. I don't even know how to become a member (laughs).

Do you create any other kind of content concerning Disney offline?

No, definitely not, I don't have time for that. Also I don't think I am that creative (laughs).

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

What do you mean?

I mean are you proud or ashamed?

I can't say that I am proud, because it is not something that I have created so it is not really something to even be proud about but I also am definitely not ashamed, why I even would have to be ashamed, I don't understand. It is a well-known brand for all the children and adults, and everyone, not just the children but everyone wants to have a part of Disney so I am not ashamed. I think they are doing a good job.

Do other people know you are a fan?

Yes, but I don't like tell it to everyone that I meet straight away that you know I am a fan. It is rather that my friends and family know that I like Disney and that's it. I don't make a big deal out of it.

Why do you tell them?

Because they are my friends and family! Why should I hide it, like I said I am not ashamed of being a fan of Disney so I am not hiding it either.

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

The unity of family and friends. Every moral, like the example of *Tarzan*, there's the concept of family, or even the *Lion King*, or *Nemo*, you see, there are a lot of those, family is important, so yeah, mainly the importance of family and friends.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

Definitely, in my family the unity is very important, also the respect for your parents and being close to them. Of course the same values from family transfer to friends as well, so in my life the same things have been very important and I want to keep it that way as well.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

No I don't think so, of course we can see that the characters are mostly just Caucasian, and we can ask that why there are not that many characters like Tiana (authors note: Tiana is the princess from *The Princess and the Forg*), but I don't think that makes them racist. Of course there could be more black characters but that doesn't mean they are racist.

Why is it not then racist if you think the characters should be with more diverse ethnicities?

Because even though there are not that much black characters, they don't send out any racist messages either, so you can't say that they are racist. For someone to be a racist they would have to say in their movies that blacks or whatever else other ethnicities are bad or not equal or something like that, you know, so of course there could be more characters with different backgrounds but that doesn't make it racist.

What about sexism?

Well that is completely wrong. I have heard those stories as well that people say that Disney is so sexist. Everyone just sees Disney as it was 50 years ago, and yes, when you look at those movies now, then they seem sexist, but back then they were just regular movies that showed how the society was back then. It is somehow as people don't want to take into account the new movies Disney is making when they say those things. It is certain that right now Disney is not anymore giving the same image it did in the beginning so we can't say that they are sexist.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

No, I don't think so. Of course I don't remember what I thought when I was a child, but I think I was fine with everything they did otherwise I wouldn't be here (laughs).

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

When I was smaller I remember my parents bought me this small toy from Disney and it broke really fast, so I was upset about that (laughs), but it was kind of my fault as I accidentally stepped on it, so I don't think I can say it is their fault (laughs). But, no I don't think that I have anything like that.

What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

Family and friends are important. You have to respect your family, be good to them and to your friends, and also to everyone, and your life will be happy. And even if sometimes it is hard, if you keep on being good, your life will get better and you will be happy again.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

Yeah, when we are in the world of Disney we are completely in another world, when we see the movies or go to the park, we like live in our imagination, it's kind of magic, we are in our bubble and we don't think about the real world and I think that every adult needs to have that every once in a while, just to remember how it was to be a child and let their imagination out.

As I understand you have been to the Disneyland parks many times?

Yes, I have.

Which ones?

Just the ones in Paris, although I'd like to go to those in the United States as well.

How many times?

Oh, who knows! I started going when I was a child, so tens and tens of times, may-be even hundreds of times, I really don't know. At one point I just stopped counting (laughs).

Do you have an annual pass?

No but we used to. Well at least my father at one point bought one for me, because even if he works there, when I was smaller I wanted to go there more often than he could take us, so me and my mom and my sister had one of those passes that let us visit more often. But now I don't go there that often anymore, although I do go there like once per month or something, but then my father can let me in.

Would you pay If you had to?

I would, but I wouldn't probably go as often then, but I would pay and I know that one day when I have children I will pay and it is definitely worth to pay for it as well, I am just lucky right now.

Why do you visit the parks?

I like the environment there, how everything is just perfect and just right. It is just this happy-happy place where you go and know that everything is okay, and I like that.

How did it make you feel to be there?

I am in my world, I am happy, I don't want the day to end, I am just having fun when I am there, I am like in my bubble and the reality can't touch me and I like that (laughs).

Would you visit Disney again?

I would and I definitely will because I just like it there, I like the feeling it gives.

Do you miss the parks when you have not been there for a long time?

I have never really had the chance to start missing it because I go there so often, but I think that if I couldn't go anymore I would definitely miss it, I am just so used to being there.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

I think through the park, because I don't watch that much movies. I do watch them, especially when a new one comes out, but I don't watch them many times again. Just when I haven't seen a movie for a very long time then I watch it again, but otherwise not, so yes, the park is the main connection to me.

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

I sometimes talk with my family about Disney.

What is usually the topic for discussion?

Mostly my father's work, so it is not even really discussing Disney, it is rather talking about my father's day or any news he has about Disney.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

As I said about the parks, I haven't been away for that long so I don't really know, but I think I would miss it, it has always been in my life so how can you not miss something that has always been there, so I think I would.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

I am not sure, because I have always been in it. If someone would show me how I would be without going to the park already since I was a child, then may-be I would have been completely different, but right now I don't know. I can only say that I like how I am so whatever influenced me, it was good (laughs).

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

It is always the same – the union between the family and the friends, happiness and positive attitude towards life.

I understand that you don't have children?

No I don't.

But what do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

Of course, the same things that adults can, but probably even more. I mean the same things but then more intensely, because they are children and they are still discovering the world so probably they will take it in better.

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

No, not really, but as I said before, may-be I would make some more black character, but that's just more as a joke, because I am not that white myself (laughs).

Does it bother you that there are not too many black characters?

No, because Disney doesn't show any negative points about blacks either and also (laughing) you have to find something positive and negative in everything, so I am just saying that this could be the negative.

Do you think that Disney had an effect on you when you were a child?

Just that I wanted to go there all the time because everyone was talking about it and everyone went there. It is a good business for them in this way, because when one friend goes there then all the other children want to go as well, it is kind of a circle.

Do you think Disney is still having an effect on you?

No, I don't think so. I think I have learned everything I can from Disney and now I am just enjoying the fun.

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

Of course, but I am thinking about it now, I didn't think about it when I was a child, but now yeah. It is just amazing how much people go there and how many visitors are there every year. I am talking about this because I am not a child anymore, and even though if the price is high, people go there and they buy their products and we can see that the business is growing thanks to the ads. Before you didn't see ads that much, they were on TV but not in the train stations, internet or newspapers.

How do you feel about that?

Disney is very clever, because they hide this side very well. It doesn't bother me at all that it is a business, but yes of course it is expensive and that bothers me, but if I am already there I have no other choice, and I want to go there even if I know that I will be spending money, so it is actually my choice in the first place.

Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

No, it really doesn't. Of course it would be great if everything was free there and they didn't want to make any money at all, but come on, that is just impossible, so for them to survive they need to make money as well, and yes of course it is expensive but the experience is all worth it.

Do you believe that their magic is still real?

Of course, because we create our magic there, we have created our bubble ourselves. They have given us the things to create this world with, but it is us who create the bubble and the magic, so of course the magic is real, because it is us who have participated in creating it.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

I definitely am.

Would you want it to change in any way?

No I don't think so, at least for now I am happy with this situation.

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

I would, I think everyone needs to get away from the reality every once in a while.

Thank you for your time and effort.

2. 1. 9. Interview #9

How would you describe Disney?

A company which emphasises magic and dreams, it's about the feeling it creates and the emotions it gives.

What is Disney to you?

Disney is a company that has produced many many movies and has great amusement parks and that also produces toys and costumes and all that sorts of things.

Is it something more than what they produce?

I guess the idea behind it is to make people's lives more magical, to give them the opportunity to escape from their reality and let them imagine and feel the magic. So it is definitely more than just their products, it may-be is even more about the feeling, they like produce the feeling if you can say that.

What does Disney mean to you?

It's a company which produces sweet and funny movies which can be enjoyed by all ages (laughs), but I guess for me it is just something that has always been there and I have also been one of those who has enjoyed those sweet and funny movies since I was a child.

How does it make you feel when somebody talks about Disney?

I'll probably join the conversation (laughs), I don't mind talking about Disney at all.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?

I'll ask them why they think like that. But it doesn't really affect me emotionally; everyone can have their own opinion. I probably don't like loads of thing that they like, so I don't mind. Of course I don't often agree with them, but oh well, can't agree with everyone, right!

Do you talk about Disney with others?

Not exactly Disney but the movies, we sometimes just discuss the new movies that have come out and who has seen them and things like that. Nothing too deep (laughs).

Do you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?

Not a massive one, but I guess a little bit yeah.

Why do you consider yourself as a fan of Disney?

Because I like their movies and the way those movies make me feel, it's kind of magic for me.

Which kind of a fan do you consider yourself to be?

Well I guess I've seen most of the movies and have my own favourite characters as well. But I guess that's it – so a moderate fan or something like that.

Do you know when you became a fan?

It wasn't too long ago, because when I was very small I didn't have good access to all this Disney stuff, so I guess it started about five years ago may-be, but I am not sure, it wasn't really like that I wake up one morning and know that hey, now I am a fan!

Do you collect any Disney items?

No, I don't, haven't even thought about what I could collect, but I am not much of a collector, I have never collected anything, so nope, don't collect (laughs).

Have you seen all the movies?

It is difficult to say if I have seen all of them, I mean may-be there are some that I don't even know of (laughs), but I have seen most of them, that is for sure.

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

Well, if we are talking about movies, then may-be to be sure one day that I actually have seen all the movies (laughs), that would be cool to say that: "you know, I have seen all the movies" (laughs).

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

Not really, just the Facebook Disney page, but I don't know if that really is an activity.

Do you post on their page or comment and like their posts?

No, definitely not, I just every once in a while see what they write, but I never do anything with it. It is more for my own entertainment that I belong to the group.

Do you post anything online about Disney?

I don't really post anything on Facebook anyways, because if I feel like saying something then I'll just talk directly with my friends, so I am not very active this way on Facebook or any other page for that matter. So no I don't post about Disney either.

Are you a member of any official fan club?

No, no I am not.

And what about the offline world, do you create any content there?

Oh, no. Not that either, I just don't have time for these things (laughs).

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

It doesn't give me any special feeling, it is just something that I like. I don't think it's anything special or something that defines me. Everyone has things they like.

Are you proud to be a fan?

Why? I don't feel like it's something to be proud of – it's not an accomplishment to like something (laughs).

So it could be said that you are not ashamed either?

Why? Oh no not all, I just don't feel like it's something to brag about (laughs).

Do other people know you are a fan?

Yes I guess some of my friends and my family. Well if they are close to me then they should know, because well, I don't brag about it, but I don't hide it either, so if they are real friends or family then they should even at one point notice it on their own.

Why do you tell them?

It's not that I specifically tell them. They just hear me talking about the movies whenever a new one comes out. And I guess they've noticed that I'm a bit more excited than them.

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

To be yourself and no one else, and to believe in your dreams. Although sometimes what they present is a bit controversial, meaning that the evil people are always ugly or have some physical "defect" and the good ones are pretty. It's like a simplistic world of the reality, which I guess, isn't always bad, but well that has caught my eye that they often do it this way.

How do you feel about those values and norms?

As a grown-up they don't really affect me that much because to me it's just a movie. But for children... I mean they're growing up thinking this is how things are and should be and so I don't think it's very appropriate to promote these kinds of values as black and white truth.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

Nope! Or I mean the positive ones, for example believe in your dreams, of course these are all good and I would want my future children to believe all that. As for the negative ones... No, definitely wouldn't promote those.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

I think that it's true to some extent. On one hand we the grown-ups understand that these are just movies and don't really take these things personally. But the children who are about to start figuring out the world, I mean for them it might really be something that they notice in the movies and take as a source of truth. But on the other hand of course, especially the sexism is not that evident anymore, it used to be in the earlier times of Disney, but it can be clearly seen that Disney has changed so much since then and that now the women are much more independent and bold, but of course some improvements can still be made.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

Yes! The princesses or girl characters are sometimes soooooooo helpless (laughs), but well as I said that is more in the older movies, the new ones, like *Brave*, are completely different.

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

Why? Hmm, good question. Maybe some movies haven't been that interesting and funny as the others (laughs), but in general... Nope, don't think so, I kind of like it!

What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

As I already said that the positive ones are magic and rainbows and unicorns but beneath are some values which need even more updating than they have been updated until now. Of course one of the important messages is the importance of family and friends as well, how you have to keep together with them and respect them, that as well.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

Yes definitely! If there's no fantasy in life then it's just boring. Everyone must dream once in a while; even, and maybe especially, the grown-ups!

Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

Yes.

Which ones?

The one in Paris.

How many times?

Hmm like 5 times I think.

Do you have an annual pass?

Nope.

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

An escape from reality to fantasy, you just go there and leave all your troubles behind and it is just nice and magical and perfect!

Why do you visit the parks?

Exactly what I said before, it's a trip to fantasyland. No pun intended (laughs).

How did it make you feel to be there?

Positive and happy, no worries, no troubles, no school, no work, just happiness and positivity!

Would you visit Disney again?

Definitely yes

Why?

Because it's a place where everyone can be happy about simple things and just be surrounded by flowers and castles and sunshine and unicorns (laughs).

Do you miss the parks when you have not been there for a long time?

Yeah a little bit, because of the feeling it gives me. I just would like to get away from the reality sometimes and until now I haven't found any other place that does it so well for me as Disney, so when I haven't been there for a while, then I start missing it.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

Mostly just through movies. Of course there's the park as well, but it is a bit expensive still to go there all the time, so I concentrate myself on movies for now (laughs).

Do you watch Disney movies a lot and repeatedly?

Yep that's me (laughs)! Maybe not exactly EVERY movie but most of them yep, definitely and repeatedly, all the time (laughs).

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

Yep, sometimes I do.

What is usually the topic for discussion?

Movies, we just talk about the new movies and who has seen them and what do they think of them or if we can we go see them together, simple things like that.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

I don't think it's something that comes into my mind on its own but I guess if I watch a movie after a long time then after the movie I think to myself: hmmm I've missed this.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

A little bit yes, I think so.

How?

Their movies can have positive messages and emotions which stay with me for a long time! Every time after I watch a movie, two days straight I walk around feeling all happy and stuff (laughs).

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

Yes, I think they can.

What?

That it's important to dream and believe! Oh and also that they sometimes have to remember what it felt like when they were children and life was simple.

If you have children, do they like Disney?

Nope don't have any. But if I did then I'm pretty sure they would. I mean what kind of a child doesn't like Disney (laughs)?! I'd probably buy them Disney dishes and plates and that kind of stuff. Oh and toys of course. But I wouldn't let my children watch movies every day, but comics they could read as often as they wanted and of course I would take them to the park as well. And I don't even have children yet (laughs)!

What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

Yes! That good and honesty triumphs! If you are good to others, even if others are not good to you, then in the end good things will happen to you and you will be happy.

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

As I said before, I kind of think that some of the things they show are not quite up to date so I think I would update their stereotypes a bit.

Have you ever thought about what kind of affect Disney has had on you?

Hmmm... Actually I don't think I have, I guess their influence is subconscious, so it is kind of hard to assess.

Do you think that Disney had an effect on you when you were a child?

Nope, being a soviet child I didn't have that much access to Disney and all that kind of stuff. I had some books though, like Cinderella for example. And I remember looking at the pretty pictures and imaging wearing those dresses (laughs). So my contact with Disney began much later, I wasn't such a child anymore, so it was different for me I guess.

Do you think Disney is still having an effect on you?

Maybe a little, but less than before.

What do you mean?

I mean that even if I wasn't a child anymore, when I began to watch Disney movies I was still a teenager or even younger, so it could have had an effect on me, but also as I said it is hard to see what that effect was, because it is subconscious.

What do you think that effect is right now?

I think it reminds me to look on the bright side of things and to simplify rather than complicate life.

How does this effect change your life?

It makes my life a bit more carefree, I just throw my problems away as much as I can (laughs).

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

Yes of course!

How do you feel about that?

Well on one hand they are making loads of money but I guess they are also selling the right thing, so to say. Whatever they sell, for example a princess dress, it all has a positive effect on the little child. But don't get me wrong, I totally understand that Disney people have profit in their mind when creating things! I just think that what they are offering is a positive emotion, be it in whatever shape or form, and it's not that bad is it?

So it doesn't bother you that they want to make a profit?

As I already said that every company wants to make money but not all of them are selling dreams and positive feelings as Disney does.

Does it affect your view of Disney in any way?

Well it's a company so they must make money, that's they're purpose. And I mean if people weren't buying all these things then they wouldn't sell them, would they. And so I think it's up to every person to understand what kind of a purchase is meaningful to them and what is just a pointless thing not worth the price.

Do you believe that their magic is still real?

Yeah sure! It's real as long as people feel that magic.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

Yep (laughs).

How would you want it to change?

I wouldn't. As I said then I'm not a crazy fan but I just like their movies and that kind of stuff. So I think I have just the right amount of Disney in my life.

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

Yep. Or I mean the movies deffo! So that they could see how funny and cute these movies are.

Thank you for your time, you have been a big help.

2. 1. 10. Interview #10

How would you describe Disney?

It's a sense of magic, childhood fantasy, but it is also a business that comprises of different branches.

What is Disney to you?

Disney is definitely movies but not just movies, i would say that to me the movies are still the biggest part of Disney. The one that comes to mind first when you think about Disney. After that there is of course the Disneyland parks.

What does Disney mean to you?

It makes me think of my childhood and family, brings up a lot of old and good memories. It makes me feel kind of nostalgic and happy in this way.

How does it make you feel when somebody talks about Disney?

It's always interesting to hear how different opinions people have of Disney. In a way you want to share your own experiences with others and hear theirs. I never hesitate to bring it up when I have a chance, because Disney is this way universal and everyone has some kind of a contact with it.

How does it make you feel when somebody criticises Disney?

I don't think i have particularly strong feelings about Disney, at least not this way. Although a lot of the times in my opinion people read too much into the stories, like about the princess stories being sexist and so on, this is kind of frustrating. I don't see it as that serious.

Do you talk about Disney with others?

Sometimes with friends who like Disney and especially with my sisters. I've watched most of the movies with them as a child, so every time we watch them again together, it brings us back some memories from our childhood and then we kind of piece it together by telling each other stories that the others might not remember and so on, so it is always really fun.

Do you consider yourself to be a Disney fan?

Yes, although I'm definitely not a fanatic. I know a lot of people who are much bigger fans than me, but I still consider myself to be a fan because I also know a lot more people who like Disney less than me (laughs).

Why do you consider yourself as a fan of Disney?

Mainly because of liking the movies, some of my favourite movies are Disney movies. Also the general atmosphere of magic around Disney is great.

Do you collect items?

I buy the pins occasionally, but i don't collect, it's just that when I see one that I really like then I will buy it, but it is not my goal to have all of them. That would even be nearly impossible as well, there are just so many of them, so I guess I can say that I pay more attention to the pins than to other products, but I don't collect them.

Have you seen all the movies?

The old ones yes, but a lot of the new ones i haven't seen yet.

Do you have a favourite character?

Yes, for some reason I've always like the more tomboyish heroines, not so much the princesses, but like Pocahontas or Esmeralda. Don't know why though (laughs).

Do you remember when you became a fan?

No, not really. We were already watching the movies with my sisters when I was quite small, so I guess it had to be some time then (laughs).

Do you have a dream, something you wish to achieve, concerning Disney?

Not really. I would like to go to the park in Florida, but i wouldn't call it a dream of mine, it is rather just something I will do one day, not specifically a dream.

Do you participate in any online Disney related activities?

Just the Facebook group of Disney, nothing else.

Do you comment on their posts or post something there yourself?

No, I don't do that. The only thing I post related to Disney on Facebook are may-be some pictures of me and my friends in Disneyland, or I have put some status updates on being in Disney, but those I put on my own page, not Disney's page, so me being a member of the Disney group is just for entertainment I guess.

Are you a member of any other official fan club?

No, have never even thought of becoming one.

How about the offline world, do you create something there about Disney?

No and once more I haven't even thought about doing that.

How do you feel about being a fan of Disney?

In a way I am actually proud. To me Disney represents first and foremost memories from childhood with family and friends, but a part of Disney's magic is that those childhood movies are still good today. So yeah i am kind of proud.

So it can be sure to say that you are not ashamed?

I do understand that some people may consider Disney childish or promoting Americanism, but I'm not ashamed. Everyone is entitled to an opinion and all in all I don't think that being a fan of Disney is anything to be ashamed of.

Do other people know you are a fan?

Some people do. It's not a conscious decision to tell or not to tell, so i can't really say a reason why i do or do not tell, I guess if the conversation happens to touch favourite movies and things like that then I would probably tell them.

In your opinion what kinds of values and norms does Disney promote?

I think Disney usually tells a story of evil versus good and it always is the good that wins. I think that is one of their strongest messages that they send but also of course love, courage, faith, not religious kind, but the regular kind (laughs), but those are maybe more like themes of Disney, not so much values and norms. Maybe a value of taking care of others, family and loved ones and maybe sometimes even the ones that are against you. Sop all in all tolerance.

How do you feel about those family values?

I know that a lot of people often bring up the fact that the families in Disney movies are not traditional ones. The princesses never have fathers, but then again thinking about today's society not a lot of kids have traditional families anymore. I think the more important thing is that no matter what your family is like, it's still your family and you always take care of one another. Like in *Lilo & Stitch, Lion King*, the characters Simba, Timon and Pumba and then there's *The Fox and the Hound* for example.

What about that it is often said that men are superior?

In my opinion, it is only the first impression that men are superior in Disney movies. When you really start to think about it, it is often the daughters and women characters that are the most powerful ones, like both Ariel and Pocahontas chose the man they want to be with against their father's initial reluctance.

Would you promote the same things yourself?

Yes, I would. I think those things are important and true.

Some people say that Disney promotes sexism and racism, what do you think about that?

I'm very aware of the fact that this is what some people think and it is true that there has not been a coloured princess in a Disney movie before Tiana and that was just a few years ago. Then again there has been gypsies, native Americans, Asians, native Hawaiians. When it comes to sexism, it is easy to see where that stems from. All the princesses that are portrayed as fragile and the main goal being to get the guy, but then again a lot of the princesses are also very stubborn and actually quite independent when you come to think of it, but I do kind of understand the accusation of sexism, but i don't quite agree with it.

Have you ever felt uncomfortable about something in the Disney stories?

Hmmm... Not really. May-be sometimes it is a bit disappointing how original books are changed and moulded, but then again that happens with all movies based on books and I do realise that the Disney movies are aimed at children, so not all of the original stories would even be appropriate for them.

Have you ever disapproved or not enjoyed a product made by Disney?

If we're talking about the movies, obviously there are some that I haven't liked quite as much, but none that i would disapprove of. The movies I haven't liked, I haven't liked just because they were boring to me, not because they were portraying something I didn't like. But if we are talking about like Disney Channel, I very much disapprove. It's just not the same quality as traditional Disney. The same goes to some of the merchandise, it is disappointing to see all the crap they sell when to me Disney is about traditions and quality.

Why?

What do you think what kind of messages do the Disney movies convey?

I think it's the same as the values they present, about the family and that good wins over evil.

Do you think it is important for every child and adult to enjoy the atmosphere of fantasy?

Yes, no one is ever too old for magic! And for kids it is a way to use their imagination and believe in things, even if they might not be true. This is exactly what I love about Disney movies as well. The magic and fantasy is there for both kids and adults. They can watch it together, and both enjoy it, there is a lot of things that kids will not understand that is aimed at adults, but the magic of it is that kids don't even understand that they don't understand. The stories are created that way.

Have you ever been to the Disney theme parks?

Yes.

Which ones?

Only the Paris one.

How many times?

Quite many times, I don't know exactly. I have some friends who work there, so we just go there every once in a while.

Do you have an annual pass?

No, I have my friends for that (laughs).

What does visiting the parks mean to you?

It is a way to experience the magic of Disney. It is quite an experience, when you enter the park you just go into this Disney bubble that is so different from the reality world.

Why do you visit the parks?

*I think the main reason is the atmosphere. As much as it is a very commercialised place, it has a certain atmosphere of magic when you go there. It's quite a special place.

How did it make you feel to be there?

I think the best word to describe it, is happy. You just leave your problems at the gate when you enter the park, and when you are in the park you don't think about them at all. This environment just makes you happy.

Would you visit Disney again?

Yes

Why?

I just want to relive the magic.

Do you miss the experience when you have not been there for a long time?

I do. I've been there many times and I have very fond memories from there, so when it has been a long time, I start to miss it.

How is Disney present in your everyday life?

I think it's present mainly through the movies, as I don't have always the opportunity to go to the parks, so I just watch the movies when I have the chance.

Do you watch Disney movies a lot?

I don't know, how much is a lot really. I've seen all the old ones and love to watch them again every now and then, but I don't for example watch all the new ones.

How often do you watch the old ones?

Couple of times a month I think. I have these periods when I miss Disney a lot and then I just watch them every week and as much as I can, but usually I just watch the movies a couple of times a month I think.

Do you talk about Disney with your friends and family?

Sometimes I do.

What is usually the topic for discussion?

When it's with people I have visited the parks with, it is usually about Disneyland, but with for example my sisters we might sometimes talk about the movies we've watched and remember some of the funny lines form them.

Do you miss the feeling Disney gives you if you haven't been in contact with Disney for a while?

Definitely! There is something about Disney that is quite hard to put into words. I guess it is the sense of magic, fantasy, traditions. A certain nostalgia that makes you miss it.

Do you believe that Disney has influenced your life?

That's a tricky question. I guess it has… the Disney stories are part of common knowledge of our society. I think that in a way you are required to know about the stories, and who Mickey and Donald are, but apart from that I think as a kid you learn a lot from the movies. It's pretty difficult to answer that.

What do you think, can adults learn anything from Disney?

Absolutely! They can learn to loosen up a little and maybe they can get a sense of that faith back that children have. Faith in the magic (laughs).

What do you think, can children learn anything from Disney?

I think I've already said this at some point but I think that Disney is in a way one the very important influences for children. Most of the stories are about the struggle between good and bad. I think it teaches a sense of moral and responsibility and caring for others. Believing in the power of magic and imagination.

If you could change something about Disney what would you change?

I think I would change some of the new animations that they are doing. I prefer the old, traditional quality of Disney. That's what I think Disney really is.

Which animations do you mean?

I mean the Disney Channel, I don't even know the names, but there is this cartoon with the children with triangular heads or something and then the shows with Selena Gomez, I don't think that this is real Disney.

Have you ever thought about what kind of affect Disney has had on you?

I've never really thought about that, but it must have had some kind of an effect. A lot of the movies that I've seen as a child are still very dear to me today, but I can't say what that effect specifically is, I don't know that.

Do you think that Disney had an effect on you when you were a child?

Definitely. I think the effect has been stronger when I was a child. The stories were so important back then, now they are just reminders of when I was a child and are important to me because of that, but back then they were new to me and that was a completely different magic.

Do you think Disney is still having an effect on you?

I think so.

What do you think that effect is?

I am not sure but I don't think the effect of Disney actually changes my life but it rather brings an important content into my life. I keep thinking that if I wouldn't have known Disney movies and characters as a child, my life would not be as rich as it is today.

Have you ever thought about that, that Disney is a business?

Yes.

How do you feel about that?

I think it is inevitable that Disney is a business. It doesn't make me feel any different about Disney.

How do you feel about it that Disney's main aim is to make a profit?

I don't think that as a child I realised that, but today it seems quite normal. They would not be able to provide what they provide without making a profit. So it makes sense.

So you said it doesn't affect your view of Disney?

No, it doesn't really. Of course it makes you see that it is not just magic and fantasy, but that it has a business and monetary side to it but then again, as an adult, the sense of magic is different than as a kid… or I don't know how to explain it. You understand the magic differently now than when you were a child.

Do you believe that their magic is still real?

I do. The magic is not created by the corporation or business, at the end of the day it is created by the viewers and the audience.

Are you in general happy with the role of Disney in your life?

Yes, I am.

Would you in general recommend Disney to others?

Yes, I definitely would

Why?

It's magic!

Thank you for your time, you have been a big help!