

How film reinforces the Madonna-Whore Complex

By **SOPHIE MURRAY**
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The media perceives women in two different lights. Whether you are aware of it or not — in the movies you watch, the books you read and the shows you stream — we see women divided into two categories: the innocent or the seductive.

The Madonna-Whore Complex, a phenomenon developed by psychologist Sigmund Freud explains this. According to him, women are divided as either pure, notorious and respectful (the Madonna) or sexually available, promiscuous and immoral (the Whore).

While human experience exists in shades of gray between this area, the media has long painted women in black and white, limiting how they can behave, grow and be perceived.

Hollywood has heavily leaned into this binary. On one side we see characters like Meg March from “Little Women” with nurturing and mature personalities, and we see the helpless damsel in distress like Snow White from “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” These women are often praised for their innocence and modesty.

On the other hand, we find characters like Mikaela Banes from “Transformers,” a highly sexualized character used as an object of desire for male characters, or

Jessica Rabbit in “Who Framed Roger Rabbit.” While these characters come off as confident and powerful, they are rarely respected within a story’s framework.

Some films also deliberately place these two archetypes side by side. For example, the movie “Grease” sharply divides its female characters. Sandy Olson is introduced as a sweet, innocent new girl. She represents the Madonna in this scenario: she is soft-spoken, dresses modestly and is wholesome. Meanwhile, Rizzo, a member of the rebellious Pink Ladies group, is portrayed as her opposite. She acts confident, tries to get boys’ attention and drinks and smokes. In the end, Sandy undergoes a dramatic transformation, trading her innocence to be part of the Pink Ladies group, an act suggesting a woman must conform to sexual desirability to be truly wanted.

These depictions are not just about storytelling. They reflect and reinforce a deeper cultural belief that women must choose between being respected or desired. Rarely are they allowed to be both, and characters assigned to a binary are typically supposed to stay there.

Take the “Harry Potter” series as an example. Hermione Granger is the classic

Madonna archetype — she is hardworking, innocent, modest and morally upright. Her characterization never shifts into anything resembling the Whore archetype.

In another light, from the show “Sex and the City,” Samantha Jones has always been categorized in the Whore archetype. She is sexually liberated, confident and bold. Her character remains firmly planted in that role and she rarely offers the complexities that other characters in the show are given.

This division has real world effects. Women in movies are rarely given the same character complexities as men. They are often flattened, oversimplified and defined by how much or how little they align with male desires.

This has more than just a narrative effect, though. When the media continues to present women as either the Madonna or the Whore, it teaches audiences, especially young women, that they too must choose. When women are strictly categorized, we lose space for authenticity. The media is practically telling women to choose to be respected or desired, never both.

However, there are movies that do a great job at producing complex female characters. A few examples are Katniss Everdeen from “The Hunger Games,” Kat

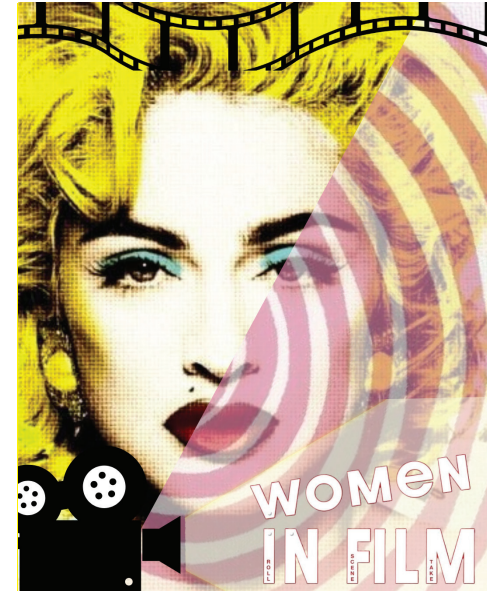


ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE MURRAY

Stratford from “10 Things I Hate About You” and Miranda Priestly from “The Devil Wears Prada.” These characters highlight how film has evolved more into creating female characters with depth.

While progress has been made, ultimately, it is time to retire the binary. Women, like male characters, are complex and evolving and are deserving of plotlines that push past the stereotypes.

Disney's Destination D23 Expo announces big updates and changes coming to the Walt Disney World Resort

By **CLAIRE FRANKLAND**
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Last month, the Walt Disney Company held its Destination D23 Expo from Aug. 29-31, at its Coronado Springs Resort at the Walt Disney World Resort.

For those of you who are not a Disney adult, like me, D23 is a weekend-long event where the Walt Disney Company announces major news throughout its parks, studios and imagineering that fans can expect to see in the future.

According to the Destination D23 website, 25 presentations were shown throughout the weekend from different divisions across the Walt Disney Company, including Walt Disney Imagineering, The Walt Disney Studios, Disney Entertainment Television, Disney Experiences and the Walt Disney Archives.

Let’s break down the big news, updates and changes coming out of the company for the Walt Disney World Resort.

TRON OVERLAY

Next time you are digitalized into the world of Tron, it may look a little different from previous rides.

Walt Disney Imagineering is bringing a new overlay to TRON Lightcycle / Run at Walt Disney World Resort and TRON Lightcycle Power Run presented by Chevrolet at Shanghai Disney Resort.

The new overlay includes tunnels of vibrant red and orange light trails, according to DisneyParksBlog. Along with the new color scheme throughout the ride and ride vehicles, original music from TRON: Ares, which opens in theaters on Oct. 10, will play along your ride.

The overlay was introduced in Orlando on Sept. 15, while Shanghai was given the overlay on Sept. 16.

Considering TRON Lightcycle / Run at the Magic Kingdom is only two years old, opening on April 4, 2023, it’s very nice to see Disney Imagineering giving the ride an overlay. Due to the COVID pandemic, construction on the ride was majorly delayed, taking almost five years to complete, and was met with disappointing reviews by many fans for its short ride times.

An overlay like this is bound to give the attraction more hype and give fans something new to enjoy next time they race through the world of Tron.

ANOTHER WALT DISNEY ANIMATRONIC

A great big beautiful tomorrow is on the horizon for a classic Disney attraction, as Walt Disney Imagineering announced that a brand new audio-animatronic of Walt Disney is coming to Walt Disney’s Carousel of Progress.

“We are grateful to The Walt Disney Company and Walt Disney Imagineering for their continued collaboration and ongoing partnership with The Walt Disney Family Museum,” Kirsten Komoroske, Executive Director of the Walt Disney Family Museum, said. “The introduction of a new Audio-Animatronics figure of Walt Disney in ‘Walt Disney’s Carousel of Progress’ marks an exciting milestone in our shared mission to celebrate the story of the man behind the magic and inspire new generations with his innovations and vision for the future. We appreciate the continued efforts and meticulous care that Imagineering has taken to keep Walt’s legacy alive.”

The Walt Disney audio-animatronic will be featured in the final scene of the attraction. Adding Walt Disney to this classic attraction is a huge milestone for the company, as the Carousel of Progress is an original attraction that Disney himself worked on.

The attraction opened at the 1964 New York World’s Fair, in Queens, where it was part of the fair, sponsored by General Electric. The attraction was then moved to Disneyland in Anaheim, California, before being transported to the Magic Kingdom.

Walt Disney Imagineering released its first audio-animatronic of Walt Disney in its new attraction at the Main Street Opera House in Disneyland, “Walt Disney — A Magic Life,” in July 2025.

After first seeing the audio-animatronic for this attraction in Anaheim, I was a little let down, especially when a video surfaced of the figure slumping over, causing the show to break down.

However, over time, the animatronic grew on me.

I, for one, am excited to see this new animatronic in the Carousel of Progress and to see the dialogue featured along with it. The Carousel of Progress held great significance to Disney, as it embodied his love for America, the American family, technological innovation and the future.

CINDERELLA CASTLE GETS A FRESH COLOR PALETTE

An exciting change is coming to Cinderella Castle in the Magic Kingdom, with a new color palette.

This color scheme is inspired by the classic look of the castle, featuring grays, creams, blues and touches of gold in an effort to enhance the castle’s architecture, according to the D23 website.

Cinderella Castle held its iconic color scheme until 2020, when the castle received a new makeover. This makeover included a rose look to the castle, along with royal blue spears, wrapped in gold.

Honestly, a part of me died when they repainted the original castle in 2020. While the new colors added a more vibrant vibe to the castle, nothing beats the original color palette of grays, creams and blues that was with the castle for almost 50 years.

VILLAINS LAND

At last year’s D23 Expo, the Walt Disney Company announced some of its biggest news to date, which included an expansion to the Magic Kingdom.

This expansion would include two new lands: Piston Peak National Park, based on Disney’s “Cars franchise, and Villains Land.

The news of Villains Land captivated Disney fans, as prior to this announcement, Disney’s iconic villains did not have a place in any of its 12 resort theme parks. This new land was announced to encompass two major attractions, dining and shopping, according to DisneyParksBlog.

At this year’s D23 Expo, more information

was released about this upcoming Villains Land, giving fans a deeper look into what to expect from this new area of the park.

Disney Legend Andreas Deja has announced that he will be on the project, a former animator known for his work on Gaston in “Beauty and the Beast,” Jafar in “Aladdin” and Scar in “The Lion King.”

“I just love the idea to have an area where you just have fun with them all,” Deja said in a video showcased at the Expo. “You get to know them even more. And I know we’re going to amplify the way we see them, like we have never seen them before.”

The land will be characterized by big personalities, bold visuals and rich backgrounds of Disney’s iconic villains, enhancing the overall experience for guests.

The company announced that its Imagineering team has been studying Art Nouveau architecture, focusing on the unique form, scale and colors of the style.

“Seeing details like colorful stained-glass windows and painted metals helped us understand how we might bring the beautiful, deep jewel tones of the animated villains to life in the land’s buildings,” DisneyParksBlog wrote.

