SECRET SUPERSTARS AND OTHERWORLDLY WIZARDS: Gender Biased Hiding of Extraordinary Abilities in Girl-Powered Disney Channel Sitcoms from the 2000s

Abstract
Conformity messaging and subversive practices potentially harmful to healthy models of feminine identity are critical interpretations of the differential depiction of the hiding and usage of tween girl characters’ extraordinary abilities (e.g., super/magical abilities and celebrity powers) in Disney Channel television sitcoms from 2001-2011. Male counterparts in similar programs aired by the same network openly displayed their extraordinariness and were portrayed as having considerable and usually uncontested agency. These alternative depictions of differential hiding and secrecy in sitcoms are far from speculative; these ideas were synthesized from analyses of sitcom episodes, commentary in magazine articles, and web-based discussions of these series. Content analysis, industrial analysis (including interviews with industry personnel), and critical discourse analysis utilizing the multi-faceted lens of feminist theory throughout is used in this study to demonstrate a unique decade in children’s programming about super powered girls. This research is invested in answering questions about how and why this decade of gendered programming was constructed and its impact on television’s portrayal of female youth. To address these issues, close study of dialogue and action via textual analysis, and application of insights from socioeconomic and historical perspectives elucidate the antics surrounding the hiding and misappropriation of extraordinary power by young girl role models. In addition, such methodologies reveal much about the attitudes of the creators of these programs (mostly white, middle-aged, Western, heterosexual males). What is discerned from scripted material on the motivations behind elaborate attempts to hide the extraordinary are the meanings disseminated from the female subject-position representations in these blockbuster sitcoms that reveal despite Disney’s progress towards creating empowered girls, the network is at best locked into tradition.

URI
http://hdl.handle.net/1808/26330
This list of extraordinary human abilities was inspired by The Top 10 Tips to Improve Your Memory when I began thinking about how some people are blessed (or.

Tetrachromacy is the ability to see light from four distinct sources. An example of this in the animal kingdom is the zebrafish (Danio rerio), which can see light from the red, green, blue, and ultraviolet sections of the light spectrum. True tetrachromacy in humans is much rarer however – according to Wikipedia only two possible tetrachromats have been identified. Humans are normally trichromats, having three types of cone cells that receive light from either the red, green, or blue part of the light spectrum.