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**Old Tactics, New Tales:
A Revitalized Gastronomic Utopia in *The Princess and the Frog***

Abstract:

In the 2007 film *The Princess and the Frog*, Disney introduces its first African-American heroine: an industrious, working-class woman who overcomes hardships to marry a prince and live happily ever after. This idealized combination of the American Dream and the Disney Dream are presented on a backdrop of food and hunger that is vividly reminiscent of ways in which marginalized populations are controlled in children's stories and African-American folklore. Using a cultural studies approach I plan to investigate how *The Princess and the Frog* engages with Susan Honeyman's concept of the "gastronomic utopia" and how this engagement reinforces the existing power structures that Disney has worked hard to establish and retain over the last century.

Def: A *gastronomic utopia* is a magical place where the food is ready to eat and available in excess, and where no one needs to work to satisfy their hunger (Honeyman 112).

"Gastronomic utopias are lures that invite audiences to concentrate on desires that cannot be fulfilled, ultimately deferring power" (Honeyman 114).

Key Concepts: Race, class, gender, power, food, sugar, media

Theme Song: "Down in New Orleans"- "where all the women are very pretty and all the men deliver."

Restaurant Song: "Almost There,"-Keeps the focus on (unattainable?) dreams of the future.

Questions:

If, as Zipes claims, Disney has successfully defined itself as "the most acceptable type of fairytale in the 20th Century" (345), it is important to recognize who is controlling our cultural narratives and how those narratives affect societal power structures.

- 1) What is the effect when we allow a small, homogeneous elite maintain control over the narratives of race and hunger in America, beginning with some of the most influential and close-held media: children's stories?
- 2) What is our responsibility as citizens and consumers in this capitalist system?
- 3) Who is responsible for eliciting change?

Works Cited

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