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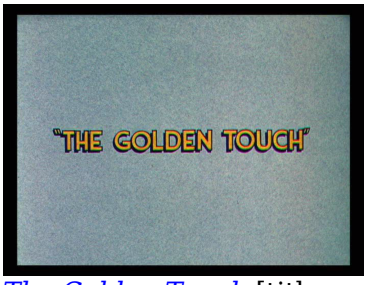
Walt Disney

The Golden Touch

United States (1935)

TAGS: Golden Touch Midas Satyr(s)





The Golden Touch [title frame] Under the Wikimedia Common Rights, 26 February, 2017, Source: Own work, Author: OswaldLR,(accessed: September 26, 2018).

General information	
Title of the work	The Golden Touch
Studio/Production Company	Walt Disney Productions
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	1935
First Edition Details	March 22, 1935, distributor: United Artists, music by Frank Churchill.
Running time	10:00
Format	VHS, DVD
Genre	Animated films, Fables, Myths, Short films
Target Audience	Crossover
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Creators



Walt Disney photographed by Boy Scouts of America (17 May 1946), available at the file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike (accessed: May 25, 2018).

Walt Disney , 1901 - 1966
(Animator, Director, Producer)

Walt Disney is perhaps one of the most popular cultural icons of all time. He was a producer and businessman, rather than an animator, although he drew at the beginning of his career. He was not really an artist – more like an interpreter of the well-known books or motifs. His first big production was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* released in 1937. This was also the first full-length animated feature film, which was a big success for the new company. After that, he made about 60 full-length movies, which opened the road for the later productions, after Disney's death.

Disney had a vision of creating a perfect world for children, where they would feel especially happy. But, as is well known, there were some hidden meanings in his movies, theme, that can challenge the over-sweetened image of this pop-icon. Disney also created a several attraction parks, such as Walt Disney World in LA (Disneyland opened in 1955, Disney World in 1965) and Disneyland near Paris (opened in 1992). He won 26 Academy Awards, 3 Golden Globe Awards, and many more. He died leaving a changed world behind, where the name Disney will live forever.

Source:

Smith, Dave, ed., "Walt Disney" (entry); in *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia*, 4th ed., Glendale: Disney Books, 2015.

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Additional information

Summary

The Golden Touch is a retelling of the myth about Midas, the king of Phrygia. We meet the main character in a medieval settling, while he is singing and counting his money. He has no one for company except for a cat, who is also enjoying the sight of gold. Above the entrance to the chamber there is a sign saying: "In Gold I Trust" – a variation of "In God We Trust," the sentence placed on every dollar bill, as it is the main motto of the United States of America. It reflects not only a change of faith, but also the perspective of that belief: there is no "we" in this relationship – just "I". Midas introduces himself to the viewers as a mighty king, who does "not care for women [nor] wine." Gold is the essence of his life. He makes a wish to have the golden touch. The wish is almost immediately granted by Goldie, the elf who magically appears in the chamber. Even though the creature warns the greedy king that his wish might turn into a curse, Midas is determined to take the risk. At first he enjoys his power when he changes his garden and furniture into gold. Here we also have the opportunity to spot a satyr statue, which might allude to the mythological roots of the story.

But, apparently, there is something that Midas loves more than gold – it is food, which he now cannot enjoy. Every bite turns into gold before he can swallow it. The vision of him turning into a golden skeleton haunts him as he runs down the corridors of his palace and eventually forces him to call once again for Goldie. The king offers to give up everything he owns for the ability to eat again. Goldie also grants him this wish and gives the promised reward in exchange for his sacrifice – a juicy and very American hamburger, the real treasure of the contemporary society.

Analysis

This animation was the last one directed by Walt Disney. After receiving a great deal of criticism, he excluded the short from the series and gave up directing films himself. He even forbade his employees to ever talk about the movie as he considered the short to be the greatest failure of his career.

The cartoon follows the Oscar-winning short *The Tortoise and the Hare*, which was based on Aesop's fable. This is one of the few short animations inspired by antiquity produced by Disney, which proves a

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strong presence of the myth in popular culture and its potential to being retold in new forms.

The mythological inspiration for *The Golden Touch* seems obvious – the name of the main character alludes to it, as does also the story itself. Interestingly, Midas is not punished by a god – only by an elf which resembles the Irish leprechaun with his pot of gold. Also, the medieval setting of the story might connect it to the egotism and greed of European kings during that period. But, crucially, "moving" the myth through time shows its universality and facility to adapt to particular concepts, places, nations or cultural circumstances – and Disney's short appears to be the perfect platform for that.

Disney changed the myth into a funny fable, with a lot of slap stick jokes inherent in this genre. The moral of the story is also quite simple – gold would never be the most important thing in life. What is really important is – a hamburger. The introduction at the end of this moral parable of this unexpected concept reflects rather disturbing American values – focused around gold and food. The thread linking the myth, Middle Ages and needs of contemporary Americans demonstrates the potential of the myth to fit within the world of popular culture.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Golden Touch Midas Satyr(s)

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Appearances Character traits Desires Humour

Further Reading

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