TEST 1-Comprensión de lectura. READING.

TASK 2: Choose the best option (A, B, C or D) for each question.The first one, number zero, is an example. You will get 1 point per correct answer.

HOW DISNEY'S PRINCESSES GOT TOUGH

After decades of selling young girls damsels in distress, Disney has finally made a run of films with strong female roles. It's just a shame it took them so long.

A lot of the talk surrounding *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, the sequel to the 2010 hit *Alice in Wonderland*, is centring on whether the film can survive the departure of Tim Burton from the director's chair, whether Sacha Baron Cohen can pull off another attempt at an orthodox acting role, or whether the project can overcome the near wholesale jettisoning of the delicate charm of the Lewis Carroll original. Much less attention has been paid to something equally significant: its contribution to Disney's ongoing project to empower and enable its pre-teen and early-teen girl audience.

If you asked anyone a decade ago who would be leading the charge to engineer this kind of feminist social change – specifically, through influencing the narratives of mass-market blockbuster films – Disney would arguably be the bottom of the list. If anything, it was considered the most conservative of the major studios, with its series of fairytale cartoons playing a significant part in schooling generations of girls in the arts of home-making, dressing nicely and meeting Prince Charmings. Its live-action fare, likewise, conformed to a family-friendly model that relied on the likes of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Princess Diaries* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Writer and activist Melissa Silverstein is arguably the most influential critic of gender issues in contemporary cinema. Is she on board with what Disney – in what is, admittedly, only a sliver of the company's total output – is trying to do?

"Disney has been giving us characters for decades that we, as a culture, can relate to," she says. "With *Brave*, and *Frozen*, and the Alice movies, feminist women are behind those things. That makes a difference. Disney makes other kinds of movies that don't necessarily fit into this category – so it's hard for me to say something extraordinary is happening across the board"

"We have to interrupt the cycle that starts very young," she says. "It's the power dynamic, that girls have to be saved. We want girls to be the heroes of the stories; they don't have to be saved. Girl characters need to be as fully fleshed out as male characters; they can't only be striving for romance.

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What Silverstein is alluding to, of course, is the studio's history with Disney Princesses; a branded concept that actually only dates from 2000, despite mining the company's eight-decade back catalogue. Disney Princesses – which encompasses toys, games, figurines and multiple fashion accessories – has been a huge money-spinner for the company, with an estimated revenue of more than $5.5bn, but the studio seems to be in retreat from the values it defined. Silverstein calls it "the princess-industrial complex" and describes it as "almost the downfall of civilisation". "This is what we've been teaching girls: wear pink, look pretty, wear makeup. I want that to go away. That is not stuff that helps girls become empowered young women. This is stuff people use to keep women docile."

According to a report by Bloomberg Business Week writer Claire Suddath, about Disney's decision to switch its doll licence from Mattel to Hasbro, one of the key factors behind Disney's change of direction was the continued criticism from influential feminist writers: specifically Peggy Orenstein's 2006 article in the New York Times magazine, *"What's Wrong with Cinderella?"*, which detailed her disgust, as a mother, for the "princess craze and the girlie-girl culture" that appeared to be swamping her daughter. But it seems Disney had been heading – slowly – in the desired direction for some time.

The process is neatly summarised in Kaitlin Ebersol's 2014 essay *How Fourth-Wave Feminism is Changing Disney's Princesses*: the latest tranche of which, via *Brave* and *Frozen* "completely cast off the patriarchal clichés of their predecessors by focusing heavily on the relationships between women and treating romance as a secondary consideration". The same is true of the Alice movies, and of the 2014 *Sleeping Beauty* reboot *Maleficent* (which shares a scriptwriter, Linda Woolverton, with Alice). The *Cinderella* remake, however, followed a more traditional, princessy route. No one is sure yet which way the new *Beauty and the Beast* will go, though the interest is certainly there (a recently released trailer broke internet records); but the participation of Emma Watson, whose plan to spend a year studying feminism has made headlines, does hint at the possibilities.

Suzanne Todd, producer of both Alice films (along with her sister, Jennifer) says that making a "female empowerment piece" was "the driving force, right from the beginning". Woolverton, she says, was a key figure in the project. Belle, a character created by Woolverton for the 1991 *Beauty and the Beast* cartoon, took "a stand for what she believes in, and is her own person" and now "it's only become more important that we create characters that we're proud of, and that our own [daughters] can look up to and emulate".

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0. One of the comments about the film, which is in the spotlight, is that...

a. ...it contributes to appeal to a teenage audience.

b. ...its cast differ from the original masterpiece.

c. ...it is unlikely that the equality project takes form in a near future.

d. ...its success is called into question by the audience.

1. When it comes to feminist social change activism, Disney...

a. ...has always been regarded as a promoter.

b. ...has been felt to be a sexist supplier.

c. ...has always fought against female stereotypes.

d. ...has been considered to be neutral so far.

2. Concerning Disney's social revolution, Melissa Silverstein...

a. ... is reluctant to accept a total change..

b. ... is relieved to tell the difference between old and new films.

c. ... is supportive with the idea of an outbreak.

d. ... is proud of herself for being considered as a founder.

3. Melissa Silverstein claims that girl characters...

a. ...are not to stop chasing for love.

b. ...need to be empowered.

c. ...are already considered as brave by males.

d. ...ought not to take leading roles.

4. "The princess-industrial complex" is said to...

a. ...have represented a golden goose for the Disney studio

b. ...have promoted positive attitudes and values among girls.

c. ...have been lately involved in the process of renovation.

d. ...have contributed to enhance outstanding female roles.

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5. Peggy Orenstein's 2006 article claims her disgust because her daughter...

a. ...was thrilled with the feminist stereotypes shown in movies.

b. ...was agitated by Disney films and dolls.

c. ...was overwhelmed by the traditional role of girls in films.

d. ...was confused by the romantic point of view in films.

6. The latest Disney films after 2014...

a. ...present a homogeneous feminist tendency against men and love.

b. ...remark the scarcity of stereotypes and gender roles.

c. ...cast some doubts on the real end of traditional roles.

d. ...aim attention only at their strong female leading roles.

7. Emma Watson's near future plans...

a. ...raise doubts on the route of her new film.

b. ...clue in on the possible end of the new film.

c. ...root for the success of a video published on the internet.

d. ...shed light upon the characteristics of her character.

8. According to Disney producers, Wolvertoon's creation...

a. ...was a line in the water.

b. ...was the beginning of a new era.

c. ...was designed to enhance women.

d. ...was sketched without a purpose.

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KEY – SOLUCIONARIO

1- b. ..has been felt to be a sexist supplier.

2- a. ... is reluctant to accept a total change..

3- b. ..need to be empowered.

4- a. ..have represented a golden goose for the Disney studio

5- c. ..was overwhelmed by the traditional role of girls in films.

6- c. ..cast some doubts on the real end of traditional roles.

7- d. ...shed light upon the characteristics of her character.

8- c. ..was designed to enhance women.

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