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Abstract

In this thesis I will explore the ways in which *gender identity*, *racial identity*, and *ethnic identity* have contributed to the evolution of the archetype of the Disney Princess as presented in: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Mulan* (1998), *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010), *Brave* (2012), and *Frozen* (2013). In this thesis, a critical examination of the representation of both femininity as well as racial and ethnic identity, in the chosen movies, will be conducted by applying Judith Butler's *Gender Theory*, *Critical Race Theory*, along with Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of *Intersectionality* to the movies. I will explore how the *Walt Disney Company* has sought to normalize these constructions by analyzing the princesses presented in them. This thesis will argue that whiteness gets promoted throughout all of the twelve movies, moreover, it will also argue that the princess archetype's gender identity has indeed evolved over time. However, it will also be argued that neither racial identity nor ethnic identity have been influential on the evolution of the Disney Princess as the Walt Disney Company seems to promote their own construction of an idealized racial and ethnic identity which assimilates all of the princesses into the mainstream American society.

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From Snow White to Anna:
A Critical Analysis of the Disney Princess in relations to Gender Identity, and Racial and Ethnic
Identity

Introduction

“U.S. legal institutions, film theorists, cultural critics, and faithful audiences all participate in Disney's self-proclaimed status as metonymic America; the bald eagle, however, is replaced by the equally iconic and symbolically loaded Mickey Mouse” (Bell, Haas and Sells 4).

Fairy tales have always been, and still are, an inseparable part, and in the forefront of, popular culture. Fairy tales serve a certain purpose, a higher purpose than merely being an entertainment, as they work as a moral guide, clearly marking the line between good and evil (Wilde 132-133). In fact, the “original European fairy tales rose from a medieval culture that faced all manner of economic and social upheaval”, a point in time where people might have felt need for some stable ideal world, another reality, as well as guidance (Orenstein 25). However, the depiction of some of the fairy tales in the media, such as animations, has been under criticism as people “learn more from media than any other single source of information so if you wanna understand what is going on in society in the 21st century we have to understand the media” (*Miss Representation* 00:02:05). Thus, how they, as well as the characters, get presented is vitally important. Moreover, as stated in the documentary *Miss Representation* (2011), the media sends a message to girls from a very early age that their physical appearance is most important, and that their values and self-worth depend on the way they look (*Miss Representation* 00:02:48). Boys grasp this message as well which affects the way they see and treat girls, thus, reinforcing these gendered values enforced upon them. As a result, these values get embedded into the society and

accepted as normality. In the documentary, *Miss Representation* (2011), Geena Davis states that in the period between “1937 and 2005 there were only 13 female protagonists in animated movies. All of them except one had the aspiration of finding romance” (01:03:44). Thus, females portrayal in animations has had its limitations. Davis also states, that in children’s movies, “the female characters are just as likely to be wearing sexually revealing clothing as in R-rated movies which is horrifying” (*Miss Representation* 01:00:95). In general, women in American culture “are brought up to be just fundamentally insecure and always looking for the time when that knight on a horse will come and rescue us or provide for us” according to Lisa Ling (*Miss Representation* 01:03:31).

In accordance with some of the statements in *Miss Representation* (2011) are Lori Baker-Sperry’s and Liz Brauerholz’s findings, which suggest that many fairy tales are gendered scripts emphasizing things such as “women’s passivity and beauty [...] and serve to legitimize and support the dominant gender system” (711). Moreover, feminine beauty ideals are merely a “socially constructed notion that physical attractiveness is one of the women’s most important assets, and something all women should strive to achieve and maintain” (711). However, these beauty ideals are most often seen as “an oppressive, patriarchal practice that objectifies, devaluates, and subordinates women” (711). As a result, films can be seen as cultural representations with the ability of revealing changes in cultural identity. Thus, animated movies, such as the Princess movies, might be seen as cultural artifacts.

According to Henry A. Giroux, in his chapter, *Memory and Pedagogy in the “Wonderful World of Disney” Beyond the Politics of Innocence*, the Disney Company has become a cultural icon in the United States and few “can match the signifying power of the Disney Company” (45). Moreover, he feels that the Disney Company, hiding behind an innocent façade, has aggressively rewritten “the historical and collective identity of the American Past” (45). Thus, instead of facing the past, the Disney Company simply rewrites it. Moreover, Giroux states that the Disney Company reinvents history “as a pedagogical and a political tool to secure its own interests, authority, and power” (46). Dawn Elizabeth England, Lara Descartes and Melissa A. Collier-Meek state that Disney’s “marketing franchise” aims at girls and encourages “children to personally identify with the characters in order to get them to consume more products” (555). Moreover, according to them, the company has contributed to the creation of a “new girlhood” that is largely defined by gender “and product consumption” (555).

Sara Wild, states that Walt Disney Company’s reproduction of their “Disneyfied” animated fairytales has made them become “synonymous with the princess fairy tale narrative” through their

army of perfect princesses (133). In fact, the release of the Walt Disney Company's *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, marks the beginning of "the princess film narrative" (Wilde 133). The first three Princess films; *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), were all based on transformed western folktales, and thirty years later, Disney did the same with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), and *Aladdin* (1992) (Bell 107). According to Elizabeth Bell, "nothing accidental or serendipitous occurs in animations as each *second* of action on screen is rendered in twenty-four different still paintings" (108). Moreover, Bell also states that Disney heroines reflect contemporary beauty standards or ideals. Earlier heroines, created whilst Walt Disney was alive, were modeled after professional ballet dancers, and "their race and ethnicity was unproblematic...fair skinned, fair-eyed, Anglo-Saxon features of Eurocentric loveliness, both conforming to and perfecting Hollywood's beauty boundaries" (110-111). Thus, it is interesting to take a deeper look into how the Disney Princess's gender identity has evolved over time, asking; *might the princesses' own racial or ethnic identity affect the way the overall concept, the Disney Princess, has evolved and if so, how?*

Theory

In the following paragraphs, the three theories, Judith Butler's *Gender Theory*, *Critical Race Theory*, along with Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of *Intersectionality*, will be introduced as well as concepts regarding *media analysis*, and *identity*. Moreover, this theory section will also include a short discussion of the *Walt Disney Company*, as well as *the 20th century*, in order to be able to tie those two influences with the evolving concept of the Disney Princess. However, this section will start with the definition of *identity* as represented by Anthony Giddens in his book, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Later Modern Age*. The section regarding *identity* will serve as a historical introduction to, and followed by, Butler's *Gender Theory*. The theory section will then continue with an introduction of *Critical Race Theory*, leading up to *Intersectionality* as represented by Kimberle Crenshaw in her article, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. The section regarding *Intersectionality* is followed by a definition of *ethnicity*, leading up to the clarification of *concepts regarding media analysis*, and lastly, the discussion of *the Walt Disney Company*, and *the 20th century*.

Identity

In his book, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Anthony Giddens states that self-identity has become an important issue in modern societies. During the lifespan, one will have to make important choices regarding everything from one's appearance to life changing one's having to do with things such as relationships, education, beliefs, and occupation. In these *post-traditional societies* there are no clearly defined roles, thus, one has to make their own, answering questions such as; "How to act?", "Who to be?", and "What to do?" either discursively or through "day-to-day social behaviour" (70). The self is not congenital or fixed but reflexive. Thus, people continue to work, reflect and revise biographical narratives, that is, the story of who we are and how we came to be. Trust has become a 'protective cocoon', or 'leap into faith', "which stands guard over the self in its dealings with everyday reality" (2-3, 75).

Things such as actions and influences that make sense to the person, as well as the person's own life, make up the stability of self-identity and affect the way she interprets different situations. A strong narrative, that is, being able to maintain a satisfactory story of events and being confident in it, is a key element when it comes to self-esteem and pride. Without confidence of one's narrative integrity and value, one can experience shame. Self-identity is thus how the person itself reflexively

understands her own biography and not a set of traits or perceived characteristics. Thus, things such as our chosen lifestyle affect our notion of self-identity (5-6, 53- 54, 66).

A person's identity is not to be found in behavior, nor – important though this is – in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self. (Giddens 54)

In post-traditional societies, 'pure relationships' are made up of equals that negotiate their way to happiness without having external reasons for being together and trust has thus become vitally important as well as influences from the mass media (6). People are encouraged to reflect themselves as well as their relationships in magazines, movies, TV shows, and self-help books where different lifestyles and social changes are on a display (4-5, 180). The media however, does not only reflect the social world but takes part in shaping it as well, thus, playing a key role in modern reflexivity. People in these modern societies take calculated risks, the media often highlighting those risks, accepting the possibility of 'failure' (3). Consumerism, and the things a person purchases, does also play its role as modernity "opens up the project of the self, but under conditions strongly influenced by the standardising effects of commodity capitalism" (196). Advertisers use this knowledge of the self to sell consumers the notion that buying things will help them achieve their goals, enhance their individuality and lifestyle, threatening and corrupting the true quest for self (200).

According to Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, the American society has been preoccupied with issues of identity, preferring to "place its citizens into boxes on the basis of physical attributes and culture" (59). Mere habit and convenience lie beneath this and like "other paradigms, the black-white one allows people to simplify and make sense of a complex reality" (59). One of the side effects could be that "nonblack minority groups, not fitting into the dominant society's idea of race in America, become marginalized, invisible, foreign, un-American" (59). However, these types of binary paradigms of race "not only simplifies analysis dangerously, presenting racial progress as a linear progression; it can end up injuring the very group" by weakening solidarity, reducing opportunities for coalition, depriving groups of the benefits of the

others' experiences, making it excessively dependent on the approval of the white establishment leading to an "ultimate disappointment" (60).

Gender Theory

In this project, the main focus, when it comes to the analysis, will not only be on Judith Butler's *Gender Theory* as presented in her article *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* (1988), but also on *Critical Race Theory* and *Intersectionality*. The focus will be on all three theories as they are all equally important as their application will directly lead to the discovery of the answer to the research question.

Butler uses different elements from both phenomenology as well as feminist theory to explain how one's gender is constituted and acted and theorizes that gender is merely a performance. According to Butler, gender is not a stable identity "or locus of agency from which various acts proceed" (519). Thus, gender identity is fluent and can evolve and change over time and is "instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 519). The stylization of the body itself institutes one's gender and helps to create the illusion that gender identity is eternal. Other everyday things such as "bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds" also help with the creation of the illusion of a lasting "gendered self", rendering it "social temporality" (519, 520).

The performance of gender, through *gender acts*, establishes gender, thus, the performer is also establishing it (520). The "social audience", that is, the human population, serves as actors performing "in the mode of belief", repeating acts that have been acted before by themselves or by others (520). This fact renders gender acts the possibility of changing over time as actors get influenced by, and have influence on, others. Furthermore, Butler states that gender acts do not only constitute the identity of the actor performing them. The performances themselves help with the preservation of the compelling illusion of identity, revealing at the same time how they are "an object of *belief*", and thus immortal in a sense (520).

According to Butler, *gender identity* is "a performative accomplishment" enforced by "social sanction and taboo" (520). That is, gender identity is enforced upon the members of a social group by the group's rules regarding suitable and unsuitable behavior, what is prohibited and banned. Thus, historical conventions affect human behavior. The body itself "is a materiality that bears meaning" and "is not merely matter but a continual and incessant materializing of possibilities" (521). These possibilities are the key to how gender and gender acts can evolve over

time and how ideas concerning gender can change. Thus, the body itself is merely a prop or a tool to communicate gender ideas and does not necessarily define one's gender identity: "one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successors as well" (521). As a result, the body has many possibilities that get affected by historical conventions (521).

It is vitally important not to confuse one's gender with one's sex, as gender is "a cultural interpretation or signification of that facility" and not "a biological facticity" (522). That is, being a female is a fact that has no additional meaning whilst being a woman insinuates that one has become one by compelling:

the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman', to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal will, and because gender is a project which has cultural survival at its end, the term '*strategy*' better suggests the situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs. (522)

The survival of gender has been insured by the use of clear penal consequences. That is, gender performance humanizes individuals within temporary culture, and those who do not perform their gender correctly get punished as a result. As mentioned earlier, Butler states that various acts of gender create the idea of gender and without them gender would cease to exceed. As a result, it is hard to recognize the true origin of gender as the creators of gender have become entrapped by their own creation leading them to belief that the creation is both necessary and natural.

According to Butler, the body does not get distinguished from "its gendered appearance" (523). One's cultural surrounding also play their part in making it hard to distinguish between sex and gender. Gender identity is reproduced through numerous enactments connected to how one's body is presented. Furthermore, these enactments get influenced by "sedimented expectations of gender" (524). The creation of *gender norms* maintains the illusion of the naturalness of sex and what it means to be a "real woman" or a real man, as well as influencing "the natural configuration of bodies into sexes which exist in a binary relation to one another" (524). According to Butler, heterosexuality is seen as the norm as it insures sexual reproduction and marriage (524). Butler continues stating that cultures are ruled by conventions that not only ensure the reproduction of human kind but also the "exchange, and consumption of material goods" (524). Moreover, they

reproduce “the bonds of kinship itself, which require taboos and a punitive regulation of reproduction to effect that end” (524). As an example, Butler discusses how the incest taboo has been used to manage people’s sexual behavior, amongst other things, to ensure the “channeling of sexuality into various modes of heterosexual marriage” (524). A “system of compulsory heterosexuality” gets both replicated and hidden by “the cultivation of bodies into discrete sexes” that have been naturalized (524).

One’s gender performance is unique in a way. However, the mere fact that individuals perform their gender identities in accordance to rules regarding wanted and unwanted behavior, and obey rules that are forced upon them by their own cultures, shows how the act is in itself not individual and that it has been performed time and time again throughout generations (525- 526). Gestures express one’s gender as well. Just as social performances, gender is merely an act, a reenactment (528). However, when performed out on the street, in reality, the audience presume that the act is genuine, making it harder to read and more dangerous if one does not conform to customs and traditions (526- 527). Although being a performance, “gender cannot be understood as a *role* which either expresses or disguises an interior ‘self’, whether that ‘self’ is conceived as sexed or not” (528). Butler continues stating that, “gender is an ‘act’, broadly constructed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority” (528). Thus, one’s gender is neither real or apparent, true or false as “gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulations and control” (528). By performing one’s gender well, one is reassured that there exists “an essentialism of gender identity after all” (528). However, as the project focuses not only on gender but also on another social construction, race, it is only appropriate to discuss it in the following section.

Critical Race Theory

This section will focus on the work of Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic as presented in their book, *Critical Race Theory (Third Edition): An Introduction*. In accordance to the theory, race is a social construction constructed by the white population, and not a biological factor. Therefore, race is not objective, inherent, or fixed but merely a form of categorization, an invention of society, and can thus be manipulated at will.

People with common origins share certain physical traits, of course, such as skin color, physique, and hair texture. But these constitute only an extremely small portion of their genetic endowment, are dwarfed by what we have in common, and have little or nothing to do with distinctly human, higher-order traits, such as personality, intelligence, and moral behavior. That society frequently chooses to ignore these scientific truths, creates races, and endows them with pseudo-permanent characteristics is of great interest to critical race theory. (Delgado, Stefancic 21)

As an example of how race can be manipulated is the concept of *differential racialization*, which can be seen in how “popular images and stereotypes of various minority groups” can shift over time as needed (21). Thus, changes in society can instigate a need for re-inventing different categories such as a group of colored people, Native Americans, Japanese, Irish, or Middle Eastern people:

In one era, a group of color may be depicted as happy-go-lucky, simpleminded, and content to serve white folks. A little later, when conditions change, that very same group may appear in cartoons, movies, and other cultural scripts as menacing, brutish, and out of control, requiring close supervision. In one age, Middle Eastern people are exotic, fetishized figures wearing veils, wielding curved swords, and summoning genies from lamps. Later, after circumstances change, they emerge as fanatical, religiously crazed terrorists bent on destroying America and killing innocent citizens. (21)

Another example of how the categories of race can change and be redefined is how “certain groups have moved into or out of that race”, for example Irish, Jews, and Italians who were at first considered to be nonwhite in America (64). However, with time they “earned the prerogatives and social standing of whites” by things such as “joining labor unions, swearing fealty to the Democratic Party, and acquiring wealth, sometimes by illegal or underground means”(64) . Thus, Whiteness is valuable, “shifting and malleable” (64).

Critical Race Theory looks at how race and racism appear across dominant cultural modes of expression and it assumes that racism is ordinary and „the usual way society does business“, making the experience of it into a „common, everyday experience of most people of color“ in the United States of America (20). According to Delgado and Stefancic, “society constructs the social world through a series of tacit agreements mediated by images, pictures, tales, tweets, blog postings, social media, and other scripts” (44). Much of the things perceived as being “ridiculous, self-serving, or cruel” has perhaps not been seen as such at the time, and “Attacking embedded preconceptions that marginalize others or conceal their humanity is a legitimate function of all fiction” (44).

The theory also presumes that this system of „white-over-color ascendancy“ has an important purpose „both psychic and material“, for the dominant group (20). As racism has become so ordinary, it is hardly ever acknowledged and thus hard to address and cure and “Color-blind, or “formal,” conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discriminations” (20). The second feature of the theory, “interest convergence” or material determinism, sheds a light on how racism is beneficial to both the white elite with material advances, as well as the white working class with physical advantages. As these two groups make up large segments of the American society there is hardly any motivation to eradicate racism (21).

Whiteness, in “the semantics of popular culture [...] is often associated with innocence and goodness” (63). As an example of that is the fact that brides tend to wear a white wedding-gown “to signify purity”, as well as *Snow White*, with her pure white complex, “a universal fairy tale”, receives her “just reward” (63). However, in the same semantics of popular culture darkness, or blackness, often carries “connotations of evil and menace” (63). As an example of that is “black gloom”, the fact that persons that get “deemed unacceptable to a group are said to be blackballed or blacklisted”, along with the fact that villains “are often depicted as swarthy or wearing black clothing” such as the bad stepmother in the fairy tale of *Snow White* (63). Whiteness has been normalized and it “sets the standard in dozens of situations”, and other groups “such as American Indians, Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans” are defined “in relation or opposition to whiteness and often referred to as ‘non-white’ (63). Both the media as well as literature play their part in reinforcing “this view of minorities as the exotic other” (63).

However, in 1954 the Supreme Court gave blacks ‘equal’ rights. In both the Second World War, as well as the Korean war, black and white soldiers had fought side by side and “cooperation

and survival took precedence over racism” (30). Due to this fact, as well as the fact that the country was still recovering from both wars, and locked in the Cold War, “The interests of whites and blacks, for a brief moment, converged” (30). The issue of nationalism versus assimilation is also of interest for critical theorists when it comes to race. Nationalists, also named separatists, hold that “people of color should embrace their culture and origins” whilst the latter might see assimilation to the mainstream society as the only way to hinder racism (53).

One of the more contentious issues in American racial thought today the very framework we use to consider problems of race reflects an unstated paradigm or mindset. That paradigm, the black-white binary, effectively dictates minority groups must compare their treatment to that of African Americans to redress their grievances. The paradigm holds that one group, blacks, constitutes the prototypical minority group. “Race” means, quintessentially, African American. Others, such as Asians, American Indians, and Latinos, are minorities only insofar as their experience and treatment can be analogized to those of blacks. (59).

Stories are a powerful tool when it comes to fighting prejudice and discrimination. Stories can give minority groups a voice and a sense of fellowship as they might discover others with similar experiences. Stories can help with determining the type of discrimination; microaggression, unconscious discrimination, or structural racism. Moreover, powerful stories and narratives “may begin a process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity” (44). However, the story of one minority group is best told by a person belonging to the group as she has lived, and experienced the events, and is a part of the story itself. A person from a majority group, telling the story of a minority group, might not have the right perspective or insight and thus, could be oblivious of the importance of certain elements of the story or simply oversee or ignore them. As an example, a black female who is also a single parent might experience discrimination at the workplace differently than a married black woman, or a white single parent one, and thus, her experience is unique and she can best identify with other females in the exact same situation belonging to the same categories. Therefore, due to the personal dimension of politics critical race theorists also examine “the interplay of power and authority within minority communities, movements, and even

selves” by looking at things such as *intersectionality* (49). Thus, categories as well as subgroups are not merely of theoretical interest as how they are framed “determines who has power, voice, and representation and who does not” (51). According to Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, women studies have created a “spin off movement” by applying ideas presented in Critical Race Theory to understand issues of *intersectionality* (20).

Intersectionality

The concept of *intersectionality*, established by Kimberle Crenshaw, grasps the multidimensionality of both the discrimination as well as the oppression women often face on a daily basis. Crenshaw argues that intersectionality is a way to expand feminist and antiracist theory by providing them with the analytical tools needed to address the experiences of Black women suffering both from racial as well as sexual discrimination. Crenshaw argues that feminism, as well as antiracist politics, are based on a single-axis framework which favors its most privileged members, ignoring the experience of those at the intersection of race and gender (Crenshaw 139, 151- 152).

As an example of how feminism can fail to recognize Black women’s experiences, Crenshaw discusses the assumptions made by society at large regarding the constitution of black families. Due to “ideological and descriptive definitions of patriarchy” usually being (156)

...premised upon white female experiences, feminists and other informed by feminist literature may make the mistake of assuming that since the role of Black women in the family and in other Black institutions does not always resemble the familiar manifestations of patriarchy in the white community, Black women are somehow exempt from patriarchal norms. (156)

As an example, it is more common that Black women work outside the home than for white women. By analyzing the patriarchy that focuses on the “history of white women’s exclusion from the workplace might permit the inference that Black women have not been burdened by this particular gender-based expectations” (156). However, the mere fact that Black women have no choice other than to work “conflicts with norms that women should not, often creating personal, emotional and relationship problems” (156). By looking at this Black women’s experience through the looking glass of white women one neglects to see how the fact that Black women need to work burdens them, not only within the black community but also within the American society in whole

as their responsibilities, that are not traditionally feminine, lead to, amongst other things, “manifestation of racism’s scourge upon the Black community” (156- 157).

Intersectional feminism allows for an investigation on how the systems of both oppression and discrimination women experience overlap, by looking at how women can be categorized. Women not only get categorized by their gender, but by other thing as well such as ethnicity, sexuality, economic background, physical abilities, and a whole variety of other axes (151). This multiple-axis categorization reveals how women’s experiences can often be multidimensional as they can be discriminated against based on multiple factors such as gender, ethnicity and sexuality. In order to clarify further, Crenshaw likens intersectionality to being at a traffic intersection or a crossroad when an accident occurs. There can be multiple factors that lead up to and resulted in the accident taking place, thus, making it difficult to pinpoint the cause and effect if only a single-axis analysis is applied.

The multiple-axis approach is a far cry from the single-axis analysis, which does not take in to account that women can belong to more than one category at any given time. According to Crenshaw, there is a tendency to “treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis”, possibly leading to Black women, along with other women of color, being overseen as people tend to put them into only one of the categories, either as Black or women (139). Crenshaw also states that there is a theoretical tendency to think of all women as being white and all Blacks as men (143). Thus, Black women are theoretically erased as their experiences do not necessarily coincide with those of either white women or Black men (139). Thus, “Where their experiences are distinct, Black women can expect little protection” in for example court, as long at the single-axis approach is applied (143). Moreover, Crenshaw theorizes that the intersectional experience itself is “greater than the sum of racism and sexism” (140). Thus, discrimination or disempowerment, is often more complicated for people who are subjected to multiple forms of exclusion, intersectionality providing a platform for it to be seen.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity has a social dimension to its meaning, that is, it is “understood as a social group based upon shared culture and customs” but is often used in “less specific ways” than race (Benshoff and Griffin 50-51). Thus, even though Native Americans have been seen as being a part of the Mongoloid race, the various Native American tribes “might be thought of as **ethnic groups** within the race, bound together by shared cultural customs” (Benshoff and Griffin 50). The term

‘ethnocentrism’, grasps how people might regard their own ethnic group as being superior, or better, than others (Benshoff and Griffin 51).

Concepts regarding Media Analysis

The concepts used in the project, regarding media analysis, need to be established as well as the preceding theories as they are important when it comes to analyzing the movies. Other concepts, used for the analysis will be explained in the analysis itself as needed. The concepts used are as followed: *Story*, *plot*, *scene* and will be explained in the same order as mentioned. *Story* differs from *plot* as it refers to the narrative itself and its events, whilst *plot* refers to the sequence of events as represented in a film (Sikov 90-91). A *scene* refers to “a unit of dramatic action that takes place in one location during single time period” (Sikov 195).

Walt Disney and the Twentieth Century

In order to be able to analyze the complexity of the influences and hidden meanings of things such as *gender* and *ethnicity*, which are conveyed through a cultural artifact like the films chosen for the analysis, one has to try to find the sources for these meaning. Thus, it is important to be familiar with both the *Walt Disney Company* as well as some of the important events occurring throughout the *20th century*.

Walt Disney. According to Naomi Wood, in her article *Domesticating Dreams in Walt Disney's Cinderella*, “Disney’s ideology is conservative and anti-intellectual, but that conservatism is by no means doctrinaire or without its own surprises and contradictions” (25). He often adjusted written and oral stories as needed, civilizing the audience by entertaining, “presenting examples of ideal types modeling proper behavior and comic anti-types showing us the results of improper behavior” (26). Thus, some of his changes to the plot might be seen as being informative as “they not only highlight the differences between the media of storytelling, literary fairy tale, and movie, but also give us insight into the cultural work Disney does” (26). However, others were merely an attempt to make the folktales into a full-length feature film, by adding “comic relief to the romantic plot by introducing subplots [...] involving animals and others [...] to act as foils to the “straight” love interest of the original plot” (29). Wood continues stating that “Disney’s work presupposes a normative standard of American-style “*civilité*”—a standard that values reason and realism over mystery and irrationality, sentiment over calculation, the morally right over the temporally

powerful” (26). Thus, Disney replaces “stereotypes of the European märchens with American ones”, giving its princesses occupations such as housekeeping that “European märchens often depicted as demeaning” (30).

In their article, *The Movie You See, The Movie you Don't: How Disney Do's That Old Time Derision*, Susan Miller and Greg Rode state that Disney films, just as other “cartoon visions” and other films for children, “make crucial contributions to our most important discourses of the self” (86). However, there is more to the films than civilizing the audience by entertaining as “many aesthetic, social, economic, technical and political pressures converge” (Miller and Rode 87). Thus, the ‘red scare’, along with the fact that Walt Disney himself was a Special Correspondent for the FBI, seeps into the overall message of the films and their presumed realities. Not only was Walt Disney hired by the government to produce counter Nazi propaganda, showing the true American way, but the studio also got used as barracks in 1941 (Bell, Haas and Sells 5). Every image in Disney films is a seed “of cultural formation that highlight gender, value energetic work, privilege a tamed nature, and verify the value of loose authority and its psychological “permission”” (Miller and Rode 87-88). According to Miller and Rode, some of the Disney movies thrive on prejudice and are thus overtly racist, sexist, and classist which then get reproduced by the audience in their everyday lives (88). They continue by stating that the “purposes *for* Disney films, like the purposes for textbooks that must be sold to teachers rather than students, focus on adults who will both predict and replay them in memory”, and this differs from “multiple purposes in them” (Miller and Rode 96).

Until his death on December 15, 1966, Walt Disney kept a close eye on every film that got made and released by the company (Bell, Haas and Sells 2). During the 1960s and 1970s “the Disney magic ran increasingly dry”, due to perhaps “mismanagement or an inability to find America’s entertainment pulse during volatile social and political times” (Bell, Haas and Sells 6). However, with the help of Michael Eisner, Jeffrey Katzenberg and Frank Wells, the magic of Disney gradually got revived (Bell, Haas and Sells 6-9). The Disney Company presents its audiences with “an endless regime of representations and commodities that conjure up a nostalgic view of America as the “magic kingdom,””, ruthlessly rewriting “the historical and collective identity of the American past”, whilst disguising itself in a cloud of innocence (Giorux 45). Thus, it is vitally important to be familiar with some of the things happening during the 20th Century.

The 20th Century. One of the basis for being able to analyze the films chosen for the project, and answer the research question, is the fact that the images of people on film, as well as

how they get portrayed in caricatures and thus in animated films, “actively contribute to the ways in which people are understood and experienced in the “real world”” (Benshoff and Griffin 3). Thus, there is a connection between film, or animations, and reality. The viewer can therefore get a notion, by watching films, of how different groups of people get represented and treated in the United States of America, on the basis of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

According to Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, from their book *America on film: Representing Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality at the Movies*, despite what was written in the *Declaration of Independence*, where all men were said to be created equal, women, along with African Americans and Native Americans, were excluded and not even allowed to vote (6). However, with time, Americans came to understand that the Constitution can be altered to grasp a wider meaning of equality and “In America today, there is a general belief that each and every individual is unique, and should have equal access to the American Dream of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (7). Thus, the differences between Americans, regarding levels of success and happiness, are based on “individual effort and merit rather than preferential treatment” (7). However, “while most American citizens philosophically understand and endorse these principles of equality, many of those same people also recognize that equality has not been totally achieved in the everyday life of the nation” (7). One of the contributing factors is how “individuals are often grouped together by some shared trait” such as “by racial or ethnic heritage, by gender, by income level, by academic level, by sexual orientation, by geographic region, by age, and so forth” (7). Members of these groups often experience overgeneralization, or oversimplification, when dominant ideologies presume that they share some common traits such as “that women are more emotional than rational, that gay men lisp, that African Americans are good dancers” (7). This ideological assumption, or overgeneralization, has become normalized, or standardized, “in speech, in movies, on TV”, leading to the creation of *stereotypes* which often get used in favor of certain groups over others (7). However, “most Americans are aware that certain group still have more opportunities and protection than others”, such as those of white, or Anglo-Saxon, descent, men, middle-, and upper-class people, and heterosexuals (7). The less privileged groups are often referred to as *minority groups*, a term that can be misleading as it insinuates that this group is smaller in number than the privileged one which is often untrue. However, it refers more often to “types of people with less social power” (8). American Patriarchy sees sexuality as something that is solely “condoned within heterosexual marriage, a situation that considers all other sexualities taboo and reinforces women’s role as the child-bearing and child-raising property of men” (9).

According to Benshoff and Griffin, “racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes work to create in corporate culture a **glass ceiling**, a metaphoric term that describes how everyone but white heterosexual males tend to be excluded from the highest executive levels of American industries” (10). Furthermore, they state that “race, gender, class, and sexuality- cannot be readily separated out as discrete categories” (10), thus, they seem to support the notion of some sort of intersectionality even though they do not mention the concept itself.

However, Benshoff and Griffin also state that Hollywood has begun making films “made in which the hero is not white, not male, or (more recently) not heterosexual” (29). Films portraying female protagonists, woman’s film, or chick flicks that “usually emphasize the female character’s desire for a man, and thus reinforce patriarchy in their own way” (29). This patriarchy is build up on traditional *white* patriarchal structuring (92). Moreover, throughout the history of Hollywood film making, members of minority groups have often been represented through stereotypes. Benshoff and Griffin also state that according to many Hollywood producers, viewers have a harder time identifying with a non-white character, thus, they spend more money on films featuring white characters (54). They continue arguing that “throughout US history, fear and hysteria about “rampant and animalistic” non-white sexualities [...] have been used to justify both institutional and individual violence against non-white people”, thus, **othering** them by defining this one group against another (56). How a dominant culture “ascribes an undesirable trait (one shared by all humans) onto *one specific group of people*”, such as; animalistic sexualitis, overly sexualization, laziness, greed, and criminality, is also **othering** them (56). These very traits have often been denied as “white traits and projected by dominant white culture onto racial or ethnic Others” (56). Benshoff and Griffin state that people of color might sometimes “deny their racial or ethnical backgrounds”, and passing off as being white “in order to be accepted as white” (57). By doing so, their hope is to gain the same privilege and power in the American culture as white people do. Moreover, they state that “most popular film help maintain dominant cultural attitudes toward African Americans” (75) and in the 1930s and 1940s, Hollywood did nothing to “challenge the racist ideologies of the era” (80). African Americans were most often in supporting roles, playing overly simplified stereotypical characters.

According to Benshoff and Griffin, the Second World War “substantially upended the day-to-day life of almost every American citizen (39). Whilst most men entered military service, women “contributed to the war efforts by entering the home front workforce” (39). During this time, there was hardly any unemployment. However, “Americans could spend their paychecks on very little

due to war rationing”, benefitting the movie business (39- 40). Hollywood provided an escape from the war, depicting women as homemakers pursuing marriage and having children, thus, heightening further the male, heterosexual patriarchy enforced upon them by cultural standards. When the war ended, “many American citizens continued to fight for social causes”, such as “for African American civil rights” (40). The mass media, however, tried its best to convince women to return back home, telling them that “happiness and fulfillment could be found as a housewife and mother” (222). Soon after The Second World War, “America found itself in a **Cold War** of espionage with the Soviet Union, and began to fight communism” (40). The Hollywood industry got greatly affected by the ‘Red Scare’, resulting in further depression of minority groups, heightening of American cultural values which “stressed conformity to white patriarchal capitalist ideals, under the assumption that even discussing cultural differences or social inequality would be misconstrued as un-American” (41). In fact, “The 1950’s is often spoken about nostalgically as a time when people migrated to crime-free suburbs to raise perfect nuclear families” even though “underneath that façade lay ugly reminders of social inequality” where neighborhoods “were zoned to keep out blacks and/or Jews, women often chafed under the restrictions placed on them, and gay and lesbian people could be arrested and fired from their jobs for merely meeting in a bar” (41). The civil rights movement fought for equal rights for African Americans throughout the 1950’s and by the 1960’s other groups such as Native Americans, Hispanic, women, and homosexuals were protesting as well in order to gain their civil rights. These social changes took their toll on Hollywood as “Many young Americans, people of color, and women began to reject the stereotypes and simplistic formulas of Hollywood films” (42). During the 1970’s and 1980’s Hollywood studios hired a new generation of film makers in effort to re-invent Hollywood in order to regain popularity (43). The “conservative trends of the 1980s” resulted in antifeminism propaganda that got visualized in the media at the time, cinema being the most important media (Stover 3).

Benshoff and Griffin state that throughout the 1980s and 1990s Hollywood was captivated by the “black and white buddy film formula”, presenting “a black and white duo” defeating bad guys (88). By portraying both a black man and a white man in the leading roles the films were supposed to appeal to both black and white audiences (88). Producers in Hollywood were too afraid of a film not appealing to white audiences not to cast a white man in a leading role. Furthermore, the African American films that appeal to a broad range of audiences “are the films that Hollywood itself allows to be produced and distributed”, films that “mostly follow Hollywood formulas and rarely challenge or address the dominant structuring ideologies of white patriarchal capitalism”

(91). However, since the 1990s there has been “a tremendous surge of African American men writing and directing films in Hollywood” (91).

When looking back “from the early twenty-first century, one can see how greatly the cinematic images of African Americans have changed”, and “today’s films exhibit a much larger variety of African American characters and concerns” (92). However, “African American roles in Hollywood films still tend to be dictated by genre formulas and the expectations of white movie executives” (92). Throughout the history of Hollywood, a group that has met similar fate is Native Americans. Native Americans, the Other, have had to experience stereotypical images of themselves in Hollywood films, based on the ones forced upon them by the European Settlers who “wanted the riches of the land to themselves” (96). The very creation of these stereotypical images made it possible for the settlers to justify the way they treated the Native Americans. Until the 1970’s, Native Americans were simply referred to as ‘Indians’, a term that “drastically reduces and essentializes different groups of people to a single, simplified label” (96). The fact that Hollywood, with its Western films reinforced “stereotypical and ideological assumptions” of Native Americans either as bloodthirsty or noble savages, has had “devastating effects upon the cultural representations and subsequent understanding and treatment of Native Americans” (97). However, during the postwar era, in the 1970s, the first Hollywood films dedicated to the celebration of “Native American cultures” emerged, and even indicted white racism by trying “to rework the Western genre into a more pro-Indian formula” (104, 107). The “bloodthirsty savage stereotype was slowly fading away” during the 1980s and 1990s, being replaced by a “softer, gentler version of cultural stereotyping”, namely the noble savage (109).

Analysis

In the following paragraphs, the analysis of the chosen Disney movies, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to *Frozen* (2013), will be conducted. The analysis will be chronological, that is, it will start with the analysis of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* as it is the oldest movie, and end with the analysis of the newest one, *Frozen*. The analysis will start with the application of *Gender Theory*, and then continue with the application of the other two theories in the same order as presented in the theory section. The movies chosen can be seen as belonging to the same genre as they all combine adventure with romance and drama. In order to make the analysis more efficient, the princesses will be divided up into the following groups for the analysis:

The Disney Princesses from when Walt Disney was alive: *Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora*.

The Disney Princesses from after Walt Disney passed away: *Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, Pocahontas, Mulan, Tiana, Rapunzel, Merida, and Anna*.

In the analysis, the focus will be on the main character, that is, on the 12 princesses themselves. When it comes to *Gender Theory*, gender is merely a performance and thus, things such as bodily gestures and movements will be the main focus. In regards to both *Critical Race Theory*, as well as *Intersectionality*, the main focus will be on not only gender identity but also on racial and ethnic identity as well, along with different elements that could affect them.

The Disney Princesses from when Walt Disney was alive: *Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora*

As stated before, Walt Disney was very involved in the whole process behind the creation of all the animations released whilst he was alive. Thus, by dividing up the movies chosen for the project, one might be able to notice a difference between the ones released before and after his death in 1966. By doing so, one could see if or how Walt Disney himself might have influenced the making of the female heroines. Due to how similar they seem to be, the first three princesses will be analyzed all at once.

The three princesses are female, however, their sex does not define their gender identity and thus, the help of Butler's *Gender Theory* is needed to figure out their gender in order to be able to

perform a comparison to the other princess' gender identities. As stated before, one performs one's gender through bodily gestures, the stylization of the body, movements, and different enactments—namely gender acts. Thus, the focus will be on these elements when looking at and analyzing the princesses' characters.

The importance of physical beauty is established right at the very beginning of the three movies. In fact, the very first thing the audience gets to know about Snow White is that “Once upon a time there lived a lovely little princess named Snow White”, and that her evil stepmother “feared that someday Snow White’s beauty would surpass her own”, forcing her to dress in rags and work as a scullery maid (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 01:30). The fact that her stepmother, because of Snow White’s beauty, makes her dress in rags and work as a scullery maid further suggests that real princesses, or women, do not do so.

Cinderella’s stepmother is also “bitterly jealous of Cinderella’s charm and beauty”, resulting in her humiliating her and making her “become a servant in her own house” (*Cinderella* 00:02:26, 00:02:54). There does not seem to be any jealousy of Aurora’s beauty, however, the first gift she receives is the “gift of beauty”, “beauty rare”, hinting that it is the most important one (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:05:58). The next one she receives is “the gift of song”, making her into a great singer just as her forerunners, Snow White and Cinderella (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:06:40). Upon giving Aurora her curse, Maleficent states that “the princess shall indeed grow in grace and beauty, beloved by all who know her”, before pricking her finger before the sun sets on her 16th birthday (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:08:54). Moreover, Aurora gets named “Sleeping Beauty” as she falls to ‘eternal’ sleep (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:54:03). Thus, physical beauty is an important part of their gender identity as women.

The stylization of the body is also important in regards to signaling one’s gender. Just as Snow White and Aurora, Cinderella’s appearance whether she is dressed in rags or a ball-gown is impeccable even though she has just woken up. As she wakes up there is not a hair to be found out of place, her skin is flawless and her nightgown tied neatly around her neck with a bow, covering her so that only her hands, her head and feet are visible (*Cinderella* 00:03:20). She is not only seen sitting in front of a mirror combing her hair several times, but also using ordinary things such as a big soap bubble as a mirror whilst fixing her hair (*Cinderella* 00:26:58). All of the princesses seem to take great pride in their looks, using every opportunity they get to fix their appearance and tend to her hair. However, Cinderella’s stepsisters are not as lucky when it comes to their looks which comes apparent when the duke shivers and makes a face of disgust when noticing the stepsisters (*Cinderella* 01:05:07). Another example of body shaming comes from *Sleeping Beauty* where one

of the fairies states that she would like to turn Maleficent into a “fat old hop toad” (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:11:28). This reaction shows the reaction women might get from the society and how they might get punished when not fitting into the pre-given notion of what makes a woman attractive and thus, acceptable. Thus, the princesses’ gender identity seems to be enforced upon them by social sanctions and taboos in accordance with Butler’s *Gender Theory*.

Just as the duke in *Cinderella*, the dwarfs from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) act as the social audience in the movie and they seem to reinforce the importance of physical appearance and beauty. When they first lay an eye on Snow White as she sleeps in their beds they make remarks regarding her appearance: “She’s mighty purdy”, and “She’s beautiful, just like an angel” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 33:49, 33:51). Their immediate reaction is not to be scared or baffled by her presence, but to comment on her looks, signaling that they do not see her as a threat, which might be seen as having to do with either her biological sex or her gendered appearance which can be seen as being sexist.

However, it becomes evident that women are not the only ones having to deal with the pressures of fitting into the perfected physical mold of the gender assigned to them. When asked to perform for the dwarfs Snow White tells them a love story of how she and the prince met and fell instantly in love. The Dwarfs seem to be equally interested in the ease of falling in love as with the prince’s physical characteristics: “Was he strong or handsome?” and “Was he big and tall?” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 55:05). The fact that there has been no mentioning of physical strength or size in association with Snow White suggests that these traits might not be seen as being feminine. As she is the first Disney Princess, she can be seen as laying the lines for the princesses to come by guiding her successors how to not only stylize the body, but also how to act. The focus on beauty extends beyond death as becomes evident in the text that appears after Snow White has fallen into eternal sleep; “so beautiful, even in her death, that the dwarfs could not find it in their hearts to bury her” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 01:15:46).

Snow White’s high pitched soft voice filling the air is almost childlike and highlights how lovely, and perhaps feminine, and innocent she is. The two other princesses, do not have as high pitched voices but just as soft ones as Snow White’s voice is and all of them love to sing. Aurora’s voice is even described as “too beautiful to be real” (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:28:57). The three princesses only wear dresses, signaling that they are indeed acting the role of women as no men are seen wearing dresses. Moving gracefully around, holding her dress up as to prevent it from getting dirty whilst she kneels down to pick flowers, Snow White acts as a cultural sign, maintaining the

illusion of a lasting gendered self which her successors, such as Cinderella and Aurora, reenact (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 07:32). As an example, although dressed in rags, Cinderella is said to be able to “wear an air of queenly grace”, and remain “gentle and kind for with each dawn she found new hope that someday her dreams of happiness would come true” (*Cinderella* 00:00:29, 00:03:03). Thus, Cinderella’s performance and bodily gestures show signs of the same performative accomplishment as Snow White’s performance does.

Unlike *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *Cinderella* (1950) seems to focus even more on the princess’ gender performance, as is evident before the movie even begins as a choir sings: “Cinderella, you’re as lovely as your name”, adding “if you give your heart a chance it will lead you to the kingdom of romance. There you’ll see your dreams unfold” (*Cinderella* 00:00:29, 00:00:48). Like good little girls, Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora comply with the pressures of society, dreaming of a male love interest and his kingdom. Furthermore, Cinderella states the importance of having faith in one’s dreams as “someday your rainbow will come smiling” and that her stepmother and stepsisters “can’t order me to stop dreaming” (*Cinderella* 00:04:53, 00:05:44). The same thing gets mirrored in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) where dreams seem to be vitally important and the princess does not have to do anything other than wait for her prince as “true love’s kiss the spell shall break” (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:09:58). In fact, Aurora has already been promised to someone from the very day she was born. Thus, the princesses do not need to do anything other than wait for their dreams to come true, there is no need for them to take matters into their own hands, heightening their passiveness even further.

Just as Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora express a variety of emotions such as happiness and sadness, thus, establishing emotions as a part of womanhood. However, Cinderella is seen trying to temper down the mice’s emotions a couple of times such as when talking to two of the mice, „Now, now, now, calm down everybody“ (*Cinderella* 00:08:19). This is in accordance to how her stepmother tries to temper down her girls emotions telling them that „Above all, self-control” (*Cinderella* 00:28:39). Following in her forrunner’s footsteps, *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) signals the same thing which becomes evident when the three fairies cry and one of them stops, stating that “we’re acting like a lot of ninnies” (00:22:28). This might suggest that a display of too strong emotions was not proper at the time, at least not for women. Another example of how a certain gender identity is enforced upon members of a social group is when the mice find out that Cinderella is allowed to attend the ball if she, amongst other things, has something suitable to wear. When some of the male mice want to help with the sewing one of the female ones stops them,

telling them to “leave the sewing to the women” (*Cinderella* 00:32:30). This assigns the act of sewing to women, a cultural gender which helps with maintaining the illusion of what it means to be a ‘real woman’.

A clear example of the importance of appearance in regards to the one’s gender can be seen in *Cinderella* (1959). When dressed, and as she sits in front of a mirror tending her hair, the male mice reappear, crawling onto Cinderella’s make-up table in order to get her attention. Cinderella misunderstands them at first, thinking they needed a gown which makes one of the mice laugh as the other one yells “no, no, no” and exposes his bare chest underneath his coat (*Cinderella* 00:07:51). One could thus conclude that it is apparently not custom for males to wear dresses, and that it is fine for males to walk around bare-chested but not for females, setting clear lines for how to stylize the body based on one’s gender.

Snow White, just as Aurora, shuns away from too much contact with the opposite sex. When meeting the prince for the very first time, Snow White’s bodily gestures suggest that she does not want him to come any closer and she even ends up running away and hiding inside the castle (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 00:05:27). Aurora behaves similarly when she meets the prince for the very first time. She tries to flee away repeatedly and even seems to be scared at first as he is a stranger (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:31:11). This might hint at how innocent and pure both Snow White and Aurora are. However, in Snow White’s case it could also result from her not wanting him to come any closer solely based on her appearance. As the prince walks over to Cinderella at the ball, and grabs her hand, Cinderella obeys and dances with him (00:50:27).

Standing near the balcony, Snow White is able to hear the prince as he sings to her, making her cross her arms over her chest almost as if hugging herself, leaning up against a wall, and smiling (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 00:05:56). A dove sits on Snow White’s finger and she sends it off with a kiss. At this point, it is almost as if the dove represents Snow White herself as it sits on the prince’s finger, blushes whilst looking away before kissing him and taking off, hinting that Snow White is shy and not used to so much attention from the opposite sex (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 06:34). As Cinderella gets undressed she steps behind a folding screen and a female mouse sends all the male mice away, “go on now, shoo” (*Cinderella* 00:06:23). Throughout the movie, Cinderella is seen covering herself just as Snow White did in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). Even Cinderella’s nightgown covers her frame almost completely. This sheds a light on the fact that Cinderella is not a little girl anymore and that it is not proper for her to be seen by the opposite sex.

Snow White, as well as Cinderella and Aurora, does no harm nor does she instigate trouble, or take part in physical conflicts, not even when the huntsman takes his dagger out in order to kill her (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 00:08:50). Even though she might have to fight for her life her bodily gesture are not aggressive. She merely screams and crosses her hands in front of her face. She does not act in self-defense, thus, performing the role of a damsel-in-distress, the defenseless victim, perfectly. She is unable to take care of or defend herself, making screaming and fleeing into her only reactions. Finally, scared out of her mind, Snow White gives up and falls down to the ground crying, framing further her lack of bravery (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 10:19). Examples of defenselessness can also be found in *Cinderella*, such as when the stepsisters attack her, ripping her dress into pieces. Instead of fighting them Cinderella is passive, standing still until upon their departure where she runs out to the yard crying (*Cinderella* 00:42:03). Similarly, instead of acting up, Aurora runs up to her room crying as the fairies tell her she can't keep her promise to the boy she met in the woods (*Cinderella* 00:39:18).

It is almost as if the society expects the princesses to be this way: simple, innocent, and defenseless. An example of that can be seen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) when the evil stepmother, who has disguised herself, finds Snow White, asking her if she is alone as if knowing that she is not only defenseless, but that she is also unable to make good decisions on her own (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 01:07:11). The fact that Snow White does not doubt the stepmother's lie shows the audience how innocent, naïve and even gullible she is. Thus, Snow White is not to be left alone and needs a rescuer, a prince to save her from not only herself but from others as well. The plan for the rescue is clear, find her, take her to the castle and then marry her. When the prince wakes her up from her eternal sleep with merely a kiss, as prince Philip does in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), Snow White's first reaction is to smile and reach her hand to him (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 01:18:02). It is as if the poisonous apple does not affect her anymore as there does not seem to be any repercussions such as vomiting. Without a hesitation, without questioning, and without saying a single word, Snow White gives this male figure, a stranger, the control and lets him take her up, put her on a horse and ride away from the dwarfs and the forest animals she had befriended. This could be seen as being another example of how innocent Snow White is, naïve, and gullible. All three can be seen as being submissive, however, there seems to be a spark of rebel insider Cinderella as she protests not being allowed to go to the ball, stating that "Every alleigeable maiden is to attend" and that she is after all "still a member of the family"

(*Cinderella* 00:29:07, 00:29:39). By doing so, she is able to get a promise from her stepmother that she might allow her to attend the ball.

Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora are all depicted as being both caring and nurturing. As an example of that is when Snow White notices a small baby bird in distress, helping it to calm down and find its parents (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 07:53). The role of women as not only mothers but also homemakers is presented from the very time Snow White sets food inside the cottage, commenting that “You’d think their mother would”, when noticing how filthy the house was (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 16:42). After waking up, Snow White makes a plea to the dwarfs to let her stay, stating that she will “keep the house” for them and “wash and sew and sweep and cook” and even bake them Gooseberry pie (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 37:19). Finally when mentioning the pie the dwarfs cheer “Gooseberry pie? Hooray! She stays!”, as if her sole worth is tied to domestic work and thus, diminishing her worth as a human being (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 37:34). The fact that she thinks she has to clean the house to be able to stay with them suggests that her self-worth, and thus, her gender identity, is connected to doing housework and that she feels as if it is the only thing she has to offer (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 16:45).

Snow White mothers the dwarfs, commanding them amongst other things to wash their hands, highlighting the importance of cleanliness, and controlling their bedtime to which they comply (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 39:54). The reason for how compliant the dwarfs are might be due to how well Snow White acts the gendered role assigned to her by the society at the time, as well as how well her gendered appearance fits to that image. However, one dwarf does not seem to dwell on her beauty; “Angel, hah! She’s a female! And all females is poison! They’re full of wicked wiles (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 33:56). This is a generalizing remark, confusing her sex with her gender which is not an uncommon thing to do, creating the illusion that one’s gender is equal to one’s sex and that her actions relate to a biological factor instead of being a performance of a gender that has been assigned to her by society (Butler 522).

Motherhood seems to be even more prominent in *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) than in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), even though it seems to be a big part of all of the princesses’ identities. However, Aurora is not seen mothering anyone herself but she is mothered by the three fairies whilst in hiding and upon her return, her father and soon to be father-in-law talk about grandchildren. Thus, Aurora will become a mother soon after marrying the prince. Cinderella act as a mother figure to the mice as well as her dog, which becomes evident such as when she asks one of the mice to see to that the new mouse “keeps out of trouble [...] and don’t

forget to warn him about the cat” (*Cinderella* 00:09:17). In fact, the importance of motherhood is highlighted at the very beginning of the film as the narrator states that although Cinderella’s father “was a kind and devoted father and gave his beloved child every luxury and comfort, still he felt she needed a mother’s care so he married again” (*Cinderella* 00:02:02). Her father might have felt pressure from the society at the time, leading him to believe that he was not good enough, believing that all children should have a mother figure. Thus, he might have rushed into getting married, focusing more at the fact that his new wife came from a good family and had two daughters the same age as Cinderella, than on how motherly she really was (*Cinderella* 00:02:11). Perhaps, her father might have anticipated, due to the dominant ideology at the time, that she would be a warm and loving parent solely based on her gender. Even the king himself, just as the kings in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), seems to be obsessed with getting grandchildren and finding a suitable mother for his son’s future children: “There must at least be one who’d make a suitable mother”, only changing it to “suitable wife” when his employee points out that his son could hear him (*Cinderella* 00:49:23, 00:49:30). Highlighting the importance of love, one might argue that because Cinderella’s father did not marry for love it ended badly as he married a woman who did not reveal her true self until after his death where she became mean to Cinderella, ruining her father’s good intentions.

In fact, the emphasis on the importance of romance is apparent throughout *Cinderella* (1950). Even the kingdom itself is described as being: “Peaceful, prosperous and rich in romance and tradition” (*Cinderella* 00:01:31). Even though Aurora’s marriage has been arranged for her, which can be seen as being very un-romantic, her father-in-law to be states that: “Our children are bound to fall in love with each other” as if both love and romance would be a sure thing (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:43:47). As soon as the prince lays eyes on Cinderella he is captivated by her looks and walks over to her, ending with both of them singing simultaneously: “so this is the miracle that I’ve been dreaming of” (*Cinderella* 00:53:05). Thus, they have fallen instantly in love without knowing a single thing about one another, yet, the prince is “determined to marry her”, sending out not only his knights to find her but other employees as well (*Cinderella* 00:59:11). The king states that the one fitting the shoe is to be brought to him, making Cinderella into a property, a price (*Cinderella* 00:59:52). This might be seen as being similar to Aurora’s situation where her marriage has been arranged from the day she was born. Thus, the maidens’ opinions, longings, and dreams do not matter to them. The princesses have to be found and brought in to become a breeding-tool for their future grandchildren, as well as a wife for their sons. Thus, both Aurora and Cinderella have in a

way, just as Snow White, been dismissed and thus discriminated against based on their biological sex.

Romance is also important to Snow White, which states that it was easy for her to fall in love with the prince, that he is the only one for her, and that she is convinced that he will find her and take her to his castle where they live “happily forever” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 55:20). According to her, all her dreams would come true if they would get married, her bodily gesture suggesting that she is praying and longing for this to be true (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* 55:17). This suggests that Snow White’s happiness is not something she is able to create on her own. She relies on her prince charming to rescue her in order to find true everlasting happiness and so do the two other princesses.

When looking at Snow White, Cinderella, as well as Aurora one notices how fixed and non-reflexive their identities seem to be and how firmly they rely on traditional values regarding femininity and family dynamics where women take care of the housework and children, or dwarfs and animals, whilst the man plays the prince charming on a white horse. All of the three princesses embody the perfected image of the damsel in distress who relies on everybody else to save her. Snow White is not a woman of many words or complex feelings, and the same can be said about Cinderella, as well as Aurora although they have a bit more to say. The fact that males comment on and desire them for their looks, as well as the fact that their only worth seems to be housework and nurturing, portrays an image of women that conform to the discrimination and oppression society puts on them. Their acceptance seems to lie in how well they perform the stereotypical feminine role of ‘woman’, as well as physical attractiveness, making it unacceptable and unthinkable to step outside the role. Thus, one could say that they get dismissed in a way and discriminated against based on their biological sex.

Whiteness seems to be appraised throughout all of the three movies, with everything from the princesses’ extremely pale complexion, to the whiteness of the castles, horses, carrot and Cinderella’s wedding dress. Even Snow White’s name favors the color white. When the narrator in *Cinderella* (1950) mentions that „And yet through it all Cinderella remained ever gentle and kind “, the sun seems to come up, brightening the sky and the whole color scheme as if to signal that hope and whiteness go together (*Cinderella* 00:03:03). The three princesses possess qualities that are often associated with whiteness, as stated in the theory section, such as their goodness, and over the top innocence where they are so innocent that they are, as stated before, both naïve and gullible.

However, when something sad or dangerous happens in all three movies, the color scheme changes into darker colors such as when Cinderella enters her stepmother's bedroom as she gets scolded (*Cinderella* 00:22:18), as well as when the stepmother finds out who the prince's dance partner was at the ball where her whole face turns almost black (*Cinderella* 01:02:48). The knights that are sent to look for Cinderella are also dressed in black capes, with red lining inside, and large black hoodies hiding their faces. Their horses are all black and the evil stepmother in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) is also dressed in black. The evil cat, Lucifer, is also black. The embodiment of all evil, Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), is also dressed in black, has a black pet raven and an army of minions that are black. In fact, darkness seems to follow her wherever she goes. Moreover, the fairies state that she does not know anything "about love, kindness or the joy of helping others" (*Sleeping Beauty* 00:12:58). Thus, one could come to the conclusion that blackness is something to fear, something sad, bad, unloving, and dangerous, or even plain fat, evil and lazy.

The Disney Princesses from after Walt Disney passed away

As stated in both the introduction, as well as the theory section, the revival of The Disney Princess resulted in a wave of new princesses eager to follow in their predecessors' light footsteps. The movies will be analyzed in accordance to their year of release, and the theories will be applied in the same order as in the analysis of the first three movies.

The Little Mermaid (1989). At first glance, physical beauty does not seem to be as important in *The Little Mermaid* as in the movies released before Disney's death. The first thing the audience gets to know about Ariel has nothing to do with her physical appearance but her voice. Her voice is, amongst other things, said to be "the most beautiful voice", sounding "like a bell" (00:04:19, 00:05:20). Ariel's voice is indeed soft and feminine in a sense that it is not a deep pitched voice like Ursula's, however, it is not as soft nor as high pitched as her forerunner's voices although the importance of singing is still prominent. After seeing Ariel for the first time, the prince tells his friend that he was rescued by a singing girl and that she had a beautiful voice, not mentioning her physical appearance at all (00:25:50).

However, one should not believe that physical beauty, and the stylization of the body, is not important when it comes to Ariel as even Ursula, her 'enemy', describes her as being "pretty"

(00:11:30). Even the prince is described as “very handsome” by Ariel which later states that “he’s so beautiful”, revealing the importance of appearances to the opposite sex as well (00:20:29). In fact, Ariel’s makeup, whether she is underwater, on the surface of the sea or on land is perfect, and her hair does not become ‘messy’ until after she becomes human. She does, however, not seem to spend too much time on her look until after she has saved and been in close contact with the prince for the first time. In fact, she is first seen looking into a mirror and spending time fixing her appearance in the first underwater-scene after the rescue where she even puts a flower in her hair. Her sisters are quick to conclude that this sudden change in behavior has to do with love, revealing how certain behaviors can be interpreted based on knowledge regarding repeated gender acts (00:27:53). Moreover, having to find a way to break the spell without her voice, Ariel is left with few other options than to work on her physical appearance, resulting in her become an object of desire as she tries to attract the prince’s gaze through repeating gender acts associated with ‘women’.

The scene where Ariel is lying on a cliff near the coast, after saving the prince, and singing about her determination of realizing her dreams, could be seen as being rather revealing, and perhaps even sexual in a way. Her shell clad bosom gets highlighted not only by the way she lays on the cliff, pressing her hands down and lifting the body, but by the climax of a large wave, and the wind fiddling with her hair (00:26:17). Instead of covering herself up, such as Snow White and Cinderella, or hide herself such as Aurora, Ariel seems to embrace her sexuality and presents it proudly. After all, she is 16 years old and “not a child anymore” (00:12:51). Thus, her body has become her prop, signaling her femininity as a ‘woman’.

The importance of physical beauty, and of body language or gender acts, is further heightened in Ursula’s song where she is trying to convince Ariel to give up her voice: “You’ll have your looks! Your pretty face! And don’t underestimate the importance of body language! Ha!” (00:42:52). Moreover, she shows Ariel how to wiggle her hips in a rather sensual manner.

The men up there don't like a lot of blabber
 They think a girl who gossips is a bore
 Yes, on land it's much preferred
 For ladies not to say a word
 And after all, dear, what is idle prattle for?
 Come on, they're not all that impressed with conversation

True gentlemen avoid it when they can
 But they dote and swoon and fawn
 On a lady who's withdrawn
 It's she who holds her tongue who gets her man. (*The Little Mermaid*
 00:43:02).

One could say that Ursula represents a traditional society with its outdated gender acts and historical conventions as she is convinced that women do not need a voice, and having one will get them into more trouble than simply keeping their mouths shut. As Ariel is concerned about losing such an important part of her, her voice, along with the fact that there seems to be more focus on her voice throughout the film than on her beauty, one could conclude that Ursula does not represent the society at the time of the movie. Thus, in accordance to Butler's *Gender Theory*, gender is not a stable identity but an evolving. In fact, one could see Ariel as adding to it by hesitating becoming voiceless. Moreover, this also sheds a light on how gender performance is individual. How the society might have changed, and influenced the changes to gender, can be seen when looking at one of Ariel's lyrics: "Betcha on land they understand, bet they don't reprimand their daughters. Bright young women- sick of swimming, ready to stand [...] and ready to know what the people know. Ask'em my questions and get some answers" (00:16:46).

In fact, Ariel seems to be an adventurous personality, something her forerunners were not, as she is not bothered by other people nor the norms of society. She throws caution to the wind, likes to explore, challenges boundaries and restrictions and takes risks in order to reach her goals and she seems to live in the present. Thus, Ariel can be said to be fearless as well as curious, rebellious, careless and an instigator of trouble who needs, according to her father, constant supervision to keep her out of trouble (00:13:40). Her individuality is seen as being troublesome. The king and his closest servant, Sebastian, seem to rationalize Ariel's behavior based on the fact that she is "a headstrong teenager", not making a connection to her sex or gender (00:13:14, 00:14:01). Thus, one could say that Ariel is not being dismissed or discriminated against based on her gender.

Ariel seems to be both confident as well as determined to reach her goals and realize her dream of being a part of the human world as she sings "I don't know when, I don't know how, but I know something is starting right now. Watch and you'll see, someday I'll be part of your world" (00:26:17). However, her adventurousness, fearlessness, curiosity and her rebellious spirit get her

into trouble as Ursula uses those qualities against her, making them into a weakness instead as she plots against “King Triton’s headstrong lovesick girl” (00:27:09).

Ariel is not a damsel in distress in the same way as her forerunners as she ends up saving the prince’s life, as well as her friend’s life as they flee away from a shark attack. Moreover, Ariel does participate in physical altercations, attacking Ursula twice (01:11:47, 01:12:16). Thus, although Ariel flees the shark, and occasionally burst into tears, she does stand up for herself as well as her family and friends, something her forerunners did not. Ariel shows a variety of emotions, including happiness and sorrow. However, unlike her forerunners, Ariel is capable of showing anger as well such as when her friends try to stop her from going to see Ursula. As it was the crab who told her father about her love interest which lead to him destroying her collection, Ariel turns her head saying “Why don’t you go tell my father. You are good at that!”, as she swims away (00:38:09).

Ariel admits that she is not happy with her life in the ocean and although she might be perceived as “a girl who has everything”, she wants more (00:15:40). In fact, she seems convinced that people on land will understand her better and that they will not “reprimand their daughters”, stating that they are “bright young women” that are “sick of swimming”, and ready to “stand [...] and ready to know what people know” (00:16:46). Thus, it seems that females are not seen as merely physical entities, but that they can also be bright. The lyrics also suggest that females have had enough of merely existing, that they are ready to stand on their own two feet and that they want to learn.

Ariel is not shown as a motherly figure such as Snow White and Cinderella. Her best friends are animals, as for the other princesses, but the animals seem to be more like equals to her than someone she would mother. In fact, Ariel is willing to sacrifice her own family, that is, being with her father and sisters, to become human and find true love (00:42:04). Thus, there does not seem to be much emphasis on neither motherhood nor family bonds. However, her friends as well as her father do sacrifice a lot for Ariel. Her father even signs a contract with Ursula where he sacrifices himself. Ariel does indeed save the prince, and her friend, and she does fight Ursula as well for them, however, it does not take away from the fact that she was willing to sacrifice them to become human.

Marriage does not seem to be of importance to Ariel’s father at least not until after he realizes that Ariel is in love, asking; “who could that lucky merman be?” (00:32:29). However, when he finds out that his daughter is in love with a human he becomes furious (00:34:36). This

might seem as a racial discrimination as her father seems to assign certain traits to all of human kind, thus, discriminating against the prince. Ariel's dreams revolve around becoming a human and learning human ways, not of meeting a prince and falling in love. It is first after she has seen the prince for the first time she falls instantly in love and starts dreaming of her prince charming and marriage. The prince however seems to feel the pressure of marriage which becomes evident when Grimsby says that he had hoped that the statue he gave the prince for a birthday present would have been a wedding present (00:21:19). The prince replies "Come on Grim don't start. Look you're not still sore because I didn't fall for the princess of Glauerhaven, are you?" (00:21:20) to which Grimsby replies that it "isn't me alone. The entire kingdom wants to see you happily settled down with the right girl" (00:21:30). Building on the same concept of 'the one and only' as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), the prince states that "she's out there somewhere. I just, I just haven't found her yet" (00:21:37). The prince seems to not only believe there is only one out there for him, but that he will fall instantly in love: "it'll just bam, hit me like lighting" (00:21:52). When Ariel sees the prince for the first time it is love at first sight, however, the prince only seems to remember her voice. Thus, when meeting her for the second time and as Ariel is unable to speak, the prince does not realize that the voice belongs to her which could presumably mean that he did not fall instantly in love with Ariel himself. It is almost as if he is more in love with her voice than anything else.

Whiteness does seem to be celebrated throughout *The Little Mermaid* (1989) with everything from the white complexion of both the merfolk race, as well as the human race, to the palaces of both Ariel and the human prince. In fact, both palaces are so white that they stand out as if not fitting into their surroundings. The celebration of whiteness is also evident when looking at King Triton's white beard. One could even see the king as being the embodiment of patriarchal authority. Whenever something good happens, the colors are bright and when something bad or sad happens, the opposite thing happens with dark color scheme. Ursula's dress is black and she has a grey complexion. She lives in a black 'palace', surrounded by darkness. Her two servants are also black. Ursula also states how she has been banished and exiled, and at one point she is called both a demon as well as a monster which might send the message that blackness, banishment, as well as exile and evilness go together (00:11:12, 00:38:09).

The Beauty and the Beast (1991). In accordance with Butler's *Gender Theory*, the prince's reactions to the old beggar women can be seen as a clear example of how the social audience might

punish someone who does not fit into the ideal beauty standards set by society. In fact, the prince is said to have had an extreme reaction to her “haggard appearance” as he was “repulsed” by it, turning her away (00:01:48). However, the narrator states that one should try to find a way to look past physical appearance as they can be deceiving “for beauty is found within”, revealing how the society might be evolving (00:01:50). The old lady then turned into a “beautiful enchantress”, and as there was “no love in his heart”, she punished him by turning him “into a hideous beast” (00:02:16). The prince felt shame for his looks and concealed himself, mirroring how a person not fitting the beauty standards might react. The message is clear, even though beauty is supposed to come from within, people still get judged based on their physical characteristics. This is further reinforced after Belle starts living at the castle. Even though she has promised to spend eternity there, the Beast does not seem too convinced that he will be able to get her to love him and break the spell as “she is so beautiful and I’m so, well look at me” (00:33:46). However, the Beast spends both time and effort trying to make himself more presentable in order to “help her to see past all that” (00:34:01).

Even Belle’s name means ‘beauty’ which indicates how important physical beauty is. In fact, her looks are said to “have no parallel”, and even children state that she is pretty (00:06:18, 00:32:15). Belle has even been chosen as a future wife by Gaston, an overly exaggerated stereotypical image of a male, who sees her as being “the most beautiful girl in town”, which makes her “the best” (00:07:00, 00:07:03). Gaston even states that as they are equally beautiful, they must be compatible and that he fell for her the moment he saw her, saying that “she’s gorgeous” (00:07:09).

Singing as Belle strolls by, the townspeople state that “there goes a girl who’s strange but special [...] it’s a pity and a sin she doesn’t quite fit in. But she really is a funny girl, a beautiful but a funny girl” (00:07:57). Thus, it is as if her ‘ill-fitting’ personality takes away from her beauty in their minds, leading to them discriminating against her. It can therefore be said that due to the fact that she does not fit all the characteristics of how a ‘woman’ should act, she has become a ‘lesser woman’, damage goods. However, Gaston does not see that as being a hindering as he seems to be convinced that he will be able to get her to stop reading, convincing her she needs to fit in, as “the whole town’s talking about it. It’s not right for a woman to read. Soon she starts getting ideas and thinking” (00:08:36). Thus, Belle is presented as being intellectual, and knowledge seeking, a trait that does not seem to fit with the gender identity the society wants to enforce on her.

Furthermore, Gaston reveals how women are looked down upon and discriminated against, when he asks Belle how she can read her book as “there’s no pictures” to which Belle replies: “some people use their imagination” (00:08:31). Belle, however, sees Gaston as being “positively primeval”, “rude and conceited”, as well as “boorish” and “brainless” (00:08:52, 00:10:35, 00:19:59). At one point Gaston tries to marry Belle, having everything ready right outside her door, convinced that “this is her lucky day”, seeing the proposal itself as merely a formality (00:17:41). Gaston tries to paint a picture of how their life together would be, revealing a mindset filled with historical conventions where women are submissive homemakers and mothers (00:18:40). In fact, Belle dismisses him several times, revealing how she is not afraid to stand up for herself and take a stand against historical conventions and outside pressure. Belle even defends her father when Gaston and his friend make fun of him (00:09:16). However, even though the townspeople do not believe so, Belle is aware of the fact that she does not fit in, stating that there is no one she can talk to and that she wants more than “this provincial life”, that she wants “adventure” and someone who understands her, and “so much more than they’ve got planned” (00:10:25, 00:20:16). Due to the situation, one could state that Belle faces both discrimination, as well as oppression, from the townspeople based on her gender and perhaps intellectuality, rendering her experience intersectionality.

Belle is bravely embarks on a journey to save her father even though she looks a bit scared (00:21:11). In fact, Belle saves him again later in the movie (01:01:13). As she meets the Beast for the first time, Belle is scared which can be seen through her body language where she, amongst other things, leans away from it. However, she has enough courage to walk up to it and offer to take her father’s place, standing bravely in the beam of light (00:24:24). She is also brave enough to refuse to come to dinner on the first night even though the Beast almost breaks down her door as it yells in rage. However, even though she possesses bravery and courage, Belle does not participate in physical conflict, cause harm or trouble, and chooses rather to cry and/or flee as Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora do.

At the beginning of the movie, the prince is said to be not only spoiled, but selfish, and unkind which is everything Belle is not (00:01:20). From the very first moment, Belle exemplifies the embodiment of all ladylike from the way she walks and talks, to the way she dresses and tends to her appearance. She has perfected her gender performance, performing a pre-established role of ‘woman’, with everything from the way she bows to her civilized eating habits (00:04:18, 00:54:07). The Beast’s actions, and in fact his very existence, seems to heighten Belle’s gender

performance even more. However, even though Belle's performance can be seen as being highly womanlike, the fact that she seems to spend majority of her time reading, and not socializing, makes the townspeople see her as being strange (00:04:34), funny (00:04:43), a puzzle, so peculiar they are not sure if she is feeling well (00:05:32), odd and different from the rest of the society (00:06:25).

As she sits down by the fountain to read with her legs crossed, and again as she lies on a chair at home whilst reading, Belle reminds more of a young innocent girl than a woman (00:05:50). Belle is seen tending to her appearance throughout the movie, focusing mostly on her hair and dresses. In fact, Belle's stylization of her body makes her wear only dresses, and the wardrobe at the palace dresses her in nothing else, hinting that dresses signal that one is a 'woman'. The difference between how the genders dress becomes clear as the townspeople attach the palace. The wardrobe manages to captivate a man and as he manages to escape he is seen wearing a wig, jewelry, gloves, a bra, skirt, pink undergarment, and high heels. Moreover, he is seen screaming in horror as he realizes how he is dressed, leading to him running away, signaling that men do not wear these types of clothing (01:10:47). Belle has not forgotten the importance of having a good voice, and sings proudly at every chance she gets. Her voice is similar to Ariel's voice in regards to both depth and softness.

Belle is not afraid of male company, that is, of coming into contact with the opposite sex. She is curious which becomes evident when she goes on to explore the West wing even though the Beast has forbidden her from doing so. As stated before, Belle is able to stand up for herself and for her father as well. However, one could see her as being rather simple and innocent nonetheless and defenseless as well. She is not even able to defend herself when attacked by wolves as she, as stated before, does not take part in physical conflict (00:48:21). Even a child has to save her at one point (01:09:56). Thus, she plays the same 'damsel in distress' as her forerunners.

Belle cares for her father and she also cares for the animals. She even ends up caring for the Beast after it saves her, cleaning its wounds (00:48:54). Thus, Belle can be seen as being both caring and nurturing. She also helps the Beast becoming more 'humanlike' in behavior and she cheers for her dad and mothers him in a way. Thus, one could say she is motherly, however, not to the same degree as Snow White and Cinderella. One could look at Belle and the Beast and see their relationship as being an abusive one, at least at first. The Beast has a hard time controlling its temper which scares Belle and even saddens her at times. However, as she has nowhere to go, and as the Beast is trying to gain control of its temper, Belle is able to instigate a change in him,

resulting in her seeing him differently and eventually falling in love with him (00:54:46, 00:55:29). Thus, the audience could get the idea that anyone could be made into ‘prince charming’ as Belle was able to change a Beast into one. Thus, leaving an abusive boyfriend or husband is not necessarily the only way to go as they could be civilized with time and nurture, restoring old time family values.

In *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), romance is the key to everything. Romance will not only break the spell, setting the prince free along with his staff, but it will also give Belle everything she ever wanted. In order to break the spell, the prince had to learn to love another and earn her love back by the time the last rose petal fell (00:02:47). Even Belle’s favorite book is “about a girl meeting prince charming, nor realizing he is a prince” at first as he is disguised (00:05:50). The book reveals how the medium afflicts its pre given notions regarding love, upon the reader by presenting things such as heterosexuality as the norm. However, neither the Beast nor Belle fall instantly in love with one another. Their love happens gradually as they get to know one another. Belle even states that she did not think she could fall in love with him at first, revealing how much her book affects her ideas regarding love, as he is “no prince charming” (00:55:51).

In accordance with *Critical Race Theory*, whiteness seems to be favored. As with the other four movies, everything good and happy is bathed in light and bright color scheme and the princess’ complexion is almost inhumanly white. The first glimpse of the castle presents it as an extremely white building (00:01:09). However, after the prince, along with his staff and castle, have been put under a spell the color scheme darkens. The castle fills with shadows and turning all the white angel like statues into dark scary looking ones and some even becoming gargoyles. However, in the next scene, the audience gets to see the extremely bright cottage, with its bright color scheme. Before the Beast starts to change into a kind and loving creature, darkness and shadows seems to follow it wherever it goes, followed by yet another scene presenting the opposite- the cottage (00:16:35). As to highlight the fact that Gaston is no ‘prince charming on a white horse’, his horse is black. How Disney uses whiteness and contrasts it to blackness becomes even more prominent as Belle and the Beast kiss for the first time. The darkness and shadows disappear and the gargoyles change back. The whole color scheme becomes bright and the scene is filled with light.

Aladdin (1992). This movie is the only one chosen where the main protagonist is not the Disney princess. The movie, which is named after the male figure, focuses on Aladdin. However, Jasmine is a part of the Disney princess concept and thus, even though she is not the hero she will be

included in the analysis as well. Moreover, *Aladdin* is the first movie based on non-European characters.

The importance of physical beauty becomes evident when looking at Jasmine's perfect appearance. Her long black locks in a perfect hairdo, big eyes, plumed lips, perfect makeup, extremely thin waist, round buttocks, and big bosom signal unattainable beauty standards. However, her beauty is only mentioned a few times, such as where Aladdin says that she is "beautiful", and she is only seen sitting in front of a mirror, tending to her appearance once (00:43:21, 01:01:38). Thus, it can be said that it is mostly implied through her overly gendered appearance and revealing outfits. However, before stating that she is beautiful, Aladdin states that "she's smart...fun", as if the Disney Company is trying to mask the fact that her biggest quality seems to be her beauty (00:43:16). In fact, it is stated at the beginning of the movie that "it is not what is outside but what is inside that matters" (00:02:23). However, the audience does not get to know much about Jasmine and what she is capable of but they get to see how she uses her beauty and sex-appeal to her advantages. An example of that is when she seduces Jafar in order for Aladdin to sneak into the palace to free her and her father (01:13:15). In fact, it is as if beauty and power go together as becomes evident when Jafar states that "A beautiful desert bloom" such as Jasmine, "should be on the arm of the most powerful man in the world" (01:12:28). As they fly into the sunset, happily ever after, Aladdin is wearing his white prince-gear again. Jasmine however, is wearing the same outfit but gained a blue see through cape as a precaution so that the viewer does not miss one second of her sexuality. With her gracious movements, and well trained, soft, singing voice, and an American accent, Jasmine performs her gendered self, a woman, effortlessly.

Jasmine longs for freedom of choice and even argues with both her father and Jafar, however, instead of fighting for her cause she merely runs away. The action of 'fleeing' is in accordance with all of the previous princesses' reactions to similar situations just as running away, crying, which she is seen doing several times. As has been stated before, Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora all covered themselves up as much as they could, and the same can be said for Belle as well. Ariel, being a mermaid, can be excused from revealing herself too much due to her living situation. However, once on land, Ariel covers herself up in clothes 'appropriate' for a woman at the time and of her status. Several different elements, such as the mentioning of "Allah", hint that Jasmine lives in a Muslim Arabic country (00:04:07). However, she wears clothing reminding more of a belly-dancer outfit than of something a princess would wear, let alone a woman living in a Muslim country at the time of the narration. Her belly-dancer attire is highly revealing and

highlights how comfortable she must be with her sexuality or simply that she is not aware of it. As Jasmine is captured and shackled by Jafar, her outfit merely changes color from blue to fiery red, a color that the audience might associate with sexual passion, presenting her as an object of desire. Thus, Jasmine's appearance does not match her innocent, childlike persona. One could argue that Jasmine has been 'othered' in the sense that she has been overly sexualized, a trait that has often been associated with people with other skin-color than white as stated in the theory chapter.

Although living in a Muslim Arabic country, Jasmine spends the majority of her time alone in the company of males. In fact, there are very few female characters presented in the movie. Jasmine is not afraid to be in close contact to the opposite sex, such as when Aladdin rescues her, which is similar to Belle. However, unlike Belle, she seems to get a bit shy but her shyness is short lived as she looks as if she is about to fall in love (00:19:29). The previous princesses all shunned away from getting too close to males until after they fell in love.

Jasmine is simple and defenseless, her actions revealing an innocent persona even though her physical portrayal of her gendered self shows the opposite. She is almost childlike, a damsel-in-distress needing and longing for the right man to rescue her. She gets freedom to marry anyone she likes but that is as far as her freedom goes. She still has to marry and is not free to do whatever she wants or be whatever she wants. Thus, she is still dependent on men, and just as trapped as her forerunners, waiting for a man to rescue her. At the end, she even chooses a husband that has a track record of being a liar and a deceiver, one that lied to her repeatedly about who he was in order to gain her love and hand in marriage. Due to this, one could see her as being naïve, even gullible, and simply giving her trust away to anyone who promises to take her to see a "whole new world" (00:55:50).

Just as Ariel, Jasmine is willing to sacrifice her relationship with not only her father, but with her closest friend, to try to reach her goal. However, once she has escaped, she finds herself in a strange world with unknown rules. Thus, she accidentally steals a fruit which leads to her getting into trouble. However, instead of saving herself by revealing her identity, Jasmine has to be saved by a male figure- Aladdin. In fact, Aladdin does all the talking and Jasmine merely plays along. From the moment he laid eyes on her, Aladdin was captivated; "Wow" (00:26:42). However, once Aladdin gets captured, Jasmine physically attacks one of the guards in an attempt to save him. When she is not successful, due to her physical weakness, Jasmine reveals her identity but gets overruled by Jafar's orders, revealing how completely powerless she is (00:22:26). Eventually, Jasmine returns to the palace making her 'great escape' an unsuccessful one. Another thing

revealing how defenseless, and innocent Jasmine is, is the fact that she has never done a thing on her own, “had real friends”, or “been outside the palace walls” (00:12:57). Thus, Jasmine does not know how the world outside the palace walls functions, nor is she capable of surviving there on her own.

Jasmine is seen as being both caring and nurturing, especially when it comes to animals. However, there does not seem to be any sight of a mothering side of her. By law, Jasmine has to get married to a prince before her birthday. However, she does not want to be “forced into this” and states that if she will marry, she wants “it to be for love” (00:12:34). When her father reminds her of the fact that she is a princess she replies, “Then maybe I don’t want to be a princess” (00:13:13). However, she has never been anything else and has been living a very isolated existence, thus, it would most likely be difficult for her to be anything else. Her upbringing has clipped her wings. As one of her wooers strolls through the palace after receiving a rejection from the princess, he wishes her father “good luck marrying *her* off”, revealing the true value of Jasmine as a commodity, and a key to the sultan’s power (00:11:40). Her father is baffled as he mumbles to himself: “I don’t know where she gets it from. Her mother wasn’t nearly so picky”, revealing how historical conventions have shaped the fate of princesses for generations (00:13:36). It also reveals how the act of marrying a prince is more important than choosing one wisely. However, in another scene, the sultan is afraid to choose a husband for his daughter in case she would not approve of him, revealing that Jasmine controls at least a part of her destiny (00: 45:29). Moreover, the importance of true love is established as the genie offers Aladdin to use his last wish on becoming a prince again to be able to marry Jasmine. Thus, the genie is willing to offer himself in the name of true love (01:19:01).

Right at the beginning of the movie, during the first song, the lyrics state that the country Jasmine lives in is “barbaric, but hei! It’s home”, which could be seen as being prejudice and even racist (00:00:40). Like her forerunners, the princess themed movie seems to prefer whiteness over blackness. The palace is extremely white, much whiter than the sand surrounding it and it resembles Taj Mahal. When Aladdin becomes a prince his prince-attire is white such as the sultan’s (00:44:07). As the narrator introduces Jafar for the first time, he speaks of: “where a dark man awaits, with a dark purpose” (00:08:49). In another scene, the genie calls him “tall, dark and sinister ugly man” (01:07:38). Moreover, Jafar’s outfit is black, with fiery red lining and he’s sitting on a black horse. At more than one occasion, Jafar’s entering casts a large shadow, a frightening one which can be seen on other’s reactions to it as well as the intensification of the music (00:13:39).

Thus, everything good and happy seems to be connected to whiteness, whilst everything evil, sad, ugly and sinister is connected to blackness.

Pocahontas (1995). Pocahontas is the first princess to be loosely based on a real person instead of a fairytale. However, how Disney's *Pocahontas* differs from the true story of colonialism in America, or from the true story of the real Pocahontas, will not be discussed further both due to lack of space and due to the fact that it does not add anything to the possible answer to the research question.

As for all of the previous Disney Princesses, there is a great importance of physical beauty. Pocahontas is both tall and slender, with a tiny waist and broad shoulders. Her skin is tan, her hair long and black. Just as for both Ariel and Jasmine, Pocahontas' hair seems to be a big part of her identity. Her luscious locks move with her every movement, as well as with the wind, framing her statuesque figure and heightening her sexuality. When it comes to the stylization of her body, one notices how her tiny dress is just big enough to cover up her bosom, the sweetheart neckline framing them into a heart shape for the audience to enjoy. Pocahontas spends hardly any time on her looks, however, she is seen braiding her hair at one time after meeting Smith, suggesting that she does take pride in her appearance (00:50:22). However, although stunning, there is no mentioning of her beauty, it is only implied such as when Smith meets her for the first time. Smith, who has taken part in similar 'expeditions' before, and killed many Native Americans, aims his gun at the 'savage' following him (00:30:36). However, once he is able to see her in the fog, he has a change of heart. As the audience has been made aware of his willingness to kill Native Americans before, it is highly likely that he did not have a change of heart due to the fact that she is a woman but because she, with her slender figure and high cheekbones, is the embodiment of beauty.

Pocahontas' voice is similar to Ariel's, Belle's, and Jasmine's voices. That is, it is soft and feminine and she is a great singer. Her moves are gracious and soft and at times it is almost as if she is a part of nature itself such as when running with Smith (00:39:21). Her long legs, and the way she runs, can be seen as resembling an animal, such as an antelope. She even looks gracious, with her hair perfectly in place, as she jumps off of a cliff (00:08:33). Thus, even though being a 'savage', Pocahontas' bodily gestures signal the same femininity as her forerunners did.

Pocahontas is not afraid to be in the presence of the opposite sex, in fact, after meeting John Smith, Pocahontas seeks his presence, instigating both touching as well as kissing at several different occasions. Pocahontas is very sexual which becomes evident as she rolls down a hill with

Smith (00:39:21). As they eventually stop, Pocahontas rolls on top of him and looks deep into his eyes. For a moment it is almost as if they are about to kiss. This behavior might be seen as being at odds with the other princesses as none of them have been presented as being so sexually inhibited. Moreover, Smith is a stranger and he is also her ‘enemy’ as he is a part of a colonizing group that is stealing and destroying her land. Thus, getting so friendly with him at this point in the story is rather alarming. They even kiss long before the movie ends, something none of the previous princesses had done (00:58:08). Thus, the audience gets an image of a highly sexual Native American princess, something that can be seen fitting into the image often presented in Hollywood of Native American females as stated in the theory section, favoring whiteness.

As her forerunners, Pocahontas does no harm, nor does she intend to instigate trouble. She only takes part in a physical conflict once, where she tries to get Kockoum off of Smith (00:58:40). Her defense mechanism seems to be the same as her forerunners, running away crying. Pocahontas lays her trust on Smith after only a short encounter, an act that some might see as being naïve, revealing how simple and innocent she is. However, even though Smith frightened her at first, Pocahontas possesses courage, such as when she jumps off of a high cliff, goes to get Smith in order to prevent a war, and saves Smith from death (00:08:33, 00:54:37, 01:07:49). However, some might see her actions as being reckless as she seems to throw caution to the wind more than once. In fact, she seems to be “guided by instinct rather than complex thought”, fitting the cultural stereotyping of the noble-savage, which is “barely one step above animals” (Benshoff, Griffin 98). However, Pocahontas is not afraid to speak her mind and through her song *Colors of the Wind*, she questions who ‘the savage’ is, pointing at Smith’s own flaws (00:39:21). Thus, even though she does show elements of the stereotyping of the ‘noble savage’, Pocahontas is in fact more complex than the stereotype.

Standing on a rock in the middle of the river, Pocahontas stands tall as she is surrounded by the mist from the waterfall (00:30:36). This gives her a mystical element, presenting her as a mystical creature as Smith lays eyes on her for the first time. This is reinstated at the end of the movie where Pocahontas, along with some of her tribe members, steps out of the fog (01:11:12). Thus, the presentation of Pocahontas as a mystical being, something unearthly- a creature guided by instinct and nature, takes part in ‘othering’ her by over simplifying her and takes away from her humanness. Moreover, Pocahontas is able to magically speak and understand English and thus, there is no need for the white man to learn her language. Thus, the Native American has adjusted himself to the needs of the white man, favoring whiteness and white supremacy.

Pocahontas is presented as being both caring and nurturing when it comes to animals, humans, and the nature. However, she is not presented as a mother figure as she is not seen mothering anyone. Her animal friends are her equals, not someone she mothers. However, according to her father, Pocahontas possesses “wisdom beyond her years”, which she spreads around, guiding those around her (01:08:51). Pocahontas can be said to be not only noble, but also kind. Her confidence, independence, positivity and courage are amongst a few of the traits her free spirited personality possesses. Without her free spirit, there would probably have been a war between the Englishmen and the Native Americans, for she is the one who instigates peace and finally achieves it by offering herself (01:07:49).

It can be argued that *Pocahontas* (1995) is first and foremost a love story where two opposites fall in love. However, shortly before they meet, Smith explores the country whilst stating that he has finally found the land of his dreams, a wild and challenging country he “can tame” (00:28:00). In fact, in the song, the country could be seen as being a metaphor for Pocahontas herself. Smith has finally found a Native American woman he can tame, fulfilling a fantasy. In fact, his actions as they meet for the first time can be seen as supporting that claim. Smith is, amongst other things, seen teaching her handshake (00:36:54). He also reassures her that he and his men will show her people how to use the land “properly [...] how to make the most of it [...] and decent houses” (00:38:17). When Pocahontas replies that their houses are in fact fine, Smith says: “You think that only because you don’t know any better” (00:38:28). As Pocahontas gets offended and strolls away, Smith tries to smooth the situation by stating that “there is so much we can teach you. We’ve improved the lives of savages all over the world” (00:38:40). Thus, in his mind, Smith has found the perfect candidate to civilize. In fact, Smith can be seen as being the embodiment of the discrimination Pocahontas might have faced in reality, not just as a female but also as a Native American. Thus, the discrimination based on her gender and ethnicity renders her experience multidimensionality in accordance with Crenshaws theory. It is first after Pocahontas teaches him about the nature and the Native American ways, where they fall in love and Smith sees beyond the savage. One could state that Pocahontas plays the role of a woman perfectly, conforming to what is expected of her although the path itself is unclear- the end result it still the same.

Being the daughter of the chief, Pocahontas is supposed to get married. In fact, despite her free spirit, and her wisdom, Pocahontas seems to be more than happy to fulfill the pre-given role handed to her from generations past. Thus, she sees love and marriage as her only option although she is not sure if she should marry Kocoum or not. However, as stated before, the princess falls in

love with the first white man she sees. The Englishmen are vicious, greedy, self-centered and egoistic, all the things the Native Americans are not. Thus, the Englishmen seem to be the real savages, leaving the Native Americans as the civilized ones.

Mulan (1998). It is made clear right from the start that the girl jumping from bed is not as ladylike as her forerunners, and it becomes even clearer as she goes to the matchmaker. In fact, in her first scene, Mulan is wearing a tank-top and shorts and the only time she wears a dress is during the scenes right before she leaves home to join the army. Before she goes to the matchmaker, her father prays to their ancestors: “please help Mulan impress the matchmaker today [...] please, PLEASE, help her” (00:04:19). In fact, her father, along with her mother and grandmother, do not seem to have much faith in Mulan’s gender performance. As Mulan shows up too late for her appointment, she arrives sitting astride a black horse. Her hair is filthy and messy as if she does not care about her appearance. The duties of women at the time of the narration are made crystal clear. In order to bring honor to her family, and be a woman boys would “gladly go to war for”, a girl as to: have good fortune, a great hairdo, have good taste, be calm, obedient, work fast-paced, be a good breeder with a tiny waist who bears sons, fulfill her duties calmly and respectfully, demonstrate a sense of dignity and refinement, and not speak without a permission (00:06:49, 00:06:52). Moreover, her skin should be soft and pale, resembling a perfect porcelain doll. Mulan fails to show almost all of the qualities needed as even her waistline is too small (00:08:34).

Mulan admits that she does not feel as if she is “meant to play this part”, but if she would truly be herself she would break her family’s heart (00:12:10). She does not recognize her own reflection and states that she is unable to hide who she really is. Her father tries to reassure her by telling her that she is merely a late bloomer, and that late bloomers often turn out to be the most beautiful ones (00:13:56). As the emperor sends after her father, Mulan tries to get the messenger to spear him. However, he scolds her father for not teaching his daughter to hold her tongue “in a man’s presence”, resulting in her father stating that she has disgraced him, later stating that; “I know my place, it is time you learn yours” (00:15:26, 00:17:15). This scene reveals how females are seen as being beneath males and discriminated against based on their gender. As her father is too weak to fight Mulan makes a brave decision and steals his armor and sword, cuts her hair and joins the army pretending to be a boy. Her father is unable to go after his daughter as revealing her would be sentencing her to death (00:20:08). Her ancestors do not seem to be pleased with her actions, one of them calling her a “crossdresser” (00:22:13). Even the dragon following her taunts

her by stating that he is doomed “and all because Mr. Man decided to take a little drag show on the road” (00:24:41). Thus, there is deep rooted sexism buried within Mulan’s culture.

However, even though Mulan is not successful fitting into the cultural interpretation of what constitutes being a woman, she does possess some of the same features as her forerunners in regards to her gender performance. Mulan’s hair seems to be important to her identity. She is often seen fiddling with it and her facial expression as she cuts it, suggests that this is a sacrifice she did not want to make (00:18:54). Her voice is also feminine, that is, she is unable to deepen her voice enough to pass it off as being a man’s voice. Mulan also expresses a variety of emotions and often runs away crying when not getting her way (00:17:15). She is also caring and nurturing, such as when she brings her father tea according to the doctor’s orders (00:04:38). One could even state that she was mothering him in a way, just as when she protects him from going off to war by sacrificing herself. Mulan tries not to do any harm, except to the enemies, nor does she intend to instigate trouble even though she does do so. Mulan does take part in physical conflicts as needed but she is never shown murdering or critically hurting someone. The importance of both marriage and on family values is a prominent feature throughout the movie and even though family members have passed they are still an active part of the family life. Honoring the ancestors, and the family name, seems to be vitally important as well.

Mulan is seen trying her best to mimic how she and the dragon think men behave (00:27:03). She tries deepening her voice and walking differently without much success. Mulan does not shy away from contact with the opposite sex unless at one time where she was bathing in the lake- naked. However, her shyness had more to do with the fact that she did not want to be exposed as that would ruin everything. As she notices a soldier picking his nose, Mulan states that men are “disgusting” to which the dragon replies; “No, they are men” (00:29:30). Even though trying her hardest, Mulan’s impersonation of men is not a very good one, resulting in a big fight amongst the soldiers. Whilst training, captain Shang sings that he will “make a man” out of her which can be seen as being a rather sexist statement (00:38:34). In fact, Disney’s depiction of what women and men do and how they behave throughout the movie can be seen as being sexist. Even as they are about to save the Emperor, Mulan chooses to attack one of the guards and gives Shang the honor of rescuing the Emperor (01:09:57). Thus, one could presume that men are above women and even when women do heroic acts they still prefer to go back home to the life they once fled from like Mulan. However, Mulan is no damsel-in-distress. When times get tough she does what she has to do in order to survive and protect her family. However, she is only able to shed her

defenselessness after she turns herself into a man. As the emperor awards her for her work, Mulan immediately jumps up and gives him a big hug, an act that could be seen as being rather childish, revealing how innocent Mulan is.

However, even though it seems that men are seen as being inferior to women, when it comes to intelligence Mulan succeeds them all. Her success has a lot to do with her mental strength, whilst the men seem to rely more on their physical strength. Mulan not only uses her intelligence to find a way to retrieve an arrow no one else could get, earning her a right to stay in the army, but she uses her intelligence to entrap the enemy army in an avalanche (00:40:14, 00:55:55).

Romance does not seem to be of importance. It is hinted that Mulan gets affections for Shang, however, she is never seen expressing those feelings. One might think that something might happen between them as Shang arrives at her home. However, he makes it clear that he will not stay forever, only for dinner. Thus, there is no promise of a wedding, no real romance and Mulan does not fulfill her family's wishes of finding a man and eventually marrying.

Mulan's identity seems to be rather fixed and firmly based on traditional values regarding femininity and family. Even though Mulan embarks on a journey to save her father, which makes her into a war hero, she chooses to return home to her father, bowing before him as an act of submission. Thus, she happily returns to her 'old' identity, leaving the one she borrowed for a while, behind (01:19:19).

Whiteness seems to be favored in a sense that all the soldiers from Mulan's army ride white horses. Their enemies also wear dark colors and their complexion is greyish and sickly. In accordance with the other movies previously discussed, dark color scheme and shadows seem to follow emotional scenes, that is, when something sad or bad is happening such as when Mulan cries (00:17:15).

Tiana (2009). As a human, Tiana only wears dresses, signaling that she is a woman through her gendered appearance. However, as a frog, she is naked. Nonetheless, the Walt Disney Company has tried to feminize her frog-version by giving her a smaller head, and a smaller, more streamline frame than the male frog. And even though she did not get clothing, the frog version of her gets to behold her eyelashes, signaling her femininity even further. By working so much, Tiana does not have time or energy to spend on her appearance, nor does it become a prominent element in the narration as for some of the other princesses. As Tiana comes home from one of her jobs she looks messy and tired (00:06:42). However, in the next scene, on her way to her next job, she has

managed to change her outfit and freshen up her appearance. Thus, one can presume that Tiana does indeed care about her appearance. The mentioning of physical beauty in the relation to Tiana happens only twice, where the song lyrics state that this is the town “where the women are very pretty” as Tiana emerges, and as her friend sees her all dolled up into a princess dress; “Look at you. Aren’t you just as pretty as a magnolia in May?” (00:07:33, 00:25:36). At one point, Mama Odie even states that: “Don’t matter what you look like, don’t matter what you wear, how many rings you got on your fingers, we don’t care, don’t matter where you come from, don’t matter what you are...” (01:03:05). Thus, the human Tiana, with her tiny waist and figure, perfected facial features and big brown eyes, sends a mixed message to the viewer.

Tiana is focused on fulfilling her father’s dream, one she has made into her own which might be seen as being a submissive act. Her focus has become her obsession as she has multiple jobs, works overtime, and chooses to work rather than spend time with her friends (00:09:57). Thus, her work ethics have a negative effect on her social life, as well as possible love life. Due to her obsession, Tiana has no time for trouble, nor does she cause any harm, let alone instigate physical conflicts. One might argue that Tiana is in fact a very simple person as she stays religiously true to her father’s wishes. Her father told her as a child that dreams would not come true unless with hard work, and made her promise never to lose sight on what is really important. Tiana does not question her father, and as she grows up, she never wonders if there is more to life than work all day and night. In fact, she does not question it at all until after she has met Mama Odie and comes aware of Naveen’s feelings for her.

One of the things that help Tiana and Naveen communicate, as well as co-exist, is the fact that Tiana does not shy away from being in contact with the opposite sex. However, with achieving her dream as her only focus, Tiana does not live a rich life. She is caring and nurturing to her friends and customers and kind to animals. However, unlike the other princesses previously discussed, Tiana is unable to talk to real animals until after she turns into one herself. Tiana’s caretaking involves a lot of cooking. Even when Tiana and Naveen, together with their animal friends, are on a flight, she still manages to find time to cook for her friends which could be seen as her mothering them. However, it might also be her way to get Naveen’s attention as her mother used to tell her: “the quickest way to a man’s heart is through his stomach” (00:11:23). Tiana expresses a variety of emotions such as sadness over her father’s passing, and joy over getting closer to her dream. She is also seen screaming upon seeing frogs, and at one point she even runs away, a defense mechanism she shares with her fellow princesses (00:06:26).

It becomes obvious right from the start that Tiana does not come from a rich family. In the first scene, Tiana is with her mother as her mother is sewing a dress to a rich little white girl- Lottie. Tiana's plain green dress is in stark contrast to the other girl's over-the-top princess dress (00:01:29). This difference between rich and poor is heightened further as the audience get to see both neighborhoods, the rich one having few, very big, white houses versus the other one having many, smaller, darker houses (00:03:46). Moreover, as a grownup, Tiana has to work multiple jobs and collects her tips into jars, marked "Restaurant fund" where every penny counts (00:05:51). Moreover, Lottie is so rich and spoiled that she does not know the value of money. It becomes evident as she orders 500 beignets for her ball. She takes a big chunk of money from her father and hands it to Tiana without counting them, asking: "Will this about cover it?" (00:11:38). To her, this chunk of money has no meaning, to Tiana it means everything as she can finally get her restaurant (00:11:51). Tiana's story can be seen as promoting work ethics that relate to the American Dream where anybody can go from rags to riches through hard work and determination.

According to both her own mother, as well as Mama Odie, one of Tiana's biggest problems is that she has worked so hard that she has forgotten the most important thing in life- love (00:13:20). As Mama Odie puts it, there is a difference between what one wants and what one needs and even though Tiana's father never succeeded at opening his own restaurant he had everything he ever needed right at home, highlighting the importance of the family. Tiana's mother wants Tiana to meet her "prince charming", fall in love, give her grandchildren and dance off to her "happily ever after", revealing a traditional vision of her daughter's future (00:13:29). It is not until Tiana realizes this that she is able to get everything she had ever wanted and needed. Thus, at the end Tiana has not only gotten her man, but also her restaurant with the help of her man. The message is clear, women are able to find just as much, if not even more, happiness right at home where they fulfill their gender identity in accordance with historical conventions.

Being a black woman, living in New Orleans in the 1920s, and having to work so much as she does has its challenges. Some might look at the fact that she works as a sign of how independent she is, however, it could also be seen as being a necessity and thus, something other than her being independent. Whilst viewing the movie, one might notice that all the rich people have a white skin color, whilst most of the poor ones are people of color. In fact, one of the scenes actively shows some of the discrimination Tiana might have faced. As Tiana meets the white skinned realtors at the ball, they tell her that she has been outbid, adding that it might be for the best as "a little woman of your background would have had her hands full trying to run a big business like that. No you're

better at where you're at" (00:24:41). One might see this as being an act of racism as they refer to her 'background'. However, her 'background' could also refer to her class thus, discriminating against her based on the fact that she is poor, and of different social class. They also refer to her as 'little woman', hinting that she is unable to run her own restaurant due to her gender. Thus, it becomes clear that there is an element of multidimensionality to both the discrimination as well as the oppression she experiences. According to the theory of *Intersectionality*, discussed in the theory section, black women often experience both racial as well as sexual discrimination, rendering Tiana's experience a multidimensional platform as she belongs to more than one category. Moreover, the prince himself seems to possess some pre-given discriminating notions regarding women as he states things such as "You will enjoy it, I guarantee it. All women enjoy the kiss of prince Naveen" (00:28:26). During the scene, the prince manages to get Tiana to 'pimp herself out' in order to take a shortcut to her dream by kissing him. However, the plan backfires and Tiana herself turns into a frog as well. The importance of love and marriage, or family values, get reinstated at this point as it is the key to turning them back to humans. As they get married Tiana becomes a princess and thus, their first kiss as a married couple gives them their humanness back as well as their dreams, or at least her dream of owning a restaurant. Another example of Naveen's sexism is when they flee and Tiana is forced to wake him up. Moreover, she has made them a boat and she seems to be the one doing all the hard labor whilst catering to the prince. Naveen simply lays down and enjoys being waited on as if this was a natural setting due to her gender. When she asks for help he ignores her by simply replying: "I play a little louder" (00:36:18). And as to show how dependent women are on the opposite sex, Tiana does not fulfill her dreams without the help of others, mainly her husband.

Even though blackness seems to get associated with honesty, kindness, family values, and hard work through Tiana's performance, whiteness seems to be favored once again in *The Princess and the Frog* (2009). When anything joyful happens the color scheme brightens, and when something bad happens it darkens. Lottie's father wears white, all the houses in his neighborhood are white, and even Mama Odie's clothes are white. In one scene, Naveen makes an engagement ring for Tiana, using a white pearl as the center stone. Moreover, as they get married and turn into humans, they reappear wearing white clothing and as they get married in a church. There are also white doves, their carriage is white, the horses are white and her bouquet is white as well. In contrast, Tiana's neighborhood consists of small darker looking houses, The evil Shadow man wears black, and is followed by black shadows, as well as his apartment is full of darkness. Thus,

one could state that the movie reproduces whiteness with its racial hierarchy resulting in it becoming normalized. Although Tiana is the protagonist, her white ‘friend’ Lottie, gets to perform as the princess throughout the movie, and even acts as Tiana’s savior as she thoughtlessly gives her a bundle of money when hiring her as a caterer- not the main one though. Even after getting married and becoming a real princess, Tiana still works at a restaurant, and although she might be the most modern princess of her forerunners, Tiana still wears dresses and marries a prince.

Tangled (2010). One of the prominent themes in *Tangled* is the importance of physical beauty. Rapunzel’s “beautiful golden hair” plays a key part when it comes to her appearance (00:03:07). Her long locks seem almost endless as she swirls around. She is desired for her hair, resulting in her getting kidnapped as an infant and hidden a tower. Her kidnapper’s sole focus is on her own youth and beauty, resulting in the upbringing of Rapunzel becoming secondary. Rapunzel’s hair seems to not only be a big part of her identity and femininity, but also a tool for anything and everything. She uses her hair even to help her with performing domestic work. Her plain dress and bare feet signal her innocence as well as defenselessness as she does her best to endure her imprisonment in the tower. Rapunzel does not seem to spend much time on her looks, however, Gothel her kidnapper makes her look in the mirror in one scene: “Rapunzel, look in that mirror. You know what I see? I see a strong, confident, beautiful young lady. Oh look, you’re here too” (0:10:48). Although she states she was only teasing her, Gothel reminds one of a milder version of the Wicked Queen from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). Gothel constantly tries to put Rapunzel down, stating amongst other things that she is fragile as a flower, can’t survive on her own, is sloppy, undressed, immature, clumsy, gullible, naïve, positively grubby, ditsy and vague (00:12:55, 00:14:17). Moreover, her psychological abuse also picks on Rapunzel’s body image, stating that she is “getting’ kinda chubby” (00:14:17).

Rapunzel is both caring and nurturing, which becomes evident as she heals Flynn’s wound (00:52:16). She is also kind to both men and animals and even her best friend is an animal. However, she does not seem to be portrayed as a mother figure, quite the opposite. Rapunzel is playful, which becomes evident as she plays hide-and-seek with her lizard friend. This can also be seen as a sign of how innocent and childish she is. Rapunzel seems to love books, as well as having an artistic side where she not only paints, but also plays guitar, knits, does pottery, candle making, and bakes which can be seen as being traditionally feminine handicrafts (00:06:37). Thus, she can be seen as being highly gifted and intellectual. Moreover, she is highly aware of the world outside

as she asks when her life will begin (00:06:47). Although she longs for the outside, Rapunzel is obedient and obeys her 'mother' who tries to scare her from fleeing, stating that "the world outside is a dangerous place, filled with horrible, selfish people" (00:04:36). However, she finally stands up for herself as Gothel tries to convince her to come home with her as Flynn will end up leaving her.

Rapunzel tries not to do any harm, nor does she cause trouble. However, she is not afraid to physically attack someone with her frying pan. In the scene where she meets Flynn for the first time, she repeatedly hits him in the head resulting in unconsciousness (00:19:36). The first blow is followed by a small, high pitched scream as she runs away to hide. Even though being scared, her curiosity drives her to eventually talk to him, revealing that she is convinced he is after her hair (00:27:17). Then she strikes a deal with him, ordering him to take her to see the lanterns and act as her guardian (00:28:05). Thus, Rapunzel does not have confidence in herself or her survival skills; she is a damsel-in-distress who has successfully found her male protector. In order to get away from the arrangement, Flynn tries to seduce her: "here comes the smolder" (00:29:46). In fact, Flynn gets surprised as his seductiveness has no effect on the princess. In fact, one could see this as a proof of how innocent Rapunzel is as she does not realize what he is doing. Her innocence gets even more prominent as he agrees to take her to the lanterns (00:30:02). Her posture, the way she holds her hands, and her facial expression remind one more of a little girl than an 18 year old. The fact that she believes him, and trusts him instantly, might be seen as a sign of how naïve she is.

Rapunzel is highly emotional throughout the movie. The scene after she has escaped from the tower shows her ride an emotional rollercoaster, where she goes from being ecstatic to being sad, unsure, afraid, and guilty. Flynn tries to reassure her, stating that "this is a part of growing up, a little rebellion, a little adventure. That's good, healthy even [...] you're way overthinking this" (00:33:05). At one point, one of the bushes moves which startles Rapunzel, making her run to Flynn, jump on him and wrap both feet and arms around him out of fright (00:34:09). Thus, it is evident that she is both overly emotional and overreacts to even harmless situations. At times, her body language reminds one of a little girl rather than a teenager, such as the scene where she and Flynn sit by the fire. She rests her elbows on her lap and her chin in her palms, whilst looking at Flynn in admiration (00:54:56). On their way to see the lanterns, Flynn tries to get Rapunzel to return to the tower such as when he takes her to a tavern for a bite (00:37:00). At times he refers to her as 'Blondie', and he also talks to her in a condescending way at times, such as when he yells "YAY!" when the princess agrees to go to the restaurant; "I do like duckling" (00:37:09). The way he shouts, as well as his body language signal how he sees her as a simple, naïve, and childish little

girl. Thus, one might say that Rapunzel experiences discrimination based on her gender as well as hair-color. Although gasping out of fright as she steps into the tavern, Rapunzel attacks the ones that try to capture Flynn. However, her attack is unsuccessful due to her physical weakness. When attacking does not seem to work she orders them to “Put him down” to which they obey (00:38:41). She then tells them about her dream, resulting in everyone singing.

Rapunzel is not afraid to be in the presence of males, nor is she afraid of touching them. She is seen touching Flynn multiple times, and as they reach the city she even physically drags the townspeople to the ‘dance floor’ (01:03:07). During the journey to the lanterns, Rapunzel and Flynn fall in love, and the movie ends with them stating that they are “living happily ever after” (01:31:08). Before the movie ends, the narrator, who is Flynn himself, tells the audience that Rapunzel “was a princess worth waiting for, beloved by all she led her kingdom with all the grace and wisdom that her parents did before her”, his remark being evident for how perfectly Rapunzel has played her role as not only a woman, but also as a damsel-in-distress, and later a princess (01:30:35). Even though physical beauty is a very important theme, love is it as well. Even though Flynn tries to protect her, it is Rapunzel that ends up saving his life- or her tears (01:27:02). As Flynn wakes up, he asks; “Did I ever tell you that I have a thing for brunettes?”, as if he has changed her meaning and does not see her as a ‘dumb Blond’ anymore which can be seen as being derogatory (01:27:54).

As for the other movies previously discussed, Rapunzel’s complexion is extremely white and whenever things are good, or anything joyful happens the color scheme brightens. However, whenever something frightening or sad happens, such as when the queen got sick, the color scheme tends to darken (00:01:52). The main antagonist’s hair is also black and her skin has a greyish color. Thus, as stated before, the audience can easily make a connection between the color white and everything that is good and joyful, and the color black and everything bad, evil, and scary.

Brave (2012). With her luscious locks of fiery red, uneven, curly hair, Merida does not show any interest in the way she looks throughout the movie. In fact, most of the time, her hair looks messy which might be supposed to represent her wild spirit. Resembling Pocahontas, Merida is presented as a princess that has a deep connection to nature. Narrating her own story, Merida tells the audience that:

Some say our destiny is tied to the land, as much a part of us as we are of it.
 Others say fate is woven together like a cloth, so that one's destiny
 intertwines with many others. It's the one thing we search for, or fight to
 change. Some never find it. But there are some who are led. (*Brave*
 00:04:31).

Merida seems to get mixed messages from her parents regarding her gender behavior. Her father gives her a bow and arrows for her birthday and teaches her how to use them (00:02:20). He does not seem to put any pressure on her conforming to a certain lifestyle, let alone marriage. Her mother, however, puts great pressure on Merida to act like a lady, to get married and conform to historical conventions regarding princesses, even scolding her father for giving her a bow (00:02:31). In fact, the queen does not think that “A princess should not have weaponry”, to which her father replies “Leave her be! Princess or not, learning to fight is essential” (00:10:15). However, Merida does share some of the other princesses' traits such as singing, running away crying, screaming out of fright, and retreating (00:39:55). It becomes evident as the movie is coming to an end, how immature, childish, and unprepared Merida is for marriage as she frowns “ah, ewww”, in a disgust as her parents share a kiss.

The gendered society Merida lives in is presented right from one of the first scenes where a big bear emerges. Whilst the men fight the bear, the queen flees with Merida, signaling how differently the genders behave in accordance with Butler's *Gender Theory* (00:04:10). Throughout the movie, Merida's mother tries to guide her daughter's behavior, making Merida into an example as Merida states that “I've got duties, responsibilities, expectations. My whole life is planned out, for the day I become, well, my mother! She's in charge of every single day of my life” (00:05:33). Her mother tries her best to make Merida present herself more properly. Walking fast paced with her hands dangling, having just wiped her mouth with the sleeve of her dress, Merida does not seem to resemble her mother's ideal image of femininity (00:05:45). In fact, Merida looks uncomfortable as her mother tries to teach her how to become a princess, such as how to play an instrument (00:06:21). However, whilst spending time with her father training falcons Merida looks more at ease which becomes evident through her laughter (00:06:26). Thus, her father seems to treasure more the quality of their time together, and be less bothered with gender ideals, whilst her mother spends her time training Merida not to chortle, how to eat, and when to wake up, stating that a

princess is: “compassionate [...] patient [...] cautious [...] clean [...] and above all, a princess strives for [...] perfection” (00:06:35).

At times, Merida gets a day where she does not have to conform to her mother’s rules. The audience gets to see her as she rides off as there are “No lessons, no expectations. A day where anything can happen”, and where she can change her fate (00:06:51). During the scene, the audience gets to see how good she is at target shooting whilst riding, and how fearless, and adventurous she is as she climbs Crone’s Tooth and drinks from the Fire Falls, thus, she participates in things that might be traditionally looked upon as being masculine (00:08:13). During dinner, Merida tries to tell her mother of her achievement but it is her father that responds (00:10:25). Her father seems to be impressed whilst her mother comments on the amount of food on her plate: “You’ll get dreadful collywobblers. Oh, Fergus! Will you look at your daughter’s plate?” (00:10:40). Later during the same scene, the queen reveals how she has been preparing Merida her whole life for marriage (00:12:31). After raising her voice, something a princess should not do according to her mother, Merida storms off to her bedroom where she attacks a column with a sword (00:12:56). Just as stubborn as her daughter, the queen tells her that “this is going to happen” (00:12:29). Whilst working in the stables, Merida confides in her horse that she might not want to get married at all, and that getting married would mean her freedom and life would end (00:15:16). Thus, Merida seems to represent a new way of establishing the female gender by denying repeating gender acts that are traditionally assigned to women.

Merida makes fun of the suitors as they fail to impress her, making her father laugh (00:24:45). Moreover, Merida decides to compete for her own hand in marriage, ripping her dress in order to be able to shoot the arrow (00:26:05). In fact, Merida shoots better than the suitors, revealing how one’s gender has no effect on one’s abilities to target shoot. However, her actions cause a rift between her and her mother, resulting in Merida storming off whilst crying (00:28:54). Not listening to her horse, Merida follows the wisps where she finds a former witch and eventually gets her to give her a spell and even though not meaning too, Merida causes big trouble (00:33:47). When her mother feels ill after eating the cake with the spell, Merida does not seem worried, in fact she seems hopeful that her mother will change her mind about the marriage which can be seen as an selfish and naïve act (00:38:09). In fact, Merida does not seem to take any responsibility for the situation at first (00:41:18). With the help of her brothers, Merida is able to get her mother out of the palace (00:44:02). In order to break the spell and change fate, Merida has to look inside, “Mend the bond torn by pride”, however, she does not understand the message (00:49:43)

Even though her mother has changed into a bear, is running out of time, and knows this is her daughter's fault, Merida's mother still protects her and tries to mother her by making things such as breakfast (00:50:50,00:52:49). Using her knowledge of nature, Merida is able to guide her mother what to eat and what to not eat, as well as teach her to hunt for a fish (00:53:27). In a way, Merida starts mothering her mother as well which becomes evident as she tries to get her to eat the raw fish: "How do you know you don't like it if you don't try it?", eventually having to cook it for her (00:54:27). This scene where they hunt for fish shows their first quality time together in a while. However, her mother gradually behaves more like a real bear than a human being, frightening Merida (00:56:56).

Finding ruins, and getting attacked by a mythical bear, makes Merida realize that her mother's stories were based on reality (00:59:59). When getting attacked, Merida tries to defend herself by shooting arrows at it, however, not without a bit of screaming and eventually retreating (01:01:19). Thinking she has the answer, Merida focuses on trying to mend her mother's tapestry. As they arrive at the castle, Merida tries to get the clans to stop fighting, resulting in her screaming: "Stop it!" (01:04:58). Then she tells them of her mother's story which seems to please her mother. However, with the help of her mother, Merida states that she will "break tradition", that her mother "feels [...] in her heart, that [...] we be free to [...] write our own story. Follow our hearts, and find love in our time" (01:06:39). The king states that she is just like her mother (01:09:18). As her father is about to chop off her mother's head, thinking she was a real bear, Merida hits his sword with an arrow, then points them at her father, leading up to her attacking him (01:17:13). As the enchanted real bear arrives, the men fight it without success and Merida fights it too.

As the second sun is rising, Merida finally acknowledges that she caused all this, apologizing to her mother, stating that "You've always been there for me. You've never given up on me. I just want you back. I want you back mummy [...] I love you" (01:20:52). As her mother changes back into her human form she kisses Merida all over her face to which Merida comments: "You've changed" (01:22:22). Her mother simply replies: "Oh, darling, we both have", signaling how the concept of 'woman' is changing and evolving, fitting with Butler's theory. (01:22:25). The film ends with Merida making her final remarks: "There are those who say fate is something beyond our command, that destiny is not our own but I know better. Our fate lives within us. You only have to be brave enough to see it" (01:24:14).

Whiteness seems to be favored throughout the movie, with everything from Merida's extremely white complexion to the blackness of the witches raven, and the bears. Thus, the

connection between everything dangerous, wild, and evil and the color black, is made clear whilst everything good has to do with white and brighter colors.

Frozen (2013). Just as the other princesses, except Jasmine and Mulan, Anna is dressed in gowns at all times. Just as Merida, Anna shows signs of feeling as if her gown is uncomfortable at times (00:36:04). In fact, Anna reminds a lot of Merida in a sense that they are both seen with their hair messed up, and Anna is even seen drawling, snoring, and yawning (00:12:48). Moreover, in one scene, Anna sings about a bodily function which might seem as being offensive to some members of the audience (00:14:18). In one of the first scenes, as the guests arrive to the coronation, a man expresses his excitement over getting to see both the queen and the princess, “I bet they are absolutely lovely”, to which his friend replies “I bet they are beautiful” (00:12:41). Thus, there are some expectations to the way she looks due to her status. Evidence regarding the importance of beauty can be found throughout the movie such as in the scene where Kristoff introduces Anna to his troll friends. One resembles her to a “little cupcake” whilst another objectifies her as he grabs her, stating that “bright eyes, working nose, strong teeth, yes, yes she’ll do nicely for our Kristoff” (01:05:21, 01:05:26). Anna is presented as an object of desire they try to get their hands on by doing their best at trying to marry her off to Kristoff, their very own “fixer upper”, which she can fix with love (01:06:15). Thus, due to her status, Anna is an object of desire for someone like Hans, whilst her physical appearance appeals to the trolls which can be seen as being sexist.

Just as Merida, Anna’s behavior gets criticized as for example Kristoff asks “where you raised in a barn?”, hinting that she might not reach the same perfection of ‘princess behavior’ as some of her forerunners such as the princesses created before Disney’s death (00:40:22). Whilst riding a horse, Anna does not sit astride the horse. Thus, she resembles both Mulan and Merida as they share the same riding style. Clumsy like some of her forerunners such as Mulan, Anna might not be the picture of sophisticated grace. However, she does seem to take some pride in her appearance as she wonders how she will look on the night of her sister’s coronation (00:14:39). However, although Anna sings of becoming a picture of sophisticated grace, she also sings about stuffing chocolate in her face which might be seen as being the opposite of sophistication (00:14:50). One of the scenes where it becomes obvious how much Anna does in fact care about her physical beauty is the one where her hair suddenly turns whiter. Instead of wondering about whether she is in danger, or about her health, or the future, Anna asks “Does it look bad” (01:02:08). This signals that even though one might not be sophisticated grace at all times, physical

appearance does matter greatly. However, as her fellow princesses, Anna loves to sing with her feminine voice. It might not be as soft or high pitched as the one of the princesses created before Disney's death but it can reach as high notes as needed.

Anna is presented as a fearless and playful character (00:03:41, 00:40:21). Anna also shows bravery when she saves her sister's life, revealing how she is willing to sacrifice herself for a member of her family (01:26:25). Instead of running away or fleeing like some of her forerunners, Anna is not afraid in difficult situations, or when faced with dangerous ones. Anna scolds the snow monster that is harassing her and her friends, telling it that "It's not nice to throw people", and attacking it with a snowball, and in another scene she is seen punching Hans in the face, resulting in him falling into the water (00:58:36, 01:29:20). Thus, she does engage in physical conflicts and even instigates one self. Her actions suggest that she is both compulsive and aggressive at times. Anna also makes her own decisions, her bodily gestures, such as the way she stands, signal how she is taking charge and ordering others what to do (00:30:16, 00:39:29). However, after she has ordered Kristoff to take her to her sister, and without him noticing, she sighs as if taking matters into her own hands is something new to her. As they get chased by a pack of wolves, Anna saves Kristoff from falling off of a cliff, revealing how she is embracing her new found feistiness (00:43:24).

Like her forerunners, Anna believes in true love and she longs for someone to notice her (00:15:14, 00:24:57). Her sister, however, does not seem to believe in love at first sight, making her disapproval of Anna's engagement clear (00:26:26). Moreover, Kristoff reinforces Elsa's opinion as he wonders how she could get engaged to a man she hardly knows (00:40:46). As Anna is unable to answer any questions regarding her husband to be, Kristoff states that their feelings do not sound like true love, and that he cannot trust someone's judgment that gets engaged so quickly (00:41:41). Whilst visiting Kristoff's troll family, the audience gets told through a song that, people cannot change but the power of love is great and by throwing "a little love their way, and you'll bring out the best" (01:07:47). Moreover, the ice in Anna's heart, which was accidentally put there by her sister, is slowly killing her. According to Kristoff's grandfather, "only an act of true love" will save her (01:09:06). Thus, romance is seen as being important, however, it has to be the right love interest and it does not necessarily have to end with a marriage. In fact, it is the true love between the sisters that eventually saves Anna which establishes the importance of both family and family values. Although being an active character who likes to take matters into her own hands, Anna can be seen as resembling a damsel-in-distress as she ends up needing to be rescued. In fact, her

relationship with her sister might be seen as more of a mother-daughter relationship where Anna's sister tries to mother her and steer her away from marrying the wrong man. Like her forerunners, Anna is shown as being both nurturing and caring and is even willing to sacrifice herself in order to save her sister from Hans' attack, which, luckily ends up saving her as well (01:26:25).

When meeting Hans, at the beginning of the movie, Anna shies away from too close contact with the opposite sex (00:17:21, 00:17:35, 00:17:40). Later in the movie, Anna seems to have gotten over her shyness and is neither afraid to interact with Kristoff nor of jumping off of a cliff into his arms (00:52:27). Anna is not afraid to express her emotion, whether it is crying or rejoicing, and might remind one of a little girl at times (00:13:25, 01:30:39). In fact, she can be seen as being rather uninhibited as she runs and dances around the palace expressing both her happiness and excitement.

The white complexion of Anna, as well as all the other characters, might be seen as favoring whiteness. The lack of people with other skin color is strange at best. The antagonist, Hans, does not wear black clothing, in fact, his jacket is white with black lining. His skin is the same color as everyone else's skin and his hair is brown, not black. The scene where Anna gets hurt as a child presents the sisters playing in a darkened room, and as their father tries to help by taking her to the trolls, the sky is dark. The coronation seems to take place during the evening as there is not a lot of light outside nor when Elsa flees the palace. In fact, a lot of scenes involving danger or drama seem to take place at nighttime. Moreover, as Hans tries to 'save' Anna, his true nature is revealed. During these scenes he is seen wearing a dark coat as if to signal his change from 'prince charming' to the villain (01:09:56).

Discussion

Snow White can be seen as the original, the pioneer, and the prototype, for the Disney Princess as she was the first one. Her gendered appearance, as well as her performance of gender acts, is the model from which the others build on. The second and third ones, namely Cinderella and Aurora, religiously follow Snow White's stylization, as well as her performance, although they have changed both their hair-color and hairstyle. All of them can be said to merely exist in the present, whilst dreaming about the future and happily ever after. They are prisoners of patriarchal hierarchy and happily domesticated. None of them wishes to break the traditional gender role assigned to them. The first three princesses are quiet, classy, graceful, obedient, and romantic damsels-in-distress, daydreaming that a prince will discover them one day and save them from their mundane lives. Moreover, as stated in the theory section, the most privileged group in American society seems to be the 'white, Anglo-Saxon, upper-class, heterosexual' one, which all of the first three princesses seem to belong to.

When looking at the society at the time of their release, one can imagine that due to the fact that both Cinderella, as well as Aurora were created after WW2, during the Cold War, their conservative reenactments of Snow White's performance might have been meant to create escape from reality. That is, reenacting how life was before the war might give the audience a sense of hope for the future, that these turbulent times would come to an end at some point. However, they might also have been a way to try to convince women, who had joined the workforce during the war, to return back home to their old roles as homemakers so that the men could get their jobs back. Moreover, as stated in the theory section, that would be in accordance with Hollywood's representation of women, and their intentions for doing so, at the time. When reflecting upon the narration of the movies, one notices how they all represent women that can only be saved by falling in love and marrying the first prince they see. Moreover, the princesses are more than happy to do so with few exceptions though.

Ariel is the first princess released after Disney's revival, and after feminists started fighting for their cause in the 1960s, as stated in the theory section. Ariel, a female protagonist, represents a different take on the Princess Concept, one where the princess lives in the present and does not merely exist. Thus, it is as if Ariel starts some kind of a re-thinking of femininity. Ariel is strong willed, adventurous and less interested in finding love than her forerunners. In fact, she is more interested in humanity and adventures on land. She presents the 'American style' that values reason and realism. As stated in the analysis, one of Ariel's lyrics hints how the society might have

changed since Walt Disney was alive; “they understand, but they don’t reprimand their daughters. Bright young women- sick of swimming, ready to stand” (00:16:46). Moreover, it is Ariel that saves the prince and not the other way around, and it is Ariel that goes after the prince and makes her dreams come true. Thus, she is not as passive as her forerunners. However, even though she might have found her voice, she repeatedly gets ignored and overruled. She might test the boundaries but at the end of the narration, she is in the exact same position as her forerunners- married to a prince. Like her forerunners, Ariel is unable to break free from the traditional role of ‘woman’, and gets objectified just as much. Her beauty, and her voice, both endanger her as well as save her during the narration and thus, like her forerunners, they seem to be her most sought after qualities. Moreover, as presented in the analysis, all the princesses experience oversimplification in regards to things such as emotions. It is as if the Disney Company presumes that all women are emotional.

Just as Ariel, Belle does not show great interest in finding love nor in domestic work, and neither do the rest of them: Jasmine, Pocahontas, Mulan, Tiana, Rapunzel, Merida and Anna. Thus, it is as if the quest for love ends with the original three princesses, even though most of the princesses end up finding love and some even getting married. In fact, there seems to be only one princess that does not find love nor get married, namely Merida. Three other princesses find love but do not get married: Pocahontas, Mulan, and Anna. Both Pocahontas and Mulan have a chance to fulfill their dreams. Mulan even has the chance of a successful career, fame and fortune, however, both choose to return home to their ‘old’ lives. As Anna is in love, and seems to have a boyfriend at the end of the narration, one might conclude that the film promises a wedding. Thus, even though they did not end up getting married their endings are ‘acceptable’ in relations to their gender and historical conventions. However, as they are free to choose their own love interests, one could say that the Princess Concept is evolving towards a more post traditional take on femininity where relationships are ‘pure’, that is, the sexes are equals. When it comes to domestic work, the ‘original’ three princesses, live and breathe it. However, Ariel is not shown doing domestic work and neither are Belle, Jasmine, Pocahontas, Merida, nor Anna. However, Mulan is seen performing domestic work as well as Tiana, and Rapunzel. By looking at the princesses chronologically, one can conclude that the level of domestic work diminished drastically after Ariel’s arrival and is almost invisible in both *Brave* (2012) as well as *Frozen* (2013).

As seen from the analysis, all of the movies rely on a stereotypical representation of femininity, even though the princess’ gender identity seems to have evolved and the stereotyping

diminished or changed over the years. Thus, the first three movies depicted the princesses portraying more gendered attributes, relying on historical conventions, than the later ones. Even so, the latest princess movies still contain gender stereotypes as stated in the analysis. However, one could say that these gender stereotypes have become more complex over the years as the archetype of the Disney Princess gradually portrays a more mixed gender identity. That is, the Disney Princess not only portrays traits that are traditionally thought of as being 'feminine', but also ones that have traditionally been thought of as being 'masculine' such as intellectuality, bravery, and physical strength such as both Pocahontas and Merida. Thus, gender roles are becoming less clearly defined, fitting into the concept of 'post traditional societies' as presented in the theory section. Moreover, Pocahontas, Mulan, as well as Anna, are not only brave but also heroic as they sacrifice themselves resulting in them saving the day. In fact, both Pocahontas and Mulan can be said to be leaders as they both lead their 'teams' to victory. Pocahontas acted as a negotiator between the Native Americans and the settlers, resulting in truce, whilst Mulan lead her army to victory by defeating the enemy. Although broad shouldered, muscular Pocahontas is shown as physically capable of many things, Mulan goes through intensive physical training resulting in her becoming capable of winning physical fights with the opposite sex. Thus, she might be seen as possessing even more traditionally 'masculine' qualities than the other princesses.

By defining both Pocahontas, as well as Tiana, against the white privileged groups, the settlers and the rich La Bouff family, the Walt Disney Company can be seen as 'othering' them. This is in accordance with how Hollywood film making has often chosen to define minority groups as stated in the theory section. Moreover, as stated in the theory section, Pocahontas fits the stereotypical image of the 'noble savage', and thus, gets 'othered' yet again. However, Tiana is assigned desirable traits often associated with 'whiteness' such as great work ethic, and honesty. Both Jasmine, as well as Pocahontas, have been assigned a quality that the dominant culture deems undesirable one, namely overly sexualization, thus projecting them as racial or ethnic 'others'. This overly sexualization is also in stark contrast to the first three princesses' gender performance, setting them aside from them. Thus, evidence of both *racism*, or white-over-color, as well as *sexism* can be found in all three movies; *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009). In fact, by merely looking at their physique, one can immediately notice evidence of sexism throughout all twelve princess movies.

When it comes to physical appearance, Snow White seems to be the most realistic one with her round cheeks. The rest of the princesses, with their extreme hourglass figures, long locks and

perfected faces with their high cheekbones, seem more unrealistic and thus, less relatable when it comes to their physique. All the princesses possess both inner and outer beauty and all of them have some kind of a relationship with animals. The only princess that does not sing, except when she was a child, is Merida. The rest of them seem to be fascinated with singing and all of them have a great singing voice.

According to Benshoff and Griffin, there is a great believe in the American society that everyone should have equal access to the American Dream and that their success is based on “individual effort and merit rather than preferential treatment” (6-7). *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) seems to present this view of equality but portrays a more realistic take on ‘reality’. Tiana’s narration takes place during the 1920s which makes her the most ‘modern’ princess. Tiana does not rely on magic, nor wishing, such as her forerunners, but on hard work. Thus, she dismisses the passiveness of her daydreaming, prince-obsessive forerunners such as Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora. By working hard, Tiana almost gets her chance to fulfill her dream, however, the realtors, belonging to the white privileged middle class group, prevent it from happening by discriminating against her based on multiple factors such as her gender and race. Thus, her hard work and merit does not matter to them. Thus, they have no believe in her as they overgeneralize, or oversimplify, her in accordance with dominant ideologies at the time of the narration. An analysis of their words reveals how neither African American, nor women, were seen as being talented enough to own a business during the 1920s (Benshoff, Griffin 7). Moreover, as stated before in the analysis, her hard work prevents her from having a love life and maintaining her friendships which is promoted as a bad thing. However, after meeting the prince and eventually falling in love, she is able to juggle it all- a husband and a career, with his help of course.

One might presume that Tiana’s successors would continue on the same path by becoming even more self-reliant, however, the next one, Rapunzel, does the opposite. Rapunzel reminds more of the original three Disney Princesses, with her damsel-in-distress act, and extremely white complexion, than Tiana. However, as to make up for all of Rapunzel’s flaws, Merida steps up and picks up where Tiana left off, breaking the stereotypical image of ‘woman’ even further and she even succeeds to escape from getting married- for now. The latest Disney Princess, Anna, is a melting pot of all the princesses as seen from the analysis.

Conclusion

As seen from both the analysis, as well as the discussion, the concept of the Disney Princess has evolved over time. In general, the Disney Princess can be seen as having evolved from a passive, voiceless, overly feminine housewife, into an outspoken, courageous hero. However, even so, she has not forgotten the importance of physical appearance. With her perfectly sculptured body, symmetrical facial features, high cheekbones, big eyes, luscious lips, and the tiniest hourglass waist, the Disney Princess marches on looking for adventures. But what about the princesses' individual racial and ethnic identities, have they set their mark on the princess' overall evolution?

As stated in both the analysis, as well as in the discussion, changes in American society have had a great effect on the Disney Princess. The Disney Company seems to be aware of both when and how it can promote its Disneyfied version of 'womanhood', as well as how it can disguise it enough to be easily digested by the general public. As seen from the analysis, the importance of physical beauty is still great, and even though the princess has become more realistic, she still promotes patriarchal hierarchy as even the ones that do not get married at the end of the narration, either will, have a love interest, or returned home to their old lives. As stated before, the Disney Company 'Americanizes' their princesses despite their origin. Thus, they get assimilated into the mainstream society. As an example, the ones based on European fairy tales, such as Snow White, do not get to keep any of their ethnic, or cultural identity as even the tradition of arrange marriages gets ostracized as a bad thing and is replaced with the more American tradition of 'marrying for love', revealing Disney's ethnocentrism. Moreover, 'whiteness' seems to be favored throughout all of the films. Thus, Jasmine, Pocahontas, Mulan, and Tiana, the ones that are not 'fairly eyed Anglo-Saxons', merely function as vehicles portraying how women face prejudice and discrimination, based on multiple factors, on a daily basis. They are allowed to join the ranks of the Disney Princesses for the sake of pretentious multiculturalism, one that wants to pretend to include everybody. Thus, as (askew) balance to the multiple 'Anglo-Saxon ones', each of the 'othered' races gets one representative.

The sexual freedom experienced through both Jasmine's and Pocahontas' gender performance, and stylized bodies, was short lived. Moreover, the fact that only those two were so sexually free, sheds a light on how the Disney Company portrays stereotypical images of different races and ethnicities, thus, participating in strengthening the discrimination of 'minority groups' in America. Thus, Disney can be seen as support the system of 'white-over-color ascendancy'. As stated before, Jasmine lives in a Muslim country but wears highly revealing clothing nonetheless

and is always alone in the presence of men. Thus, Disney's depiction of her does not seem to leave any of her own racial or ethnic background. Even Pocahontas represents a well-known stereotypical image of the 'noble savage' and magically learns to speak English. Pocahontas is thus, made to effortlessly assimilate into the Englishmen's culture. The Englishman however, does no such thing.

Tiana is the only princess that works outside the home, and she is also the only African American one. As stated before, it is more common for women of African American origin to work outside the home out of necessity, and thus, the Disney Company merely reproduces 'reality', but with a twist. The Disney Company portrays an image of an African American woman that works outside the home because she wants to, it is her choice, which fits with the common view in America of African American women. Moreover, it shows how stories of one minority group are best told by a member of the minority group as an African American person might have had another view of, and another take on, Tiana's story. Thus, Disney's depiction 'others' her and makes her different from the other princesses. However, it is hard to tell if that was done on purpose or if the Disney Company was simply oblivious as they might not have the right perspective or insight. Moreover, her white skinned 'friend' gets to play the role of a princess throughout the movie even though Tiana herself is considered to be one of the Disney Princesses. The next princess in line, Rapunzel, a 'white Anglo-Saxon', is in stark contrast to Tiana and everything she accomplishes, as Rapunzel reminds more of the first three princesses in regards to both her looks, as well as gender performance. Instead of continuing the 'hero phase', Rapunzel plays the role of a damsel-in-distress perfectly. This difference frames Tiana's 'otherness' even more.

Thus, one could conclude that the Disney Princess is stuck in an Americanized 'Anglo-Saxon' mode of racial prejudice. The princesses' different racial and ethnic identities do not seem to have had any effect on the evolving concept of the Disney Princess as the ones that differ from the Americanized 'Anglo-Saxon' ones are deemed irrelevant and get assimilated into the mainstream society. Moreover, as stated before, they do not seem to get to keep any of their own racial or ethnic heritages. There seems to be only one race and one ethnicity in Disneyland- the privileged 'white American' one. All the other races and ethnicities seem to get ostracized and 'othered'.

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