

6-2017

Breaking the Glass Slipper: Analyzing Female Figures' Roles in Disney Animated Cinema from 1950-2013

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Breaking the Glass Slipper: Analyzing Female Figures' Roles in Disney Animated Cinema from
1950-2013

By
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Honors in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program

UNION COLLEGE
March 2017

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Acknowledgments

I have been asked why I decided to do a critical analysis of Disney Animated Cinema for my thesis. Throughout the study, I harshly criticize certain films I once adored. Why would I want to destroy something I love? The honest answer is because I love these films enough to analyze and question them. This study has become an offspring of mine and I am pleased to share her with the world. However, none of this would have been possible without the help of some amazing people.

For Professor Andrea Foroughi, my most sincere thank you. Professor Foroughi has been my Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies advisor for the past four years. She has supported me and helped me in countless ways throughout my time at Union College. She truly is a role-model educator. I hope to educate and inspire my students one day as she has done for me. She has spent countless hours working with me to make sure this study was not only ready for the world to see but also to make sure that I as a person am ready to take on the world. She challenged me, encouraged me, and supported me in every facet during my time at Union College. It was a blessing to work with her as an advisee and I look forward to working with her as a graduate.

For Professor William García, thank you for your unbounded support throughout this journey. Professor William García is one of the most talented and brilliant educators I have ever had the pleasure of working with throughout my four years at Union College. As my Spanish and Hispanic Studies advisor for the past four years, he has guided me into becoming the strong student and person that I am. He has helped me tirelessly both academically and socially. He made me realize that not only are the actions of these women in this study important, but the endings of their tales are just as important if not more important. His knowledge in film and cinematic elements helped me understand my position as a spectator and how to define the message of each film. He is passionate about his work and I can only hope find the same passion in my career moving forward. I have been blessed with him as my advisor and I look forward to working with him as a graduate.

For my parents, Manuel and Nadine, and my twin sister Gabriela thank you for your support, advice, and guidance throughout this journey. To my parents, thank you for purchasing all those Disney films and products throughout my childhood. Without any of that Disney exposure, this thesis topic would not have even existed. To Gabriela, thank you for watching every single Disney film with me throughout our childhood. As an adult now, my family has helped me tremendously throughout this study from engaging in thought provoking conversations about Disney female characters to seeing current Disney films together.

For Mr. Walt Disney, thank you for your creations and your ever-lasting legacy on the world. Thank you for never giving up on your dreams and teaching us all to keep chasing our own no matter what. Mr. Walt Disney has blessed the world with the Disney corporation and I have been fortunate enough to be exposed to it in its full capacity. Without Walt's contributions to the animation industry, this study would have been impossible. Thank you to the current Disney Corporation as well that continues Walt's work in the most profound and creative way.

ABSTRACT

GUTIÉRREZ, BRIANNA

Breaking the Glass Slipper: Analyzing Female Figures' Roles in Disney Animated Cinema from 1950-2013

In this study, heroines and villainesses in nineteen Disney animated films from 1950-2013 are characterized as traditional, complex or non-traditional. A total of twenty-four female characters are classified based on their representation, actions, personality traits, appearance, and relationship status. Traditional female figures are beautiful, dependent on male figures, and engage in a heterosexual relationship as part of their 'happily ever after.' The traditional female figures in this study are Cinderella from *Cinderella* (1950), Lady from *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), Aurora (Sleeping Beauty) from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and Duchess from *The Aristocats* (1970). Complex female figures are, in the beginning of a film, independent from male figures, and outspoken, but by the end of a film, they are dependent on male figures and they always end their tale with a man beside them. The complex female characters are Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Jasmine from *Aladdin* (1992), Meg from *Hercules* (1997), Mulan from *Mulan* (1998), Jane from *Tarzan* (1999), Tiana from *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), Rapunzel from *Tangled* (2010), and Anna from *Frozen* (2013).

Non-traditional women are all independent, outspoken and determined. Non-traditional female characters are separated into two sub-categories: negative and positive. The negative women are evil and masculine in appearance while the positive women are inherently good and feminine in appearance. The evil villainesses are Lady Tremaine from *Cinderella* (1950), Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), Cruella DeVil from *101 Dalmatians* (1961), Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Yzma from *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), and Mother

Gothel from *Tangled* (2010). The positive non-traditional women are Pocahontas from *Pocahontas* (1995), Nani from *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), Helen Parr from *The Incredibles* (2004), a Disney and Pixar film, Merida from *Brave* (2012), a Disney-Pixar film, and Elsa from *Frozen* (2013).

There are two phases of changing representation: traditional to complex and negative to positive non-traditional. When Ariel appeared in 1989, it marked the shift from traditional to complex female figures. Likewise, in 1995, Pocahontas signified the transition from negative to positive non-traditional female characters. Disney's animated female characters in the 1950s to early 1970s reinforce Cold War values of modest femininity and devotion to family. Walt Disney's influence is crucial to the traditional female figure image. Most of the "princesses" of the 1990s-2010s reflect changes brought about by feminist activist efforts of the 1960s-1970s, attempting to incorporate multicultural and feminist ideals in their representations of heroines. With recent positive portrayals of independent female characters, Disney has experimented with representing non-traditional families, which are increasingly prevalent in 21st century America. The recent rise of positive portrayals of independent female characters in Disney animated cinema is in part due to the phenomena of consumer feminism. Based on current Disney films and media such as *Moana* (2016), *Elena of Avalor* (2016) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), it is evident that Disney continues to feature positive non-traditional female figures in their animated productions to capitalize on feminism.

Introduction: An Overview of Disney Animated Female Representation from 1950-2013

As a child of the '90s, the Disney Corporation has had an enormous impact on me. In 2014, I wrote an opinion article for Union College's newspaper stating that *Frozen* (2013) was the first Disney animated feminist film. I based my opinion solely on the fact that one of the main characters, Elsa, stated: "You can't marry a man you just met."¹ In one phrase, Elsa single-handedly denounced seventy-six years of Disney animated cinema that feature female characters marrying male characters that they just recently met. I, along with other audience members, was shocked by Elsa's bold declaration. However, upon the publication of my article, I received a significant amount of backlash. Commenters challenged me with protagonists and films such as *Mulan's* (1998) title character, Nani from *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), Helen Parr, also known as Elastigirl and Mrs. Incredible, from *The Incredibles* (2004), and the like that feature female characters focusing on familial and social issues instead of romantic relationships. Mulan saves China, Nani saves her younger sister Lilo from social services, and Helen saves her husband, Mr. Incredible, as well as her family, from falling apart. These examples caused me to question the assertion I made in the review. I thought to myself: Could it be that there were other films that can be considered feminist? Had I been naïve enough to say only one Disney animated film has feminist attributes? These questions required further investigation on my part and thus, my thesis topic was born.

Upon further evaluation of these female figures, the question of whether the films could be considered feminist becomes futile, and the main question is whether the female characters have feminist characteristics. Disney has produced several types of films: live action, hybrid films of live action and animation, documentary, and animated films. Being that the topic began with *Frozen*, analyzing solely Disney animated films from 1950 to 2013 seems appropriate. The

¹ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

research begins in 1950 with the film *Cinderella* (1950). The character Cinderella is the epitome of the traditional female character. She is confined to the domestic sphere through cleaning and cooking for everyone in the household as a maid, and the Prince, a male character, makes her his wife and confines her to an aristocratic version of the domestic sphere as a wife and princess.² The inclusion of films from the '90s is important because these films impacted Generation X and Y. The analysis ends in 2013 with the release of *Frozen*.

The female characters in the analysis include: princesses, sisters, villainesses, orphans, and anthropomorphized animals. Certain female characters, from early films, fall into the traditional woman's role, whereas some fall into the non-traditional woman's role. Traditional female figures are beautiful, domestic, and engage in a heterosexual relationship with a man as part of the 'happily ever after' trope. Non-traditional female figures are outspoken, independent, and determined, and do not have a 'happily ever after.' These non-traditional female figures are present in early films (1950-1980s), later films (1990-2000s), and current films (2010s). In this study, independence means being alone, and making decisions and acting upon them without the consent of others. The non-traditional women only need to fulfill one of these conditions to be considered independent. Their independent actions outweigh their status as being alone or not. Moreover, it is necessary to create a third category for female characters that have both traditional and non-traditional characteristics. This category is called complex. Complex female characters are both independent from and dependent on male figures, and end their tales with a 'happily ever after' heterosexual relationship. Complex female characters are in recent films from the 1990s-2010s. From 1950 to 2013, female characters in Disney animated films are categorized as traditional, non-traditional or complex figures based on their personalities, actions, appearances, and relationship status.

² *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

The man behind the mouse's, Walt Disney, influence carries on from early to recent films. To fully understand Disney animated cinema, and Walt's influence on his corporation, it is crucial to discuss his life.³ Walt was born in 1901 in Hermosa, Chicago, Illinois. When Walt was five years old, his family moved to Marceline, Missouri.⁴ In Marceline, Walt truly thrived as a child and discovered "his love" for "cartooning" and "drawing," which led him to base his future attractions on Marceline.⁵ For example, Main Street USA in Disneyland "is a reduced-scale model of the main street of Marceline."⁶ Walt spent his formative years in Marceline so it is not surprising that the small rural town "became his model of what America was in the past" and "the foundation upon which his future visions of America could rest."⁷ Walt and his siblings grew up on a farm. Walt was the youngest child; therefore, he could not help with farm work. He had an undefined amount of freedom to be able to play around the farm. With this freedom, Walt began to draw and let his imagination run wild. However, his parents never supported his drawing abilities or his cartoonist ambitions. Instead, his neighbors and other family members supported him. One neighbor even paid Walt for a mediocre drawing of his horse.⁸ Soon Walt's family moved to Kansas City due to the awful weather in Marceline and his father's poor state of health. At fifteen, Walt became separated from his parents and sister because he decided to stay in Kansas City for the summer to work with his brothers, while the rest of his family moved back to Chicago.⁹ Walt was reunited with his parents in the fall of 1917.

In 1918, when he was 17 years old, Walt left his family to go to France as part of the Red Cross Ambulance Corps. He lied about his age to be admitted to the Red Cross. Walt began to

³ "Walt" refers to the person; "Disney" refers to the corporation

⁴ Louise Krasniewz, *Walt Disney: A Biography* (Santa Barbara CA: Greenwood, 2010), 9.

⁵ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 11.

⁶ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 9.

⁷ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 9.

⁸ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 11.

⁹ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 13.

live a very independent life from his parents. In 1923, at 21, Walt moved to California to be with his brother Roy to pursue his dream of becoming a successful cartoonist.¹⁰ Walt would not give up on his dream, but he would try his hand at directing first. He sent a copy of his film *Alice's Wonderland* to a cartoon distributor named Margaret Winkler. Luckily, she loved the idea and offered Walt a contract to create more *Alice* films.¹¹ Walt and Roy soon established the Disney Brothers Studio and the rest is simply history. As Walt's career began to take off, he became even more distant from his parents. However, in 1938 tragedy struck the Disney family. Walt's mother died from carbon monoxide poisoning in the California home that Walt and Roy built for their parents. His father survived but he was never the same. Walt was only 37 years old when he lost his mother and 40 years old when his father died in 1941. Thus, he was left without parents at 40 years old.¹² Walt's distant relationship with his parents and the fact that he lost both suddenly may have influenced him to exclude certain parental figures from his films. Considering that Walt used the town of Marceline as a basis for the design of Main Street USA, it is possible that he used the lack of parental presence in his life to influence the lack of parental figures within his characters' lives.

Walt's attitude towards women can be characterized as a "mixture" of "respect and suspicion".¹³ As a child, Walt took home economics where he learned how to cook and clean. He was the only boy in the class, yet he seemed to enjoy the class.¹⁴ His mother was kind towards him and she identified him as the funny one of her children, therefore he respected women.¹⁵ However, in his teen years he became very suspicious of them because he learned in the Red

¹⁰ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 27.

¹¹ Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 32.

¹² Krasniewz, *Walt Disney*, 74.

¹³ Amy M. Davis, *Good Girls and Wicked Witches Changing Representations of Women in Disney's Feature Animation, 1937-2001*, (Bloomington, IN: John Libbey Publishing, 2007), 111-112.

¹⁴ Davis, *Good Girls*, 112.

¹⁵ Davis, *Good Girls*, 112.

Cross that women carried sexual transmitted diseases and infections, and his high school sweetheart married someone else while he was away in France.¹⁶ Throughout his entire life, Walt's opinion of women shifted back and forth from two contradictory opinions: "Woman as source of love and goodness and Woman as source of danger and duplicity."¹⁷ His polarized opinion of women can be seen in his female characters that were created during his lifetime: Cruella DeVil and Anita, Cinderella and Lady Tremaine, and Aurora and Maleficent.

In terms of his overall work, Walt hoped to create a world of escape where happy endings are possible, all is well, where children can embrace their innocence and adults can rekindle their feeling of childhood innocence. Numerous Disney animated films have a 'happily ever after' ending in which loose ends are tied up, a heterosexual relationship is established, a male saves a female, and it is all smiles with a song or two. It is important to recognize that these films are simply adaptations of fairy tales, folk tales, or myths or entirely fictional. Walt adapts the films *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, from the fairy tales of French writer Charles Perrault¹⁸ and *101 Dalmatians* from Dodie Smith's fictional book by the same name.¹⁹ Charles Perrault fairy tales depict Cinderella and Aurora as beautiful domestic beings as well.²⁰ Disney's villainess Cruella differs greatly from Smith's beautiful, glamorous, and married Cruella.²¹ The Disney Corporation's later films are based on Brothers Grimm's fairy tales and Danish writer Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tales.²² This world of escape that Walt hoped to create, via his

¹⁶ Davis, *Good Girls*, 112.

¹⁷ Davis, *Good Girls*, 112.

¹⁸ History Channel, "Disney's Cinderella Opens," History.com, accessed September 20, 2016, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/disneys-cinderella-opens>.

¹⁹ Catherine Spooner, "The Lady Is a Vamp: Cruella De Vil and the Cultural Politics of Fur," in *Fashion Talks: Undressing the Power of Style*, eds. Shira Tarrant and Marjorie Jolles (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), 165.

²⁰ History Channel, "Disney's Cinderella Opens."

²¹ Spooner, "The Lady Is a Vamp," 170-171.

²² Susan Hines and Brenda Ayres, "Introduction: (He)gemony Cricket! Why in the World Are We Still Watching Disney," in *The Emperor's Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney's Magic Kingdom*, ed. Brenda Ayres (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 4.

adaptations, for his audiences is seen in Disney World's marketing as the 'happiest place on Earth.' Walt's legacy lives on despite his death in 1966. The Disney Corporation continues to capitalize on this idea of a world of escape where happiness is inevitable and where one can feel like a child again.²³

Disney animated cinema deeply impacts children, adolescents and young women and men in terms of gender roles, gender stereotypes, and sexuality. Scott Richardson discusses this phenomenon when commenting about an interaction with a student in his college course: "This was not the first time that I encountered women (or men) in love with Disney movies. These fairytales were deeply significant to their childhood."²⁴ Richardson goes on to discuss the detrimental impact that Disney animated cinema has on women in terms of Disney female characters demonstrating that "they are in need of a man.... Disney tales are heteronormative;" therefore the message to young girls is this: the only acceptable form of sexuality is heterosexuality.²⁵ Moreover, this heterosexual relationship message to young girls indicates an even more disturbing trend: the highest achievement any girl can accomplish in life is landing a man and getting married. Disney animated cinema has imposed this idea on young women from the very beginning in films like *Cinderella* (1950) and *The Little Mermaid* (1989). Both films focus on female characters trying to get a man and end with them getting married to that man. Neither of these characters is focusing on career goals. Instead, their entire goal in each film is to get the man to marry them. Richardson elaborates that because Disney cinema is a form of media, this media has created a limiting image of what it means to be feminine and masculine, thereby creating gender stereotypes and, subsequently, gender roles that young men and women

²³ Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells, eds., *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 45-47, 133.

²⁴ Scott Richardson, "Blurred Lines of a Different Kind: Sexism, Sex, Media and Kids," in *Gender & Pop Culture: A Text-Reader*, eds. Adrienne M. Trier-Bieniek and Patricia Leavy (Rotterdam: Sense, 2014), 27.

²⁵ Richardson, "Blurred Lines of a Different Kind," 28-29.

must adhere to.²⁶ These rigid gender roles can be destructive and harmful to young men and women.

Another key message that Disney animated cinema imposes upon young women is the idea of creating a traditional family. The traditional family means having a mom, a dad and children. Non-traditional families are single parents, either a single mother or father who have children. Susan Hines and Brenda Ayres speak to this inescapable message in Disney animated cinema: “Despite the dependence that the Disney child or adolescent animated characters seem to have, they inevitably desire (more than anything) a [traditional] family.” For example, in *The Little Mermaid* (1989) Ariel’s mother does not exist.²⁷ Her father, King Triton, is a single father with multiple children. Ariel runs away from her non-traditional family to create a traditional family “in which she can be the mother.”²⁸ Non-traditional families in Disney animated cinema are presented as dysfunctional such as Cinderella’s family in which she lacks a father and a loving mother.²⁹ Cinderella flees from this non-traditional family as well and marries a prince to create her traditional family where she can be a loving mother presumably. Therefore, Disney animated cinema imposes another message upon young women: they must become mothers and create and nurture a traditional family. Disney is also showing that heterosexuality is the only acceptable form of sexuality. Once again, Disney animated cinema is imposing traditional gender roles and instilling gender stereotypes upon young women.

Based on the study, there are two phases of changing representation of female figures in Disney animated cinema. The first phase is from traditional female figures to complex female figures. Early Disney animated films (1950s to 1970s) tend to have female characters that

²⁶ Richardson, “Blurred Lines of a Different Kind,” 27-52.

²⁷ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²⁸ Hines and Ayres, “Introduction: (He)gemony Cricket!” 6.

²⁹ Hines and Ayres, “Introduction: (He)gemony Cricket!” 7.

feminist scholars have classified as traditional female figures. These female characters reflect what is expected of a traditional woman during the time period in which the film was released. Traditional female characters are beautiful, domestic, and engage in a heterosexual relationship with a man. The traditional female figures in this study are Cinderella, a maid turned princess, from *Cinderella* (1950), Lady, a domesticated female dog, from *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), Aurora (Sleeping Beauty), a princess, from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and Duchess, a domesticated cat, from *The Aristocats* (1970).

Various authors in the 1995 edited collection *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* characterize and define the traditional woman that Disney constructs throughout their films. According to Chris Cuomo, the traditional woman is a nurturing “caregiver,” she is a “sacrificial” wife, she resides in the “domestic” sphere, she does not defy “prescribed gender roles,” she is feminine, maternal, dependent, and docile.³⁰ For example, Amanda Putnam argues that Cinderella embodies the traditional woman in that she is the caregiver of the home, she cooks and cleans, she resides in the domestic sphere, and she is feminine in her appearance. Cinderella is very feminine because she “wears low, scoop-necked dresses that emphasize a small waist and rounded bust.”³¹ She is also docile and dependent on the Prince to save her from her evil stepmother. Even more so, she sacrifices her time and happiness by ensuring her evil stepmother and stepsisters are content. She eventually marries a male partner who is the Prince and becomes a wife and a princess. Thus, Cinderella is the epitome of the traditional woman in Disney animation.

³⁰ Chris Cuomo, “Spinsters in Sensible Shoes: *Mary Poppins* and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*,” in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 214-215.

³¹ Amanda Putnam, “Mean Ladies: Transgendered Villains in Disney Films,” in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2013), 149.

From 1989-2013 the completely traditional female figure transitions into a complex female figure. Complex female figures have both traditional and non-traditional characteristics. Complex female figures are, early in a film, independent from male figures, and outspoken, but later in a film, they are dependent on male figures and they end their tale beside a man. It is noteworthy that the male characters alongside the protagonist traditional and complex female figures must get married as well. However, the expectation for men to get married does not carry the same weight as it does for women. The marriage expectation is highly gendered to the degree that if a woman does not get married then she has failed as woman and she subsequently does not achieve a 'happily ever after.' The shift towards complex female representation begins with Ariel, a mermaid princess, in 1989. The complex female characters are Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Belle, a captured intelligent French woman, from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Jasmine, an Arabian princess, from *Aladdin* (1992), Meg, a woman who sold her soul to Hades, from *Hercules* (1997), Mulan, a Chinese woman who impersonates a male soldier, from *Mulan* (1998), Jane an English research assistant, from *Tarzan* (1999), Tiana, a hard-working African-American waitress turned princess, from *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), Rapunzel, a princess, from *Tangled* (2010), and Anna, a princess, from *Frozen* (2013).

Complex female figures are making their way into the public sphere, towards non-traditional status, however, their heterosexual relationships and dependence on men continues to link them to the private sphere, or the traditional role. For example, Jane from *Tarzan* (1999) is a complex female character because she lives a non-traditional life outside the home, however she is under the control of a couple of patriarchal figures throughout the film. She accompanies her father on an expedition to the African jungle in a large yellow Victorian dress with fashionable boots which is very feminine, traditional attire. Later, she becomes independent by shedding her

large cumbersome British dress for a more practical blouse and skirt. Nevertheless, she has traditional characteristics that continue through the film; she is dependent on patriarchal male characters such as her father and her male partner, Tarzan.³² At the end of the film, she ends up gaining Tarzan as a male-partner. In the work, *Good Girls and Wicked Witches Changing Representations of Women in Disney's Feature Animation*, Amy Davis examines Jane's characterization. Davis comments on Jane's appearance that adds to her complexity. In the beginning of the film, she wears a large yellow Victorian dress with her hair tied up. In the middle of the film, she replaces her large dress for "a simple skirt and blouse."³³ At the end of the film, she is wearing even less clothing: "she is dressed in what could best be described as a leather mini-skirt and bra combo."³⁴ Moreover, Jane's actions throughout the film could classify her as a complex female character. She decides to stay in the jungle with Tarzan with the approval of her father. She chooses to leave the domestic sphere and live her life in the public sphere (the jungle acts a public sphere) even if it is under the approval of her father.

The second phase is from negative to positive non-traditional female representation. Non-traditional women are present throughout the Disney film timeline in this study. Non-traditional women are all independent, outspoken and determined. In early Disney, animated cinema (1950s-1980s), non-traditional women are classified as evil and masculine in appearance. These women are Lady Tremaine, Cinderella's evil stepmother from *Cinderella* (1950), Maleficent, an evil fairy, from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), Cruella DeVil, an evil fashionista, from *101 Dalmatians* (1961), Ursula, an evil sea witch, from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Yzma, an evil advisor to an emperor, from *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), Mother Gothel, Rapunzel's evil phony mother from *Tangled* (2010). In later Disney, animated cinema (1990s-2013) non-traditional

³² *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

³³ Davis, *Good Girls*, 190.

³⁴ Davis, *Good Girls*, 202-203.

women are characterized as inherently good and feminine in appearance. The positive female figure representation begins with Pocahontas, a Native-American princess. The positive women are Pocahontas, from *Pocahontas* (1995), Nani, a young Hawaiian woman, from *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), Helen Parr, a shape-shifting super heroine wife, and mom, from *The Incredibles* (2004), a Disney and Pixar film, Merida, a Scottish princess, from *Brave* (2012), a Disney-Pixar film, and Elsa, queen of Arendelle with ice powers, from *Frozen* (2013).

Non-traditional women in early Disney animated films (1950s-1980s) are demonized as evil women or villainesses, while traditional women in these same films have been glorified as heroines. For example, Lady Tremaine is characterized as a negative non-traditional woman because she is evil, masculine in appearance, independent, outspoken and determined. Lady Tremaine is masculine in appearance with her sharp features on her face. Throughout the film, she commits vicious acts towards Cinderella. She is also single because her husband, Cinderella's father, dies at the beginning of the film. In one of the final scenes of the film, Lady Tremaine makes an independent decision to lock Cinderella in her room so that the Duke would not find her nor let her try on the slipper. Cinderella yells to Lady Tremaine from the inside of her room: "Let me out! You must let me out!"³⁵ Lady Tremaine is determined to ruin Cinderella's life at all costs to make sure one of her own daughters marries the Prince. In another scene, Lady Tremaine is outspoken towards the Duke. She tells him not to pay attention to Cinderella: "Pay no attention to her."³⁶ A masculine, single, outspoken, and determined woman like Lady Tremaine in 1950 is surely classified as a bad example for young women. Cinderella is praised as a good example because she is beautiful, domestic, and she engages in a heterosexual relationship.

³⁵ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

³⁶ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

Fortunately, in later Disney animated cinema (1995-2013), there is a shift towards positive non-traditional female characters. For example, Pocahontas is feminine in appearance and beautiful; she is inherently good, while also being independent, determined and outspoken. She embodies Disney's white woman ideal beauty standards: she has a soft face, a rounded chin, a tiny waist, a bosom that shows her cleavage, long slender legs, and a more defined hourglass figure. Her body is reminiscent of Cinderella's hourglass shape body. Pocahontas is also inherently good because she tries to make peace between her people and the English settlers by any means necessary including by risking her own life. She is independent, determined and outspoken as well. She makes the decision to stay with her people and lets her love interest, John Smith, go back to England without her. In the beginning of the film, she is determined to show John that her people are not savages via the song "Colors of the Wind." She is very outspoken especially when she defies her father in one of the final scenes to save John's life. She yells at her father: "If you kill him, you'll have to kill me too!"³⁷ Positive non-traditional women are adored unlike their negative non-traditional counterparts. Refer to Figure 3 in the Appendix to see a chart of the female characters that are categorized as traditional, complex, or non-traditional within the nineteen films selected for analysis. It is imperative to understand that the ending scenes of these films also greatly affect the female figures' categorization.

The two phases have occurred due to the various historical events surrounding the production and release of the films including World War II, the Cold War, and due to the impact of consumer feminism. Animated female characters in the 1950s to early 1970s reinforce Cold War values of modest femininity, devotion to the family, and the woman's role as a domestic being within the family. Most of the "princesses" of the 1990s-2010s reflect changes brought about by feminist activist efforts of the 1960s-1970s, which shows Disney corporations attempt

³⁷ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

to incorporate multicultural and feminist ideals in their representations of heroines. With recent positive portrayals of independent female characters, Disney has experimented with representing non-traditional families, which are increasingly prevalent in 21st century America. The recent rise of positive portrayals of independent female characters in Disney animated cinema is in part due to the phenomena of consumer feminism. Consumer feminism is “about branding feminism as an identity that everyone can and should” buy.³⁸ Thus, Disney has incorporated these independent positive female characters in their films recently to capitalize on feminism.

The following chapters analyze traditional, complex, and non-traditional female figures. The first chapter explores the traditional female figures and discusses the reasoning behind why these figures were celebrated in early Disney animated cinema based on historical events surrounding their productions and release dates. The second chapter examines the shift from traditional to complex female figures and identifies what makes them ‘complex’ in comparison to the traditional female representation that was enforced to fight against the anxiety of the Cold War. The third chapter analyzes the shift from negative to positive non-traditional female representation based on feminist ideals and the impact of consumer feminism. The study concludes with an examination of the future of Disney female figures based on current Disney films and media such as *Moana* (2016), *Elena of Avalor* (2016) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). It is crucial to analyze what these Disney animated female figures, past and present, represent for women of all ages.

³⁸ Andi Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists ONCE: From Riot Grrrl to CoverGirl®, the Buying and Selling of a Political Movement*, (New York: PublicAffairs, 2016), 74.

Appendix

<u>All Disney/Pixar Films Produced Since 1950</u>	<u>Year Released</u>
Cinderella	1950
Treasure Island	1950
Alice in Wonderland	1951
The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men	1952
Peter Pan	1953
The Sword and the Rose	1953
The Living Desert	1953
Rob Roy, the Highland Rogue	1954
The Vanishing Prairie	1954
20,000 Leagues Under the Sea	1954
Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier	1955
Lady and the Tramp	1955
The African Lion	1955
The Littlest Outlaw	1955
The Great Locomotive Chase	1956
Davy Crockett and the River Pirates	1956
Secrets of Life	1956
Westward Ho the Wagons!	1956
Johnny Tremain	1957
Perri	1957
Old Yeller	1957
The Light in the Forest	1958
White Wilderness	1958
Tonka	1958
Sleeping Beauty	1959
The Shaggy Dog	1959
Darby O'Gill and the Little People	1959
Third Man on the Mountain	1959
Jungle Cat	1959
Toby Tyler	1960
Kidnapped	1960
Pollyanna	1960
Ten Who Dared	1960
Swiss Family Robinson	1960
One Hundred and One Dalmatians	1961
The Absent-Minded Professor	1961
The Parent Trap	1961
Nikki, Wild Dog of the North	1961
Greyfriars Bobby	1961

Babes in Toyland	1961
Moon Pilot	1962
Bon Voyage!	1962
Big Red	1962
Almost Angels	1962
The Legend of Lobo	1962
In Search of the Castaways	1962
Son of Flubber	1963
Miracle of the White Stallions	1963
Savage Sam	1963
Summer Magic	1963
The Incredible Journey	1963
The Sword in the Stone	1963
A Tiger Walks	1964
The Misadventures of Merlin Jones	1964
The Three Lives of Thomasina	1964
The Moon-Spinners	1964
Mary Poppins	1964
Emil and the Detectives	1964
Those Calloways	1965
The Monkey's Uncle	1965
That Darn Cat!	1965
The Ugly Dachshund	1966
Lt. Robin Crusoe, U.S.N.	1966
The Fighting Prince of Donegal	1966
Follow Me, Boys!	1966
Monkeys, Go Home!	1967
The Adventures of Bullwhip Griffin	1967
The Gnome-Mobile	1967
The Jungle Book	1967
Charlie, the Lonesome Cougar	1967
The Happiest Millionaire	1967
Blackbeard's Ghost	1968
The One and Only, Genuine, Original Family Band	1968
Never a Dull Moment	1968
The Horse in the Gray Flannel Suit	1968
The Love Bug	1968
Smith!	1968
Rascal	1969
The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes	1969
King of the Grizzlies	1970
The Boatniks	1970

The Wild Country	1970
The AristoCats	1970
The Barefoot Executive	1971
Scandalous John	1971
The Million Dollar Duck	1971
Bedknobs and Broomsticks	1971
The Biscuit Eater	1972
Now You See Him, Now You Don't	1972
Napoleon and Samantha	1972
Run, Cougar, Run	1972
Snowball Express	1972
The World's Greatest Athlete	1973
Charley and the Angel	1973
One Little Indian	1973
Robin Hood	1973
Superdad	1973
Herbie Rides Again	1974
The Bears and I	1974
The Castaway Cowboy	1974
The Island at the Top of the World	1974
The Strongest Man in the World	1975
Escape to Witch Mountain	1975
The Apple Dumpling Gang	1975
One of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing	1975
The Best of Walt Disney's True-Life Adventures	1975
Ride a Wild Pony	1975
No Deposit, No Return	1976
Treasure of Matecumbe	1976
Gus	1976
The Shaggy D.A.	1976
Freaky Friday	1976
Escape from the Dark	1977
The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh	1977
A Tale of Two Critters	1977
The Rescuers	1977
Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo	1977
Pete's Dragon	1977
Candleshoe	1977

Return from Witch Mountain	1978
The Cat from Outer Space	1978
Hot Lead and Cold Feet	1978
The North Avenue Irregulars	1979
The Apple Dumpling Gang Rides Again	1979
Unidentified Flying Oddball	1979
The Black Hole	1979
Midnight Madness	1980
The Watcher in the Woods	1980
Herbie Goes Bananas	1980
The Last Flight of Noah's Ark	1980
Popeye	1980
The Devil and Max Devlin	1981
Amy	1981
Dragonslayer	1981
The Fox and the Hound	1981
Condorman	1981
Night Crossing	1982
Tron	1982
Tex	1982
Trenchcoat	1983
Something Wicked This Way Comes	1983
Never Cry Wolf	1983
Return to Oz	1985
The Black Cauldron	1985
The Journey of Natty Gann	1985
One Magic Christmas	1985
The Great Mouse Detective	1986
Flight of the Navigator	1986
Benji the Hunted	1987
Return to Snowy River	1988
Oliver & Company	1988
Honey, I Shrunk the Kids	1989
Cheetah	1989
The Little Mermaid	1989
DuckTales the Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp	1990
The Rescuers Down Under	1990
White Fang	1991

Shipwrecked	1991
Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken	1991
The Rocketeer	1991
Beauty and the Beast	1991
Newsies	1992
Honey, I Blew Up the Kid	1992
The Mighty Ducks	1992
Aladdin	1992
The Muppet Christmas Carol	1992
Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey	1993
A Far Off Place	1993
The Adventures of Huck Finn	1993
Hocus Pocus	1993
Cool Runnings	1993
The Three Musketeers	1993
Iron Will	1994
Blank Check	1994
D2: The Mighty Ducks	1994
White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf	1994
The Lion King	1994
Angels in the Outfield	1994
Squanto: A Warrior's Tale	1994
<i>The Santa Clause</i> ^{TSC}	1994
The Jungle Book	1994
Heavyweights	1995
Man of the House	1995
Tall Tale	1995
A Goofy Movie	1995
Pocahontas	1995
Operation Dumbo Drop	1995
A Kid in King Arthur's Court	1995
The Big Green	1995
Frank and Ollie	1995
Toy Story	1995
Tom and Huck	1995
Muppet Treasure Island	1996
Homeward Bound II: Lost in San Francisco	1996
James and the Giant Peach	1996

The Hunchback of Notre Dame	1996
First Kid	1996
D3: The Mighty Ducks	1996
101 Dalmatians	1996
That Darn Cat	1997
Jungle 2 Jungle	1997
Hercules	1997
George of the Jungle	1997
Air Bud	1997
RocketMan	1997
Flubber	1997
Mr. Magoo	1997
Meet the Deedles	1998
Kiki's Delivery Service	1998
Mulan	1998
The Parent Trap	1998
Air Bud: Golden Receiver	1998
I'll Be Home for Christmas	1998
A Bug's Life	1998
Mighty Joe Young	1998
My Favorite Martian	1999
Doug's 1st Movie	1999
Endurance	1999
Tarzan	1999
Inspector Gadget	1999
The Straight Story	1999
Toy Story 2	1999
Fantasia 2000	1999
The Tigger Movie	2000
Dinosaur	2000
Disney's The Kid	2000
Remember the Titans	2000
102 Dalmatians	2000
The Emperor's New Groove	2000
Recess: School's Out	2001
Atlantis: The Lost Empire	2001
The Princess Diaries	2001
Max Keeble's Big Move	2001

Monsters, Inc.	2001
Snow Dogs	2002
Return to Never Land	2002
The Rookie	2002
Lilo & Stitch	2002
The Country Bears	2002
Tuck Everlasting	2002
The Santa Clause 2	2002
Treasure Planet	2002
The Jungle Book 2	2003
Piglet's Big Movie	2003
Ghosts of the Abyss	2003
Holes	2003
The Lizzie McGuire Movie	2003
Finding Nemo	2003
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl	2003
Freaky Friday	2003
Brother Bear	2003
The Haunted Mansion	2003
The Young Black Stallion	2003
Teacher's Pet	2004
Miracle	2004
Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen	2004
Home on the Range	2004
Sacred Planet	2004
Around the World in 80 Days	2004
America's Heart and Soul	2004
The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement	2004
The Incredibles	2004
National Treasure	2004
Aliens of the Deep	2005
Pooh's Heffalump Movie	2005
The Pacifier	2005
Ice Princess	2005
Herbie: Fully Loaded	2005
Sky High	2005
Valiant	2005
The Greatest Game Ever Played	2005

Chicken Little	2005
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	2005
Glory Road	2006
Roving Mars	2006
Eight Below	2006
The Shaggy Dog	2006
The Wild	2006
Cars	2006
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	2006
Invincible	2006
<i>The Nightmare Before Christmas 3D</i> ^{TNBC}	2006
The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause	2006
Bridge to Terabithia	2007
Meet the Robinsons	2007
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	2007
Ratatouille	2007
Underdog	2007
The Pixar Story	2007
The Game Plan	2007
Enchanted	2007
National Treasure: Book of Secrets	2007
Hannah Montana and Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert	2008
College Road Trip	2008
The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	2008
WALL-E	2008
Beverly Hills Chihuahua	2008
Morning Light	2008
High School Musical 3: Senior Year	2008
Roadside Romeo	2008
Bolt	2008
Bedtime Stories	2008
Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience	2009
Race to Witch Mountain	2009
Hannah Montana: The Movie	2009
Earth	2009
Trail of the Panda	2009

Up	2009
Lilly the Witch: The Dragon and the Magic Book	2009
G-Force	2009
Walt & El Grupo	2009
A Christmas Carol	2009
Old Dogs	2009
The Princess and the Frog	2009
Alice in Wonderland	2010
Waking Sleeping Beauty	2010
Oceans	2010
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	2010
Toy Story 3	2010
The Sorcerer's Apprentice	2010
The Crimson Wing: Mystery of the Flamingos	2010
Secretariat	2010
Do Dooni Chaar	2010
Tangled	2010
The Boys: The Sherman Brothers' Story	2010
Tron: Legacy	2010
Anaganaga O Dheerudu	2011
Lilly the Witch: The Journey to Mandolan	2011
Mars Needs Moms	2011
Zokkomon	2011
African Cats	2011
Prom	2011
Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides	2011
Cars 2	2011
Winnie the Pooh	2011
The Muppets	2011
John Carter	2012
Chimpanzee	2012
Arjun: The Warrior Prince	2012
Brave	2012
The Odd Life of Timothy Green	2012
Frankenweenie	2012
Wreck-It Ralph	2012
Oz the Great and Powerful	2013

Wings of Life	2013
Monsters University	2013
The Lone Ranger	2013
Planes	2013
Frozen	2013
Saving Mr. Banks	2013
Muppets Most Wanted	2014
Bears	2014
Million Dollar Arm	2014
Maleficent	2014



<u>All Disney/Pixar Animated Films Since 1950</u>	<u>Year Released</u>
Cinderella	1950
Alice in Wonderland	1951
Peter Pan	1953
Lady and the Tramp	1955
Sleeping Beauty	1959
One Hundred and One Dalmatians	1961
The Sword in the Stone	1963
The Jungle Book	1967
The Aristocats	1970
Robin Hood	1973
The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh	1977
The Rescuers	1977
The Fox and the Hound	1981
The Black Cauldron	1985
The Great Mouse Detective	1986
Who Framed Roger Rabbit	1988
Oliver & Company	1988
The Little Mermaid	1989
DuckTales the Movie	1990
The Rescuers Down Under	1990
Beauty and the Beast	1991
Aladdin	1992
The Nightmare Before Christmas	1993
The Lion King	1994
A Goofy Movie	1995
Pocahontas	1995
Toy Story	1995
James and the Giant Peach	1996
The Hunchback of Notre Dame	1996

Hercules	1997
Mulan	1998
A Bug's Life	1998
Doug's First Movie	1999
Tarzan	1999
Toy Story 2	1999
Fantasia 2000	1999
The Tigger Movie	2000
Dinosaur	2000
The Emperor's New Groove	2000
Recess: School's Out	2001
Atlantis: The Lost Empire	2001
Monsters, Inc.	2001
Return to Never Land	2002
Lilo & Stitch	2002
Spirited Away	2002
Treasure Planet	2002
The Jungle Book 2	2003
Piglet's Big Movie	2003
Finding Nemo	2003
Brother Bear	2003
Teacher's Pet	2004
Home on the Range	2004
The Incredibles	2004
Pooh's Heffalump Movie	2005
Howl's Moving Castle	2005
Valiant	2005
Chicken Little	2005
Bambi II	2006
The Wild	2006
Cars	2006
Meet the Robinsons	2007
Ratatouille	2007
WALL-E	2008
Tinker Bell	2008
Roadside Romeo	2008
Bolt	2008
Up	2009
Ponyo	2009
Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure	2009
A Christmas Carol	2009
The Princess and the Frog	2009
Toy Story 3	2010
Tales from Earthsea	2010
Tangled	2010
Gnomeo and Juliet	2011

Mars Needs Moms	2011
Cars 2	2011
Winnie the Pooh	2011
The Secret World of Arrietty	2012
Arjun: The Warrior Prince	2012
Brave	2012
Secret of the Wings	2012
Frankenweenie	2012
Wreck-It Ralph	2012
Monsters University	2013
Planes	2013
Frozen	2013
The Pirate Fairy	2014
The Wind Rises	2014
Planes: Fire & Rescue	2014



<u>Final List of Disney/Pixar Animated Films Since 1950</u>	<u>Year Released</u>
Cinderella	1950
Lady and the Tramp	1955
Sleeping Beauty	1959
101 Dalmatians	1961
The Aristocats	1970
The Little Mermaid	1989
Beauty and the Beast	1991
Aladdin	1992
Pocahontas	1995
Hercules	1997
Mulan	1998
Tarzan	1999
The Emperor's New Groove	2000
Lilo & Stitch	2002
The Incredibles	2004
The Princess and the Frog	2009
Tangled	2010
Brave	2012
Frozen	2013

Figure 1. This chart depicts the process of elimination from every Disney film ever released, to every Disney animated film created, to the final top nineteen films.

Citation: Disney. "List of Disney Films." D23. 2017. Accessed August 14, 2016.
<https://d23.com/list-of-disney-films/>

<u>Film</u>	<u>Year Released</u>	<u>Year(s) in production</u>	<u>Wave(s) of Feminism</u>	<u>Female Character in Question</u>
Cinderella	1950	1944-1950	First/Second Wave	Cinderella
Lady and the Tramp	1955	1949-1955	First/Second Wave	Lady
Sleeping Beauty	1959	1953-1958	First/Second Wave	Aurora and Maleficent
101 Dalmatians	1961	1956-1960	First/Second Wave	Cruella de Vil
The Aristocats	1970	1962?-1969	Second Wave	Marie
Robin Hood	1973	1971-1972	Second Wave	Maid Marian
The Fox and the Hound	1981	1977-1981	Second Wave	Big Mama (owl)
The Little Mermaid	1989	1987-1989	Second/Third Wave	Ariel and Ursula
Beauty and the Beast	1991	1987-1991	Second/Third Wave	Belle
Aladdin	1992	1988-1992	Third Wave	Jasmine
Pocahontas	1995	1990-1995	Third Wave	Pocahontas
Hercules	1997	1994-1997	Third Wave	Meg
Mulan	1998	1994-1998	Third Wave	Mulan
Tarzan	1999	1996-1998?	Third Wave	Jane
The Emperor's New Groove	2000	1997-1999?	Third Wave	Izma
Lilo & Stitch	2002	1999-2001?	Third/Fourth Wave	Lilo & Nani
The Incredibles	2004	2000-2004?	Fourth Wave	Helen Parr/ Elastic Girl
The Princess and the Frog	2009	2006-2009?	Fourth Wave	Tiana
Tangled	2010	2009-2010	Fourth Wave	Rapunzel
Brave	2012	2008-2012?	Fourth Wave	Merida
Frozen	2013	2011-2013	Fourth Wave	Ana and Elsa

<u>Film in footnotes</u>	<u>Year Released</u>	<u>Year(s) in production</u>	<u>Wave(s) of Feminism</u>	<u>Female Character in Question</u>
Mary Poppins	1964	1960-1963?	Second Wave	Mary Poppins
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	1988	1981-1988	Third Wave	Jessica Rabbit
Toy Story	1995	1993-1995	Third Wave	None (male dominated film)
Anastasia	1997	1992-1997?	Third Wave	Anastasia
Maleficent	2014	2012-2014	Fourth Wave	Maleficent

<u>Film</u>	<u>Sister Relationship</u>	<u>Villainess</u>	<u>Princess</u>	<u>Historical Figure</u>	<u>Folk Tale/Fairy Tale</u>
Cinderella	Yes*	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lady and the Tramp	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Sleeping Beauty	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
101 Dalmatians	No	Yes	No	No*	No
The Aristocats	No	No	No	No*	No
Robin Hood	No	No	No	Yes*	Yes
The Fox and the Hound	No	No	No	No	No
The Little Mermaid	No	No/Yes (Ursula is the villain)	Yes/No	No	Yes
Beauty and the Beast	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Aladdin	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Pocahontas	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hercules	No	No?	Yes	No	Yes
Mulan	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tarzan	No.	No	Yes	No	Yes
The Emperor's New Groove	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	No.
Lilo & Stitch	Yes.	No.	Agruably yes.	No	No
The Incredibles	No.	No	Agruably, yes.	No	No
The Princess and the Frog	No	No	Yes	No.	Yes
Tangled	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	Yes
Brave	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	No.
Frozen	Yes*	No.	Yes.	No.	Yes

<u>Film in footnotes</u>	<u>Sister Relationship</u>	<u>Villainess</u>	<u>Princess</u>	<u>Historical Figure</u>	<u>Folk/Fairy Tale</u>
Mary Poppins	No indication	No indication	Possibly	No.	Yes.
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	No indication	No	No	No.	No.*
Toy Story	No	No	No	No	No
Anastasia	No.	No	Yes	Yes.	No.
Maleficent	No	Yes	No	No	Yes.

Film

<u>Film</u>	<u>Orphan Element</u>
Cinderella	Yes. Her birth parents have passed and now her guardian is her evil stepmother.
Lady and the Tramp	No indication.
Sleeping Beauty	No. Her parents are a king and queen.
101 Dalmatians	No mention of orphan status of Cruella.
The Aristocats	She has a mother but no mention of the father. An alley cat comes into play to be a father figure to her.
Robin Hood	No indication
The Fox and the Hound	No indication
The Little Mermaid	Ariel only has a father and with Ursula there is no indication of orphanage
Beauty and the Beast	No, but she only has a father not a mother
Aladdin	No, she has a father
Pocahontas	No, but she has a father
Hercules	No indication.
Mulan	No, both her parents are present.
Tarzan	Only her father is present.
The Emperor's New Groove	No indication.
Lilo & Stitch	Yes both their parents died in a car accident.
The Incredibles	No indication
The Princess and the Frog	No
Tangled	Yes, her adoptive mother tricks her into thinking her parents are dead.
Brave	No, she has both parents present.
Frozen	Yes, both their parents have passed in a boat crash.

Film in footnotes

<u>Film in footnotes</u>	<u>Orphan Element</u>
Mary Poppins	No indication
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	No indication
Toy Story	Well Buzz and Woody become lost toys
Anastasia	Yes, both her parents were killed.
Maleficent	Yes

<u>Film</u>	<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>	<u>Box Office Numbers</u>
Cinderella	Family is upper class but she is working class	\$10,000,000
Lady and the Tramp	Lady is from the upper class.	\$36,359,037
Sleeping Beauty	Family is aristocratic	\$36,479,905
101 Dalmatians	Upper middle class? Unclear	\$14,000,000
The Aristocats	Upper class	\$10,100,000
Robin Hood	Lower class/working class	32,056,467
The Fox and the Hound	She is an owl so I am not sure	\$39,900,000
The Little Mermaid	Ariel would be of the aristocracy since she is royalty however, Ursula might be of the working class	\$84,355,863
Beauty and the Beast	Working class	145,863,363
Aladdin	Jasmine is of the noble class	217,350,219
Pocahontas	Pocahontas, I believe is part of the nobility class because her father is chief.	141,579,773
Hercules	She is of the middle class I believe.	99,112,101
Mulan	She is of the working class I believe.	120,620,254
Tarzan	Jane seems to be from the aristocratic class.	171,091,819
The Emperor's New Groove	Izma seems to be of the upper class because she works for the emperor.	89,302,687
Lilo & Stitch	Nani and Lilo are from the middle class status.	145,794,338
The Incredibles	She is of the socioeconomic middle class.	261,441,092
The Princess and the Frog	Tiana is from the working class.	104,400,899
Tangled	Rapunzel is from the working class even though she is actually from the nobility.	200,821,936
Brave	Merida is from the noble class.	237,283,207
Frozen	Both sisters are from the nobility class as both are princesses.	400,738,009

<u>Film in footnotes</u>	<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>	<u>Box Office Numbers</u>
Mary Poppins	Mary Poppins is from the working class I believe.	31,000,000
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	Jessica is from the middle class.	156,452,370
Toy Story	Andy's family is of the middle class.	191,796,233
Anastasia	Anastasia is originally from the noble class however she falls into the working class.	58,406,347
Maleficent	It is very unclear	241,410,378

Figure 2. This chart has been broken up into several parts as the numerous categories did not allow the chart to fit on one page. This chart addresses the similarities and patterns that exist throughout the various Disney animated films.

<u>Traditional</u>	<u>Complex</u>	<u>Negative Non- Traditional</u>	<u>Positive Non-Traditional</u>
Cinderella	Ariel	Lady Tremaine	Pocahontas
Lady	Belle	Maleficent	Nani
Aurora	Jasmine	Cruella DeVil	Helen Parr/Mrs. Incredible/Elastigirl
Duchess	Meg	Ursula	Merida
	Anastasia	Yzma	Elsa
	Mulan	Mother Gothel	
	Jane		
	Tiana		
	Rapunzel		
	Anna		

Figure 3. This chart depicts the female characters in question either being categorized as traditional, complex, or non-traditional from the final nineteen Disney films chosen for analysis. They are listed in chronological order.

Chapter 1: The Traditional Disney Animated Female Characters

To understand the representation of Disney female characters of the past 25 years (1990-2013), it is vital to explore the Disney women of the past (1950-1970). Several female figures fall into the traditional female category: Cinderella from *Cinderella* (1950), Lady from *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), Aurora (Sleeping Beauty) from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), Duchess from *The Aristocats* (1970).³⁹ These female characters share common characteristics that make them traditional: beauty, domesticity, and heterosexuality. Each female character engages in a ‘happily ever after’ of a heterosexual relationship with a male character via marriage.

Cinderella (1950) arrived on the big screen in 1950. The film made \$10,000,000 domestically in 1950 and the lifetime domestic gross to date is \$93,141,149. *Cinderella* (1950) was in production for six years.⁴⁰ The film is based on “Charles Perrault’s French version of the fairy tale,” which was inspired by the Brothers Grimm’s fairy tale *Cinderella*.⁴¹ Walt Disney reimagined Charles Perrault’s version of the fairy tale to be suitable for an American audience of the 1940s-1950s.

Cinderella has several feminine characteristics that make her the epitome of the traditional female character. First and foremost, her beauty is an undeniable feminine characteristic. Cinderella has long curved eyelashes, pink rosy lips, a button nose, crystal blue eyes, and a slender face (Figure 4). Cinderella’s physical appearance sets the tone for the appearance of traditional female characters that come after her. In the beginning of the film, the narrator describes Cinderella’s stepmother’s, Lady Tremaine, jealousy of Cinderella: “[. . .] cold,

³⁹ Other traditional female figures from this time period are Maid Marian from *Robin Hood* (1973), and Big Mama from *The Fox and the Hound* (1981)

⁴⁰ IMDb.com, Inc., “Cinderella (1950),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=cinderella1950.htm>.

⁴¹ History Channel, “Disney’s Cinderella Opens,” History.com, accessed September 20, 2016, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/disneys-cinderella-opens>.

cruel, and bitterly jealous of Cinderella's charm and beauty."⁴² In "Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies," Elizabeth Bell explains that in Charles Perrault's version he describes Cinderella as "'a hundred times more beautiful than her sisters.'"⁴³ Bell discusses how the early Disney princesses such as Cinderella, Snow White, and Aurora were based on the ideal of feminine beauty during the mid-twentieth century: "Disney artists sketched the flesh and blood on these folktales templates with contemporaneous popular images of feminine beauty and youth, their sources ranging from the silent screen to glossy pin-ups."⁴⁴ Cinderella's beauty is based on what was considered beautiful in the late 1940s through the early 1950s. The later traditional female characters, Lady, Aurora, and Duchess, are all beautiful as well.

Another characteristic that Cinderella embodies is domesticity, which in turn adds to her role as a traditional female character. Cinderella's role resides in the domestic sphere: the home. In *Mean Ladies: Transgendered Villains*, Amanda Putnam notes that most Disney princesses have "pre-occupations with domestic work," which makes them "ultra-feminine."⁴⁵ In the film, Cinderella's primary outfit features a dress with an apron: the ultimate symbol of domesticity (Figure 5). Throughout the film, Cinderella cleans, makes food for her stepmother and stepsisters, or feeds the animals in the home and in the barn. In one scene, Cinderella is scrubbing the floor and singing at the same time. Most of her time is spent in the home, which is essentially the domestic sphere. Putnam comments that Cinderella, Snow White, and Sleeping

⁴² *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

⁴³ Elizabeth Bell, "Somatexts at the Disney Shops: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies," in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 109.

⁴⁴ Bell, "Somatexts at the Disney Shops," 109.

⁴⁵ Amanda Putnam, "Mean Ladies: Transgendered Villains in Disney Films," in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2013), 150.

Beauty “clean houses while smiling, seemingly enjoying the work”⁴⁶ (Figure 6). Later Disney traditional female characters also operate within the home whether they are cleaning, cooking, training to be a respectable lady, or conducting maternal duties.⁴⁷

The final characteristic that truly makes Cinderella a traditional female character, and that influences subsequent traditional female characters, is her marriage to the Prince at the end of her tale as part of her ‘happily ever after.’ At the end of the film, Cinderella wears a white wedding dress, and she and the Prince ride off in a carriage while wedding bells are ringing (Figure 7). Once Cinderella marries the Prince she becomes a princess. In the last scene, the camera pans out to show a page in a book, representing Cinderella’s story, and the page says: “and they lived happily ever after.”⁴⁸ Putnam analyzes the trend of a heterosexual relationship at the end of Disney animated films that these female characters engage in: “the appearance and behavior of male-female leads emphasize their heterosexuality, and that flirtation is rewarded; most of the princesses marry their prince at the end of the film, underscoring the goals of heterosexual attraction, love, marriage, and eventually, family.”⁴⁹ The trend of heterosexual relationships indicates to viewers that this is the only acceptable form of sexuality. Cinderella’s beauty, her domesticity, and her ‘happily ever after’ heterosexual relationship make her the epitome of the traditional female character in Disney animated cinema.

A traditional female character must be beautiful whether she is human or anthropomorphized. Cinderella’s influence carries over into the character of Lady from *Lady and the Tramp* (1955). *Lady and the Tramp* made \$36,359,037 in 1955 and to date has netted

⁴⁶ Putnam, “Mean Ladies,” 150.

⁴⁷ See Lady, Aurora, and Duchess.

⁴⁸ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

⁴⁹ Putnam, “Mean Ladies,” 151.

\$93,602,326.⁵⁰ The film's origins differ from that of its animated predecessors. The film is based on a combination of a storyline developed by Joe Grant, a Disney animator, based on his dog named Lady, and the short story "Happy Dan the Whistling Dog" by Ward Greene.⁵¹ Walt Disney purchased the rights for "Happy Dan the Whistling Dog" in 1943.⁵² The film's production took place from 1943 to 1950.⁵³ Like Cinderella, Lady carries similar attributes of a traditional female character: beauty, domesticity, and her 'happily ever after' with Tramp, her male street-smart mate.

Lady is a beautiful dog. However, as a dog, particularly a cocker spaniel, Lady's beauty is presented differently. In the first scene, Darling, one of Lady's owners says, "What a perfectly beautiful little lady."⁵⁴ Lady's beauty is further accentuated with her long-curved eyelashes and her ears that resemble curly red hair (Figure 8). It is crucial to recognize that Darling does not have real name throughout the entire film. Instead, everyone, even her girlfriends, call her "Darling."⁵⁵ Thus, Darling is valued less than Jim, her husband, because Jim's name is mentioned whereas Darling does not have a real name at all. The gender inequality in this name giving or lack thereof cannot be ignored. Reverting to Lady's beauty, in another scene, when Tramp and Lady are having an Italian dinner, Lady bats her eyelashes as she gazes into Tramp's eyes. In the same scene, the viewer can see that Lady's ears resemble long voluminous red hair as well. In "Gender Ideology in Disney Beast Fables," Stephanie Mastrostefano believes that if

⁵⁰ IMDb.com, Inc., "Lady and the Tramp (1950)," Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed October 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=ladyandthetramp.htm>.

⁵¹ Stephanie Mastrostefano, "Gender and Ideology in Disney's Beast Fables," *Rhode Island College Digital Commons @ RIC*, April 12, 2013, accessed January 10, 2017, http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1086&context=honors_projects, 12.

⁵² Mastrostefano, "Gender and Ideology," 31.

⁵³ IMDb.com. "Lady and the Tramp (1955)-Trivia." IMDb. 2016. Accessed October 25, 2016. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048280/trivia>.

⁵⁴ *Lady and the Tramp*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955) film.

⁵⁵ *Lady and the Tramp*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955) film.

the animal protagonist bats her eye-lashes then the animal protagonist's gender must be female.⁵⁶ The batting of the eyelashes is a very feminine action that emphasizes one's beauty. Despite her canine identity, Lady's beauty echoes that of a female human.

Lady is a domestic being both literally and figuratively. Lady's place is in the home. In the film, Lady takes on domestic duties; she protects and takes care of her human family. For example, in one scene Lady protects the human baby by telling Tramp to get a rat out of the baby's room. Moreover, Lady is literally a domesticated dog: she wears an expensive collar that symbolizes her domestication (Figure 9). Her status as a domesticated pet plays on her role as the "domestic" female figure, who is expected to reside in the domestic sphere.⁵⁷ Tramp is not domesticated; he is a stray. Throughout the movie, Lady leaves the home to go on adventures with Tramp but still maintains ties to the home and honors her domestic role. In one scene, Lady justifies not running away with Tramp because she must adhere to her domestic responsibilities to her human family: "But who'd watch over the baby?" Tramp accedes to her wishes and takes her home to watch over the baby, thereby honoring her domestic duties. At the end of the film, Lady further upholds domesticity by becoming a mother. Now she can take care of her own children after she has taken care of her owners' human baby. Like Cinderella, Lady is a domestic being. Lady is one of the many traditional Disney female characters that "are domestic."⁵⁸

Like Cinderella, Lady engages in a heterosexual relationship with a male character, Tramp, at the end of her tale. She has a male partner as part of her 'happily ever after.' In the last scene of the film, Lady and Tramp are depicted side by side. Both wear collars, both are domesticated, and both care for their puppies, indicating implicitly that they are now 'married'

⁵⁶ Mastrostefano, "Gender and Ideology," 12.

⁵⁷ Mia Adessa Towbin, Shelley A. Haddock, Toni Schindler Zimmerman, Lori K. Lund and Litsa Renee Tanner, "Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films," in *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 15, no. 4 (Fort Collins, CO: The Haworth Press Inc., 2008), 31.

⁵⁸ Towbin, et al., "Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation," 31.

(Figure 10). Like Lady, Tramp is now a domesticated animal and tied to the home. Evidently, animals are not excluded from the heterosexual relationship Disney imposes on its female characters as part of the ‘happily ever after’ trope. Putnam describes how the human female characters are not the only ones that engage in the heterosexual relationship; animal female characters are involved in this display of heteronormativity as well. Putnam states, “Clearly, Disney’s royalty, whether human or animal, portray a safely traditional heterosexual view of the world.”⁵⁹ Lady participates in the heterosexual relationship as part of her role as a traditional female character. Like her traditional Disney sisters before her, and after, Lady is “likely to marry.”⁶⁰ Despite being a dog, Lady is anthropomorphized to look like an attractive human female, to fulfill the domestic role, and to participate in a heterosexual relationship like her Disney female human counterparts.

In 1959, Disney returned to fairy tales for the basis of *Sleeping Beauty*, with a female human heroine, a princess, who embodied traditional womanhood. The public knows Aurora as Sleeping Beauty. However, her actual name is Aurora. In its first year, the film made \$36,479,805 domestically and its lifetime gross is \$51,600,000.⁶¹ The film was in production from 1953 to 1958 and its origin is like *Cinderella*’s origin.⁶² The film is based on Charles Perrault’s French fairy-tale called *La Belle au bois dormant*.⁶³ Aurora is quite traditional in that she is beautiful, devoted to work in and near her home, and destined to marry Prince Phillip as part of her ‘happily ever after’.

⁵⁹ Putnam, “Mean Ladies,” 151.

⁶⁰ Towbin, et al., “Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation,” 31.

⁶¹ IMDb.com, Inc., “Sleeping Beauty (1959),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 23, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=sleepingbeauty.htm>.

⁶² IMDb.com. “Sleeping Beauty (1959) Box Office/business for,” accessed September 23, 2016. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0053285/business?ref_=tt_ql_dt_4.

⁶³ Tison Pugh and Susan Lynn. Aronstein, *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy-Tale and Fantasy Past* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 48.

Aurora's nickname, Sleeping Beauty, emphasizes her physical beauty. In the beginning of the film, the kingdom is celebrating her birth. The first gift that is bestowed upon her is beauty from the good fairy named Flora.⁶⁴ Aurora's status as a Disney princess makes it inevitable that she is beautiful. Therefore, it makes sense that the first gift that the film would emphasize to the audience is beauty. Some scholars have even described Aurora "as Disney's most beautiful heroine."⁶⁵ Aurora is beautiful even while she is sleeping, i.e. 'sleeping beauty' (Figure 11). Perrault's fairy tale also communicates to its reader that Aurora is beautiful and the translated French title is *The Sleeping Beauty*.⁶⁶ Aurora's beauty is one aspect that makes her a traditional female figure.

Aurora is born a princess; however, she enjoys engaging in domestic duties as well. In one scene, Aurora smiles as she cleans the cottage while holding a rag (Figure 12). Like Cinderella, Aurora takes pride in her domestic duties.⁶⁷ Throughout the film, Aurora never complains about her domestic duties while living in the cottage with the three good fairies. In the article, "Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films," Towbin, Haddock, Schindler Zimmerman, Lund, and Tanner discuss their observations of Disney animated female characters. They note that *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) joins fourteen other Disney films that emphasize a theme of women as marriageable domestic beings "portrayed in domestic roles."⁶⁸ Aurora's confinement to the domestic sphere enhances her image as a traditional female character.

Another aspect that makes Aurora a traditional female figure is her marriage to Prince Philip as part of her 'happily ever after.' The film makes a direct statement to this expectation

⁶⁴ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

⁶⁵ Bell, "Somatexts at the Disney Shops, 110.

⁶⁶ Pugh and Aronstein, *The Disney Middle Ages*, 48.

⁶⁷ Putnam, "Mean Ladies," 150.

⁶⁸ Towbin, et al., "Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation," 31.

that princes must marry princesses. In one scene, King Hubert says to his son Prince Phillip (Aurora's future husband): "You're a prince and you're going to marry a princess."⁶⁹ Male characters in Disney animated films are expected to marry as well, however female characters are more pressured to marry because that is how their marriage is tied to their achievement of a 'happily ever after.' The good fairies echo this expectation to Aurora as well. Fauna says to Aurora: "You are already betrothed. . ." Aurora responds: "Betrothed?" Merryweather reasserts Fauna's statement: "Since the day you were born." Fauna adds: "To Prince Phillip." After this statement, Aurora realizes that she is a princess and that her marriage to Prince Philip is what is expected of her. Luckily, Prince Philip happens to be the same person that she falls in love with initially in an earlier scene in the woods. Again, Disney never fails to make sure the endings are happy in this case that Aurora marries her love who happens to be the same person she is betrothed to in the first place. At the end of the film, it is implied that the two will get married as they happily dance together around the ballroom (Figure 13). Then, the ballroom transforms into a bunch of clouds resembling a heaven-like setting. Due to the implications of marriage that are sure to come to complete Aurora's tale, in one of the final scenes, the camera shows a page from her story that says: "And they lived happily ever after."⁷⁰ It is no coincidence that Cinderella's tale ends almost the exact same way in which a book page is displayed saying those same words. A 'happily ever after' must include a heterosexual marriage. Aurora is truly a traditional female figure in that she is beautiful, she bears her domestic role with pride, and she ends up marrying a man as part of her 'happily ever after.'

Before examining later examples of traditional female characters, one must explore the historical events surrounding the production and release of these films to understand why female

⁶⁹ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

⁷⁰ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

characters might be presented as traditional archetypes. The production time periods for *Cinderella*, *Lady and the Tramp*, and *Sleeping Beauty* fall under the end of WWII. Yet with an end to this war, anxiety began to erupt about the Cold War. The United States looked to the structure of the family and a woman's role within it as a maternal and domestic symbol and "as a source of social stability and prosperity."⁷¹ This anxiety and fear over nuclear arms and bomb attacks caused the public to fear the woman leaving the home, thus, destroying the stability of the family, and essentially turning social norms inside out. White men and conservative white women began to reassert and reaffirm the woman's role in the home as a wife and mother. Therefore, it is not surprising that this fear and anxiety over women breaking with traditional gender expectations is reflected in media. These Disney films portray female characters as domestic beings. These films are geared towards children, the next generation. It was important to mold the next generation of women to be domestic housekeepers and wives like their mothers to maintain social stability in a time of chaos. Also, mothers are watching these films with their daughters and are also influenced by the representation of domestic bliss evoked through these female characters' representation.

However, not all white women agreed with or could afford to be part of these mainstream expectations of a woman's place in the home post World War II. During the 1950s, many white women were involved in the workforce. For example, in 1940 only 14 percent of married white women worked whereas by 1960, 30 percent of white married women worked.⁷² Due to the prosperity of World War II, there was an abundance of job opportunities for white women, but there were also fears that women performing war work would not return to their homes. It is possible that these films were a reaction to the anxiety associated with the growing presence of

⁷¹ Ellen Carol DuBois, and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), 535.

⁷² DuBois, and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 544.

women in the public sphere. Walt himself was known to be an anti-communist and a conservative.⁷³ Therefore, it is not surprising that he would create and support traditional female characters that conservatives like him believe in. Also, Walt had either/or views about women from respecting them to being suspicious of them throughout his life.⁷⁴ Walt respected women at times because of his good relationship with mother as child, but at other times, he was suspicious of them because a female partner was unfaithful to him.⁷⁵ Walt may have created these traditional female characters out of respect for women, and to abide by his conservative views. In contrast, he may have created the villainesses, Lady Tremaine and Maleficent, in opposition to Cinderella and Aurora, to convey his suspicion of ‘bad’ women. Cinderella and Aurora may have been implemented and created as traditional figures to reassert to the public, to white women that the woman’s place is in the home.

These female characters are portraying white females. Both Cinderella and Aurora are white in their respective movies. Lady is a dog; however, she carries traditional traits associated with white women of the 1950s. Lady’s owners are both white people and they live in an upper-middle class neighborhood with “nice houses, big yards, and white picket fences.”⁷⁶ During the 1950s, much of the suburban development was segregated and for the middle class: “Many of these homes were located in new suburban developments that created a haven for the new domesticity. However, much postwar housing remained racially segregated both by law and custom.”⁷⁷ Because of the economic prosperity of WWII, more white families bought homes in suburban areas and remained racially segregated from black people. Also, all the human beings

⁷³ Davis, *Good Girls*, 114.

⁷⁴ Davis, *Good Girls*, 111.

⁷⁵ Davis, *Good Girls*, 112.

⁷⁶ Stephanie Mastrostefano, “Gender and Ideology in Disney’s Beast Fables,” *Rhode Island College Digital Commons @ RIC*, April 12, 2013, accessed January 10, 2017, http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1086&context=honors_projects, 34.

⁷⁷ Ellen Carol DuBois, and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), 536.

in the film are white people apart from the darker skinned Italian restaurant owners.⁷⁸ Lady may reflect the same race as her owners who are both white as well.⁷⁹ Therefore, it can be inferred that Lady represents a young white woman of that time.

These films could be the physical manifestation of anxiety of white women defying social norms of their gender role. By placing traditional women, Cinderella, Aurora, or female figures, Lady, at the center of these films, it becomes nearly impossible to disregard how their happy endings come about because they remain in a traditional woman's role. These films are implicitly providing a guide to women on how to achieve their 'happily ever after.' She must beautify herself, and remain domestic and in the home, therefore, a male partner would surely come into her life. Despite the films' images reasserting a traditional woman's role, white women were still involved in the workforce as single women, married women and as mothers. However, Walt Disney Productions continued to impose the image of the traditional Cold War woman as a symbol of familial stability onto the American audience.

Like Lady, Duchess from *The Aristocats* (1970) is an anthropomorphized version of a traditional woman. In production from around 1964 to 1969, *The Aristocats* was the last film approved by Walt Disney himself before his death.⁸⁰ It was also the first film that was completed after his death. The film was inspired by a true story of a family of Parisian cats that inherited a large fortune.⁸¹ In 1970, the film made \$10,100,000 and as of 2006 the film had made \$26,46,000.⁸² The film may have been one of Walt Disney Productions' last attempts to show the American public how a traditional woman should act and behave. Like her traditional

⁷⁸ *Lady and the Tramp*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955) film.

⁷⁹ *Lady and the Tramp*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955) film.

⁸⁰ IMDb.com, "The Aristocats (1970)-Trivia," IMDb, 1990, accessed September 23, 2016, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065421/trivia>.

⁸¹ IMDb.com, "The Aristocats (1970)-Trivia," IMDb, 1990, accessed September 23, 2016, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065421/trivia>.

⁸² Sheldon Hall, "Blockbusters in the 1970s" in *Contemporary American Cinema*, eds. Linda Ruth Williams, and Michael Hammond, (London: Open University Press, 2006), 176.

predecessors, especially Lady, Duchess embodies a traditional woman with her beauty, her domesticity, literally and figuratively, and her 'happily ever after' heterosexual relationship with Thomas O'Malley, an alley cat.

Duchess is dubbed beautiful even as an animal. In the first scene, Duchess's owner, Madame, says to Duchess's daughter Marie: "Marie my little one, you're going to be as beautiful as your mother [Duchess]." Madame is the first in film to characterize Duchess as beautiful. The male cat character O'Malley validates Duchess's beauty. In one scene, when O'Malley meets Duchess she bats her eyelashes at him. Her eyelashes are long and curved giving her a hyper-feminine appearance, like Lady (Figure 14). In the same scene, O'Malley flirts with Duchess by complimenting the color of her eyes. O'Malley says to Duchess: "And those eyes. Ooh. Why your eyes are like sapphires sparkling so bright,"⁸³ highlighting another beautiful quality about her appearance: her sapphire-like colored eyes (Figure 15). Lady did not have colored eyes nor did they sparkle. Duchess's eyes resemble Cinderella's eyes. Duchess has black pupils and crystal blue coloring on her iris like Cinderella (Figure 4 and Figure 15). This is no accident that Disney added this very human aspect of colored eyes to the character of Duchess. Her colored eyes link her to a human female representation. Granted, cats do have colors around their irises like humans. However, the specific coloring aligns too perfectly with Cinderella's eyes.

Duchess's beauty enhances her characterization of a traditional female character.

Like Lady, Duchess is a domesticated being both literally and figuratively. Madame owns Duchess. Duchess has a diamond-studded collar that further indicates her status as a domesticated animal. Duchess lives in a fancy mansion with her owner in France. Like Lady, Duchess's place is in the home. However, Duchess is a mother at the beginning of the film. Duchess is figuratively domestic because not only is her proper place in the home but also

⁸³ *The Aristocats*, dir. Wolfgang Reitherman (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970) film.

because she is a mother. Duchess has three kittens: Marie, Toulouse, and Beriloz. In one scene, Duchess instructs her daughter Marie that it is important that she does not physically fight with her brothers and that she must act like a proper lady. Duchess says: “Marie, darling, you must stop that. This, this is really not lady-like.” Duchess goes on to tell her children that she is training them in the fine arts so that they can “grow up to be lovely charming ladies and gentleman.” Duchess teaches Marie how to sing while she teaches Beriloz how to play the piano and Toulouse how to paint (Figure 16). In a later scene, when the kittens and Duchess are thrown into a river in a basket, and Duchess awakes to thunder and lightning, she freaks out and has no idea what to do being that she is a domesticated house cat and never leaves the home without Madame. She says to herself in shock: “Oh where am I? I’m not at home all. Children where are you?”⁸⁴ Once she finds all of her children, and they ask what will happen to them she says to them: “Darlings I just don’t know. It does look hopeless doesn’t it?”⁸⁵ Duchess admits to her children that she does not know what will happen to them because she cannot function in the public sphere; her domain is the private domestic sphere. Luckily, she meets O’Malley in a later scene, who guides them back to their home: the domestic sphere. Duchess is not only domesticated as a traditional female figure but she tries to pass on her lessons about domestication to Marie. Duchess’s domesticity only heightens her status as a traditional female figure.

Lastly, at the end of the film, Duchess engages in a heterosexual relationship with O’Malley as part of her ‘happily ever after.’ Like Lady and Tramp, Duchess and O’Malley are a pair comprised of a wealthy/domesticated female courted and won by a tramp/alley lower class male. In one scene, Duchess brings O’Malley home to Madame. Madame praises Duchess for

⁸⁴ *The Aristocats*, dir. Wolfgang Reitherman (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970) film.

⁸⁵ *The Aristocats*, dir. Wolfgang Reitherman (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970) film.

bringing a male cat home with her. Madame says to Duchess: “We need a man around the house.” Then the scene switches to Duchess, O’Malley, and the kittens taking a family photo (Figure 17). Duchess began the film as a single mother; however, she reaffirms her role as a traditional woman by ending the film with a man by her side in a union. Once again, Disney promotes the image of a nuclear family. Earlier in the film, O’Malley says to Duchess that the kittens need “a father around.” Duchess agrees with him: “Oh, Thomas, Thomas, that would be wonderful.” Disney would not leave the audience with an image of a single woman raising a family by herself for the rest of her days. Duchess’s ‘marriage’ to O’Malley symbolizes that the nuclear family must be established at all costs by a heterosexual couple. Through the character of Duchess, Disney tries to impose the traditional female role onto the public because the last scene captures a nuclear family with a female character that is a mother, a wife and a domestic.

Why would Disney continue to impose such a strict traditional gender role on women? *The Aristocats* was the last film Walt approved before his death therefore it is possible that his opinion on women found their way into this production as well. He may have created the traditional character of Duchess in response to women rapidly leaving the domestic sphere and entering the public sphere. Women left the home not only to work for pay but also to challenge gender norms. During the production of *The Aristocats*, there were numerous demonstrations by women that sought to break with the domestic role. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan captures white women’s desire to leave the domestic sphere as they were mentally suffering from their restrictive role in the home. Friedan writes: “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: “‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.’”⁸⁶ Through Friedan’s work, she presents this need that white women had to leave the home to the public sphere: to want more than a domestic life. White women were leaving the

⁸⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; repr., New York: Dell, 1974), 27, 224-26.

home, and they were not looking back. In 1966, sixteen women created the National Organization for Women (NOW) in order “to “bring women full participation in the mainstream of American society.””⁸⁷ In 1968, a group of women openly protested the Miss America pageant and burned several female items that represented their oppression. Women were working in the public sphere and fought for their rights to advancement in employment and equal pay for equal work. The early 1960s feminism focused on “women’s employment rights.”⁸⁸

By the end of the 1960s, the movement extended beyond white affluent women. Minority women were also leaving the home to make their voices heard. In 1968, a group of African-American women created the Black Women’s Liberation Committee. Two years later, Chicana women formed the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana* (The Mexican Female Commission). Their goal was to combat *machismo* (male chauvinism) by encouraging and fighting for Chicana women to be designated leadership positions within their community. Women of all colors and backgrounds were out in the public sphere fighting for their rights as human beings. *The Aristocats* was released in 1970. The film may symbolize physical manifestation of the anxiety and fears men and traditional women had over women becoming part of the feminist movement. The film seems to impose the image of what a “proper lady” acts like and seeks to show that she is the glue that holds the nuclear family together.

These films represent a sexist anxiety over the loss of the traditional woman in post-World War II America. The 1950s saw a beginning of women gradually leaving the domestic sphere. The 1960s showed resurgence, albeit not a popular or accepted revival, in the feminist movement altogether: Second Wave Feminism. Each of these films serves as an opportunity for Disney to remind the American audience of the greatness of the traditional woman. She holds the

⁸⁷ DuBois, and Dumenil, *Through Women's*, 606.

⁸⁸ DuBois, and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 607.

nuclear family together in a time of fear over the Cold War. She raises the children, she takes care of her husband, and she takes care of the home. As the 1960s wore on, Disney films became an escape for people. Disney allowed people to escape and remember a simpler time when women were in the home and everything was right with social norms. In these animated films, Disney is dictating the proper gender role for women, a traditional one. A traditional gender role in which she must strive to be beautiful, she must stay planted in the domestic sphere, and she must, without question, get married to a man.

In essence, these female figures represent traditional women who share common characteristics of beauty, domesticity, and participation in a heterosexual relationship as part of their 'happily ever after'. These traditional female characteristics apply to human representations, Cinderella and Aurora, but they also apply to animal representations as well, Lady and Duchess. The most important characteristic that bonds these women are their representation of heteronormativity as part of the 'happily ever after.' A 'happily ever after' in the Disney universe must contain a heterosexual couple getting married by the film's end. Each female figure starts off single at the beginning of her tale, and by the end, she has a man by her side as her husband and she as his wife: establishing a message of heteronormativity.

Appendix of Traditional Female Characters



Figure 4. Cinderella's beauty is prominent even as she awakes from bed.

Citation: *Cinderella*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.



Figure 5. Cinderella can be seen here in her domestic attire which emphasizes her white apron.

Citation: *Cinderella*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.



Figure 6. Cinderella seems to be enjoying herself as she scrubs the floors and looks at her reflection in one of the bubbles.

Citation: *Cinderella*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.



Figure 7. Cinderella and the Prince ride off into the sunset as a married couple. This scene depicts Cinderella's 'happily ever after'.

Citation: *Cinderella*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.



Figure 8. Lady's beauty is evident with her long-curved eyelashes and her ears that resemble long curly red hair.

Citation: *Lady and the Tramp*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Barbara Luddy, Larry Roberts, and Peggy Lee. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955. Film.



Figure 9. Lady's collar adds to her status as a domestic being.

Citation: *Lady and the Tramp*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Barbara Luddy, Larry Roberts, and Peggy Lee. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955. Film.



Figure 10. Lady and Tramp can be seen here side by side in a heterosexual union caring for their puppies. Both are wearing collars indicating domesticity.

Citation: *Lady and the Tramp*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Barbara Luddy, Larry Roberts, and Peggy Lee. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955. Film.



Figure 11. Aurora is very beautiful even while she is sleeping.

Citation: *Sleeping Beauty*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.



Figure 12. Aurora is seen happily doing domestic work in this scene. She is cleaning the cottage with a rag.

Citation: *Sleeping Beauty*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.



Figure 13. Aurora and Prince Phillip are dancing around the ballroom as they enact their 'happily ever after.'

Citation: *Sleeping Beauty*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.



Figure 14. Duchess is seen here flirting with O'Malley and she bats her long-curved eyelashes at him.

Citation: *The Aristocats*. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Performed by Phil Harris, Eva Gabor, and Sterling Holloway. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970. Film.



Figure 15. Duchess's eyes are crystal blue adding to her beauty. Her eyes resemble that of Cinderella's eye color (See Figure 1).

Citation: *The Aristocats*. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Performed by Phil Harris, Eva Gabor, and Sterling Holloway. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970. Film.

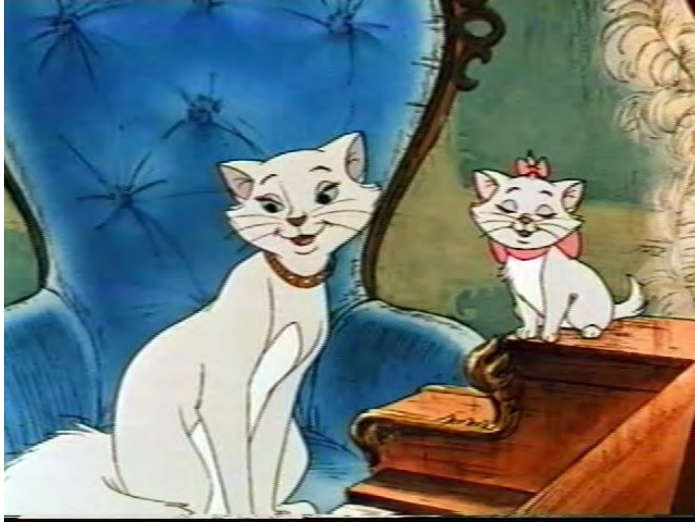


Figure 16. Duchess is wearing a diamond collar to indicate her domesticity. She is also teaching her daughter Marie to sing like a proper lady. Duchess is sitting on a chair indicating that she is inside a household.

Citation: *The Aristocats*. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Performed by Phil Harris, Eva Gabor, and Sterling Holloway. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970. Film.



Figure 17. Duchess and O'Malley engage in a heterosexual relationship as part of Duchess's 'happily ever after.' Duchess and O'Malley's union creates the image of a nuclear family. This scene shows the epitome of a nuclear family in feline form.

Citation: *The Aristocats*. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman. Performed by Phil Harris, Eva Gabor, and Sterling Holloway. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1970. Film.

Chapter 2: The Complex Disney Animated Female Characters

Disney features a surplus of traditional animated female characters throughout the 1950s-1980s. However, most Disney female figures of the 1990s, and a few from the 2010s, exemplify a new type of persona: a complex female figure.⁸⁹ These female figures possess characteristics that could deem them both traditional and non-traditional. Therefore, it seems fitting to create a third category that accommodates those who do not completely fit into the traditional or the non-traditional category. These female figures are Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* (1989),⁹⁰ Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Jasmine from *Aladdin* (1992), Meg from *Hercules* (1997),⁹¹ Mulan from *Mulan* (1998), Jane from *Tarzan* (1999), Tiana from *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), Rapunzel from *Tangled* (2010), and Anna from *Frozen* (2013). Throughout their films, they are at times independent from male figures and outspoken, and at other times dependent on male figures, ultimately ending their tale with a male partner at their side as part of their 'happily ever after.' Anna differs from her complex sister because she is independent from and dependent on men simultaneously. These female characters cannot simply be deemed traditional or non-traditional based on their traits. Their personalities and actions make them suitable to be deemed complex.

Two key aspects that make these female figures complex are their independence from and dependence on male figures. These female figures differ from their Disney traditional predecessors because they move towards independence but remain dependent on men for

⁸⁹ Another layer of complexity that accompanies these complex female' figures is that Disney attempts to present their films through a multicultural lens during this period.

⁹⁰ Other complex female figures that precede Ariel from this time period are Mary Poppins from *Mary Poppins* (1964), and Jessica Rabbit from *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988).

⁹¹ Anastasia from *Anastasia* (1997) is another complex female figure that commonly gets associated with the Disney princesses from the 1990s because she is beautiful, she has an hourglass figure, she sings, and has a similar coming of age story. However, the film is produced by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Anastasia is another complex female figure from the same era because she is independent from and dependent on Dimitri, she is outspoken, determined, and she engages in a heterosexual relationship with Dimitri as part of the 'happily ever after' trope.

happiness, protection, and freedom. No longer are they completely traditional, but they are not fully non-traditional either. Non-traditional female figures are independent, outspoken, and determined. They are complex because they possess characteristics that could place them in both traditional and non-traditional categories.

The shift towards independence for female figures in Disney animation begins in 1989 with Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* (1989). Ariel's tale is based on the fairy tale written by Scandinavian author Hans Christian Andersen by the same name, *The Little Mermaid*.⁹² Ariel has moments of independence from men but at the end of her tale, she is willingly dependent on them. In an early scene, after being forbidden from the surface by her father, King Triton, Ariel makes an independent decision to go to the surface again to see a firework display and to get a closer look at the humans on a ship. Ariel says: "I've never seen a human this close before."⁹³ In "'Where Do the Mermaids Stand?'" Voice and Body in *The Little Mermaid*" Laura Sells discusses Ariel's desire for independence: "The film portrays the story of the teenage mermaid, Ariel, who first desires independence and entry into the human world."⁹⁴ Ariel wants to be independent from her controlling father and she makes independent decisions and actions frequently throughout the film.

However, at the end of the film, Ariel becomes dependent on both her father and Prince Eric. First, Prince Eric saves Ariel from Ursula's clutches by killing Ursula with the sharp end of a ship, then, King Triton gives Ariel back her human legs in the film via his magical powers, and allows her to marry Prince Eric. Sells discusses Ariel's dependence on these two male figures:

⁹² Richard Finkelstein, "Disney's *Tempest*: Colonizing Desire in the Little Mermaid," in *The Emperor's Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney's Magic Kingdom*, ed. Brenda Ayres (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 132-133. Anderson's version has a dark ending in which the Prince marries someone else and the Little Mermaid kills herself. The Disney Corporation altered this ending for a 'happily ever after' ending.

⁹³ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

⁹⁴ Laura Sells, "'Where Do the Mermaids Stand?'" Voice and Body in *The Little Mermaid*" in *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 176.

“As Ariel passes from her father’s hands to her husband’s hands, the autonomy and willfulness that she enacted early in the film becomes subsumed by her father’s “permission” to marry Eric.”⁹⁵ Ariel is initially dependent on Prince Eric to save her from Ursula. Then, Ariel’s dependence shifts from Prince Eric to her father because he has the power to give her legs and she relies on her father for his permission to marry Prince Eric. Next, her father gives Ariel legs, and his permission to marry Prince Eric, therefore, her dependence shifts back to Prince Eric who is now her protector and husband. Ariel is now dependent on Prince Eric instead of her father. Ariel goes from mermaid to human, to daughter to wife, through her dependence on her father and Prince Eric. Ariel holds both characteristics of being independent at times and dependent at other times on male figures in her tale.

Another Disney female figure woman that is both independent from and dependent on male figures is Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*. Belle’s tale is based on the French fairytale *La belle et la bête* by French novelist Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, which Disney adapted in 1991.⁹⁶ Belle has various moments of independence from male figures. For example, in one scene when her father’s horse returns without him on it, she does not ask anyone to help her, instead she decides to go off into the forest alone to find him.⁹⁷ In “Disney, the Beast, and Woman as a Civilizing Force,” Kathleen E. B. Manley addresses Belle’s characterization in comparison to her suitor Gaston, a macho man who pursues Belle: “He [Gaston] serves as a foil

⁹⁵ Sells, “Where Do the Mermaids Stand?” 180.

⁹⁶ Karen Schwartz, Zana Marie Lutfiyya, and Nancy Hansen “Dopey’s Legacy: Stereotypical Portrayals of Intellectual Disability in the Classic Animated Films,” in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2013), 187.

⁹⁷ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

to Belle, highlighting her independence and intelligence.”⁹⁸ In one scene, Belle rejects Gaston’s marriage proposal, showing that she does not need nor want a man like him.

However, by the end of the film Belle becomes dependent on Beast.⁹⁹ In another scene, Beast saves Belle’s life from a pack of wolves who are attacking her and her horse. Once they are back at Beast’s castle, Belle says to the Beast: “By the way, thank you for saving my life.”¹⁰⁰ Beast becomes her protector. Davis explains the nature of Beast and Belle’s relationship by comparing their relationship to Phantom and Christine’s relationship from *Phantom of the Opera*: “[. . .] Belle or Christine have for anything resembling romantic love are the monsters who are their protectors.”¹⁰¹ Belle becomes dependent on Beast for her safety. From that scene onward, her love for Beast develops, and that causes her to become even more dependent on him not just for her safety, but also for her happiness. At the same time, Beast becomes dependent on Belle to “civilize” him.¹⁰² Manley believes Belle fulfills “the stereotypical role of woman as” a “civilizing force.”¹⁰³ It is true that Beast does depend on Belle to civilize him; she teaches him how to read, how to eat properly, and how to treat people with respect throughout the film.¹⁰⁴ The two become dependent on each other. In one of the final scenes, Beast releases Belle from the castle to take care of her father, but once she sees that a mob is going after him, she cannot bear to see him in danger, and she realizes her happiness is dependent on him staying alive and her admitting her love to him. Belle races to the castle on her horse to warn Beast of the approaching mob. When Belle reaches the castle, she finds Beast wounded on the balcony.

⁹⁸ Kathleen E.B. Manley, “Disney, the Beast and Woman as Civilizing Force,” in *The Emperor’s Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney’s Magic Kingdom*, ed. Brenda Ayres (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 82.

⁹⁹ Beast is a grotesque monster that resembles a werewolf. He was turned into this creature by a spell an enchantress at the beginning of the film. His servants were also turned into talking furniture by the enchantress. Before Beast was turned into a monster, he was a human prince.

¹⁰⁰ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

¹⁰¹ Davis, *Good Girls*, 25.

¹⁰² Manley, “Disney, the Beast and Woman as Civilizing Force,” 79.

¹⁰³ Manley, “Disney, the Beast and Woman as Civilizing Force,” 79.

¹⁰⁴ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

Gaston had attacked Beast and now he is dying. Beast says to Belle: “You came back.”¹⁰⁵ She returns to him because she loves him and cannot live without him. In the same scene, Belle whispers to Beast: “Please don’t leave me! I love you!”¹⁰⁶ Evidently, she has become dependent on him. Belle saves Beast’s life through her love because after she admits her love for him, he comes back to life as a human being, and the talking furniture, Beast’s servants, become human again as well.¹⁰⁷ Belle has broken the spell through her love for Beast. Belle also depends on him to give her the life she has always wanted, which is more than the provincial life she has been given. Davis discusses what Belle’s new life with Beast provides for her: “Belle has moved from life on the edge of her boring, provincial village to a castle where she has a library filled with books and a charming, intelligent, loving man to talk with and read to.”¹⁰⁸ Belle’s happy ending not only gives her, her true love, but also provides her with a more intellectual and exciting life. In one of the final scenes, like Aurora and Prince Phillip, Belle and Beast dance around a ballroom. In the last, Belle and Beast are pictured in a stain glass image with her wearing a crown.¹⁰⁹ She has become a princess dependent upon her Beast who is a prince. The film highlights Belle’s independence from male figures, however, she willingly becomes dependent on Beast by the film’s end.

In 1992, Jasmine, the first Arab Disney princess, joins her Disney complex sisters in the film *Aladdin*. Jasmine can be characterized as independent from men at times and dependent on them at other times. The film is based on the Arab folklore “Ala Al-Din and the Wonderful

¹⁰⁵ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

¹⁰⁶ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

¹⁰⁷ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

¹⁰⁸ Davis, *Good Girls*, 206.

¹⁰⁹ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

Lamp” from the book *Arabian Nights*.¹¹⁰ The authorship of this tale is uncertain being that it is folklore and has been part of various compilations of different versions of *Arabian Nights* which is like European folk tales. In the beginning of the film, Jasmine seems very independent and unlike her Disney sisters. In one of the first scenes, Jasmine rejects yet another suitor for marriage because she dislikes the suitor and the idea of an arranged marriage. The Sultan, Jasmine’s father, says to Jasmine: “Dearest you’ve got to stop rejecting every suitor who comes to call. The law says you must be married to a prince by your next birthday.” Jasmine responds: “The law is wrong. Father, I hate being forced into this. If I do marry, I want it to be for love.”¹¹¹ In a later scene, Jasmine is seen jumping over the palace wall to escape her restricted role as a princess. Jasmine says to her pet tiger: “I can’t stay here and have my life lived for me.” Throughout these two scenes, Jasmine shows promise of gaining her independence and her freedom. In “Disney’s Magic Carpet Ride: *Aladdin* and Women in Islam,” by Christine Staninger, Staninger comments on Jasmine’s desire to be independent which is highlighted in these two scenes: “She [Jasmine] wants independence, rejects the suitors who approach her—and does so for reasons of personal dislikes—and runs away from home and its boredom.”¹¹² Jasmine wants to be independent and even abandons her home, the domestic sphere, to gain her independence.

However, like Belle, Jasmine’s tale ends with her becoming dependent on the male figures around her: Aladdin and the Sultan. Towards the end of the film, when Aladdin is disguised as Prince Ali, he gives Jasmine a taste of freedom by taking her on a magic carpet ride.

¹¹⁰ Christine Staninger, “Disney’s Magic Carpet Ride: *Aladdin* and Women in Islam,” in *The Emperor’s Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney’s Magic Kingdom*, ed. Brenda Ayres (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 66, 75.

¹¹¹ *Aladdin*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1992) film.

¹¹² Staninger, “Disney’s Magic Carpet Ride,” 67.

Aladdin says to Jasmine: “We could get out of the palace, see the world.”¹¹³ Jasmine agrees to go with him on a magic carpet ride and by agreeing to go with him, she is becoming dependent on him for her freedom. Aladdin offers a way for her to gain her freedom and she takes it.

In the final scene, Jasmine also becomes dependent on her father the Sultan. Jasmine seeks her father’s approval to marry Aladdin even though he is not a prince. Unlike the beginning of the film, Jasmine is no longer acting independently from her father’s wishes, but is now begging for his approval. The Sultan decides to change the law so that Jasmine and Aladdin can get married. Jasmine’s marriage depends on the Sultan’s approval and his power to change the law. The Sultan changes the law so that the princess, Jasmine, can marry whoever she wants.¹¹⁴ Like Ariel, Jasmine needs her father’s permission to marry Aladdin. In “Monarchs, Monsters, and Multiculturalism: Disney’s Menu for Global Hierarchy” by Lee Artz, Artz comments on Jasmine’s characterization of being independent and dependent: “Jasmine, one of Disney’s recent ‘feminist’ heroines, is spunky, adventurous, and independent—although ultimately she needs male guidance, rescue, and approval.”¹¹⁵ Artz points out an interesting contradiction about Jasmine’s characterization: her independence in the beginning of the film, but by the film’s end, she becomes heavily dependent on male figures. Jasmine’s independence from men at times and her dependence upon them at other times are two traits that make her a complex female figure.

Five years later, Megara (Meg), from the film *Hercules*, struts onto the Disney runway as another complex female figure. In the film, she is independent from and dependent on male

¹¹³ *Aladdin*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1992) film.

¹¹⁴ *Aladdin*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1992) film.

¹¹⁵ Lee Artz, “Monarchs, Monsters, and Multiculturalism: Disney’s Menu for Global Hierarchy,” in *Rethinking Disney: Private Control, Public Dimensions*, eds. Mike Budd and Max H. Kirsch (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 84.

figures. The film is based on “the Mediterranean Hercules myth.”¹¹⁶ Like Jasmine, Meg seems to be very independent early on in her tale. In one scene, Hercules tries to rescue Meg from a river monster. However, she directly rejects his help with sarcasm, “Keep movin’, Junior.” Hercules responds to Meg: “But you. . . Aren’t you a damsel in distress?” Meg says: “I’m a damsel, I’m in distress. I can handle this. Have a nice day!”¹¹⁷ Meg is quite independent in this scene because she rejects a man’s help, refusing to be dependent on Hercules. However, Hercules still saves her anyway to fulfill his need to be a hero. Meg thanks him for saving her, but she strives to maintain her independence. Hercules offers Meg a ride on Pegasus, however she declines his assistance. Meg says to Hercules: “I’ll be alright. I’m a big, tough girl. I tie my own sandals and everything.”¹¹⁸ Meg proceeds to walk away from Hercules to maintain a sense of dignity and independence. In the book *Good Girls and Wicked Witches Changing Representations of Women in Disney’s Feature Animation* by Amy M. Davis, Davis comments on several Disney female figures, that can be considered independent which include Meg, Mulan, Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, and Jane: “[. . .] there are, at the time of this writing, twenty-one Disney heroines who are unquestionably active, self-motivated, strong-willed, intelligent and independent.”¹¹⁹

However, like Jasmine, Meg becomes dependent on her male partner: Hercules. For example, Meg depends on Hercules to save her soul from the River Styx. A pillar kills Meg and her soul goes to the River Styx. Davis describes how Hercules saves Meg’s soul: “Hercules, in turn, rescues Meg from the River Styx and brings her back to life.”¹²⁰ After Hercules escapes from the River Styx, he places Meg’s soul back into her physical body and then she awakens

¹¹⁶ Dick Hebdige, “Dis-gnosis: Disney and the Re-tooling of Knowledge, Art, Culture, Life, Etcetera,” in *Rethinking Disney: Private Control, Public Dimensions*, eds. Mike Budd and Max H. Kirsch (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 42.

¹¹⁷ *Hercules*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997) film.

¹¹⁸ *Hercules*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997) film.

¹¹⁹ Davis, *Good Girls*, 225.

¹²⁰ Davis, *Good Girls*, 209.

alive. Once again, Hercules rescues Meg and she is dependent upon him for her safety even in the after-life. From the study mentioned in Chapter 1, Towbin, et al. characterize Meg as one of the women from several Disney animated films that is “*helpless and in need of protection*,”¹²¹ along with Ariel, Belle, Lady, Cinderella, and Aurora. Meg is indeed helpless and in need of protection by the film’s end. Meg is another female figure that becomes helpless and needs to be “saved” by Hercules, a male character.¹²² The two key aspects that make Meg complex are her independence from and her eventual dependence on a male figure.

In 1998, Mulan makes her way onto the battlefield as another complex female figure. Despite, Mulan’s great potential to be fully independent, she, like her Disney sisters of the 90s, becomes dependent on male figures as well and thus, she is complex. Mulan is based on the “Chinese folktale of Hua Mulan,” who also impersonates a soldier in the Chinese army to take her sick father’s place.¹²³ Hua Mulan is only a legend rather than a historical figure.¹²⁴ In the Disney version of Mulan’s tale, she is viewed as very independent. It is important to note that Mulan is the first Chinese Disney princess which differentiates her from her Disney complex predecessors. In the beginning of the film, Mulan makes an independent decision to run away from home, dressed as a male soldier, to take her elderly father’s place in the Chinese army.¹²⁵ No one tells Mulan to go off to the army in her father’s place. Like Ariel, Mulan decides to leave her home on her own without regard to any societal consequences or her father’s displeasure. As mentioned previously, Davis believes Mulan is an “independent” female character.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Towbin et al., “Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation”, 31.

¹²² Davis, *Good Girls*, 210.

¹²³ Gwendolyn Limbach, “*You the Man, Well, Sorta*,”: *Gender Binaries and Liminality in Mulan*” in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2013), 115.

¹²⁴ Limbach, “*You the Man, Well, Sorta*,” 115.

¹²⁵ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

¹²⁶ Davis, *Good Girls*, 225.

However, ultimately, Mulan does become dependent on male figures: her fellow soldiers and her father's validation. Mulan becomes dependent on her fellow soldiers to help her defeat the Huns and she becomes dependent on her father to validate that she is an honorable daughter. In one of the final scenes, Mulan goes to the Imperial City to warn others that the Huns are alive and they are going to invade the city yet, no one will listen to her claims. Due to Mulan's return to feminine attire, she is now viewed as a woman, therefore, she does not get the same respect she did dressed as a male soldier. Mulan realizes that to save China she needs the help of the men who do listen to her; her fellow soldiers Chien-Po, Yao, and Ling and eventually her Captain Shang. Mulan yells to her fellow soldiers: "Hey guys! I've got an idea" and they proceed to follow her onto the roof of the Emperor's palace.¹²⁷ Her fellow only listen to her because of her accomplishments on the battlefield that she achieved posing as a man named Ping such as saving Shang's life and creating an avalanche to temporarily entrap the Huns. Mulan is ultimately able to defeat the Huns because she depends on the male figures around her to help her.¹²⁸ Without their help, she would have never been able to kill the Hun leader.

In the final scene of the film, Mulan immediately shifts back to her role as a traditional dependent woman. In that scene, Mulan returns home to her family, while wearing a form fitting feminine dress, and wearing her hair down. Mulan's appearance indicates femininity thus, she is returning to a female gender display. Mulan goes back to the domestic sphere willingly. She meets with her father in the courtyard of their home and she gives him the sword of the Hun leader, and the crest of the emperor. Mulan immediately gives up these masculine items to her father. At this moment, Mulan is dependent on her father for validation; that she is an honorable daughter. She says to him while kneeling before him: "Father, I brought you the sword of Shan

¹²⁷ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

¹²⁸ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

Yu. And the crest of the emperor. They're gifts to honor the Fa family."¹²⁹ All she ever wanted was for her father to accept her as she is and she is clearly dependent on him for his approval. Her father drops the items and hugs Mulan indicating his validation of her as an honorable daughter and he says: "The greatest gift and honor is having you for a daughter."¹³⁰ Despite all of Mulan's accomplishments and valor in the war, in the end, she returns home to fulfill the traditional role she was instructed to fulfill in the beginning. Her grandmother and her mother look on as Mulan and her father hug. Her grandmother says to her mother: "Great she brings him a sword. If you ask me she should have brought home a man."¹³¹ Her grandmother's remark only reaffirms the notion that despite all of Mulan's heroism and independence she is still expected to fulfill the traditional role of being a wife and becoming dependent on a man. Her grandmother most likely does not believe that Mulan has brought honor to the family unless she brings home a man. After her grandmother speaks, Shang immediately shows up to return Mulan's helmet and Mulan asks him to stay for dinner. Evidently, Mulan intends to fulfill the traditional role by becoming dependent on a man as his wife.

Davis admits that Mulan, and her Disney sisters like Meg, can be passive at times: "Some may even exhibit passive tendencies upon occasion."¹³² These "passive tendencies" can include being dependent on men. Mulan is both independent from men at times and dependent on them at other times, which makes her another complex female figure. Towbin et. al agree that Mulan can be considered both independent and dependent: "In three movies (*Fox*, *Pocohontas*, and *Mulan*), there were portrayals of both women needing protection as well as heroic women,

¹²⁹ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

¹³⁰ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

¹³¹ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

¹³² Davis, *Good Girls*, 225.

but with more portrayals of adventurous and independent women.”¹³³ At the end of the film, Mulan needs help from her fellow soldiers to defeat the Huns, and she depends on her father for validation that she is an honorable daughter, but she is also adventurous and quite independent in the beginning of the film. However, her dependency on male figures, such as her father, and her fellow soldiers, prevails in the final scenes of the film. Mulan falls into the same pattern of ultimately becoming dependent on men like the rest of her complex Disney sisters.

In 1999, Jane Porter follows Mulan as another complex female figure in the film *Tarzan*. The film is based on a novel called *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912) written by Edgar Rice Burroughs.¹³⁴ Jane is another complex female figure who is both independent from and dependent on the men around her. When Jane makes her first appearance in the film, she is depicted as independent. For example, in one scene, a baboon takes her sketchbook and she makes an independent decision to go after the baboon to get it back.¹³⁵ She does not ask her father, Professor Porter, or their guide Clayton to get it for her. She goes into an unexplored part of the jungle on her own to retrieve her sketchbook. Jane attempts to reason with the baboon: “Give me that. Oh come on now enough of this. I want this paper on the count of three.”¹³⁶ By approaching this wild animal on her own without telling anyone where she is going, or what she is doing, Jane exhibits independence. Davis also considers Jane, along with Belle, Mulan, and Jasmine, to be independent.¹³⁷

However, her independence does not last very long during the film as the audience can start to notice that like Jasmine, Jane becomes dependent on her father and her partner: Professor

¹³³ Towbin et al., “Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation,” 31.

¹³⁴ Edgar R. Burroughs, “History of Tarzan,” Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc., 2005, accessed September 23, 2016, http://www.tarzan.org/history_of_tarzan_part1.html.

¹³⁵ *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

¹³⁶ *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

¹³⁷ Davis, *Good Girls*, 225.

Porter and Tarzan. Jane is dependent on Professor Porter because she relies on him for approval to stay in the jungle with Tarzan. Jane relies on Tarzan as her protector from the unknown of the jungle. Artz points out that Jane only decides to stay with Tarzan after her father gives his approval.¹³⁸ Professor Porter says to Jane: “But you love him. Go on.”¹³⁹ In response, Jane jumps into the ocean to swim back to the island to be with Tarzan. Once Jane decides to stay on the island with Tarzan, she must rely on him for her safety and survival. Davis discusses Jane’s dependency on Tarzan: “[Jane] is living in a world which, no matter how much she loves it, is still largely alien to her, making her dependent on Tarzan’s protection and guidance.”¹⁴⁰ Jane becomes very dependent on Tarzan to protect her from the dangers of the jungle and to guide her on how to survive in the jungle. Like Jasmine, Jane becomes dependent on her father and her male partner. Both Jasmine and Jane become heavily dependent on their father’s approval to marry/stay with their male partners. Both women also become very dependent on their male partners for freedom, safety, and protection. Jane’s independence from and dependence on male figures makes her a complex female figure.

Jane is the last complex female figure from the 1990s. There were a couple of movies released between 1999 and 2004 that feature Disney female protagonists such as *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) featuring Nani, and *The Incredibles* featuring Helen Parr (2004). These female figures are classified as positive non-traditional female figures and they are analyzed further in Chapter 3. Moving forward in time, there are three complex female figures in the 2010s: Tiana from *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), Rapunzel from *Tangled* (2010), and Anna from *Frozen* (2013). As recently released films, the scholarship on them is limited. Nonetheless, by applying scholarly

¹³⁸ Artz, “Monarchs, Monsters and Multiculturalism,” 86.

¹³⁹ *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

¹⁴⁰ Davis, *Good Girls*, 205.

analyses used on earlier heroines, it is possible to analyze and categorize these female figures as complex.

Tiana is the first complex female figure of the 2010s. Tiana is the first African-American Disney princess. The film is based on “the classic Grimm brothers’ fairy tale *The Frog Princess*.”¹⁴¹ Disney stays true to the ending of the fairy tale in that the Prince and Princess get married with the exception that the Prince and Princess are not of color.¹⁴² In the onset of the film, Tiana seems to be fiercely independent. In one of the first scenes, she makes an independent decision to work two jobs tirelessly to make enough money to accomplish her dream: opening her own restaurant.¹⁴³ She never asks for financial help or handouts from anyone. She also has no interest in becoming dependent on any man. In “*Hurricane Katrina, Race, and Gender in The Princess and the Frog*” by Sophie Engel, Engel addresses Tiana’s representation: “Tiana’s character seems like a first step of Disney reaching out to gender equality and the encouragement of female independence.”¹⁴⁴ Tiana may represent independence for women. In another scene, Tiana explains to her mother, Eudora, that she has no time for dating because she is committed to accomplishing her dream. Eudora says to Tiana: “And that’s all I want for you, sweetheart, to meet your Prince Charming and dance off into your ‘happily ever after’.” Eudora makes a strong point about princesses dancing off into their ‘happily ever after.’ For example, Aurora and Belle dances off with their princes Philip their ‘happily ever after’. Eudora’s remark is a nod to the traditional expectation for Disney princesses to be married by the end of their tale. Tiana responds to Eudora: “Mama! I don’t have time for dancing. That’s

¹⁴¹ Sarah E. Turner, “*Blackness, Bayous and Gumbo: Encoding and Decoding Race in a Colorblind World*” in *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability*, ed. Johnson Cheu (Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2013), 83.

¹⁴² Turner, “*Blackness, Bayous and Gumbo*,” 83.

¹⁴³ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

¹⁴⁴ Sophie Engel, “*Hurricane Katrina, Race and Gender in The Princess and the Frog*,” in *Film Matters* 4, no. 3, (2013) 61.

just going to have to wait a while.”¹⁴⁵ Tiana’s admits to her mother that marriage is not her focus now because she wants to open her own restaurant first. In an earlier scene, Prince Naveen tries to flirt with Tiana, but she rejects his advances because she is too busy working to achieve her goal.¹⁴⁶

Later in the film, another woman, Mama Odie, a Cajun witchdoctor tells Tiana that all she needs in life is love. Mama Odie tries to explain to Tiana that all she needs is to love and be in love with another person: Prince Naveen. However, Mama Odie cannot get through to Tiana. Mama Odie asks Tiana: “Well, Miss Froggy, do you understand what you need now child?” Tiana responds to Mama Odie: “Yes. I do, Mama Odie. I need to dig a little deeper and work even harder to get my restaurant.”¹⁴⁷ Mama Odie responds by ending the song and placing her face in her palm in frustration. Tiana holds onto her independency with a firm grip and ignores two older women pointing her down the path of traditional dependence on men.

In “Disney’s *The Princess and the Frog*: The Pride, the Pressure, and the Politics of Being a First” by Neal A. Lester, Lester discusses Tiana’s desire to be economically independent: “Tiana is her parents’ hope for familial and racial uplift as evidenced by her dreams of entrepreneurship and of economic independence.”¹⁴⁸ Tiana’s would like to become economically independent because it would mean, that as the first African-American princess that she succeeded financially and made her family, especially her father, proud. At the end of

¹⁴⁵ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

¹⁴⁶ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

¹⁴⁷ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

¹⁴⁸ Neal A. Lester, “Disney’s *The Princess and the Frog*: The Price, the Pressure and Politics of Being a First,” in *The Journal of American Culture* 33, no. 4, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost, 2010, 302, accessed on October 12, 2016.

the film, when Tiana succeeds in opening her restaurant, Tiana becomes an inspiration for young African-American women. Like Mulan, Tiana's race differentiates her from her complex sisters.

However, despite Tiana's image of as a fiercely independent woman, she, like her complex predecessors, becomes dependent on a male figure. Throughout Tiana and Prince Naveen's journey, as frogs, to Mama Odie's home, Tiana and Prince Naveen end up developing feelings for each other. Tiana realizes that love is the greatest success of all.¹⁴⁹ Once the firefly Ray tells Tiana that Prince Naveen loves her, and was trying to propose to her in an earlier scene, she races to find him and admit her love for him. When Tiana finds Prince Naveen, she tells him how she feels: "My dream wouldn't be complete without you in it."¹⁵⁰ Tiana's happiness is dependent on Prince Naveen being in her life as her partner. At the end of the film, Tiana gives up her independence to marry Prince Naveen because she loves him. Like Belle, Tiana realizes her happiness depends on Prince Naveen being in her life as her partner. Tiana also depends on Prince Naveen to help her get her restaurant. At the end of the film, Naveen and Tiana go to the bank to place their payment for the restaurant space. They bring along Louis, an alligator, who with Prince Naveen as well, intimidate the Fenner brothers at the bank to sell Tiana the restaurant. Tiana depends on the strong male presence to get her restaurant. In a later scene, Prince Naveen helps Tiana renovate and open the restaurant, as well. Therefore, she depends on his help in getting the restaurant up and running. Engel comments on Tiana's ultimate dependence on a male figure to accomplish her dreams: "[. . .] Tiana's strong work attitude is not the only thing that is required of her to fulfill all her dreams. It is only after she commits to the

¹⁴⁹ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

¹⁵⁰ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

love of her life [Prince Naveen] that she is permitted to have all that she had ever wanted.”¹⁵¹

Despite Tiana’s display of remarkable independence in the beginning of the film, it is at the end of her tale that she becomes dependent on a male figure, Prince Naveen, who helps her accomplish her dream. Tiana is the first African-American complex female figure but she is not the first to initially be independent from male figures and then to become dependent on them.

Tiana’s complex successor is Rapunzel from *Tangled* (2009). Like *The Princess and the Frog*, *Tangled* is also based on a Brothers Grimm’s fairytale called *Rapunzel*.¹⁵² In the beginning of the film, Rapunzel acts very independent. In one of the first scenes, when an intruder, Flynn Rider, comes into her home, she makes the independent decision to defend herself by knocking him out with a frying pan, and keeping him as a captive in her closet. Rapunzel says to herself: “I’ve got a person in my closet! Too weak to handle myself out there, huh mother?”¹⁵³ Rapunzel praises herself for being clever and best of all for being strong and independent. In a later scene, Rapunzel ties up Flynn with her long hair and decides to interrogate him. She asks how he found her and what does he want with her hair. He says that he does not want her hair and she realizes that he does not know that her hair has magical youth granting powers. What he wants is his satchel with the lost princess’s crown in it. Rapunzel makes an independent decision to use the crown as leverage to get Flynn to take her to see the floating lights. She says to Flynn: “You will act as my guide, take me to these lanterns, and return me home safely. Then and only then will I return your satchel to you.”¹⁵⁴ Flynn reluctantly agrees to take Rapunzel to see the floating lights in exchange for his satchel with the crown in it.

¹⁵¹ Engel, “Hurricane Katrina, Race and Gender,” 61.

¹⁵² IMDb.com, “Tangled (2010),” IMDb, 2010, accessed February 08, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0398286/>.

¹⁵³ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

¹⁵⁴ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

Through this deal, Rapunzel essentially makes an independent decision to leave her tower. After they agree, Rapunzel releases Flynn from her hair. Rapunzel says as she jumps out of the tower using her long hair as a rope: “Here I go!” Once she is on the ground she explores nature and she soon yells: “I am never going baaaaaacccckkk!”¹⁵⁵ Rapunzel enjoys her independence and freedom from the confined space of her tower. Her independence grows even more once she and Flynn reach the town. In “Something Else Besides Being a Daughter?: Maternal Melodrama Meets Postfeminist Girlhood in *Tangled* and *Brave*” by Katie Kapurch, Kapurch addresses Rapunzel’s growing independence: “Once she arrives in what is actually her home kingdom, Rapunzel’s hair is, for the first time, not such a cumbersome burden. Flynn finds some children to braid and decorate it with flowers. Rapunzel’s blooming braid marks her independence and emerging sexuality.”¹⁵⁶ Rapunzel’s hair is a symbol of confinement to the domestic sphere. Part of the reason why she could not leave her tower before is because her hair is a major burden to carry around being that it is incredibly long. Now that her hair is braided, she can move around more independently and freely. Rapunzel’s braided hair is a symbol of her independence.

However, Rapunzel does end up becoming dependent on Flynn. Kapurch comments on how the braid also signifies Rapunzel growing dependence on Flynn: “Rapunzel’s blooming braid marks her independence and emerging sexuality-and a new dependence on Flynn.”¹⁵⁷ Rapunzel becomes increasingly dependent on Flynn. Towards the end of the film, Rapunzel’s dependency on Flynn is most evident when he rescues her from the clutches of Mother Gothel by

¹⁵⁵ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

¹⁵⁶ Katie Kapurch, “Something Else Besides a Daughter?: Maternal Melodrama Meets Postfeminist Girlhood in *Tangled* and *Brave*,” in *The Lion and the Unicorn* 40, no. 1, 2016, 53 accessed October 7, 2016, <http://fe5uk3rb3z.search.serialssolutions.com>.

¹⁵⁷ Kapurch, “Something Else Besides a Daughter?” 53.

cutting off her hair and thus eliminating its magical youth granting powers.¹⁵⁸ Rapunzel depends on Flynn to rescue her without even asking him. He sees a damsel in distress, Rapunzel in this case, and he rescues her. Flynn is a catalyst for change once he shows up in Rapunzel's life. In a way, Flynn is responsible for giving Rapunzel back her aristocratic life because he brings the crown to her tower and takes her on a journey back to her kingdom. In the end, Rapunzel is reunited with her real parents, the King and Queen, and she becomes a Princess again and of course she marries Flynn.¹⁵⁹ Rapunzel inadvertently depends on Flynn to take her back to her aristocratic life and to be reunited with her real parents. Like Tiana, Rapunzel is a complex female figure of the 2010s because she is both independent from and dependent on a male figure.

The last complex female figure of the 2010s is Anna from *Frozen* (2013). The film is based on Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale called *The Snow Queen*.¹⁶⁰ Anna slightly differs from her complex predecessors because she exhibits independence from and dependence on male figures simultaneously. In one scene, Anna asks her sister Elsa, the queen of Arendelle, for her blessing on her marriage to Prince Hans, a man Anna just met. Anna is dependent on Hans for her happiness, and she thinks he could be her escape from her lonely life. When Elsa and Anna were children, Elsa accidentally froze Anna's brain with her ice powers nearly killing Anna. Luckily, rock trolls were able to heal Anna. The rock-trolls also erased all memories of Elsa's ice powers from Anna's brain. Therefore, Elsa has secluded herself for years from Anna because she is afraid of hurting her with her ice powers again. She also does not want Anna to know that she has ice powers either. Thus, Anna has lived a very lonely life. Elsa refuses to bless, and gets into an argument with Anna. While arguing, Elsa accidentally unleashes sharp ice crystals in the

¹⁵⁸ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

¹⁵⁹ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

¹⁶⁰ Jalic Inc., "The Snow Queen," The Literature Network, 2000, accessed February 09, 2017, http://online-literature.com/hans_christian_andersen/972/.

ballroom and decides to run away from her coronation party at their castle after her powers were revealed. Anna makes an independent decision to go out to find Elsa during a blizzard to bring her back home. Anna says to Prince Hans: "I'm the one that needs to go after her." Then she says to a castle guard: "Bring me my horse, please."¹⁶¹ After the guard brings Anna her horse, she goes after Elsa independently without any help. Yet, once she realizes she is lost and meets a travelling ice salesman named Kristoff, she demands his help in guiding her to the mountain that Elsa is presumably residing on. Anna says to Kristoff: "Take me up the North Mountain, please."¹⁶² Anna begins to depend on Kristoff because she needs him to guide her to the North Mountain. Once Anna finds Elsa, in Elsa's ice castle, the two get into another argument. During the argument, Elsa accidentally freezes Anna's heart. Then, Anna's dependence shifts back to Prince Hans because only an act of true love, a true love's kiss perhaps, can thaw her frozen heart. Therefore, Anna depends on Prince Hans to save her life. However, once Anna returns to the palace, Prince Hans admits that he does not love Anna and leaves her for dead. Anna's dependency then shifts back to Kristoff. Olaf, a talking snowman, helps Anna realize that Kristoff loves her. Therefore, only his act of true love can save her life. Anna questions Olaf: "Kristoff loves me?" Olaf responds to Anna's ridiculous question: "Wow, you really don't know anything about love do you?"¹⁶³ Anna tries to find Kristoff in a frozen wasteland. By the film's end, Anna realizes she loves Kristoff too, and her happiness depends on him being her partner. However, once Anna sees that Prince Hans is trying to kill Elsa with a sword she makes a final independent decision to stop him by throwing herself in front of the sword to block him from hurting Elsa. Anna differs from her complex Disney predecessors because she does not become

¹⁶¹ *Frozen*, dir, Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

¹⁶² *Frozen*, dir, Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

¹⁶³ *Frozen*, dir, Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

dependent but rather she is simultaneously independent from and dependent on male characters throughout her tale.

Another characteristic that makes these female figures complex is that they are all outspoken, yet are still independent from and dependent on men. Being outspoken is a nontraditional characteristic, however, they possess it, which adds to their complexity as female figures. For example, Ariel openly speaks her mind. Ariel yells to her father: “Daddy, I love him!”¹⁶⁴ Ariel loves Prince Eric, therefore she wants to keep her collection of human belongings and she wants to marry him. When the townspeople call Belle’s father insane, she aggressively defends him: “Don’t talk about my father that way!”¹⁶⁵ Jasmine orders the guards to release Aladdin: “That’s not your concern. Do as I command. Release him.”¹⁶⁶ Meg refuses to continue to help Hades, God of the underworld, take down Hercules. Meg tells Hades: “Get yourself another girl, I’m through.”¹⁶⁷ Mulan abruptly yells at her father during dinner about going to fight in the Chinese army. She slams down her teacup and says to him: “You shouldn’t have to go!”¹⁶⁸ Mulan is strongly opposed to her father going to war and she is unafraid to speak out of turn. Jane defends herself against Tarzan during their first encounter, ordering him to “... get off, get off. Get off!”¹⁶⁹ Tiana demands the Fenner brothers come back after they tell her that someone has outbid her for the space she has planned for her restaurant: “Now, hold on there! You come back!”¹⁷⁰ Rapunzel refuses to let Mother Gothel use her hair anymore after she discovers that she (Rapunzel) is the lost princess: “No! You were wrong about the world. And

¹⁶⁴ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

¹⁶⁵ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

¹⁶⁶ *Aladdin*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1992) film.

¹⁶⁷ *Hercules*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997) film.

¹⁶⁸ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

¹⁶⁹ *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

¹⁷⁰ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

you were wrong about me. And I will never let you use my hair again!”¹⁷¹ Anna follows her predecessors in being outspoken. She tells off Prince Hans for leaving her for dead, dismissing him with, “The only frozen heart around here is yours.”¹⁷² Then she proceeds to punch Prince Hans in the face, causing him to fall out of the boat and into the ocean. These women are unapologetically vocal about their thoughts and feelings; another aspect that adds to their complexity, while being independent and dependent.

Their complexity does not end with their outspokenness and being independent and dependent. Their complexity is heightened because they comply with and adhere to the traditional Disney expectation that all women must get married to a male partner to live ‘happily ever after.’ These female figures either get married to their male partners at the end of their tales or there is an implication that a marriage will occur soon for the couple. Belle’s, Meg’s, Jasmine’s, Rapunzel’s, Mulan’s and Anna’s marriages are all implied rather than depicted explicitly on screen. In one of the final scenes, Belle is dancing around the ballroom in her gold dress with the human form of Beast. Chip and Mrs. Potts look at the couple in awe. Chip asks Mrs. Potts: “Are they gonna live ‘happily ever after’ Mama?” Chip is referring to Belle and Beast. Mrs. Potts responds to Chip: “Of course my dear. Of course.”¹⁷³ The scene then switches to a stained-glass window that depicts Belle wearing a crown and Beast wearing a crown, which implies that they have been married (Figure 19). Clearly, marriage is part of the ‘happily ever after’ trope. In Belle’s case, marriage is implied. Nonetheless, Belle ends her tale in a heterosexual relationship with Beast as her male partner. The ending scene of a Disney film is critical to analyze because it is one of the deciding factors that places female figures in certain categories especially the complex category.

¹⁷¹ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

¹⁷² *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

¹⁷³ *Beauty and the Beast*, dir. Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991) film.

Jasmine follows the pattern of marrying her male partner as part of her ‘happily ever after’ as well. Jasmine and Aladdin are seen in the final scene in Arab wedding garments flying on their magic carpet.¹⁷⁴ (Figure 20). Davis comments on Aladdin’s marriage to Jasmine with the familiar phrase: “Aladdin marries Jasmine and they all live ‘happily ever after’.”¹⁷⁵ Like her Disney sisters, Jasmine’s ‘happily ever after’ must include her getting married to her male partner. Like Belle, Jasmine’s marriage is implied. In Meg’s tale, her marriage to Hercules is hinted at as well. Hercules says to his father Zeus: “A life without Meg, even an immortal life, would be empty. I wish to stay on Earth with her. I finally know where I belong.”¹⁷⁶ Hercules realizes he wants to be with Meg for the rest of his life instead of being immortal. Hercules kisses Meg passionately and Meg does not say anything but rather kisses him back in a firm embrace (Figure 21). The marriage scene is not depicted in the film; however it is heavily implied. Marriage is part of Meg’s ‘happily ever after’. Jane’s marriage to Tarzan is also implicit. Professor Porter allows Jane to stay in the jungle with Tarzan. Jane, of course, stays in the jungle forever with Tarzan as his wife. Moreover, Jane says in monkey language to Tarzan’s family: “Jane stays with Tarzan.”¹⁷⁷ In the final scene, Jane is seen standing next to Tarzan in a tree as he yells out into the jungle (Figure 23).¹⁷⁸ In Mulan’s tale, marriage is implicit as well. In the final scene, Shang comes to Mulan’s home to return her helmet. Mulan says to Shang: “Would you like to stay for dinner?” Then her Grandmother yells: “Would you like to stay forever?”¹⁷⁹ Grandmother’s line suggest that Mulan and Shang will eventually get married as well. In *Mulan II* (2004), the sequel to *Mulan*, Shang proposes to Mulan, she happily accepts,

¹⁷⁴ *Aladdin*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1992) film.

¹⁷⁵ Davis, *Good Girls*, 246.

¹⁷⁶ *Hercules*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997) film.

¹⁷⁷ *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

¹⁷⁸ *Tarzan*, dir. Chris Buck and Kevin Lima (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999), film.

¹⁷⁹ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

and they later marry at the end of the film (Figure 22).¹⁸⁰ Rapunzel and Flynn also get married implicitly but it is not depicted on screen. Instead, Flynn tells the audience that they got married: “But I know what the big question is. Did Rapunzel and I ever get married? Well, I am pleased to tell you that after years and years of asking and asking I finally said yes.” Then Rapunzel interrupts Flynn and says: “Eugene.” Then Flynn adds: “Alright. I asked her.” Rapunzel adds as one of last lines of the film: “And we’re living ‘happily ever after’.”¹⁸¹ Rapunzel’s ‘happily ever after’ also includes a marriage to her male partner.

In *Frozen*, Anna’s marriage to Kristoff is suggested as well. Kristoff kisses Anna as part of one of the last scenes of the film (Figure 25). They are finally physically expressing their love for each other. However, the marriage will not happen instantly because Elsa strongly disapproves of Anna marrying someone she just met. Earlier in the film, Elsa says to Anna: “You can’t marry a man you just met.” Kristoff also disapproves of a woman marrying a man she just met. He says to Anna: “Who marries a man she just met?”¹⁸² The marriage however, will eventually happen as part of Anna’s ‘happily ever after’. The complexity that these women share is only heightened by the fact that they are all either to get married or will eventually get married to their male partner while remaining outspoken, and independent but becoming dependent.

In contrast, Ariel’s and Tiana’s marriages are very explicit on screen. Ariel is determined to marry Prince Eric.¹⁸³ In one of the final scenes, Ariel and Prince Eric are shown kissing while wedding bells are ringing. Ariel is in a white dress, a crown, and a veil and Prince Eric is in a suit (Figure 18).¹⁸⁴ For Tiana, her marriage to Prince Naveen is depicted very clearly to the audience. Mama Odie officiates the marriage. She says to the audience at their wedding: “By the power

¹⁸⁰ *Mulan II*, dir. Darrell Rooney and Lynne Southerland (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2004) film.

¹⁸¹ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

¹⁸² *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

¹⁸³ Davis, *Good Girls*, 176.

¹⁸⁴ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

vested in me I now pronounce y'all frog and wife.”¹⁸⁵ Tiana and Prince Naveen are both still frogs at this point. However, Tiana is wearing a white veil and is holding a white flower and Prince Naveen has a butterfly on his chest that resembles a bow-tie (Figure 24). In the next scene, as they are kissing, Tiana and Prince Naveen turn back into humans, and Tiana is still wearing the veil but now she has a wedding dress on and Prince Naveen is in a suit as well (Figure 24). In the closing scene, Tiana and Prince Naveen on the rooftop of their restaurant. Like Belle and Aurora, Tiana dances off into her ‘happily ever after’ with her Prince as well.

What could be causing this shift towards a more independent, outspoken female figure? It is important to examine the historical context surrounding these films. Ariel’s film was in production and released (1987-1989) as the nearly decade long backlash against second wave feminism began to be questioned by young feminists who were coming of age.¹⁸⁶ Third wave feminism focuses not only on “cultural and sexual politics” but also on “wage discrimination, access to education, and domestic violence,” and “eating disorders, globalization, and the effects of racism and classism on the movement.”¹⁸⁷ Third wave feminism picks up right where second wave feminism left off, focusing on social, cultural, and political issues that affect women of different backgrounds, races, and classes. In “Kicking Ass is Comfort Food’: Buffy as Third Wave Feminist Icon”, Patricia Pender comments on how third wave feminism addresses issues of diversity: “From some of its earliest incarnations academic third wave feminism has presented itself as a movement that places questions of diversity and difference at the centre of its

¹⁸⁵ *The Princess and the Frog*, dir. Ron Clements and Jon Musker (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009), film.

¹⁸⁶ IMDb.com., “The Little Mermaid (1989) Box Office/business for,” 2016, accessed September 30, 2016, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0097757/business?ref_=tt_ql_dt_4.

¹⁸⁷ Lisa Shapiro Sanders, ‘Feminists Love a Utopia’: Collaboration, Conflict, and the Futures of Feminism” in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, eds. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 51.

theoretical and political agenda.”¹⁸⁸ The end of second wave feminism focused on extending the movement to women of different colors and backgrounds and third wave feminism picked up that notion as well and expanded upon it.¹⁸⁹ Third wave feminism focuses on addressing the problems of a diverse group of women, while acknowledging women’s individual and intersectional identities and struggles. These feminists even tackle the issues that racism and classism impose upon the movement itself.

In the 1990s, it is possible that Disney began to take steps towards creating female figures that reflected values of third wave feminism because most women supported feminist ideals.¹⁹⁰ However most women were reluctant to proclaim themselves as feminists because the word still carried a negative connotation. For example, in Paula Karmen’s “1991 book *Feminist Fatale*,” she surveyed people on their views of feminism and she found that “the young, diverse women and men” actually “supported the *goals* of feminism but shunned the word itself; only about 16 percent were willing to use the term to describe themselves.”¹⁹¹ In 1998, Gloria Steinem comments on how women identify with the feminist movement and its value however they are reluctant to call themselves feminists: “[. . .] according to a 1998 Time/CNN poll, more than 50 percent of women between eighteen and thirty four say they are simpatico with feminist values but do not necessarily call themselves feminists.”¹⁹² Based on the survey and poll, most people supported feminist ideals but were reluctant to call themselves feminists. Pender explains why the word “feminist” has a negative connotation in third wave feminism: because it was viewed as

¹⁸⁸ Patricia Pender, “Kicking Ass is Comfort Food’: Buffy as Third Wave Feminist Icon” in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, eds. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 171.

¹⁸⁹ Sanders, ‘Feminists Love a Utopia,’ 51-52.

¹⁹⁰ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists ONCE*, 150.

¹⁹¹ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists ONCE*, 150.

¹⁹² Sanders, ‘Feminists Love a Utopia,’ 54-55.

excluding white women from the movement as it focuses on diversity.¹⁹³ Therefore, it makes sense that in the 90s, Disney may have been reluctant to create a fully third wave feminist female figure, or a positive non-traditional female figure, in their films because people, particularly women, shied away from calling themselves feminists at all. Thus Disney, instituted complex female figures that have some non-traditional traits such as independence and being outspoken, but also carry traditional traits such as dependence on men and engaging in a heterosexual relationship. It is important to note that Disney's hesitance to create a completely positive non-traditional female figure did not hurt their ticket but in fact helped them grow by aligning with people's feelings towards feminism without claiming the identity itself: *The Little Mermaid* (1989) netted \$6,031,479,¹⁹⁴ followed by *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) pulling in \$9,624,149,¹⁹⁵ then with *Aladdin* (1992) making \$19,289,073,¹⁹⁶ *Pocahontas* (1995) netted \$29, 531, 619,¹⁹⁷ and *Hercules* (1997) made \$21,454,451¹⁹⁸ *Mulan* (1998) brought in \$22,745,143,¹⁹⁹ and *Tarzan* (1999) made \$34,221,968²⁰⁰ (Refer to Figure 26 for full chart).

In the 2000s-2010s, Disney may have taken greater steps in creating third wave female figures in their films because feminism was becoming and became mainstream as part of the phenomena of consumer feminism. Consumer feminism is the “branding” of feminism as a

¹⁹³ Pender, “Kicking Ass is Comfort Food,” 171.

¹⁹⁴ IMDb.com, Inc., “The Little Mermaid (1989),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=littlemermaid.htm>.

¹⁹⁵ IMDb.com, Inc., “Beauty and the Beast (1991),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=beautyandthebeast.htm>.

¹⁹⁶ IMDb.com, Inc., “Aladdin (1992),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=aladdin.htm>.

¹⁹⁷ IMDb.com, Inc., “Pocahontas (1995),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=pocahontas.htm>. Pocahontas is included in this section and the chart to indicate the high-ticket sales of Disney films throughout the 90s despite that most of their female figures were complex.

¹⁹⁸ IMDb.com, Inc., “Hercules (1997),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=hercules.htm>.

¹⁹⁹ IMDb.com, Inc., “Mulan (1998),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=mulan.htm>.

²⁰⁰ IMDb.com, Inc., “Tarzan (1999),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=tarzan.htm>.

product that anyone can buy and adopt as an identity to be considered “cool” and to be in-line with the latest fad.²⁰¹ Disney capitalized and continues to capitalize on feminism. Tiana, Rapunzel, and Anna are complex female figures, because they end up becoming or dependent on men, but their feminist attributes cannot be denied. Their frankness may symbolize that women have their own voice and they wish to be heard. Their independence may indicate that women wish to own their space and assert autonomy over themselves. The complex female figures possess some feminist attributes such as outspokenness, and independence, but they also have traditional attributes such as dependency on men, which make them incomplete feminist icons. Along with them, came the positive non-traditional female characters, who are all independent, outspoken, and determined, such as Nani from *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), Helen Parr from *The Incredibles* (2004), Merida from *Brave* (2012), and Elsa from *Frozen* (2013).²⁰² The positive non-traditional female characters can be considered complete feminist icons in comparison to the complex figures. Both complex and positive non-traditional female characters have feminist attributes, in different capacities, therefore, it is appropriate to say that from 2000s-2010s Disney was and continues to capitalize on feminism via their protagonists. The most obvious way that Disney capitalized on feminism is in their gross sales from the opening weekend of each of these films from 2000s-2010s: *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) made \$35, 260, 212²⁰³, *The Incredibles* (2004) netted \$70,467,623,²⁰⁴ *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) made \$24,208,916,²⁰⁵ *Tangled* netted

²⁰¹ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, X, 74.

²⁰² The positive non-traditional women are analyzed further in Chapter 3. These films are included in this chapter and in Figure 26 to emphasize how Disney was and continues to capitalize on feminism via their complex and non-traditional figures.

²⁰³ IMDb.com, Inc., “*Lilo & Stitch* (2002),” Box Office Mojo, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=lilostitch.htm>.

²⁰⁴ IMDb.com, Inc., “*The Incredibles* (2004).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=incredibles.htm>.

²⁰⁵ IMDb.com, Inc., “*The Princess and the Frog* (2009).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=princessandthefrog.htm>.

\$48,767,052,²⁰⁶ *Brave* earned \$66,323,594 and *Frozen* pulled in \$67,391,326²⁰⁷ (Figure 26).²⁰⁸

Apart from, *The Princess and the Frog* there was an increase in ticket sales for these 2000s-2010s films. Disney is a corporation and their goal is to make money. Clearly Disney saw an opportunity to capitalize on feminism with their animated complex and positive non-traditional female characters, they took that opportunity, and ran with it all the way to the bank. When women choose to buy a feminist product such as purchasing a ticket to see a film like *Frozen* with female figures, like Elsa and Anna, they are making a conscious choice because they have the right to choose what they want to spend their money on. Zeisler explains that this concept is referred to as “choice feminism” in which women have the right to choose whatever they would like to do or in this case purchase.²⁰⁹ Women are choosing to see these films that feature complex female figures that represent third wave feminist ideals. By choosing to see these films, these women are consuming feminism and Disney is turning a profit on feminism.

Moreover, Disney used and continues to use ethnically diverse female figures in its cinema productions to draw a wider audience and to possibly show that its characters are reflective of third wave feminist ideals. Third wave feminism focuses on addressing issues of a diverse group of women. Jasmine is Arab, Mulan is Chinese, and Tiana is African-American.²¹⁰ Disney tried to cater to the multicultural population of the United States while also trying to appease third wave feminists. For example, Staninger comments on Jasmine and how she was created to not only reflect multiculturalism in the United States but also to attract feminist

²⁰⁶ IMDb.com, Inc., “Tangled (2010).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=rapunzel.htm>.

²⁰⁷ IMDb.com, Inc., “Frozen (2013).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=frozen2013.htm>.

²⁰⁸ It is possible that *The Incredibles* pulled in the highest amount in its opening weekend ticket because it is a film that features a superhero family which would attract a wider audience of male superhero fanatics or action movie goers.

²⁰⁹ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists ONCE*, 18.

²¹⁰ Pocahontas fits with this explosion of diversity because she is Native-American however, she is analyzed in chapter 3 as a positive non-traditional female figure.

movie-goers: “This Americanization of *Aladdin*’s Jasmine could have been benevolently interpreted as Disney’s attempt to make the movie inviting to a large American audience and to fledgling American feminists.”²¹¹ As mentioned previously, Jasmine has feminist attributes: being outspoken and independent. However, she still has traditional aspects as well that hold her back from being a complete feminist icon; thus, she is an incomplete feminist icon. In “Mulan Disney, It’s Like, Re-Orients: Consuming China and Animating Teen Dreams” by Sheng-mei Ma, Ma comments on Disney’s attempts at incorporating multiculturalism into their films via *Mulan* and other 90s movies: “One hastens to add that *Mulan* and her nineties siblings, [were] born out of multiculturalism...”²¹² However, *Mulan* is not a complete feminist icon either because she falls into the same trope of having a ‘happily ever after’ with a man by her side and returning to the domestic sphere of the home. In 2009, *Tiana* also seems fiercely independent however she also has a ‘happily ever after’ with a man by her side. Moving forward, Disney seems to be striving to give viewers complete feminist icons, positive non-traditional female figures, because a majority of the positive female figures’ films have shown to bring in even greater ticket sales than the complex female figures’ films (Figure 26).

²¹¹ Staninger, “Disney’s Magic Carpet Ride,” 68.

²¹² Sheng-mei Ma, “Mulan Disney, It’s Like, Re-Orients: Consuming China and Animating Teen Dreams,” in *The Emperor’s Old Groove: Decolonizing Disney’s Magic Kingdom*, ed. Brenda Ayres (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 150.

Appendix of Complex Female Figures



Figure 18. The wedding scene between Ariel and Prince Eric.

Citation: *The Little Mermaid*. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker. Performed by Jodi Benson, Rene Auberjonois, and Christopher Daniel Barnes. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989. Film.



Figure 19. Belle and Beast are pictured here in a stained-glass window while both wearing crowns.

Citation: *Beauty and the Beast*. Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. Performed by Paige O'Hara, Robby Benson, and Jesse Corti. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991. Film.



Figure 20. Aladdin and Jasmine riding on their magic carpet indicating their union.

Citation: *Aladdin*. Directed by Ron Clements and Jon Musker. Performed by Scott Weinger, Robin Williams, and Linda Larkin. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1992. Film.



Figure 21. Hercules and Meg passionately kissing implying their impending nuptials.

Citation: *Hercules*. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker. Performed by Tate Donovan, Susan Egan, and James Woods. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1997. Film.



Figure 22. The first image shows Mulan asking Shang to stay for dinner and he happily accepts thus implying that they will start dating and eventually marry. The second image shows Mulan and Shang getting married in *Mulan II*.

Citations: *Mulan*. Directed by Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook. Performed by Ming-Na Wen, Eddie Murphy, and BD Wong. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998. Film.

Mulan II. Directed by Darrell Rooney and Lynne Southerland. Performed by Ming-Na Wen, and BD Wong. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2004. Film.



Figure 23. Tarzan and Jane standing together as a unit in the final scene of the film.

Citation: *Tarzan*. Directed by Chris Buck and Kevin Lima. Performed by Tony Goldwyn, Minnie Driver, and Brian Blessed. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1999. Film.



Figure 24. Tiana’s wedding scenes to Prince Naveen in frog form and human form.

Citation: *The Princess and the Frog*. Directed by Ron Clements and Jon Musker. Performed by Anika Noni Rose, Keith David, and Oprah Winfrey. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2009. Film.



Figure 25. Kristoff and Anna kiss to signify their love for one another and their impending marriage.

Citation: *Frozen*. Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee. Performed by Kristen Bell and Idina Menzel. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013. Film.

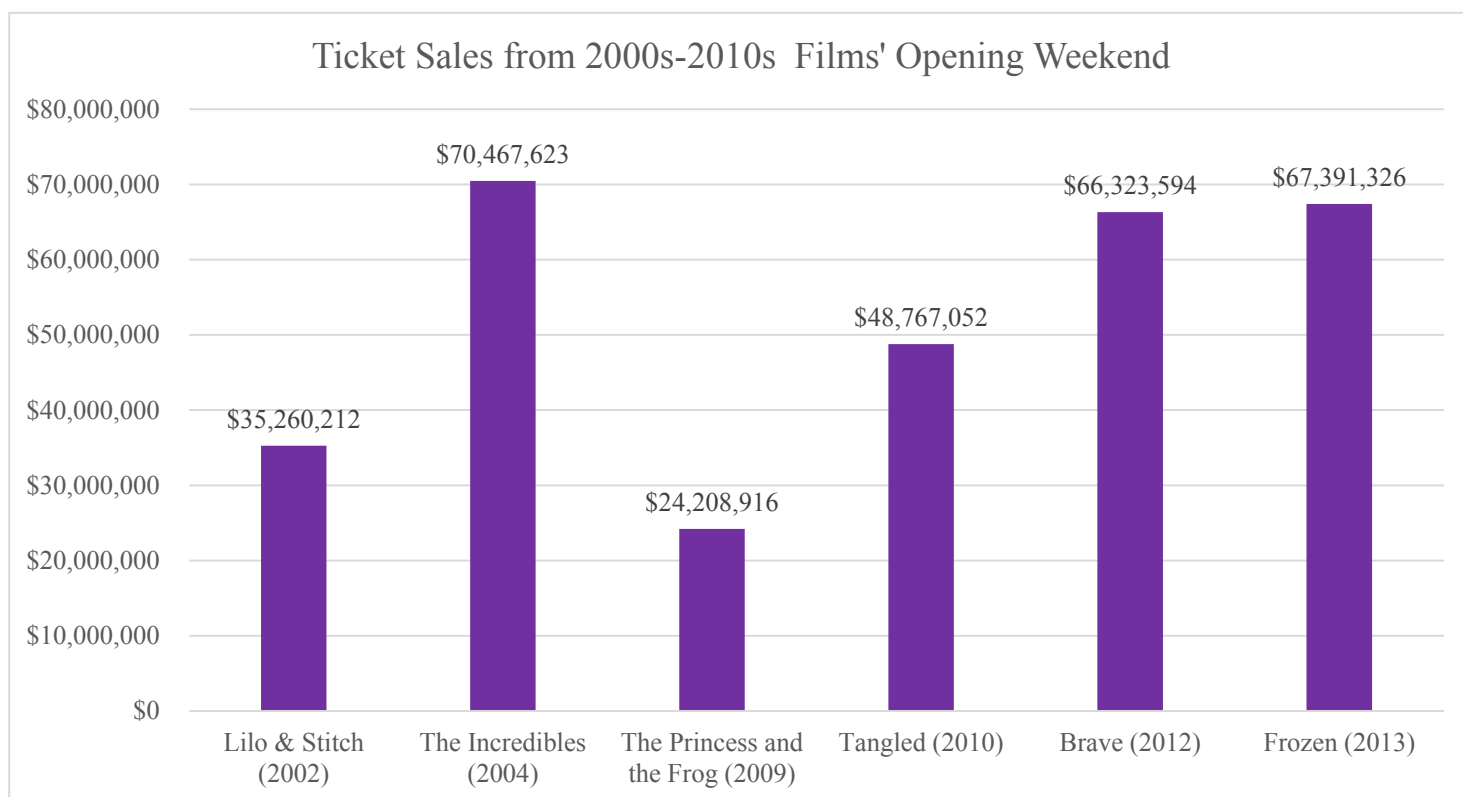
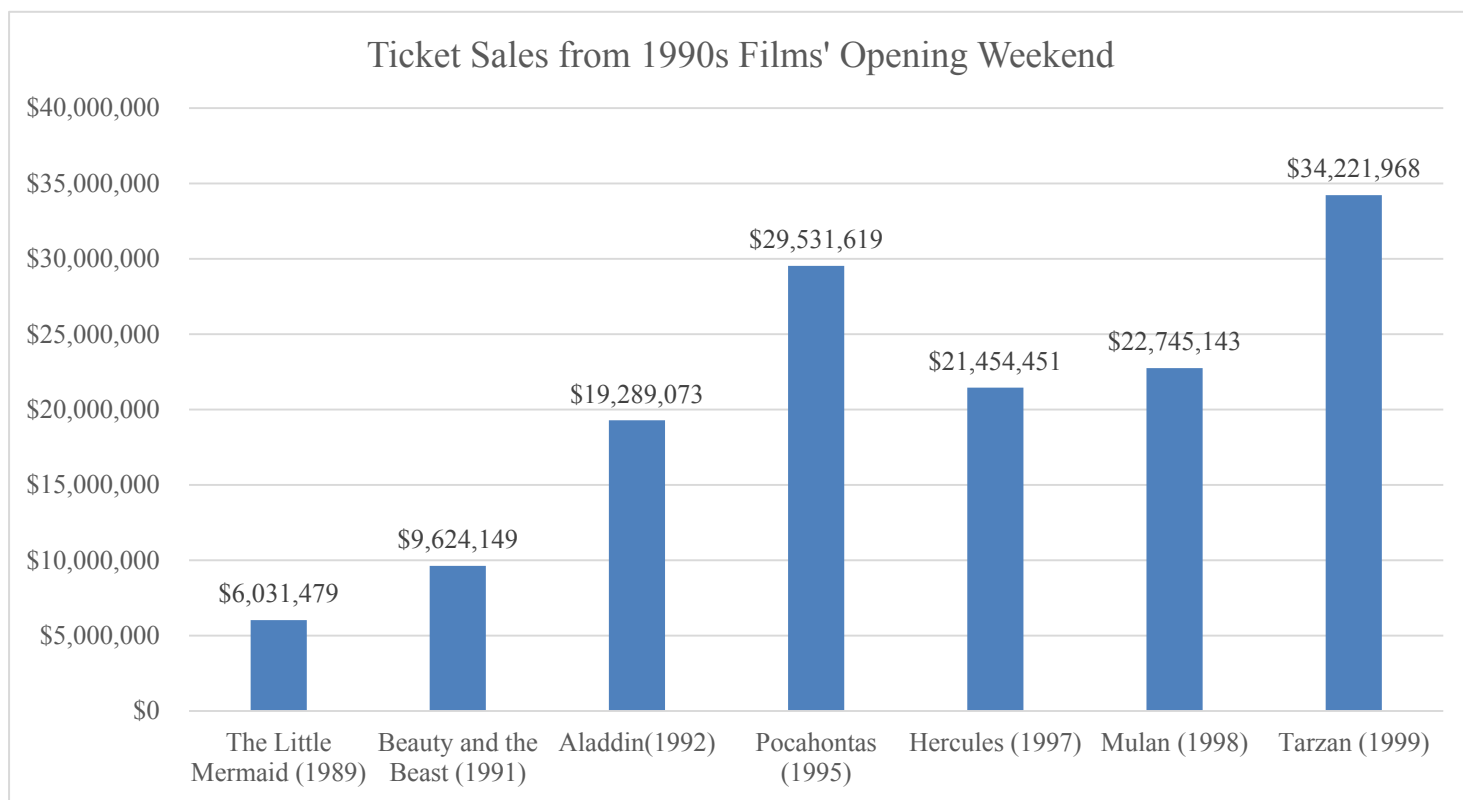


Figure 26. The top chart depicts the ticket sales for the 1990s films during their opening weekends. The opening ticket sales continuously increase with the exceptions of Hercules and

Mulan whose opening sales were almost the same. Pocahontas is included in the top chart to indicate the high-ticket sales of Disney films throughout the 90s despite that most of their female figures were complex. The bottom chart depicts ticket sales for the 2000s-2010s films which are all consistently high with the exception of *The Princess and the Frog*. The positive non-traditional women's films are depicted in the chart to emphasis how Disney continues to capitalize on feminism via their complex and non-traditional figures. It is possible that *The Incredibles* pulled in the highest amount in their opening weekend ticket sales because it is a film that features a superhero family which would attract a wider audience of male superhero fanatics or action movie goers. The positive non-traditional women's films are Pocahontas, Lilo & Stitch, *The Incredibles*, *Brave*, and *Frozen*.

Citations:

IMDb.com, Inc. "Aladdin (1992)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=aladdin.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "Beauty and the Beast (1991)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=beautyandthebeast.htm>.

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IMDb.com, Inc. "Pocahontas (1995)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=pocahontas.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "Tangled (2010)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=rapunzel.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "Tarzan (1999)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=tarzan.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "The Incredibles (2004)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=incredibles.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "The Little Mermaid (1989)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=littlemermaid.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "The Princess and the Frog (2009)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=princessandthefrog.htm>.

Chapter 3: The Negative and Positive Non-traditional Disney Animated Female Characters

The non-traditional female figure takes two forms in Disney cinema: negative and positive. The earlier Disney films (1950-2000) depict negative non-traditional female figures (villainesses) that are characterized as outspoken, masculine in appearance, independent, determined and evil. These villainesses are Lady Tremaine, Cinderella's evil stepmother from *Cinderella* (1950), Maleficent, an evil fairy, from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), Cruella DeVil, an evil fashionista, from *101 Dalmatians* (1961), Ursula, an evil sea witch, from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), and Yzma, an evil advisor to an emperor, from *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000), and Mother Gothel, Rapunzel's evil phony mother, from *Tangled* (2010). The later Disney films (1995-2013) depict positive non-traditional female figures (heroines) that are characterized as outspoken, feminine in appearance, independent, determined, and inherently good. These heroines are Pocahontas, a Native-American princess, from *Pocahontas* (1995), Nani, a young Hawaiian woman, from *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), Helen Parr, a shape-shifting super heroine wife, and mom, from *The Incredibles* (2004), a Disney and Pixar film, Merida, a Scottish princess, from *Brave* (2012), a Disney-Pixar film, and Elsa, queen of Arendelle with ice powers, from *Frozen* (2013).

These non-traditional female figures (positive and negative) share common characteristics such as outspokenness, independence, and determination. These characteristics heighten their placement into the non-traditional category. However, the main distinctions between them are masculine versus feminine appearances and being evil versus being inherently good. In this study, the term 'masculine' means any aspect of a female figure's physical appearance that does not align with Disney's ideal version of beauty. The traditional female figures such as Cinderella and Aurora embody Disney's ideal version of beauty. The non-

traditional woman's image has shifted from being demonized (1950-2000) to being praised (1995-2013). Davis discusses this shift: "Whereas strong heroines are a growing trend in Disney animation in the later period, evil women are becoming an increasingly rare phenomenon."²¹³ The Disney villainesses have become more spread out throughout the Disney time-line in this study with three appearing in the 1950s-1960s, Lady Tremaine (1950), Maleficent (1959), and Cruella DeVil (1961) then the next villainess does not emerge until 1989, Ursula (1989), after Ursula eleven years later Yzma (2000) comes onto the scene, and finally ten years later Mother Gothel (2010) makes her debut. The positive non-traditional women also represent non-traditional family structures: Pocahontas's mother passes away when she is young therefore her father must raise her on his own; Nani is the guardian to her little sister Lilo because their parents died in a car crash; Elsa and Anna's parents died in a ship wreck; Merida successfully rejects the traditional role as a princess and her family eventually accepts it; Helen is a powerful mom, wife, and super-heroine to her family. The similarities between the negative and positive non-traditional women are important, but their differences are what truly defines them as negative non-traditional women or positive non-traditional women, and their differences highlight the shift from villainesses to heroines.

From 1950 to 2013, these women have been and remain quite vocal. The negative non-traditional women take the stage early on and they are unapologetically outspoken. Beginning in 1950, Lady Tremaine is quite vocal. During one scene, Lady Tremaine tries to stop Cinderella from trying on the slipper by standing in front of her. Lady Tremaine commands the Duke to pay no mind to Cinderella because she is "just an imaginative child."²¹⁴ Lady Tremaine is being outspoken towards a man, and a man with power at that. In 1959, Maleficent, like Lady

²¹³ Davis, *Good Girls*, 214.

²¹⁴ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

Tremaine, is frank as well. In the beginning of the film, Maleficent makes a grand entrance at the christening of Aurora. Maleficent appears from a ball of green fire with thunder and lightning in the castle. Maleficent interrupts the good fairy Merryweather's speech when she enters the room. Maleficent confronts King Stefan for not inviting her in front of his guests: "I really felt quite distressed at not receiving an invitation."²¹⁵ She calls out King Stefan, an authoritative figure, for not inviting her to his daughter's christening. In one of the final scenes, Maleficent fights Prince Philip to stop him from rescuing Aurora. During the battle, she says to Prince Philip: "Now shall you deal with me and all of the powers of hell!"²¹⁶ Then she turns into a dragon and tries to kill Prince Philip. Maleficent is quite outspoken throughout the film especially towards male characters. In 1961, Cruella DeVil comes onto the scene as another vocal non-traditional woman. The film is based on "Dodie Smith's classic British children's novel *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*."²¹⁷ In the beginning of the film, Cruella openly insults her old-school friend Anita's home to her face: "This horrid little house is your dream castle."²¹⁸ Cruella unapologetically speaks her mind. In a later scene, Roger, Anita's husband, and Anita refuse to sell their Dalmatian puppies to Cruella. In response, Cruella is furious. She says to them: "But I warn you, Anita, we're through. I'm through with all of you! I'll get even. Just wait. You'll be sorry. You fools!"²¹⁹ Cruella follows through on her threat by stealing their puppies later on in the film.

In 1989, Ursula joins her Disney sisters in being outspoken. From the beginning to the middle of the film, Ursula is vocal in private, however, by the end of the film she becomes outspoken publicly. In the middle of the film, when Ursula's eel henchmen knock the boat over, thus, stopping Ariel from kissing Prince Eric, she says to herself in her cave: "Triton's daughter

²¹⁵ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

²¹⁶ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

²¹⁷ Spooner, "The Lady Is a Vamp" 165.

²¹⁸ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

²¹⁹ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

will be mine! And then I'll make him writhe."²²⁰ At the end of the film she becomes publicly outspoken. In one of the final scenes she takes Ariel as her prisoner for failing to get Prince Eric to kiss her. She runs into King Triton on her way back to her cave. She refuses to give Ariel to him. She says to King Triton: "Not a chance Triton! She's mine now!" In a later scene, when Ariel tries to escape from Ursula's clutches, Ursula yells at Ariel: "Don't fool with me ya little brat!" Ursula's bluntness in public comes to a climax when she says, with King Triton's crown on her head: "Now I am the ruler of all the ocean!"²²¹ Ursula defies King Triton publicly and subsequently emasculates him by taking his crown away; his source of power.

In 2000, Yzma emerges onto the screen as another negative non-traditional female figure. The film itself is based on "Hans Christian Anderson's fairytale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*."²²² In the beginning of the film, Yzma sits on Emperor Kuzko's throne. She listens to the peasants' grievances. Yzma says to one peasant: "It is no concern of mine whether your family has. . . what was it again?" The peasant responds: "Um, food." Then Yzma says: "Ha! You really should have thought of that before you became peasants. We're through here take him away. Next!"²²³ Yzma blatantly disregards the peasant's complaint for food to his face. She tells the male guards to take him away, and the male guards listen to her without question. In a later scene, after Kuzko fires Yzma, she makes plans for how to get rid of Kuzko so that she can become empress. She says to her assistant Kronk: "I'll poison him with this."²²⁴ Yzma talks about poisoning Kuzko shamelessly to accomplish her goal. Once again, another negative non-traditional female figure is being frank.

²²⁰ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²²¹ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²²² Nóra Borthaiser, "Brave New Americas: Historical Re-Interpretations in Disney's *The Emperor's New Groove* and Dreamworks' *The Road to El Dorado*," *Americana E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary*, Spring, VI, no. 1 (2010), accessed February 19, 2017.

²²³ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

²²⁴ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

In 2010, Mother Gothel unites with her evil sisters in being shamelessly blunt and direct. Throughout the film, Mother Gothel is quite outspoken towards women and men. For example, when Rapunzel pleads with Mother Gothel to take her to see the floating lights, Mother Gothel suddenly loses her temper, cuts off Rapunzel mid-sentence and yells at Rapunzel: “Enough with the lights Rapunzel! You are not leaving this tower! Ever!”²²⁵ Mother Gothel directly forbids Rapunzel to leave the tower ever. Mother Gothel seems to represent a female force that confines Rapunzel to the domestic sphere that is her tower. Mother Gothel is also outspoken towards men. In a later scene, after Rapunzel escapes from her tower, Mother Gothel decides to go and find her. Along her journey, she encounters the Stabbington Brothers, two thugs, who are trying to kill Flynn because Flynn double crossed them by taking the crown for himself.²²⁶ Mother Gothel overhears their conversation about their plans to kill Flynn and steal the crown back from him to sell and make a profit off it. Luckily, Mother Gothel has the crown in the satchel with her. She calls out to the brothers: “Perhaps you want to stop acting like wild dogs chasing their tails and think for a moment.”²²⁷ Mother Gothel shows them that she has the crown and they draw their swords to steal it from her. The Stabbington Brothers are two large brutish men with weapons. However, she is unafraid of them. Mother Gothel openly insults the Brothers by calling them dogs. She speaks her mind to whomever and does not care if they are insulted or hurt by her frankness. Mother Gothel openly insults the Brothers by calling them dogs. Mother Gothel takes pride in her frankness. All the negative non-traditional female figures are vocal and the positive non-traditional women are just as outspoken.

The positive non-traditional women follow the negative non-traditional women’s path in being outspoken. Beginning in 1995, Pocahontas leads the way for the positive non-traditional

²²⁵ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

²²⁶ See Chapter 2 for more details about the crown and its symbolism

²²⁷ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

women. The film *Pocahontas* is based on the real-life person Pocahontas, the historical events that impacted her life, and other historical figures.²²⁸ However, the film is not an exact portrayal of Pocahontas's life. In the film, Pocahontas is probably around 18 years old, and she does not return with John Smith, her love interest, to England and instead remains with her people. In real life, Pocahontas was 11 years old when the English arrived and when she met John Smith. John Smith did in fact go back to England without Pocahontas because of a gunshot wound, but there is no evidence of a romance between them like the Disney film depicts. In reality, Pocahontas married Kocoum when she was 14 years old.²²⁹ The film does not depict this scene at all nor does it portray Pocahontas as an 11-year-old girl. Nonetheless, in the film, and possibly in real life, Pocahontas is very outspoken. In the beginning of the film, Pocahontas is openly defiant towards her father, Chief Powhatan, especially when he suggests that she marry Kocoum. She says to her father: "Father, I think my dream is pointing me down another path."²³⁰ Pocahontas is also frank towards her male counterpart John Smith. John says to Pocahontas that he believes the Native Americans are savages. Pocahontas responds to him in song: "You think I'm an ignorant savage/And you've been so many places/I guess it must be so/But still I cannot see if the savage one is me/How can there be so much that you don't know."²³¹ Her outspokenness climaxes when she saves John's life and defies her father. She throws herself onto John as her father is lifting his staff to kill him. She yells: "If you kill him, you'll have to kill me too!"²³² She speaks out against her father in front of her tribe and the Englishmen. She speaks her mind throughout the entire

²²⁸ Radha Jhappan and Daiva Stasiulis, "Anglophilia and the Discreet Charm of the English Voice in Disney's *Pocahontas* Films," in *Rethinking Disney: Private Control, Public Dimensions*, eds. Mike Budd, and Max H. Kirsch (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 154.

²²⁹ Sarah J. Stebbins, "Pocahontas: Her Life and Legend," *National Park Service Seasonal*, (2010), accessed February 19, 2017.

²³⁰ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

²³¹ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

²³² *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

film to whomever she feels is in the wrong. Pocahontas paved the way for the positive non-traditional women.

In 2002, Nani joins her Disney sisters in being outspoken. The film *Lilo & Stitch* is not based on a folk tale, myth, fairy-tale or history. However, the setting is based on a town called Hanapepe in Hawaii.²³³ Throughout the entire film, there are various instances of Nani's candidness. In the beginning of the film, Nani runs home to meet the social worker, Mr. Bubbles, before he sees that Lilo, her little sister, is home alone. On her way home, she runs across the street and Mr. Bubbles almost hits her with his car. She says to him, while she does not know it is him driving: "Hey! Watch where you're going! Stupidhead!"²³⁴ Nani kicks his car as well. She speaks her mind fearlessly to anyone. Throughout the film, Nani and Mr. Bubbles engage in a power struggle because Mr. Bubbles wants to take Lilo away from Nani, believing she is an unfit guardian, and Nani is constantly fighting him to keep Lilo with her through the end of the film. In another scene, Nani rejects her co-worker David's advances towards her directly and coldly. David says to Nani "Listen, I was wondering if you're not doing anything. . ." Nani abruptly cuts him off and says: "David, I told you, I can't. I . . .I got a lot to deal with right now." David responds with trying to persuade Nani to go out with him but she abruptly cuts him off again and says: "You smell like a lawnmower."²³⁵ Her frankness reaches a climax when the social worker, Mr. Bubbles, tries to take Lilo away to foster care because he believes Nani is an unfit guardian for Lilo. Mr. Bubbles says to Nani: "You know I have no choice." Nani responds and yells at him: "No! You're not taking her! I'm the only one who understands her! You take that away she

²³³ Gary A. Warner, "Kauai town inspired Disney's 'Lilo & Stitch,'" The Orange County Register, February 20, 2009, accessed February 19, 2017.

²³⁴ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²³⁵ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

won't stand a chance!"²³⁶ Nani is resilient and outspoken when she tries to stop Mr. Bubbles from taking Lilo away. Mr. Bubbles yells in response to Nani: "Is that what she [Lilo] needs?! It seems clear to me that you [Nani] need her a lot more than she needs you."²³⁷ Again there is a constant power struggle between Mr. Bubbles and Nani. Nani is fearless when she defies male figures, especially when it comes to protecting her sister.

In 2004, Disney & Pixar released *The Incredibles*, featuring an outspoken super heroine, wife, and mother, Helen Parr. Disney & Pixar worked on this film collaboratively. In 1991, Disney and Pixar announced an agreement that they would "make and distribute at least one computer-generated animated movie."²³⁸ This film was *Toy Story* (1995). The working collaboration between the two companies continued until Disney bought out Pixar in 2006.²³⁹ The joint companies became known as Disney-Pixar. This film is based on director Brad Bird's life of "trying to balance a career with family."²⁴⁰ Despite Helen's seemingly domestic role, she is first and foremost a super heroine. Her frankness comes from her super heroine background. In the beginning of the film, when Helen is still an active super heroine and unmarried, Helen is being interviewed. She is asked about when she will settle down indicating the assumption that women should marry. She responds to the interviewer: "Settle down? Are you kidding? I'm at the top of my game! I'm right up there with the big dogs! Girls, come on. Leave the saving of the world to the men? I don't think so."²⁴¹ She says what is on her mind in public. In a later scene, Helen is outspoken in private as well. During an argument in the present day with her husband Bob, she yells at him aggressively, "This is not about you!"²⁴² She is blunt even towards her

²³⁶ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²³⁷ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²³⁸ Pixar, "Pixar- Our Story." Pixar, 2016, accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.pixar.com/about/Our-Story>.

²³⁹ Pixar, "Pixar- Our Story." Pixar, 2016, accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.pixar.com/about/Our-Story>.

²⁴⁰ IMDb.com, Inc, "The Incredibles (2004)-Trivia," IMDb, 2016, accessed February 19, 2017.

²⁴¹ *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

²⁴² *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

husband. Helen is outspoken again in public in a later scene when she saves Bob from being trapped on an island by his nemesis Syndrome. Syndrome and his henchwoman Mirage are on the island with Bob holding him as a prisoner. When Helen finds Bob in the arms of Mirage, Helen punches Mirage, in the face. Helen believes Bob is having an affair with Mirage. However, Bob was thanking Mirage with a hug because she told him that his family survived the plane crash. The plane crashed because Syndrome ordered missiles to destroy it. In response to Helen punching Mirage in the face, Bob pulls Helen stretched arm towards him. She yells at him angrily: “Let go of me! Let go, you lousy, lying unfaithful creep!”²⁴³ She is very vocal as a super heroine in the beginning, and even as a wife and mother, and as a super heroine once again at the end of the film.

In 2012, Merida races onto the Disney cinema scene on her horse with her voice being heard by all. Her film, *Brave*, is a Disney-Pixar film. Despite references to Scottish folk-tales throughout the film, the film itself, however, is not based on any pre-existing fairytales or stories: “Merida is the first Disney princess to not be based on any preexisting character or historical figure.”²⁴⁴ Merida is highly outspoken from the beginning of the film through the end of the film. Early in the film, Merida refuses to go through the betrothal process. She yells at her mother at the dinner table: “No, it’s what you’ve been preparing me for my whole life. I won’t go through with it. You can’t make me.”²⁴⁵ Merida refuses to meet her suitors and refuses to get married. Merida continues to be outspoken when she competes for the right to her own hand in marriage via an archery competition against her suitors. She yells to the crowd of Scottish clans and her parents: “I am Merida. Firstborn descendant of Clan Dun Broch. And I’ll be shooting for my

²⁴³ *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film. Syndrome is the villain in this film. Mirage is his henchwoman.

²⁴⁴ IMDb.com, Inc, “Brave (2012)-Trivia,” IMDb, 2016, accessed February 19, 2017.

²⁴⁵ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

own hand!”²⁴⁶ She successfully wins the archery competition and thus her own hand in marriage. However, her mother, Elinor, does not acknowledge her triumph and refuses to let her out of the betrothal process because Merida embarrassed her family, and her suitors. Elinor desires to stick to tradition. Thus, Merida decides to pay a witch to change Elinor to alter Merida’s fate. The witch does change Elinor but she changes her into a bear. At the end of the film, Merida remains greatly outspoken even to her own father and the other clan leaders. The men try to kill Elinor, still a bear, because they hunt bears. Merida steps in, with her bow drawn towards all the men even her own father to protect Elinor. Merida says to her father: “Get back. That’s my mother.”²⁴⁷ She remains shamelessly frank towards male figures in her life including her father. Merida is a very vocal positive non-traditional female figure.

Not only is Merida incredibly outspoken to male figures, but Elsa is similarly blunt to her family, men, and her guards. In 2013, Elsa graced the screen in *Frozen*. She is presented as very straight-forward throughout the entirety of her tale. In the beginning of the film, Elsa tells her sister Anna plainly: “You can’t marry a man you just met.” She says that to Anna in front of Prince Hans, Anna’s love interest. Prince Hans tries to ease Elsa’s worries about their abrupt marriage but Elsa shuts him down and tells him to leave. Elsa is blunt even towards men because she knows she as a queen is more powerful than a prince. Then, Elsa abruptly decides to end the celebration party for her coronation. She instructs the male guard: “The party is over. Close the gates.”²⁴⁸ In response, Anna starts an argument with Elsa in front of the party guests: “What did I ever do to you?” Elsa responds: “Enough Anna.” Then Anna says: “No! Why? Why do you shut me out? Why do you shut the world out? What are you so afraid of?!” Elsa loses her patience

²⁴⁶ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

²⁴⁷ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

²⁴⁸ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

and yells at the entire party, including Anna: “I said, enough!”²⁴⁹ At the same time, Elsa accidentally unleashes sharp icicles all over the room. The entire party and Anna are in shock to hear Elsa, who is the Queen of Arendelle, speak out of turn and because she made ice crystals appear from her hands. Elsa removes herself from the party and runs away to create her own space: an ice castle. In a later scene, Anna finds Elsa in the ice castle. Anna has come to try to convince Elsa to return to Arendelle and stop the eternal winter. During this discussion, Elsa tries to explain to Anna that she does not know how to stop the winter. Anna is persistent and continues to try and persuade Elsa to return to Arendelle. However, Elsa abruptly cuts Anna and yells to Anna in song: “I CAN’T!”²⁵⁰ Elsa cannot stop the winter and Elsa then tells Anna that she must leave and Elsa creates a snow monster to throw Anna out of her ice castle. Elsa loses her mind when her tranquility is disturbed. Elsa is the Queen of Arendelle. Her word is law. She gives commands and the people, men included, and her guards listen to them. She expects Anna to do the same. Elsa is outspoken as a queen and as a female character. These non-traditional women, both positive and negative, are shamelessly vocal in their tales.

Not only are these non-traditional women candid but they are all quite independent and determined. Independence is defined as making decisions, and acting upon them without the consent of others, and by being alone. The non-traditional women only must fulfill one of these attributes to be considered non-traditional. Lady Tremaine, Maleficent, Cruella DeVil, Ursula, Yzma, Mother Gothel, Merida and Elsa are alone, they make their own decisions, and act upon them. Pocahontas, Nani and Helen Parr are not alone throughout the film however they do make their own decisions and act upon them without the consent of others; doing so causes them to step outside of their traditional woman’s role. Therefore, positive non-traditional women are

²⁴⁹ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

²⁵⁰ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

considered independent like their negative non-traditional counterparts. Their noteworthy independent attributes and actions outweigh their relationship status. They are all determined to accomplish their goals in each of their tales.

The negative non-traditional female figures precede the positive non-traditional female figures chronologically in terms of expressing their independence and determination. Lady Tremaine is quite independent and determined. Her husband, Cinderella's father, dies early in the film.²⁵¹ The narrator addresses the significance of her husband's death: "It was upon the untimely death of this good man, however, that the stepmother's true nature was revealed."²⁵² Lady Tremaine never remarries, and therefore, she remains alone. In a later scene, Lady Tremaine decides to lock Cinderella in her room so that the Duke would not find her nor let her try on the slipper. Lady Tremaine makes this decision independently without consulting anyone. After Lady Tremaine locks Cinderella in her room, she taps her pocket to make sure the key to Cinderella's room is still in her pocket thus, indicating to the viewer that Lady Tremaine is quite powerful. Lady Tremaine is determined to ruin Cinderella's life at all costs to make sure her daughters succeed in life. In the beginning of the film, the narrator describes Lady Tremaine's determination: "[. . .] she was grimly determined to forward the interests of her own two awkward daughters."²⁵³ Davis elaborates on Lady Tremaine's determination: "Furthermore, the evil step-mother actively threatens and thwarts the heroine in her 'care,' and will stop at nothing to destroy the heroine."²⁵⁴ Lady Tremaine is determined to destroy Cinderella's life. No one encourages her or motivates her on her evil quest; rather, Lady Tremaine pushes herself to accomplish her goal.

²⁵¹ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

²⁵² *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

²⁵³ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

²⁵⁴ Davis, *Good Girls*, 104.

Like Lady Tremaine, Maleficent is an independent and determined negative female figure. Maleficent does not have a husband, partner, or any male counterpart throughout the film.²⁵⁵ She fiercely stands on her own, making her own decisions and acting upon them. No one tells her what to do or how to do it. For example, in the beginning of the film, Maleficent curses Aurora out of revenge for not being invited to her christening. Maleficent says maniacally to a frightened crowd and Aurora's parents: "Listen well, all of you. The princess shall indeed grow in grace and beauty beloved by all her know her. But, before the sun sets on her sixteenth birthday, she shall prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and die!"²⁵⁶ In her spell, Maleficent is describing the traditional female figure which in this case is Aurora. Maleficent makes the independent decision to cast a curse on Aurora to fulfill her need for revenge. Maleficent is also driven to see to it that her curse on Aurora comes true. Davis alludes to Maleficent's determination: "They are also linked by Maleficent's obsessive pursuit of Aurora for sixteen years."²⁵⁷ Towards the end of the film, she lures Aurora to a spinning wheel via another spell and she does in fact end up pricking her finger and falling into a deep sleep.²⁵⁸ Maleficent lets no one ruin her plans. She is determined to see to it that the curse comes true. When juxtaposed to Aurora, Maleficent is the anti-thesis of the traditional Cold War woman. Aurora functions in the home and marries at the end of her tale as part of her traditional duties as a representation of a traditional Cold War women. Unlike Aurora, Maleficent does not conform to the traditional patriarchal family nor the woman's role within it.

In addition to Lady Tremaine and Maleficent, Cruella DeVil is very independent and determined. In "The Lady Is a Vamp: Cruella de Vil and the Cultural Politics of Fur," Catherine

²⁵⁵ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

²⁵⁶ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

²⁵⁷ Davis, *Good Girls*, 126.

²⁵⁸ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

Spooner addresses Cruella's relationship status: "Disney's Cruella is single."²⁵⁹ It is interesting that Disney's Cruella is single when the original Cruella in Dodie's Smith's book is married.²⁶⁰ It is possible that Disney made Cruella single to emphasize her as another example of the anti-thesis of the traditional Cold War woman. In the beginning of the film, Cruella tells her friend Anita that furs are her "only true love," while openly mocking Anita's marriage, sneering: "And poor Roger is your bold and fearless Sir Galahad!"²⁶¹ Cruella rejects marriage and ridicules Anita's marriage. Anita embodies the traditional Cold War woman because she fulfills the traditional duties of womanhood at that time such as getting married and becoming a stay at home to keep stability in the home. Anita is like the traditional heroines. Cruella also makes various independent decisions throughout the film. For example, she decides to pay men to kidnap the Dalmatians so that she can kill them and turn them into a fur coat for herself.²⁶² No one is telling her what to do and she creates her devilish plan all on her own. She even makes the independent decision to track down the puppies herself, in a blizzard, when she finds out they have escaped from her henchmen.²⁶³ To depict a woman, like Cruella, in the 1960s who orders men around, men who are of the working class at that time, was certainly very unconventional and only heightens her status as the anti-traditional Cold War woman. One important aspect of Cruella's multifaceted independency that sets her apart from other non-traditional female figures is that she is economically independent as well. Disney emphasizes this facet of her character. In the middle of the film, she tells Anita that she will pay her for her Dalmatian puppies. When Anita objects, Cruella snaps, "Enough of this nonsense. I'll pay you twice what they're worth. Come

²⁵⁹ Spooner, "The Lady Is a Vamp," 171.

²⁶⁰ Spooner, "The Lady Is a Vamp," 171.

²⁶¹ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

²⁶² *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

²⁶³ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

now, I'm being more than generous.”²⁶⁴ Cruella writes a fat check for Anita's puppies but Roger, Anita's husband, rejects the offer and the money. Undeterred, Cruella decides to steal the puppies instead. Davis describes Cruella's drive: “Cruella deVil will stop at nothing to satisfy her own selfish whims and vanities, again out of what is apparently a much-inflated ego.”²⁶⁵ Cruella is determined to get the Dalmatian puppies so that she can have a Dalmatian fur coat for herself regardless of the devious implications for her actions. Cruella is another non-traditional female figure that acts on her own decisions and is determined to accomplish her goals.

Likewise, Ursula is independent and determined; however, her goal is not an object but power and revenge. Ursula does not have a husband, or a male partner throughout the entire film.²⁶⁶ In fact, she is constantly shown alone in her cave plotting ways to get revenge on King Triton, who had banished and exiled Ursula years before.²⁶⁷ Ursula also makes her own decisions about how to go about her revenge, instructing her eel henchmen early in the film: “I want you to keep an extra close watch on this pretty little daughter of his. She may be the key to Triton's undoing.”²⁶⁸ Ursula plots on how she will get revenge on Triton: by taking his daughter, Ariel, as prisoner when she does not get Prince Eric to fall in love with her by the deadline. Determined to get Ariel as her prisoner and to take over the ocean, she makes sure that Ariel does not make Eric fall in love with her nor kiss her. She tells her eel henchmen to knock their boat over so that the couple does not kiss. When this fails, Ursula says to herself in her cave: “Well, it's time Ursula took matters into her own tentacles. Triton's daughter will be mine! And then I'll make him writhe!”²⁶⁹ Even though Ursula acts on her decisions independently, she has eel henchmen to

²⁶⁴ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

²⁶⁵ Davis, *Good Girls*, 109.

²⁶⁶ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²⁶⁷ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²⁶⁸ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²⁶⁹ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

help carry out her plans. Likewise, Cruella, Maleficent, Yzma and Mother Gothel have either animal or human henchmen as well. Towards the end of the film, Ursula decides to disguise herself as a beautiful woman named Vanessa to tempt Prince Eric, she uses Ariel's singing voice to gain Prince Eric's affection, and she tries to control Eric, through a spell, to marry her instead of Ariel.²⁷⁰ Ursula's manipulation over Prince Eric shows that she has major power over him, thus the gender dynamics have changed. However, her manipulation over a man characterizes her as evil and her motivations behind the manipulation further place her as a negative female figure. Also, Ursula temporarily steals Ariel's beautiful singing voice. She steals an attribute from the female protagonist Ariel. Like Ursula, Mother Gothel steals from Rapunzel, the female protagonist, as well. Mother Gothel steals the youth giving powers of Rapunzel's hair for herself which is why she has confined Rapunzel to the tower for the rest of her life.²⁷¹ Ursula is evidently very independent and determined to unleash her revenge on King Triton by any means necessary.

Along with her negative non-traditional sisters, Yzma acts very independent and determined. There is no indication in the film that Yzma has or had a husband or male partner at all.²⁷² She is a powerful being, as she is the Emperor's advisor. Therefore, it would not be surprising if through her ascent to power that she would not have a man alongside being that she is too intimidating. Kuzko, the Emperor, describes Yzma in the beginning of the film to the audience: "Ok gang. Check out this piece of work. This is Yzma, the emperor's advisor [. . .]"²⁷³ Kuzko disrespects Yzma and dehumanizes her by calling her a piece of work. Therefore, her need for revenge after Kuzko fires her may be justified. Yzma makes her own decisions, without

²⁷⁰ *The Little Mermaid*, dir. Ron Clements and John Musker (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), film.

²⁷¹ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

²⁷² *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

²⁷³ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

the consent of her henchman Kronk, to whom she gives commands and does not take his opinion into consideration at all. For example, in the beginning of the film, when Yzma's plan to poison Kuzko fails, she decides to have Kronk kill him instead. Yzma yells to Kronk: "Take him out of town and finish the job now!"²⁷⁴ She does not ask Kronk for his consent to commit murder but rather commands that he do it. Yzma is so determined to become empress that she tries every way to achieve it from poisoning Kuzko, to holding a fake funeral for his death, and to finally trying to kill him herself.²⁷⁵ Davis describes Yzma's determination for power: "Yzma's motivation, in other words, comes not so much from jealousy as it does from an overwhelming desire for power."²⁷⁶ Yzma is determined to be empress by any means necessary. She is fiercely independent and very determined to accomplish her goals.

Like Yzma, Mother Gothel does not have a husband or male partner, she makes her own decisions and acts upon them and she is determined to keep Rapunzel as her prisoner. There is no indication throughout the entire film that Mother Gothel has or ever had a husband.²⁷⁷ Mother Gothel acts on her decisions independently. For example, when Mother Gothel finds out that Rapunzel escaped from the tower, she makes the independent decision to go after her and bring her home because Mother Gothel needs Rapunzel's hair youth giving powers to stay young and alive.²⁷⁸ Mother Gothel does not go after Rapunzel because she is concerned for Rapunzel safety but rather because of her own selfish reasons. Mother Gothel is so determined to keep using Rapunzel's hair to stay young and alive that she uses any means necessary to get her home and keep her at home. Near the end of the film, Rapunzel finds out that she is the long-lost princess of the kingdom and that Mother Gothel is not her mother at all. Mother Gothel stole Rapunzel

²⁷⁴ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

²⁷⁵ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

²⁷⁶ Davis, *Good Girls*, 215.

²⁷⁷ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

²⁷⁸ *Tangled*, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010), film.

from her parents when she was a baby. Upon this revelation, Rapunzel refuses to let Mother Gothel use her hair anymore. However, Mother Gothel's determination prevails. Mother Gothel makes an independent decision to gag and chain up Rapunzel because she is so determined to keep using her hair that Mother Gothel does anything to keep Rapunzel from running away. Mother Gothel's independence and determination are unbounded. These Disney villainesses are independent and determined. Davis addresses their independence: "Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the villainesses in this era of Disney films is the much higher proportion of agency they show when compared to that of their victims [. . .] They are strong, fearless, and often very creative. They are mature, powerful, and independent."²⁷⁹

Moreover, like the negative non-traditional female figures, the positive female figures are quite independent and determined. In 1995, Pocahontas leads the way as the first positive non-traditional female figure, who acts upon her own decisions and is determined. Granted, throughout the film, Pocahontas does have a male partner, John Smith. However, she decides to remain single at the end of the film, urging John to go back to England without her so that she can stay with her people.²⁸⁰ In the last scene, she is seen standing tall and confidently, looking out into the distance at John's ship as it sails away without her.²⁸¹ This scene is very significant in that she decides to be single instead of engaging in a heterosexual relationship which disrupts the 'happily ever after' trope of the traditional and complex female characters. The ending message to the audience is that women can be independent. In the article, "Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses," Dawn Elizabeth England, Lara Descartes, Melissa A. Collier-Meek, identify Pocahontas as single based on the end of the film: "No princess remains

²⁷⁹ Davis, *Good Girls*, 107.

²⁸⁰ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

²⁸¹ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

single except for Pocahontas.”²⁸² In a significant departure from the Disney tradition, Pocahontas remains single at the film’s end because she makes her own decision to be single and remain with her people. Her father encourages her to be independent via making her own decisions. In one of the last scenes, her father says to her: “You must choose your own path.”²⁸³ Pocahontas is also determined. In the middle of the film, Pocahontas is resilient with her cause to show John that her people are not savages in the song “Colors of the Wind.” In the opening lines of the song she sings: “You think I’m an ignorant savage/And you’ve been so many places/I guess it must be so/But still I cannot see if the savage one is me/How can there be so much that you don’t know.”²⁸⁴ She consistently meets with John to show him the ways of her people and to attempt to humanize them to him. She pushes herself to create a space of understanding and acceptance amongst her people and the Englishmen. She is determined to create peace. Her determination comes to a climax when she pushes herself to stop her father from killing John to bring about peace between the two groups.²⁸⁵ Pocahontas is independent and determined.

Following in the footsteps of Pocahontas, is the independent and determined Nani. However, as mentioned previously, Nani is not independent in terms of being alone. Nani does have a male partner by the film’s end. In one of the final scenes, David finds Nani a job and he goes to her home to tell her the good news.²⁸⁶ Nani rushes off to the store with David to get that job. On their way there, Nani says to David: “Aw, David, I owe you one.” David responds: “That’s okay. You can just date me and we’ll call it even.”²⁸⁷ Nani does decide to date David. At

²⁸² Dawn Elizabeth England, Lara Descartes and Melissa A. Collier-Meek, “Gender Role Portrayal and Disney Princesses” *Sex Roles* no. 64 (2011): 561, *ProQuest*, accessed September 21, 2016.

²⁸³ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

²⁸⁴ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

²⁸⁵ *Pocahontas*, dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995), film.

²⁸⁶ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²⁸⁷ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

the end of the film there is a montage of family photos with David beside Nani.²⁸⁸ Nani begins the film single but does not remain single. Yet, she is independent through making her own decisions and acting upon them throughout the entire film. As mentioned previously, Nani makes her own decision to be single throughout the film and rejects David's advances.²⁸⁹ She sticks to her decision up until the very end of the film when she knows that Lilo is financially secure because Nani finds a new job which David arranged for her. When Nani tells Lilo she is going into town with David to get a job she says: "Things are finally turning around."²⁹⁰ Nani decides on her own to put her social and romantic life on hold to take care of her younger sister Lilo after her parents died in a car crash and she became Lilo's guardian. She does not have any parents or any leadership figure in her life to tell her what to do.²⁹¹ Towards the end of the film, Nani makes her own decision to try and stop an alien ship from taking Lilo. She yells: "No! Stop!" Then in a later scene, she makes her own decision to confront Stitch, Lilo's dog and an alien, about the whereabouts of Lilo once an alien government ship takes her away. Nani hits Stitch with a tree branch and says to him: "Ok, talk. I know you had something to do with this. Now where is Lilo?"²⁹² She is making her own decisions left and right throughout the film without anyone beside her to help or give their advice on the situation. Nani's ability to make her own decisions and act upon them readily outweigh her relationship status as not being single, thus she remains within the non-traditional category.

Nani's tale echoes Mulan's tale in that both women begin their films' alone but then they have a male partner by the film's end. However, their family structures, and their family's expectations of them or lack thereof, are what separates them as a positive non-traditional female

²⁸⁸ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²⁸⁹ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²⁹⁰ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²⁹¹ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²⁹² *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

figure and a complex female figure. In Mulan's case, she automatically reverts to the traditional role at the end of her film because that is what her family expects from her. Her parents and Grandmother expect her to find a man and marry him because that is part of tradition. In the beginning of the film, Mulan is dressed up by her mother and Grandmother to impress the matchmaker so that the matchmaker can set her up with a good man.²⁹³ At the end of the film, by Mulan returning home to the domestic sphere, in feminine attire, giving up her masculine items to her father, she has reverted to the traditional role her family expected her to fulfill in the first place. Grandmother even criticizes Mulan for bringing home a sword instead of a man. Yet, once Shang shows up to their home looking for Mulan, Grandmother is elated to see that Mulan can bring a man home. Mulan not only reverts to her traditional role but she is also able to fulfill her role as well by having Shang as her partner by the film's end. Therefore, Mulan remains in the complex female category. In contrast, Nani's family structure is very different from Mulan's family structure. Nani's parents' died in a car crash.²⁹⁴ Therefore, she had to become Lilo's guardian. Nani does not have any parental figure to guide her or set expectations for her as a woman. She is leading herself and attempting to guide Lilo. Nani is not expected to fulfill a traditional role being that her parents are out of the picture and no one in the film is telling her to find a man and get married. Nani does not engage in a relationship with David to get the approval of anyone. Nani's relationship with David at the end of the film is a bonus for her because her only goal throughout the entire film is to keep Lilo from being taken by Mr. Bubbles. Therefore, Nani remains in the positive non-traditional female figure category.

Not only is Nani a positive non-traditional because of her alternative family structure, but also because of her immeasurable determination. For example, in the middle of the film, she is

²⁹³ *Mulan*, dir. Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1998) film.

²⁹⁴ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

determined to find a new job to make sure social services does not take Lilo away due to her inability to provide financial security. The scene goes through a montage of Nani asking various employers for a job from the grocery store, to the coffee shop, to a hotel, and finally at the beach for a lifeguard position.²⁹⁵ She is persistent in her efforts to land herself a new job. Her determination is commendable. Davis describes Nani's determination in the film: "Being a young woman herself, Nani is struggling to support them financially (and, in fact, spends a portion of the film unemployed and searching everywhere for a job)."²⁹⁶ Overall, Nani is determined to keep Lilo and their family together. She will not let Lilo be taken away even as the social worker, Mr. Bubbles, puts her in his car. She pushes herself to make sure Lilo has a good life and is provided for despite her lack of maternal abilities. Davis acknowledges that Nani is one the twenty-one Disney female heroines who is "unquestionably active, self-motivated, strong-willed, intelligent, and independent."²⁹⁷ Davis believes Nani is independent despite her relationship with David, showing that the word 'independent' has different meanings and interpretations. Like Pocahontas, Nani is independent and determined with the exception that she does not remain single.

Helen Parr and Nani are both independent and determined in similar ways. Like Nani, Helen is not single, as she is married to Bob Parr otherwise known as Mr. Incredible. In the beginning of the film, Helen and Bob are seen side by side in a church at the altar. Helen is wearing a white wedding dress and Bob is wearing a black tuxedo. They are clearly getting married. The priest says to both: "I pronounce this couple husband and wife."²⁹⁸ However, one of the main reasons why Helen decides to settle down and have a family despite her declarations

²⁹⁵ *Lilo & Stitch*, dir. Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002), film.

²⁹⁶ Davis, *Good Girls*, 213.

²⁹⁷ Davis, *Good Girls*, 225.

²⁹⁸ *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

early in the film that she will not settle down anytime soon, as quoted previously, is because the public has banned super heroes and super heroines. Therefore, Helen is led into this role by circumstance if anything. She cannot be a super heroine anymore, which was her career. What is there left to do if not to settle down? In the article, “‘And when everyone is super [...] no one will be’: The limits of American Exceptionalism in *The Incredibles*,” by Dietmar Meinel, Meinel comments on Helen’s situation: “However, contrary to her declaration, Helen marries, becomes a homemaker and does settle down after the public bans superheroes.”²⁹⁹ Therefore, it is by circumstance that Helen finds herself in the role as a wife and mother.

Even though Helen is Bob’s wife, and the mother to their children, Violet, Dash, and Jack-Jack, she still maintains independency via making her own decisions and acting upon them throughout the entire film. For example, when Helen is vacuuming Bob’s office, she notices a stitch in his old super suit. She makes the independent decision to investigate what he has been doing behind her back so she calls Edna, a fashion designer, to see if she worked on his suit. Helen compliments the seamstress, which yields her the information she is trying to obtain: “Listen, there’s only one person Bob would trust to patch his super suit. And that’s you E.” Edna responds and says: “Yes, yes, yes. Marvelous isn’t it?”³⁰⁰ In a later scene, Helen finds out where Bob is via a tracking device provided by Edna. She then decides on her own to go find Bob, by herself, and bring him home. She tells her kids: “You’re not coming! And I gotta pack!”³⁰¹ She specifically tells her kids to stay home and that she is going alone to get their father. Helen even charts a plane to go get Bob because she is a licensed pilot.³⁰² In a later scene, after Helen

²⁹⁹ Dietmar Meinel, “‘And when everyone is super [...] no one will be’: The limits of American Exceptionalism in *The Incredibles*,” *European Journal of American Culture* 33, no. 3 (2014): 189, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost, accessed February 17, 2017.

³⁰⁰ *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

³⁰¹ *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

³⁰² *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

finds out the kids have stowed away on her plane, Helen and her children find themselves on an unknown island. Helen makes a fire for them in a cave and she tells her children that she is going on her own to look for their father. Once again, Helen makes her own decision to go find Bob on her own and acts upon it. She tells them to stay in the cave and that Violet, the older sister, is in charge. Meinel describes Helen's sense of independence as "transcend[ing] her conventional role of homemaker to become an equal counterpart to the male superheroes."³⁰³ Helen goes beyond her role as a "homemaker" in order to become equal to the male superheroes. She reinforces her sense of independence by returning to her super heroine roots but this time as a wife and mother as well. Meinel describes the final scene of the film where Helen is beside Bob: "The final shot of the film concludes her liberation from the tyranny of the majority when the camera pictures Helen alongside her husband: As Bob prepares to battle another super villain, she has already geared up for their next adventure."³⁰⁴ Helen has combined her sense of independence, which comes from her need to be a super heroine, with being a wife and a mother. It is interesting that Meinel neglects to mention that their children are also geared up and ready to take on the super villain as well.³⁰⁵ With the children, and Helen, ready for battle, it shows that superhero work is no longer a gendered man's job, it is now everyone's job. Like Nani, Helen is independent via her decisions and actions and is determined.

Unlike Nani and Helen, Merida is independent, meaning alone, and determined. In the film, Merida openly rejects marriage and fights her mother on the betrothal process.³⁰⁶ When her mother announces at dinner that the clans have accepted the invitation to compete for Merida's hand in marriage, Merida is furious. Elinor believes that Merida should be happy that the clans

³⁰³ Meinel, "'And when everyone is super [...] no one will be,' 189.

³⁰⁴ Meinel, "'And when everyone is super [...] no one will be,' 189.

³⁰⁵ *The Incredibles*, dir. Brad Bird, (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios 2004), film.

³⁰⁶ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

have accepted. Elinor desperately wants Merida to marry and follow the traditions of Scottish princesses before her. Elinor embodies the traditional female figure of the past, while Merida is the positive non-traditional female figure of the present. Merida rejects the traditional princess's role. Merida narrates to the audience how she feels when she gets to be herself for a day: "But everyone once in a while, there's a day where I don't have to be a princess. No lessons, no expectations. A day where anything can happen. A day I can change my fate."³⁰⁷ Merida desires to defy the traditional princess's role through her independence and determination. For example, Merida's hair serves as a symbol that adds to her sense of independence. It is large, unruly, bright red, and is almost never tied down or styled throughout the film. When Merida rides through the Scottish forest on her horse, while shooting arrows at targets, in the beginning of the film, her large curly red hair flows in the wind freely. In a later scene, while Merida and her father converse about how Merida is against marriage, her father alludes to the sense of independence that Merida's hair provides for her by intimating her. He says in a girlish voice: "I don't want to get married, I want to stay single and let my hair flow in the wind as I ride through the glen firing arrows into the sunset."³⁰⁸ Kapurch addresses Merida's hair as a symbol for independence: "As [her mother] tries to convince Merida of the political stakes of her potential marriage's import to a peaceful kingdom, Elinor works to restrain Merida's hair, a symbol of the princess's independent and wayward spirit."³⁰⁹ Elinor tries to restrain her hair, her sense of independence, by making her go through the betrothal process dressed in a tight dress and

³⁰⁷ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

³⁰⁸ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

³⁰⁹ Katie Kapurch, "Something Else Besides a Daughter?: Maternal Melodrama Meets Postfeminist Girlhood in *Tangled* and *Brave*," in *The Lion and the Unicorn* 40, no. 1, (2016): 52, accessed October 7, 2016, <http://fe5uk3rb3z.search.serialssolutions.com>.

putting her hair into the “white headpiece” of the tight dress.³¹⁰ Once again, Elinor embodies the traditional princess’s role. Elinor tries to impose the traditional princess’s role onto Merida. However, Elinor does this to no avail because like Merida’s hair, her independent spirit cannot be contained.

Like Merida, Elsa is also independent and determined. Elsa is both single and makes her own decisions and acts upon them. Elsa does not have a male counterpart, partner, or husband throughout the entire film. In fact, in the beginning of the film, she is coroneted as Queen of Arendelle without a husband.³¹¹ In the scene the priest coronets Elsa and says to the crowd: “Queen Elsa of Arendelle.”³¹² In a later scene, Anna visits Elsa in her ice castle. In the reprise of the song “For the first time in forever,” Elsa sings to Anna: “Yes I’m alone/but I’m alone and free.”³¹³ Elsa prefers to be alone, finding it freeing to be alone. Moreover, Elsa makes her own decisions and acts upon them readily. For example, when she accidentally reveals to the guests at her coronation reception that she has ice powers, she decides on her own then and there to run away from the kingdom to live alone in an ice castle that she creates on a mountain.³¹⁴ In the study, “Gender and Speech in a Disney Movie” by Azmi N.J, Radzuwan Ab Rashid, Maira Abd Rahman et. al examines the gender dynamics and speech patterns in *Frozen*. They identify Elsa and Anna as independent characters: “They are very independent characters, and are not portrayed as being gracious and gentle, unlike the first generation characters.”³¹⁵ Although the sisters are both independent, Anna remains in the complex category because she relies on male

³¹⁰ Katie Kapurch, “Something Else Besides a Daughter?” 52.

³¹¹ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

³¹² *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

³¹³ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

³¹⁴ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

³¹⁵ Azmi N.J., Radzuwan Ab Rashid, Mairas Abd. Rahman, and Z. Basirah, Safawati. “Gender and Speech in a Disney Princess Movie” *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5, no. 6 (November 01 2016): 236.

figures, whereas Elsa does not rely on any male figures at all nor has a male partner by the film's end. Elsa is determined to live her life alone. She sends Anna away from her ice castle via a snow monster. She refuses to let anyone ruin her happiness now that she is free. In a later scene, when various nobles come to attack Elsa in her ice castle, she fights them off because she refuses to go back to Arendelle. She pushes herself to finally live the life she has always wanted. She is determined to be happy and free. Elsa is like Merida in that both choose to live the life they please without regard to tradition or convention. They fight for the life they want through their unbounded determination.

However, there are two major differences between the non-traditional female figures: the negative non-traditional women are masculine in appearance and evil, while the positive non-traditional women are feminine in appearance and inherently good. Lady Tremaine and Maleficent are similarly masculine in their appearance. Their faces are both "sharp-edged" and they both have "large eyes and a pointy chin."³¹⁶ They also both have "over-plucked, arched eye brows" which only adds to their masculine look (Figure 27).³¹⁷ They look most masculine when juxtaposed with their victims: Cinderella and Aurora. Compared to Lady Tremaine and Maleficent, Cinderella and Aurora have softer faces, smaller eyes, and rounded chins (Figure 28). They appear quite feminine in contrast to their masculine villainesses. Moreover, Lady Tremaine and Maleficent have masculinized bodies as well. Lady Tremaine's feminine attributes are not emphasized in her unflattering dresses (Figure 29). One can see her breasts slightly and her butt and a waist but in comparison to Cinderella's body, she is anything but feminine. Cinderella has an emphasized bosom, a tiny waist, and slender legs (Figure 30). Cinderella's clothing constantly emphasizes her hourglass figure whereas Lady Tremaine's clothing does not.

³¹⁶ Putnam, "Mean Ladies," 153.

³¹⁷ Putnam, "Mean Ladies," 153-154.

Cinderella has the perfect hourglass figure. Maleficent also has a masculinized body. Throughout the film, she dons an oversized black cloak in which one cannot see her figure at all (Figure 31). None of her feminine attributes are emphasized, making her appear flat-chested, straight bodied, with no curves at all: masculine. Both Maleficent and Cruella wear oversized clothing which distort their bodies' shape. In contrast, Aurora, like Cinderella, has an obvious bosom, a tiny corseted waist, and long slender legs, and of course, the perfect hourglass shape (Figure 32). It is no surprise that Lady Tremaine and Maleficent look similarly masculine because they both represent the anti-thesis of the traditional Cold War woman. Their films were released only nine years apart (*Cinderella* 1950, *Sleeping Beauty* 1959). Therefore, the Disney image of the villainess, at that time, was not likely to change drastically. It is also not shocking that Cinderella and Aurora look similarly feminine, with their films being released so closely together, and because as traditional Disney women they must portray Disney's white version of 'beautiful' and they embody the traditional Cold War woman. The traditional Cold War woman must be quite feminine. Lady Tremaine and Maleficent appear masculine in similar ways especially in comparison to their highly feminine victims.

Like Lady Tremaine and Maleficent, Cruella DeVil appears masculine in her film. Her face has sharp edges, especially with her protruding cheek bones; she has a pointed chin, large eyes, and overly plucked and arched eye brows (Figure 33). Her body is masculinized as well, especially in comparison to Anita's feminine body. In the film, Cruella's body is distorted because she wears a large fur coat that makes her figure unclear (Figure 34). Spooner comments on Cruella's body: "Instead of the "absolutely simple white mink coat," she wears an enormous heavily flounced coat that distorts her body shape."³¹⁸ Like Maleficent, Cruella's body figure is unclear and one can only assume that she is flat chested, lacks hips, or an hourglass shape. In

³¹⁸ Spooner, "The Lady Is a Vamp," 170.

contrast, Anita is the epitome of “proper and desirable femininity.”³¹⁹ Like Cinderella and Aurora, she has an impeccably tiny waist, an hourglass shape, and an obvious bosom (Figure 35). Her face is also softer than Cruella’s, she has smaller eyes than Cruella and she has a rounded chin. Anita embodies Disney’s version of beautiful. Again, like Cinderella, and Aurora, Anita embodies the traditional Cold War woman because she is depicted as feminine. If Cruella is the anti-thesis of the traditional Cold War woman then she cannot be feminine but instead she must be depicted as masculine. Like Lady Tremaine and Maleficent, Cruella looks masculine when she is juxtaposed with a highly feminine figure such as Anita.

Ursula has masculine qualities like that of the earlier villainesses. She has large eyes, and very arched eyebrows (Figure 36). However, she has strikingly different masculine qualities as well. She has a “voluptuous figure,” “large breasts,” wears heavy make-up, and has a very deep voice that all together give off a drag-queen presence.³²⁰ In fact, Ursula’s character is based on a drag queen named Divine.³²¹ Putnam concludes that due to Ursula’s large size, her heavy make-up, her deep voice, her exaggerated and sexualized body movements that her overall appearance “suggests something much more masculinized.”³²² By Ursula overcompensating for her lack of femininity due to her massive size and deep voice, she ends up appearing more masculine than feminine, whereas Ariel is beautiful, has a tiny waist, small eyes and a soft face with a rounded chin (Figure 37). Ursula appears especially masculine when she is juxtaposed with Ariel.

Like her villainess predecessors, Yzma appears masculine. She has large eyes, her face has sharp edges, she has a pointed chin and she has arched and overly plucked eye-brows (Figure 38). Moreover, her body is masculinized as well. One can see Yzma’s figure because she wears

³¹⁹ Spooner, “The Lady Is a Vamp,” 170.

³²⁰ Putnam, “Mean Ladies,” 154-155.

³²¹ Putnam, “Mean Ladies,” 155.

³²² Putnam, “Mean Ladies,” 155.

form fitting gowns and dresses. Like Cruella, Yzma's body has sharp edges as well instead of soft curves. Her hips, her shoulders, and her rib cage all protrude sharply from her body (Figure 39). Like Ursula, she tries to look glamorous, but ends up failing and looking more masculine than anything. Davis asserts, "Yzma, at least physically, is similar to past villainesses: she tries to look glamorous, but is so ugly (in fact, she is repeatedly described in the film as being "scary beyond all reason") that she is anything but glamorous (despite her long black dress and pearls)."³²³ Yzma's masculine appearance is similar to that of previous villainesses. However, one major difference between Yzma and her villainess predecessors is that she does not have a female feminine victim to be compared to. Throughout the film, she is described as "scary beyond all reason" by various male characters instead of female characters.³²⁴ In the film, men are terrified of Yzma's appearance which they use as a more of an excuse to dub her as evil along with her malicious acts. Yzma appears masculine with her sharp edged facial and bodily qualities.

Mother Gothel also appears masculine in comparison to the female protagonist Rapunzel. It is important to acknowledge that Mother's Gothel's physical appearance is a façade because she uses Rapunzel's hair to make herself younger. Mother Gothel actually looks old, haggard, and scary with gray hair (Figure 40). Moreover, like Yzma, Cruella, Lady Tremaine, and Maleficent, she has sharp facial features: protruding cheek bones, and a pointed nose. She also has overly arched and overly plucked eye-brows as well. Essentially, Mother Gothel has almost the exact same masculine facial features that the previous villainesses had. Unlike her villainess predecessors, Mother Gothel's body is not masculinized because her dress reveals her tiny waist, her bosom, and her curvy hips (Figure 40). When Mother Gothel is juxtaposed with Rapunzel

³²³ Davis, *Good Girls*, 215.

³²⁴ *The Emperor's New Groove*, dir. Mark Dindal (USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000), film.

her masculine facial features are more obvious. In comparison to Mother Gothel, Rapunzel has a soft face, and a rounded nose (Figure 40). Therefore, Mother Gothel has masculine facial features but does not have the same masculinized body as her villainess predecessors.

In contrast, all the positive non-traditional female figures have a feminine appearance. In the study, “Gender Role Portrayal and Disney Princesses” Dawn Elizabeth England et. al discuss the Disney princesses’ feminine appearances: “Consistent with the romantic resolutions of the films, the princesses are frequently portrayed as idealized feminine figures.”³²⁵ England et. al go on to identify the characteristics that make these women “idealized feminine figures,” which includes being beautiful.³²⁶ Davis believes the typical Disney heroine is “beautiful, young, and attractive.”³²⁷ For example, Elsa portrays the idealized Disney white version of beauty. Elsa’s feminine appearance is reminiscent of the traditional Disney female figure’s appearance. Except for her large eyes, she has a soft face, a rounded chin, a tiny waist, an hourglass figure, and an emphasized bosom (Figure 41). She is also a white woman like Cinderella, and Aurora therefore, physically, she represents the traditional trope of Disney’s version of white feminine beauty.

However, some of these non-traditional female figures portray a more diverse representation of beauty. Some represent women of color whom are beautiful as well. For example, Pocahontas is a Native-American woman who is considered beautiful.³²⁸ She has light brown skin and oval eyes. Yet, she still possesses the Disney’s white woman ideal beauty standards: she has small eyes, a soft face, a rounded chin, a tiny waist, a bosom that shows her cleavage, long slender legs, and an hourglass figure (Figure 42). Nani’s beauty almost fully breaks from the traditional idealized Disney version of beauty. Nani is a young beautiful

³²⁵ Dawn Elizabeth England et. al, “Gender Role Portrayal and Disney Princesses” 565.

³²⁶ Dawn Elizabeth England et. al, “Gender Role Portrayal and Disney Princesses” 565.

³²⁷ Amy M. Davis, *Good Girls*, 232.

Hawaiian woman. She has a similar skin tone to Pocahontas. She also has small eyes, a soft face and a rounded chin. However, her body differs greatly from past Disney women. She does not have tiny waist, in fact it is fuller and looks more like a human woman's waist. She does not have slender legs but rather has large hips, big thighs, a full butt, and muscular calves (Figure 43). Her body represents a new type of beautiful, especially given that she is a woman of color.

Helen's feminine appearance somewhat breaks with the traditional Disney version of beautiful. She is first and foremost a white woman with a small waist, a soft face, small eyes and a rounded chin. However, like Nani, she has thick thighs and a large butt (Figure 44). Therefore, her body is not the perfect hourglass shape and resembles that of an actual human female. A Scotswoman, Merida's feminine appearance also breaks slightly from the norm. Her eyes are small, she has a soft face and a rounded chin (Figure 45). However, she does not have a tiny waist at all. In one scene, her mother is putting her in a corset to try and make her waist smaller to make her appear more attractive to her suitors.³²⁹ Merida's and Helen's beauty somewhat breaks from the traditional trope of Disney's version of beauty, while Nani's beauty almost fully breaks from the norm. It is possible that Merida's beauty breaks with the trope of Disney's version of beauty because her appearance reflects her non-traditional personality of independence, outspokenness, and determination. Helen's beauty differs from the Disney trope of beauty because motherhood changes the body. Nani's beauty differs drastically from traditional female figure's beauty because Nani's character is meant to be a diverse representation of beauty.

These villainesses and heroines are different not only based on their appearance but also based on their goodness or lack thereof. These villainesses are evil. They are bad women who

³²⁹ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

have been demonized and portrayed to be the antithesis of the protagonist. The negative and positive non-traditional female figures' beauty indicate their evilness or their goodness. Davis explains that beautiful women in Disney are typically inherently good, whereas ugly women are typically evil.³³⁰ There is no question that these ugly villainesses are evil: Lady Tremaine makes Cinderella a servant in her own home and tries to ruin her chances at happiness, Maleficent casts a curse on Aurora that will kill her on her 16th birthday, Cruella wants to kill 101 Dalmatian puppies for their fur to make a fur coat for herself, Ursula wants to take Ariel as her prisoner for life so that she can get revenge on King Triton, Yzma wants to kill Kuzko so that she can become empress, and Mother Gothel steals Rapunzel from her family at birth to harness the youth giving powers of Rapunzel's hair for herself. From the beginning of their respective films, so that the audience has no doubt, these villainesses have bad intentions that include murder, revenge, and fulfilling their own superficial desires at the expense of others.

In contrast, the beautiful heroines are inherently good: Pocahontas wants to create peace between her people and the English settlers; Nani wants to provide Lilo with financial stability so that she will not be taken away by social services and placed in foster care, even when doing so limits her own aspirations; Helen wants to save her husband and family from harm's way; Merida wants to change her fate and defy the traditional princess's role, and Elsa wants to find a way to be free, be herself, and reconnect with her sister. These heroines have good intentions that include: helping others, rescuing others, finding themselves and seeking freedom. The non-traditional female character is no longer vilified because she is no longer characterized as a villainess or an antagonist because he has become the protagonist with inherently good intentions. These non-traditional women share similarities but their differences are what sets them apart as positive and negative representations.

³³⁰ Davis, *Good Girls*, 232.

Why were bad non-traditional women demonized and why are good non-traditional now glorified? The answer lies in the historical context surrounding these films. *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *101 Dalmatians* were all released during the end of World War II and during the eruption of anxiety over the Cold War. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this Cold War anxiety put pressure on women to remain and uphold traditional values such as being maternal, staying in the home, and being domestic. For example, Anita is the epitome of the proper Cold War woman because she is a housewife, a domestic, and does not work outside the home and her husband is the breadwinner.³³¹ In contrast, Cruella is the anti-thesis of this traditional Cold War because she does not marry, supports herself financially, and functions in the public sphere outside the home. By the late 1970s and 1980s, white men and conservative white women sought actively to reaffirm the traditional woman's role. The United States viewed the family structure and a woman's role within it as a maternal and domestic symbol "as source of social stability and prosperity,"³³² especially during times of crisis such as The Cold War. Therefore, it is not surprising that *Cinderella*, *Aurora*, and *Anita* are perfect examples of traditional female figures. They are deemed 'good women.' They are considered great examples of how women should look, act and behave. Thus, *Lady Tremaine*, *Maleficent*, and *Cruella* are the anti-thesis of the traditional Cold War woman. They are fiercely outspoken, independent, operate outside the home, and reject the domestic role. It is possible that these women could remind viewers of second wave feminists because they defy the traditional gender role. As mentioned in the introduction, during Walt's life, he had very polarized views about women. He respected them at some points and at other times he was suspicious of them. His contradictory opinions on women can be seen in his characters. He creates good women (*Cinderella*, *Aurora*, and *Anita*) and bad

³³¹ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

³³² DuBois, and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 535.

women (Lady Tremaine, Maleficent, and Cruella) who interact with each other in the same film.

It is possible that Walt sought to reaffirm the idea that ‘bad women’ work outside the home, are not wives, and are not domestically oriented and thus, they are doomed to fail. Lady Tremaine fails at ruining Cinderella’s life and fails to have one of her daughters marry the prince.³³³

Maleficent is killed by Prince Philip.³³⁴ Cruella fails to get the Dalmatian puppies, to create her fur coat, crashes her car, and is humiliated.³³⁵ The villainesses are demonized and shown as failures. Meanwhile the ‘good women’ who are domestic beings in the home, wives, and mothers are destined to succeed. Cinderella marries the Prince and becomes a princess, Aurora marries Prince Phillip, and Anita gets her Dalmatian puppies back. The heroines are celebrated and shown to succeed. What does the audience’s take away from these films? Good traditional women win while bad non-traditional women lose.

In 1995, the shift towards positive non-traditional female representation began with Pocahontas. As mentioned in Chapter 2, through the 1990s, people believed in the goals of feminism but would not proclaim themselves as ‘feminists.’ Thus, the complex female figure emerged in Disney animated cinema. Apart from Pocahontas, most 1990s female figures are complex figures. Pocahontas is the first non-traditional female figure to not be demonized but instead she is praised. She is glorified because she is feminine and inherently good. Therefore, it seems Disney was moving towards an image of a positive non-traditional female character, which lines up with third wave feminist values. Pocahontas is also a Native American woman therefore, Disney could have been trying to represent a more diverse female population which aligns with third wave feminist ideals. The independent, outspoken, and determined woman for the first time, was not necessarily an evil one. *Pocahontas* (1995), *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), and *The*

³³³ *Cinderella*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950), film.

³³⁴ *Sleeping Beauty*, dir. Clyde Geronimi (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959) film.

³³⁵ *101 Dalmatians*, dir. Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske (USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961), film.

Incredibles (2004) came out during third wave feminism. Third wave feminism continued the unfinished business of second wave feminism. Third wave feminism focuses on the social, cultural, and political issues that affect all women; women of different backgrounds, experiences, races, and classes. Third wave feminism focuses on issues that include but are not limited to: “wage discrimination, access to education, and domestic violence,” and “eating disorders, globalization, and the effects of racism and classism on the movement.”³³⁶ Third wave feminists also placed emphasis that it was possible for women to be independent, have a career, a husband, and be a mother if she makes that choice for herself. Nani and Helen follow Pocahontas’s path and show that non-traditional women can be positive examples for young women. Pocahontas and Nani are also diverse female representations which aligns with one of the focuses of third wave feminists: to focus on issues that affect women of different racial background. Pocahontas, Nani and Helen are representations that women can have it all if they want to in terms of having a male partner but still maintaining their sense of agency, independence and outspokenness.

Disney seemed to be moving in a positive direction towards supporting third wave feminism. The main reason why Disney was moving in this direction is because Disney could turn a profit on feminism (consumer feminism) as it was becoming mainstream.³³⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 2, Disney profited on their complex female figures’ films, but they also profited and continue to profit on their positive non-traditional female figures’ film. The ticket sales for opening weekend for the positive non-traditional female figures’ films are consistently high for each film: *Pocahontas* (1995) pulled in \$29,531,619,³³⁸ *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) made \$35, 260,

³³⁶ Lisa Shapiro Sanders, ‘Feminists Love a Utopia’: Collaboration, Conflict, and the Futures of Feminism” in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, eds. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 51.

³³⁷ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, XII.

³³⁸ IMDb.com, Inc., “Pocahontas (1995).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=pocahontas.htm>.

212³³⁹, *The Incredibles* (2004) netted \$70,467,623,³⁴⁰ *Brave* (2012) earned \$66,323,594 and *Frozen* racked in \$67,391,326³⁴¹ (Figure 46). Zeisler points out that feminism can sell “in the form of a movie”³⁴² and Disney certainly sold their feminist female characters well.

Brave (2012) and *Frozen* (2013) were released during fourth wave feminism. The definition of fourth wave feminism is often disputed amongst feminist scholars. For this study, this definition of fourth wave feminism is appropriate: fourth wave feminism focuses on creating and maintaining a sense of community and solidarity amongst women of all different backgrounds to help one another regardless of whether the issue they are up against affects them personally.³⁴³ Like third wave feminism, fourth wave feminism has become quite mainstream and popular. Wyre defines fourth wave feminism: “The *fourth wave* moved into the 21st century as women turned toward spiritual concerns about the planet and all its beings, putting themselves in the service of the world, ecology, and the downtrodden.”³⁴⁴ Wyre goes on to elaborate that fourth wave feminism emphasizes that women should collaborate and support one another in fighting global issues against women such as domestic violence and sexual assault. Merida and Elsa are examples of fourth wave feminists. Merida is not just concerned about her own fate but about the fate of princesses and princes after her. She believes no princess or prince should be forced to marry if they do not want to get married by the time they are at the age of betrothal. Merida and her mother Elinor eventually work together to redefine a princess’ and prince’s role. The film focuses on how a good mother and daughter relationship can lead to amazing outcomes.

³³⁹ IMDb.com, Inc., “Lilo & Stitch (2002).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=lilostitch.htm>.

³⁴⁰ IMDb.com, Inc., “The Incredibles (2004).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=incredibles.htm>.

³⁴¹ IMDb.com, Inc., “Frozen (2013).” Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016. <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=frozen2013.htm>.

³⁴² Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, XVI.

³⁴³ Harriet Kimble Wrye, “The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Psychoanalytic Perspectives,” 185.

³⁴⁴ Wrye, “The Fourth Wave of Feminism,” 185.

In one of the final scenes, Merida makes a speech to the clan leaders and their sons to explain her actions: “I decided to do what’s right and. . . and. . . break tradition. My mother the queen feels in her heart that I. . .we. . . be free to write our own story.”³⁴⁵ Merida works to break tradition not just for her but for all future princesses and princes to not be required to go through courtship or betrothal.

In *Frozen*, the film ends with Elsa being single.³⁴⁶ She is a queen who is unmarried. Her subjects accept her for who she is and her marital status. She stands up for all women, demonstrating that one does not have to get married to be powerful or successful. Elsa’s characterization seems to support the idea that women, like men, can also be in positions of power without being married. By the end of the film, Elsa is finally working with and collaborating with her sister Anna in running the kingdom.³⁴⁷ Elsa is no longer focusing on herself, rather she is focusing on her relationship with Anna, her kingdom and both of their well-beings. Elsa and Anna show that when women work together their accomplishments are unbounded. The film focuses on how a good sister relationship can create success for a whole society. Elsa is the embodiment of fourth wave feminism in that her relationship with her sister shows that it is important that women work and collaborate with each other and for the benefit of one another and the world.

³⁴⁵ *Brave*, dir. Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman (USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012) film.

³⁴⁶ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

³⁴⁷ *Frozen*, dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013), film.

Appendix for Negative and Positive Non-traditional female figures



Figure 27. Lady Tremaine and Maleficent have similar masculine facial qualities.

Citations:

Cinderella. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.

Sleeping Beauty. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.

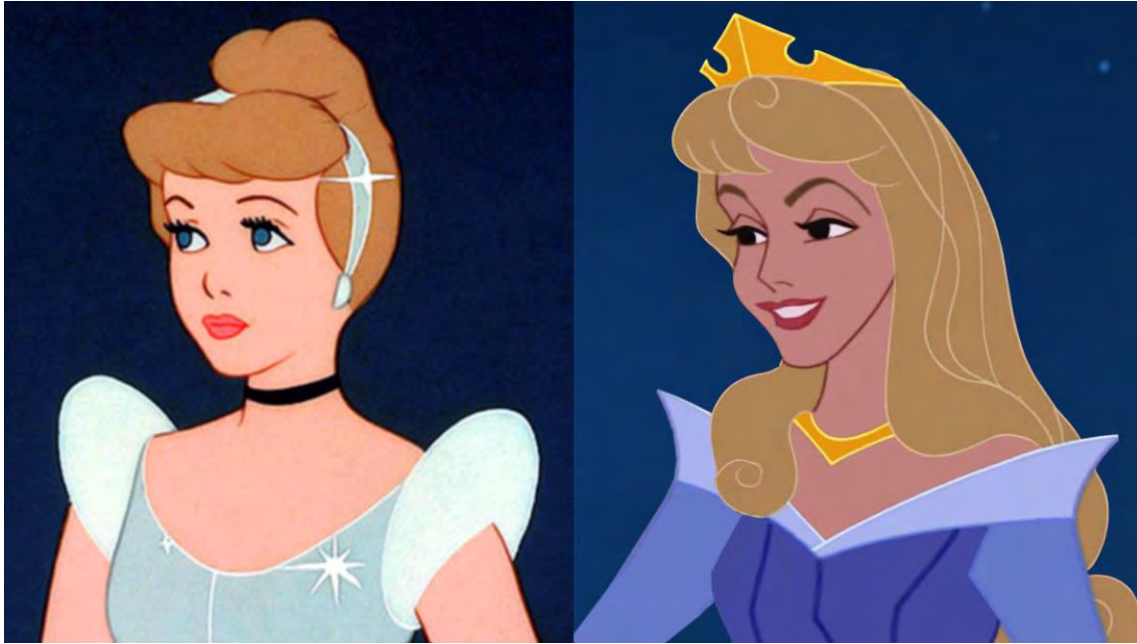


Figure 28. Cinderella and Aurora have similar feminine features.

Citations:

Cinderella. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.

Sleeping Beauty. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.



Figure 29. Lady Tremaine's feminine features are hard to see in her unflattering dresses.

Citation: *Cinderella*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.



Figure 30. Cinderella's feminine appearance is obvious in her tiny waist and bosom.

Citation: *Cinderella*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Ilene Woods, James MacDonald, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1950. Film.



Figure 31. Maleficent's body shape is masculinized by her oversized cloak.

Citation: *Sleeping Beauty*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.



Figure 32. Aurora has a feminine body shape with a tiny waist, obvious bosom, and long slender legs.

Citation: *Sleeping Beauty*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi. Performed by Mary Costa, Bill Shirley, and Eleanor Audley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1959. Film.



Figure 33. Cruella's facial features are pointed, her chin is pointed and she has overly plucked and arched eye brows.

Citation: *101 Dalmatians*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske. Performed by Rod Tyler, Betty Lou Gerson, and J. Pat O'Malley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961. Film.



Figure 34. Cruella's oversize coat distorts her body shape.

Citation: *101 Dalmatians*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske. Performed by Rod Tyler, Betty Lou Gerson, and J. Pat O'Malley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961. Film.



Figure 35. Anita's body is the epitome of the ideal feminine body and her face is soft and rounded as well.

Citation: *101 Dalmatians*. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Hamilton Luske. Performed by Rod Tyler, Betty Lou Gerson, and J. Pat O'Malley. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1961. Film.



Figure 36. Ursula has overly plucked eye brows, they are arched, and she has big eyes. She also has a very large body.

Citation: *The Little Mermaid*. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker. Performed by Jodi Benson, Rene Auberjonois, and Christopher Daniel Barnes. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989. Film.



Figure 37. Ariel has a tiny waist, an hourglass shape, a soft face, and a rounded chin making her appear very feminine.

Citation: *The Little Mermaid*. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker. Performed by Jodi Benson, Rene Auberjonois, and Christopher Daniel Barnes. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1989. Film.



Figure 38. Yzma has pointed facial features, a pointy chin, overly plucked and highly arched eye brows.

Citation: *The Emperor's New Groove*. Directed by Mark Dindal. Performed by David Spade, John Goodman, and Eartha Kitt. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000. Film.



Figure 39. Yzma's body is very pointed and looks masculine.

Citation: *The Emperor's New Groove*. Directed by Mark Dindal. Performed by David Spade, John Goodman, and Eartha Kitt. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2000. Film.





Figure 40. Mother Gothel's masculine facial features, protruding cheeks bones, and pointed nose, are most obvious when juxtaposed with Rapunzel's soft facial features. Mother Gothel's and Rapunzel's bodies both support the traditional Disney trope of an hourglass shape, an obvious bosom, and a tiny waist.

Citation: *Tangled*. Directed by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard. Performed by Mandy Moore, Zachary Levi, and Donna Murphy. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2010. Film.

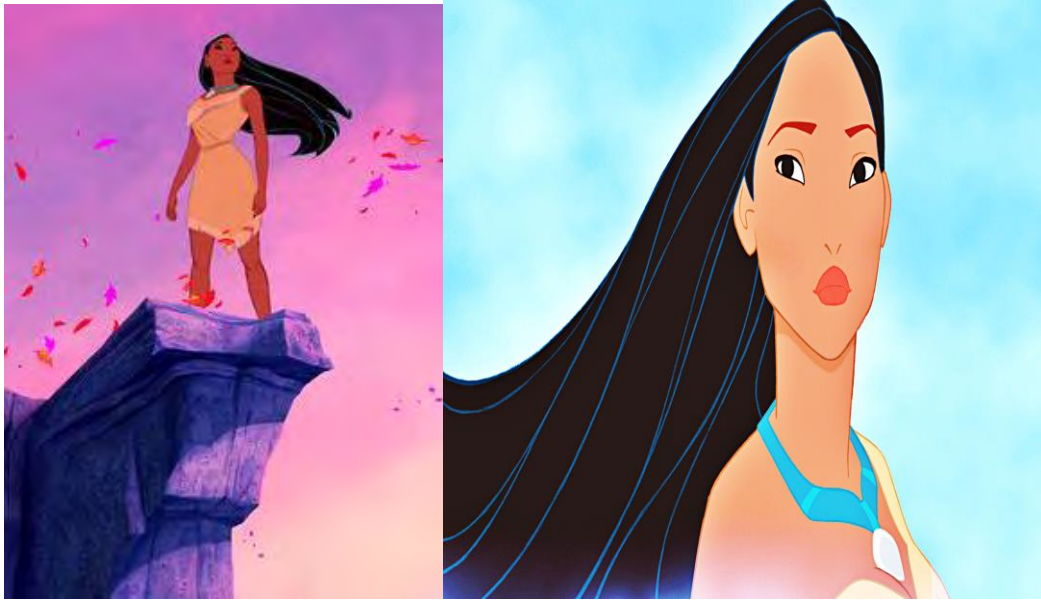


Figure 41. Pocahontas's feminine appearance from her soft face to her hourglass body.

Citation: *Pocahontas*. Directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. Performed by Mel Gibson, Linda Hunt, and Christian Bale. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1995. Film.



Figure 42. Nani's body almost fully defies the traditional woman's body with her thick thighs, muscular calves, full waist and big butt. Her face is also soft, rounded, and she has small eyes.

Citation: *Lilo & Stitch*. Directed by Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders. Performed by Daveigh Chase, Chris Sanders, and Tia Carrere. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002. Film.



Figure 43. Helen's face resembles that of traditional female figure. It is soft, she has a rounded chin, and small eyes. She is also beautiful. Helen's body slightly deviates from the traditional woman's body because she has large hips and a large butt as a result of motherhood.

Citation: *The Incredibles*. Directed by Brad Bird. Performed by Craig T. Nelson, Samuel L. Jackson, and Holly Hunter. USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2004. Film.



Figure 44. Elsa's face and body are very traditional: rounded, chin, soft face, beauty, tiny waist, bosom, and hourglass figure. However, she does have big eyes.

Citation: *Frozen*. Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee. Performed by Kristen Bell and Idina Menzel. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2013. Film.



Figure 45. Merida's face resembles that of a traditional female figure but her body slightly differs because she does not have a tiny waist or an hourglass figure.

Citation: *Brave*. Directed by Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman. Performed by Kelly Macdonald, Billy Connolly, and Emma Thompson. USA: Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2012. Film.

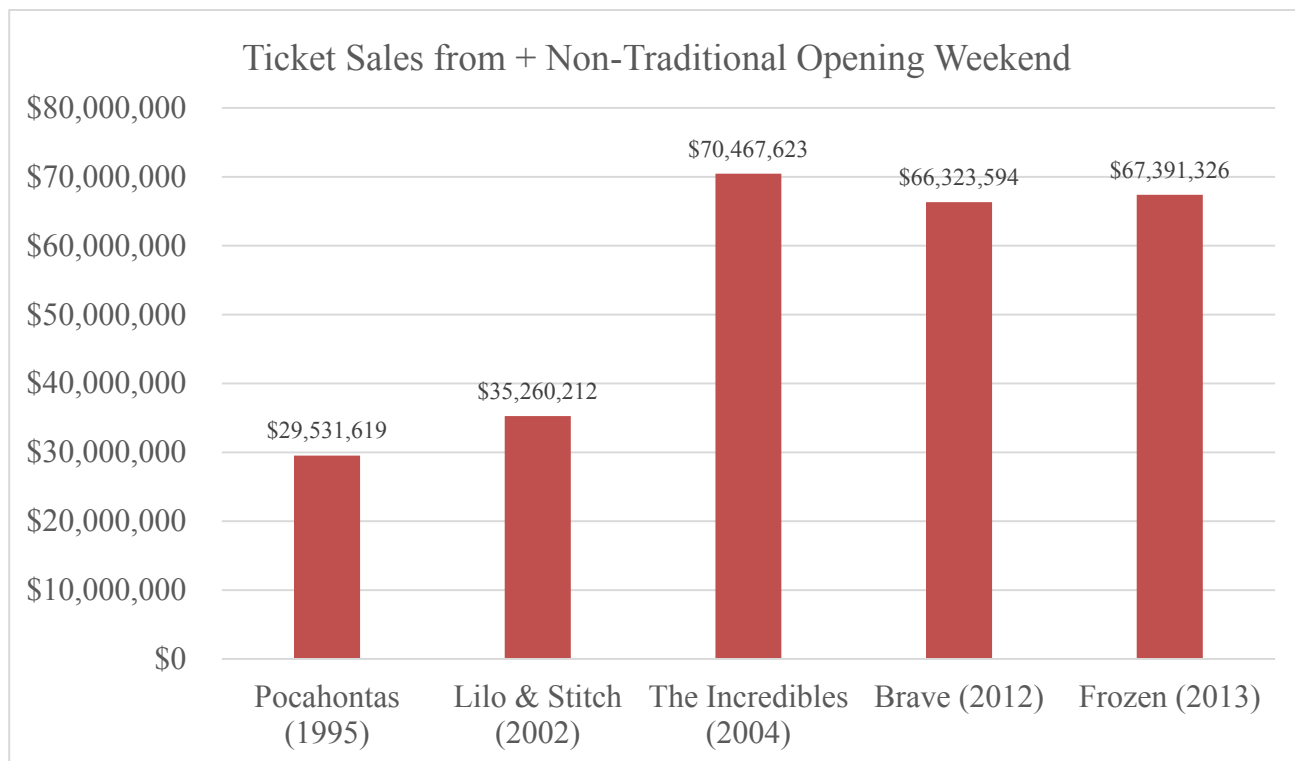


Figure 46. This chart depicts the consistently high ticket sales for the opening weekend for the positive non-traditional female figures' films.

Citations:

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IMDb.com, Inc. "Pocahontas (1995)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=pocahontas.htm>.

IMDb.com, Inc. "The Incredibles (2004)." Box Office Mojo. 2016. Accessed September 25, 2016.
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=incredibles.htm>.

Conclusion: Disney Animated Female Figures Then and Now and Where They are Going

From 1950-2013 Disney female figures have changed drastically in terms of representation, appearance, personality traits, and relationship status. This change is in part due to impacts of World War II, the Cold War, third and fourth wave feminist ideals, and consumer feminism. The traditional Disney women (1950-1970) are no longer the 'ideal' example of a proper lady. Cinderella, Lady, Aurora, and Duchess are Disney female icons of the past (Figure 47). They are beautiful, dependent on male figures, and engage in heterosexual relationship as part of their 'happily ever after.' They were created based on the standards of white beauty of the 1940s-1960s. Their actions and personalities all follow a traditional woman's role. They were created to reinforce traditional traits for women and possibly as a reaction to the second wave feminist movement. Walt's either/or attitude towards women had major influence on these characters as well. The complex Disney women (1989-2010) carry reminders of traits of traditional Disney women but have a few non-traditional characteristics. Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, Meg, Mulan, Jane, Tiana, Rapunzel and Anna represent a shift towards non-traditional representations, however they hold onto traditional characteristics as well (Figure 47). They are at times independent from male figures, and outspoken, but at other times they are dependent on male figures and the entire time they end their tale with a man beside them.

The non-traditional female figures (1950-2013) represent another shift in Disney animated cinema: from vilifying non-traditional women to glorifying them. In the beginning, all non-traditional women were considered villainesses especially when juxtaposed next to their beautiful, inherently good, and traditional victims. Lady Tremaine, Maleficent, Cruella, Ursula, Yzma, and Mother Gothel are all independent, outspoken, and self-determined. They are all also masculine in appearance and evil. The shift towards glorifying non-traditional women starts with

Pocahontas. Pocahontas, Nani, Helen, Merida and Elsa are all independent, outspoken and self-determined. However, they are feminine in appearance and inherently good. Some of the positive non-traditional women are ethnically diverse as well. Nani is Hawaiian and Pocahontas is Native American. The positive non-traditional women reflect third and fourth wave feminist ideals in terms of representing women different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and focusing on building solidarity to help all women. The positive non-traditional also embody non-traditional families. The glorification of these non-traditional women is in part due to feminism becoming mainstream and thus, a brand, that anyone “can and should consume” or adopt as an identity as part of consumer feminism.³⁴⁸ From 1950 to 2013, female characters in Disney animated films are categorized as traditional, complex, or non-traditional based on their personalities, actions, appearances, and relationship status. There are two significant shifts throughout these eras: a shift towards a complex female figure who is both traditional and non-traditional, and a shift from a demonized non-traditional woman towards an adored non-traditional woman.

It is important to recognize that consumer feminism can both benefit and hurt the feminist cause. Consumer feminism can help the cause by bringing national, if not global awareness, as to what feminism is and why should one join the cause via empowering commercials and advertisements, videos, films, t-shirts, bracelets, blogs, magazines, television shows etc.³⁴⁹ The marriage between pop culture and feminism has instilled great changes. For example, Zeisler explains that “new movies” are now analyzed and reviewed with a feminist “lens” in mind and their female characters are evaluated in terms of their representation.³⁵⁰ Zeisler points out that consumer feminism has opened the door to condemn the media for the sexist way they talk about

³⁴⁸ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, 74.

³⁴⁹ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, XIV.

³⁵⁰ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, XII.

and present women to the public.³⁵¹ However, consumer feminism can be detrimental to the cause because it only focuses on the “most appealing” aspects of feminism such as “personal identity” and does not touch on the more critical albeit less appealing features of feminism such as “why men might not be invested in feminism,” or the underlying matter of whether women are “human beings, with the same rights, access, and liberties as men.”³⁵² Purchasing a ticket to see *Frozen* or buying a “This is What a Feminist Looks Like” t-shirt, does not solve the catastrophe that is gender inequality in the United States.

Yet, it makes the public feel good to see more diverse female representation in Disney animated cinema even if Disney’s motivations are rooted in making a profit.³⁵³ For example, in 2016, *Moana* was released which features the first Disney Polynesian princess, named Moana (Figure 48). She is independent, outspoken, and self-determined to save her people and her island. She is guided on her journey by her grandmother, which builds on the fourth wave feminist ideal of female solidarity. She remains single and tries to rely on Maui who is a Polynesian demi-god. However, she ends up not needing him at all, and he becomes dependent on her, to find himself. There is no romance at all between them being that Moana is a child.³⁵⁴ Along with Moana, in 2016, the Disney animated television show *Elena of Avalor* was released which features the first Hispanic Disney princess named Elena (Figure 49). Elena saves her kingdom from an evil witch. The show follows her journey as a teenager in becoming a leader for her people.³⁵⁵ Disney continues to feature positive non-traditional female figures in their animated productions that are not only their own person, but they are also ethnically diverse.

³⁵¹ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, XII.

³⁵² Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, 74, XV.

³⁵³ Zeisler, *WE WERE feminists* ONCE, 74, XIII.

³⁵⁴ *Moana*, dir. Ron Clements and Don Hall (USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2016) film.

³⁵⁵ *Elena of Avalor*, creator. Craig Gerber (USA: Disney Television Animation, 2016) television series.

Young women and girls of color can now see themselves in Disney princesses. They no longer must get married or must be dependent on men.

On March 17, 2017, Disney will release the much-anticipated *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) live-action film based on the animated *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) (Figure 50). The live-action version is expected to have a certain nostalgic feel to it being that kids of the 1990s will likely see it as adults now with their own kids. Granted most of the cast is white again including Belle who is played by Emma Watson therefore, there is little to no diverse female representation.³⁵⁶ However, Emma Watson's said that the film will feature a more active version of Belle and the director, Bill Condon, emphasized that there will be "an exclusively gay moment" between LeFou and Gaston.³⁵⁷ Watson explains that Belle will have a more "feminist slant" to her personality in that she tries to escape from Beast's castle when by "using whichever materials she has on hand" and she is an "engineering whiz" as well.³⁵⁸ Therefore, it is possible that the live-action of Belle could represent a positive non-traditional female figure. Also Condon says that there will be "'a nice, exclusively gay moment" in his *Beauty and the Beast*" which would defy the Disney trope of heteronormativity.³⁵⁹ The film has not been released yet therefore, it is uncertain whether Belle will pass for an active character or if the gay scene is subtle or direct.

Overall, the categorization of the female figures in this study is not absolute. Spectators of all ages, genders, and backgrounds have different perspectives and interpretations about each of these female characters. The messages these female figures are sending to audiences are

³⁵⁶ Estelle Tang, "21 of the Biggest Differences in the New Live-Action *Beauty and the Beast*," ELLE. March 3, 2017, Accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.elle.com/culture/movies-tv/news/a43534/beauty-and-the-beast-biggest-differences-original-spoilers/?zoomable>.

³⁵⁷ Tang, "21 of the Biggest Differences."

³⁵⁸ Tang, "21 of the Biggest Differences."

³⁵⁹ Tang, "21 of the Biggest Differences."

strong and cannot be ignored. Whether these messages are beneficial or detrimental to women is open to interpretation. This study is an exploration of one scholar's own interpretation of these female figures' representation. It is imperative to continue to evaluate Disney female representation with a feminist lens and to start conversations with one another about these representations. We must be brave enough to question everything, even the things we love, otherwise change is impossible.

Appendix for Conclusion



Figure 47. This image summarizes the messages that these traditional and complex female figures evoke through their actions, appearance, and personality.

Citation: "Disney Princesses Meet Their Doom in Thomas Czarnecki's New Photoseries." BUST. 2017. Accessed March 15, 2017. <http://bust.com/arts/7317-disney-princesses-meet-their-doom-in-thomas-czarneckis-new-photoseries.html>.



Figure 48. Moana (left) is the first Polynesian Disney princess.

Citation: *Moana*. Directed by Ron Clements and Don Hall. Performed by Auli'I Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson and Rachel House. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2016. Film.



Figure 49. Elena of Avalor is pictured here as the first Disney Hispanic princess.

Citation: Elena of Avalor. Created by Craig Gerber. Performed by Aimee Carrero, Jenna Ortega, and Christian Lanz. USA: Disney Television Animation, 2016. Television Series.



Figure 50. A side by side comparison of the animated Belle and Beast (left) versus a live-action Belle and Beast (right).

Citations:

Beauty and the Beast. Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. Performed by Paige O'Hara, Robby Benson, and Jesse Corti. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 1991. Film.

Beauty and the Beast. Directed by Bill Condon. Performed by Emma Watson, Dan Stevens, and Luke Evans. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2017. Film.

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Beauty and the Beast. Directed by Bill Condon. Performed by Emma Watson, Dan Stevens, and Luke Evans. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2017. Film.

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Lady and the Tramp. Directed by Clyde Geronimi and Wilfred Jackson. Performed by Barbara Luddy, Larry Roberts, and Peggy Lee. USA: Walt Disney Productions, 1955. Film.

Lilo & Stitch. Directed by Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders. Performed by Daveigh Chase, Chris Sanders, and Tia Carrere. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2002. Film.

Moana. Directed by Ron Clements and Don Hall. Performed by Auli'i Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson and Rachel House. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2016. Film.

Mulan II. Directed by Darrell Rooney and Lynne Southerland. Performed by Ming-Na Wen, and BD Wong. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2004. Film.

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