LEARN TO ADAPT: DEPICTIONS OF FEMALE

PROTAGONISTS IN DISNEY FAIRY TALE ADAPTIONS

by

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A THESIS

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The Disney Princess franchise, since its formation in 2000, has become a staple of American girlhood. The princess phenomenon has caused many to question the impact that Disney Princesses have on American culture. Since the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, Disney Princess films have steadily become more progressive in the ways they portray their heroines. However, because Walt Disney Studios takes a corporate approach to storytelling that prioritizes profitability, Disney Princesses still conform to trends of female misrepresentation in popular media.

This thesis tracks how the heroines featured in the Disney Princess franchise are depicted over time. Nine films that span from *Snow White* to *Tangled* are evaluated based on a set of original research criteria. The categories include total percentage of screen time, number of Progressive Actions, and how many times the protagonist rescues other characters or herself. The data show that female protagonists in Disney's animated princess movies have become more active and complex characters over time. However, the trends that have persisted correlate to the broader struggles of female representation in the media, such as women being held to rigid standards of beauty and being out spoken by the male characters in their films.

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Introduction

At the turn of the millennium, former Nike executive, Andy Mooney, had just started working for the Walt Disney Company when he made a multi-billion dollar discovery. While attending a Disney on Ice show he realized that there was a huge consumer demand for princess merchandising. Before the year 2000, Walt Disney Studios had released nine films that featured either a compassionate princess, or in the case of *Mulan* and *Pocahontas*, a headstrong heroine. Mooney's new business proposal took these women out of the context of their films and created a franchise where they could all appear together on the same product. The Disney Princess franchise was born.

In 2006, Peggy Orenstein wrote an article for the *New York Times* titled, "What's Wrong with Cinderella?" In it she shares Mooney's story of success alongside her personal concerns as a mother. Mooney's business proposition was suspiciously simple. By marketing the Disney princesses under one coherent brand, the company gives young girls more opportunities "to do what they're doing anyway: projecting themselves into the characters from the classic movies.'" Orenstein wonders if the Disney Princesses, now an inescapable staple of American girlhood, are really the best role models for her daughter, (Orenstein, 2006). Her concern is still shared by parents a decade later.

Are the women of the Disney Princess Franchise good role models? This is the question that inspired me to track Disney's portrayal of women as it evolved overtime. As a corporation, Disney's priority is to make profitable content rather than creating realistic characters, however, the marketability of their films is very much entangled with issues surrounding representation. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* starred a

heroine that had no control over the outcome her story. Seventy-three years later, Disney Studios released *Tangled*, an adaption of the classic fairy tale *Rapunzel*, which introduced a female protagonist who decides to the leave the tower she's spent her entire life in to embark on a journey of self-discovery. My project is designed to evaluate how the women featured in the Disney Princesses franchise evolved into more dynamic characters over time. Looking at what has changed and what has remained the same between 1937 and the present will help me better understand how Disney reinforces and influences popular American culture.

Fairy Tale Heroines

The discussion about the characterization of Disney princesses begins with the role of the fairy tale heroines. The role of the heroine is not consistent. It varies widely based on the time period, cultural influences, and, of course, the values of the storyteller. Jack Zipes is a prominent scholar on the subject of fairy tales and their historical significance. In his book, *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales Children and the Cultural Industry*, he talks about how the fairy tale has evolved based on the social context in which it is told. Fairy tales used to be seen as dangerous, but "by the beginning of the nineteenth century, fairy-tale writers had learned to rationalize their tales and to incorporate Christian and patriarchal messages in to the narratives..." (1997, 4-5). Esteemed fairy tale writers, such as The Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, reinterpreted the fairy tale genre to reflect the values of middle-class and aristocratic Europeans, which in turn influenced the depiction of fairy tale heroines. In the nineteenth century, femininity was defined by reservation and restriction. According to James McGlathery, author of Fairy Tale Romance, these dated gender roles have

influenced the stereotype of female passivity in fairy tales, especially in the stories that depict heterosexual romance. McGlathery writes about how feminist critics have often exaggerated the lack of agency that fairy tale heroines possess.

> "Feminist critics understandably have tended to emphasize the passivity of fairy tale heroines, for their concern is with the very real and severe constraints that patriarchal society in early modern Europe placed on women's activities. The romantic heroines especially have been singled out as exemplifying the patriarchal ideal of feminine passivity," (51).

This specific historical context has informed the social perception of fairy tale heroines. Though the ubiquity of feminine passivity in fairy tales may be inflated by feminist critics, the "damsel in distress" trope is still prevalent in Western media today.

Tropes and archetypes are by definition recurrent, however, it is important to recognize how common depictions have been influenced by cultural expectations. Ming-Hsun Lin wrote an essay about the heroine archetype and how it manifests in the *Harry Potter* franchise. She defines the archetypal fairy tale heroine as "fluid and variable," because of the variability of her depiction. The heroine is a multifaceted tool, allowing the storyteller freedom to play with the character. Alternatively, Lin warns that when the storyteller follows "the culture's expectations more than the narrative's needs" the archetype is transformed into a stereotype. When that happens the "stereotyped heroine retains little or no personal autonomy, becoming virtually a prisoner of societal expectations," (82). When the heroine's role is molded to suit the expectations of the audience, she loses her depth of character. Though the fairy tale heroine is flexible by nature, the socio-historical context of the storyteller may negatively impact her portrayal. This criticism has been applied to the Disney Princess films, specifically regarding the outdated depictions of the female protagonists as passive fairy tale

heroines. While Disney's fairy tale heroines are more active than this stereotype would have you believe, it is important to understand how the studio's economic goals impact the stories and characters they create. Disney's representation of women aims to mirror popular opinions in order to make the most profit.

Disney Princesses

The Disney Princess franchise has become an aesthetic synonym for American girlhood. While Disney claims their heroines enforce childhood innocence and family values, critics are cautious to buy into the brand. Many believe that Disney has a negative effect on young girls, due to the stereotypical portrayals of female characters. Elizabeth Bell, one of the editors of *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, wrote an essay on the visual design of Disney's cartoon women. She criticizes Disney's constructed relationship between femininity and age.

> "The teenaged heroine at the idealized height of puberty's graceful promenade is individualized in Snow White, Cinderella, Princess Aurora, Ariel and Belle. Female wickedness – embodied in Show White's stepmother, Lady Trumaine, Maleficent, and Ursula – is rendered as middle-aged beauty at its peak of sexuality and authority. Feminine sacrifice and nurturing is drawn in pear-shaped, old women past menopause, spry and comical, as the good fairies, godmothers, and servants in the tales," (108).

The trend in how age impacts the "goodness" of a female character consistently promotes youthfulness as the pinnacle of virtue. Bell, also brings attention to the lack of racial diversity in Classic Disney describing the heroines as possessing "anglo-saxon features of Eurocentric loveliness, both conforming to and perfecting Hollywood's beauty boundaries," (110). Bell and many other critics claim Disney Princesses reinforce standards of beauty that already dominate the media. The concern is that

Disney is pushing these standards onto the children who make up the company's target audience.

Appearances can only say so much, but unfortunately princess may not be able to say much either. A recent study by Carmen Fought and Karen Eisenhauer revealed that in every princess movie made between 1980 and 2010 the male characters deliver more than half of lines in the film. The trend began with *The Little Mermaid* in 1989, in which male characters speak for 64% of the time. The trend continued all the way until *Tangled*. The study shed a new light on how much autonomy Disney's female characters are given within their own films.

> "Fought and Eisenhauer's research reminds us that it's not just how the princesses are portrayed. It's also important to consider the kinds of worlds these princesses inhabit, who rules these worlds, who has the power — and even who gets to open their mouths. In a large number of cases, the princesses are outspoken by men in their own movies," (Guo, 2016).

These princess movies are set in environments where male voices are more valued than female voices. Though the stories are about women, and are meant for a primarily female audience, there is a disproportionate amount of participation given to the male characters. The women's character is then judged by her interactions with men, rather than her actions. Patrick Murphy, whose essay on androcentric animation is also featured in *From Mouse to Mermaid*, takes a critical look at how Disney plots generally revolve around male characters. The Disney plot begins with the hero or heroine shown to be in a dismal environment that eventually they are able to escape, usually with the help of a male character. He specifically points out that when Disney heroes are not

given the opportunity to rescue themselves from an undesirable situation, the film concludes with their character "fundamentally unchanged." In the case of Disney heroines, the lack of character development becomes an issue of representation. The women in Disney films are either "bad" or "good," and these polarized traits are depicted exclusively in extremes. The princesses, who are without question "good" women, are rewarded for their virtue with the love of a man. The male character also acts as the solution to their unhappiness, and the princesses are expected to endure until his arrival in the plot. Murphy claims that if "the films do not empower their characters, they cannot possibly empower their audiences," (154). Murphy is most concerned with the way stories impact communities. Since the Disney Princesses franchise is so visible in American culture it's important to understand the portrayal of these characters can change how people think about themselves.

What many of these criticisms fail to acknowledge is that the issues Disney has with female representation are delineative issue in the broader media. Media theorist and Disney scholar Janet Wasko writes about representation in Classic Disney films. She emphasizes the importance of analyzing the stereotypes that Disney promotes due to their brand popularity, but she also understands that their films do not exist in a cultural vacuum.

> "But again, we should be cautious about giving one person full credit for the attributes and characteristics of popular cultural products. Indeed, the representation of women in Classic Disney may not differ very much from other popular cultural depictions." (133)

Disney is a big name in commercial cultural production, however, Wasko understands that they are not the only company deserving of scrutiny. Popular media commonly

portrays women as having less agency and depth as male characters. Although their prominence makes them an obvious target for criticism, Disney's issues with representation speak to a larger problem of female representation that is pervasive in the majority of American media.

Women on the Screen

Hollywood has a long history of poor representation. Multiple reports have found that women are left wanting for diverse representation both on and behind the big screen. A recent report conducted by three faculty members at the USC Annenberg tackled the issue of female representation in entertainment. The report revealed a deficiency of women characters as well as women storytellers. The researchers found that, "girls and women are less than one-third of all speaking characters, and comprise a small percentage of directors and writers of the major studio and art house releases of 2014," (Smith, Choueiti, & Pieper, 2016). Women's voices are unvalued in the movie industry, both in the creation of stories and execution of them. The lack of women working in entertainment severely limits how female characters are portrayed.

Women who appear on the big screen run into many issues regarding the sexual objectification of their bodies. The way a woman looks is often more important to a writer than the role she plays in the story. The Women's Media Center (WMC) is an organization that combats sexism in popular media and endorses positive representation. Since 2012 WMC has been putting out an annual report of statistic regarding women in the media. The 2015 report illuminated the disparity in how women's bodies are portrayed in comparison to men's bodies.

"Girls and women were twice as likely as boys and men to be shown in sexually revealing clothing, to be partially or fully naked or ultra-thin. They were five times as likely as males to be described as attractive," (Women's Media Center, 2015).

Popular media in U.S. has an extremely narrow visual representation of women. According to television and movies, a woman's value in society is correlated to her attractiveness, which directly influences how women establish their self-worth. The visual homogeny of female characters is especially harmful to marginalized communities. A report put out by San Diego State University in 2014 documented the lack of diverse women represented on the big screen. The women who were given the most screen time conformed the closest to Hollywood beauty standards. Female characters were on average depicted ten years younger than male characters, most of them between 20 and 30 years old. The majority of male characters were between 30 and 40 years old. Over 70% of all women appearing in television and films were White, while Black women only made up 11% of female characters. Latina and Asian representation was so low that the report stated that moviegoers "were almost as likely to see another-worldly female as they were to see a Latina or Asian female character," (Lauzen, 2014). These discouraging statistics reveal the institutional racism and ageism that is widespread in American media. They serve as a reminder of how much progress still needs to be made concerning the representation of women in the media.

Feminism and the Fight for Equity

Currently the feminist movement is leading the fight against this unfortunate trend in film and television. Feminist advocates are insistently demanding for a more diverse range of characters and stories to be presented in the media. In the collection

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Fairy Tale Films, Linda Pershing and Lisa Gablehouse write about how Disney still

uphold patriarchal ideals even after the first two feminist movements. The define

feminism as an intersectional discipline that aims to break down social inequality.

> "Feminism seeks to disrupt conventional masculine/feminine polarities,
> see other positions and identifications, and raise significant questions
> about issue of power and privilege, not only with regard to gender and
> sexuality but also race, ethnicity, class, culture, dis/ability, religion, and
> nationality," (153).

Feminism targets disproportionately distributed social power. This power imbalance is

why American media tell extremely limited narratives about women and female

experiences. Veronica Schanoes writes in her book *Fairy Tales, Myth, and*

Psychoanalytic Theory about the phenomenon of feminist revision. Since the first

feminist movement, writers have been retelling classic fairy tales with newly

empowered female heroines. Schanoes writes that the power of the fantasy genre is in

exposing the "conventions for representation" within American culture. By altering the

setting, feminism reveals "the artificiality of gendered roles and restrictions claimed for

so long to be natural by their proponents," (Schanoes, 139). Social inequality has been

spread through the myth of a natural hierarchy within the human race, in which white,

heterosexual men are usually depicted at the top. Fantasy as a genre subverts cultural

expectations through the invention of imaginary worlds where society is in some way

altered. Writers use fantasy stories to intentionally point out the failings of a culture as

well. Sarah Rothschild, author of *A Princess Story*, makes a close feminist examination

of the princess stories being told in America today. She talks about the techniques that

feminist writers employ to reinterpreted outdated fairy tales.

"Giving voice, agency and subjectivity to characters within the story is a feminist narrative strategy, as is subverting stereotypes of males as well as females and changing patriarchal ideals into those based on other value systems..." (122).

Characters who are allotted agency and who don't follow old-fashioned stereotypes are a staple of feminist storytelling. The retelling of princess stories is the means to combat the harmful cultural production that is impacting young girls and women today.

Fairy tale adaptions have the power to reinforce cultural conventions or break them down. Disney's corporate approach to storytelling aims to reinforce popular opinions by taking the archetypal values of the collected fairy tales, such as love and courage, and conforming thoem to a technologically innovative and socially relevant narrative. Disney Princess films that feature female main characters have become more progressive in the ways they depict the heroines. Over time, Walt Disney Studios have written their female protagonists as more complex and active characters, however, the trends in representation that have persisted since the classic Disney era correlate to broader struggles of female representation media. These broader struggles include a deficit of speaking roles for female characters and a lack of diversity amongst the women who have a chance to share their voice.

Methods

For the purpose of my research, I decided to approach Disney's animated princess films as literary texts. My main concern was gathering data on the characterization of the protagonist. When I was determining if the princess is an example of positive female representation, these are the questions I asked: How human is she? How intricate is her personality? How active is her role in the story? My goal was to quantify the answers to these questions. With numerical data, it will be easier to visualize Disney's progress over time.

The Films

For my examination I selected movies from the official Disney Princess franchise that have a single female protagonist. The two films that did not meet these requirements are *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and *Aladdin* (1992). It is no surprise that the main character of *Aladdin* is titular character. Princess Jasmine, despite her pivotal role in the film, doesn't meet the requirements need for me to include her in my research. Originally, I did gather data on *Sleeping Beauty*, however, there much debate over whether Princess Aurora is actually the protagonist of her film. While Aurora is an iconic figure of the classic Disney era and the princess franchise, it is her fairy friends, Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather, who drive the action of the story. Because of this ambiguity surrounding her role in the film, Princess Aurora was removed from the final data set.

Another film that did not make it onto the final list is *Frozen*. *Frozen* is not currently a part of the official Disney Princess franchise and it is unclear if it ever will

be added. Thus far all Frozen merchandise has been successfully marketed separately from collective princess brand. The other reason for its absence in my data is both Princess Anna and Queen Elsa are equally important in the discussion of female representation in Disney. My research criteria only allow for me to look at one heroine for each film. To only analyze the role of Anna, the protagonist, would be an oversimplification of the significance of *Frozen* within the timeline of female-lead Disney movies. While *Frozen* has been disqualified from my research, it is still an important film to look to understand where the future of Disney Princess movies is headed, and it will be discussed in more detail later.

The final selection of films consists of nine movies total, and they are Snow White (1937), Cinderella (1950), The Little Mermaid (1989), Beauty and the Beast (1991), Pocahontas (1995), Mulan (1998), The Princess and the Frog (2009), Tangled (2010), and Brave (2012). Each of these films feature a human woman as the main character. They all follow the "survival script," which is tells the story of "a protagonist, often innocent and defenseless, [who] falls prey to a severe challenge, perseveres, and finally emerges triumphant," (Watts, 439). Finally, the heroines of all of these movies have undergone an official coronation making them a part the Disney Princess media franchise.

Figure 1: Timeline of Disney Princess Films

This timeline shows the years that each princess film was released. There are three significant periods. The Classic Disney princess films span from 1937 to 1959, the second-wave princess films span from 1989 to 1998, and the contemporary princess films span from 2009 to the present. The films that are portrayed on the bottom in black and white are the three films that were not included in my data collection, but are needed to contextualize the Disney Princess franchise.

The Categories

In order to measure the role of the heroine over time, I created a system of five categories by which to evaluate the film. These categories are intended to assess the agency the protagonist within her story as well as her depth as a character.

Screen Time

Screen time is the percentage of time that the protagonist is physically pictured on screen during her movie. This number denotes how much presence the female character has in her own film. The princess fulfills a purpose in the story with every on screen appearance; therefore screen time is an important category by which to measure the princess's autonomy. In the genre of animation, this category is especially

important. The percentage directly correlates to how much time and effort the artists spent on rendering the female heroine.

When gathering this data, I used a stopwatch to time how long the princess was shown within the frame of the shot. This includes limbs, such as feet and hands, as well as hair. I counted hair in all but the case of Rapunzel, the protagonist of *Tangled*. Rapunzel's hair is often used as a prop rather than an indication of her presence, and shots of Rapunzel's hair were not counted as instances when the character herself was on screen. I also did not count shadows or outlines. An outline is an instance where the princess is covered or inside an object that is on screen, but none of her distinctive features have been illustrated.

Progressive Action

I define Progressive Action as anytime a heroine's actions progress the plot of the film. The opportunity to act allows her a level of control over the outcome of the story. A Progressive Action can be a decision as well as a physical endeavor. A good test of whether or not the action qualifies as a Progressive Action is to ask, if the princess had not done this, then would the story have the same ending? If the actions of the princess are pinnacle enough to alter the ending of the story, then they count as Progressive Action.

It could be argued that some instances of Progressive Action are not really the will of the protagonist but instead are circumstantial. For example, Cinderella kept the other glass slipper she escaped wearing as a memento of her magical night. When she reveals this slipper to the Duke at the end of the film, it is the action that leads to her marrying the prince. It could be seen as purely circumstantial series of events, but

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Cinderella takes an active role in her own recue by using the glass slipper as tool to rescue herself from a dismal environment. The subjectivity of what is and isn't Progressive Action is worthy of more debate, but these are the elements I took into consideration when looking for it in the films.

Rescues herself or other character/Recused by another character

Critics of Disney often reference how the company capitalizes on the role of the passive female maiden who waits around to be rescued. In the documentary film *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*, the narrator is quoted saying, "In the world of Disney, females not only get into trouble easily, they also lack the ability to save their own lives," (Sun, 2002). Fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes similarly states, "Females do not rescue themselves in Disney films, but they do sing," (1997, 71). Disney princesses are commonly stereotyped as damsels in distress with no power to help themselves.

The pervasiveness of this criticism is the reason why I decided to measure how many times the princess does the rescuing. My criteria for "rescue" is a situation where the heroine removes a character or group of characters from harm's way. It is important to note that the character whom the heroine rescues can be herself. My decision to combine the number of times the princess rescues herself with the times she rescues other people is to show that in both instances the princess is given the power to redeem a bad situation. However, the number of instances where the princess rescues herself is rare enough that when it occurs it should be acknowledged.

For comparison, I took note of every time the princess was rescued by another character as well. By looking at these variables side by side my intention is to reveal whether expectation of female passivity is based in stereotype or a fact.

Disobeys

I noted every time a female protagonist disobeyed an order. This order usually came from a figure of authority, such as her parent or superior officer. My decision to tally the princesses' disobedience was one attempt I made to measure the depth of their personality. Under the patriarchy women are taught to be compliant and agreeable. When the heroine chooses to ignore the people who have power over her, it one of the ways to measure the extent to which she embodies feminist values. In Disney films disobedience may be portrayed as childish, such as Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* spying on the royal ship after her father forbid her from interacting with humans. It may be an act of rebellion, as in the case of Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* exploring the West Wing after the Beast told her to stay away. However, disobedience can also be a serious and necessary action, such as Mulan stealing the last cannon and firing into the snowy mountain top to save her troop instead of following the orders of Captain Shang. In instances such as these, where the situation has severe consequences, the princess's disobedience also counts as Progressive Action.

Makes a Mistake

It is a quintessential human experience to make a mistake and have to take responsibility for it. When a character admits that they are at fault, they become more human in revealing their imperfections. In her lecture on the importance of bravery, Reshma Saujani says that "women have been socialized to aspire to perfection," (2016). People who have been raised female avoid situations in which they could fail, because they believe failure diminishes their worth. Looking at how many times the Disney

heroines mess up is one way to see how these fictional women endorse or undermine unrealistic expectations for real women.

I exclusively selected instances where the princess makes a mistake that negatively impacts other characters. Snow White taking a bite of the poison apple is not counted as a mistake because she is the only character that is hurt by it. However, Merida feeding her mother the magical cake thus transforming her into a bear does count as a mistake because the princess has directly impacted another character. Also a mistake must have a sense of intention behind it, which would require the protagonist to apologize her actions. It wouldn't make sense for Snow White to apologize for eating the apple, but Merida is expected to apologize to her mother for feeding her the cake. It is valuable to write a character who makes mistakes and acknowledges them because their flaws make them more realistic and relatable.

Results

After watching the nine Disney princess films I was able to identify many interesting patterns in how they relate to each other. From this data I was able to see a clear positive trend in the agency of the heroine that occurred over time. Out of all the princess movies, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* scored the lowest in every category. However, none of the films had the overall highest score, which shows that there is still progress to be made. I will begin by talking about *Snow White* and then I will go on to discuss the most notable cases each category.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

In 1937, Walt Disney made history with the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. It was the first feature length animated film ever made and it wowed audiences across the world. I find it fitting that the oldest film of the nine I've selected also has the most passive protagonist. Snow White as a character is not portrayed as a person as much as she is a symbol of goodness and virtue.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is tied with *Cinderella* for smallest percentage of screen time, only pictured on screen for 25.7% of her own film. Most of the screen time was spent on the supplemental comic relief provided by the seven dwarfs and the forest animals. Snow White is the only female protagonist who takes absolutely no Progressive Action in her film and therefore has no direct impact over the outcome of the story. She is also the only princess who is rescued by other characters more times than she is portrayed doing the rescuing. She is rescued a total of two times, while ironically, the only instance of Snow White rescuing another character is when

she saves the disguised queen from the vicious attack of her bird friends. The princess does not disobey any orders or make any mistakes, however these categories did not have a consistent positive development over time and Snow White is not the only princess who scored a zero in these categories.

It is interesting that *Snow White* being the first princess movie also portrays the most passive protagonist, however there is no most autonomous protagonist for comparison. The highest scoring films excelled in multiple categories but not every single one.
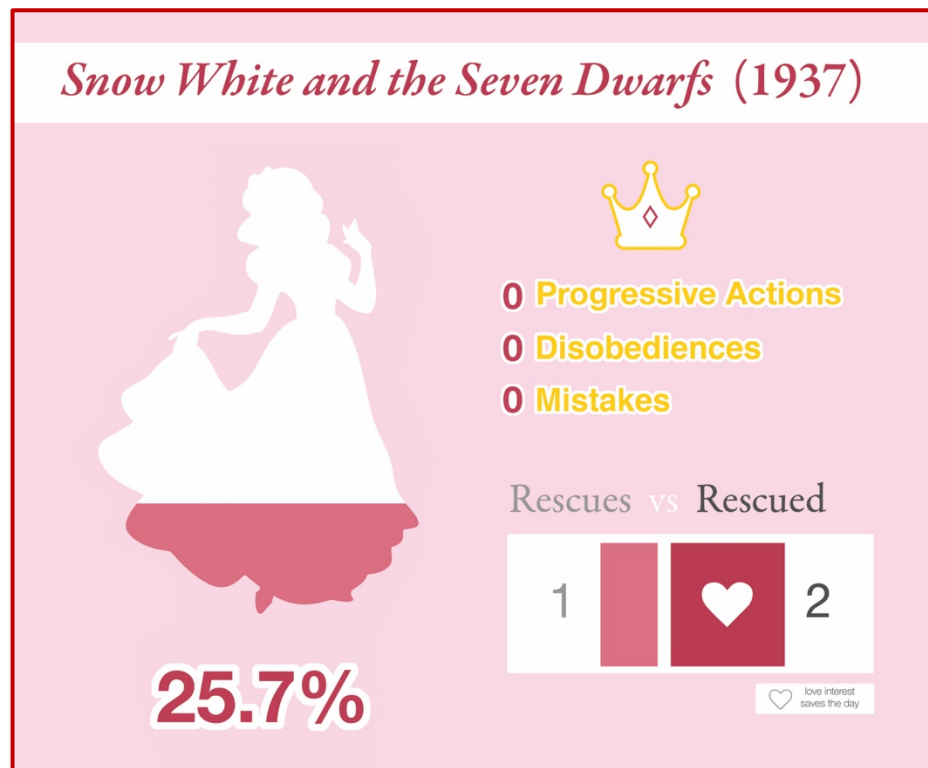

Figure 2: Snow White Compiled

This shows all the data I collected on Snow White compiled into one infographic.

Screen Time

As mentioned before *Snow White* and *Cinderella* are tied for the lowest

percentage of screen time. The former is a longer movie, meaning Snow White is

actually on screen for a longer amount of time than Cinderella, but the two heroines

have the same amount of time proportionally. The two highest scoring movies are

Tangled and *Brave*. *Tangled* has the overall highest percentage of protagonist screen

time at 49.4%, with *Brave* at a close second with 47.8%. Both of these films show the

heroines on screen for almost half of the movie. The films in between the first two and

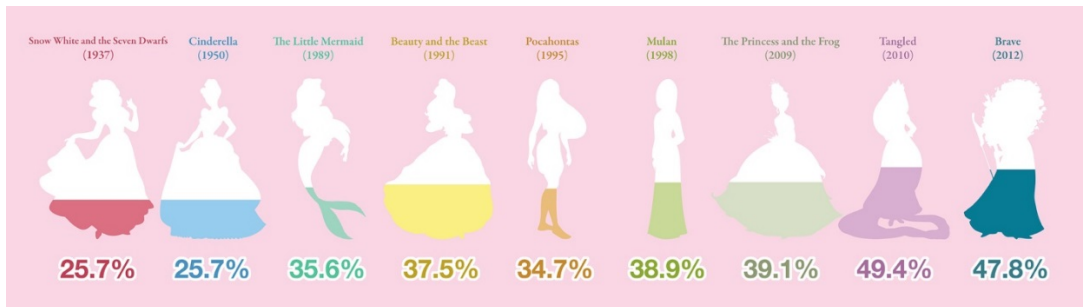last two in the data set all scored between 34% and 40%.

Figure 3: Screen Time Silhouettes

This graphic shows the percentage of the princess's screen time in chronological order
of release date. Screen time is the amount of time that the princess is pictured within the
frame of a shot. The silhouettes of each princess is filled to the percentage that she
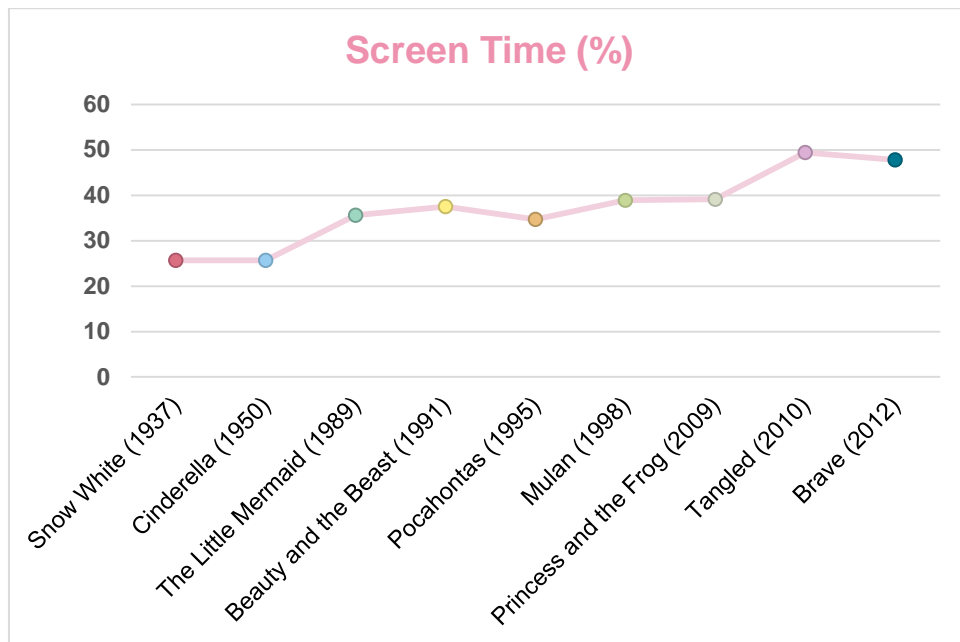appears in the film.

Figure 4: Screen Time Graph

This graph shows the increase in percentage of screen time over time.

Progressive Action

The only Progressive Action that Cinderella takes is presenting the Duke with the other glass slipper and thus takes the initiative to escape from her abusive home. Princess Ariel has three Progressive Actions, but they all occur at the beginning of the film. The final one is her decision to turn over her voice to Ursula, which also fulfills the criteria for a mistake. *Beauty and the Beast* and *Pocahontas* both have five Progressive Actions, that unfortunately all revolve around the male characters. *Tangled* has six in total, but only two don't involve Eugene, Rapunzel's love interest. Both *The Princess and the Frog* and *Brave* only have four but the two princesses, along with Mulan, ultimately save the day. *Mulan* has six total Progressive Actions and all but one revolve around helping other people.

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Figure 5: Progressive Action

The number of crowns represents the number of Progressive Actions that heroine takes during the course of her film. Progressive Action is defined as an action or choice that changes the outcome of the story.

Rescues vs. Rescued

While I will compare the number of times a protagonist rescues another character against how many times she is rescued, these numbers are not correlated, therefore the ratios will not be simplified.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is the only princess film that depicts a heroine who is rescued more times than she is shown rescuing other characters. Both *Cinderella* and *The Little Mermaid* have an equal number of each. *Cinderella* is interesting because there is sense of balance regarding who rescues whom. The titular character plays an important role in freeing herself from her stepmother and stepsisters by alerting the Duke to her existence, but she is ultimately rescued by her marriage to the Prince.

Cinderella is shown rescuing her animal friends from Lucifer, the evil cat, and at the end of the film the animals help her by retrieving key to the locked attic from Lucifer.

Another interesting correlation is between *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Princess and the Frog*. Both tell the tale of a male character who has been transformed into an animal and requires a woman to return them to their human form. Each film has three instances where the heroine does the rescuing and two where she needs to be rescued. It is fitting that at least one of the times she is rescued it is by her male love interest while he is in an animal form, and one of her rescues is when she breaks the spell placed on him.

Tangled and *Pocahontas* are both notable in this category. Rapunzel has the highest score with a total of eight instances where she is shown rescuing other characters, namely Eugene. Pocahontas has the fewest number of times where she need to be rescued, with only one at the beginning of her film. When John Smith is about to discover her presence, her hummingbird friend, Flit, flies out of the bush to distract him.

Snow White isn't the only heroine who is portrayed rescuing the villain. Rapunzel also makes an attempt to catch Mother Gothel before she falls out the tower window. The biggest difference is Rapunzel was fully aware of Gothel's ill intentions, while Snow White was fooled into thinking the old hag was harmless.

Cinderella, Mulan, Tiana, and Rapunzel are the four princesses who are shown rescuing themselves, and Rapunzel is the only one who does not deliver the final blow to the villain.
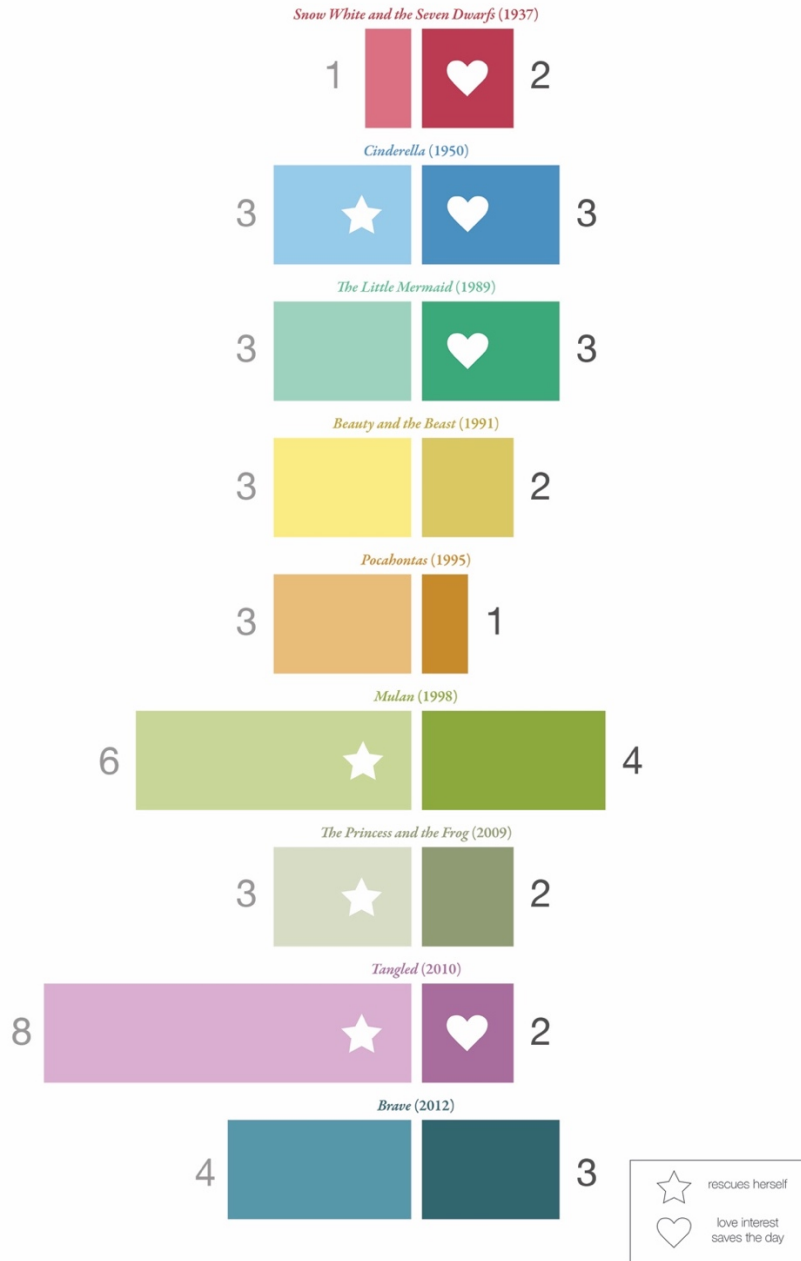
Figure 6: Rescues vs. Rescued

This figure shows the amount of times the princess rescues herself or another character (left column) versus the amount of times she is rescued by another character or characters (right column). The stars show which princesses are shown rescuing themselves, and the hearts show which princess's love interests ultimately save the day.

Disobeys/Makes a Mistake

I have conflated these two categories because neither of these were chronologically consistent. I will focus solely on the notable cases for each.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and *The Princess and the Frog* are the only two in which the female protagonist did not disobey any orders, and coincidentally neither of them made any mistakes as well.

The disobedience category is interesting because the heroines have varying reasons that motivated them to ignore the commands of their superiors. Cinderella and Rapunzel both have abusive family situations that require that they ignore the commands of their mother figures in order to preserve their well-being. Ariel and Belle are both motivated by curiosity and spite for the male figures in their stories. Pocahontas and Mulan act disobediently for the greater good when they believe their superiors are making foolish decisions. Finally, in *Brave* Princess Merida purposefully disobeys her mother's command to stop shooting arrows because she is frustrated.

Brave is the most interesting film to look at in regard to these two categories. Merida's motivations for disobedience are rooted deeply in her personality and she makes the most mistakes of all the princesses. In her pivotal speech she delivers to the four clans in the latter half of the movie, she says, "I need to amend my mistake." This makes her one of the only princesses to openly acknowledge an error in her actions and the only princess to take responsibility for fixing the situation. While these two categories do not show a trend of upward progress, *Brave* illustrates the importance of their inclusion.

HOW MANY TIMES THE PRINCESS DISOBEYS

Snow White   Cinderella   Ariel   Belle   Pocahontas   Mulan   Tiana   Rapunzel   Merida

Figure 7: Disobeys an Order

In chronological order of release date, this figure shows the number of instances where a female protagonist disobeys a command or order from a figure of authority.

HOW MANY TIMES THE PRINCESS MAKES A MISTAKE

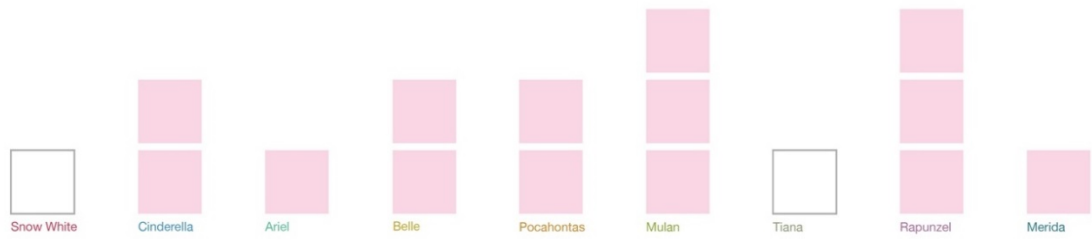Snow White   Cinderella   Ariel   Belle   Pocahontas   Mulan   Tiana   Rapunzel   Merida
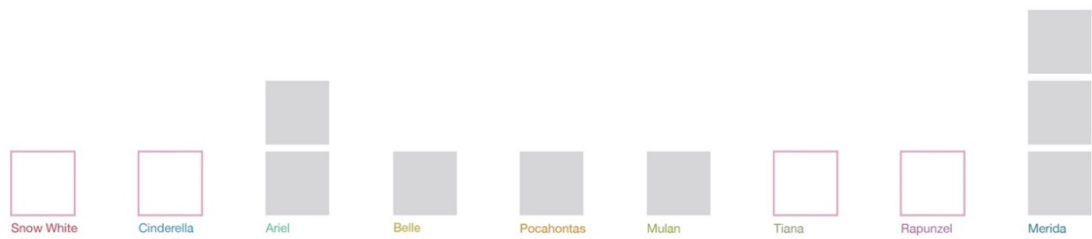
Figure 8: Makes a Mistake

In chronological order of release date, this figure shows the number of instances where a female protagonist make a mistake for which she should apologize.

Analysis

It is no surprise that the role of the heroine in Disney films has become more active over the years. Fairy tales have traditionally evolved based on the historical context in which they were told.

> "As ideas concerning the increasingly independent status of women permeated society, the tales came to reflect them through the actions of the female characters, and through the metaphors related to them," (Pilinovsky, 115).

The power of fairy tales comes from their ability to endlessly reimagined. Combining the archetypal elements with the current historical context is the recipe for keeping fairy tales relevant and entertaining. Through the making of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney modernized the classic fairy tale to reflect American values of the 1930s. Snow White was designed to fulfill the feminine ideal that was prevalent at the time her movie was released.

In *Snow White* and *Cinderella*, the princesses are not depicted as complex beings. They are emulative of goodness and virtue, which is epitomized in the fact that they make no mistakes in the entirety the film. The classic heroines' function is not to aspire to realism. She exists as an ideal, proving that goodness can preserve against the evil forces that would attempt to defeat her. Snow White and Cinderella are not given much if any agency in their stories. The women with agency are the scheming villainesses who use their actions to inhibit the heroines. The villainesses are motivated by jealously and ambition, and they are competing with heroine to secure their position of power in a male driven society. The activeness of the villainesses is contrasted with the passiveness of the heroines. The princess reinforces that ideal femininity is

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grounded in inaction. It is the friends of the princess who must protect the young

heroine from evil older woman. In *Snow White* the evil queen is defeated while being

pursued by the dwarfs, and in *Cinderella* the princess is locked in the attic by her step-

mother only to be rescued by her animal friends. Since the worth of these two

princesses is determined by their ability to endure, they do not need to fulfill an active

role in their own liberation. However, it is important to note that Cinderella is given an

opportunity to stand up to her step-mother. She is the one who presents the Duke with

the other slipper thus partially executing her own rescue. She also is shown rescuing the

animals from life or death situations before the climactic scene when they free her from

the attic. When the heroine is shown rescuing other characters as much as they rescue

her, the message of the film reflects the value of team work and community rather than

virtuous female passivity.

     The Little Mermaid marks the start of a new era in Disney Princess films. After

the release of *Sleeping Beauty*, it took three whole decades before the next princess film

was produced. In that time the perception of women shifted dramatically. The next

round of princess movies, which I refer to as the "second-wave princess movies,"

spanned from 1989 to 1998. With these films Disney made an attempt to incorporate

new perspectives on women and gender roles, however, the company took a

conservative approach when integrating these perspectives into their films. The

phenomenon is what Pershing and Gablehouse describe as 'faux-feminism.'

> "Usually this impulse involves trivializing feminist ideology or
> compressing the actions of female characters into the conventions of
> popular romance while maintaining that they are her choice, not actions
> instilled by patriarchal teaching and values," (153).

While the second-wave princesses may have more agency over their decisions, their choices still fulfill patriarchal expectations for how they should act. In *The Little Mermaid* the application of faux-feminism is obvious in the consequence of her actions. Ariel's disobedience initially appears to be an example of how the role of the princess has evolved. In *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*, Dr. Gail Dines points out, "[Ariel] does defy her father. There is a sense of a more powerful female here." Unfortunately, Ariel's disobedience results in her falling love with a human prince, and, as Dines put it, "ultimately she's willing to give up her voice to get the man," (Sun). Ariel makes the transition from father to husband with ease. Her position within the patriarchal societies under the sea and on land is never questioned. Starting with *The Little Mermaid*, a troubling trend emerges where the majority of Progressive Actions taken by the second-wave princesses revolve around male characters and the pursuit of heterosexual romance.

  Mulan is the exception. Most of Mulan's actions are motivated by the desire to help those around her. Three of her six Progressive Actions are also instances of her rescuing other characters. While men benefit from these acts of autonomy, she ultimately does them for herself as evidenced in her line, "Maybe I didn't go for my father. Maybe what I really wanted was to prove I could do things right." Despite the titular character's independent motivations, *Mulan* is not free from examples of faux-feminism. The fictional Chinese society in which the film takes place has impenetrably strict gender roles that Mulan struggles to fit. Throughout the film, Mulan is seeking validation for who she is outside of these constraints and she is only able to find that through her male friends and family. As Rothschild puts it, "Mulan proves herself

worthy, but she earns her accolades in spite of being a girl rather than because of being one," (159). Only by receiving the approval of the most powerful Chinese patriarch, the emperor, does Mulan get the permission to be herself.

Though the amount of time that female protagonists appear on screen consistently goes up over time, male characters are still deliver the majority for every princess film between *The Little Mermaid* and *The Princess and the Frog* (Guo). According to a study by Hanah Anderson and Matt Daniels that documented the gender of speaking roles in 2,000 screenplays, "Mushu, [Mulan's] protector dragon, has 50% more words of dialogue than Mulan herself." The second-wave princess movies in order to establish the worth of the female characters introduce male characters to act as a literary foil and added comedic relief. Ariel has Sebastian and Flounder, Belle has Lumiere and Cogsworth, Mulan has Mushu, and Tiana has her animal pals from the Bayou. In addition to the princess's funny friends, the script must provide some level of depth for her male love interest. Love at first sight is no longer an acceptable form of character development. Though the story revolves around a central female character, she is surrounded by male characters and therefore most of the dialogue has a significant gender imbalance, (Anderson and Daniels, 2016). *Tangled* is the first movie to break the pattern having 54% of the lines said by female characters, and *Brave* goes above and beyond, with women speaking for 74% of the film, (Guo). As my research shows, this positive trend in women's speaking roles is also tied to their increase in complexity and agency.

Ten years after the success of *Mulan*, *The Princess and the Frog* made history, with Tiana becoming the first black Disney princess. While reception of Tiana has been

mixed, often times "the anger and pain associated with historical absence transfers to the anger and pain of misrepresentation and suspicion," (Lester, 305). Disney's history of misrepresenting marginalized groups is evident in the inaccurate account of historical events in *Pocahontas* and the over-exaggerated sexism of ancient China in *Mulan* (Rothschild). The introduction of Tiana to the princess cannon raises the same concerns from the past regarding Disney's representation of race and ethnicity. The way Disney integrates diversity into their films is similar to their misuse of feminism. By using race as a tool to increase their marketability, "the more profound consequences of institutional racism are never allowed even momentarily to invade the audience's comfort zone," (Edgerton & Jackson). One way that Disney has avoided addressing the rampant racism of 1920s America was to have Tiana spend 21% of the movie pictured in animal form. She is only on screen for 39.1% of the film, and for over half of that time she is a frog. By avoiding depicting her human form, Disney is no longer obligated to represent the historically accurate racial tensions that would be present in Tiana's life.

While the categories that measure a princess's disobedience and mistakes can provide some interesting insight, they are not an accurate way to track progress. Neither Tiana and Snow White disobey any commands in their respective films, nor do they make any mistakes. However, Tiana is given much more agency in her story than Snow White. Tiana is one of the only princess who has concrete aspirations that don't involve marriage and she is one of three princesses who rescues herself from the villain. Tiana does not need to disobey and order or make a mistake in order to be considered autonomous. However, princesses that do make mistakes have a heightened sense of

realism, especially in the case of Princess Merida. Merida makes a total of three mistakes, the most of any of the princesses, and these are mistakes that she is forced to acknowledge and repair by the end of her story. Her character growth occurs through her recognition of her failings, and in learning from her mistakes, Merida becomes the most multilayered heroine in the Disney Princess franchise.

Brave is the only Disney princess movie that does not end with the heroine happily involved in a romantic relationship. While *Brave* has received much praise for making Disney princess history, in cases such as *Mulan* and *Tangled*, the presence of a love interest does not diminish the princess's autonomy. As queer studies scholar Katie Kapurch points out, in both *Brave* and *Tangled*, the story hinges on "the princess's discovery of her own potential and her demand for respect from others," rather than her relationship with man.

> "More and more contemporary princess imagery—both studio and fan produced— denies the prince's participation in this identity formation," (Kapurch, 450).

I would add *Mulan* to this list of movies, since all three heroines made significant personal breakthroughs that were not mediated through romance. Rapunzel decides to leave the tower which eventually leads to her realization of her royal standing; Mulan is able to excel as a soldier, using her cunning to rescue the Chinese Emperor; and Merida takes control of her fate and in doing so reconciles her differences with her mother. Each of these princesses through their own means are able to realize and express their authentic selves.

In recent years Disney Princess films feature more independent and complex characters. The female heroines are given an opportunity for internal reflection and

personal growth. Based on my data gathered on screen time and Progressive Action, the contemporary heroines are more active participants in their stories than the princess from the classic Disney era. I have challenged the stereotype of the passive protagonist who waits around to be rescued by showing that even in films as far back as *Cinderella*, princesses have been rescuing their friends and themselves. When a princess disobeys a command or makes a mistake she becomes more human, however, there are many more ways to imbue characters with a sense of realism.

The Present

The criteria that I have presented provides the means to track the progress Disney has made over the years. However, these five categories aren't easily applied to movies with multiple female heroines. *Frozen* is Disney's most recent female-centric animated film, and it follows the story of two sisters named Anna and Elsa. Princess Anna is considered the protagonist of the movie and Queen Elsa is considered the deuteragonist, but both characters make significant strides for the representation of women. To only evaluate the protagonist would be an oversimplification of the multifaceted ways that *Frozen* has challenged the status quo regarding female representation. To understand the progress Disney has made over the years, it is important to look at the both role of Princess Anna and Queen Elsa.

Frozen turns multiple Disney clichés on their head. Disney films often revolve around the theme of Good vs. Evil, and in their previous films the two sides are depicted to be very polarized with little or no crossover. "Good cannot become evil, nor can evil become good," (Zipes, 1997, 93). Elsa is one of the first characters that has a sense of ambiguity regarding this theme. According to Jennifer Lee, screenwriter and

director of *Frozen*, Elsa was originally going to be the villain of the story. The Snow Queen, the character Elsa is based on, is an evil being, but Elsa has ended up evolving away from the intentions of the original text, and she "took on a more symbolic nature as a misunderstood individual who others could identify with," (Acuna, 2016). The women with power in Disney animated films are typically villainesses who are not meant to be relatable or realistic. Queen Elsa shows why it is profitable to portray a female character who is powerful but also complex.

Disney romances have evolved as much as the heroines of the stories. In the Classic Disney era, the prince and princess fell in love at first sight, but beginning with *Beauty and the Beast* the fairy tale couple went through a period of falling in love in which they came to appreciate each other for more than what was on the surface. In *Frozen*, the love at first sight trope is mocked openly for being outdated and superficial. At the beginning of the film Princess Anna meets a prince names Hans, and the two fall instantly in love in stereotypical Disney fashion. When Anna informs Elsa that she wants to marry Hans, Elsa responds saying that Anna "can't marry a man she's just met." Later in the film when Anna tells Kristoff that she got engaged to Hans after only knowing him for a day, Kristoff is shocked and he exclaims, "Didn't your parents ever warn you about strangers?" The concern of Elsa and Kristoff turns out to be justified, right before the climax of the film Hans is revealed to be the true villain of the story. In his ambition for power, he was using Anna to become the leader of her kingdom. This twist solidifies Disney's moving on from "love at first sight" in exchange for romance that grows out of a previously established relationship.

Frozen also challenges ideas about the fairy tale ideal of True Love. The act of True Love that breaks the curse at the end of film is when Anna sacrifices herself to save Elsa. The familial love between the two sisters proves to be just as strong as the romantic love that Anna believed she had with Hans and Kristoff. This makes the romantic relationships that are portrayed in the film secondary to the relationship of the two female characters.

Based on my criteria, Anna is an upstanding protagonist. She takes multiple Progressive Actions in the film, including her decision to pursue Elsa into the woods and her decision to save her sister instead of herself. In addition to rescuing her sister, she also recues Kristoff on more than one occasion, and eventually she rescues herself. Queen Elsa also makes huge strides in female representation. She makes many mistakes that harm her kingdom and her sister, but she is given the chance to amend them at the end of the film. In her musical number "Let It Go" Elsa says outright, "That perfect girl is gone," with an expression of joy. From Elsa's perspective, trying to be perfect was inhibiting her from being her authentic self.

There is still progress to be made. Frozen breaks the positive trend of women speaking more often than the men in female lead animated films. While Anna speaks the most of all the characters in the film, Elsa is beat out by Kristoff, Olaf, and Hans, (Anderson & Daniels). Elsa and Anna are the only two named female characters with speaking role in the movie. Their mother has no lines in the film preceding her death, and the only other women portrayed are minor background characters. Even though the relationship of the sisters is central to the story, more time is given developing Anna's relationship with the male characters.

In line with the reports on female representation in the media, *Frozen* features barely any people of color. In the crowd scene at the coronation party there are multiple people with dark skin, however none of them have speaking roles and they do not appear in any crowd scene afterward. The only women older than Elsa with a speaking role is Elsa's mother and the female troll Bulda, both whom have inconsequential minor roles. Finally, Anna and Elsa both designed to adhere to Hollywood's unrealistic beauty standards. *Frozen* is emulative of how far Disney has come over the years, but there is still much work to be done.

Conclusion

My research has provided a new way to evaluate the heroines in Disney princess movies. What my data revealed in the nine movies that spanned *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to *Tangled* is that the Disney's portrayal of their female character's changes over the years. The most recent princesses that have joined the franchise are more autonomous and realistic than their predecessors. They are women with a clear sense of self that develops over the course of the film. Disney still struggles with the diverse visual representation of women, and unfortunately female characters continue to be outspoken by the male characters highlighted in the film, but Disney is one of many media sources that still has room to improve in these areas. However, that does not mean the company should be let off the hook. Disney's pervasiveness in American culture and popularity amongst children are two of the reasons it is important to take a close look at the example they set.

The Future

Because Disney is a corporation, the company is forced to prioritize profitability over innovative storytelling, which is why their progress has been spread out over the years. In the time it's taken Disney to build up to a storytelling success like *Frozen*, many storytellers independent of Disney have also harnessed the power of the fairy tale revision in order to supplement and challenge the pervasiveness of the Disney's adaptions. As I move forward with this project I am planning on creating my own fairy tale adaption that will demonstrate where representation is still lacking in the modern Disney Princess narrative. As Schanoes states, "Revision has the potential to expose the

ideological underpinnings of the stories that shape our lives, not in order that we surrender to them, but in order that we can shape them in turn," (57).

The Six Swans, a fairy tale collected by Brothers Grimm, tells the story of a princess whose six older brothers are transformed into swans by a wicked witch. In order to save them, the heroine must sacrifice her voice while she sews six magical shirts that can transform them back into humans. Before she is able to finish the shirts, she accused of being a witch and sentenced to execution. Unable to defend herself, the princess continues to work until the last second. when she finally throws the shirts over her brothers, the curse is broken and the princess is spared.

My version of the fairy tale follows a princess named Zipporah who secretly has magical powers. Her six older brothers bully her ruthlessly because they blame her for their mother's death. One day the brothers go too far, and Zipporah makes the mistake of using her magical powers to turn the six boys into swans. In order to turn them back Zipporah must sacrifice not only her voice, but also her long hair and her beautiful face. The story follows Zipporah's journey to earn her brothers' forgiveness while simultaneously discovering her own self-worth. My fairy tale adaption will be entitled, *The Swan Witch*.

My version of *The Six Swans* will challenge the trends of poor female representation that are still present in Disney films and the larger media. My protagonist will be a woman of color. Zipporah's closest friend and eventual love interest is Gail, a comical, chubby young woman employed in the princess's castle. While Zipporah is designed to be thin, she won't have the unrealistic hourglass figure that most of the Disney Princesses possess. For most of the film, Zipporah will be dressed in a shirt and

pants. I also plan to elaborate on the story of Zipporah's mother, the deceased queen, who was the source of Zipporah's magical abilities. Through the story of the queen, I will feature a resilient, middle-aged female character.

        The Swan Witch is intended to be the creative application of my research. Seeing the progress that still needs to be has inspired me to create a complex female character who takes charge of her narrative. Disney's prominence in American culture should be challenged by contemporary storytellers from creating their own fairy tale revisions. By telling the stories the Disney overlooks, we can redefine what it means to live happily ever after.

Notes on the Films

Key:

1. ST = Screen Time (%)
2. PA = Progressive Action
3. M = Makes a mistake
4. D = Disobeys an order
5. RS = Rescues herself or other
6. RD = Rescued by other

** one instance meets two criteria
*** one instance meets three criteria
❤ love interest saves the day
★ rescues herself

	Snow White (1937)	Cinderella (1950)	The Little Mermaid (1989)	Beauty and the Beast (1991)	Pocahontas (1995)	Mulan (1998)	Princess and the Frog (2009)	Tangled (2010)	Brave (2012)
Screen Time (%)	25.7	25.7	35.6	37.5	34.7	38.9	39.1	49.4	47.8
Progressive Action	0	1	3	5	5	6	4	6	4
Makes a Mistake	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3
Disobeys	0	2	1	2	2	3	0	3	1
Rescues	1	3	3	3	3	6	3	8	4
Rescued	2	3	3	2	1	4	2	2	3

Table 1: Data on the Princess Films

This table shows the numerical data I've collected. The data is organized by the chronological order of release date.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)

1. **ST:** 21.20 min./ 83.00 min. (1280 sec. / 4980 sec.) = 25.7%
2. **PA:** 0
3. **M:** 0
4. **D:** 0
5. **RS:** 1
    a. Saves the evil queen from the birds who attack her
6. **RD:** 2
    a. The huntsman spares her
    b. The prince's kiss wakes her (❤)

Cinderella (**1950**)

1. **ST:** 19.02 min. / 74.00 min. (1142 sec. / 4440 sec.) = 25.7%
2. **PA:** 1
   a. Stops the duke from leaving, gives him second slipper**
3. **M:** 0
4. **D:** 2
   a. Interrupts her family's music lesson
   b. Secretly goes to the ball
5. **RS:** 3
   a. Rescues Gus from mouse trap
   b. Rescues Gus from Lucifer
   c. Stops the duke from leaving, gives him second slipper** (★)
6. **RD:** 3
   a. Fairy Godmother saves her from missing the ball
   b. Animal friends free her from attic
   c. Ultimately rescued by marriage to the Prince (❤)

The Little Mermaid (**1989**)

1. **ST:** 29.33 min. / 83.00 min. (1773 sec. / 4980 sec.) = 35.6%
2. **PA:** 3
   a. Goes to check out the human ship**
   b. Saves Prince Eric from wreckage**
   c. Visits and makes deal with Ursula**
3. **M:** 2
   a. Forgets about the performance
   b. Visits and makes deal with Ursula**
4. **D:** 1
   a. Goes to check out the human ship**
5. **RS:** 3
   a. Rescues Flounder from the shark
   b. Saves Prince Eric from wreckage**
   c. Saves Prince Eric by pushing the trident out of the way
6. **RD:** 3
   a. Seagull and other creatures smash the shell necklace
   b. King Trident saves her from the bargain with Ursula
   c. Prince Eric spears Ursula with ship (❤)

Beauty and the Beast (**1991**)

1. **ST:** 31.31 min. / 84.00 min. (1891 sec. / 5040 sec.) = 37.5%
2. **PA:** 5

       a. Refuses to marry Gaston
       b. Follows the horse to go find her father, "Take me to him"
       c. Makes a trade with the Beast for her father, "Take me instead." **
       d. Shows the Beast to Gaston and the townspeople to save her father***
       e. Goes back to the castle to help the Beast
3. **M:** 1
       a. Shows the Beast to Gaston and the townspeople to save her father***
4. **D:** 2
       a. Refuses to come to dinner
       b. Goes to explore the West Wing
5. **RS:** 3
       a. Makes a trade with the Beast for her father, "Take me instead." **
       b. Shows the Beast to Gaston and the townspeople to save her father***
       c. Saves the Beast from the curse
6. **RD:** 2
       a. The Beast rescues her from the wolves
       b. Chip frees her from the basement

Pocahontas **(1995)**

1. **ST:** 28.4 min. / 81.00 min. (1684 sec. / 4860 sec.) = 34.7%
2. **PA:** 5
       a. Chooses to follow John Smith
       b. Gets out of the boat to speak with John Smith
       c. Decides to meet John Smith after she has been told not to talk to the white men**
       d. Protects John Smith from being killed by her father***
       e. Chooses to stay with her tribe, not follow John Smith to England
3. **M:** 1
       a. Blames herself for Kocoum's death
4. **D:** 2
       a. Decides to meet John after she has been told not to talk to the white men**
       b. Protects John from being killed by her father***
          i. Father tell her to stop blocking John, she refuses
5. **RS:** 3
       a. Rescues Flit from being stuck to the canoe
       b. Pulls John into the corn to keep him from getting caught
       c. Protects John from being killed by her father***
6. **RD:** 1
       a. Flit keeps John from finding her in the bushes

Mulan **(1998)**

1. **ST:** 34.18 min. / 88.00 min. (2057 sec. / 5280 sec.) = 38.9%
2. **PA:** 6
    a. Takes her father's place**
    b. Gets arrow from top of post instead of going home
    c. Steals the last cannon**
    d. Decides to warns the army instead of going home
    e. Come up with plan to stop the Huns in the palace
    f. Uses fireworks to defeat Shan Yu**
3. **M:** 1
    a. Messes up matchmaker appointment
4. **D:** 3
    a. Writes on her arm
    b. Mom says stay inside during call to war
    c. Steals the cannon***
5. **RS:** 6
    a. Takes her father's place**
    b. Rescues her horse from the exploding carriage
    c. Steals the cannon** (★)
    d. Pulls Shang out of the snow
    e. Saves the Emperor from Shan Yu by helping him escape
    f. Saves Shang from Shan Yu with her revealing her identity
    g. Uses fireworks to defeat Shan Yu** (★)
6. **RD:** 4
    a. Mushu bites the butt
    b. Her horse helps out of the snow during the avalanche
    c. Her troop catches her arrow as they are falling off the cliff
    d. Shang doesn't kill her when it is revealed she is a woman

Princess and the Frog **(2009)**

1. **ST:** 37.55 min. / 97.00 min. (2275 sec. / 5820 sec.) = 39.1%
    a. Human = 16:44.4 min. and Frog = 21:10.9 min.
2. **PA:** 4
    a. Makes deal with Naveen in exchange for her restaurant
    b. Kisses Naveen to turn him human**
    c. Doesn't accept Facilier's offer
    d. Smashes Facilier's medallion**
3. **M:** 0
4. **D:** 0
5. **RS:** 3
    a. Kisses Naveen to turn him human**

          i.   First time she fails

          ii. Second time it works!

      b. Saves Naveen from crocodiles

      c. Smashes Facilier's medallion** (★)

6. **RD:** 2

      a. Ray unties Tiana and Naveen's tongues

      b. Naveen saves Tiana from trappers

Tangled (2010)

1. **ST:** 49.25 min. / 100.00 min. (2965 sec. / 6000 sec.) = 49.4%

      a. Not including her hair

2. **PA:** 6

      a. Hides Flynn from Gothel in the tower

      b. Makes a deal with Flynn for him to take her to see the lights

      c. Leaves the tower**

      d. Gives Flynn the crown

      e. Confronts Gothel

      f. Gives herself to Gothel in order to save Flynn**

3. **M:** 0

4. **D:** 3

      a. Hides Flynn from Gothel in the tower**

      b. Leaves the tower**

      c. Refuses to return home with Gothel

5. **RS:** 7

      a. Knocks out Flynn when he breaks in (★)

      b. Befriends Ruffians, saving Flynn

      c. Grabs Flynn with her hair, saves him from the horse

      d. Saves herself and Flynn in the dark water with her hair (★)

      e. Makes a deal with the horse, saving Flynn

      f. Gives herself to Gothel in order to save Flynn**

      g. Her tears unexpectedly heal Flynn

      h. Rapunzel tries to catch Gothel before she falls out the window

6. **RD:** 2

      a. Bartender shows them the secret passage way

      b. Flynn cuts Rapunzel's hair freeing her from Gothel (❤)

Brave (2012)

1. **ST:** 47.49 min. / 100.00 min. (2869 sec. / 6000 sec.) = 47.8%

2. **PA:** 4

      a. Decides to compete for her own hand**

      b. Gives the transformation spell to her mom**

     c. Gives the pivotal speech, stops the fighting between clans
     d. Reconciles with her mother, repairs tapestry**
3. **M:** 3
     a. Decides to compete for her own hand**
        i. "I need to amend my mistake."
     b. Slices tapestry
     c. Gives the transformation spell to her mom**
4. **D:** 1
     a. "Don't shoot another arrow!"
5. **RS:** 4
     a. Helps her mom escape from the castle
     b. Saves her mom from the skeptical guard
     c. Rescues her mom from her dad in the forest
     d. Reconciles with her mother, repairs tapestry**
6. **RD:** 3
     a. Father fights Mor'du, Mother flees with young Merida
     b. Brothers give her the key
     c. Mom saves her from Mor'du

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