San Jose State University
SJSU ScholarWorks

Fall 2011

Happily Ever After: Construction of Family in Disney Princess Collection Films

Jennifer Hecht
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

     Part of the Mass Communication Commons

HAPPILY EVER AFTER:
CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY IN DISNEY PRINCESS COLLECTION FILMS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Jennifer Hecht

December 2011

The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

HAPPILY EVER AFTER:
CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY IN DISNEY PRINCESS COLLECTION FILMS

by

Jennifer Hecht

APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS

COMMUNICATIONS

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2011

Dr. Diana Stover   School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Prof. Diane Guerrazzi   School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Dr. Susan Murray   Department of Sociology

ABSTRACT

HAPPILY EVER AFTER:
CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY IN DISNEY PRINCESS COLLECTION FILMS

by Jennifer Hecht

This thesis examined the role and characterization of family members in Disney princess films. The purpose of this study was to fill gaps in previous research on the Disney princess films by analyzing the themes and collection as a whole, including the newest film in the collection, *The Princess and the Frog.* Using content analysis, this study identified three variables that were present in every Disney princess film in the collection – nuclear family, love, and appearance. The researcher found little family diversity in terms of types of households, parenting roles, and characterization of family members. Siblings were especially underrepresented. Only two of the nine princesses had siblings, and very little screen time was devoted to them. Diversity in the appearance of princesses and suitors was also lacking, even in more recent films. Newer films included non-Caucasian princesses, and more of the princesses were shown wearing revealing clothing. No significant differences were found in the characterizations of the princesses. The age, ethnicity, and economic status of the suitors became more diverse in recent films, but the suitors were characterized in similar ways. Although there were few changes in the appearance and characterizations of family members and significant others, princesses in newer films became more goal-driven and showed less romanticization of love and escapism.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my grandparents, Mom Mom and Pop Pop, and to my mother. Thank you for always standing by me and encouraging me in my endeavors. This thesis is as much yours as it is mine.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter I

Introduction

For centuries, children have learned about femininity and women's traditional roles from fairy tales (Craven, 2002). In children's literature, gender roles reinforce and create meanings of femininity and masculinity (Baker-Sperry, 2007). Christensen (1996) found that women's roles in fairy tales distort reality and the stories teach viewers to look for their faults. Many fairy tales infer that girls are chosen for marriage solely for their beauty rather than for other characteristics (Lieberman, 1972). These reinforced stereotypes of sex roles and conservative ways of thinking about the family system are taught to children when they are most impressionable (Fisher & Silber, 2000). Research has shown fairy tales may help to shape a child's view of the world. In many fairy tales, children of color internalize white privileging – the feeling that white people have a special advantage – because of the images that are presented (Hurley, 2005). Thomas (2007) suggested that this is because white children get most of the positive images from white characters in child-based animation. Throughout its history, Disney has been accused of racial stereotyping in its feature films about fairy tales (Banfield, 2008). Narratives for a family audience also have an influence on the cultural ideas of evil, goodness, womanhood, manhood, and fantasies about love (Fisher & Silber, 2000).

Women in fairy tales are characterized as either good or bad. In most fairy tales, when a mother is good, she is dead or passive in life. When a mother exhibits characteristics that are considered bad, she lives. Powerful women are seen as bad, and good women as passive. The good woman is the victim and the bad woman must be

destroyed. Furthermore, men are always good, no matter what they do. Men and women in fairy tales are shown as complete opposites. Women could never do what men do, and one would never be mistaken for the other. The moral at the end of the story tells the audience that a happy ending means a woman has to be passive, victimized, asleep, or destroyed (Dworkin, 1974).

Disney princess films are specifically examined in this thesis because of their iconic image in American culture. Not only are the princesses present in the movies, but their images are also reproduced in the form of dolls, stickers, coloring books, and other toys for mass consumption. Children do not just watch the princesses, they interact with them as well. Disney princess films span a total of 72 years. This means that children watching the newest princess films are most likely repeating an action that their mother and grandmothers engaged in when they were younger. Thus, Disney movies are not just generational, but they include multiple generations. This is important because of the way Disney is able to spread its influence across different ages. Disney has been able to dominate aspects of culture throughout the years because of its early and perpetual existence in film. It is important to study the ways in which Disney dominates cultural experience because the company has such an influential role in the lives of Americans young and old.

The purpose of this study was to determine what cultural messages are conveyed by the construction and characterization of the family in the Disney princess collection's feature films. The study examined the gender roles within the family that were perpetuated in nine animated movies — *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella,*

Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, Pocahontas, Mulan, and *The Princess and the Frog.* In addition, the study explored the messages dealing with the ways in which the primary characters attempted to find a significant other. Specifically, the study examined the emphasis placed on appearance and character traits such a dependence, confidence, negativity, and competitiveness. This study extended previous research on the Disney princess collection, as well as provided research on the newest and unexamined princess from *The Princess and the Frog.* Although considerable research on the Disney princess collection has been conducted on themes of femininity and masculinity, little research has been conducted on roles within the family. This study will help to fill this research gap. Specifically, the content analysis examined themes of the representation of family type, siblings, biological and non-biological parents, appearance of princesses and suitors, and the attainment of a family life. .

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter II provides a review of the academic literature on the Disney princess collection's films. It was organized into three subsections — the nuclear family, love, and appearance. The section on the nuclear family provides a review of research on the characterization of the princesses' immediate family. The section on love presents literature dealing with the ways marriage was romanticized, and the section on appearance provides a review of research on the importance of appearance in a romantic relationship. Chapter III presents the method for the study and includes details on the coding used for content analysis. Results and statistical significance are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V provides conclusions found through content analysis and discusses how they relate to previous research.

Chapter II

Background

The literature review primarily focused on themes of family, marriage, and love found in the Disney princess collection's animated feature films. It included research and academic literature related to the main films and not their sequels. News articles on the newest princess from *The Princess and the Frog* were also included to show what audience members and critics expected for the film based on knowledge of Disney's previous films and what they eventually found after watching the film. The literature review provides a contextual background for the study on the construction of family in the Disney princess collection's feature films and shows areas where research has been neglected.

Theorists have found a connection between media and children's construction of social reality. Media has specific and measurable influences on a viewer's conceptions of reality. The more time a person spends consuming media, the more their sources of information, ideas, and consciousness are related to the perceptions of reality given by media. Likewise, the more media are consumed, the more their perceptions are "mainstreamed" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980). American children spend so much time in front of the television that it takes up the majority of their social lives. Wilson (2008) found that children under the age of six spend more time watching television than playing outdoors, meaning that social experiences are no longer face-to-face. Some studies suggested that exposure to media during the first years of life can be attributed to poorer cognitive development. Children are cognitively passive when

watching television and movies because they are under the control of attention-eliciting features, such as fast movement and sound effects. A child's perception of video until age two or three is that it is a real-life event. As a result, they are unable to process content as entertainment rather than reality (Kirkorian, Wartella, & Anderson, 2008).

Norms, rules, and values are acquired through watching media, enabling children to create connections with their families, peer groups, and society. Wilson (2008) found that the media's influence on children is more dependent on content that children find attractive than it is on the amount of time they spend in front of the television set or the movie screen. Children learn empathy and the nature and causes of their different emotions from watching characters go through emotional experiences. This can also contribute to a child's fears and anxieties and result in an emotional upset. There is strong evidence that children's social development can be affected by violent programming, contributing to aggressive behavior in children (Wilson, 2008). Contrary to this finding, educational programs and situation comedies have been found to have favorable effects on children, increasing their altruism, cooperation, and tolerance of others. Furthermore, cultivation theory suggests that the more television a person watches, the more he or she will perceive the real world as being the same as what is seen on the television screen (Wilson, 2008). Children who grow up watching and re-watching Disney movies on their television screens are more likely to perceive what they are viewing as reality. Their continuous use of the television to view Disney movies creates mainstream views of reality and social situations (Wilson, 2008).

The Disney company's influence extends across many different media outlets and

countries. It is the second largest media conglomerate in the world, earning more than $22 billion annually. Disney has 50,000 employees, 32 unions, 10 collective bargaining agreements, and many diverse holdings such as Walt Disney Pictures, Touchstone Pictures, and Miramax Films. It also controls television networks such as ABC Television Network and Walt Disney Television. Disney reaches 100 million listeners each week solely on its ABC radio networks. Furthermore, it owns a variety of magazines, newspapers, stores, websites and amusements parks, including Disneyland and Disney World. Disney is not only a primary wedding market that caters to brides and grooms who want to get married in its theme parks, but it is also a secondary wedding market to future consumers by advertising to children and adults through sport franchises, publishing companies, theme parks, and films, such as those in the princess collection (Ingraham, 1999).

Disney has dominated the visual representation of fairy tale characters because of the popularity of its films. Children tend to believe the story depicted by Disney is the real story rather than the classic version of the story they may or may not have heard before (Hurley, 2005). While making the earlier films, Walt Disney did not see his audience in terms of age, but saw audience members in terms of gender and believed his audience was primarily female. A study on Disney's notes suggested that he had three major assumptions about an audience of women (Davis, 2005). The first was that women do not like physical comedy and low humor, the second stated that women will automatically enjoy soft, rounded, child-like characters because of their maternal instincts, and the third was that all women fit into the first two generalizations (Davis,

2005). These generalizations were perpetuated in the earlier films, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Sleeping Beauty,* and *Cinderella*. Best & Lowney (2009) noted that critics of Disney contended that children who watch Disney films learn to accept racism, capitalism, sexism, and traditional values without being critical. The images shown by Disney also affect children's beliefs about good, bad, pretty, and ugly (Hurley, 2005). The influence Disney has on a child's perception of reality can be beneficial or detrimental depending on how the company's power is used. Griffin (2000) explained that Disney presents family values as part of a white, middle-class, patriarchal, and heterosexual image. This limited view of the construction of the family in Disney films may have a harmful effect on the worldview and belief system of children who view the films, especially on the way they see their parents, themselves, and marriage.

The nuclear family. In their study of Disney films, Tanner, Haddock, Zimmerman, and Lund (2003) found that family relationships were a strong priority, the diversity of families was simplified, mothers were marginalized, and fathers were elevated. Disney films included two-parent, single parent, and stepparent families; however, children in families with gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender parents were not represented. Furthermore, films depicting stepfamilies were presented in an unrealistic or negative way. Stepmothers were portrayed as evil and the stepfather was depicted as good and caring. Often, fathers were given the nurturing roles in Disney films at the expense of the mother's role. Films with nurturing fathers completely left out mothers with little or no explanation, or they marginalized mothers in the story. This suggests that, when a mother is not available, a father is only required to be nurturing (Tanner et.

al, 2003).

Single parent families were a common theme in the Disney princess collection. A study by DiPirro (2007) found that only 63% of princesses had fathers and only 25% had mothers. Snow White and Cinderella were both fatherless and lacked a positive mother figure, but had competitive, evil stepmothers. Stepmothers were portrayed as evil, jealous, and hostile tormentors who offered no love to their stepdaughters. Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, and Pocahontas were all motherless characters who had love for their protective fathers. Mulan was the only princess with both a biological mother and father (DiPirro, 2007). It is also interesting to note that none of the princesses had a brother (Rozario, 2004).

Rozario (2004) argued that, in Disney films where a male power is erased or reduced, there was a presence of jealous queens and evil fairies who attempted to retain authority over the princess. The mother figures tried to keep the princess passive and obedient by repressing and victimizing her. There was a theme of femme fatale in which men were powerless as compared with women. This was most clearly seen in *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Little Mermaid* in which the fathers, both kings, were helpless in protecting their daughters and were no match for the femme fatale (Rozario, 2004). Belle, Aurora, and Snow White were all distinguished by a non-existent or bad relationship with mother figures and loyalty and affection to their father figures. Snow White's resurrection from the glass coffin she was placed in could be seen as an act of liberation or recovery from her wicked stepmother's incarceration (Craven, 2002). In *Cinderella*, the mother figure was trivialized because there was little reference to

Cinderella's good mother and her death. The fairy godmother acted as a wish-granter

who was just a means of Cinderella getting to the ball; her character was not as developed

as the evil stepmother's character. This devalued any aspect of a good mother figure and

the importance of the bond between a mother and a daughter (Panttaja, 1993). Patriarchy

was also reinforced in many of the films. Although Mulan was successful in helping to

save her country, the lesson children learned was that what matters was coming home as a

dutiful daughter (Wang, 1998). Snow White immediately started cleaning the dwarfs'

cottage upon arriving, perpetuating the role of women as men's caretakers (Ebner, 2009).

Disney's portrayal of marginalized women and elevated men within the nuclear family

eventually created the values and attitudes seen in the princesses' quests for love and a

marriage of their own.

Love. Disney films create an idea that relationships between couples are easily

maintained through "love at first sight" and are characterized by differences in gender-

based power (Tanner et al., 2003). Christensen (1996) contended that the films portray

happiness as finding a man and that a new hairstyle and clothes have the ability to save a

young woman living in undesirable conditions. DiPirro (2007) found three themes — the

instantaneousness of love, passivity of independently reaching one's destiny, and the ease

of finding love. Princesses without fathers or mothers strived to gain the love they

remember having in their lives that, in most cases, was the paternal love of their fathers.

Princesses who were motherless were encouraged by their fathers to find love and marry.

Both groups of princesses viewed love as the most important goal in life. Male

characters were often given identities outside of romance, but they were still limited

(DiPirro, 2007). Cheriton (1995) suggested that the most common story theme in Disney animated films was that, if a woman was not interested in a man, he would do something dangerous, which usually involved the death of himself or of another man. After he accomplished this, the woman would love him (Cheriton, 1995).

Princesses in earlier films had few aspirations other than finding a handsome prince (Guest, 2007). Snow White's happily-ever-after was based on physical attraction to a man she spoke to once and had seen twice. It was most likely lust, not love that Snow White and the prince felt, but Disney did not show the difference. Like Snow White, Cinderella's goal was to find a male suitor to make her dream become a reality, but jealousy also prevented her from achieving her dream of meeting Prince Charming. Aurora spent most of her time wishing for love. When she met Prince Phillip, like the other princesses before her, they were attracted to each other based on looks alone, and the conversation they had was brief and unsubstantial. Although they had only met twice, their love was labeled true. Snow White and Cinderella both felt the need to replace the void left by their absent fathers and to escape the hardships they faced after the death of their fathers. Falling in love with men they did not know filled their void (DiPirro, 2007).

In the more recent films, princesses appeared to have personal goals, such as Belle's desire to replace her father as the Beast's prisoner, but they were ultimately rewarded with romantic love (DiPirro, 2007). Craven (2002) suggested that it was Belle's usefulness as a female and not her beauty that made her valuable and attractive because only a woman could break the spell the Beast was under and she was necessary to

provide romance. In *Beauty and the Beast,* the idea conveyed about love was that before

female desire was aroused, it was captured. Belle only consented to love once she was

trapped (Craven, 2002). Ariel, Jasmine, and Pocahontas strayed from the typical roles of

princesses finding love. Rozario (2004) contended that their journey was in the opposite

direction as previous princesses before them. Instead of keeping to the tradition of an

unequal union to preserve familial and political peace, their courtships had a dual focus

where change and openness was desired (Rozario, 2004). For Jasmine, riches and grand

physical appearance were second to the true nature of a suitor, although like the other

princesses, a suitor was an escape from her reality (DiPirro, 2007).

The way that marriage was depicted in *Pocahontas* bolstered the American and

European patriarchal view of family and property. In the film, her father gave her away

to a male suitor, but Edwards (1999) found that, in reality, Powhatan women were free to

choose their own husbands. Pocahontas was constructed as a post-feminist, feminine

Native American woman who ultimately wanted the freedom to choose her heterosexual

relationship and who then used her liberated independence to give up the relationship to

serve the interests of the community (Ono & Buescher, 2001). John Smith and

Pocahontas vindicated heterosexuality through their gendered portrayals. Although

Pocahontas was seen as powerful and animalistic at times, her femininity was asserted in

her first and last meetings with Smith (Ross, 2008). Superficially, the film looked like a

story about a young Powhatan princess who used heroism, courage, and humanism to

create peace between two groups of people. However, during the story, the heroic

character was shifted to Smith. Smith was essentially the hero in the end who saved

Pocahontas' father, the Powhatan chief, from being shot. The shift made Pocahontas' act of heroism look like an act of romantic love juxtaposed to Smith's sacrifice made out of humanity. This validates the gender division of roles and the idea that men protect and women are protected (Kutsuzawa, 2000). Unlike the other princess movies, Pocahontas and Smith did not end up together. Instead, Smith returned to England and Pocahontas remained in America. Kutsuzawa (2000) stated that Disney might be indicating a new happy ending to Disney princess films showing the farewell of an interracial couple's relationship, such as between Pocahontas and Smith, because it is the safest way to keep love and respect for one another.

The newest princess, Princess Tiana, was also the first African-American princess. In the initial version of *The Princess and the Frog*, the princess was to marry a white prince who saved her from a voodoo magician, but the plot was changed so that Tiana was to live "happily ever after" with a prince of Middle Eastern descent (Banfield, 2008). Helm (2009) noted that it was a conscious decision made by Disney to create a prince of non-African American descent, but the reasoning behind this decision is yet to be determined. Some in the African-American community felt that the decision was made for economic reasons because of the idea that Black couples do not sell in Hollywood (Helm, 2009). An opinion article stated that Tiana was the only princess who had to compete for the love of the prince with a Caucasian debutante (Johnson, 2009). Johnson (2009) contended that the movie contained subtle racism because Tiana's dreams did not come true in the same way as the Caucasian princesses' dreams came true. Tiana had to work harder for things she wanted, including the love of her prince, unlike many of the

princesses before her. The love interests of the princesses as well as their beliefs on finding love were limited even though they have progressed slightly over the years.

Appearance. The theme of love at first sight presented in the films not only depicted love as instantaneous, but it also offered an unrealistic image of couples that encourages the notion that physical appearance is the most important factor when two people enter into an intimate relationship (Tanner et al., 2003). Craven (2002) suggested that viewers tended to think they had been educated about feminism as well as entertained but, in reality, the education was really about the importance of beauty. The feminine beauty ideal, or the socially constructed idea that physical attractiveness is among the most important assets a woman has, is represented in many fairy tales. Disney films that retell popular fairy tales often strayed from the original story in ingenuity, activity, and independence, but not in physical attractiveness (Baker-Sperry & Grauerholz, 2003). Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) found that young women, as opposed to men and older women, were more often described as fair, pretty, or beautiful. They also determined that beauty was more often connected with being economically privileged, virtuous, and white. The tradition of transformation reinforced the idea of attaining power through appearance (Healy, 2004). Smith (1999) suggested that, in most fairy tales, a woman was pretty and helpless and that the prince usually wanted to marry the princess because she was beautiful and not because of other qualities. There was also an expectation that the prince must be young, handsome, and rich as well as unspoiled and unselfish (Cheriton, 1995).

In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* emphasis was placed on the importance of

beauty. Characters were either desperate to be beautiful or in danger because of their beauty. Female characters were the most affected. Snow White's wicked stepmother attempted to have her killed so that she would be the prettiest woman and, through this action, Snow White learned that her appearance was vital to attract others (DiPirro, 2007).

Disney film versions of the fairy tales used binary color symbolism to show that white was good and black was evil. The princesses and princes were mainly white and their whiteness was exaggerated, resulting in an ideology of white superiority. In *Cinderella*, the princess was visibly whiter than her evil stepsisters and mother. Her fairy godmother had white hair and she turned low-status, brown mice into white human beings and animals. In *Sleeping Beauty*, Aurora was blonde-haired and blue-eyed, the highest standard of beauty and grace. Color symbolism was also used in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to attribute white with goodness. The whiteness of Snow White's skin as well as the whiteness of the seven dwarf's furnishings were symbolic markers of good and beauty (Hurley, 2005). Harper (1989) contended that children are taught that beauty and goodness are only found in the fairest of them all. Although Snow White's skin was supposed to be as white as snow, Disney used a hue that looked Caucasian, not like snow (Harper, 1989). Robinson, Callister, Magoffin, and Moore (2006) found that the majority of older characters in Disney films were male and Caucasian and suggested that younger viewers could see the lack of racial diversity in the older age group as a representation of real life. In *Beauty and the Beast*, Gaston instigated a mob to kill the brown beast who had won the affections of Belle. At the end of the film, white triumphed over black. The

Beast became a blue-eyed, white prince and all of the black statues in the castle turned white. All seven of the Mermaid princesses in *The Little Mermaid* were white. Sebastian, the crab, was the only major character of color in the film and, from his accent and behavior, he was clearly Caribbean (Hurley, 2005). He served as King Triton's trusted servant and was a nanny figure to the princesses.

Pocahontas included a male suitor who was the ideal Caucasian male beauty with blonde hair, blue eyes, and a masculine body. The story tells the audience that only in a white man's fantasy of a woman of color can the woman be a heroine and have a romance with a white hero (Kutsuzawa, 2000). Even before *Pocahontas* debuted, there was a fear, based on previous representations of people of color in Disney films, that Native Americans would be given stereotypical features and characteristics, such as a bulbous nose, loin clothes worn by overweight Indians, and war whooping with tomahawks. Many of these stereotypes eventually did appear in the film (Tomas, 1995). When people of color are misrepresented or eliminated all together from visual media, children of color receive a message that they are unimportant (Hurley, 2005).

Disney was responsible for creating some of the most offensive stereotypes of African Americans (Thomas, 2007). During the production of *The Princess and the Frog*, changes had to be made because of complaints of racial insensitivity. In a newspaper review, critics of the film stated that people were led to believe black-on-black love did not exist in Walt Disney's world because the prince in the movie was of another ethnicity ("Anger Growing," 2009). Parents were hoping that the movie would bring more cultural diversity to films for children (White, 2007). Until 1992, Disney feature

films have only included white princesses. It was not until 54 years after the release of the first film that Princess Jasmine, who is of Middle Eastern descent, became the first non-white princess (McGregor, 2007). Currently, five of the nine princesses are Caucasian (Thomas, 2007). Tucker (2009) noted that the message that Tiana can be as elegant as Snow White was a milestone in Disney's imagery. Tiana may become a new symbol of the changing standard of feminine beauty (Tucker, 2009). A newspaper article contended that she signified the acceptance of black beauty, but also stated that critics raised concern about Tiana spending most of her screen time as a frog and not a human, which was unlike any other princess (Daly, 2009).

Sexuality played a major role in the identity of the female in the Disney princess collection's feature films. Belle's sexual identity was secured by her wardrobe. Her costumes, typical of a Disney heroine, were worn like uniforms. Her feminine sexuality and beauty were defined by large eyes, raised eyebrows, a demure shape, and fineness juxtaposed to Beast's large, excessive body. She wore a luscious, sexualized cape and a ball gown as she seemed to portray the semi-ritualized, sexual debutante (Craven, 2002). The sexuality of the princesses was also seen as an inhibitor to their freedom. Ortaga (1998) made the comparison between Mulan cross-dressing and women characters in the history of feature films who have dressed as men, stating that the purpose was to achieve something that was impossible to do as a woman. DiPirro (2007) contended that Asian women might learn that their beauty must come from their internal strength rather than from their physical appearance because Mulan was made less attractive. Pocahontas was created using aesthetically pleasing features from four different ethnicities – American

Indian, African-American, Asian American, and Caucasian (Edwards, 1999). She had an

Asian face, dark skin, long, straight hair, and a Caucasian body type. These features

presented the ideal exotic beauty as determined by Western males as well as bolstered the

western standard of beauty (Kutsuzawa, 2000). Tomas (1995) found that some Native

Americans criticized Pocahontas' clothing, saying that the dress was too short and it did

not fully represent the clothing worn by the Powhatan people. Pocahontas' body was a

racialized and eroticized native sexual object for Smith (Edwards, 1999), who only

listened to her because of his instant attraction to her (Kutsuzawa, 2000). The portrayal

of females as sexual objects in the Disney princess collection's feature films does not

offer much more than a stereotypical view of women and their abilities to find love from

outer beauty.

The concepts determined from the academic literature have provided a context

and framework for the research. Themes were identified on the makeup of the nuclear

family, which included the lack of diversity, the perpetuated gender roles of mother and

father figures, and the stereotyping of non-biological parents. Research on the role of

love in the films has also shown themes of the ease of finding love, passivity of

independently reaching one's destiny, and the instantaneousness of love. Finally, the

academic studies reviewed themes of the importance of appearance of the princesses,

including the emphasis on the need to be beautiful, white, and sexual objects to find a

suitor. These findings have shown that there is a problem with the representation of the

construction of the family in the Disney princess collection of animated feature films.

Although research has identified these problems in individual studies, it has yet to be

connected in one study on the construction of the family.

This study's design drew from studies by Tanner et al. (2003) and DiPirro (2007) since their research covered couples and families, and character appearance, respectively. The study was designed to fill a gap in the research by taking the themes of previous studies of individual princess films and applying them to the newly updated Disney princess collection as a whole.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What types of families are represented?

2. How are siblings presented?

3. How are biological parents characterized?

4. How are non-biological parents characterized?

5. What are the characteristics most desired in a significant other?

6. How is a family life attained?

Chapter III

Method

This study utilized qualitative and quantitative analysis to examine nine Disney films – *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, Pocahontas, Mulan,* and *The Princess and the Frog.* Disney animated movies were excluded from the study if they were not original films and if they were sequels to original films in the Disney princess collection. The data represented the population of Disney princess animated films that were original versions of films within the official Disney princess collection. The analytical framework provided the context for the study on the Disney films chosen. Previous research found some individual themes within the Disney films, but have yet to utilize content analysis to examine the entire Disney princess collection to determine the construction of a Disney family.

Snow White and *The Little Mermaid* were both 83 minutes long. *Sleeping Beauty* was 75 minutes, *Cinderella* was 74 minutes, *Beauty and the Beast* was 84 minutes, *Aladdin* was 90 minutes, *Pocahontas* was 81 minutes, *Mulan* was 88 minutes, and *The Princess and the Frog* was 97 minutes.

The researcher did a systematic qualitative analysis of each of the six themes and five subthemes identified in previous Disney princess research. The analysis was done to determine: (1) whether the themes and subthemes were actually present and (2) how they were presented. The themes the researcher included were: (1) family relationships are a strong priority, (2) patriarchy, (3) control of the princesses, (4) princesses rewarded with

romantic love, (5) men protect and women are protected, and (6) false sense of security and independence. The second theme contained subthemes that included: (1) lack of a positive mother figure, (2) elevation of fathers, and (3) jealous mothers or queens when a father figure is reduced or not present. The third theme contained subthemes that included: (1) feminine beauty ideal and (2) isolation.

Each movie was viewed three times to determine what themes were present. The first time the researcher took extensive notes on themes relating to the princesses. The second time extensive notes were taken on themes on the suitors and the third time notes were taken on themes dealing with parents.

The quantitative content analysis was conducted to determine the portrayal of family type, representation of siblings, characterization of parents and suitors, and the desire for a future family. The quantitative coding categories and their definitions are in the Appendix. For many questions, Likert-type scales in which the values ranged from 1-5 were constructed. However, for some questions, the sample size was too small for the scales to be used in statistical tests. To answer the first question, family type was categorized for each film into groups. Variables included the presence of parents and stepparents, interracial parents, same sex parents, two biological parents, only father, only mother, only stepmother, and only stepfather. This determined the types of families that were most and least represented. To answer the second question, siblings for each film were coded for number present, gender, and their relationship to the princess, either biological or step-sibling. A system similar to Likert scales was constructed, but since the sample size was too small for analysis of some data, it was analyzed qualitatively. The

number of seconds siblings appeared in the films was recorded and used to determine

whether the siblings were undesiring or desiring of the princess's life, unkind or kind

toward the princess, and noncompetitive or competitive with the princess. To answer the

third and fourth questions, coding was used for references to character description, which

included references to appearance and personality in categories based on role in the

family. Variables for appearance included dark or light clothing and whether the parent

had a menacing (sharp features) or comforting (soft features) facial structure. Characters

with sharp features were determined as having a face shape and features that were more

angular, and characters with soft features were determined as having a face shape and

features that were more rounded. Seconds were recorded to determine whether the

parents were considered negative or positive, unnurturing or nurturing, and unprotective

or protective. Families with two biological parents were coded as a set. This showed

how women and men were represented in their role in the family as biological or non-

biological parents.

To answer the fifth question, references to physical appearance based on gender

were coded. The variables for suitors were ethnicities, age group, economic status,

whether the suitor was physically fit or unfit, demonstration or non-demonstration of

physical strength, and eye and hair color. The variables for age group were teenager

(ages 14-17), young adult (ages 18-25), and adult (ages 25 and up). The variables for

economic status included categories for upper class, middle class, and lower class. The

variables for princesses included coding for revealing or non-revealing clothing,

ethnicities, economic status, age group, whether the princess was physically fit or unfit,

and eye and hair color. Variables for age group and economic status were the same ones used to code for the suitors. Seconds were recorded for both the princesses and suitors to determine whether they were helpless or independent and whether they were diffident or confident. The study also noted how many times both genders had a positive reference to their appearance. Variables included the following words – beautiful, pretty, fairest, lovely, gorgeous, dreamy, cute, handsome, and strapping. This part of the study was aimed at determining whether there were more references to a woman's physical appearance or to a man's physical appearance as well as determining whether certain words were used more often than others.

To answer the sixth question, references to rescue and romanticization were coded. Variables for references to rescue included how many times the suitor saved the princess from physical harm and whether the suitor saved the princess from an undesirable life. References to rescue also determined how many times the princess saved the suitor from physical harm. Variables for references to romanticization included whether or not family approval was needed, whether love at first sight occurred, whether finding and maintaining love was easy or hard, and whether the goal of the princess and the suitor was love. Trends were also examined among the nine films to determine whether there was less, more, or the same amount of stereotyping of appearance, rescue, and romanticization exhibited and whether there was less, more, or the same biased parenting roles and family diversity during the 72-year-period of films. Earlier films included *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid,* and *Beauty and the Beast*, and newer films included *Aladdin, Pocahontas,*

Mulan, and *The Princess and the Frog.* The major distinction this study used between an early film and a recent film was the inclusion of non-Caucasian princesses. Movies with Caucasian princesses were considered early films and movies with non-Caucasian princesses were placed in the newer films category. Two-tailed t-tests were used to test whether there were differences between biological and non-biological parents, Caucasian and non-Caucasian princesses, and Caucasian and non-Caucasian suitors. In some cases, n's were too low for statistical analysis.

Scott's pi was used to determine intercoder reliability. The researcher and a second coder independently watched and coded a randomly selected sample of 10% of each movie. The formula $k = [Pr(a) - Pr(e)] / [1-Pr(e)]$ was used to determine intercoder reliability. Pr(a) was the observed agreement and Pr(e) was the expected agreement. The intercoder reliability for the coding of the variables ranged from 76% to 100%. For sibling characterization, seconds devoted to being undesiring versus desiring and unkind versus kind both had 98% intercoder reliability. Seconds devoted to siblings being noncompetitive versus competitive had 86% reliability. For biological parent characterization, seconds devoted to being negative versus positive had 76% reliability, seconds devoted to being unnurturing versus nurturing had 90% reliability, and seconds devoted to being unprotective versus protective had 80% reliability. For non-biological parent characterization, seconds devoted to being negative versus positive had 80% reliability, seconds devoted to being unnurturing versus nurturing had 85% reliability, and seconds devoted to being unprotective versus protective had 92% reliability. There was 93% intercoder reliability for the princesses' characterization of seconds devoted to being

dependent versus independent and 83% reliability of seconds devoted to being diffident

versus confident. There was 98% intercoder reliability for both the suitors'

characterization of seconds devoted to being dependent versus independent and seconds

devoted to being diffident versus confident. All other variables had 100% intercoder

reliability. See the Appendix for an explanation of the variables and their respective

intercoder reliability tests.

Chapter IV

Results

  Qualitative analysis. The first theme, family relationships are a strong priority, was found to be present in six of the nine movies. The only movies that did not show that family relationships were a strong priority were *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, The Little Mermaid, and Aladdin.* Snow White ran away from her stepmother and was not intent on fixing the relationship with her. The only interaction seen between Snow White and her stepmother was when her stepmother was disguised as an old woman. Both princesses in *The Little Mermaid* and *Aladdin* did not make family relationships a strong priority because their fathers disapproved of their suitors at some point. The princesses disregarded their family relationships to be with their suitors. In the six movies where the theme was present, princesses protected their families or took into account the feelings of family members about their goals or suitors. Both princesses in *Beauty and the Beast* and *Mulan* voluntarily took the place of their fathers when their fathers were faced with physical harm. Even Cinderella wanted to maintain a strong family relationship with her stepmother and stepsisters. She happily cooked and cleaned for them even though they treated her as a servant of the house. Although Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* did not know her parents until she was sixteen, she followed their orders even though she was unhappy with their rules. She did not attempt to ruin the relationship with her family by disobeying them. The princesses in *Pocahontas* and *The Princess and the Frog* both had strong relationships with their fathers. In the end, they stuck with what their fathers had taught them and reached goals their fathers had set for them.

The second theme, patriarchy, was also found to be present. The men were the decision-makers and rulers of the house. In *Princess and the Frog*, Tiana did everything for her deceased father; her mother received no credit and was not seen as a strong authority figure in Tiana's life. The biological fathers were not just the leaders of the household, but they were also leaders of society. The fathers in *Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, and Aladdin* were all kings. Pocahontas's father was the chief of his tribe. The princesses in *Beauty and the Beast, Mulan,* and *Princess and the Frog* all strived to achieve approval of their fathers and looked up to them as strong, important men. Two movies included mothers who were nurturing or supportive of their daughters. However, in these movies, mothers acted as bystanders to their husbands and were not treated as model figures for their daughters. Two movies, *Cinderella* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, depicted stepmothers as negative, evil, competitive, or jealous of their stepdaughters. In both these movies fathers were not present. Stepmothers were never exhibited showing or giving love to the princesses. Cinderella's stepmother gave her biological daughters unconditional love and Snow White's stepmother was seen nurturing her black bird. They did not, however, give the same love to the princesses.

The third theme, control of the princesses, was present in the films. The importance of appearance and the feminine beauty ideal was a major theme. A princess's worth was placed on appearance rather than on talent or character. This meant that the appearance of the princesses controlled their ability to get what they wanted. Ariel had to change her body and give up her strongest talent to get the man she wanted. Appearance was the only thing necessary in the movies where love at first sight occurred. The suitors

were not interested in learning about who the princess was as a person when love at first sight was involved. The princesses were also isolated from society in some way. Snow White and Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* had to leave society to stay alive. Cinderella's stepmother orders her not to leave her own house. Similarly, Ariel and Jasmine were given boundaries on where they could go and with whom they could interact. Belle and Pocahontas were both isolated from society through their different views and ways of life. Mulan faced isolation because she was female in a male-dominated society, and Tiana chose to separate herself from friends to turn her dreams into reality. In addition, she was forcefully isolated when she was turned into a frog. In many of the films, princesses were subject to the rules and restrictions their parents placed on them. In *Mulan*, she was not only held back by her parents' rules, but also the rules of her society. Tiana was the only princess who displayed a different kind of control placed on her by her economic status. She could not reach her goals because she did not have enough money.

The fourth theme, princesses rewarded with romantic love, was also found to be present. In all nine movies, the princesses were able to obtain suitors and have romance. The only princess who was not able to stay with her suitor was Pocahontas. All other princesses were able to maintain their relationships. In the nine movies, princesses faced hardships to be with their suitors, but were ultimately rewarded with love. Four of the princesses, Snow White, Aurora, Pocahontas, and Mulan were not able to be with their suitors because the possibility of their own death hindered them. Other princesses had to overcome family rules or rules they placed on themselves, but always found love.

The fifth theme, men protect and women are protected, was only partially present in the movies. Although men did protect women, women also protected men. The princesses' heroism, however, went more unnoticed than the suitors' heroism. When it was noticed, the princesses were shown saving their suitors for selfish reasons — to keep the ones they loved and had been waiting for or to help them get out of a danger. Even when Mulan saved her suitor, she was punished and was seen as shameful for lying about her sex. Suitors who saved princesses did so in more exaggerated ways. The suitors in *Sleeping Beauty, Aladdin,* and *The Little Mermaid* saved the princesses from an ultimate death by physically fighting off evil witches and sorcerers who were more powerful than the suitors were. Princesses were not faced with these types of challenges, but saved suitors from less threatening situations in which they did not have to worry about combating people more powerful than themselves.

The sixth theme, false sense of security and independence, was also found to be present. A false sense of security was found in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, Aladdin,* and *Beauty and the Beast*. The princesses in these movies all had an illogical sense that their lives were not in danger or that they would not face hardship. In one instance, Ariel said that "nothing is going to happen," right before a shark tried to attack her. The princesses also had a false sense of independence. They believed themselves to be independently living their lives, but in reality, needed help from other humans or even animals. All of the princesses enlisted help from animals and significant others, some needing more help than others. Other characters, mainly female, were also asked for assistance. Snow White relied on the

seven dwarves, Cinderella on her fairy godmother, Aurora on the three good fairies, Ariel on Ursula, Belle on the castle's servants, Jasmine on her father, Pocahontas on Grandmother Willow, Mulan on her ancestors, and Tiana on Mama Odie, the voodoo queen. Suitors, like the princesses, needed help from other characters. The prince in *Cinderella* needed help from the Duke in finding Cinderella, and the prince in *Sleeping Beauty* required help from the good fairies in defeating the evil stepmother. The Beast from *Beauty and the Beast* and Shang from *Mulan* both needed help from their significant others and from servants and an army of men, respectively. Prince Naveen required the most help from animals, Dr. Facilier, the voodoo witchdoctor, the princess of the Mardi Gras Parade, and Mama Odie, the voodoo queen.

Quantitative analysis.

Types of families. The first research question asks, "What type of families are represented?" Table 1 shows that seven of the nine princesses were raised in a single parent household for all or a majority or their lives. The majority of princesses (44%) had only a biological father present. The film, *Cinderella*, was coded for a biological parent and stepparent present; however, it should be noted that Cinderella's biological father was only present for 4 seconds of the movie. Similarly, *The Princess and the Frog* was coded for two biological parents present even though Princess Tiana's father was only present for the first few scenes of the movie. Four types of families were represented in the nine Disney films. Categories of families found were parent and stepparent present, two biological parents present, only biological father present, and only stepmother present. Table 1 also indicates that families having only a biological mother,

only a stepfather, interracial parents, and same sex parents were not found in the nine

movies.

Table 1

Types of Families Represented

Movie	Themes
Snow White	Only stepmother present
Cinderella	Biological father and stepmother present
Sleeping Beauty	Two biological parents present
The Little Mermaid	Only biological father present
Beauty and the Beast	Only biological father present
Aladdin	Only biological father present
Pocahontas	Only biological father present
Mulan	Two biological parents present
Princess and the Frog	Two biological parents present

Siblings. The second research question asks, "How are siblings presented?" In

the movies containing siblings, there was a theme of unconditional love. Siblings who

had biological mothers or fathers received unconditional love, but siblings who were non-

biological received only conditional love. Only two of the princesses, Ariel from *The*

Little Mermaid and Cinderella, had siblings. Ariel had six biological sisters, but they

only appeared in the movie for three short scenes. Cinderella had two stepsisters and the

other princesses had no siblings. None of the princesses had a brother, either biological

or a stepbrother.

Table 2 shows siblings, for the most part, acted as if they were neither undesiring nor desiring of the princess' life. In Cinderella, the stepsisters did act very desiring, but only for the 48 seconds that they appeared in the movie. As Table 2 shows, this was very little compared to the amount of time they were neither undesiring nor desiring of Cinderella's life.

Table 2

Sibling Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Undesiring vs. Desiring

Movie	Very Undesiring	Undesiring	Neither Undesiring nor Desiring	Desiring	Very Desiring
Cinderella	8	0	342	0	48
The Little Mermaid	0	0	53	4	0

Table 3 shows that, in scenes where Cinderella interacted with her stepsisters, they were equally very unkind or unkind (199 seconds) or neither unkind nor kind to the princess (199 seconds). There were no scenes in which they were kind or very kind. In *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel's sisters did not have much interaction with her, but were not shown speaking unkindly about her. Cinderella's stepsisters, on the other hand, treated her as a slave. She was forced to make their breakfast, do their laundry, and mend their clothes. The stepsisters never felt badly about treating their sister unkindly.

Table 3

Sibling Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Unkind vs. Kind

Movie	Very Unkind	Unkind	Neither Unkind nor Kind	Kind	Very Kind
Cinderella	125	74	199	0	0
The Little Mermaid	0	0	22	33	2

Table 4 shows that both biological and stepsisters were, for the most part, neither non-competitive nor competitive. However *Cinderella*'s stepsisters did act very competitive for 105 seconds. No time was recorded for Cinderella's stepsisters acting very noncompetitive or noncompetitive. Ariel's sisters were supportive of her singing debut, rather than trying to take her spotlight. Statistical tests could not be run to compare sibling characterization because the sample size was too small across the Likert scales.

Table 4

Sibling Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Noncompetitive vs. Competitive

Movie	Very Non-competitive	Non-competitive	Neither Non-competitive nor Competitive	Competitive	Very Competitive
Cinderella	0	0	293	0	105
The Little Mermaid	0	10	47	0	0

Biological parents. The third research question asks, "How are biological parents characterized?" Table 5 shows seven fathers and three mothers that were in the Disney movies. More father-daughter relationships were portrayed than mother-daughter relationships. Ninety-one percent of biological parents had light clothing and 82% had comforting, soft features. The two characters with menacing, sharp features were both biological fathers. One of these two fathers had dark clothing as well. The two fathers with menacing features were both men in positions of power. The father in *Sleeping Beauty* was a king, and the father in *Mulan* was a highly respected warrior.

Table 5

Biological Parent Appearance

Movie	Character	Clothing	Facial Structure
Cinderella	Father	Light	Soft features
Sleeping Beauty	Mother	Light	Soft features
	Father	Dark	Sharp features
The Little Mermaid	Father	Light	Soft features
Beauty and the Beast	Father	Light	Soft features
Aladdin	Father	Light	Soft features
Pocahontas	Father	Light	Soft features
Mulan	Mother	Light	Soft features
	Father	Light	Sharp features
Princess and the Frog	Mother	Light	Soft features
	Father	Light	Soft features

Table 6 provides evidence that biological parents were mainly positive or very positive. When biological parents were very negative or negative, they were shown reprimanding their daughters for not following rules. In *Beauty and the Beast*, Belle's father was negative when he displayed diffidence in himself. Table 7 shows that biological parents were, for the most part, neither nurturing nor unnurturing. However, at times they were nurturing or very nurturing. Table 8 indicates that biological parents

were never very unprotective or unprotective. Instead, they were shown being neither

protective nor unprotective.

Table 6

Biological Parent Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Negative vs. Positive

Movie	Very Negative	Negative	Neither Negative nor Positive	Positive	Very Positive
Cinderella	0	0	0	4	0
Sleeping Beauty	0	18	156	190	0
The Little Mermaid	91	101	47	122	35
Beauty and the Beast	0	16	302	49	161
Aladdin	0	22	240	59	237
Pocahontas	19	20	182	131	116
Mulan	8	67	200	92	94
Princess and the Frog	0	0	80	86	191

Table 7

Biological Parent Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Unnurturing vs. Nurturing

Movie	Very Unnurturing	Unnurturing	Neither Unnurturing nor Nurturing	Nurturing	Very Nurturing
Cinderella	0	0	4	0	0
Sleeping Beauty	0	0	291	30	43
The Little Mermaid	67	36	271	2	20
Beauty and the Beast	0	0	402	56	70
Aladdin	0	0	417	78	63
Pocahontas	0	12	348	3	105
Mulan	17	0	259	75	110
Princess and the Frog	0	0	36	104	217

Table 8

Biological Parent Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Unprotective vs. Protective

Movie	Very Unprotective	Unprotective	Neither Unprotective nor Protective	Protective	Very Protective
Cinderella	0	0	0	4	0
Sleeping Beauty	0	0	235	79	50
The Little Mermaid	0	0	187	21	188
Beauty and the Beast	0	0	340	58	130
Aladdin	0	0	377	53	128
Pocahontas	0	0	210	33	225
Mulan	0	0	200	80	181
Princess and the Frog	0	0	179	157	21

Non-biological parents. The fourth research question asks, "How are non-biological parents characterized?" The study found that 100% of non-biological parents, both of whom were stepmothers, wore dark clothing and had menacing, sharp features.

Table 9 shows that Snow White's stepmother was mainly very negative. Table 10 indicates that she was very unnurturing and Table 11 provides evidence that she was very unprotective of Snow White. Cinderella's stepmother, for the most part, was found to be

neither negative nor positive, neither unnurturing nor nurturing, and neither unprotective nor protective. However, at times, Cinderella's stepmother was found to be very negative, very unnurturing, and very unprotective. The data showed that there were no instances in which the non-biological parents were positive, nurturing, or protective. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Snow White's stepmother ordered her to be killed and have her heart brought back in a box. When this plan failed she took it upon herself to poison Snow White with "The Sleeping Death." In *Cinderella*, the stepmother abused, humiliated, and forced Cinderella to become a servant in her own house. Both stepmothers acted in this manner because they were jealous of their stepdaughter's beauty. Statistical tests could not be run because the sample size was too small.

Table 9

Non-biological Parent Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Negative vs. Positive

Movie	Very Negative	Negative	Neither Negative nor Positive	Positive	Very Positive
Snow White	552	13	152	0	0
Cinderella	164	49	212	0	0

Table 10

Non-biological Parent Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Unnurturing vs. Nurturing

Movie	Very Unnurturing	Unnurturing	Neither Unnurturing nor Nurturing	Nurturing	Very Nurturing
Snow White	564	0	153	0	0
Cinderella	158	35	232	0	0

Table 11

Non-biological Parent Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Unprotective vs. Protective

Movie	Very Unprotective	Unprotective	Neither Unprotective nor Protective	Protective	Very Protective
Snow White	564	0	153	0	0
Cinderella	81	0	344	0	0

Two-tailed t-tests were used to determine whether there was a difference between the characterization of biological and non-biological parents. Two characteristics were used — negative and unnurturing. The means for characteristics are shown in Table 12 and the results of the two-tailed t-test are shown in Table 13. Table 13 shows that there was a significant difference in the amount of time biological and non-biological parents were negative ($p = .004$) and unnurturing ($p = .002$).

Table 12

Means for Seconds Devoted to Characteristics of Biological and Non-biological Parents

Characteristic	Biological			Non-biological		
	M	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Negative	45	64	8	389	249	2
Unnurturing	17	36	8	379	262	2

Table 13

Two-Tailed t-Test for Seconds Devoted to Characteristics of Biological and Non-biological Parents

Characteristic	*df*	*t*	*p*
Negative	8.0	-4.085	.004
Unnurturing	8.0	-4.647	.002

Appearance and characterization of princesses. The fifth research question asks, "What are the characteristics most desired in a significant other?" Table 14 shows that all had a fit body type and were young, 67% had non-revealing clothing, and 56% were upper class and Caucasian. The majority of princesses (67%) had brown eyes and black hair (56%). None of the princesses had green eyes. Table 15 indicates that all of the princesses were Caucasian until the sixth princess broke the trend in the film, *Aladdin*.

Table 14

Princesses' Appearance and Status

Movie	Body Type	Clothing	Economic Status	Age	Eye Color	Hair Color
Snow White	Fit	Non-revealing	Upper class	Teenager	Brown	Black
Cinderella	Fit	Non-revealing	Lower class	Teenager	Blue	Blonde
Sleeping Beauty	Fit	Non-revealing	Upper class	Teenager	Blue	Blonde
The Little Mermaid	Fit	Revealing	Upper class	Teenager	Blue	Red
Beauty and the Beast	Fit	Non-revealing	Lower class	Young adult	Brown	Brunette
Aladdin	Fit	Revealing	Upper class	Teenager	Brown	Black
Pocahontas	Fit	Revealing	Upper class	Young adult	Brown	Black
Mulan	Fit	Non-revealing	Middle class	Teenager	Brown	Black
Princess and the Frog	Fit	Non-revealing	Lower class	Young adult	Brown	Black

Table 15

Princesses' Ethnicity

Movie	Ethnicity
Snow White	Caucasian
Cinderella	Caucasian
Sleeping Beauty	Caucasian
The Little Mermaid	Caucasian
Beauty and the Beast	Caucasian
Aladdin	Middle Eastern
Pocahontas	Native American
Mulan	Chinese
Princess and the Frog	African American

Table 16 shows the extent to which the princesses were dependent. The table shows that the more recent princesses are the most independent. The last princess, Princess Tiana, was the most independent, with almost 18 minutes of the film devoted to scenes where she is depicted as showing her independence. In the beginning of the film, Tiana showed her independence when she opened up her dresser drawer to reveal all the money she had been saving on her own to open a restaurant. Princess Tiana was the only princess who had more seconds being very independent. In contrast, 15 minutes of the first Disney movie show Snow White in scenes where she is dependent. In one instance, Snow White enlists the help of animals in the forest to find her a place to stay. Table 17

gives evidence that, in general, the princesses were neither diffident nor confident. However, when characteristics of being diffident or confident were exhibited, most princesses were confident in themselves or in reaching their goals.

Table 16

Princesses' Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Dependent vs. Independent

Movie	Very Dependent	Dependent	Neither Dependent nor Independent	Independent	Very Independent
Snow White	408	516	639	57	0
Cinderella	228	427	637	58	0
Sleeping Beauty	185	69	771	0	0
The Little Mermaid	148	442	1211	86	38
Beauty and the Beast	176	305	746	482	130
Aladdin	349	62	475	117	128
Pocahontas	28	175	844	501	163
Mulan	65	481	1229	195	121
Princess and the Frog	68	440	1575	524	548

Table 17

Princesses' Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Diffident vs. Confident

Movie	Very Diffident	Diffident	Neither Diffident nor Confident	Confident	Very Confident
Snow White	125	132	809	267	287
Cinderella	61	103	909	242	35
Sleeping Beauty	50	0	803	151	21
The Little Mermaid	10	76	1409	359	71
Beauty and the Beast	138	267	927	383	124
Aladdin	87	105	706	51	182
Pocahontas	20	257	719	589	126
Mulan	167	332	1216	305	71
Princess and the Frog	154	330	1468	654	549

Two-tailed t-tests were used to determine whether there was a difference between the characterization of Caucasian and non-Caucasian princesses. Four groups were used — diffident, confident, dependent, and independent. The first groups comparing seconds the princesses were diffident and confident were not statistically significant, $t(6.348) = -1.714$, $p = .135$ and $t(3.644) = -1.073$, $p = .349$, respectively. The last groups comparing seconds the princesses were dependent and independent were also not statistically

significant, $t(6.729) = 1.224$, $p = .262$ and $t(5.010) = -1.835$, $p = .126$, respectively. Two-tailed t-tests could not be conducted to determine whether there were differences between the newest princess, Tiana, and the other princesses because the sample size was too small.

Appearance and characterization of suitors. Overall, there were more Caucasian suitors than Caucasian princesses. Furthermore, the age range of suitors was split almost evenly between teenagers and young adults. Young adults, however, appeared more often in recent films. Table 18 shows that suitors were fit (100%), demonstrated their physical strength (89%), and were upper class (78%). Table 19 indicates that the majority of suitors were Caucasian (67%). Like the princesses, all the suitors were Caucasian until the sixth suitor broke the trend in the film, *Aladdin*. The suitors mainly had brown eyes (67%) and either brown (45%) or black hair (45%). None of the suitors had green eyes or red hair.

Table 18

Suitors' Appearance and Status

Movie	Body Type	Physical Strength	Economic Status	Age	Eye Color	Hair Color
Snow White	Fit	Demonstrated	Upper class	Teenager	Brown	Brunette
Cinderella	Fit	Undemonstrated	Upper class	Teenager	Brown	Black
Sleeping Beauty	Fit	Demonstrated	Upper class	Young adult	Brown	Brunette
The Little Mermaid	Fit	Demonstrated	Upper class	Teenager	Blue	Black
Beauty and the Beast	Fit	Demonstrated	Upper class	Young adult	Blue	Brunette
Aladdin	Fit	Demonstrated	Lower class	Teenager	Brown	Black
Pocahontas	Fit	Demonstrated	Middle class	Young adult	Blue	Blonde
Mulan	Fit	Demonstrated	Upper class	Young adult	Brown	Black
Princess and the Frog	Fit	Demonstrated	Upper class	Young adult	Brown	Brunette

Table 19

Suitors' Ethnicity

Movie	Ethnicity
Snow White	Caucasian
Cinderella	Caucasian
Sleeping Beauty	Caucasian
The Little Mermaid	Caucasian
Beauty and the Beast	Caucasian
Aladdin	Middle Eastern
Pocahontas	Caucasian
Mulan	Chinese
Princess and the Frog	Unknown

Table 20 shows that suitors were neither independent nor dependent. However, when characteristics of being dependent or independent were exhibited, six of the nine suitors were independent or very independent. Suitors who lacked good looks or high economic status, such as in *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*, were shown to be more dependent. Table 21 indicates that, in general, suitors were neither confident nor diffident in themselves or in reaching their goals. However, when characteristics of being diffident or confident were exhibited, most suitors were very confident. The only suitors who were more diffident than confident were found in *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*. The suitor in Cinderella exhibited diffidence when he was not sure whether he would be

able to find Cinderella. The suitor in *Beauty and the Beast* showed diffidence that

stemmed from his unfavorable appearance.

Table 20

Suitors' Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Dependent vs. Independent

Movie	Very Dependent	Dependent	Neither Dependent nor Independent	Independent	Very Independent
Snow White	0	0	85	157	0
Cinderella	0	0	176	0	9
Sleeping Beauty	112	12	261	86	179
The Little Mermaid	21	49	545	75	59
Beauty and the Beast	225	186	529	129	84
Aladdin	611	367	837	176	242
Pocahontas	242	127	649	86	242
Mulan	151	69	417	126	165
Princess and the Frog	249	464	657	400	196

Table 21

Suitors' Characterization: Seconds Devoted to Being Diffident vs. Confident

Movie	Very Diffident	Diffident	Neither Diffident nor Confident	Confident	Very Confident
Snow White	0	0	23	52	167
Cinderella	0	26	150	0	9
Sleeping Beauty	0	33	224	176	217
The Little Mermaid	37	57	527	62	66
Beauty and the Beast	103	172	690	115	73
Aladdin	191	309	916	388	429
Pocahontas	43	197	715	245	146
Mulan	0	99	436	135	258
Princess and the Frog	95	118	559	611	583

Two-tailed t-tests were used to determine whether there was a difference between the characterization of Caucasian and non-Caucasian suitors. Four groups were used — diffident, confident, dependent, and independent. The first groups comparing seconds the suitors were diffident and confident were not statistically significant, $t(2.675) = -1.239$, $p = .313$ and $t(2.287) = -2.423$, $p = .121$, respectively. The last groups comparing seconds

the suitors were dependent and independent were also not statistically significant, $t(2.465) = -2.026$, $p = .155$ and $t(3.109) = -2.520$, $p = .083$, respectively. Two-tailed t-tests could not be conducted to determine whether there were differences between the newest suitor, Naveen, and the other suitors because the sample size was too small.

Two-tailed t-tests were also used to determine whether there was a difference between the characterization of princesses and suitors. Four groups were used — diffident, confident, dependent, and independent. The first groups comparing seconds the suitors and princesses were diffident and confident were not statistically significant, $t(15.990) = 1.356$, $p = .194$ and $t(15.572) = .503$, $p = .622$, respectively. The last groups comparing seconds the suitors and princesses were dependent and independent were also not statistically significant, $t(13.571) = 1.403$, $p = .183$ and $t(11.419) = .614$, $p = .551$, respectively.

Importance of appearance. Table 22 shows that, surprisingly, only 40 positive references toward appearance were made in total about females and only 12 were made about males in the hours of the nine movies. The majority of references to appearance (77%) were made about females. References to appearance began to diminish in the first movie containing a non-Caucasian princess, *Aladdin*. The first five Disney films — *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, The Little Mermaid, and Beauty and the Beast* — contained most of the references to appearance (81%). Two of the princesses, Pocahontas and Mulan, had no references to appearance. The most referenced word in the films was the word beautiful, which was always directed toward a female and was mentioned 28 times. The most common reference to male appearance

was the word handsome, which was mentioned only 7 times.

Table 22

Number of References to Appearance

Movie	Female	Male	Total
Snow White	8	0	8
Cinderella	3	1	4
Sleeping Beauty	8	1	9
The Little Mermaid	4	0	4
Beauty and the Beast	12	5	17
Aladdin	3	2	5
Pocahontas	0	1	1
Mulan	0	0	0
Princess and the Frog	2	2	4

Finding love. The sixth question asks, "How is a family life attained"? Table 23 gives evidence that suitors and princesses equally saved one another from harm. In four films, *The Little Mermaid*, *Pocahontas*, *Mulan,* and *The Princess and the Frog*, the princesses saved their suitors from physical harm. Princesses in the older films typically did not save their suitors, rather their suitors saved them from physical harm. In the recent films, all of the princesses saved their suitors from physical harm. The princess was not always faced with physical harm, but always had an undesirable life. The newer films *Pocahontas, Mulan,* and *Princess and the Frog* were the only films in which the

princess was not saved from an undesirable life.

Table 23

References to Rescue

Movie	Times suitor saves princess from physical harm	Times princess saves suitor from physical harm	Suitor saves princess from an undesirable life
Snow White	1	0	Yes
Cinderella	0	0	Yes
Sleeping Beauty	1	0	Yes
The Little Mermaid	3	2	Yes
Beauty and the Beast	1	3	Yes
Aladdin	2	1	Yes
Pocahontas	1	3	No
Mulan	1	2	No
Princess and the Frog	3	2	No

Table 24 indicates that a majority of the princesses (56%) did not need their family's approval of a suitor. In two-thirds of the cases, love at first sight occurred. Love at first sight was not found in the two most recent films, *Mulan* and *The Princess and the Frog*, and was also not seen in *Beauty and the Beast*, the film based on learning how to look past appearance. Belle was not able to instantly fall in love with the Beast because his appearance was frightening. The Beast was the only suitor to have this frightening effect on a princess. In two-thirds of the films, love was seen as easy to accomplish and

maintain. The princesses had a goal of love about three-fourths of the time and the

suitors had a goal of love two-thirds of the time. Until the two most recent films, the goal

of every princess was to find love. Likewise, until the three most recent films, the goal of

every suitor was to find love.

Table 24

References to Romanticization

Movie	Approval by Princess's Family Needed	Love at First Sight	Difficulty of Love	Goal of Princess is Love	Goal of Suitor is Love
Snow White	No	Yes	Easy	Yes	Yes
Cinderella	No	Yes	Easy	Yes	Yes
Sleeping Beauty	Yes	Yes	Easy	Yes	Yes
The Little Mermaid	Yes	Yes	Easy	Yes	Yes
Beauty and the Beast	No	No	Hard	Yes	Yes
Aladdin	Yes	Yes	Easy	Yes	Yes
Pocahontas	Yes	Yes	Hard	Yes	No
Mulan	No	No	Easy	No	No
Princess and the Frog	No	No	Hard	No	No

Love in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was so easy that they were in love even though they had only sang a short song about finding true love to each other and were complete strangers. At the end of the film, the prince kissed Snow White, brought her back to life, and carried her away without a single word spoken between them. Love did not come so easy, however, for Tiana and the prince, Naveen, in *The Princess and the Frog*. Prince Naveen was depicted as a ladies' man who dreamed of dating multiple girls and was not interested in true love. Tiana was only focused on her dream of owning a restaurant until Prince Naveen started to have a romantic interest in her. Tiana found herself having to choose between her career goals and love. In the end, she was able to have both, but unlike early films, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* her path to find love was not easy.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The results of this qualitative and quantitative analysis provide data on how Disney constructs the family in its princess collection. Given Disney's popularity and domination in the re-creation of fairy tales, the themes found in princess movies are likely to play a role in the development of children's culture and influence the way in which children view family life and how they approach marriage and having a family. Themes found by Dworkin (1974) were also found within this study. They included the views of women as good or bad and men as always good. Tanner et al. (2003) also studied the positivity of biological and non-biological families and support this study's findings that non-biological familes were portrayed in a more negative light than biological families. Data collected on appearance of the princesses and suitors mirrored some of the findings of Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) and Cheriton (1995). This study extended research conducted by Kutsuzawa (2000) who also found that men protected women. However, this study also showed that women protected men. The results showed that love in Disney films tends to be instantaneous and easy, a finding that was additionally made by DiPirro (2007).

Although this study supported the findings in previous studies, it also expanded on past studies. The results showed that most families had only biological fathers present and no siblings. Biological parents were characterized in a positive way and non-biological parents in a negative way. The appearance and characterization of the princesses and suitors have changed over time both positively and negatively. Love

became more realistic as princesses and suitors from more recent films had more goals and greater obstacles. Less romanticization and rescue occurred in the newer films and both the princesses and suitors became less interested in love as being their only goal. This section discusses themes found in the analysis of the nuclear family, appearance of the characters, and love.

Discussion

Family diversity, parenting roles, appearance, rescue, and romanticization have all gone through changes in representation during the 72-year period of the Disney princess films. Some aspects have not changed, others have become more stereotyped, and some are now more diverse. Family diversity in the films has decreased. Older films included four types of families, whereas newer films included only two. Films have still not diversified completely to include interracial and same-sex parents, single biological mothers, and single stepfathers. Early films depicted more nuclear families as single-parent households. Three of the five early films (four if Cinderella's household after her father died is included) were all led by single parents, half being stepparents. Recent films included only biological parents, but did depict both single parent and two-parent households. Parenting roles have not changed over time. Biological parents and non-biological parents were still characterized, for the most part, as being neither positive nor negative, neither nurturing nor unnurturing, and neither protective nor unprotective.

The major theme found within the nuclear family category was that of biological family members being less negative and unnurturing than non-biological family members. Stepparents also had more menacing, dark appearances. Princesses with a

stepparent faced abuse and neglect because of the jealousy the stepparent felt for their beauty. This theme that the biological family is positive and the non-biological family is negative supports existing theory (Tanner et al., 2003).

The representation of siblings was lacking. Only two of the nine princesses had siblings, none of whom were brothers. Children with brothers and no sisters cannot relate to the princesses' family life because their family type was not represented in the movies. Furthermore, children with same-sex or interracial parents will find no comparable family within the Disney princess collection. The lack of diversity in family characterization means that children who watch the films are only getting a limited view of family life.

Themes for appearance included molds for princesses and suitors. Many of these themes pertaining to feminine beauty and attractiveness support research by Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003). For the most part, princesses were teenagers who were upper class, Caucasian, physically fit, had brown eyes and black hair, and who wore non-revealing clothing. They are also depicted as being neither confident nor diffident and neither independent nor dependent most of the time. However, when those characteristics were exhibited, princesses were confident but dependent when it came to reaching their goals. Although the mold is very limited, in recent years, princesses have become more ethnically and economically diverse, but non-Caucasian princesses were shown less as being upper class. Princesses in newer films were also more diverse in age, including more of a mix between young adults and teenagers than in earlier films. This may be because more emphasis was placed on appearance in early years rather than recent years. The films, however, still did not include any princesses who are adults.

Although Disney has progressed in certain aspects of the princesses' physical appearance, such as ethnicity, they have remained stagnant with body type and eye and hair color. Newer films are now less diverse in eye and hair color, only including brown eyes and black hair. There was no change in the stereotyping of body type, but in recent films, princesses wore mainly revealing clothing.

The appearance of suitors is also more ethnically and economically diverse now. Suitors were less diverse in age in the newer films, with more suitors being young adults. The films, however, did not include any suitors in the adult age range. Newer films were more diverse in hair color and had the same diversity in eye color. There was no change in the stereotyping of body type, demonstration of physical strength, or characterization of the suitors.

Overall, suitors were mainly shown to be either a teenager or adult, in the upper class, Caucasian, physically fit, had brown eyes and brown or black hair, and demonstrated their physical strength. They were also mainly depicted as being neither confident nor diffident and neither independent nor dependent. However, when those characteristics were exhibited, suitors were mainly very independent and very confident. Previous research also found that the suitor must be young, handsome, and rich (Cheriton, 1995). Although more recent suitors differed more in age, ethnicity, and economic status, they remained the tall, dark, handsome, independent, and confident men they always were. None of the princesses or suitors had green eyes and there were no suitors with red hair. Although Disney has attempted to diversify its characters, they still were not inclusive of all eye and hair colors, age groups, body types, and ethnicities.

Themes for love have also changed from the earlier films. There has been less romanticization of love throughout the years. Although some princesses still needed family approval of their suitors, there were fewer instances of love at first sight in recent films. Princesses and suitors in newer films found finding and maintaining love to be more difficult. Furthermore, princesses and suitors in more recent films had goals other than love. These goals, however, did make it hard for love to be maintained once it was found. Love was easy except when appearance or career goals got in the way. Earlier princesses who had no other goals in life other than love had an easier time finding and keeping love. This study supports previous research conducted by DiPirro (2007) who found love to be instantaneouness and easy in early Disney princess films. Although more recent princesses had a difficult time with love, they always ended up with what they wanted. The only instance in which love did not result in two people being together was when it was between the interracial couple in *Pocahontas*. The fact that Disney did not rewrite the story for *Pocahontas*, like they did other stories, to include an ending where the couple remained together is significant. Children may learn from this that interracial relationships do not work since interracial relationships were not seen in nuclear families and because the relationship between Pocahontas and her suitor was unsuccessful. Prince Naveen's race in *The Princess and the Frog* was unknown; therefore, the viewer is left with uncertainty about whether his relationship with Tiana qualified as an interracial relationship.

Over time, there has been less stereotyping of rescue. Older films depicted more suitors saving princesses from physical harm. In newer films there was a role reversal

where princesses saved suitors from physical harm. Princesses in newer films were less reliant on a suitor to help them escape from their situation and demonstrated more responsibility over their own lives. All suitors in the early films saved the princesses from an undesirable life, but current princesses, excluding Jasmine, reached their own desired life on their own or with little help from their suitors. When it comes to love, family had an important role in deciding on a suitor, but in the end the princess always got what she wanted and her family stood behind her decision. Love at first sight appeared more in the earlier films. This theme teaches viewers that there is no need to find compatibility. The viewer was never made aware whether love at first sight makes for a lasting relationship, except for in some cases where he or she was told the princess and suitor lived happily ever after. More recent films moved away from this theme and if it was included, created more obstacles for the princess and suitor to be together.

Results for the analysis of the nuclear family, appearance, and love showed changes over time in themes. This may be because Disney is attempting to create a more diverse princess collection. Attempts, however, have only been made toward certain aspects of each category. Disney still depicted a limited view of family, physical appearance, and love in recent films. This could be a result of the company trying to maintain a brand identity among the films in the collection. Disney may not want the films to stray too far from each other in an effort not to weaken the brand.

References

Anger growing over Disney's first black princess' non black suitor (2009, April 30). *The Jacksonville Free Press,* p. 9.

Baker-Sperry, Lori (2007). The production of meaning through peer interaction: Children and Walt Disney's Cinderella. *Sex Roles, 56*(11-12), 717-727.

Baker-Sperry, Lori & Grauerholz, Liz (2003). The pervasiveness and persistence of the feminine beauty ideal in children's fairy tales. *Gender and Society, 17*(5), 711-726.

Banfield, Wanjira (2008, August 15). Disney combats racial stereotypes in new film. *South Florida Times,* p. 1A.

Best, Joel & Lowney, Kathleen S (2009). The disadvantage of a good reputation: Disney as a target for social problems claims. *Sociological Quarterly, 50*(3), 431-449.

Cheriton, Glenn (1995, December 31). Beauty and the Beast: Is Disney's tale sexist against men? *Everyman,* (16), 21.

Christensen, Linda (1996, June 30). Unlearning the myths that bind us: Critiquing fairy tales and films. *New Moon Network, 3*, 8.

Craven, Allison (2002). Beauty and the belles: Discourses of feminism and femininity in Disneyland. *European Journal of Womens Studies, 9*(2), 123-142.

Daly, Sean (2009, December 28). Finally, every girl's a princess. *St. Petersburg Times*, pp. E1.

Davis, Amy M (2005). The 'dark prince' and dream women: Walt Disney and mid-twentieth century American feminism. *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television, 25*(2), 213-230.

DiPirro, Danielle Marie (2007). *From biting the apple to breaking the spell: Analyzing love in the Disney princess collection.* California State University, Fullerton.

Dworkin, Andrea (1974). *Woman hating.* New York: E.P. Dutton.

Ebner, Sarah (2009, August 4). The princess and the pay gap. *The Times,* p. 6.

Edwards, Leigh H. (1999). The united colors of "Pocahontas": Synthetic miscegenation and Disney's multiculturalism. *Narrative, 7*(2), 147-168.

Fisher, Jerilyn & Silber, Ellen S. (2000). Good and bad beyond belief: Teaching gender lessons through fairy tales and feminist theory. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 28*(3/4), 121-136.

Gerber, George; Gross, Larry; Morgan, Michael; & Signorielle, Nancy (1980). The "mainstreaming" of America: Violence profile No. 11. *Journal of Communication, 30(3)*, 10-29.

Griffin, Sean (2000). *Tinker belles and evil queens: The Walt Disney company from the inside out*. New York: New York University.

Guest, Katy (2007, February 17). 'When I grow up I want to be a princess'. *The Independent,* p. 16.

Harper, Jorjet (1989). Snow White, Cinderella, and Bambi: That Disney magic. *Hot Wire, 5*(3), 24.

Healy, Christopher (2004, November 25). The princess virus. *National Post,* p. B2.

Helm, Angela Bronner (2009, June 23). Disney's first black princess controversy continues. *Miami Times,* p. 1C.

Hurley, Dorothy L (2005). Seeing white: Children of color and the Disney fairy tale princess. *The Journal of Negro Education, 74*(3), 221-232.

Ingraham, Chrys (1999). *White weddings: Romancing heterosexuality in popular culture.* New York: Routledge.

Johnson, Jason (2009, December 9). If you care about your little princess, don't see this frog. *Chicago Defender*, pp. 12.

Kirkorian, Heather L.; Wartella, Ellen A.; & Anderson, Daniel R. (2008). Media and young children's learning. *The Future of Children, 18(1)*, 39-61.

Kutsuzawa, Kiyomi (2000). Disney's Pocahontas: Reproduction of gender, orientalism, and the strategic construction of racial harmony in the Disney empire. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies, 6*(4), 39.

Lieberman, Marcia R (1972). "Some day my prince will come": Female acculturation through the fairy tale. *College English, 34*(3), 383-395.

McGregor, Susan E. (2007, March 22-28). Black princess joins Disney's royal line. *New York Amsterdam News,* p. 17.

Ono, Kent A. & Buescher, Derek T. (2001). Deciphering Pocahontas: Unpackaging the commodification of a Native American woman. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 18*(1), 23-43.

Ortaga, Teresa (1998, July 7). Cartoon cross-dresser: Disney's Mulan joins a long line of women who dress like men on-screen. *The Advocate,* 57.

Panttaja, Elisabeth (1993). Going up in the world: Class in "Cinderella". *Western Folklore, 52*(1), 85-104.

Robinson, Tom; Callister, Mark; Magoffin, Dawn; & Moore, Jennifer (2007). The portrayal of older characters in Disney animated films. *Journal of Aging Studies, 21*(3), 203-213.

Ross, Angela M. (2008). *The princess production: Locating Pocahontas in time and place.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona.

Rozario, Rebecca-Ann C. Do (2004). The princess and the magic kingdom: Beyond nostalgia, the function of the Disney princess. *Women's Studies in Communication, 27*(1), 34.

Smith, Rachel (1999, August 31). Forget the fairy tale. *New Moon, 6,* 22.

Tanner, Litsa Renee; Haddock, Shelley A.; Zimmerman, Toni Schindler; & Lund, Lori K. (2003). Images of couples and families in Disney feature-length animated films. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 31,* 355-373.

Thomas, Emil M. (2007, March 29). Disney's black princess. *Sun Reporter,* p. 6.

Tomas, Lois (1995, March 31). Pocahontas: New Disney film yields new twist on history. *Red Sticks Press,* p. 16.

Tucker, Neely (2009, April 20). Disney gives African-American girls their own princess; 'Sends a huge message'; Tiana is a heroine for modern times. *The Gazette,* p. A18.

Wang, Oliver (1998, July 2). Mulan: Woman-warrior heroine defies some stereotypes, while reinforcing others. *Asianweek,* p. 17.

White, Aria (2007, May 30). Anticipating black Disney princess' effect. *Sacramento Observer,* p. C7.

Wilson, Barbara J. (2008). Media and children's aggression, fear, and altruism. *The Future of Children, 18*(1)*,* 87-118.

Appendix

Codebook for the Disney princess films

1. Types of families represented (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)
   (1) Two biological parents present
   (2) Only biological father present
   (3) Only biological mother present
   (4) Biological parent and stepparent present
   (5) Only stepfather present
   (6) Only stepmother present
   (7) Same sex couple
   (8) Interracial couple

2. Siblings represented (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)
   (1) Biological sister
   (2) Biological brother
   (3) Stepsister
   (4) Stepbrother

3. Sibling characterization: Seconds devoted to being undesiring vs. desiring (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 98%)
   (1) Very undesiring: Verbal and physical actions, such as hand motions that show something is unwanted, are present when something the sibling has is undesired.
   (2) Undesiring: Only a verbal response is given when something is undesired.
   (3) Neither undesiring nor desiring: Character does not exhibit any traits of being undesiring or desiring.
   (4) Desiring: Only a verbal response is given when something is desired.
   (5) Very desiring: Verbal and physical actions, such as physical force or threats, are present when something the sibling has is desired.

4. Sibling characterization: Seconds devoted to being unkind vs. kind (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 98%)
   (1) Very unkind: Verbal and physical actions that affect a character negatively, such as physical force or threats, are present when the sibling is unkind.
   (2) Unkind: Only verbal cues are given, such as how disliked another sibling is, to indicate the character is being unkind.
   (3) Neither unkind nor kind: Character does not exhibit any traits of being unkind or kind.

(4) Kind: Only verbal cues are given, such as how liked another sibling is, to indicate the character is being kind.

(5) Very kind: Verbal and physical actions that affect a character positively, such as physical affection, are present when the sibling is unkind.

5. Sibling characterization: Seconds devoted to being noncompetitive vs. competitive (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 86%)

(1) Very noncompetitive: Verbal and physical actions, such as giving a sibling something that is wanted by both characters without hesitation, are present.

(2) Noncompetitive: Only verbal cues are given, such as telling a sibling how happy they are for them.

(3) Neither noncompetitive nor competitive: Character does not exhibit any traits of being noncompetitive or competitive.

(4) Competitive: Only verbal cues are given, such as telling a sibling how they want what they have been given.

(5) Very competitive: Verbal and physical actions, such as taking away something from a sibling that is wanted by both characters, are present.

6. Biological parent present (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

(1) Father

(2) Mother

7. Biological parent appearance (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

(1) Light clothing

(2) Dark clothing

(3) Soft features: Face shape and features are more rounded

(4) Sharp features: Face shape and features are more angular

8. Biological parent characterization: Seconds devoted to being negative vs. positive (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 76%)

(1) Very negative: The parent is verbally and physically unsupportive of another character or themselves. Physical cues include the use of violence or physical force against another character.

(2) Negative: The parent is verbally unsupportive of another character or is verbally outspoken about not being able to accomplish something.

(3) Neither negative nor positive: Character does not exhibit any traits of being negative or positive.

(4) Positive: The parent is verbally supportive of another character or is verbally outspoken about being able to accomplish something.

(5) Very positive: The parent is verbally and physically supportive of another character or themselves. Physical cues include the use of affection toward another character.

9. Biological parent characterization: Seconds devoted to being unnurturing vs. nurturing (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 90%)
   (1) Very unnurturing: Physical actions, such as violence, are used against another character.
   (2) Unnurturing: Verbal cues such as scolding or yelling at another character are exhibited.
   (3) Neither unnurturing nor nurturing: Character does not exhibit any traits of being unnurturing or nurturing.
   (4) Nurturing: Verbal cues that let a character know they are loved and supported are used.
   (5) Very nurturing: Physical actions, such as affection, are used with another character.

10. Biological parent characterization: Seconds devoted to being unprotective vs. protective (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 80%)
    (1) Very unprotective: The parent gives the child complete freedom or does not physically protect the child from physical and emotional harm.
    (2) Unprotective: The parent does not give the child rules or does not worry about the child's well being.
    (3) Neither unprotective nor protective: Character does not exhibit any traits of being unprotective or protective.
    (4) Protective: The child is given some rules, but is also allowed to have some freedom outsides of the rules, or worry over the child's well being is made evident through verbal cues.
    (5) Very Protective: The parent places strict rules for their child to follow or physically protects the child from physical and emotional harm.

11. Non-biological parent present (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)
    (1) Stepmother
    (2) Stepfather

12. Non-biological parent appearance (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)
    (1) Light clothing
    (2) Dark clothing
    (3) Soft features: Face shape and features are more rounded
    (4) Sharp features: Face shape and features are more angular

13. Non-biological parent characterization: Seconds devoted to being negative vs. positive (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 80%)
    (1) Very negative: The parent is verbally and physically unsupportive of another character or themselves. Physical cues include the use of violence or physical force against another character.
    (2) Negative: The parent is verbally unsupportive of another character or is verbally outspoken about not being able to accomplish something.
    (3) Neither negative nor positive: Character does not exhibit any traits of being negative or positive.
    (4) Positive: The parent is verbally supportive of another character or is verbally outspoken about being able to accomplish something.
    (5) Very positive: The parent is verbally and physically supportive of another character or themselves. Physical cues include the use of affection toward another character.

14. Non-biological parent characterization: Seconds devoted to being unnurturing vs. nurturing (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 85%)
    (1) Very unnurturing: Physical actions, such as violence, are used against another character.
    (2) Unnurturing: Verbal cues such as scolding or yelling at another character are exhibited.
    (3) Neither unnurturing nor nurturing: Character does not exhibit any traits of being unnurturing or nurturing.
    (4) Nurturing: Verbal cues that let a character know they are loved and supported are used.
    (5) Very nurturing: Physical actions, such as affection, are used with another character.

15. Non-biological parent characterization: Seconds devoted to being unprotective vs. protective (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 92%)
    (1) Very unprotective: The parent gives the child complete freedom or does not physically protect the child from physical and emotional harm.
    (2) Unprotective: The parent does not give the child rules or does not worry about the child's well being.
    (3) Neither unprotective nor protective: Character does not exhibit any traits of being unprotective or protective.
    (4) Protective: The child is given some rules, but is also allowed to have some freedom outsides of the rules, or worry over the child's well being is made evident through verbal cues.

(5) Very Protective: The parent places strict rules for their child to follow or physically protects the child from physical and emotional harm.

16. Princesses' appearance and status (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)
   (1) Body Type: Fit or unfit
   (2) Clothing: Non-revealing or revealing
   (3) Economic Status: Upper class, middle class, or lower class. Upper class status is given to a princess that comes from royalty. Middle class status is given to a princess that lives comfortably, but is not royalty. Lower class status is given to a princess where a struggle is seen to attain things she wants or needs.
   (4) Age: Teenager, young adult, adult. Teenagers range from age 13 to 17. Young adults range from age 18 to 25 and adults are 26 years or older.
   (5) Eye color
   (6) Hair color
   (7) Ethnicity

17. Princesses' characterization: Seconds devoted to being dependent vs. independent (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 93%)
   (1) Very dependent: The princess relies on another character to save her from physical harm.
   (2) Dependent: The princess relies on and asks another character to help her with tasks, such as cleaning or dressing.
   (3) Neither dependent nor independent: Character does not exhibit any traits of being dependent or independent.
   (4) Independent: The princess can complete tasks on her own with no help from others.
   (5) Very independent: The princess is able to get herself out of situations by herself that may cause physical harm or is verbal about doing things on her own without help from others.

18. Princesses' characterization: Seconds devoted to being diffident vs. confident (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 83%)
   (1) Very diffident: Verbal cues from the princess are made, such as saying she is unable to ever reach a goal or showing no confidence in herself. There is no hope that goals will be reached.
   (2) Diffident: The princess shows diffidence in herself or in reaching her goals, but is still hopeful that she will accomplish her goals.
   (3) Neither diffident nor confident: Character does not exhibit any traits of being diffident or confident.
   (4) Confident: The princess shows some confidence in herself and in her ability to accomplish her goals.

(5) Very confident: Verbal cues from the princess are made, such as saying she will definitely reach a goal or showing complete confidence in herself. No doubt is exhibited from the princess.

19. Suitor's appearance and status (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)
   (1) Body Type: Fit or unfit
   (2) Physical strength: Demonstrated or undemonstrated
   (3) Economic Status: Upper class, middle class, or lower class. Upper class status is given to a suitor that comes from royalty. Middle class status is given to a suitor that lives comfortably, but is not royalty. Lower class status is given to a suitor where a struggle is seen to attain things he wants or needs.
   (4) Age: Teenager, young adult, adult. Teenagers range from age 13 to 17. Young adults range from age 18 to 25 and adults are 26 years or older.
   (5) Eye color
   (6) Hair color
   (7) Ethnicity

20. Suitors' characterization: Seconds devoted to being dependent vs. independent (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 98%)
   (1) Very dependent: The suitor relies on another character to save him from physical harm.
   (2) Dependent: The suitor relies on and asks another character to help him with simple tasks.
   (3) Neither dependent nor independent: Character does not exhibit any traits of being dependent or independent.
   (4) Independent: The suitor can complete tasks on his own with no help from others.
   (5) Very independent: The suitor is able to get himself out of situations by himself that may cause physical harm or is verbal about doing things on his own without help from others.

21. Suitors' characterization: Seconds devoted to being diffident vs. confident (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 98%)
   (1) Very diffident: Verbal cues from the suitor are made, such as saying he is unable to ever reach a goal or showing no confidence in himself. There is no hope that goals will be reached.
   (2) Diffident: The suitor shows diffidence in himself or in reaching his goals, but is still hopeful that he will accomplish his goals.
   (3) Neither diffident nor confident: Character does not exhibit any traits of being diffident or confident.

(4) Confident: The suitor shows some confidence in himself and in his ability to accomplish his goals.

(5) Very confident: Verbal cues from the suitor are made, such as saying he will definitely reach a goal or showing complete confidence in himself. No doubt is exhibited from the suitor.

22. References to female appearance
   (1) Beautiful/beauty
   (2) Pretty
   (3) Fairest
   (4) Lovely

23. References to male appearance
   (1) Handsome
   (2) Gorgeous
   (3) Dreamy
   (4) Cute
   (5) Strapping

24. References to rescue
   (1) Number of times the suitor saves the princess from physical harm
   (2) Number of times the princess saves the suitor from physical harm
   (3) Suitor saves the princess from an undesirable life: Yes or no

25. References to romanticization
   (1) Approval of suitor by family is needed: Yes or no
   (2) Love at first site is present: Yes or no
   (3) Difficulty of love: Easy or hard
   (4) Goal of princess is love: Yes or no
   (5) Goal of suitor is love: Yes or no