

A Comparative Study of the Leading Female Characters in Popular Old and New Hollywood Animated Movies

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to conduct a comparative analysis of the portrayal of leading positive and negative female characters in animated movies. Such movies mostly attract young people as their potential audiences and believed to have quite strong impact on the viewers. Animated movies said to inculcate gender stereotypes in the minds of their audiences. The researcher has analyzed how the personalities of females are portrayed in Popular Hollywood animated movies both in positive and negative characters. Additionally she has also analyzed the stereotype, concerning “submissiveness” associated to the leading female heroines in the popular Hollywood animated movies. For this purpose a detailed content analysis of six popular animated movies was carried out.

The full-length animated feature films are categorized in to popular old and new animated movies with the focus on the leading female heroines. The findings of the study show that heroines depicted in old movies were relatively more submissive as compared to the heroines portrayed in new movies. There is a noticeable shift from being passive and not demanding to be brave, strong and assertive. A positive step towards change in thinking pattern of the animated movie makers has been observed when there are many gender stereotypes attached to women's role in society; and these stereotypes shape up the mindset of the audiences whether true or not. Leading heroines in the new animated movies are depicted to help the hero, unlike the heroines of old animated movies who are always in need of a male savior to rescue them from the villain.

Introduction:

Gender roles are defined by the parents' attitudes toward their children. In the first few years of their lives children are exposed to the understanding of gender roles in their families. Parents' buy "pink" clothes for girls and "blue" for boys. They handle or treat girls more delicately and softly as compared to the boys. Then comes the preference in buying toys for their children For example

Girls will be get dolls and indoor games to avoid the slightest possibility of getting hurt or being on an adventure. On the other hand, boys are encouraged to play outdoor games like cricket, baseball, volley ball, go for swimming and involve other tough sports which need strength and might. Boys tend to indulge in wrestling and fist fighting at a tender age because it's a symbol of being tough.

Since animated movies cater to both children and young adults; therefore the messages conveyed through these animated movies have immense and inevitable impacts on the audiences. Many stereotypes and subliminal messages are hence hammered in the mind of viewers, and thus affecting thinking and behavior patterns. For instance, mothers are always busy doing house-chores, nurturing the families, cooking food and helping the male members by motivating them to progress in their jobs and earn money for the family. These gender discriminatory acts are very powerful and leave strong impact on children's minds. They tend to believe them as such.

“Corsaro (1997) refers to the term *childhood symbolic culture* to explain the various representations or expressive symbols of children's beliefs, concerns, and values. Three primary sources of childhood symbolic culture are children's media (e.g., cartoons and films), children's literature (e.g., fairy tales), and mythical figures (e.g., Santa Clause).”

Hollywood animated movies are believed to be the most watched movies due to their entertainment appeal and therefore they comprise a huge chunk of audiences, young and adults. The messages conveyed through these full-length feature films are full of gender stereotypes that are associated both with male and females characters. Through repeated viewing of these messages people start believing the roles of men and women played in the movies are real and that specifically males enjoy an upper hand in the society. Most of the female characters shown in the animated movies are submissive or passive and are always in need of a man

to rescue them from the villains or to change their harsh circumstances, which the females can't deal with.

The number of female characters in leading roles either as Heroine or Vamp in most animated movies is less as compared to the male characters. Females comprise half of the society's population and yet they are underrepresented appearing less frequently as compared to the male characters in the animated movies.

Disney movies have been inculcating such messages since 1937 when *Snow White & 7 Dwarfs* was released. That was the time when the feminist movements had started. The traditional portrayal of women in a submissive, domestic and desirable manner was much appreciated by the audiences as parents and children like to watch their favorite Disney princesses.

The difference in perceiving the images depicted by Disney, Pixar, and DreamWorks lies in the messages. People's perception towards these messages is the turning point. Now people seem to be fairly more aware. They accept the changes rather explicitly. In view of the ever changing beauty standards and the need to be equally accepted as their male counterpart, women too have realized their worth in society.

- Objective of the study: To study the effects of gender stereotypes shown in the animated movies and attitude of young adults towards women change regarding gender balance as an effect of these animated movies. A content analysis of six popular Hollywood animated movies is carried out. The purpose of this study is to find out how the female characters' depiction is submissive, passive and overly emotional in old animated movies and in new animated movies.

Literature Review

Many researches have been carried out to study the gender roles and gender stereotypes that are shown in the animated movies.

Some of the relevant research studies have been mentioned to base our argument for this research.

“According to Berry and Segall (1992), gender stereotypes are widely shared beliefs within a society about what males and females are generally like as have been studied for decades in western societies. A common finding is that these stereotypes of males and females are very different from one another, with males usually viewed as dominant, independent, and adventurous and females as emotional, submissive, and weak.

Children has different ways to conceptualize gender where depending on their stage of development but viewing gendered content can be assumed to affect children’s personal gender schemas (O’Byrant & Corder Bolz, 1978).

The traditionally masculine behaviors remain more powerful than traditionally feminine behaviors and those females can engage in and embrace nontraditional behaviors more readily than can males (Ruble & Martin, 1998).

Tobin, Haddock and Zimmerman (2003) who studied how gender and stereotypes were portrayed in twenty-six animated Disney films. They had found four themes that defining womanhood which is include: a woman’s appearance is valued more than her intellect, women are helpless and in need of protection, women are domestic and likely to marry, and overweight women are ugly, unpleasant, and unmarried.

The TV research suggests that television viewing can have an impact on developing or possibly reinforcing children’s stereotypical attitudes and beliefs about gender. With repeated television viewing of characters engaging in traditional sex roles, a child’s gender expectations for his/her own sex or the opposite can become simplified, skewed, and stereotypical in nature. These effects are particularly problematic when we consider that females

are seen less frequently than males on television (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004, Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974).

Children are among the most sensitive and potential audience of the animated movies and tend to believe whatever is being shown in the movies. Following are the thoughts of many researchers who have done extensive researches on gender stereotypes and their impacts on society.

“Our society exposes children to gender stereotypes on a daily basis. Institutions such as families, schools, television and books expose children to gender stereotypes (Denny 2011).

Researchers have found that although Disney tells stories of individualism, friendship and the power of courage, the stories really convey messages of gender inequality and racial hierarchies (Hass 1995; Gagnon 1994)

“Critics have generalized femininity to be equating it with—passivity and victimage (Bell 112)

“McGhee and Frueh (1980) suggest that heavy television viewing may contribute significantly to children's acquisitions of stereotypic perceptions of behavior and psychological characteristics associated with males and females.

Salomon (cited in Manley-Casimir & Luke) insists the quality of learning from TV has much to do with peoples' pre-existing schemas. Hence, if children do not have a realistic schema about relationships or gender they will use TV representations to form their schema, which is adaptable, but may not assimilate new information that does not correspond to their existing schema.

Coltrane and Adams (1997) argue images of others and ourselves are largely developed by gender stereotypes, which provide a baseline for cultural distinctions between men and women.

Television imagery has adopted the tendency to portray men and women in conventionally stereotypical ways as demonstrated by nearly two decades of television content analysis (Coltrane & Adams, 1997).

“Women performed significantly worse than men on a math test when the participants were led to believe that the test would probably produce gender differences. In contrast, women and men performed equally well when the participants were led to believe that the test did not produce gender differences. These findings suggest that negative stereotypes can and do negatively affect performance even when the stereotype has not been internalized or incorporated into the view of the self (Steven Spencer, Claude Steele, Diane Quinn, 1999)

“While sex and gender are often used interchangeably in casual conversation, in definition they are marked differently. Sex is determined by biology and anatomy. Gender, on the other hand, is the conceptualization of what it *means* to be male and female, and what are “appropriate” attitudes and behaviors for each to have (Junn 1997).

This conceptualization is formed through social interaction, external instruction, and the observation of male and female models (Lorber, 2007; Bandura and Walters, 1963)

As media provide male and female character models for observation, some have speculated that gender conceptualization and understanding of male-female relationships may be shaped, in part, by viewing films and television programs (McGhee and Freuh, 1980; Shrum, 2008)

In-depth content analysis of gender-on-television began with Tedesco’s (1974) four-year sample of prime-time TV characters, which found trends of male and female characters portrayed largely with stereotyped, traditional characterizations. Males

displayed independence, intelligence, and courage while women were portrayed as passive and dependent.

Mainstream movies have generally assumed an androcentric position, telling stories through the lens of male experience, and teaching men to be aggressive and dominant while encouraging women to be submissive and passive (Hedley, 1994).

Females in Disney films traditionally existed merely to exemplify beauty and virtue, to be rescued and romanced by males, and to serve as nurturing mothers (Stone, 1975; Tanner, 2003).

Junn (1997) found that mothers were under-represented and fathers were over-represented in Disney films, suggesting a promotion of patriarchy. This study also revealed trends of female characters appearing primarily in romantic stories and males appearing in a broad variety of roles; even in romance, however, males take an active lead.

Critical analyses have suggested that Pixar promotes an altruistic, caring, and communal masculinity (Gillam and Wooden, 2008) and provides strong, assertive, capable women in many roles and with a variety of character traits almost unseen in other children's media (DeFife, 2009).

As Li Vollmer and Lapointe (2003) argue: "It is through this constructed lens of gender that we view much of the world around us" (p. 90). Traditionally, males are expected and taught to be more active, aggressive, and dominant, while women are expected and taught to be more passive, caring, and nurturing (Junn, 1997)

Unfortunately, this function often limits perceived options of how men and women can feel, behave, and exist, setting arbitrary rules such as "men aren't allowed to cry" and "women have to be sexually attractive and/or invested in parenting to have worth" (Lorber, 2007).

A large part of creating one's subjective perspective of gender is through the observation of male and female models (Bandura & Walters, 1963).

Gerbner and Gross (1976) also described a positive correlation between the amount of television watched and viewer perceptions of reality as being similar to the programs.

Stone explains:

“Heroes succeed because they act, not because they are. They are judged not by their appearances or inherent sweet nature, but by their ability to overcome obstacles, even if these obstacles are defects in their own characters. Heroines are not allowed any defects, nor are they required to develop, since they are already perfect. The tests of most heroines require nothing beyond what they are born with: a beautiful face, tiny feet, or a pleasing temperament” (p. 45)

Towbin, Haddock, Zimmerman, Lund, and Tanner's results for women in Disney movies is grim: “(a) A woman's appearance is valued more than her intellect; (b) Women are helpless and in need of protection; (c) Women are domestic and likely to marry; (d) Overweight women are ugly, unpleasant, and unmarried” (2003: 30).

“Women are portrayed as significantly younger and thinner than women in the population as a whole, and most are depicted as passive, dependent on men, and enmeshed in relationships or housework (Davis, 1990).

Research Questions:

- Are females characters portrayed in old animated movies more submissive as compared to the female characters of new animated movies?

- Has any significant change observed in the depiction of positive and negative female characters in new animated movies being more close to reality?
- Have new animated movies depicted the leading positive and negative female characters as strong, independent and upright working ladies?

Method:

The purpose of this research is to analyze six popular and all-time hit animated movies by Walt Disney Productions, Dream Works and private production companies are selected namely, *Cinderella (1950)*, *The Little Mermaid (1989)*, *Beauty and the Beast (1991)*, *Shrek (2001)*, *KungFu Panda 2 (2011)* and *Madagascar 3 (2012)*.

The researcher has used the technique of content analysis to specifically study the stereotype of “submissive or passive behavior” associated to the heroines or leading female characters of the popular animated movies.

The stereotype of “submissive” is defined as, a person who is inclined or willing to submit to orders or wishes of others or showing such inclination; "submissive servants"; "a submissive reply"; "replacing troublemakers with more submissive people".

The movies selected for the content analysis consist approximately 90 minutes duration. Each animated movie is carefully analyzed to study the gender stereotypes associated with leading female characters, Heroine and Vamp.

There are many stereotypes but the researcher has studied the “submissive” character of females mostly the Heroines who are depicted as care-givers, domestic and extremely gorgeous in old animated movies. Female characters mainly the heroines of new animated movies are studied to find out whether there’s a shift in the thought process of the animators to portray leading female characters in strong, responsible and brave avatar unlike the classic

Walt Disney's damsels in distress. And for this purpose, the study analyses the physical traits and overall personality of both Heroines and Vamps in old animated movies and new animated movies. Categories are prepared by assigning adjectives to the characters of the 'leading females' to study their physical traits and personality in depth.

Following steps have been carried out during the content analysis of both old and new animated movies:

- The step for the analysis of physical traits and personality of Heroines in old animated movies has been carried out by studying the physique, and overall personality of Cinderella, Ariel, and Beauty.
- The step for the analysis of physical traits and personality of female in negative role in old animated movies has been done by studying the physique and overall personality of Step-mother and Ursula
- The step for the analysis of physical traits and personality of Heroines in new animated movies has been done by analyzing the physique and overall personality of Princess Fiona, Tigress, Gloria and Gia
- The step for the analysis of the physical traits and personality of female in negative role in new animated movies

Categories for Physical traits:

Beautiful, fair, long-hair, beautiful-eyes with long lashes, plain, ugly, and young.

Categories of Personality Traits:

Middle-aged, old, cheerful, serious, sad, introvert, extrovert, innocent, cunning, well-wishing, conspiring, contented, ambitious,

timid, bold, adventurous, villager, town dweller, cosmopolitan, kind hearted, unconcerned, cruel, naïve, sophisticated, blond / black / asian, slim, plump, fat, soft spoken, cultured, uncouth, educated, illiterate, sings beautifully, homely /busy in household chores, loving and caring, shy, care free, submissive, disobedient, yielding, headstrong, modest, bold, indecent, well wishing, jealous, down to earth, arrogant, conservative, modern.

Types of “submissive” behavior displayed by the leading female characters in both the old and new animated movies:

Following orders, crying, and walking away in despair/anger, helplessness.

Findings

Analysis of Hollywood’s popular old animated movies

Cinderella:

Physical traits:

Beautiful, naïve, fair, young, blond, slim and tall.

Personality traits:

Introvert, innocent, timid, villager/town dweller, kind hearted, sophisticated, soft spoken, cultured, sings beautifully, homely/busy in household chores, loving and caring, shy, submissive, modest and down to earth.

Cinderella’s Step Mother:

Physical Traits:

Plain / expressionless, middle-aged, tall and slim.

Personality traits:

Introvert, cunning, conspiring, ambitious, villager/town dweller, unconcerned/ cruel, sophisticated, sadistic, cultured, jealous and arrogant.

The Little Mermaid:

Ariel:

Physical Traits:

Beautiful, fair, young, beautiful big eyes/ long eye lashes, long and silky red hair, small waist.

Personality Traits:

Cheerful, extrovert, innocent / naughty, ambitious, bold, adventurous, kind hearted, naïve, soft spoken, sings beautifully, loving and caring, care free, submissive, disobedient, headstrong.

Ursula (Sea witch):

Physical Traits:

Ugly, old, full lips, big eyes.

Personality Traits:

Sarcastic, cunning, conspiring, ambitious, bold, cruel, and uncouth; sings badly due to her grave voice, disobedient, headstrong, indecent, jealous and arrogant.

Beauty and the Beast:

Belle:

Physical Traits:

Beautiful, fair young, tall, slim, small waist, beautiful eyes, black hair.

Personality Traits:

Introvert, innocent, well-wishing, ambitious, timid, town dweller, kind hearted, sophisticated, cultured, educated, sings beautifully, loving and caring; soft spoken, shy, submissive, yielding, modest, down to earth.

Analysis of Hollywood's popular new animated movies

Shrek

Princess Fiona:

Physical Traits (Before Transformation):

Beautiful, Fair, Young, Slim, Tall, Long red hair, Small waist

Physical Traits (After Transformation):

Fat, ugly, green complexion

Personality Traits:

Cheerful, Extrovert, Brave, Cranky, Demanding, Strong/Tough, Excited, Knows cooking, Unpredictable, Know to defend herself, Burps, Well-wishing, Contented, Bold, Adventurous, Town dweller, Kind hearted, Naïve, Blond (in terms of voice dubbing by

the actor), Soft spoken, Uncouth, Sings beautifully, Loving and caring, Care free, Headstrong, Modern

Kungfu Panda 2:

Tigress:

Physical Traits:

Good looking, Tall, Young

Personality Traits:

Brave, tough/strong, demanding, serious, introvert, intelligent, ambitious, cosmopolitan, kind hearted, blond, smart, speaks less; not at all domestic, caring, adventurous, headstrong, bold, well wishing, modern, working female (works to defend the country as a Kungfu warrior)

Soothsayer:

Physical Traits:

Ugly, old, fat, short heighted, weak eyesight, asian (in terms of voice dubbing by the actor)

Personality Traits:

Speak less, Knowledgeable, Knows Acupuncture, Tells future, Introvert, Wise, Contented, Villager, Kind hearted, Sophisticated, Soft spoken, Modest, Well wishing

Madagascar 3 Europe's Most Wanted

Gloria (Hippopotamus):

Physical Traits:

Ugly, Young, Fat, Black (in terms of voice dubbing by the actor)

Personality Traits:

Cheerful, good sense of humor, extrovert, innocent, well-wisher, contented, adventurous, cosmopolitan, kind hearted, soft spoken, dances very well; not at all domestic, loving and caring, modern, working female (after she joins the circus).

Gia (Cheetah):

Physical Traits:

Beautiful, Young, Tall, Slim, Long eyes and long eye lashes, Fair

Personality Traits:

Cheerful, Extrovert, Innocent, Well-wishing, Contented, Ambitious, Bold, Adventurous, Cosmopolitan, kind hearted, Naïve, Blond, Soft spoken, Not at all domestic, Loving and caring, Modern, Working female (works in a circus as a performer).

Captain Chantal Dubois (Woman):

Physical Traits:

Full lips, Fair, Big eyes, Grave Voice, Applies too much makeup, Sharp features, Short curly hair, Middle Aged, Plump, Blond (European)

Personality Traits:

Cunning, aggressive/violent, brave, conspiring, ambitious, cosmopolitan, unconcerned/ cruel, uncouth, educated; not at all domestic, adventurous, headstrong, jealous, arrogant, modern, working woman (officer in animal control department)

During the content analysis of all the six Hollywood’s popular animated movies, the researcher came across the physical and personality traits of the leading female characters of the animated movies and the number of times types of submissive behavior displayed by the leading ladies in the animated movies. Following is table for types of submissive behavior shown in both Hollywood’s popular old and new animated movies.

Table for types of submissive behavior shown by the leading female characters in the old animated movies:

S. #	Animated Movies	Waiting for Savior	Walk away	Crying	Following orders	Helplessness
1	Cinderella	1	–	2	7	3
2	The Little Mermaid	1	1	2	–	3
3	Beauty and the Beast	–	–	2	2	6

Table for types of submissive behavior shown by the leading female characters in the new animated movies:

S.#	Animated Movies	Waiting for Savior	Walk away	Crying	Following orders	Helplessness
1	Shrek	-	-	2	-	1
2	Kungfu Panda 2	-	-	-	-	2
3	Madagascar 3 Europe's Most Wanted	-	-	-	-	1

The findings of the above tables are discussed in detail in chapter Discussion.

Discussion

Through careful and thorough content analysis of the six most popular Hollywood animated movies, the researcher has found out the answers to the following research questions for example,

- Are females portrayed in old animated movies more submissive as compared to the female characters of new animated movies?

The answer to this question is that leading female characters, particularly the “Heroines” for example Cinderella and Ariel were shown submissive and helpless against the will of females in negative roles; whereas Belle was helpless against Gaston and then Beast. However, Princess Fiona was confused and was shown fighting a battle of her choice between Lord Farakwad (Villain) and Shrek (Hero).

In new animated it was found that Heroines were less submissive as compared to the Heroines of the old animated movies. They were very active, brave and strong in rescuing and helping their friends from the villains and vamp. Female characters like Tigress, Gloria, Gia and Captain Chantal Dubois were not at all submissive in their conduct. They were depicted closer to reality in terms of expressions, behavior and body language.

Tigress, Soothsayer, Gia, Gloria, and Captain Chantal Dubois were shown speaking very calculated. They all were very skilled in their jobs. Tigress, Gia and Captain Dubois are very active and athletic. They don't need male character to help or rescue them.

Whereas in the old animated movies leading ladies like Cinderella, Ariel, and Belle they were mostly found helpless against the manipulative female characters (Step mother and Ursula) and male character (Gaston) in the animated movies respectively.

Ariel and Belle were among the submissive ladies in the main role but were never shown doing house chores or domestic work. Ariel was disobedient as she never follows the orders of her father and Sebastian (the crab) and wants to do whatever she feels is right even if it endangers her life. Belle from Beauty and the Beast is fond of reading books and like Ariel wants to live a life her own choice.

- Has any significant change observed in the positive and negative female characters in new animated movies being closer to reality?

Leading ladies in negative role for example Ursula from "The Little Mermaid", Step Mother from "Cinderella", and Captain Chantal Dubois from "Madagascar 3 Europe's Most Wanted" were more real in depiction in terms of their evil acts. All three ladies in negative role are neither submissive nor domestic. They are more

conscious about their looks and power. Unlike the Step Mother, Ursula and Captain Chantal Dubois apply makeup to look good and presentable. However, female characters like Tigress, Princess Fiona, Gloria and Gia are more care free and are not shown applying any makeup to enhance their looks. They are more close to the commoner who is watching them in the movie.

In new animated movies, Princess Fiona, Gloria and Gia were shown dancing in the movies when they were happy and excited. Captain Chantal Dubois (Vamp) sings a French song to instigate and encourage the officers to fight the animals in order to capture and kill them.

The classic series of fairy-tales by Walt Disney Productions have always emphasized on the looks and figure of the leading female characters. Movies like Snow White and seven dwarfs, Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Sleeping Beauty, Beauty and the Beast portrayed heroines in a submissive but extremely desirable outlook who qualify in their beauty and are most likely to get married to a handsome guy. They sang very beautifully. When they are happy, excited, sad, irritated and in love they start singing to express their feelings. Whereas, Ursula (Vamp) was shown singing in the movie to instigate Ariel to go against the will of her father King Triton and trade her voice to Ursula to become human.

Like Cinderella and Ariel in the old animated movies, *Belle* is an extremely beautiful girl who is sought after by most men. Since she outshines in her looks therefore she is most likely to marry. Therefore it doesn't really matter if she is helpless and most in need of a savior to rescue her. Another very notable finding in the research was the shift from being extremely gorgeous to average or normal looks. In the movie *Shrek*, *Princess Fiona* is shown ugly ogre in the animated movie, unlike other Disney princesses. Here the stereotype of a female being fair-skin and exceptionally beautiful is more likely to get her true love or getting married is negated.

In fact *Princess Fiona* is depicted to be cursed with a spell that turns her beautiful when in reality she's ugly. The movie also gives the message that people shouldn't judge others by their appearances and outlook. Same is the case with the leading females of new animated movies that they are not into looks and superficial beauty rather they focus on the relationships based on sincerity, love and friendship. For instance, Princess Fiona, Belle (female character from old animated movie) and Gloria are shown falling in love without giving importance to looks unlike Cinderella and Ariel who are waiting to get married to their Prince Charming.

- Have new animated movies shown female characters as strong, independent and upright working ladies?

Another very important observation made during this research is female characters portrayed in the new animated movies for example: Tigress of Kungfu Panda 2, Gloria, Gia and Captain Chantal Dubois of Madagascar 3 Europe's Most Wanted were all working women and were very confident and struggling.

Also it was found that leading female characters in new animated movies for instance, Tigress, Gia and Captain Chantal Dubois were professionals in their respective fields. Tigress was a Kungfu warrior who protects China from enemies; Gia is a performer in circus and Captain Chantal Dubois is an officer in animal control department.

This is a great move towards changing thinking patterns of the animated movie-makers who are now showing women as brave, independent and responsible unlike the fairytale characters from the old animated movies.

Master Table for Number of times types of "Submissive" behavior displayed in old and new animated movies:

S.#	Types of submissive behavior	Total number of types of submissive behavior displayed in all 6 animated movies
1	Waiting for a savior	2
2	Walking away	1
3	Crying	9
4	Following orders	10
5	Helplessness	16

*Walking away is the type of submissive behavior observed once in the movie “The Little Mermaid”.

However, being helpless in hard and testing situations has been the most observed submissive behavior displayed by the leading female characters particularly the heroines. In the animated movie “Beauty and the Beast”, Belle is shown displaying helplessness most number of times as compared to the heroines of other animated movies. Princess Fiona and Gloria are shown helpless only once in their respective movies.

Cinderella is shown following orders 7 times in the movie as compared to Belle which is 2 times. Crying has been the most common type of submissive behavior depicted in 5 out of 6 animated movies. Only Cinderella and Ariel were shown desiring for a prince charming to take them away from their homes.

Other Findings observed in the research during content analysis:

*It was also observed that in the old animated movies Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast the leading female

characters i.e., Cinderella and her stepmother, Ariel and Ursula, and Belle were found speaking formal language as compared to the leading ladies of new animated movies for instance, Princess Fiona, Gloria, and Captain Chantal Dubois were found speaking informal and sometimes slang language.

*Ariel from the movie “The Little Mermaid”, Belle from “Beauty and the Beast” were portrayed submissive but they were never shown doing any domestic work for example cleaning, sweeping and cooking.

*Belle was fond of reading books; hence she is educated and can read.

Conclusion:

The present study of comparative analysis of Hollywood’s popular six animated movies was carried out to analyze if there is a shift from animated movie heroine being submissive to independent and responsible. The research findings show that there is a visible change in the way female characters are portrayed in new animated movies as compared to the ones that belonged to classic fairytale series of Walt Disney Productions.

From the physical and personality traits of the female characters to their roles as a member of society, a drastic change can be observed. Earlier female characters were portrayed subservient and always in need of help, but now female characters are shown more brave, strong, independent and closer to the real world. Audiences can easily understand the gender stereotypes associated with women if they compare the princesses with the common female characters (both in human and animal form). If girls desire to be like Cinderella or Snow White; there are also other girls who want to be like Princess Fiona who chose to love Shrek without considering his ugly looks. Some girls idealize Tigress who is

smart, focused and brave and serves her country alongside the males of her society.

Female characters portrayed as working females is one positive effort towards the negation of stereotypes associated to women for being only the care-givers of family and not the bread earners.

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