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Gender in Disney Movies

Gender roles are defined as behaviors, values, and beliefs that society sees fit for males and females based on one's biological sex. For years, the role for women was in the home, where they would cook, clean, and raise the children. Women were inferior to men. The role for men was to be out in the work force. Men were suppose to be the main breadwinners of a family.

Over the years, women have started to take back control and play a bigger part in the work world. Now the main job for a woman is not maintaining a home. Women can receive higher educations and even work above men.

Lately, there has been controversy over the Disney movies and the role male and female characters have in these movies. Children grow up watching these movies, and some people believe that they do learn some gender behaviors from movies like the ones made by Disney. The main question is does Disney support old-fashioned gender roles?

It is common in Disney movies for women to be portrayed as being princesses, queens, maids, or homemakers. For example, in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, and Aladdin, Snow White, Cinderella, and Jasmine are all princesses. Cinderella and Snow White are both seen in a maid's position in the beginning of the movies, cleaning and cooking for someone else. In all of these movies, the loving mother figures are missing, but in Cinderella and Snow White, both princesses have evil step mothers who want control and power.

Women are also seen as being weaker and in need of a male figure to help them or save them from some evil. For example, In Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Snow White is being hunted by her evil step mother (the Queen), who wants to kill her so that

she can be the fairest one of all. When the Queen manages to give Snow White a poisonous apple, it is her Prince charming who comes to the rescue and saves her from her glass coffin. In the Little Mermaid, Aerial is given the chance to become human, but needs her prince to kiss her so that she can stay a human and save her from Ursula.

In the Disney movies it is also common for the women to go from their fathers to their husbands. They do not have independent lives of their own. In the Little Mermaid, Aerial goes from her father (King Triton) to Erik her husband. In Aladdin, Jasmine goes from her father (the Saltan) to Aladdin her husband. Jasmine is forced to marry because her father knows he will not be around forever, and even though he does not say it, thinks that Jasmine will be unable to take care of herself without a man around to protect her.

The way characters are dressed is also an issue some people have with the Disney movies. The female characters are always seen in dresses that show their feminine figures, while the male characters are seen in clothing that brings out their stronger side. It also seems to be the case that women's attire is attributed with the light pastel colors while the men and the villains in the movies wear darker, bolder colors. For example, in Aladdin, Jasmine is seen wearing something along the lines of a tube top, and low cut pants that shows off her belly button. Her clothes are also a pastel blue. Aladdin is seen wearing white pants and a dark purple or blue vest with nothing on underneath to show off his muscles. Aladdin's monkey is also wearing a similar vest, which shows that he is a male character. In Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Snow White is featured at the beginning of the movie wearing rags and cleaning off the steps to the palace. Even in rags one can see her feminine figure.

Everything mentioned throughout this paper are just people's speculations and opinions. I grew up watching these movies and I turned out fine. In my opinion these

movies are classical traditional movies that I will someday pass on to my children. I think it is okay for children to view these kinds of fairy tale movies as long as they realize that this is not the way real life is.