

# Gender And Violence In Disney Movies

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## Gender Representation in Disney Films

Disney movies form a huge part of America's entertainment industry. They are loved by people throughout the world and across all ages. Having been around for close to a century, they have influenced people, mostly children, in many ways, among them clothing, gender perception, games, and violence.

Throughout the time they have been in existence, Disney movies have played a huge role in how society displays different roles played by different genders. Despite the popularity of Disney movies, they are surrounded by controversy on the way they portray the gender roles of their characters. Violence has also been a major controversy in these movies. As time changes, Disney has also shown to change how they display their character as far as gender roles and violence are concerned. In this essay, our main focus will be on how Disney movies gender and violence are portrayed in Disney movies. (England et al., 2011)

To begin with, Disney displays a great difference in the gender roles between the males and the females. Males are presented as the superior and strong gender while females are portrayed as the dependent gender, they are shown to be inferior and weak. These differences in how different genders are portrayed in these movies inaccurately teach the children and the youth that there are societal expectations and behaviors for different genders. Over time, this has led to gender stereotypes in society.

## Princess Narratives and Stereotypes of Masculinity

The princesses in the Disney movies are shown to get happy after marrying their prince, who is shown as their savior from dismal and distress. This portrays women as weak and can't be able to save themselves from distress, and it can only take a man's intervention to save them. Among the characters portrayed by women is that they are fragile, emotional, tentative, ever complaining, and cause more trouble than their male counterparts. Their lives are portrayed as horrible until they find men who come to save them from their troubles. A good example of these female characters is Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty princesses. Portraying women as weak and helpless can be detrimental to the society, the girl child may be disillusioned that they cannot be able to overcome the obstacle they face in their lives and it can only take a man's intervention to bail them out of their problems.

Further, in the movies where the animal characters are involved, for instance the "The Lion King" the

lionesses are displayed as weak and can only wait for the lion to save them. The message this conveys is that the lionesses, which in this scenario represent the women, are that they can't be able to do anything for themselves and are fully dependent on the lions, who, in this case, are the men. Women are also portrayed as troublesome as their male counterparts. Powerful women are portrayed as evil. Even if they gain power, they are not shown to be powerful in a positive way that can show them independence and assertiveness.

Men have also been viewed stereotypically in Disney movies. They are portrayed as self-reliant, full of courage, strong, protectors, and heroic. For instance, in the movie "Aladdin," Aladdin is portrayed as fearless and one who is able to use his wits. In the movie, he is shown as a fighter who fights the "bad guys." He also wears a vest that is revealing to show his masculinity. Gender roles in Disney movies portray the assumptions about the behaviors and expectations of different genders. This can lead to societal problems such as sexual biases.

## Screen Violence and the Need for Responsible Representation

Violence in movies is another great challenge facing society; Disney movies are not an exemption. Some of the scenes in these movies are scary, dreadful, and disturbing nature, especially when the audience is the children. In the movies, there are always stereotypical characters who, in their lives, represent evil and tend to die a terrible death. A good example of how Disney movies portray violence is in the movie "Beauty and the Beast." The movie says that a woman can change an abusive man to a gentle and kind man if she is sweet-natured and pretty. This shows that it is a woman's fault that her man is abusive to her, which tends to promote violence against women who are not sweet and pretty. (United Nations, 1979)

Further, most of the Disney movies feature blood and injury; this is evident in movies like "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Little Mermaid". The scenes of violent acts negatively impact society, especially children who grow up viewing killing the evil ones in society as normal. In these movies there are also scenes where some characters attack others, for, instance, in the movie "Tangled" there is a scene where Flynn goes up the tower to save Rapunzel but upon reaching the top she is stabbed by Mother Gothel. Such a scene depicts violence and may negatively impact promoting moral vices such as violence in our communities.

In conclusion, it is of great importance for Disney movie producers to improve the way they portray gender roles in their movies. They should avoid the stereotypical that portrays different genders in a certain assumption of behavior and expectation. They should try to portray gender balance in their movies; this will help in solving some social problems facing our society today, such as sexual biases. They should stop portraying women as the inferior gender who are helpless, this will instill confidence in the girl child. Also, violence should not be displayed in these movies; this is because it has a negative impact on society. Children who watch the violent acts in these movies tend to become

more violent, which is a detrimental character in society. To ensure a morally upright society, Disney movies and other players in the entertainment industry should be at the forefront in promoting gender balance and a violence-free society through the way they portray their characters.

## References

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