Social Commentary

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**Introduction**

Over the course of time, it can be seen that the Disney Animated movies have progressed and developed in light of the changing eras. It can be seen that the main female characters have changed as well, they are more independent and self-sufficient now. Female suppression and male superiority have been seen repeatedly time and time. These movies also instilled the notion that a woman looks best in the kitchen or doing household chores. It is also shown that they should not stand up for themselves and suffer until a miracle happens and changes their fate. Movies that were made in the 1950s era, like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty idealized the post-war American culture of rags to riches. They were mostly concentrated on how a woman should be delicate, beautiful and depend on a man to be happy (Jorgensen, 2018). It all changed in the late 1980s. The movie Ariel showed that a woman can be rebellious and pursue her dreams, but this movie also portrayed the notion of a woman needing a man’s love. This all changed from the late 1990s with the release of Mulan. This movie portrayed a woman who was strong, independent and went to fight war regardless of the consequences of getting killed so she can restore her family’s honor. Her actions were not to impress a man, but her deeds brought the love of a man to her. This all changed in the 2010s after the release of Brave where no love interest of a man was projected. This paper will discuss how far Disney has come with the portrayal of its female protagonists in the light of the movie "Brave."

**Discussion**

Times have changed and the surrounding culture has changed as well, and Disney has taken full account of this fact. Disney has completely changed the representation of their Princesses over time. They have broken the stereotypes repeatedly, but the 2010s onwards would be the time the industry shined the most. The release of their movie Brave broke all the princess stereotypes and patterns that were followed in the past. Disney took this movie as an opportunity to show their audience that a princess does not need a man or marriage to be happy. The movie shows that a princess can be independent, unique and realize that her worth is more than getting married and having children (Sandlin, & Garlen, 2016). The idea is not about opposing marriage and having children, the concept is that being a woman is more than that. Being a woman is not different than being a man, they have the right to discover themselves and grow as a person just like men do. The current approach of feminism is projected by this movie beautifully.

The movie Brave is regarding a Viking princess Merida. She is independent, ingenious, and a determined young girl who denies being anyone other than herself. One of the prominent reasons that make Merida step out of stereotype princess image is the fact that she refuses to be restricted by marriage. She does not find any amusement in being fought for by men in competition (Tarigan, 2016). She believes in fighting for her own hand instead of letting a man decide her fate. This would be the epitome of women empowerment. Merida does not need a man to figure out and further lead her life. While this movie projects feminism and women empowerment, it also talks about how women were treated like an object and their lives were directed by men. Brave is the projection of a 21st-century girl in a mid-evil Scotland (Garabedian, 2015).

Even though Merida's mother is trying to make her act more like a woman, she refuses. She is a free-spirited girl who follows her own mind and goes after her own destiny. It can also be seen through this movie that women are expected to act a certain way to be more ladylike. Merida does not believe in that. She feels comfortable in the way she is and has the thought that she does not need to act a certain way to be assumed as a lady. Her character is quite strong and is trying to prove to everyone that she can climb mountain, trees and fend for herself. She is a rebel and self-sufficient (Tarigan, 2016).

Girls nowadays will be able to relate to Merida’s character not because she is sloppy and blamed everything on her mother, but the fact that she feels indifferent and misunderstood. The concept of perfection and beauty is not important to Merida, to her, being herself carries more importance. Another noteworthy fact is that she makes a mistake, realizes it and tries to fix it. She corrects the wrong she has done on her own without the help of a man (Macaluso, 2018). She is the one who saves the day not a man and through this process of personal discovery, she learns and understands the importance of family.

**Conclusion**

This movie truly shows how far Disney has come. For a change, they made a movie in which the female lead is not after love and marriage, but is more concerned about her freedom. This movie does not show the typical girl meets a boy romance, it revolves around the relation of a mother and daughter. For the first time, Disney stepped out of its shell through Brave. Through Merida, they changed the stereotypical labeling of a woman (Lind, 2016). Disney continues to change after this movie. Merida has a set a new standard for the Disney Princesses, which deviates from a woman being domestic and dependent on a man to a woman being independent and a hero of her own story.

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