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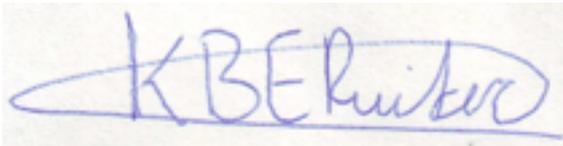
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Name of student: Kaya de Ruiter

Student number: 4475283

Alice in Wonderland

Feminism in Adaptations



Kaya de Ruiter

S4475283

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Abstract

The movement of female empowerment of the 1960s was not the beginning of feminism, but it could be construed as the confirmation of an old tradition of thought that was centred on the inequality of women. The second wave of feminism is a movement that was literary from the start. It realised the importance of female representation in literary works. This thesis is focused on the analysis of the representation of female characters in adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland*. The study makes use of several sources of information and studies that were conducted based on Disney adaptations and feminism. The hypothesis for the thesis is that the Disney characters will adapt to the feminist waves that were present in society at the times of productions. This means that the traditionally accepted traits of women such as demureness and passiveness will become less and less prominent throughout the ages, and the women will show more independence and assertiveness.

Keywords: *Thru The Mirror, Alice in Wonderland, Female empowerment, Alice, Queen of Hearts, White Queen, Voiceless Beauty, 'new womanhood'*.

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Introduction

"We're all mad down here." - L. Carroll

When reading this line, most people will be reminded of the famous stories of Alice in Wonderland. The characters and their adventures have been adapted so often that it has become part of our cultural history. Thomas Leitch states that Disney is aware of the character's popularity and uses familiar characters to create new films that are to the liking of contemporary audiences. "Burton and his collaborators expect their audience to know the original Alice in Wonderland -- that is, the 1951 Disney film -- so well that they are hungry for changes that include a more adult Alice who is repeatedly sexualised, more floridly inventive CGI visuals, more self-plagiarisms, more winking references to other recent blockbuster films, and a climactic battle that pits the cast of *Alice in Wonderland* against the cast of *Through the Looking-Glass*." (26) The film is created with the presumption that people are familiar with the characters of Alice in Wonderland and want changes that contemporary audiences can identify with. What these changes are and why contemporary audiences want them is what this research will examine.

The characters first appeared in the books *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) by Lewis Carroll. Walt Disney took the stories and characters and turned them into film adaptations. Alice in Wonderland has always been a remarkable story for the Walt Disney company. The first project of the company was to produce a series of Alice Comedies. The short films were shown to prospective film distributors and signalled the beginning of one of the most successful global companies of all times. The Alice Comedies were just the beginning. Alice in Wonderland is one of the most adapted stories by the Disney company. Recently two new films have come out. A resurgence of the renewals of classic tales shows that there is currently still a demand for the original novels. That Alice in Wonderland is popular at the moment is made clear by the success of the live-action film from 2010. It is on the 36th place of the highest-grossing films worldwide list, according to boxofficemojo.com.

The most memorable characters of the stories are Alice and her enemy, The Red Queen. Noticeable is that both characters are female and influence the narrative a lot. How much influence they have, their relationships with other characters and their specific personalities is something I will explore in this thesis. This thesis will study female empowerment in the 1930s, 1950s and early 21st century by examining the representations of female characters in Alice in Wonderland film adaptations. Female empowerment is a term I will be using throughout the thesis to describe the decline of traditional roles of females and the rise of independence and individuality of women. With

traditional roles, I mean the role of the silent female character that has no discernible characteristics or goals in life other than to marry and manage a household. The term that is often used for this type of woman is Angel in the House. Christine Stansell observes that the term was described by "Some have found her to be a bloodless and famished creature, a patriarchal construction born of men's needs, not women's. (Stansell 1) By researching the portrayal of the same female characters at different times, this research will attempt to show an increase in independence and individuality.

The three films that will be the source material for this thesis are all produced by the Walt Disney corporation. The first is an animated short film called *Thru the Mirror* from 1936. The short film is a 10 minute animated clip that sees Mickey Mouse in the role of Alice. He finds himself in a wondrous world after falling through a mirror but is soon chased out by the King of Hearts. The other two films are both regular length films. The next one is an animated film from 1951 called *Alice in Wonderland*. The animated film is a relatively faithful adaptation of the Carroll novels and tells the story of a little girl entering Wonderland. The last film is a more recent live-action film from 2010 and is also called *Alice in Wonderland*. This film is situated after the animated film and depicts a more grown-up Alice who travels back to the wondrous land that she visited in her youth. In order to avoid confusion with the two films that are both called *Alice in Wonderland*, I will call the 1951 *Alice in Wonderland* the animated film and the 2010 *Alice in Wonderland* the live-action film.

All of the films are produced by the Walt Disney corporation and are therefore all American productions. These films were chosen because Walt Disney is a film company that has a worldwide audience. The way female empowerment is depicted in these films, therefore, affects a worldwide audience, and not just a specific country. The Disney Corporation has been the most productive adaptor of classic children's fiction in the twentieth century and is still dominant in marketing children's and family films for an audience in the U.S. and the rest of the world (Sawyer 113).

The influence that Disney has on society has been researched extensively. Television and films serve as a socializing function that supplies many children with images that can form and change stereotypes. Disney films hold a prominent position in children's media consumption. The company has produced films since the 1920s and is now one of the largest film producers in the world. Henry Giroux said about the influence of the Disney films; "these films inspire at least as much cultural authority and legitimacy for teaching specific roles, values, and ideals than more traditional sites of learning such as public schools, religious institutions and the family" (Giroux 25)

Because the Walt Disney Corporation is one of the most prominent businesses worldwide and has been for a long time, there are numerous studies regarding its productions. A feminist reading of Disney characters has been a popular topic in past research. Many of these researches centre on the evolution of Disney princesses. For example, Dawn England's, Lara Descartes' and Melissa A. Collier-Meek's *Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses*, Amy Davis' *Good Girls & Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation*, and Cassandra Stover's *Damsels and Heroines: The Conundrum of the Post-Feminist Disney Princess*. Stover classified the princesses that appeared in two periods. The first period ranged from the 1930s till the 1960s and the *Voiceless Beauty* dominated the screens before the second-wave of feminism occurred. The second period was affected, according to Stover, by the anti-feminist backlash of the 1980s, "bombarded with images of the ruthless career woman too in love with ambition to embrace traditional femininity; society could only accept a woman whose ambitions were channelled towards love, or a woman with a great love for her father, a very prominent trend in postmodern representations of powerful female characters." (Stover 5) According to Stover, the Disney feminist princess had a relapse and fell back on more traditional views of the woman as a reaction to societal problems.

England et al. conducted a similar study as Stover. However, they took a quantitative approach to the study. They defined some traits to be masculine; e.g. assertiveness, independence, bravery and the want to explore, and some traits to be feminine; e.g. submissiveness, nurturing, and taking on the role of victim. They counted the number of times the characters showed behaviour that corresponded with their predetermined gender stereotypes and compared the results. Their conclusion is in line with Stover's findings that the *Voiceless Beauties* from the earlier films portray more feminine attributes than masculine attributes. However, the re-embrace of traditional femininity in the 1980s is exaggerated according to the results of England et al. The *Little Mermaid* (1989) had a princess, Ariel, that showed a rather significant difference between the stereotypical gender traits. Masculine being 101, against the feminine traits number of 161. However, the films that followed showed considerably less difference in the ratio of masculine and feminine traits. *Beauty and the Beast's* (1991) difference only being 10, *Alladin's* (1992) difference being 27 and *Pocahontas'* (1995) being 25. These ratios are considerably less compared to the earlier films, *Snow White's* (1937) astonishing difference of 124 and *Cinderella's* (1950) difference of 145. *Sleeping Beauty's* (1959) difference of 66 should not be attributed to the empowering of women. This difference has a lower number than the other two films because *Sleeping Beauty* has fewer traits and actions to examine since she is asleep for most of the film. (558) This last confusing result shows a

problem with a solely quantitative study. Counting frequency should be enriched with qualitative research on what these behaviours do for the plot and if the more masculine traits are accepted.

After the third wave, the post-feminist princess appeared during the 1990s, with more modern characteristics, for example, *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) and *Brave* (2012). The first containing a more traditional plot with a girl falling in love with a boy. The latter a more modern plot with the heroine fighting with a bow and arrow for her independence. Stover said about the evolution of Disney princesses the following; "Throughout the twentieth century, the princess waxed and waned in reaction to periods of strength and decline in the women's movement, reflecting the compulsion to regulate, and subsequently de-fang, female sexuality through visual media." (Stover 2) This notion has been discussed and agreed upon by many researchers, but this research is mostly limited to the classic Disney princess films. Disney has made many more films over the years containing female characters that are not discussed in these studies.

This thesis will contribute to the discussion of female empowerment in Disney produced films by focussing on the characters of Alice in Wonderland, which have received the least amount of attention of female Disney characters in past research, and it will examine rather obscure works such as the short film and works that have not had much attention from scholars because of its recentness, such as the live-action film. This research will build on previously conducted research on the subject of Disney and feminism. The study utilizes a content analysis approach to examine these characters' gender portrayals to reveal the roles present in the films and assess changes over time. The main question that will be researched in the thesis is; Do the traits of female characters in the Disney adaptations; *Thru the Mirror* (1936), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), and *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), show gender stereotypes and is there a change noticeable in the films that relate to changes in society?

The hypothesis for this research is in line with Stover's and England's et al. conclusions, namely that the waves of feminism influenced the representations of female characters in Disney adaptations. The short film was produced before the second wave of feminism and will probably adhere to the more traditional role women were supposed to take on in society. The animated film was produced in the run-up to the second wave of feminism and will probably have less traditional female attributes than the short film, but still more than the live-action film that was produced after the post-feminist period.

This thesis examines the way female Alice in Wonderland characters are portrayed in media from the 1930s, 1950s, and 2010s. It will show if the representations of these characters share similarities to each other, or if they have been changed to fit their contemporary times. Studying the changes or similarities of female characters can tell us if the portrayal of the characters of Alice in Wonderland were influenced by feminism.

The first chapter will describe the theoretical framework that will be used for the research. The basis for the research is the feminist study of other scholars such as England et al. and Cassandra Stover. The first chapter will also include a brief overview of the separate feminist waves, focussing in particular on the second- and third-wave. The waves are an indication of a change in society for women. Changes that should be seen in the characters and should correspond with the waves. Female empowerment and the traits that indicate empowerment will also be explained in the first chapter. This chapter will provide the foundation for the remainder of the chapters.

The films will be introduced in chronological order, and follow the same route the feminist waves did. The second chapter will centre on the short film and animation film which were produced before the second wave of feminism. These chapters will focus on the portrayal of the same characters, excluding the White Queen since she does not make an appearance in either of the adaptations. The third chapter will be about the live-action film, which is the most recent adaptation. The conclusion will unite the results of the analysis, and with the results, the thesis will answer the research question and prove or disprove the hypothesis.

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

In order to research the representation of female empowerment in Alice in Wonderland characters, this research will look closely at three film adaptations. The focus will be on the female characters shown in the films. Even though the characters were initially literary characters from Lewis Carroll's two books *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, the characters were transferred from literature to film by Disney. The focus of this research is not on comparing literary characters to film characters. Therefore this research will neglect theories from film and adaptation studies. Alice is the protagonist in both of the novels. She enters a bizarre world in which she meets various characters. One of these characters is the Queen of Hearts, who is the villain of the stories. Her villainess is made evident by her most characteristic phrase "Off with their heads!" Another character that Alice encountered in the second novel is the White Queen. The White Queen plays no role in the earlier adaptations but has a significant role in the most recent adaptation.

This research will use a feminist approach in order to detect changes or similarities in the female characters. Anglo-American feminists maintain a significant interest in traditional critical concepts of theory such as theme, motif, and characterisation. They treat literature as a series of representations of women's lives and experience, which can be measured and evaluated against reality. A close reading of texts is the principal business of feminist criticism. (Barry 119) Norma Alarcón states that the most popular subject of the Anglo-American feminist is "an autonomous, self-making, self-determining subject." (Alarcon 141) This research's interest matches the Anglo-American feminists' interests and will, therefore, include close reading and analysis of the female characters. With the use of a feminist viewpoint, the characters are analysed on their actions and characteristics.

1.1 The Waves of Feminism

Feminism is often explained by using the metaphor of waves. Just like literal waves, when one wave goes away, another one comes in, but it retains much of the structure of the previous wave. Feminist waves also retain the same underlying structure but have significant differences. Feminist scholars often question the wave narrative. Scholars who oppose it fear that it suggests periods of inactivity and uses generalizations. Others find it a chronological and a logical explanation of the development of feminism. In *Critical waves: Exploring Feminist Identity, Discourse and Praxis in Western Feminism*, Elizabeth Evans and Prudence Chamberlain, discuss how wave metaphor enables or constrains continuity, inclusivity and multiplicity through analysis of feminist identity, discourse and praxis. They say that Marsha Lear coined the term wave narrative in order to distinguish US, UK and European women's liberation movements from the campaigns for women's suffrage. However, the term is no longer used in a purely chronological and thematic fashion. Some scholars critique the wave narrative and highlight a number of crucial flaws: "it sets up generational barriers between feminists (Gillis & Munford, 2004); excludes feminists of colour (Springer, 2002); privileges western feminism (Hemmings, 2005); presents paradoxes of confusion when cross-wave themes and aims are combined (Graff, 2003); and creates both collective and individual crises of feminist subjectivities amongst those who do not identify clearly with a specific wave (Kinser, 2004)." (Evans et al. 2) Evans and Chamberlain acknowledge these flaws, but since feminists do define themselves through the wave narrative, they suggest that a more reflexive and fluid use of the term is optimal. Scholars should take into account that continuity, inclusivity and multiplicity are essential for understanding the wave narrative.

Theories and ideas are not limited to one wave, learning from the past and continuity aids in the development of feminist theory. On-going critique ensures the development of the discourse, and questions both who is included and excluded from the discourse. Feminism is fluid and has different essential aspects for every individual. Evans and Chamberlain say "The wave narrative does not conform to a neat progressive notion of history; indeed, it is possible to speak of the second, third and fourth waves of feminism as being coterminous. The emergence of a new wave does not require the automatic consignment of the previous wave to the history books. Indeed, the intersection between the waves is an important site for rigorous and healthy debate; debates that are both conceptual and chronological." (Evans 3) This fluidity makes it difficult to define the waves, and overlap in ideas between waves is inevitable. However, the wave narrative is a preferred system for researching feminism in Disney, as will be discussed in *Disney and Feminism*.

Before the feminist waves occurred at the end of the Victorian era, the representation of women was dominated by the Angel in the House. The Angel in the House were female characters who only had dominion of the 'woman's sphere' the part that Victorians deemed to be properly in women's control, such as the house, religion and volunteer work. Because of this, a stereotype emerged of the straitlaced, empty-headed and repressed lady. Many researchers see this stereotype as the product of a patriarchal society, who has no voice and is not empowered. Other researchers disagree on this notion and claim that women used the woman's sphere to empower themselves. Christine Stansell mentions a few texts that concur with that view. "Linda Gordon, in her sections on nineteenth-century sexuality in *Woman's Body, Woman's Right* (1976), argued that bourgeois women, by limiting their sexual relations and thus controlling their pregnancies, utilized their supposed asexuality and prudery as a means of contraception. Mary Ryan's *Cradle of the Middle Class* (1981) revealed a highly articulated female society in the Burned-Over District of upstate New York, where women turned the 'influence' bequeathed to them by evangelical Protestantism to the purpose of increasing their power in their families and their communities." (Stansell 467) However, this vision of female empowerment in the Angel of the House is more hidden and personal empowerment. These females had power (to a certain extent) in their own homes, but were still somewhat powerless when it came to politics, culture, and work. Female empowerment is more a combination of power in both the personal and the public spheres. It also encompasses an attitude and world view that is in contrast to the demure and quiet Angel of the House. Cassandra Stover writes about a study in her article that "demonstrated that masculine qualities of the traditional Disney hero are increasingly applicable to the female characters. The study suggests that traits such as "assertiveness," "independence," and "desire to explore" are coded masculine, and delineates the progression of female characters towards embodying these previously off-limits characteristics." (Stover 3) These traits are part of the female empowerment that I will be looking for in the characters of Alice and both of the Queens.

The first wave of feminism was from the 1880s till about the 1920s and its most distinctive aspect was the suffragette movement. During this period, women fought for the right to vote. Public persuasion was considered most unwomanly in those days. With their actions, the suffragettes confronted stereotypes of woman, in particular, claims of proper female behaviour. When a woman spoke in public, she was displaying masculine behaviour. The suffragettes were ignoring their bio-

logical weaknesses as women, a smaller brain and more fragile physique. Some activists used these claims to argue that women deserved the right to vote from an argument of expedience. It would be advantageous for politics if it were to be enriched with the different qualities women had to offer. (Krolokke 5) Women used gender stereotypes to gain the right to vote. Later waves would reject gender stereotypes altogether. This wave had political influence on the world, but not affect the immediate lives of women. The role of women as the Angel in the house was not affected by this wave. The wave did not extend to culture or the more public spheres. (Burkett, par.1) However, the idea of equality between genders was established.

The second wave is said to be most prominent between the 1960s and 1980s, and the focus was on equality and civil rights. This was not only on a political level, but the movement touched upon all of the areas of women's experiences, such as work, home life, and sexuality. The slogan for the second wave was "the personal is political" to highlight the impact of sexism and patriarchy on every aspect of a woman's life. (Krolokke 9) Burkett said in the Britannica Online Encyclopedia that the first indication of this new movement was the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). In it, Friedan spoke of "the problem that "lay buried, unspoken" in the mind of the suburban housewife: utter boredom and lack of fulfilment. Women who had been told that they had it all—nice houses, lovely children, responsible husbands—were deadened by domesticity, she said, and they were too socially conditioned to recognize their own desperation. *The Feminine Mystique* was an immediate bestseller. Friedan had struck a chord." (Burkett, par. 3) The reaction this book triggered was an indication of imminent change for women.

Charlotte Krolokke assigns the protests associated with the Miss America pageants in 1968 and 1969 as the harbinger of a new wave. They protested the underlying assumption that beauty is more important than what women do and think. Radical second-wave feminists started using guerilla theatre to shed light on what they called 'women's oppression'. They staged several types of theatrical activism; "crowning a sheep Miss America and throwing "oppressive" gender artifacts, such as bras, girdles, false eyelashes, high heels, and makeup, into a trash can in front of reporters (Freeman, 1975). Carrying posters reading, "Cattle Parades Are Degrading to Human Beings," "Boring Job: Woman Wanted," and "Low Pay: Woman Wanted," feminists made their message loud and clear: Women were victims of a patriarchal, commercialized, oppressive beauty culture (Freeman, 1975)." (Krolokke 8) Second-wave feminists started to reject the stereotypical roles of women and started to affect the sphere of culture.

Theatre and performance art are not the only arts that are important to second-wave feminists. Elizabeth Hardwick, a feminist of the second wave, wrote in her book *Seduction and Betrayal: Women and Literature* about both women in literature but also about women who made literature, and their role in English literary canon. The representation of women was considered an essential aspect of society since it provided the role models which indicated to women and men what societies expectations were. Key to this wave was a strong belief that women could collectively empower one another. Krolokke characterises second-wave feminists as "a claim for sisterhood and solidarity, despite differences among women and a simultaneous investment in the slogans "Woman's struggle is class struggle" and "The personal is political," directing the feminist agenda to attempt to combine social, sexual, and personal struggles and to see them as inextricably linked." (Krolokke 10) They acknowledged the differences among women and the different standpoints this brought. Because of these differences, there are numerous feminist theories.

The third wave, which began in the mid-1990s, is also sometimes called post-feminism. This wave is dominated by the confidence of having more opportunities and less sexism. "Born with the privileges that first- and second-wave feminists fought for, third-wave feminists generally see themselves as capable, strong, and assertive social agents." (Krolokke 15) This wave encompasses the powerful attitude women started to have. There was a growing national sense that the core goals of the women's rights movement had been achieved. (Burkett, par. 12) Because of these thoughts, feminist groups fractured and started questioning each other's ideas of feminism. This wave was a reaction to second-wave feminists. According to Claire Snyder, second-wave feminism was often represented as anti-male, anti-sex and anti-femininity, so it was more focused on differentiating the female narrative from the male (179). Where second-wave feminism was focused on women as a group, third-wave feminism focused on personal narratives and how feminism has influenced individual women differently; these influences were not always seen as positive. Because the focus is on personal narratives, third-wave feminism is difficult to define. Some feminists believe all of the second wave feminists goals are achieved, and others believe that feminism has turned into an anti-male establishment, and others are still fighting for equal rights on all aspects. Some theories contradict each other, and some share similar ideas. However, Jane Flax states in *Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory*, that the common goal for almost all fem-

inists has been to attempt to describe, as well as explain, the sources of gender inequality, and initiate strategies to end it. (622)

Flax says that feminist theory is closely linked with the analysis of social relations and postmodern thinking. "Gender relations enter into and are constituent elements in every aspect of human experience. In turn, the experience of gender relations for any person and the structure of gender as a social category are shaped by the interactions of gender relations and other social relations such as class and race. Gender relations thus have no fixed essence; they vary both within and over time."(Flax 623-624) It is the postmodern influence on feminism that encourages the scepticism of fixed roles and truths. Because there is no fixed essence of gender relations, there are many contradictions in third-wave feminism. Third-wave feminists admit that there is now more equality, but many feminists stay critical of the level of equality and the areas of equality. Karen Ross is one of these critics "In an era of pervasive anti-feminist backlash, media professor Karen Ross warns against this "replacement of one set of stereotypes for another" disguised as "genuine progress." (Ross 3)

1.2 Disney and Feminism

There has been extensive research done in the past where the focus was on Disney and feminism. The corporation and many of the Disney princesses have been regarded as non-feminist by many scholars. The scholars believe that Disney princesses uphold traditional norms and values and play a passive role in their own lives. Other scholars such as Amy Davis, say that the fact that the films are about women and their problems suggests that women matter. Even though the women are often too good or too willing to let others run their lives, the films are about them, and they exist to give substance to women's feelings. (Davis 223) Both types of scholars have intriguing points of view, but this research does not aim to prove the importance of women for Disney. This research aims to show a change in personalities in the female characters, which correlates with the feminist waves.

Many scholars that researched Disney and feminism divided the princesses into categories that seem to coincide with the feminist waves. In *Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses*, Dawn England, Lara Descartes and Melissa Collier-Meek divide the princesses into three groups and calls the groupings the earlier films, the middle films and the new film. Bridget Whelan and Cassandra Stover make two differentiations. Whelan calls the princesses first-wave and second-wave princesses. Stover uses the terms Voiceless Beauty and 'new womanhood'. Even though these scholars use different names for the three groups, the division of the princesses in the first group are the same. *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) belong to a period before second-wave feminism and are in the first group. The princesses that follow are more complicated. This complication is enhanced by the fluidity and complexity of the second and third waves. However, they all agree that Disney changed the format of the princess with Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* (1989). Because these groups are based on the feminist waves, typically the third group is heralded by *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), which was the first Disney princess film of the 21st century. What these scholars all seem to agree on is the importance of the gender roles portrayed in the Disney films. England et al. say that "Television has been identified as a dominant source of social influence on children's gender concepts." (556) Whelan similarly says "For generations, Disney has used the princess narrative to instill in its viewers an understanding of the position of girls and women in American society." (27) Another shared conception is the use of gender stereotypes by Disney and how it reflects societies ideologies. Sarah Wilde states that Disney adapted its narrative in order to adhere to societal changes. (136) There seems to be an interplay between

societies ideologies and Disney's influence. This research will not focus on the influence Disney has on society, but the influence society has on Disney.

The three groups presented by England et al. follow a logically chronological course which shows the influence the feminist waves had on the Disney films. Therefore this research will use the terms, earlier films, middle films and new films to differentiate between the groups. However, an update is required since the additions of Disney princess films since the publishing of their article in 2011. The new films should also include *Tangled* (2010), *Brave* (2012) and *Frozen* (2013).

For the analysis of the characteristics of the women, this research will adopt the terms of Stover's article, The Voiceless Beauty and 'new womanhood'. Since the films that this research discusses are either from 1936, 1951 and 2010 the focus will be on the Voiceless Beauty that ruled the screen before the first wave and the 'new womanhood' traits that were important for the post-feminist. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to an overview of the relationship between Disney and feminism and the corresponding traits of the Voiceless Beauty and 'new womanhood'.

Cassandra Stover wrote an article in which she writes about the connections between the role of women in history and the Walt Disney productions. Stover writes in her article about a similar representation of women as the Angel in the House but calls it the Voiceless beauty. According to Stover, in the period leading up to the second wave, Disney women were entirely derived from the original Grimm fairy-tales. The women were voiceless heroines who upheld conventional gender norms which were seen fit for the Angel of the house, such as the housekeeping and nurturing. Although the first wave suffrage movement gave women the right to vote, women were still portrayed in a traditionally feminine way, which indicates the widespread encouragement of these traits in the 1930s. (2) Sarah Wilde states in *Repackaging the Disney Princess* "In the Nineteenth Century fairy tales were adapted to teach girls how to become "domesticated, respectable and attractive to a marriage partner through gendered values" (Sperry and Grauerholz 2003, p.714). Such fairy tales reflected the Nineteenth Century's view of "true womanhood"; a value system that denotes a true woman's honourability and respectability based on four virtues: "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (Welter 1966, p.152). Housework was exercise and craft was the "appropriate occupation" for the "valiant" housewife who found happiness through her husband (Welter 1966, p.174). Men however, were associated with "independence", proposing bravery and strength (Rose 1992, p. 15)." (134) Morals depicted in fairy tales reflected expected norms and behaviour in society.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) is an excellent example of the domesticated, respectable women that was valued in the nineteenth century. The heroine of the story is a princess who is forced to flee her home and ends up in a cottage where she fulfils her traditional role as a woman by doing the housekeeping, while she waits to be saved by a man. She is always quiet and demure and happily does what she is told to do, the perfect Angel in the House. These social conventions, in term of gender, were adopted by Disney from Grimm's original fairy tales. The second wave of feminism had not yet challenged the gender stereotypes of women, and so the original Voiceless Beauty was adapted into Disney films.

During the second world war, when women were leading the war effort at home, the submissive female image disappeared from Disney productions. Instead, films without female leads were produced, such as *Bambi* and *Dumbo*. The submissive female reappeared after the war when the appeal and security of domestic marriage were popularized and pushed on the American public. (Friedan 61) The success of *Cinderella* (1950) embodies the desire for women to return to traditional roles for both men and women. "Cinderella is powerless in the tale, Henke et al. (1996) argues this powerlessness represents the ideology of a perfect girl upholding feminine attributes of compassion, kindness and loyalty during slavery and abuse." (Wilde 135) In the end, she is rewarded for her feminine attributes by marriage to a prince. *Sleeping Beauty* arguably has the least amount of power, since she has no influence on her story because she is asleep for most of the duration of the film. The princesses of the earlier films all show the same nineteenth-century characteristics; they are submissive, domesticated and powerless. Moreover, the female characters who show more masculine attributes such as independence, activeness and strength, were depicted as the ugly and the villains of the stories. (Wilde 136)

During the 1960s, the second-wave of feminism came to be, and women became more critical of the traditional portrayals of women. It is therefore unsurprising that there were no princess films made from 1960 till 1989. Disney's passive princesses did not fit the requirements for second-wave feminists. Wilde states that "According to Bell (1995) Disney adapted its narrative of femininity to adhere to societal changes. In the 1960s, a second wave of feminism emerged, attempting to redefine sexual and social roles of women (Rowe 1979; Whelehan 1995)." (136) The Disney princesses that promoted this 'new womanhood' seem to be much more progressive than the Voiceless beauty from before the second wave. The princesses transformed from damsels into heroines, with both a voice and a desire for adventure. "This new approach ushered in two decades of goget-

ting, proactive heroines, with progressive qualities and character traits that corresponded completely to the increasingly acceptable gender roles in a society where women hold the same jobs as men. (Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor 2011) If Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella exemplified the traditional Disney female as docile, beautiful objects waiting for their prince to come, then Belle, Jasmine, Pocahontas, Meg, Mulan, and Tiana are exactly the opposite: focused, ambitious, and in the case of Pocahontas and Mulan, literally heroic as they perform the traditional prince role and save the day." (Stover 3) However, these progressive traits the princesses seem to possess are seen by some scholars as disguises "female protagonists are still dominated by a male world and ideals of romantic love still exist (Tanner et al. 2003). Even Mulan, a strong powerful princess, is subjected back into the feminine roles of society (Dines 2001)." (Wilde 136) Even though the post-second wave princesses seem to possess these 'new womanhood' traits of assertiveness, independence and a desire to explore, they are still repressed by a patriarchal world and eventually assume their expected roles in that world. Even though the narrative has changed from 'any prince' to 'the right prince' the Voiceless Beauty trait of domesticity is still represented in the middle films.

In the new films, a combination of the 'new womanhood' traits and more feminist appropriate goals for the princesses are introduced. In *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), Tiana's goal in life is to own a restaurant which she achieves her goal through effort and without the aid of a man. In *Brave* (2011), the princess, Merida, has no marriage goals and proceeds to enter an archery competition in order to win her hand in marriage. She resists the domestic path her society and father expect her to take. Merida rejects gender stereotypes which third-wave feminist would most probably encourage. These films were produced after third-wave feminism and responded to the critiques of feminists. Post-feminists encourage the scepticism of fixed roles and, because there is no fixed essence of gender relations, accept that there are many contradictions in life. Even though these contradictions are acknowledged, some third-wave feminists value the abolishment of gender stereotypes and value the 'new womanhood' traits. Overall the 'new womanhood' traits are considered as empowering and are more prominent in films that were produced after the second and the third wave.

To summarise; the traits of the Voiceless Beauty encompass what some call stereotypical feminine traits. The Voiceless Beauty embodies societies expectations of females before the second-wave of feminism questioned these stereotypes. The traits that comprise this stereotype are; quiet-

ness, passiveness, a submissive attitude, domesticity, and acting as a damsel in distress who is dependent on men to solve her problems. The second- and third-waves introduced the 'new womanhood' traits. These traits were previously designated as stereotypical masculine traits but were now associated with the 'new woman'. These traits are; assertiveness, independence and a desire to explore. According to previous research, the analysis should show that the female characters of *Through the Mirror* and the animated *Alice in Wonderland* portray more traits of the *Voiceless Beauty* than 'new womanhood', and the live-action *Alice in Wonderland* characters should have more 'new womanhood' traits than traits of the *Voiceless Beauty*.

Chapter 2: Before the second wave

The two analysed adaptations in this chapter were both produced before the second wave of feminism and belong to the Disney era of the earlier films. The short film *Thru The Mirror* was produced in 1936, just after the first wave. The animated *Alice in Wonderland* was produced in 1951, just before the second wave began. The analysis of the female characters of these two adaptations can show if there was already a form of female empowerment in the periods between the first- and second wave.

2.1 Thru The Mirror (1936)

The first analysis is on the animated short film from 1936. This film is 8:48 minutes long, and is a modernised version of Lewis Carroll's books. This modernisation is seen in the addition of the telephone and radio that come to life in Mickey's dream world. In this short film, Mickey Mouse is seen reading Lewis Carroll's book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* before he falls asleep. In his dreams, he assumes a spiritual form with which he travels through a mirror. He then enters an absurd world where he plays with the furniture and does an amusing tap-dance with a telephone and a matchstick. During the dance number, he encounters the deck of cards. Next Mickey is seen dancing with the Queen of Hearts. The King of Hearts sees this and immediately takes her away from Mickey and proceeds to attack Mickey. A swordfight ensues which Mickey wins, and the King of Hearts calls the deck of cards for reinforcements. After another fight scene, Mickey is eventually chased out by the deck of cards, after causing a commotion in the land through the mirror.

When examined from a feminist point of view, the most noticeable aspect is the absence of female representation. *Alice in Wonderland* is well known for its female characters, the protagonist Alice, and the villain of the story the Queen of Hearts. In this adaptation, the role of Alice is played by the brand logo of the Disney corporation, Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse is the company's best-known character and has starred in many productions of the company. By replacing Alice with Mickey Mouse, the gender of the protagonist has changed. This research focusses on the portrayal of female characters and thus will not analyse his role in the adaptation. However, the analysis will include the role of the Queen of Hearts. In this adaptation, the Queen of Hearts plays a small but significant role.

The significance of the role of the Queen of Hearts lies in her actions being the catalyst for the plot. As a character, the Queen of Hearts is difficult to analyse, since she has little screentime. The Queen of hearts is seen from 5.15 - 5.42 dancing with Mickey Mouse. The film does not show

how the dance began, and Mickey or the Queen says not a single word. The Queen does have a content look on her face while dancing, which should make the audience believe that the queen enjoys Mickey's attention. According to Thomas Leitch, her face closely resembles Greta Garbo, a Hollywood film actress from the 1920s and 1930s. "When Mickey dances with a Queen of Hearts who strongly favors Greta Garbo and an outraged King of Hearts attacks him, the film is combining contemporary references with Carroll's trick of treating court cards as individuals." (Leitch 21) Disney's short film featured contemporary references that the audience of the time would understand and appreciate. The glamorous women of Hollywood inspired the only prominent female character. It is interesting to note that beauty is an essential aspect of the Voiceless Beauty. Sarah Wilde states "A princess through passivity represents virtuousness and beauty defines grace and goodwill, whereas villains such as Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty* are active and ugly and thus evil (Wasko 2001a; Bell 1995; Tatar 1999). Under patriarchy, women are only judged on this spectrum, youthful and beautiful or old and undesirable." (136) Even though the Queen of Hearts originally fulfils the role of the villain, she is given a princesses attribute by being beautiful.

Although the limited screen time of the Queen does not give us much material to analyse her character, her relationship with her husband does give us some insights. The King of Hearts is shown as a jealous and violent man. When he sees the pair dancing he literally throws her aside in order to fight Mickey, the Queen is not seen afterwards. The Queen is an essential part of the furthering of the narrative, even though she does not actively decide anything to influence the plot. It is the jealousy of the King, and his decision to take action, that drives Mickey into a fight. Apart from the beauty, the Queen has many other characteristics of the Voiceless Beauty. She comes across as a silent and submissive character since she does not object to the King's treatment of her. However, the Queen does not seem to be an utterly submissive character. Her glamorous Hollywood inspired appearance and her exuberant dancing could be a sign of a desire to be more assertive and rebellious. However, this is pure speculation what Disney shows us is a passive and submissive character that accepts her husband's treatment. The King's actions depict her as a damsel in distress that needs saving, even though she believes she is perfectly fine. Apart from her exuberant dancing, the Queen of Hearts embodies the Voiceless Beauty.

2.2 Alice in Wonderland (1951)

The animated *Alice in Wonderland* is full-length film and resembles the original story of Lewis Carroll more closely than the short film did. Alice is a small child who enters Wonderland and is thrust from one bizarre situation into another. It is made clear throughout the film that Wonderland is a dreamland that Alice made up. Before Alice enters Wonderland, she tells her cat, Dinah, what a world of her making would look like. "If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense" (*Alice in Wonderland* (1951) 02:47) At the end of the film her sister awakens Alice in order to have tea. Lance Weldy writes about the moral which the audience perceives from Wonderland being of Alice's own making. "Alice's foray into Wonderland is preceded by her announcement (in song) that a world of her making would be full of nonsense and impossibility, a claim that then figures her adventures as an explicit manifestation of her own desires that gives her an opportunity to test her belief. Alice is engrossed but unsatisfied and ultimately frightened by the inanity of Wonderland, and audiences are left to understand at the film's conclusion that she has learned to be careful what she wishes for." (Weldy 114) The moral of the story is familiar; be careful what you wish for. This experience teaches Alice, and therefore also the audience that there is danger in dreaming of something more. Dreaming of something more and causing change is precisely what the feminists of the second wave were doing. This film cautions against big chances saying that it can go terribly wrong. Since this film was produced preceding the second wave of feminism, it could be regarded as a caution to second-wave feminists to be careful what they wish for.

2.3 Alice

Alice is a well-mannered child who has some bizarre encounters in Wonderland. Even though she is sometimes frustrated with the characters of Wonderland, she stays polite. Her appropriate behaviour also comes up in her interactions with other characters. Tweedle Dee and Dum tell her it is polite to introduce oneself and state their business. The Queen of Hearts immediately corrects Alice on her manners upon meeting. "Look up. Speak nicely. And don't twiddle your fingers." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 01:01:53) Alice also comments on the manners of Wonderland characters. When the flowers ridicule her for her appearance, she walks away angrily, commenting "They could learn a lot about manners." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 31:51) These interactions indicate the importance of proper manners to Alice and the characters of Wonderland. Her manners often stop her from showing her anger even though she is quite often frustrated with her circumstances. It also limits her speaking her thoughts and showing strong emotions. Propriety could be deemed an attribute of the Voiceless Beauty since it limits her outspokenness, and encourages women to conform to societies expectations of female behaviour.

The few times Alice shows her genuine emotions, she shows happiness and sadness. Alice tends to cry when something does not go as planned. England et al. list 'collapsing and crying' as one of the gender stereotypical behaviours of females. (559) The first time Alice faces a problem is when Alice grows too tall when she tries to enter the door that leads her to Wonderland. In Wonderland, Alice often grows or shrinks by eating or drinking. Alice eats a biscuit and grows to a size too large to fit through the door. The doorknob laughs at her, and Alice responds with "I don't find it funny. Now I shall never get out." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 09:49) She then proceeds to cry so hard that she creates a sea of tears. Alice knows that she can shrink by drinking the potion she drank earlier, letting her enter through the door. Even though this situation is far from hopeless, Alice quickly gives up and resorts to crying. Instead of taking action herself, she passively cries until the situation is resolved. It is resolved when the doorknob reminds her of the potion, and she then drinks it. Alice takes on the role of the damsel in distress and needs the help of a man to save her. Her passiveness is even shown in situations of danger. When Dodo wants to set the house on fire in which Alice is trapped because of her large size, Alice's reaction is to say calmly "Oh dear. This is serious" (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 25:25) However, this time, she does save herself by eating something in order to shrink again. It does take a while for her to take action. She first passively waits for the Dodo and White Rabbit to save her. When they do not help her, she proceeds to save herself. This scene suggests that she can save herself but chooses not to. Her passiveness and taking on the victim role are more attributes associated with the Voiceless Beauty.

The other occasion on which Alice resorts to crying is when she wants to leave Wonderland, but is lost in a dark forest. She sits down on a log in the forest and gives herself the advice "Well, when one is lost, I suppose it is good advice to stay where you are until someone finds you." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 54:07) This attitude is a very passive and defeatist approach to resolving a problem. It closely resembles the Voiceless Beauties like Snow White and Cinderella who wait for men to save them. Just like those damsels in distress, Alice is saved by a male character, the Cheshire Cat. Alice says that she wants to find her way home. Cheshire says that all the ways in Wonderland belong to the Queen of Hearts. When he mentions the queen, Alice immediately wants to meet her. This change in attitude is probably related to the strong curiosity Alice seems to have. It is her curiosity that causes her to enter Wonderland when she follows the White Rabbit and lets her experience all the other strange encounters. Her curiosity seems to be depicted as a dangerous trait since it causes her to enter dangerous situations. Alice knows this but seems not to be able to help herself. She says to herself "Be patient is very good advice, but the waiting makes me curious." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 55:11) Curiosity is her most assertive trait and is depicted by the film and by herself as a faulty trait. Assertiveness is one of the traits associated with stereotypical masculine stereotypes. (England et al. 559)

Alice often is told what to do by the characters of Wonderland. When Alice finds the White Rabbit at his house, he calls her Mary Ann, and he demands she finds his gloves for him. Alice does not protest much and enters the house in order to find the gloves. She is a bit miffed about her own complacency as she says to herself "Goodness. I suppose I'll be taking orders from Dinah next." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 21:29) Even though Alice does not want to perform the task, she shows submissiveness and does what she is told to do. This scene shows Alice's willingness to comply with others wishes and neglect her desires. When she does try to protest, Alice is ignored, and she quickly gives up. Her attempts to protest shows that she wants to be more assertive but is not given a chance and does not have the resolve to continue.

Alice's most prominent traits are her well-mannered behaviour, her curiosity, and her passiveness. Proper manners were essential for a young lady at the time of production. It is part of the image of a Voiceless Beauty. A contradiction to this image of a proper lady is that she is not particularly quiet or demure. She is enthusiastic and wants to comment on what others say but is often spoken over or ignored. The characters do not care much about her opinions or ideas. The reason for this does not have to be linked to her gender. It could also be an indication of the belittling way

adults treat children in Alice's eyes. However, it is clear that Alice does not feel that she is listened to by others and therefore, stops trying to be heard and make her wishes clear. This also coincides with her passiveness and defeatist traits she has when she has a problem. Alice waits for others to resolve her problems and save her. She is dependent on others, especially male characters such as the doorknob and Cheshire, to save her. These traits all correspond to the characteristics of the Voiceless Beauty who ruled the Disney screens before the second-wave.

Her curiosity does give her some 'new womanhood' features. Her curiosity leads her to experience adventures and shows her desire to explore and her assertiveness. However, her curiosity brings her in unpleasant and sometimes dangerous situations. The moral of the film is, to be careful what you wish for, and Alice herself seems to warn the audience that being too assertive is dangerous. Alice would seem to be saver if she suppressed her curiosity and did what others expected her to do.

2.4 The Queen of Hearts

The Queen of Hearts is the other prominent female character in the film. She is the monarch of Wonderland and seems to have absolute power. The Cheshire Cat tells Alice that all ways are the Queen's ways. Her subjects seem to follow her out of fear of losing their heads. She tells Alice that people tend to lose their heads when she loses her temper. When the Queen and Alice play croquet, her subjects do everything they can to let the Queen win. They fear, quite rightly, that if the Queen does not win someone will be decapitated. When her subjects applaud her, the Queen is genuinely pleased by the attention. It appears as if the Queen rules through fear because that is the only way she knows how to be powerful. Her meek husband accentuates her power. He is much smaller than the Queen and is shown no respect by the subjects. When the Queen appears in the film for the first time, the White Rabbit says "Her imperial highness, her grace, her excellency, her royal majesty, The Queen of Hearts, - and the King." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 01:00:25)

The White Rabbit only mentions the King when the King scrapes his throat to get his attention. These actions accentuate the power the Queen has. The King seems to have no problems with the differences in their positions or does not seem to notice. When one of the cards is to be decapitated by order of the Queen, he shouts enthusiastically "Off with his head. By order of the King. You heard what she said." (Alice in Wonderland (1951) 01:04:42) However, although the subjects of Wonderland seem to regard him as unimportant, he does seem to have some power over the Queen. He interferes twice on behalf of Alice when the Queen wants to decapitate Alice. First, he asks for a trial and then asks to hear witnesses at the trial. The Queen is easily persuaded to do what her husband asks of her. Even though the Queen's power is absolute, she shows a submissive side by listening to her husband.

The Queen of hearts does not seem to portray the traits indicative of the Voiceless Beauty. She is assertive and has great independence because of her power. However, these traits that are in line with 'new womanhood' seem to be connected with her villainous. She only has power because people fear her and people fear her because she has these 'new womanhood' traits. She shows no compassion or reasonability and seems to make her decisions based on emotions and her whims. The empowered female character of Wonderland is portrayed as the villain of the story, and Wonderland seems like a dangerous and bizarre world because of it.

Chapter 3: After the third wave

3.1 Alice in Wonderland (2010)

The basis for the live-action film *Alice in Wonderland* is quite different from the animated version from 1951. The 2010 film acts as a sequel to the animated film. This film has a more chronological storyline than the animated *Alice in Wonderland* did. Instead of a series of strange and random encounters, Alice in the live-action film has a quest to fulfil. The story takes place when Alice is nineteen years old, and barely remembers her first visit to Wonderland. What she does remember, she believes to be a dream. Since this film acts as a sequel, it must have been a dream. However, in the film, Alice acknowledges near the end of the film that it is not a dream. However, until that moment, her decisions are influenced by her assumption that it is all a dream. As in the animated *Alice in Wonderland*, the story starts in the real world and also ends with Alice returning to the real world. However, in this adaptation, the real world plays a much more significant role in the film. In the real world, Alice flees an engagement party because she does not want to marry a man named Hamish. She follows the White Rabbit into Wonderland and is awaited by the characters of Wonderland. She is part of a prediction that will ensure that the Red Queen, as the Queen of Hearts is called in this adaptation, loses her power in order for the White Queen to rule.

3.2 Alice

When we first see Alice in the film, she is a young girl and has recently visited Wonderland. Alice is depicted as a frightened and sickly girl. She is frightened that she is going insane because she keeps thinking about weird things such as blue caterpillars. She asks her father "Do you think I've gone round the bend?" (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 02:23) She is comforted by her dad saying he too is mad, and all the best people are mad. This mantra is a recurring theme throughout the film. Alice uses it to console the Mad Hatter when he has a mental breakdown as a prisoner of the Red Queen. Alice seems to accept people who are a bit mad and show unusuality. This portrays Alice as an accepting character that accepts differences in people. However, this image of acceptance is not always present. Alice's aunt, Imogen, is present at the beginning and the end of the film. Imogen is portrayed as a delusional older woman who never married and is still waiting for her fiancé. Alice assures her sister that she does not want to be like aunt Imogen, and when Alice returns from Wonderland, she tells her aunt to stop being delusional and that her fiance will never come. This comment could be meant as a wake-up call, but it mostly shocks Imogen and comes off as a mean and an unaccepting comment from Alice. This scene shows an unusual unaccepting attitude for a post-feminist film. Third-wave feminists often praise individuality. Alice tries to stint her aunt's quirki-ness in order to conform to societies reality.

Alice seems not to be too concerned with the reactions or criticism of others. She mostly tells people when she does not agree with them, and she questions what others find fixed. Alice's sister, Margareth, does not even consider the option that Alice would decline Hamish's marriage proposal. She says about the proposal "When you say yes.." Which Alice interrupts with "But, I don't know if I want to marry Hamish." Her sister thinks this is preposterous and asks Alice "Who then you won't do better than a lord" (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 07:41)

She then proceeds to say that Alice will lose her youth and beauty if she does not marry fast and that Alice could otherwise end up like aunt Imogen. Margareth's assumptions show the values the society in which Alice lives has. The most important aspect of a woman is her youth and beauty, and no one wants to stay unmarried. The necessity of marriage shows an expectancy of dependency and domesticity of women in their society. Margareth says in the film "So you'll marry Hamish. You'll be as happy as I am with Lowell, and life will be perfect. It is already decided." (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 08:08) She says that Alice's destination has already been decided for her and that she will be happy if she follows the path that society expects of her. The society Margareth depicts for the audience closely resembles the society of the earlier Disney films. This would suggest

that society expects Alice to have the attributes of the Voiceless Beauty. Alice soon discovers that her sister's happy marriage is a lie when she sees Lowell kissing another woman at the party. The addition of this scene quickly dissolves the notion that it would be in Alice's best interest to conform to societies expectations.

Alice shows her independence by choosing in the end, not to marry Hamish. Instead, she becomes the apprentice of her not-father in law and sails to China. However, Alice is not always this independent, and the film shows quite some contradictory moments. There are a couple of scenes where Alice is in danger because of the henchman of the Red Queen. In all of the scenes, Alice flees and is rescued by other characters in Wonderland. She is saved from the Bandersnatch by the Dormouse, found and guided by the Cheshire Cat when she is lost in the woods, saved by the Mad Hatter at the tea party and saved by the Mad Hatter and the Bandersnatch at the Red Queen's castle, even though Alice is the only one in possession of a sword. The only moment Alice does not rely on others to save her is in the end when she fights the Jabberwocky. Most of the film, Alice is portrayed as the damsel in distress who depends on others to save her. Alice's independence seems to increase throughout the film. This could suggest that independence is not innate to Alice but is learned during her adventures.

When Alice is in Wonderland, another predestined path awaits her. Alice is to slay the Red Queen's Jabberwocky. She is supposed to risk her life for strangers in a dreamland of her own making. She refuses to do this for a long time even though the characters of Wonderland constantly put pressure on her. Alice diverges from the path laid out for her in Wonderland by saving the Mad Hatter instead of going to the White Queen to prepare for killing the Jabberwocky. She says "From the moment I fell down that rabbit hole I was told what I must do and who I must be. I've been shrunk, stretched, scratched, stuffed into a teapot. I'm accused of being Alice, and not being Alice, but this is my dream. I'll decide where it goes from here. I make the path" (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 43:49). The refusal of her predestined path shows some rather 'new womanhood' traits. Alice shows assertiveness and independence at that moment. She rebels against societies expectations and chooses herself instead. However, Alice is unsuccessful in saving the Mad Hatter. When she finds him, he tells her to find the Vorpall sword, which is part of the prophecy and to leave him behind, he then saves himself. Alice does what she is told and flees with the sword to the White Queen, thereby following her destination. The message this sends to the audience is that even though Alice tries to follow her own path, she cannot divert from the path decided by others. This message contradicts

the third-waves believe that women can decide their own future. It instead suggests that even when Alice tries to rebel against societies expectations, she is unable to influence her fate dictated by society.

There are noticeable similarities between the paths set out for her in reality and Wonderland. In both situations, Alice is told what to do by other people. She is pressured to follow the path others have decided for her, and in both cases, she does not want to do it. In the real world, she is pressured by her family and friends to marry Hamish. In Wonderland, she is expected to risk her life to save the characters from the Red Queen.

The only difference between the two situations is that Alice eventually succumbs to the pressure of the characters from Wonderland. She fulfils her destiny of slaying the Jabberwocky, and she returns to reality. There Alice chooses herself over others. She rejects societies expectations by not marrying Hamish, threatening Lowell to treat her sister better, and sailing to China. In the real world, Alice seems to have more traits of 'new womanhood' than she seems to have in Wonderland. She is a contradictory character who sometimes shows aspects of female empowerment and sometimes shows traits from the Voiceless Beauty. These contradictions are confusing but do agree with the post-feminist scepticism on fixed roles.

3.3 The Queens

In the live-action adaptation from 2010, the queens are sisters who are engaged in an ongoing battle for power. The Queen of Hearts is called the Red Queen and is portrayed as the villainous sister who took power over Wonderland from the White Queen with force. During her reign, people are miserable and fear for their lives. Anything that displeases the Red Queen could lead to decapitation. In the first scene of the Red Queen, she punishes one of her staff and his entire family, for eating her tarts. Decapitation is the standard punishment under the rule of the Red Queen. This type of punishment is often deployed, which is made clear by her head filled moat. The Queen maintains her power through fear. This is not the way she would like to rule, but it is the only way she knows how to maintain her power. When the Red Knave asks her if it is better to be feared than loved, she answers "I'm not certain anymore." (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 55:12) She wants to be loved, but it seems that she choose to rule with fear because that was the only way she could get what she wanted. As the oldest sister, she is the rightful heir. However, her sister became the queen because of her charm and beauty. The Red Queen asks "Why do they adore her but not me?" (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 54:24) She also says of The White Queen "Mirana can make everyone fall in love with her; men, women even the furniture." (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 54:42) When they meet at the battleground, the Red Queen reveals that she is the eldest sister, but the White Queen got the approval from their parents because she was more charming and beautiful. The Red Queen says that the White Queen uses her beauty to get what she wants, but that it will not work with her. She fights for her right as the rightful heir of Wonderland. Their society seems to praise beauty over rules. With the victory of the White Queen, the film seems to suggest that beauty prevails. Post-feminists would object to this notion since behaviour and actions are more important than a woman's appearance.

The Red Queen is insecure about her large head and therefore surrounds herself with people who also have deformities. When Alice says she is laughed at for her size, the Red Queen immediately takes her in because she sees a kindred spirit. She says to Alice "My dear girl, anyone with a head that size is welcome in my court." (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 48:12) The Red Queen depicts with this scene a second-wave feminist notion of female solidarity. When she discovers that her subjects faked their deformities and have been lying to her, she gets understandably angry. They start a rebellion against her that the Mad Hatter instigated. After the rebellion, she says that it is better to be feared than loved. It is not until she is forced to fight for her power and independence that she decides to attack her sister and her rebellion.

The White Queen is depicted as the good queen. She wears all white and acts graciously and is kind to everyone. The White Queen ruled Wonderland before the Red Queen did, and according to the Mad Hatter, everything was lovely when she ruled. The White Queen is the one the people want as a ruler because she is 'good'. However, this seems to be all a facade. A character never suggests it, but the White Queen has some questionable moments. When the White Queen meets Alice for the first time they talk about the Red Queen, while she puts severed fingers in a concoction. She immediately asks about her sister's head, something the Red Queen has always been most self-conscious about. (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 01:08:57) The White Queen knows that the Red Queen is seen as different and ugly because of her big head and uses her sister's deformity in order to emphasise her beauty. She criticises the appearance of her sister, something which should not define her character. When Alice asks the White Queen "Why don't you slay the Jabberwocky yourself, you must have the power." She replies with "It is against my vows to harm any living creature." (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 01:15:54) While she says this she swats away a firefly. This action suggests that she does not have that much difficulty with harming a creature, but it is an excellent way to come across as a benign ruler. It also ensures that others do her fighting so that she does not have to do anything herself.

All of these actions are not benign and show that the White Queen is not as she portrays herself to others. She also shows no sisterly bond or any love for the Red Queen. When Alice slays the Jabberwocky, and the White Queen takes over Wonderland, she banishes her sister. Since she vowed not to harm a living creature, she does not sentence her sister to die. Instead, she banishes her sister to the Outlands. No one is allowed to show her kindness or to speak to her ever again. The Red Knave is cuffed to the Red Queen and receives the same fate. He then tries to kill the Red Queen but is stopped by the Mad Hatter. The White Queen shows no concerns about sending her sister away with a man who moments before tried to kill her.

Besides her goodness, the White Queen also has a more manipulative way of getting what she wants. She comes across as a promoter of free will, but she uses her charm to let people believe they made their own choices. She tells Alice "Alice, you cannot live your life to please others, the choice must be yours." (Alice in Wonderland (2010) 01:19:43) However, Alice is supposed to fight the Jabberwocky for her, and therefore let the White Queen rule once more. When the champion must be chosen, she uses gestures to tell the other characters what they must do or say, and she implies that Wonderland will be ruined if Alice does not fulfil her duty. Where the Red Queen uses

directness and is very open about what she wants, the White Queen acts contrarily and uses manipulation and a facade to get what she wants.

Conclusion

Through previously conducted studies, a hypothesis for the characteristics of the female characters was formulated. It stated that Disney adaptations that were produced before the second wave would probably have the traits of the Voiceless Beauty. These traits are; quietness, passiveness, a submissive attitude, domesticity, and acting as a damsel in distress who is dependent on men to solve her problems. Disney adaptations that were produced after the second and third waves should show signs of female empowerment, by depicting more 'new womanhood' traits. Attributes that indicate female empowerment are; assertiveness, independence and a desire to explore. The question which should now be answered with the information from the analysis is; Do the traits of female characters in the Disney adaptations; *Thru the Mirror* (1936), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), and *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), show gender stereotypes and is there a change noticeable in the films that relate to changes in society?

The short film *Thru The Mirror* was produced before the second-wave and concurred with the expectations of the hypothesis. The character of The Queen of Hearts as portrayed in the short film seems to be in line with the Voiceless Beauty Stover described. She is shown as a quiet and passive woman, who shows no assertiveness or independence. Her jealous husband decides what she does and does not give her the chance to object. The portrayal of the Queen is in line with the portrayal of Disney princesses from the earlier films.

In the animated *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice mostly shows traits of the Voiceless Beauty. She easily cries and shows a passive attitude. She does not act by herself, waits for others to save her, and shows no independence. She does have some 'new womanhood' traits that come from her natural curiosity. However, this trait is shown as a bad trait to have, which is not in line with feminist notions. This critique on 'new womanhood' characteristics can also be seen by analysing the Queen of Hearts. The Queen shows many empowering traits, such as assertiveness and independence.

However, the Queen is the villain of the story, and this suggests that these traits are villainous characteristics, and not to be admired. The portrayal of these women are in line with what is expected from a period that preceded the second wave.

The live-action film *Alice in Wonderland* seems to be more complicated. Alice's character is difficult to define since she seems to be whimsical. She makes different choices in similar situations. She is both independent and dependent, passive and assertive. She seems to develop from a Voiceless Beauty to a more empowered character, with a few exceptions such as her giving into the prophecy. Alice does decide to fulfil the prophecy, which suggests that the system is right. The audience learns that the right thing is to accept responsibility and sacrifice yourself in order to conform to societies expectations.

However, minutes later, she chooses herself over the path that others chose for her by her refusal to marry Hamish. At the end of the film, she seems to resemble the Red Queen. Both women displease others by choosing for themselves. The resemblance of the two characters is reinforced when Alice yells the Red Queen's catchphrase, "Off with your head.", when she decapitates the Jabberwocky. Both characters choose themselves over others and do not care about the consequences their actions evoke by others. Alice seems to be the villain in the real world because no one wins from Alice's decisions except Alice.

The Red Queen is a fully empowered character who possesses no traits of the Voiceless Beauty. She is assertive and independent and does everything she can to protect her power and freedom. She does not pretend to be other than who she truly is. The White Queen is also assertive and independent, but she pretends to have the traits of the Voiceless Beauty. She acts innocent and demure but uses her grace and beauty to get what she wants.

Because the Red Queen is depicted as the villain of the stories, her empowerment can be seen as an anti-feminist backlash. The roles of the two queens seem to suggest to the audience that women who put up a facade and use others have more power than women who are open about what they want.

The characters of this film seem to be more complicated and show the more traditional traits from the Voiceless Beauty and 'new womanhood'. Even though the hypothesis is mostly correct, I would have expected that the traits of female empowerment in the most recent film were not depicted as bad characteristics to have. It gives a slightly cynical view of female empowerment. These progressive traits seem to be paired with ruthless characters who use others to get power and freedom. This depiction of those traits was expected from the animated *Alice in Wonderland* since it

appeared before the second wave of feminism, but I would have expected the most recent film to be more in line with the views on the feminism of contemporary society. Although there seems to be some progression in the female empowerment of the characters, the analysis shows that there could have been more progression.

In order to analyse the characters more accurately, more research should be done on the portrayal of the female characters, especially concerning feminism. A quantitative study such as England et al. conducted could enrich this research and show the frequency of stereotypical masculine and feminine behaviour. There is an abundance of research on the characters in the novels, but the films have been neglected. Perhaps, in more time, the most recent film will be the subject of more studies.

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