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## Portrayal of the Heroine in Shōjo: Female Representation in Hayao Miyazaki's Animated Features

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Portrayal of the Heroine in Shōjo:  
female representation in Hayao Miyazaki's animated features

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## Introduction

Characters in films are often built upon previously established stereotypes or tropes. These stereotypes are also regularly bound to gender, for example the 'brave and strong male hero' who is the active force in the story, and the 'cute and fragile female princess' who plays a more passive role. These kinds of stereotypes can be seen in a lot of early Disney animation films based on old fairy tales, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Cinderella* (1950). However, animation is a very versatile medium and can be used to create enjoyable stories with in-depth characters in all kinds of different genres.

Multiple Japanese animation studios produce animated tv-series and films, and one of these companies is Studio Ghibli, sometimes called the 'Japanese Walt Disney' or the 'new Disney of Japan' (Hernández-Pérez 2016, 298). They are known for their portrayal of detailed whimsical worlds and environmental themes in their critically acclaimed animated films. The studio became known internationally with some of their most popular films like *Princess Mononoke* (1997) and *Spirited Away* (2001), transporting the viewer to fantastical worlds of adventure. Furthermore, their depiction of female characters and heroines is more three-dimensional and nuanced than some other Japanese anime productions and they might be more reasonable role models for the audience. This is remarkable, because characters in animation are usually built around specific character tropes and personality stereotypes, which result in overly simplified gender roles or the sexualized depiction of characters. For example, 'masculine characteristics' are things like physically strong, assertive, and independent and 'feminine characteristics' are things like affectionate, nurturing, and fearful (England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011, 556-8).

The issue of gender representation and stereotyping of gender characteristics continues to be relevant in our current society. Therefore, it is useful to examine how the representation of women has evolved in the past decades in creative works like animation. Because of the popularity of their products, Studio Ghibli has had a huge influence on the western perception of Japanese animation, asserting their dominant place in the mainstream animation industry. Although Studio Ghibli is certainly not the only animation studio who challenges the established ideas of character representation, it will be the one this thesis is focused on. One of the studio's main directors, and one of the founders, is Hayao Miyazaki. He is a famous name within the anime community, who has written and directed a lot of the successful Studio Ghibli animated films. This means that he fits in the 'auteur theory', where the director's perspective is emphasized over the role of the other professionals involved in the production (Hernández-Pérez 2016, 299). As such, we can say that Miyazaki is an *auteur* for his feature films, where his personal opinions unconsciously or consciously influence the films. This shows that he has had a lot of direct influence on the representation of women in the films. At first

glance, the female characters in Ghibli films seem very progressive and complex, not letting the existing stereotypes define the depiction of their entire personality. This contrasts with stereotypes in Japanese anime for a female-demographic (*shōjo*). However, while the studio makes an impressive effort to improve the representation of the female lead, this is certainly not a flawless example of how to depict a female character in animation, because the creators are still partially falling back to earlier ideals and personality tropes to design their characters.

Therefore, this thesis will answer the following question, “How are gender stereotypes in animation challenged by female characters in Hayao Miyazaki’s films?”. To answer this question, three of Miyazaki’s heroines will be analyzed based on their goals and how they try to achieve them, their personalities, and their relationship with the male main character of the film. The characters in question will be Nausicaä from *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), San from *Princess Mononoke* (1997), and Sophie from *Howl’s Moving Castle* (2004). This analysis will be based on gender stereotypes prevalent in the *shōjo* anime genre (Napier, Denison, McCarthy), the official Disney princesses by using gender characteristics (England et al.), universal archetypes (Jung, Mark and Pearson), and the *Heroine’s Journey* theory (Maureen Murdock). We will show that within the main body of Miyazaki’s works at different stages of his career, there is a clear development in how he depicts his female leads. At the start he partially conforms to the traditional role patterns, followed by a destruction of the female portrayal, and ending with a reconstruction or synthesis of the emancipated female representation.

## Chapter 1 – Character types in animation

To avoid confusion, listed below are definitions for terms used in the thesis, as defined by the Oxford Languages dictionary.

**Archetype:** (in Jungian theory) a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious.

**Cliché:** an expression that is trite, worn-out, and overused.

**Trope:** a significant or recurrent theme; a motif.

Terms as defined by Ed Sikov in *Film Studies: An Introduction* (2010).

**Type:** a shared, recognizable, easily grasped image of how people are in society (with collective approval or disapproval built into it).

**Stereotype:** a widely held but oversimplified and sometimes demeaning type.

The line between type and stereotype becomes blurred when it comes to women's characters in film, and this has a connection with the difference between sex and gender. As Ed Sikov explains, "sex is the physiology we are each born with; gender is how we learn to understand the sexes, [...] which communicates information about masculinity and/or femininity." He further gives the examples of a popular female character type, *the Blonde Bombshell*, who is the "curvaceous beauty with radiantly light-colored hair and, often, a certain lack of normal intelligence." (Sikov 2010, 133-4) This character type can be seen as a stereotype, as it is very oversimplified and is sometimes used as comical relief in a demeaning manner.

### 1.1 Shōjo anime genre stereotypes

Gledhill and Ball point out in their study of soap operas that representations of women in popular media are often stereotypes rather than "psychologically rounded characters" (Hall, Evans, and Nixon 2013, 342). This is also the case within animation, more specifically in Japanese anime is a genre called *shōjo*, literally 'young girl', which often has very simple characters based on stereotypes. The genre was originally created as a contrast to the *shōnen* genre, literally 'young boy', separating the previously *children's* market into two distinct thematic strands for boys and girls in the late 1960's. (Denison 2015, 88-9). According to Masami Toku, heroines in this period are often depicted as "cute, innocent, and patient girls, but with strong wills to change their tough lives to be happy or successful. The heroine's image idealizes girls' figures and styles." (Toku 2007, 24). The *shōnen* genre shows are often fighting series and have their male leads more focused on social development through perseverance rather

than romance, with a demographic for mainly early to late teen boys. In contrast, the *shōjo* shows are made for an early to late teenage girl demographic and tend to have stories of personal growth where the female lead achieves the love of the main male character as their main theme (Unser-Schutz 2015, 135). Furthermore, Fusami Ogi gives the definition that “A typical *shoujo manga* has been regarded as the story, of a prince and a princess with a happy ending to a love story such as Cinderella, in which a lower-status girl gains a higher-status husband through magic.” (Ogi 2003, 795). Unser-Schutz observes another difference between *shōjo* and *shōnen*, “*Shōnen-manga* also feature larger casts of characters than *shōjo-manga*, which seem to focus on a small, core set. [...] [I]t is related to the focus on interpersonal relationships in *shōjo-manga*.” (Unser-Schutz 2015, 148). Which supports the notion that the *shōjo* genre focuses on personal matters.

Typically, girls in *shōjo* anime are ultrafeminine in a very passive or dreamy sense, however the heroines in Miyazaki’s films are often independent and active, giving them more stereotypical masculine traits (Napier 2005, 154). As they are very independent and active, and willing to confront their obstacles in a courageous manner. The depiction of heroines in Ghibli is consequently significant, because as stated above, characters in anime are often built around specific character tropes and stereotypes, which results in overly simplified gender roles or the sexualized depiction of characters. However, the Miyazaki films are not without their own flaws, and should still be looked at critically.

In the genre as a whole, characters in anime and manga are sometimes shown in a very provocative or sexual pose or a completely opposite ‘*moe*’ style designed to invoke intimate or protective feelings in fans in order to create a form of ‘fan-service’<sup>1</sup> (Denison 2015, 53). *Moe* is defined by Oxford Languages as: “The quality in a fictional female character of being youthfully innocent and vulnerable in an idealized way, perceived as eliciting feelings of affection or protectiveness.” This can be connected to the objectification and male gaze theory from media studies, where the existence of women’s bodies in media only seems to be there for the use and pleasure of others (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997, 175). Furthermore, that they are only there for the pleasure of *men*, and that the pleasure of looking has been split between active/male and passive/female allowing a fantasy to be projected onto the characters (Mulvey 1975, 808-809). These gaze and objectification are not only about the physical body, but also the personality and demeanor of the female characters. The implication is that the audience would want a passive and compassionate female character, rather than an aggressive and independent one. While the sexual objectification of female characters in anime is more prevalent in *shōnen* shows, trying to appeal to the teen boy audience, this passive personality behavior can be seen in both the *shōnen* and *shōjo* female characters. Showing

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<sup>1</sup> Fan-service is material in a work of fiction or in a fictional series that is intentionally added to please the audience, often sexual in nature, such as nudity. It is about "servicing" the fan – giving the fans "exactly what they want." – From Wikipedia “Fan service”

simultaneously an ideal fantasy to the male audience, while also showing the female audience the ‘proper’ way to act around others.

This is also shown in the use of language by the female characters in shōjo and shōnen. Unser-Schutz states that “Japanese is commonly said to be a highly gendered language, meaning that the speech patterns of male and female speakers differ greatly. Over the past twenty years, however, numerous studies have reported changes in the use of female speech, with reports that women are using more neutral or masculine speech.” But despite this change to a more neutral or masculine speech, the female characters in shōnen especially use strongly feminine forms more than has been reported for natural speech (Unser-Schutz 2015, 147).

As Lamarre explains, “Miyazaki prefers to work with heroines to avoid certain totalizing tendencies – which comprise both male adventure stories and narratives of technological progress. [...] So it is that Miyazaki resorts to conventional, even stereotypical ideas about women in order to transform the action-adventure story, which is coded as male.” (Lamarre 2002, 351). Thus, showing that Miyazaki uses the characters to surprise the viewers and subvert their expectations in order to expand their horizon on what a female character can be and what they can achieve within the narrative of cinema. Furthermore, this is a noteworthy point in combination with Napier’s argument, because she highlights the fact that Miyazaki’s female characters have the potential for change, growth, and compassionate empowerment. However, they are not ‘real’ at the ‘level of daily life’, but the heroines are a way for Miyazaki to express his magical reality and help the viewer understand and live in that ideal fiction (Napier 2005, 154). Furthermore as Miyazaki has said in an interview with Yamaguchi for Eureka magazine “This is not realism at the level of daily life but rather the expression of an independent imaginative universe.” (Yamaguchi 1997, 29) Therefore, according to Napier, the “female characters are indeed “real” and richly believable *within the confines of the narrative*” (Napier 2005, 156). Besides the possibility for character growth, the narrative is rooted in a believable world which is created by, as Napier explains, a “careful mixture of realistic and fantastic details which makes them able to exist comfortably inside a larger realm that could legitimately include our own universe as well” (Napier 2005, 152). This allows the female characters to be “real” in their established world and the confines of the narrative, if they are internally consistent with the rules that govern their universe, even if they would not be realistic when transported to our reality. This argument of Napier illustrates successfully that while the female characters are complex in the film, they are still based on stereotypes and idealized versions of what women can be, in the eyes of the director. So, even though the female characters are nuanced and not passive one-characteristics personalities, they are not a complete representation free from gender stereotypes, which will be further discussed with the character case studies.



## 1.2 Archetypes

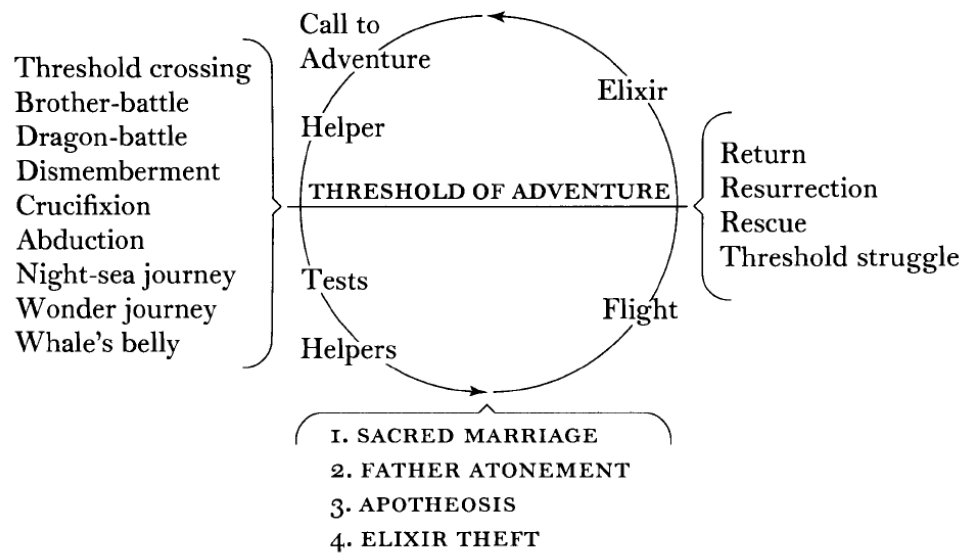
Fairy tales are an old but important part of history to researching character traits, characteristics, and types. For example, the stories collected by the German Brothers Grimm, published as *Children's and Household Tales* in 1812, or the tales written by the Danish author Hans Christian Anderson, most famously *The Little Mermaid* published in 1837. In these tales, certain characters are easily categorized by what role they play in the story. These roles are commonly called archetypes and were proposed by Carl Jung, defining them as universal symbols from the collective unconscious (Jung 1969). He describes the four parts of a human unconscious: Ego, Anima/Animus, Shadow, and Persona; and several archetypal figures: Great mother, Father, Child, Devil, God, Wise old man, Wise old woman, Trickster, and Hero. Building further on Jung's theory of the four cardinal orientations and the nine figures, are the twelve universal archetypes which were popularized and further developed by Margaret Mark and Carol Pearson in the widely recognized brand psychology book, *The Hero and the Outlaw* (Mark and Pearson 2001). These archetypes are the Lover, Hero, Outlaw, Magician, Explorer, Sage, Creator, Innocent, Caregiver, Jester, Everyman, and Ruler. Where for example the 'child' is changed to the 'innocent'. A simple overview of these archetypes is shown in Table 1. An extended list of the different archetypes and their characteristics, such as their core desire, goals, and the shadow within them for which they are at risk, is available in Appendix A.

<b>Mastery</b> <i>Leave a legacy</i>	<b>Stability</b> <i>Provide structure</i>	<b>Belonging</b> <i>Pursue connection</i>	<b>Independence</b> <i>Explore spirituality</i>
Hero: mastery	Caregiver: service	Lover: intimacy	Innocent: safety
Outlaw: liberation	Ruler: control	Jester: enjoyment	Sage: understanding
Magician: power	Creator: innovation	Everyman: belonging	Explorer: freedom

**Table 1.** Overview of the twelve archetypes from *The Hero and the Outlaw*.

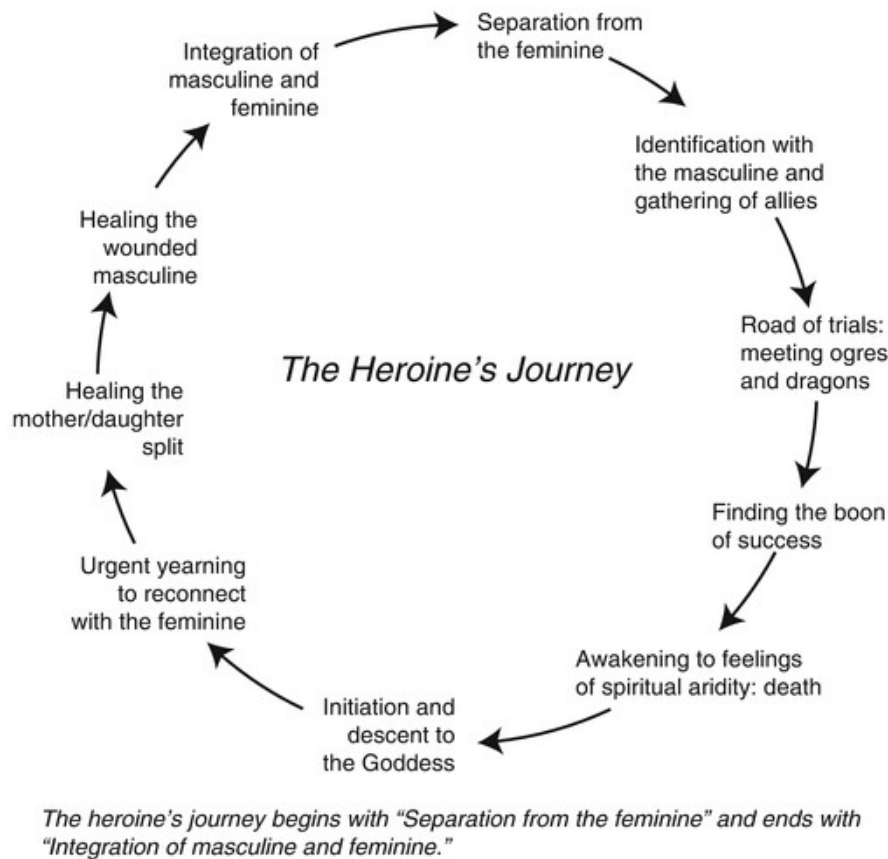
## 1.3 The Journey

Building on the theory of the Hero archetype and the mythologies around the world, is the Hero's Journey monomyth proposed by Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Campbell 1949). This theory describes the adventure of the Hero as a series of steps, the Departure or Call to Adventure, followed by crossing the threshold of Adventure and the Initiation and after an Atonement and Ultimate Boon, a Return (see Figure 1.).



**Figure 1.** The Hero's Journey as defined by Joseph Campbell.

It mainly focuses on the male journey however, which has been a point of debate, as it normalizes the masculine-centric story protagonist. In reaction to this work, Maureen Murdock has written *The Heroine's Journey* which looks at the Hero from a feminine perspective (Murdock 1990). This is a book that Helen McCarthy suggests all scholars researching Miyazaki should read and utilize, because it highlights the advantages and strengths gained by incorporating both masculine and feminine principles within a character. She goes so far as to say "[Murdock] is charting Miyazaki's quest since he set out to make *Nausicaä*." (McCarthy 2018, 100). The Heroine's Journey is depicted in Figure 2. It enables us to look at the Miyazaki female characters in a new perspective. The theory starts by the rejection of the feminine and the identification with the masculine, this allows them to travel the road of trials and find success. However, this often leads to missing their femininity and after the all-time low of the journey, feel the yearning to reconnect with the feminine. By healing the distinction of the mother/daughter split and completing herself with an integration of the masculine and feminine. Thus, she travels the entire journey towards personal growth.



**Figure 2.** The Heroine's Journey as defined by Maureen Murdock.

## 1.4 Female depiction in Disney animation

These archetypes are connected to the widely known Disney Princesses because the films are based on the stories from Grimm and Anderson, in which the archetypal roles are prevalent due to the moralistic nature of the tales. Since 13 May 2019, the twelve official Disney Princesses are Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora, Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, Pocahontas, Mulan, Tiana, Rapunzel, Merida, and Moana ("Disney Princess Official Site" 2019). However, there is a massive difference between the older Disney era with early films like *Snow white and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) or *Cinderella* (1950), compared to the newer films like *Brave* (2012) or *Moana* (2016). They are all considered to be part of the official Disney Princesses brand, even though there is almost 80 years between the films, during which a lot has changed in terms of women empowerment and representation in mainstream media.

There is also the special case with *Frozen* (2013), where Elsa and Anna are not official Disney Princesses, simply because they made enough money from merchandise on their own and did not need to be added to the Princesses Line of toys to be profitable. (Stanford 2021) So, to make a comparison between Disney female characters and Ghibli female characters for this research, the

focus will lie on the films made during the ‘Disney Renaissance’ (1989-1999). This was a period during which Walt Disney Feature Animation had a phase of industrial growth and returned to producing critically and commercially successful animated films (Pallant 2011, 89). The films within this period that include an official Disney Princess are Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Jasmine in *Aladdin* (1992), Pocahontas in *Pocahontas* (1995), and Mulan in *Mulan* (1998). They all have some connection to royalty or are in a position of power. Ariel is born into royalty, Belle marries the prince in the end, Jasmine is the sultan’s daughter, Pocahontas is the tribe chief’s daughter, and Mulan ends up in a position on the emperor’s council. Even though they are a progressive improvement on the helpless Snow White or Aurora, who passively sleep for most of the film waiting for their Prince Charming to rescue them, they each still have flaws associated with their character. Ariel gives up her entire life for a prince she has never met, Belle and Jasmine become the Damsel in Distress trope, Pocahontas needs a white man to help solve the situation and act as savior, and Mulan is forced back into a woman’s life and shows that she could only achieve something as a man. This means they do not have any or minimal *human agency*, which is to influence and contribute to one’s functioning and life circumstances (Bandura 2006, 164). They are barely able to make their own choices and are just products of their situation.

The representation of gender in Disney has often been criticized. Bell categorizes the possible Disney females as ‘teenage heroine’, the ‘wicked stepmother’, and the friendly ‘fairy godmother’ (Bell, Haas, and Sells 1995 120-2). Showing the limited depictions of women in an animated Disney feature film. They also show that Disney Princesses conform to the ideal western image of beautiful young girls. Ideal physical attributes like white skin, red lips, hourglass figure, blue eyes, or blonde hair. Resulting in the *Blonde Bombshell* stereotypes for Cinderella and Aurora, or the racial stereotypical appearances of Jasmine, Pocahontas, and Mulan, based upon a westerner’s world view.

Additionally, as studied by England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek, each of the first nine Disney Princess films features a central female character, the princess, and a male character who is romantically linked with the princess, and each film concludes with a climactic rescue scene. Furthermore, their article gives an extensive list of ‘masculine characteristics’ (e.g. physically strong, assertive, independent) and ‘feminine characteristics’ (e.g. affectionate, nurturing, fearful) in order to methodically calculate if the character had more feminine or masculine traits. (England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011, 556-8). The complete set of these characteristics is listed in Appendix B. Their findings are shown in Table 2, it shows that all princesses have more feminine characteristics than masculine characteristics, especially in the Early Films.

Film	Year	Prince			Princess		
		Masc.	Fem.	Total	Masc.	Fem.	Total
Early Films							
<i>Snow White</i>	1937	12	10	22	13	137	150
<i>Cinderella</i>	1950	2	5	7	42	187	229
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	1959	59	52	111	10	76	86
Middle Films							
<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	1989	78	52	130	101	161	262
<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	1991	54	31	85	77	87	164
<i>Aladdin</i>	1992	63	109	172	50	77	127
<i>Pocahontas</i>	1995	117	95	212	105	130	235
<i>Mulan</i>	1998	49	12	61	88	120	208
Most Current Film							
<i>Princess and the Frog</i>	2009	60	129	189	81	93	174

**Table 2.** Coded characteristics for the prince and princess characters in the Disney princess films

Moreover, a content analysis of sixteen Disney films between 1937 and 1995 showed that the princesses are more likely to do housework and avoid positions of authority than their male counterparts (Golden and Jacoby 2017, 300). Throughout the films, the female characters were also speaking on average 20% less than males in the film, showing the dominant voice in the Disney films were still male despite their efforts to depict a progressive heroine. This is a problem because young girls desire to emulate the princess, which also brings the gendered stereotypes with them. This makes them believe and internalize the ideals that women should always be gentle, thin, kind, caring, please everyone, speak softly, and not cause trouble.

Furthermore, Sekiguchi shows the language of the characters for both the Disney princesses and the Ghibli heroines (秋香 関口 Akika Sekiguchi 2016, 40-2). Her study shows that for Disney, the percentage of feminine words<sup>2</sup> has been rapidly declining since Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* (1989), compared to Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and contributes this change to the social situation in the US during this period. The women's rights movement took place from 1966 to 1968, which gave stereotypical 'femininity' a negative image. The case of Ghibli is a bit later in the timeline, showing a decline in feminine words since San in *Princess Mononoke* (1997). This change came after the equal employment opportunity law from 1986. Showing that changes in women's position in the real world have influenced changes in the heroines' language use. Furthermore, it is fascinating to see that the decline in female languages is several years earlier in Disney films than in Ghibli films, even though

<sup>2</sup> Sekiguchi defines the four types of features within feminine words as: 1) expression of emotion, 2) stilted expression, 3) additional questions to seek empathy, and 4) emphatic expressions.

Ghibli films have continued to portray independent women, whereas Disney films emphasize meeting the ideal man.

Another trope of the princesses is that they almost always have an animal sidekick at their side or some other connection with wild animals, they have the role of giving the princess advice, or joining on the adventure. As the princesses are shown to be compassionate, the interaction with animals is to further show their love and respect of animals, and not just with other humans (D. E. England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011, 559). A further reason for the animal companion is to show that the princess is isolated or does not fit within their community, instead forming a bond with animals. The animal trait of Disney princesses is not a negative stereotype, but it is supporting their archetype and is a famous recognizable characteristic, linking female characters who have an animal companion with the Disney princess image.

Disney Princesses are associated with sweet compassionate characteristics, an innocent passive role, and romantic love for their prince. From this we can conclude that this Princess archetype is a combination of the Caregiver (caring, warm, reassuring), the Innocent (optimistic, honest, humble), and the Lover (sensual, empathetic, soothing).

## Chapter 2 – The Miyazakian Heroine

Several Japanese and foreign DVD releases of *Nausicaä* include a featurette entitled 'The Birth of Studio Ghibli' in which Toshio Suzuki, Miyazaki's producer, fixer and friend for over 30 years, says, 'Miyazaki is a feminist, actually. He has this conviction that to be successful, companies have to make it possible for their female employees to succeed too. You can see this attitude in *Princess Mononoke*. All [the] characters working the bellows in the iron works are women. Then there's *Porco Rosso*. Porco's plane is rebuilt entirely by women.' (McCarthy 2018, 98)

From 1984 to 2004 Studio Ghibli released fifteen films, eight of which were directed by Hayao Miyazaki. In this chapter we will examine three of his films, chosen for their active female lead characters.

### 2.1 - Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind

*Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984) is an animated film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, the story is based on his own manga of the same name which was originally published between 1982 and 1994. This means that Miyazaki could design the protagonist as an archetypical heroine, without outsider influences. However, during the production, he was still bound to a previous work, even if that was his own work. It still needed to be faithful to the manga, which was originally serialized in *Animage* magazine with no intention to ever animate it (McCarthy 2002, 74).



**Figure 3.** Nausicaä flying on her Möwe glider with Teto sitting on her shoulder

The main character and heroine of the film is Nausicaä (see Figure 3.), a young adult woman living in a small kingdom in the Valley of the Wind. She is actual royalty as she is the daughter of King Jhil and thus a princess, but her mother died when she was young and only appears as a memory in the film. She has short brown hair, a simple blue dress with practical bullet pockets, and no makeup

on. The story takes place on Earth after a catastrophic event destroyed most of the human civilization and the original ecosystem. The world is inhabited by small communities of humans who live in isolation from other settlements because of toxic forests, called the Toxic Jungle, and giant aggressive insects. Nausicaä lives in one of these communities and is a skilled fighter and a capable pilot on her Möwe glider,<sup>3</sup> meaning seagull in German, which she uses to move around the dystopian landscapes. She also has great agility and endurance on top of her practical skills; these are all typical masculine traits.

In an interview with 'Young' magazine to promote *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, Miyazaki was asked why the protagonist was female and he said that he could only create the kind of character he wanted as a girl. "Nausicaä is not a protagonist who defeats an opponent, but a protagonist who understands, or accepts. She is someone who lives in a different dimension. That kind of character should be female rather than male." (McCarthy 2002, 79). Although seen as progressive with his depiction of Nausicaä, this quote means that he was still following stereotypical gender roles. He made Nausicaä a woman because the character had to be compassionate and empathetic, which is something 'only a woman can be', even though he could have chosen to design a male character who understands and accepts his opponent.

Nausicaä is introduced in the film when she is exploring the polluted forest and admiring the scenery, where she finds a shell of one of the giant insects called the Ohm, she examines the shell closely and takes it apart to bring back home as useful material. Here we quickly see that Nausicaä is very compassionate and caring for the creatures in the forest but at the same time very brave and courageous to explore this dangerous area. Back home in the Valley is the land safe from the toxic vapor, for now, where she lives with the rest of her people of the small kingdom and tries to be helpful to them by utilizing her practical skills and flying ability. During her travels she collects plants to study and research them in the hopes to find an origin and true nature of the toxic air. Perhaps developing a cure that will permit humans to live safely without having to wear a specialized breathing mask in the toxic areas. Nausicaä believes that the Ohm are peaceful creatures and that they should not be provoked, she is also able to mentally communicate with them in some way, allowing a stronger bond with them compared to other characters in the film. In a memory we even see a younger Nausicaä who has found a baby Ohm and is crying because her father is taking it away. The people kill the Ohm because they fear it, but Nausicaä believes that they should try to understand all living creatures. This bond with animals is further shown with her pet companion Teto the fox-squirrel, who she gets from Lord Yupa. These traits all contribute to the Caregiver archetype.

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<sup>3</sup> The JX0122, a M-02J plane modelled after Nausicaä's glider, the Möwe, was built in real life and has had multiple successful flights since its maiden flight in July of 2013. <https://flyteam.jp/registration/JX0122>



There is not a big focus on a romantic subplot in the film, which would be typical for a shōjo story. Nausicaä does meet the prince from Pejite called Asbel and they end up trapped together under the Toxic Jungle and search for a way to escape back to the surface. Their relationship stays purely platonic as friends and allies to defeat the main antagonist Imperial Princess of Torumekia, Kushana. However, Asbel does seem to have a crush on Nausicaä, but this does not develop further in the film itself. The lack of a stereotypical hetero romantic main theme shows that Nausicaä is not the typical shōjo female lead, and she does not demonstrate the princess Lover archetype. She does however frequently display the competent and courageous Hero archetype, as she exerts mastery and fights for justice to improve the broken world by stepping into dangerous places and going into battle by herself. Nausicaä exhibits the combined archetype of a caring Hero.

As a female hero, Nausicaä travels the Hero's Journey from Campbell, rather than the Heroine's Journey from Murdock. Her call to adventure starts with the attack by a different kingdom and the death of the princess of Pejite. She has a supernatural aid in her ability to communicate with the insects. When taken away from her known world of the Valley of the Wind, she moves over the threshold into the unknown. On her journey, her helper is the prince of Pejite, Asbel and her mentor is Lord Yupa. Her trials and revelation happen when she gets trapped under the Toxic Jungle together with Asbel and finds that the air is clean. It is clear at the end of the journey that Nausicaä is the angelic creature from the prophecy destined to save mankind, as she calms down the rampaging group of Ohm set to destroy the land while her clothes are soaked in the blue blood from the giant insects, achieving the boon of success. She returns to the Valley after making peace with the Ohm and the other kingdoms. Being already quite the perfect Hero, it limits her to go on a journey of personal growth, something that commonly does happen in the shōjo genre. Napier reluctantly sees this problem with Nausicaä as well, she is *too perfect*. "Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind is a flamboyant paean to an ideal of femininity that is both remarkably contemporary and yet at the same time epic in its scope. Omnicompetent, blessed with special powers, and potentially even a messiah figure, she is perhaps the single Miyazaki heroine who [is] "not real at all." She is a genuine hero in a narrative of epic proportions." (Napier 2005, 165). So, she is the ultimate perfect Hero from Campbell's monomyth and fails to be a Heroine in Murdock's feminine internal development because she can't have meaningful personal growth if there is nothing to improve.

When we score Nausicaä for the coded gendered characteristics of the prince and princess characters as England et al. have done for the Disney Princess films, she scores very high on eleven out of thirteen of the masculine characteristics. For example, she is 'independent', 'athletic', 'leader', and 'wants to explore'; seemingly more suited to be a Disney prince. This shows us that she is a fairly androgenous character. Napier already came to this conclusion when she says, "[Nausicaä] is a unique

personality whose combination of "feminine" qualities (aesthetic delight, compassion, and nurturance) and "masculine" qualities (mechanical and scientific ability and fighting prowess) create a memorable figure. [...] This combination is constantly underlined throughout the film, climaxing at its end when Nausicaä's "masculine" bravery is matched only by her "feminine" willingness to sacrifice her life for the sake of world harmony." (Napier 2005, 167). Nausicaä attacking and killing her father's murderers in a fit of rage is a prime example of her 'masculine' characteristics, which Napier described as "deeply shocking and seemingly out of place in a narrative that largely positions her as a heroic, almost perfect figure". This idealized vision of the female hero goes so far that it almost seems she is the only one doing anything in her small settlement.

The fact that she does not agree with the ideas forced upon her, despite her father telling her otherwise, also emphasizes the importance for young girls to still stay true to their own ideals in a society where the father is the ruler of his household (Vernon 2018, 116). Having your own opinion, strong will and not backing down, together with her other masculine characteristics indicates that she is stuck on the 'identification with the masculine' step from the Heroine's Journey. Unlike a traditional fairy tale princess story, Nausicaä is her own hero who travels the world-saving Hero's journey rather than the self-improving Heroine's Journey.

While Nausicaä has a lot of feminine characteristics and a shōjo disposition, we will now turn our attention to the second princess and next case study, *Princess Mononoke*, who will show an almost complete removal from the feminine.

## 2.2 - Princess Mononoke

*Princess Mononoke* (1997) is a Studio Ghibli original animated story, and not based on an adaptation, which means that Miyazaki had complete control over the entire production of the film and can rightfully be called the *auteur* of the work. In the film, Ashitaka is the former prince of the Emishi village and the main character. He is a young man of approximately 17 years old with dark brown hair and brown eyes, he wears a blue shirt with white pants, and sometimes a red hood (see Figure 4). Nago, a demon-possessed boar god, attacks his village and Ashitaka is poisoned by the god's curse of hatred when he gets injured in the fight. Later, when he leaves the village to search for a cure against the curse, he also cuts off his hair bun to symbolize he is leaving his status as prince behind. He is accompanied on his journey by Yakul, his giant serow steed. The other main character is a young woman called San, she is around 16-17 years old and was raised by the wolf goddess Moro in the forest together with Moro's pups as her siblings. She has short brown hair and dark blue eyes, wearing ragged clothing, fang accessories, face paint and a cape made from wolf fur (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** (Left) Ashitaka and Yakul & (Right) San and one of the wolf pups

San is also known as ‘Princess Mononoke’ or the ‘wolf girl’, and while the wolf girl is self-explanatory, as she was brought up by a pack of wolves, Princess Mononoke has roots in Japanese folklore. *Mononoke* (物の怪) in Japanese are vengeful *yōkai*, which are spirits that are aggressive towards humans. It makes sense for her to be given this nickname by the people living in the small settlement called Irontown (タタラ場, *Tataraba*), as San is fighting against them. She hates humanity and basically refuses to believe she is a human herself at the start of the film, but she has a special resentment for the leader of Irontown, Lady Eboshi. Irontown is destroying parts of the forest for fuel and to mine for iron, hurting the spirits and gods of the forest in the process. San wants to stop their process of damaging the untouched nature, so she tries to assassinate Lady Eboshi multiple times in the hopes that this will end the growth of the settlement.



**Figure 5.** San & Moro in the first meeting with Ashitaka

The first meeting between the Ashitaka and San is impactful, because it shows San sucking blood and pieces of a bullet out of the wounded mother-wolf Moro, after one of the many fights with the citizens of Irontown. Her mouth is covered in blood (see Figure 5) when she spots Ashitaka who watches her from across the water stream at a distance, showing him and the audience how

animalistic and wild she is. When he tries to talk to her and the wolf gods, they ignore him, and San only replies with “Go away!” while she rides away on one of the wolf pups.

The character San is modeled after a clay figurine from the Jōmon period (12,000 BCE – 300 BCE) (Miyazaki 2014). This is because Miyazaki felt that women had more freedom and society was more fluid in this prehistoric period, focusing on the ordinary man and woman struggling to survive in a world where the class distinction had not yet been codified (McCarthy 2002, 187-8). This shows she truly is a wild woman; this is a quintessential difference with the norm of the female lead in the shōjo genre. San is not a cookie cutter example of traditional womanhood; she is aggressive but shows compassion to the wolf clan and the other forest gods.

Throughout the first part of the film the audience gets to see the hostile side of San and her unwillingness to talk with other humans. But when Ashitaka gets hurt after stopping a sword fight between San and Eboshi, we get to see more of her compassionate personality traits as she nurses him back to health. She goes through a lot of trouble to bring the wounded Ashitaka all the way to the lake of the Forest God, while she could also have left him to die if she truly did not care for humans. Furthermore, she is very protective and empathetic of the animals and spirits living in the forest. She also removes the bridle from Ashitaka’s steed Yakul when she is healing Ashitaka, after saying “You can go wherever you want now. You’re free now” because she believes it would be better for him to be free in nature than to be stuck with a human.

She is very courageous, even if it is bordering on suicidal at times in battle, but not afraid to fight for what she believes to be right, which we see at the climactic fight between the boars and humans and San joins the battle. This willful outlook does make it difficult for her to sympathize with humans, instead saying she hates every human, even Ashitaka with whom she has bonded with the most. Compared to San, Ashitaka is more of a pacifist and sees fighting as a last resort solution, but he is strong when needed, although the curse helps him with this considerably. He is very determined to complete his quest to find a cure to his curse and he shows curiosity to learn the story of both sides of the conflict, and acts with kindness in his journey as he ultimately wants a peaceful resolution.

Ashitaka is compassionate with San and shows her the positives of being human, accepting herself in the process while learning to trust humans more. As mentioned earlier in chapter 2.1, Nausicaä was a woman because Miyazaki wanted a protagonist that would understand their opponent, so she needed to be female, this is strongly based on stereotypical gender roles. We see this empathetic protagonist again with Ashitaka in *Princess Mononoke*, which was published thirteen years later. He is a compassionate and pacifistic hero who wants both sides of the conflict to understand each other, showing a gender role reversal. San and Ashitaka learn from each other and help reach their goals, as Ashitaka shows her what it means to be human and accept her own humanity, while

San shows the spirit and nature side of the conflict. This could be seen as the male character domesticating a female character to be more adapting to human society. When he stops the fight between San and Eboshi, he essentially claims San by saying “The girl’s life is now mine.”, to which Lady Eboshi responds in an ironic fashion with “I’m sure she’ll make a lovely wife for you.” After this he knocks them both unconscious with the power of his curse and takes San with him out of the settlement of Irontown.

Shortly thereafter is one of the iconic scenes in the film that further shows Ashitaka’s affection towards San, as he says, “You’re beautiful.” when San is actively trying to hurt him by holding a knife to his throat. It takes her by surprise, and she retreats. After this he says that she needs to be more careful with her life and not throw it away in battle. At that moment it might feel out of place, as you would not normally say this to your attacker, but this is the first time Ashitaka speaks face-to-face with San from up close and expresses his feelings freely. In this situation he is quite literally objectifying San by commenting on her appearance. Furthermore, he can be seen as the literal male gaze in the film as he is the main point of view when we encounter San, Eboshi and the rest of the female iron production workers, who were taken in by Eboshi after they left their life as prostitutes.

At the end of the film, after they have given back the head of the Forest Spirit, Ashitaka does not force San to leave the forest so they can be together. San says she does like Ashitaka, but she cannot forgive the humans for what they have done to the forest. He respects her lifestyle and wants to love her for who she is, living in the forest among the nature-spirits. So, they do not end up in a traditional romantic relationship in the film, diverging from the stereotypical heterosexual love storyline that a romance must ensure simply because they are a boy and a girl in the same film. But instead, they leave each other with a mutual respect and an open ending in the film, where the audience can fill in themselves if they believe they will meet again in the future. Where Ashitaka is helping the humans rebuild Irontown, while San is living in the forest, both nearby enough to visit each other when they want, while at the same time striving to bring balance between the two forces.

San is not the typical princess at all. Most obviously is the fact that she is not a real princess of royalty and only has this title because of the nickname the Irontown residents have given her. She is seen as a symbolic princess of the forest and the beasts because she protects nature together with her adoptive wolf goddess mother, Moro. Because she was orphaned at a young age and was brought up by wolves in the wild, she did not interact much with humans while growing up and does not know how ‘women should behave’ according to the social standards. San is an outcast and does not have any intention to fit into society either. As a literal wild woman, the obvious choice for her main archetype is the Outlaw, also known as ‘the wild man or woman’. The core desire and goal for this archetype is revenge and to destroy what is not working. In San’s case these traits fit perfectly because

she wants revenge against the humans who are wrecking her home and wants to destroy their settlement. This is the overarching theme for San's character development. She does care for the forest and helps Ashitaka, who she loves, when he gets hurt. But she does not fit the Lover archetype, because even though she likes Ashitaka, she cannot forgive humans for what they have done; her hatred for mankind is stronger than her love for her 'prince'. She prefers to be alone with her wolf tribe and has an innocent desire to be herself, free from humanity. So, the other archetypes expected from a princess which include the Lover, Caregiver, and Innocent, are only minor parts of her and cannot be used as archetypal descriptions for San.

*Princess Mononoke* was released 13 years after *Nausicaä*, so Miyazaki had a lot of time to further develop his heroine character. If we again score our female protagonist on gender characteristics, we see that San is very much showing masculine characteristics like 'physically strong', 'athletic', 'independent', 'inspires fear' and is 'brave'. But she is scoring way less on the feminine characteristics, only fitting 'helpful', 'victim' and is 'described as physically attractive' once when she is called beautiful by Ashitaka. This overwhelmingly masculine and violent behavior excludes her from being a Disney Princess.

In the film, Ashitaka fulfills the role of Hero and is the one traveling the Hero's Journey, consecutively he gets his call to adventure when his village gets attacked and he gets cursed by the enraged boar god, crossing the threshold into the unknown by leaving his village in search of a cure. On his journey he meets his mentor and helper San, survives the epic battle between nature and man, achieving the boon of success, and returns to his known world when he decides to help rebuild Irontown. Therefore, San will not be analyzed based on this hero cycle.

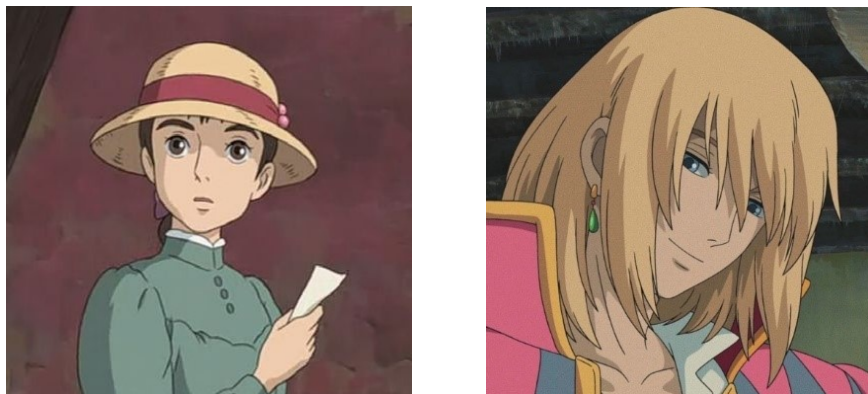
However, when we look at San from the perspective of the Heroine's Journey, we can see that she starts the film already separated from her mother as the feminine influence and has acquired masculine survival traits from her wolf allies. Most of the film focuses on her road of trials to defeat Lady Eboshi and protect the Forest spirit. This ends in her boon of success when the Forest spirit is healed and the forest is growing green again, giving the humans another chance to respect nature. But her journey ends there even though the next step is offered to her by Ashitaka. When he asks her to go with him and leave her current destructive lifestyle, she declines, meaning she is not yet willing to travel further in the Heroine's Journey and reconnect with the feminine.

As the third and last character of the Studio Ghibli Heroine analysis, we will now focus on Sophie from *Howl's Moving Castle*, who will differ greatly from her animated predecessors.

## 2.3 - Howl's Moving Castle

*Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) is a Studio Ghibli animated film based on a book written by British author Diana Wynne Jones. Although the rest of the analysis will focus solely on the film adaptation, it is interesting to note that the film version has a couple of differences compared to the book. The book, for example, depicts Sophie as having some magical powers, whereas in the film she does not. This allows more focus on her character development in the film and shows her personal growth as more rewarding as she does not have magical powers to help her with this task.

Sophie Hatter is the main character and the audience's point of view throughout most of the film. She is a young woman around 18 years old and has brown eyes and brown braided hair (see Figure 6), she is a milliner and is the eldest of two sisters. As the oldest daughter of a hat maker, she is an apprentice at the family store and is seen making hats at the beginning of the film. Even though she designs ornate hats, she is dressed rather sober in a green dress and wears a simple sun hat with a red ribbon. The other main character of the film is Howl Jenkins Pendragon, he is a young adult man around 25 years old with blond hair and blue eyes, wearing black pants, a tucked in white shirt and a diamond-pattern pink and blue jacket (see Figure 6). He is a powerful wizard and has the reputation that he seduces beautiful girls and steals their hearts, a rumor which turns out to be false. He can transform into a large, black-feathered beast, which he uses against the enemy airships at certain points in the film.



**Figure 6.** (Left) Sophie and (Right) Howl at the start of the film

The two characters meet when Sophie wants to visit her sister Lettie at the bakery she works at. She encounters Howl on the way as he saves her from two soldiers trying to flirt with her, while also saying he is being followed by one of the antagonists of the film, the Witch of the Waste. Howl casts a spell that grants the two of them the ability to walk in the air (see Figure 7), a situation she is surprisingly quickly adjusting to, showcasing a braveness and flexibility to adapt to unknown circumstances. After guiding Sophie to the bakery, he leaves her alone on the balcony of the

establishment after jumping off the balcony. While leaving he says, “That’s my girl” in English, or 『いい子だ』 (*ii ko da*) in Japanese which means ‘good girl’, a phrase usually used when a child or pet behaves correctly, establishing his charismatic but flirty personality.



**Figure 7.** Sophie and Howl walking in the air

Since Sophie is the oldest child in the family with no brothers, she is expected to take over the family business to continue her father’s legacy, and thus is fulfilling a role usually reserved for the oldest son, showcasing one of the first gender-role breaking stereotypes. Furthermore, she is not wearing the elaborate dresses or hats that we see on other women in the film, implying she is nothing like her sister Lettie who is wearing make-up and following the fashion trends. Throughout the film we learn that Sophie has a reserved personality, is considerate and compassionate, even taking in her enemy when the witch loses power in the later parts of the film. These are feminine characteristics, but she is also very strong willed and dutiful and even has an outburst of frustration over her curse. These are more associated with masculine characteristics.

Sophie is cursed by the Witch of the Waste at the start of the film because the witch is jealous of how Sophie got Howl’s attention. This curse turns her into an old woman (see Figure 8), and Sophie’s goal becomes to remove her curse and return to normal. So, she independently leaves her town and business to search for a solution and decides to go to the powerful wizard Howl to help her. Showcasing an enormous autonomy and active role in the driving force of the narrative. Sophie spends most of her appearance throughout the film transformed into an old woman due to the curse, which technically does not meet the criteria of her being a *shōjo*, in terms of her looks. However, this fits in with Napier’s observed phenomenon of the ‘disappearing’ or ‘vanishing *shōjo*’, where the female main character is lost in a literal or metaphorical sense (Napier 2005, 170). The inclusion of this phenomenon in *Howl’s Moving Castle* reinforces the fact that Sophie is indeed a *shōjo* protagonist. Shortly after the transformation, Sophie remarks how her old-fashioned clothes finally suit her, showing the audience that she has more peace with her new form than most other characters would have, as she never felt beautiful in the first place. Due to her personal growth, there are moments in the film where her appearance changes back slightly or completely to her original age, suggesting that



her outward appearance matches the age she feels herself to be in that moment, an old woman or a shōjo. An important moment occurs when she is going to the castle in disguise as Howl's mother to tell the king's royal sorcerer, Madame Suliman, that Howl is not willing to fight in the war. This demonstrates her assertiveness compared to the coward Howl who will not face Suliman himself. Furthermore, she transforms back into her youngest when she defends Howl at the king's castle and in the flower meadow scene. This suggests that her love for him is a major factor to find her courage and her self-love. She needs these to mature as a woman and solidify her position as independent and self-determined to break her and Howl's curse.



**Figure 8.** Sophie in her new old-woman appearance due to the curse

While Sophie is shown to have multiple gender role challenging qualities, the world portrayed at the start of the film is very traditional. In the film she is shown as a compassionate woman who takes care of all her families, her biological family and her found family, which is a Japanese societal ideal for women to be a “good wife and wise mother”. To sneak into the castle and secure a place in Howl's household she decides to work as a cleaning lady and goes grocery shopping together with Markl, Howl's young apprentice. Displaying mother-like activities to care for the household.

From this it is shown that Sophie has a combination of stereotypical feminine personality traits, like cooking, cleaning, and caring for the family. She also struggles with her appearance and has doubts about her self-worth and courage. But she is assertive when it counts to protect herself and the people around her. When the war breaks out, she must protect the house and her friends from missiles and soldiers. She grows as a person together with Howl because they inspire confidence in each other and find strength to break both of their curses.

There is a *heavy* emphasis on love throughout the film, which fits the traditional shōjo themes of a female lead, romantic subplots, and stories of personal growth. There are multiple kinds of love present in the film, literally in a sense of the growing romantic relationship between Howl and Sophie, but also in how it allows Sophie to have personal growth and develop into the woman she becomes at the end and growing confident in her self-worth.

Additionally, the concept of ‘family of choice’ or ‘found family’ is present in the film, which is a term in media and literature that refers to a non-biologically related group of characters that form a family bond based on shared experiences, mutual understanding, and interpersonal connection (Vélez 2020). Sophie develops platonic and familial love for the people she meets and decides to stay at the castle where she will live together with Howl, Markl, and others she meets on her journey as a family. Showing a happily ever after scenario of the couple in their flying castle. Because Sophie and Howl end up in a relationship together at the end of the film, contrasting the start of the film where Howl was a womanizer who went after beautiful girls and looked at the world through his male gaze, shows he was changed by Sophie’s sincerity and loved her for who she was instead of how she looked. Furthermore, even though Sophie might be the mother figure of this new family, she is not defined by her mother-like traits at the end of the film, because she chooses to care for the people she loves and her found family, and she is not forced to do so. If she wanted to, she could return to her old village to start up her own hat shop.

Sophie gives the braid from her hair to the fire demon Calcifer to give him power to break free from Howl and cure his curse. In Japanese cinema, cutting one’s hair symbolically reflects the Edo period samurai ceremony of cutting off their topknot when resigning; signifying the end of that era of their lives (Sevakis 2018). This scene can be interpreted as Sophie giving the fire demon her past regrets and allowing her to start a life anew, now together with Howl in a relationship while living in the castle free from their curses in a stereotypical fairy tale ending. While this fairy tale narrative is not how most of the film plays out, one of the plot points is about Sophie who travels back in time to meet Howl when he was younger. In this past, she says, “find me in the future”, showcasing they were destined to meet and become lovers in the present of the film narrative, this reminds us of a fairy tale story about soulmates. This destiny theory is further supported by looking at the surnames of the two characters: Sophie Hatter and Howl Pendragon. ‘Hatter’ indicates Sophie’s destiny is to be a simple hat maker in her small shop, while Howl has the same name as the legendary King Arthur. This shows that when Sophie joins Howl in his life, she too is worthy to be more than her name suggests and can break through the expectations of her in-universe society as well as the audience watching the film.

Contrasting the way Sophie’s and Howl’s curse are broken is the scene near the end of the film where Sophie kisses the magical turnip-head scarecrow, who has been following them around the whole film, and he turns into a neighboring country’s prince, obviously referencing Grimm’s ‘The frog prince’ story of a true love’s kiss. Positioning Sophie here in the traditional fairy tale gender role of princess who breaks the curse, conforming to established expectation, but at the same time showing how simple this solution is portrayed in fairy tales, while the film is more complex and has nuanced character development to achieve a happy ending.

From her actions in the film, we see that Sophie grows and changes from being a Regular Gal and Creator of hats, to fit the established princess archetypes of Innocent, Caregiver, and Lover quite closely. She is a Caregiver for the found family, Innocent when she regains and accepts her youth in the flower meadow, and Lover with Howl.

When scoring Sophie on gender characteristics according to the previously used list of traits, she is quite balanced between her masculine and feminine characteristics. For example, she exhibits both the masculine 'wants to explore', 'assertive', 'independent', and 'brave', but also the feminine 'shows emotion', 'affectionate', 'nurturing', and 'helpful'. Sophie's gender characteristics are in line with the scoring of princesses in the Disney Middle Films period (Ariel to Mulan), where the characters are more balanced than the princesses in the Disney Early Films period (Snow White, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty), but still score higher in feminine than in masculine.

Sophie in *Howl's Moving Castle* is the hero of her own journey as laid out by Campbell. She gets a call to adventure in her first appearance when her colleagues invite her to leave work and go have some fun, but she refuses. The supernatural aid comes in the form of her curse by the Witch of the Waste, this time Sophie has no other choice than to cross the threshold into the unknown, with her literal transformation into an old woman. On her journey she finds the needed mentors and helpers in the form of Turnip Head, Markl, and Calcifer. She enters the imposing moving castle and ends up in the belly of the whale. She travels the road of trials, where her challenges include caring for everyone in the castle and her trip to Madame Suliman. Where in a traditional hero story a meeting with the goddess will result in an item to help the hero in the future, in the film, Sophie gets a magical ring from Howl to guide her to Calcifer. The woman as the temptress is her mother who tries to seduce Sophie into coming back to live with her mother and her mother's new rich husband, but she refuses and says she is happy with where she is. Her atonement comes when the witch destroys the castle and almost kills Calcifer, and by extension Howl. Followed by her deeper understanding or apotheosis, which occurs when Sophie travels back in time to see young Howl make a deal with Calcifer, and she promises to meet him later in life.<sup>4</sup> The boon of success comes in the form of the broken curse of both Sophie and Howl, and the end of the war. She decides not to return to her old home and hatter shop but instead decides to live with Howl and the rest of her found family in the Flying Castle.

More importantly, she also starts and *completes* the Heroine's Journey, in contrast to Nausicaä and San who only partially traveled on the journey. Sophie leaves her stereotypically

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<sup>4</sup> This explains Howl's actions in the beginning of the film, when he saves her from unwanted male attention and says, "There you are. Sorry, I'm late". The audience will first think this is only to get her out of the situation, but after this time travel scene, it is clear that Howl recognizes her and was looking for her ever since they met in the past.

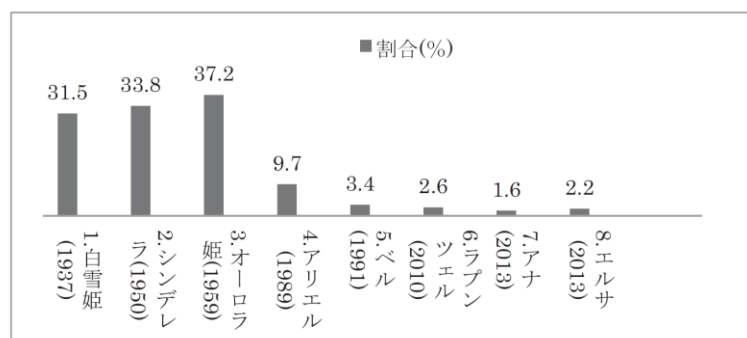
feminine mother, and after her curse, is even robbed of her own youthful feminine beauty. By adapting to this un-feminine situation and gathering her allies she travels the road of trials and finds the boon of success. On her quest she has a yearning to reconnect with the feminine, and a major character development happens in the flower meadow with Howl, where she starts to accept her own innocence and young state of mind, but still cannot fully accept that she is 'beautiful' and 'feminine'. Her two sides, the youthful and energetic but insecure 'daughter' and her wise but frail old 'grandmother', help each other to overcome their shortcomings. Her energetic younger part helps the grandmother, and her wise part gives more confidence to the daughter. This 'healing of the magical mother/daughter split' within herself brings her further on her journey. After the key moment when she lets go of her fears and regrets, by giving her hair to the fire demon, she gets the appearance of a young woman with gray hair. Signifying she is 'Beyond Duality' and has integrated both parts of herself, her youthful feminine and gray-haired maturity, resulting in her final balanced state.

## Chapter 3 – Understanding the results

We will now take a step back and combine the observations to better understand the progression of the female representation of the heroines in the animated films. To do so we will compare the selected Ghibli films, and where applicable Disney films, in terms of language, gender characteristics, archetypes, shōjo genre and the journeys the main female characters travel.

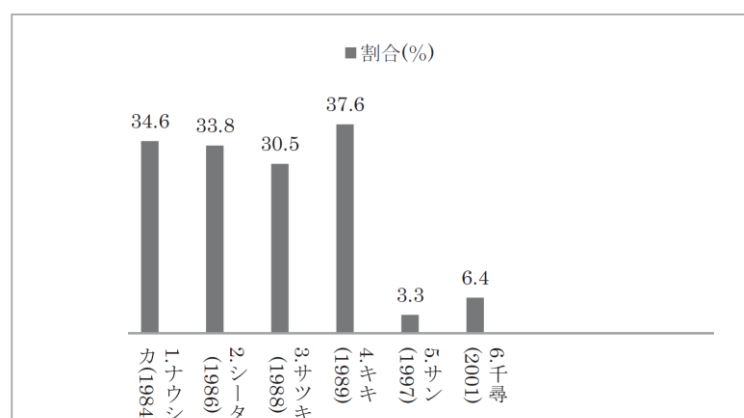
### 3.1 Gendered language

Compared to the renaissance era Disney princesses, Ghibli heroines show a more nuanced image of women besides the ‘damsel in distress’ and giving them a more balanced character with masculine and feminine traits throughout the film. It shows them as independent women who can take care of themselves without a prince saving them from a situation. Charts from Sekiguchi’s research show the progression of feminine language in Disney (Figure 9) and Ghibli (Figure 10) films.



**Figure 9.** Percentage of female words to the total number of lines by Disney film heroines (Left to right, Snow white, Cinderella, Aurora, Ariel, Belle, Rapunzel, Anna & Elsa).

This shows that from Ariel onwards in 1989, the Disney princesses use less feminine language.



**Figure 10.** Percentage of female words to the total number of lines by Ghibli film heroines (Left to right, Nausicaä, Sheeta, Satsuki, Kiki, San & Chihiro)

This shows that from San onwards in 1997, the Ghibli heroines also use more neutral language.

This time difference between the language change in Disney and Ghibli films, is roughly in line with the period between the American women's liberation movement, and the Japanese women's equal employment opportunity law from 1986. Although the language for San and Ariel became less feminine, the content of the films did not necessarily change in the same way. When comparing *Princess Mononoke* (1997) with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), we see that San is driven by her own desire to protect and fight her home, whereas Ariel's goals seem driven by her love for the prince. The transition to the modern language is somewhat gradual in Disney's thirty years from Aurora's score (37.2) to Ariel (9.7), but the change in Ghibli's eight years from Kiki (37.6) to San (3.3) shows that San is a real extreme case reinforcing her special status as the antithesis of the feminine heroine.

### 3.2 Gender characteristics development

When comparing the results based on masculine and feminine characteristics, we see a big difference between the three female leads. Compared to the values found by England et al. for the always beautiful Disney royalty, Nausicaä is showing typical Prince characteristics balancing the active masculine parts with compassionate female traits, displaying an androgenous image. Her appearance also supports this image, with her practical military tunic and shoulder length hair. San goes much further in the reversal of the gender characteristics, showing overwhelmingly masculine characteristics, without the calming feminine characteristics that Nausicaä has. The appearance of San is in line with this masculine image, as she wears ragged clothing, has short hair, and uses red war paint. Nausicaä talks and acts feminine compared to San, she calls things cute or pretty like the Ohm shell and she tames Teto, her fox-squirrel, like a princess animal companion. Throughout the film San does not seem to do cute things, the one exception would be when Ashitaka calls her beautiful and she stumbles while jumping back, but this could just be a result of her being caught off guard. Sophie has the most female leaning set of gender characteristics compared to the three, ending up in a castle with her prince. Her appearance is the most feminine of them as well, with long brown hair in a braid wearing a long dress with an apron. In her older form she keeps her braid and dresses, while her hair changes to gray. San would never choose the domestic life Sophie has, being bound to a man and the family and being a mother-like caregiver is not a lifestyle that fits her. So, a big difference between Nausicaä, Sophie and San is their level of 'femininity'.

### 3.3 Archetypal labeling

The origins of archetypes are found in mythical tales, fairy tales, and stories with morals. Archetypes associated with female characters were limited to the innocent child, great mother, and wise old woman. Within the framework of the modern developed archetype, by Mark and Pearson, we see

that the Princess in the Disney films has elements of the Innocent, the Caregiver, the Lover. When comparing the archetypes from the heroines in the three Ghibli films, within this context, we see that Nausicaä fits the Hero archetype with some elements of compassion from the Caregiver; San is the perfect example of the Outlaw, as a literal wild woman; and Sophie, being the only non-princess in these three films, seems like the perfect princess archetype as a combination as the Innocent, Caregiver, and Lover. This range in archetypes shows us that Miyazaki is not afraid to depict his female characters as something different than the princess image and is also not stuck in one archetypal deviation.

### 3.4 Shōjo romance themes

Shōjo is in essence a romantic story of a girl, for a female demographic, written by female authors. Nausicaä, San, and Sophie all have a love interest, but how they develop their relationship with their male counterpart is quite different. Nausicaä, as the predestined messiah figure, is only interested in saving the world. She sees Asbel as a useful ally in her fight, instead of a potential romantic partner. Just like Nausicaä, San is not yet ready for a romance, as she is more focused on restoring the wrongs the humans have inflicted on nature and rejects Ashitaka's offer to live together. Compared to Nausicaä and San, Sophie is a typical shōjo protagonist in a dramatic romance story with focus on interpersonal relationships. Her relationship with Howl and internal growth are the driving forces in the film. Showing that Miyazaki fits his narrative within the strict boundaries of the classical shōjo genre, after demonstrating he broke free from these limitations in previous films. He was not forced to return to this shōjo genre based on ideals dating back to the 1960's, as his previous works were received with critical acclaim and were a commercial success. Still, he chooses to challenge the old boundaries by using the canvas of the shōjo story to paint a different picture and subvert audience expectations. Some examples of how the stereotypes are contested are the portrayal of the heroine as an active old woman instead of a passive young girl and depicting the male lead obsessed with his youth and beauty as well as being a coward. Ultimately the story ends when the male character, who is technically a 'damsel in distress', is rescued by the female lead.

### 3.5 The Hero and Heroine's Journey

As described in the previous chapter, all three films have someone completing the hero's journey. In the case of Nausicaä, she is the hero, but she does not complete the Heroine's Journey to achieve meaningful personal growth. She has no clear separation from the feminine and her being the savior of the world is not a big catalyst to better herself. The fact that she is the angelic creature from the prophecy is also proof that she has little human agency in her life, as her story was destined to

happen and bound to fate. Next is San, who is only an ally in Ashitaka's hero's journey, and is also stuck in the heroine's cycle. She defines herself by the masculine survival traits and due to the events in her past is disconnected from her feminine characteristics, but she stops after finding the boon of success. So even though she does not complete the journey because she does not yet have a yearning for the feminine, she is further in her quest for wholeness compared to Nausicaä. San does show a high level of human agency because she is strong enough to make her own choices and knows what she wants in her life. Last, we have Sophie, who is both a hero that completes a quest and travels her own Heroine's Journey to complete personal growth to become balanced and can choose her own life, displaying a full degree of human agency at the end of her story.

Having the full development of the results, together with the combined types to look at female representation in films allows us to answer the main question effectively.



## Conclusion

In the previous discussion we established that in the 1980's, the 1990's, and the 2000's, Disney gave us princesses and Ghibli showed us heroines. These heroines, starting with Nausicaä, showed us girl characters in animation that were a revolutionary departure from the idealized version of how girls were shown to behave in shōjo animation up to that point.

With Nausicaä, Miyazaki chose to give us a lead female character with expertise in almost everything she needs to conquer the external threats on her hero's journey. This resulted in her being able to complete her world-saving quest without showing the need to grow as a person. This indicates that she was an ideal depiction of the mythological hero and too perfect to be believable, even within the confines of the narrative. However, with her, Miyazaki challenged the stereotypical notion that girls are passive and only interested in love. The one stereotype that he kept was that girls are compassionate.

With San in *Princess Mononoke*, Miyazaki was defying the expectations of the public about a princess character once again, now even that last stereotype of compassion was challenged. San goes against almost every feminine characteristic, and she represents the original feminist ideal of the independent woman.

With Sophie in *Howl's Moving Castle*, it seems a step backwards into the stereotypical shōjo story and characteristics when viewed superficially. However, Sophie's personality traits and actions show that the female main character in Miyazaki's film is psychologically rounded and an active participant in the narrative. She completes her Heroine's Journey by bringing the two internal conflicting aspects of herself in balance. The film questions gender stereotypes by introducing female characters with more traditionally masculine characteristics, like being independent or assertive, and making them an important driving force in the overall story. At the same time the film uses traditional female characteristics, based on old shōjo stereotypes first started in the late 1960s, when they are relevant and effective within the narrative, like being compassionate, affective, and nurturing. This implies that female characters are not necessarily more progressive when they are more masculine, but rather meaning that they become more complex and less superficial stereotypes. The characters are better, not because they are more progressive, but because they are more believable as 'real' and are active participants in their story. The main result could well be that the stereotypes no longer stand out: characters do not cook for their family simply because they are a girl, but because they enjoy it, are skilled at cooking, or it is a part of the narrative. Simply reversing all gendered characteristics, like in *Princess Mononoke*, now feels forced and might become performative, serving no deeper meaning than to simply appear 'progressive'. As a result of Sophie's internal struggle, she gains a balanced personality and achieves a great amount of human

agency within the confines of the narrative, ultimately choosing her own destiny to have a “happily ever after”.

Concluding, by using *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, *Princess Mononoke*, and *Howl's Moving Castle* as example case studies, we have shown that by presenting us with multiple alternatives of female lead characters who do not conform to the expected traditional feminine characteristics, the female characters in Hayao Miyazaki's films have challenged the gender stereotypes in animation and changed how women can be represented in a positive way; they can be an androgenous, masculine, or feminine heroine.

During the research, an example from *Princess Mononoke* came to light where San's character is based on the idealization of the diverse prehistoric *Jōmon* people. Additionally, another example where the films romanticize other cultures, occurs in *Howl's Moving Castle*, where the fictional world is a mixture of European cultures. These examples invite research on how cultural and racial representation have developed in animation, but such a new research question falls outside the scope of this thesis.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Archetype list – reformatted from *The Hero and the Outlaw* (2001), originally written by Margaret Mark and Carol Pearson

The Yearning for Paradise	INDEPENDENCE	Innocent, Explorer, Sage
<hr/>		
<b>The Innocent</b> <b>Core desire:</b> to experience paradise <b>Goal:</b> to be happy <b>Fear:</b> doing something wrong or bad that will provoke punishment <b>Strategy:</b> do things right <b>Gift:</b> faith and optimism <b>Also Known As:</b> Pollyanna, <i>puer or puella</i> , utopian, traditionalist, naive, mystic, saint, romantic, traditionalist, dreamer. <b>Levels of the Innocent</b> <b>The Call:</b> a desire for purity, goodness, and simplicity <b>Level One:</b> childlike simplicity, naive, dependent, obedient, trusting, idyllic <b>Level Two:</b> renewal, positive, reinventing, reframing, cleansing, reentering the Promised Land <b>Level Three:</b> an almost mystical sense of oneness, whereby Innocence comes from values and integrity, not outer experience; being, not doing <b>Shadow:</b> denial, repression		<b>Motto:</b> “Free to be you and me.”
<hr/>		
<b>The Explorer</b> <b>Core desire:</b> the freedom to find out who you are through exploring the world <b>Goal:</b> to experience a better, more authentic, more fulfilling life <b>Greatest fear:</b> getting trapped, conforming, inner emptiness, nonbeing <b>Strategy:</b> journey, seek out and experience new things, escape from entrapment and boredom <b>Trap:</b> aimless wandering, becoming a misfit <b>Gift:</b> autonomy, ambition, ability to be true to one’s own soul <b>Also Known As:</b> the seeker, adventurer, iconoclast, wanderer, individualist, pilgrim, quester, antihero, rebel. <b>Levels of the Explorer</b> <b>The Call:</b> Alienation, dissatisfaction, restlessness, yearning, boredom <b>Level One:</b> hitting the open road, going out into nature, exploring the world <b>Level Two:</b> seeking your own individuality, to individuate, to become fulfilled <b>Level Three:</b> expressing individuality and uniqueness <b>Shadow:</b> being so alienated, you cannot find any way to fit in		<b>Motto:</b> “Don’t Fence Me In.”
<hr/>		
<b>The Sage</b> <b>Core desire:</b> the discovery of truth <b>Goal:</b> to use intelligence and analysis to understand the world <b>Greatest fear:</b> being duped, misled; ignorance <b>Strategy:</b> seek out information and knowledge; become self-reflective and understand thinking processes <b>Trap:</b> can study issues forever and never act <b>Gift:</b> wisdom, intelligence <b>Also Known As:</b> Expert, scholar, detective, oracle, evaluator, advisor, philosopher, researcher, thinker, planner, professional, mentor, teacher, contemplative <b>Levels of the Sage</b> <b>Call:</b> confusion, doubt, deep desire to find the truth <b>Level One:</b> search for absolute truth, desire for objectivity, looking to experts <b>Level Two:</b> skepticism, critical and innovative thinking, becoming an expert <b>Level Three:</b> wisdom, confidence, mastery <b>Shadow:</b> dogmatism, ivory tower, disconnection from reality		<b>Motto:</b> “The truth will set you free.”
<hr/>		

## Leaving a Thumbprint on the World

## MASTERY

## Hero, Outlaw, Magician

**The Hero****Motto:** *"Where there's a will, there's a way."***Desire:** prove one's worth through courageous and difficult action**Goal:** exert mastery in a way that improves the world**Fear:** weakness, vulnerability, "wimping out"**Strategy:** become as strong, competent, and powerful as you are capable of being**Trap:** arrogance, developing a need for there always to be an enemy**Gifts:** competence and courage**Also Known As:** the warrior, the crusader, the rescuer, the superhero, the soldier, the winning athlete, the dragon slayer, the competitor, and the team player.**Levels of the Hero****The Call:** the bully kicks sand in your face or someone tries to intimidate or abuse you; a challenge beckons; someone needs you to help defend him or her**Level One:** the development of boundaries, competence, mastery, expressed through achievement, motivated or tested through competition**Level Two:** as with a soldier, doing your duty for your country, organization, community, or family**Level Three:** using your strength, competence, and courage for something that makes a difference to you and to the world**Shadow:** ruthlessness and obsessive need to win**The Outlaw****Motto:** *"Rules are meant to be broken."***Core desire:** revenge or revolution**Goal:** to destroy what is not working (for the Outlaw or the society)**Fear:** being powerless, trivialized, inconsequential**Strategy:** disrupt, destroy, or shock**Trap:** to go over to the dark side, criminality**Gift:** outrageousness, radical freedom**Also Known As:** the rebel, the revolutionary, the villain, the wild man or woman, the misfit, the enemy, or the iconoclast.**Levels of the Outlaw****Call:** feeling powerless, angry, mistreated, under siege**Level One:** identifying as outsider, dissociating from the values of the group or society in a way that flies in the face of conventional behaviors and morality**Level Two:** behaving in shocking or disruptive ways**Level Three:** becoming a rebel or a revolutionary**Shadow:** criminal or evil behavior**The Magician****Motto:** *"It can happen!"***Core desire:** knowledge of the fundamental laws of how the world or universe works**Goal:** make dreams come true**Fear:** unanticipated negative consequences**Strategy:** develop vision and live it**Trap:** becoming manipulative**Gift:** finding win-win outcomes**Also Known As:** the visionary, catalyst, innovator, charismatic leader, mediator, shaman, healer, or medicine man or woman.**Levels of the Magician****Call:** hunches, extrasensory or synchronistic experiences**Level One:** magical moments and experiences of transformation**Level Two:** the experience of flow**Level Three:** miracles, moving from vision to manifestation**Shadow:** manipulation, sorcery

No Man (or Woman) Is an Island	BELONGING	Regular Guy/Gal, Lover, Jester
<hr/>		
<b>The Regular Guy/Gal</b>		<b>Motto:</b> <i>"All men and women are created equal."</i>
<b>Core desire:</b> connection with others		
<b>Goal:</b> to belong, fit in		
<b>Fears:</b> standing out, seeming to put on airs, and being exiled or rejected as a result		
<b>Strategy:</b> develop ordinary solid virtues, the common touch, blend in		
<b>Trap:</b> give up self to blend in, in exchange for only a superficial connection		
<b>Gift:</b> realism, empathy, lack of pretense		
<b>Also Known As:</b> the good old boy, the regular Jane, Everyman, the common man, the guy or gal next door, the realist, the working stiff, the solid citizen, the good neighbor.		
<b>Levels of the Regular Guy/Gal Archetype</b>		
<b>Call:</b> loneliness, alienation		
<b>Level One:</b> the orphan, feeling abandoned and alone, seeking affiliation		
<b>Level Two:</b> the joiner, learning to connect, fit in, accept help and friendship		
<b>Level Three:</b> the humanitarian, believing in the natural dignity of every person regardless of his or her abilities or circumstances		
<b>Shadow:</b> the victim who is willing to be abused rather than be alone, or the lynch-mob member, willing to go along with abuse in order to be one of the gang		
<hr/>		
<b>The Lover</b>		<b>Motto:</b> <i>"I only have eyes for you."</i>
<b>Core desire:</b> attain intimacy and experience sensual pleasure		
<b>Goal:</b> being in a relationship with the people, the work, the experiences, the surroundings they love		
<b>Fear:</b> being alone, a wallflower, unwanted, unloved		
<b>Strategy:</b> become more and more attractive-physically, emotionally, and in every other way		
<b>Trap:</b> doing anything and everything to attract and please others, losing identity		
<b>Gifts:</b> passion, gratitude, appreciation, commitment		
<b>Also Known As:</b> partners, friends, intimates, matchmakers, enthusiasts, connoisseurs, sensualists, spouses, team builders, harmonizers.		
<b>Levels of the Lover</b>		
<b>The Call:</b> infatuation, seduction, falling in love (with a person, an idea, a cause, work, a product)		
<b>Level One:</b> seeking great sex or a great romance		
<b>Level Two:</b> following your bliss and committing to whom and what you love		
<b>Level Three:</b> spiritual love, self-acceptance, and the experience of ecstasy		
<b>Shadow:</b> promiscuity, obsession, jealousy, envy, Puritanism		
<hr/>		
<b>The Jester</b>		<b>Motto:</b> <i>"If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."</i>
<b>Core desire:</b> to live in the moment with full enjoyment		
<b>Goal:</b> to have a great time and lighten up the world		
<b>Fear:</b> boredom or being boring		
<b>Strategy:</b> play, make jokes, be funny		
<b>Trap:</b> frittering away one's life		
<b>Gift:</b> joy		
<b>Also Known As:</b> the Fool, trickster, joker, punster, entertainer, clown, prankster, practical joker, or comedian.		
<b>Levels of the Jester</b>		
<b>Call:</b> ennui, boredom		
<b>Level One:</b> life as a game, fun		
<b>Level Two:</b> cleverness used to trick others, get out of trouble, and find ways around obstacles, transformation		
<b>Level Three:</b> Life experienced in the moment, one day at a time		
<b>Shadow:</b> self-indulgence, irresponsibility, mean-spirited pranks		
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Providing Structure to the World	STABILITY	Caregiver, Creator, Ruler
<hr/>		
<b>The Caregiver</b>		<b>Motto:</b> <i>"Love your neighbor as yourself."</i>
<b>Desire:</b> protect people from harm		
<b>Goal:</b> to help others		
<b>Fear:</b> selfishness, ingratitude		
<b>Strategy:</b> do things for others		
<b>Trap:</b> martyrdom of self, entrapment of others		
<b>Gift:</b> compassion, generosity		
<b>Also Known As:</b> the caretaker, altruist, saint, parent, helper, or supporter.		
<b>Levels of the Caregiver</b>		
<b>Call:</b> seeing someone in need		
<b>Level One:</b> caring for and nurturing one's dependents		
<b>Level Two:</b> balancing self-care with care for others		
<b>Level Three:</b> altruism, concern for the larger world		
<b>Shadow:</b> martyrdom, enabling, guilt-tripping		
<hr/>		
<b>The Creator</b>		<b>Motto:</b> <i>"If it can be imagined, it can be created."</i>
<b>Desire:</b> create something of enduring value		
<b>Goal:</b> give form to a vision		
<b>Fear:</b> having a mediocre vision or execution		
<b>Strategy:</b> develop artistic control and skill		
<b>Task:</b> create culture, express own vision		
<b>Trap:</b> perfectionism, miscreation		
<b>Gift:</b> creativity and imagination		
<b>Also Known As:</b> the artist, innovator, inventor, musician, writer, or dreamer.		
<b>Levels of the Creator</b>		
<b>Call:</b> daydreams, fantasies, flashes of inspiration		
<b>Level One:</b> being creative or innovative in imitative ways		
<b>Level Two:</b> giving form to your own vision		
<b>Level Three:</b> creating structures that influence culture and society		
<b>Shadow:</b> overly dramatizing your life, living a soap opera		
<hr/>		
<b>The Ruler</b>		<b>Motto:</b> <i>"Power isn't everything. It's the only thing."</i>
<b>Desire:</b> control		
<b>Goal:</b> create a prosperous, successful family, company, or community		
<b>Strategy:</b> exert leadership		
<b>Fear:</b> chaos, being overthrown		
<b>Trap:</b> being bossy, authoritarian		
<b>Gift:</b> responsibility, leadership		
<b>Also Known As:</b> the boss, leader, aristocrat, parent, politician, responsible citizen, role model, manager, or administrator.		
<b>Levels of the Ruler</b>		
<b>Call:</b> lack of resources, order, or harmony		
<b>Level One:</b> taking responsibility for the state of your own life		
<b>Level Two:</b> exerting leadership in your family, group, organization, or workplace		
<b>Level Three:</b> becoming a leader in your community, field, or society		
<b>Shadow:</b> Tyrannical or manipulative behaviors		
<hr/>		



## Appendix B: Gendered characteristics – reformatted from *Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses* (2011), originally written by Dawn Elizabeth England & Lara Descartes & Melissa A. Collier-Meek

### Masculine Characteristics

- **Curious about princess**—exhibiting a studious, concerned expression when looking at the princess. This behavior suggested that the female had a mystique that was captivating and romantically compelling. This was only coded for the prince characters.
- **Wants to explore**—to search for, to investigate, to want to find out or explore the unknown.
- **Physically strong**—hitting or moving something, providing evidence that the character had a strong physical effect on the person or object. This was different from a simple athletic display. There was a separate code for athletic, defined below, and the codes were mutually exclusive, as it was understood that displays of physical strength often incorporated some athleticism.
- **Assertive**—insistence upon a right or claim, the action of declaring or positively stating. Assertiveness included polite assertiveness with a hint of aggression. Assertiveness was a strong, direct assertion of a position or idea.
- **Unemotional**—repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure or pain. A character was unemotional in response to something that might seem to warrant an emotional response, such as a death.
- **Independent**—not depending on the authority of another, autonomous, self-governing. A character was considered independent when performing an independent action against many, being alone when it was not the norm, or not participating in the expected culture.
- **Athletic**—a specific jump or kick that was large enough to require some athleticism. Running was also coded as athletic.
- **Engaging in intellectual activity**—engaging the intellect, including reading or showing the use of thought.
- **Inspires fear**—causing someone to respond with fear, which is defined as uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger. This includes portraying violence and aggression, intimidation, or unintentionally inspiring fear as well.
- **Brave**—courageous, daring, intrepid. Bravery often involved a rescue or leadership in the face of danger.
- **Described as physically attractive (masculine)**—a characters' expression about the handsomeness of the prince.
- **Gives advice**—providing suggestions, recommendations or consultation. This was coded regardless of whether advice was asked for or whether it was warranted, appreciated, or helpful.
- **Leader**—one who leads, a commander. Leader was only coded if the character was leading a group of people, not animals and not just him- or herself. It also was only used to describe physical leadership in which a person is seen in front of and directing people and involved giving orders.

### Feminine Characteristics

- **Tends to physical appearance**—adjusting physical appearance for the purpose of making it look better or to draw attention to it.
- **Physically weak**—not being able to succeed in something that takes physical strength. It was often accompanied by needing help or else failing.
- **Submissive**—yielding to power or authority, humble and ready obedience. This trait was usually in response to another character's assertiveness.
- **Shows emotion**—the expression of both positive and negative representation of feeling. This was only coded for princes because initial piloting of the coding scheme indicated princesses consistently displayed emotion at each opportunity throughout and it was unreasonable to code.
- **Affectionate**—having warm regard or love for a person or animal, fond, loving. This required direct interaction and required a physical display of love such as a hug, a kiss, or an individual touch for the point of illustrating affection.
- **Nurturing**—to care for and encourage the growth or development of, to foster. Being nurturing required direct interaction and was often shown as mothering. It involved prolonged touching and attention in a soothing manner (different than a brief instance of affection) or lending care and help in a loving way to either animals or people.
- **Sensitive**—perception, knowledge, connected with. This code was distinguished as a form of empathy, as being sensitive required being aware of another person's or animal's issues from a distance without interacting directly with them at that time.
- **Tentative**—in an experimental manner, uncertain, cautious, seen in behavior or speech.
- **Helpful**—rendering or affording help, useful when assistance is needed. This required a specific action performed that gave another person or animal direct assistance. It was not used in a broader way to describe a character's role in a scene.
- **Troublesome**—causing trouble, turmoil, disturbance. This was recorded when the character was being discussed by other characters in a way that made clear that the character had caused trouble that others were trying to solve.
- **Fearful**—an instance of emotion, a particular apprehension of some future evil, a state of alarm or dread.
- **Ashamed**—affected with shame, the painful emotion arising from the consciousness of dishonoring and guilt. While both characters were eligible to be coded for ashamed, it was only portrayed by the princesses and thus is considered a female trait.
- **Collapses crying**—the character puts his/her face down, such that it was no longer visible, and cries, usually in rocking shakes and sobs. Sitting and crying while showing the face did not count; the character must have thrown him/ herself on or against something (e.g., a bed, the floor) in a statement of physical and mental helplessness.
- **Described as physically attractive (feminine)**— Another characters' expression about the beauty of the princess.
- **Asks for or accepts advice or help**—the character asks directly for help, or needs assistance and is open to receiving assistance such that it is clear the character wants it and accepts it. Assistance could be physical, mental, or emotional.
- **Victim**—subjected to torture by another, one who suffers severely in body or property through cruel or oppressive treatment. Physical harm or abuse was used as a defining factor in this code. Victimization was coded even if it was voluntary.