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1. Introduction

People are surrounded by different texts used to inform, amuse and keep busy. These texts constantly influence our daily lives (Milestone and Meyer 1). This process takes place through popular culture. However, this concept is not as straightforward as it might seem at a first glance. There are several definitions of this vast concept of popular culture due to the fact that it is historically variable and influenced by different theoretical and political frameworks (Storey 11).

Storey (4) outlines six different ways to define popular culture. The first is a very broad one, namely, “that popular culture is simply culture which is widely favoured or well liked by many people” (Storey 4). Another possibility is to contrast high culture with popular culture, which would degrade the latter as inferior due to assertions of it being mass-produced and commercial. This highly ideological category serves to fulfil a social function, namely, that of legitimizing social differences (Storey 5). The third definition is similar to the second in that it considers popular culture ‘mass culture’. However, it regards the audience as non-discriminating, passive consumers who react to manipulative stimuli (Storey 6). Furthermore, this definition is often linked to the concept of ‘Americanization’ which means that US-culture has a homogenizing influence because of its availability worldwide (Storey 7).

Within this paradigm, there is a perspective that considers popular culture and everything it entails “as forms of public fantasy [...], as a collective dream-world”(Storey 7). This stance implies that all cultural texts and products represent our desires, dreams and wishes (Storey 7). Storey’s fourth definition comprehends popular culture as emanating from the collective, from ‘the people’. “This is popular culture as folk culture: a culture of the people for the people”(Storey 7). Nevertheless, it poses a problem of inclusion and exclusion into this category of ‘the people’ as well as a problem of production because it bypasses the commercial aspect of the resources (Storey 7). The fifth definition is heavily influenced by Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. The consent of the subordinate group needed by the dominant, ruling group is reached through coercion or certain incentives (Candeias 19). This process of negotiation, struggle and exchange between the dominant and subordinate groups is carried out through popular culture (Storey 8). This theory implies that a text can be interpreted differently depending on the socio-historical circumstances (Storey 9). This stance means that an analysis of everyday life through popular culture is possible and that power relations can be revealed (Turner 6). The sixth definition follows a postmodern stance and rejects the distinction between high and popular culture (Storey 9).

One feature all these definitions have in common is the belief that popular culture “only emerged following industrialization and urbanization”(Storey 10). Depending on what we contrast it with, it will influence our selection of definition as well as all the theoretical and political implications it entails (Storey 11). Therefore, it is important to make one’s conceptual framework explicit.

The definition of popular culture used in this paper is a mix between the aforementioned third and fifth definitions. I posit popular culture to be a terrain which, to a certain extent, represents the collective’s dreams, desires and wishes which are partially shaped by US-culture. The products that appear through the process of creating and diffusing meanings are integrated into our conception of the world around us and, in turn, help us make sense of our everyday lives (Milestone and Meyer 2). Such products are usually vehicles to transport messages and narratives. Thus, it can be concluded that “[s]ocial reality is a vast network of narratives that we use to make sense of experience, to understand the present, the past and the future. Narratives give us the shape of our identity as individuals and as members of a socially symbolic reality”(Watkins 183).

As chapters 2.1 and 2.2 will show, these narratives shape our understanding of the world and influence our development. Particularly children are highly susceptible to hidden messages and world views perpetuated through the media because they are unsuspecting and unaware of their existence (Rushkoff 7). Therefore, it is important to analyze and decode these underlying assumptions that very often make use of stereotypes to characterize their protagonists that are then internalized by the audience. If one is aware that such images exist, one is in a position to counteract and deconstruct them so that uneven and unequal power structures can be abolished.

Based on this belief, the present thesis is an attempt to analyze how Pocahontas and Sacagawea¹, two extraordinary Native American women, are portrayed in selected media for children in order to reduce ideologies of inequalities. Two movies were chosen which represent the mainstream representations of these two women, one being the Disney film *Pocahontas* and the other the Twentieth Century Fox movie *Night at the Museum*. In contrast to these two examples of popular culture, I included two novels targeted at young adults, both written by Joseph Bruchac and each named after one of these famous Native American women. The portrayal of these two women will focus on the portrayal of gender (roles) and women’s appearance (*lookism*) as well as on their role within the plot, particularly if they

¹ There are several correct spellings of Sacagawea’s name. This paper will use Sacagawea; however, Sacajawea or Sakakawea are accurate as well.

support or subvert existing stereotypes regarding gender and the perception of non-Western culture, for which the concept of *othering* will play an important role, especially with regards to the interact with others (mainly the ‘new’ settlers). Since both these women are prominent figures in history, this paper will juxtapose their stories and narratives to see if they share a similar portrayal in the media. This will be carried out following a content-based approach in an attempt to identify the underlying messages and perpetuated images.

While there exists a multitude of literature and research on Disney’s *Pocahontas*, not much has been published on Sacagawea and her representation in popular culture, particularly not with a focus on media produced for the entertainment of children and young adults.

How they are portrayed and what roles they fulfill, however, impacts children and young adults since they are prone to comparing themselves to these images portrayed on television, in the movies and in the media in general (Anderson et al.109). This identification process influences not only their identity, values and beliefs but also their knowledge about the world. Pocahontas and Sacagawea constitute two examples of national myths which “[...] work largely unconsciously but nevertheless powerfully, to shape a part of adults’ and children’s cultural imagination. [...] These national myths, like other kinds of cultural myth, are woven into the literature we give our children.” (Watkins 185). Since they have such an influence on a person and on their attitudes concerning cultural and historical occurrences, they should be critically assessed which is what the present paper sets out to do.

The paper’s structure consists of three parts, each focusing on one aspect of the portrayal. The first chapter and its subchapters situate the narratives within the context of children and young adult literature and elaborate on the importance of maintaining a critical stance toward the messages portrayed by the media and their impact. Particularly, when it comes to films, a pattern, namely, Disney’s formula for success, can be detected which transmits specific values. The following subchapters will identify these tenets in the works analyzed. The historical and biographical aspects relating to the portrayal of Pocahontas and Sacagawea will be discussed only briefly since this paper focuses on the fictitious figures as depicted in US culture.

The second chapter will investigate how Pocahontas and Sacagawea are represented in relation to others, particularly how their interaction with the Europeans is characterized and which stereotypes emerge. The first part of the second chapter, chapter 2.1, will provide the theoretical framework underlying the concept of “the other” and the notion of stereotypes. The identified main concepts will subsequently serve as a basis for the analysis of how Pocahontas (in the Disney movie and Bruchac’s novel) and Sacagawea (in the Twentieth

Century Fox movie and in Bruchac's novel) are portrayed and if and how they are representative of their culture. This analysis and a following juxtaposition will take place in subchapters 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

Chapter 3 and its subchapters place their emphasis on gender, gender roles and the appearance bias. Gender studies is a vast interdisciplinary field with various different tenets depending on the researcher's stance and field. Chapter 3.1, thus, provides a selection of theories and concepts postulated by renowned scholars in the field which will be exemplified in chapter 3.2. While the subchapters 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are both each dedicated to either Pocahontas or Sacagawea, chapter 3.2.3 will highlight similarities and differences in the representation of these two women. Finally, the conclusion will provide a general summary and recap the main tenets in the portrayal of Pocahontas and Sacagawea in contemporary US-culture.

2. The Wonderful World of childhood stories

Narratives help us make sense of the world and shape our values and beliefs (Milestone and Meyer 2). Particularly, movies are "a powerful storyteller; employing narrative, visuals, and music enhances its power to communicate a vision of moral living"(Ward 5). While literature stimulates the reader's creativity, films make use of different sensory perceptions, such as sound and visual effects, to deliver their message. Especially films targeted at children and young adults, such as the ones produced through the Hollywood machinery, should be assessed critically because "[t]he more harmless or inane the forum, the more unsuspecting the audience"(Rushkoff 7). As the following chapter 2.1 will show, children's behavior, norms and values are heavily influenced by their surroundings and exposure to the media. Rushkoff formulated the theory that there exists such as thing as a media virus which is transmitted through popular culture and hidden ideological codes put there by its producers to infiltrate and influence the lives and beliefs of individuals (10). As already pointed out in the introduction, this view reflects a content-based approach to media which means that "children attend to, encode, and store in memory the information and behavior they see and hear on television or in other media and that they use that information to guide their own interests, motivations, and actions" (Anderson et al. 3). Given that throughout history, books and other forms of media have undergone censorship and even faced destruction, the idea that humans can be influenced by messages perpetuated through the media is nothing new. However, media targeted at children has and had not been the

subject of the same academic scrutiny as the following chapters 2.1, 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 will demonstrate.

Until the 1970s, children's literature, for example, was considered "trivial, easy, often ephemeral and fundamentally 'childish'" (Maybin and Watson 1). Particularly, the prejudice that children's literature is trivial and easy is surprising, given the fact that children's and young adult's literature mirrors relevant issues and beliefs in society (Paul 80). In addition, the underlying belief that literature for children is somewhat less challenging or less noteworthy is especially unfortunate, considering that the emergence of Western culture and its literary tradition was immensely influenced by children's literature as was the intergenerational interaction and transmission of cultural traditions (Maybin and Watson 1). However, as Hunt points out, literature for children and young adults has undergone direct or indirect censorship ("Instruction and Delight" 24). This might be due to the fact that it is extremely influential and holds power over the child's or teen's forming of beliefs, ideas and values at a time when the child or teen is still impressionable (Hunt, "Instruction and Delight" 15).

The same argument can be made about the Disney Company: "[By d]rawing in audiences of all ages, Disney animation is considered universal, wholesome and magical, promoting innocent fantasies" (Coca 7). However, the messages and the narrative are delivered on multiple levels. While one overtly targets children, the other targets adults by using more subtle messages. Rushkoff discovered that films employing such a double entendre technique usually feature an "[i]rreverent tone, as if to counterbalance the surface sweetness or moral uprightness of the show's main message" (100). Therefore, it is important to decode the message in order to teach children how to take a critical stance. Ward (113) summarizes the prevalent critique aptly:

The problem for many critics comes in how those minds are being affected or in what children are learning about right and wrong. Disney picks and chooses what it will use from myths, legends, history, and other people's stories. It 'Disneyfies' each plot to fit its formula for commercial success and its perspective on reality. In these films, certain moral lessons are chosen over others, according to Disney's value structure (Ward 113).

In this quotation, Ward points out three main issues. One is the appropriation of history to fulfill a didactic function which will be the focus of chapter 2.2. It will start with a very brief overview of Native American story telling traditions and the origins of Pocahontas' and Sacagawea's story. The subchapters will then contrast the narrative provided by the books and films with the existing facts about the lives of these two extraordinary women.

The second point of critique raised by Ward is the Disney formula. Chapter 2.1.2 will provide a definition of what constitutes this formula and how it is used. Since it was created by Walt Disney himself and because his beliefs still shape the company to this day (even though he has been dead for several decades), the chapter will also provide a very brief account of his personal achievements and views.

The last point mentioned in Ward's quotation is the effect stories and films have on children's behavior and values. Chapter 2.1.1 Children and young adult literature is - as the name points out - devoted to children and young adult literature. It will provide a short overview of the academic field. Together with the introductory chapter 2.1 and chapters 2.1.2 and 2.2, it will provide a basis for concepts used in the analysis in chapters 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3. The following chapter 2.1 will, as already pointed out, provide a general introduction into the effect narratives have on children's and young adults' beliefs and behavior.

2.1. Some stories stay with us forever

As already pointed out in chapter 2, children's and young adults' behavior, their value system as well as their worldview are heavily impacted by their exposure to media as well as by their surroundings. This is due to the fact that children acquire information about societal norms and expected behaviors by observing others. However, "[b]ecause children do not have much experience with the real world, television can often serve as an 'early window' on the world" (Anderson et al. 109). By the usage of television as a dominant source of information, specific messages diffused through the media are incorporated into the children's beliefs. The present chapter will examine Rushkoff's thesis, already mentioned in chapter 2, that popular culture uses hidden codes to influence individuals' beliefs (10). It is based on the assumption, following content-based theories, that "[r]epeated viewing leads children to retrieve, rehearse, solidify, and expand existing scripts, resulting in cumulative long-term effects" (Anderson et al. 3). Thus, it can be concluded that exposure to concepts portrayed by the media is used to modify the children's and young adults' existing value and behavioral system. Similarly, the theory underlying the perpetuation of stereotypes, which will be elaborated on in chapter 3.1, maintains that certain patterns are affirmed through reiteration of specific recurrent content, images or emotions which fortify them and make them more likely to be reproduced later by the children or young adults in real life (Anderson et al. 3).

However, not only preschool age children and young adults are affected by the diffused patterns. Mumme and Fernald conducted a study on infants and their response to emotions exhibited by a televised stranger (230). They pointed out that infants pay attention to

the emotions and behavioral patterns displayed by people they encounter in order to incorporate this knowledge into their own forming behavior and understanding of the world (Mumme and Fernald 221). They discovered that “[b]y responding selectively to the object that was singled out by the actress, infants showed that they could discern that the emotional signal was directed to one object and not to the other”(Mumme and Fernald 230). Thus, their findings suggest that young children are susceptible to behavior cues and emotions they see, whether they are shown on television or in person. Therefore, it can be concluded that children in general accept what they see on television and consider it as a source of information about social interactions and as a basis for presumptions about other people’s reactions (Mumme and Fernald 221).

Considering the fact, that infants are already able to absorb certain behavioral patterns, it seems only logical to dismiss the claim that children might not be able to decode sexualized images in children’s programs (Coca 17). These sexualized images very often portray a specific body type. “Television portrays images of thin women and muscular men that are unrealistic, especially for females. For most women, the ideal body type portrayed on television is unattainable[...]” (Anderson et al. 110). Since young children might not be able to read on their own yet, they tend to watch more television which informs them about these unrealistic body images and makes them aware of dieting (Dohnt and Tiggemann 148). This poses the risk that children and young adults internalize these unrealistic images which then, especially when they reach puberty, cause dissatisfaction with their bodies. Since children and young adults are prone to compare themselves to images portrayed on television, they use them as grounds for identification (Anderson et al. 109). According to a study conducted by Anderson et al., it was particularly entertainment television which had a negative impact on the viewers’ satisfaction with their bodies (116).

These perpetuated images on programs targeted at children and young adults are extremely powerful and entrenched in their minds. Their power is particularly evident in the following finding from a study: “[w]hen asked about Cinderella’s physical appearance prior to the reading of the tale, the children responded with a characterization of Cinderella that is consistent of Disney’s well-known image” (Baker-Sperry 721). Not only was the film and Disney’s version of Cinderella well-known but also the portrayed gendered messages about what it means to be a woman led the children to question the deviations from the beauty ideals in the villains (Baker-Sperry 721f.). Particularly, behavioral stereotypes related to gender, such as the use of the female body to gain an advantage or to solve a problem as portrayed in various Disney movies are present in children’s minds (L. Lee 371). However, Baker-Sperry

also discovered that children "[...] embraced the ideological messages about femininity, yet, at the same time, negotiated, added to, and subtracted from the tale as they filtered the messages through their own experiences, hopes, and desires" (Baker-Sperry 722). This filtering process mostly takes place in conversations with their peers (Dohnt and Tiggemann 142). Lena Lee highlights the importance of such discussions and suggests teachers take an active role in them as well since she believes they are a necessary means to modify and reconstruct preexisting stereotypes (373).

Conversations and discussions should also be held with adolescents, who reportedly watch approximately one and a half to two and a half hours of television a day (Anderson et al. 25). However, according to a study by Anderson et al., teenagers select and use different media depending on the purpose and content (35). Nevertheless, young adults spend about half an hour reading books which were not given to them as a reading assignment (Anderson et al. 29). This means that teenagers are less likely to read than to watch television, for example. Both films and books perpetuate stereotypes of societal expectations and norms, such as gender (Baker-Sperry 718). Since adolescents strive for more independence when they reach puberty, they might turn to these stereotypical images portrayed in the media as role models for their own lives, behaviors and beliefs (Anderson et al. 108). This influence is one of the reasons why particularly literature for children and young adults has been subject to censorship (Hunt, "Instruction and Delight" 24). Therefore, Hunt argues that fiction for children and young adults actually describes the relationship adults have with the idea of childhood rather than the actual experience teens and children have ("Instruction and Delight" 14). The same analogy can be drawn for films targeted at children and young adults since these also always reflect the producers' and screenwriters' views, as well as they need to be in accord with the movie company, such as Disney and Century Fox. While the following chapter 2.1.1 will briefly focus on the relevant issues in children and young adult literature, chapter 2.1.2 will concisely summarize the Disney worldview and formula, which can also be found in other films, such as *Night at the Museum*.

2.1.1. Children and young adult literature

Books that people enjoyed when they were children have a special, and often very personal, value and meaning (which is not surprising, considering the change that a single book may make to an inexperienced reader), and there is a perfectly natural urge to revisit them. (Hunt, "Instruction and Delight" 13).

This quotation illustrates, as have the previous chapters in part, that literature can have an enormous impact on the development of children and young adults. While chapter 2.1 has

already elaborated on the influence literature can have on the minds and attitudes of young readers, this chapter will focus on relevant issues in the field, as well as provide a very brief overview of the academic discipline in order to contextualize these features.

Although the term and the academic field of children and young adult literature might appear to be rather straightforward at first glance, in reality, however, it is still involved in an ongoing debate (Maybin and Watson 3). For instance, Hunt postulates that fiction for children and young adults actually describes the relationship adults have with the idea of childhood rather than the actual experience teens and children have (“Instruction and Delight” 14). This approach is also mirrored in the question posed by Maybin and Watson “The term itself appears to be an oxymoron: how can books which are written by adults, published and disseminated by adults, and largely bought by adults be appropriately called ‘children’s literature’?”(3). Thus, literature for children and young adults is mostly written by adults who try to cater to what they perceive as the interests and experiences of children and teens. Here, some analogies can be drawn to the criticism of postcolonial writers that the West was speaking for them. Proposing that adult writers write about the experiences young people have means, however, that a definition cannot be static but has to be able to adapt to changes in society and in the individuals, especially in what it means to be a child. The notion of childhood is another area which undergoes change throughout time.

Whenever childhood is being discussed or debated, Philippe Ariès is mentioned. He conducted historical research on the concept of childhood and postulated that the notion emerged in the early modern period because in the Middle Ages this concept had not yet been developed (Ariès 125ff.). Ariès’ theory has been subject to debate, which will not be elaborated on in the present paper, since it is not pertinent to the following analysis. However, one common denominator in the discussion was that the notion of childhood depends on the historical context (Horne 7). The concept of childhood influences the definition of children’s literature and since it largely defines the target audience, the different socio-historical contexts and locations also impact literature as a whole. (Hunt, “Literature For Children: Contemporary criticism” 6) Therefore, Hunt concludes that: “[w]hat is important for children’s literature is that the inevitable variety of childhood and childhoods is acknowledged in its real readers, and its variability as a social and commercial construction is acknowledged in the texts” (Hunt, “Instruction and Delight” 23). Additionally, this variety is also mirrored in the multitude of different forms of text that constitute children and young adult literature. Maybin and Watson provide a comprehensive overview of several possibilities:

[C]hildren's literature' might well encompass picture books, storytelling, drama, television, ballet and film and the wide variety of nursery rhymes, ballads and limericks [...], popular fiction [...] alongside prestigious classics, extend to magazines, manga and other comics, and expand to take in pop-up books, toy theatres, hybrid picture-book toys and Japanese mobile phone novels (Maybin and Watson 4).

Thus, the definition and the question what constitutes the field are contested. This might have to do with the fact that children and young adult literature is still a relatively young discipline (Maybin and Watson 1). For a long time, it was considered a minor part of literary studies which was rarely or not at all mentioned and considered as a curiosity (Hunt, "Literature For Children: Contemporary criticism" 6f.). Its emergence as its own field can be traced to the 1970s which also saw growing interest in issues such as multiculturalism and feminism (Paul 88). Since children and young adult literature mirrors the relevant issues and beliefs in society, these concerns appeared in publications from that time (Paul 80). The fact that they are featured has to do with the nature of the genre, since "[c]hildren's books are [...] *inevitably* didactic in some way" (Hunt, "Instruction and Delight" 14).

One of the issues that emerged was ecology. "[I]n the 1960s, innumerable children's books in every genre have incorporated ecological principles, emphasising the interrelationships of animals, plants, soil and weather" (Hanlon 229). Readers should empathize with animals and carefully handle the available natural resources. (Hanlon 230). This focus on nature can also be found in another prominent theme, namely multiculturalism. Until the 1970s, it was sufficient that a story took place in a Native context for the story to be considered multicultural (Paul 89). This was done on purpose to marginalize Native Americans so that they would not pose a threat, as will be elaborated on in chapter Orientalism 3.1. This is one of the reasons why A. Lee posits that multiculturalism and ethnic diversity are social constructs created by US-American self-absorption (15). However, "Natives did have parts to play in children's books – either as enemies or as foils or sidekicks to the brave adventurers who had gone out from the old world to conquer the new" (Paul 91).

Even though the situation has changed by now, the underlying storylines have remained (Paul 93). Recently, though, Native novelists have begun to write about colonial experiences and encounters from a Native's perspective (Stott 506). They, thereby, have made use of literature's didactic function to educate mainly their white Western readers (Coulombe 7). Thus, there now exists a critical stance towards these experiences and encounters which describe consequences and abuse (Paul 93). This fulfills one of the aims of Native American writers, namely to guide "readers to new ways of thinking about the world and their roles in it.

Significantly, Native writers provide general readers with the requisite information and context to understand” (Coulombe 6). However, it bears the risk that “[o]ur own complicity in our production is another kind of translation of cultures, access to a ‘museumized’ identity, roots in aspic”(Spivak, “Acting Bits/Identity Talk” 798). Nevertheless, these counter-narratives have been distributed more widely recently and offer perspectives accurately portraying the uniqueness of Native groups, even though some might still make use of stereotypes (Stott 505).

Most Native American writers, like Joseph Bruchac, Sherman Alexie, Gerald Vizenor and James Welch, to name a few, include their cultural heritage and past in their stories which feature traditional elements but also contain relevant and debated issues within society (A. Lee 5). Particularly in connection with ecology, oral stories, such as the ones passed on through generations of Native Americans, were written down, adapted and “reinterpreted to foster reverence for the earth and more harmonious relations among species and people” (Hanlon 229). Thereby, specific stereotypical representations are sometimes reproduced and perpetuated, even though that might not even be the author’s intent. Especially through the adaptation and reinterpretation process, some features are being lost and, thus, misrepresentation happens. One webpage which focuses on Native American children’s literature is maintained by the AICL, the American Indians in Children’s Literature. It offers many insights into traditional oral stories told by different Native American tribes.

These stories, as any other form of narrative, help us learn about our heritage, culture and enable us to use experiences by shaping our identity as members of a specific community (Watkins 183). In Western culture, fairy tales, myths and legends have fulfilled the same purpose. Originally, they were also “[t]old in person, directly, face-to-face, they were altered as the beliefs and behaviors of the members of a particular group changed“(Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 22). With the emergence of the printing press the stories were categorized and written down whereby they were again modified so that they would appeal to their audience and mirror relevant issues in society (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 22f.). However, the oral stories continued to exist since the printed versions were extremely expensive and “[...] written in a standard 'high' language that the folk could not read, and it was written as a form of entertainment and education for members of the ruling class“ (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 24). By the end of the 18th century, however, the fairy tale genre was broadened to include stories for children (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 25).

Since then fairy tales have been quite popular for children. When the new medium, the film, emerged at the turn of the 20th century, fairy tales were also turned into movies (Zipes,

“Breaking the Disney Spell” 28). “The purpose of the early animated films was to make audiences awestruck and to celebrate the magical talents of the animator as demigod”(Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 31). This means that the first producers wanted to make the audience forget about the original story and focus instead of the images they were presented with. The same can be said about Walt Disney’s aim, as the following chapter will show. He successfully managed that “[g]enerations are now raised on Disney fairy tales, and original story lines are forgotten or dismissed as not the real thing“(Ward 2). He achieved this with the Disney formula which will be elaborated on in the following chapter 2.1.2.

2.1.2. Walt Disney and his legacy

To achieve a comprehensive analysis of any Disney movie, one has to have a general overview of the company and the creator itself. This will be provided in the following chapter.

Walt Disney created his first animated fairy-tale adaptations between 1922 and 1923, along with Ub Iwerks, in Kansas City (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 28). Zipes supposes that Disney was drawn to the fairy-tales because they mirrored his experiences in life, namely, coming from a poverty-stricken background and having a strict and not very warmhearted father (“Breaking the Disney Spell” 31). After his cooperation with Iwerks, Disney went to Hollywood and founded the *Disney Brother’s studio*, together with his brother, after having convinced him to lend him money and work with him (Davis 72f.). In Hollywood, he created the first animated cartoon with sound which made him “[...]known for introducing new inventions and improving animation so that animated films became almost as realistic as films with live actors and natural settings”(Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 34). By producing the first colored animated cartoons in 1932, he furthered his reputation even more (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 35). Five years later, he produced the first full-length animated version of the fairy-tale *Snow White* (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 555). The movie “[...] became a huge critical, popular and financial success for the Disney studio, and would earn \$8 million by the end of its first run” (Davis 90). Disney’s success continued to grow as he used fairy-tales and other stories as inspiration for his movies. However, literature was not the only source of inspiration for Disney, as Allan points out: “The films were made by an American who drew upon a European inheritance of literature, graphic and illustrative art, music and design as well as upon European and indigenous cinema”(Allan xv).

Nowadays, the term Disney designates several things, the studios, the company and the man behind it, Walt Disney. However, these connotations seem rather straightforward

whereas linking Disney with ideology is not one of the first associations the general public has. Nevertheless, Disney can be considered as “[a] sign whose mythology and cultural capital is dependent on and imbricated in all the above manifestations of the name 'Disney'” (Bell et al. 2). Hence, Disney films present a specific view of the world which is to a certain extent synonymous with the United States of America which it glorifies (Bell et al. 3). In order to do so, the company makes use of a specific formula, the Disney formula, which guarantees success for feature-length animated movies (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 40).

“The power of Disney's fairy-tale films does not reside in the uniqueness or novelty of the productions, but in Disney's great talent for holding antiquated views of society *still* through animation and his use of the latest technological developments in cinema to his advantage” (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 39). This means that technology and content as well as the mise-en-scene are part of the recipe for success.

However, also the marketing of the movies, their re-rendering to reestablish them and the story, of the film's music and of the heroes, of the heroines and of the sidekicks plays a crucial role for Disney's success (Do Rozario 36). An example, is the highly profitable advertising campaign of the Disney Princess line, created in 2001 to familiarize young girls with all the princesses, even those who were originally introduced in 1937 like *Snow White*, and which managed to raise Disney's marketing sales from 300 million US-dollars to 4 billion within seven years (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 555). These sales, however could not have been achieved if all the movies had not followed the Disney formula. Luckily for the company, all of them did because “[o]nce Disney realized how successful he was with his formula for feature-length fairy-tales, he never abandoned it” (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 40). It consists of distinct elements which influence the story, the animation and the technology used to create the movie (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 39f.).

The available technology plays a crucial role, as Disney shaped the animation genre by using musical films and plays of his time as a basis from which he then went on to create his signature animation films (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 39). The musical background remains important up until this day because all Disney films include perfectly arranged sounds and catchy songs with memorable lyrics (Xu and Tian 185). Zipes also emphasizes that in Disney's films “[...]the story is used to celebrate the technician and his means” (“Breaking the Disney Spell” 39). This impacts the movie as a whole. It influences the sequence and the arrangement of the images to draw the viewer in and to create a harmonious sense of completeness (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 39). Brode believes, by also

referring to a Harvard historian, that through this finely arranged composition of the talents of the technician, the carefully selected music and the sounds as well as the attentively chosen setting, Disney creates masterpieces of creative art (Brode: xix).

Another important element that ties in to the category of sound and which also shaped the Disney formula are the renown international stars that lend their voices to the protagonists and the sidekicks which further Disney's popularity (Xu and Tian 185). These sidekicks are usually animals or other adorable creatures and constitute another important contributing feature of the Disney formula. They were first introduced in Disney's *Pinocchio* in the form of Jiminy Cricket (Schickel 233) „In Disney's fantasy world, the aides to the hero or heroine are invariably friendly and cute animals, adding appeal for young viewers and comic relief for older ones“ (Xu and Tian 184). They are usually not present in the original story but seem indispensable for the films and stay in the viewer's memory long after they have seen the movie. This might have to do with the fact that the Disney company considered them “[...] a convenient way to brighten and lighten any story they feared might grow too serious or unpleasant for audiences”(Schickel 234). The Disney movie *Pocahontas* features three examples of helpful and adorable sidekicks, namely, the hummingbird Flit, the pug Percy and the raccoon Meeko (see image 1 and 2).



image 1 Pocahontas, Meeko, Flit and Percy (*Pocahontas*)



image 2 Meeko, Flit and Percy (*Pocahontas*)

Another feature of the Disney formula is geared at the content. The characters are mostly one-dimensional but appear realistic and fulfill their rather stereotypical functions to fit the film's overall message (Zipes, "Breaking the Disney Spell" 40). In addition, there are certain recurrent themes. One of them is the dichotomy between good and evil. In the majority of Disney movies, the characters are either good or evil and this distinction is clear cut (Xu and Tian 184). This follows the general fairy tale structure in which the villains always try to harm the hero or the heroine and prevent them from succeeding. In *Pocahontas*, Governor Ratcliffe would constitute a prime example of such a scoundrel. However, in the end "Good ultimately prevails over evil" (Xu and Tian 184). This is not always due to physical strength but often due to the hero's or heroine's intellect. By considering strength an important criterion, the hero's or heroine's and the villain's body plays a vital role. The depiction of the leading roles already hints at their role within the plot. For instance, male villains are often

feminized and portrayed as either darker, overweight or having edgier facial features than the heroes (Towbin et al. 28). Examples are Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992), Frollo in the *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) and Governor Ratcliffe in *Pocahontas* (Coca 16). As evidenced by images 3, 4, and 5 their characteristic traits are immediately visible to the viewer.



image 3 Jafar (*Aladdin*)



image 4 Frollo (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*)



image 5 Governor Ratcliffe (*Pocahontas*)

While Jafar and Frollo both wear clothing that look like dresses, Governor Ratcliffe wears armor but at the same time pony-tails with bows at the end. Also, when they close their eyes they appear to wear eye shadow (see image 3 and 5). The female villains, in contrast, are usually depicted as drag queens, in the sense that they wear too much makeup, eccentric hairdos and long, pointy and polished nails like Queen Ursula in *The Little Mermaid* (Coca 16). Whereas the bad characters are displayed in a somewhat unusual fashion, the heroes and heroines usually have perfect bodies and small noses and are able to move elegantly (Lacroix, “Images of Animated Others” 219f.). Mostly, they embody the Western beauty ideals (Xu and Tian 184). By coupling the heroes and heroines together and emphasizing their attractiveness, heterosexuality is supported which “[...] is significant because it helps display the stark dissimilarity of the villain’s transgendered depiction”(Putnam 149). This will be elaborated on and exemplified in chapter 4.2.1.

Their perfect bodies might also be a reason for the second recurrent theme, namely, love (at first sight). Thereby, Disney communicates the message that heterosexual couples quickly fall in love with each other against all odds (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 565). Being in love is an important defining feature for the (naïve and sometimes helpless) heroines, especially in the older Disney movies (Ward 120). This happy ending, which mostly consists of an ensuing marriage, is usually the conclusion of the movie (Xu and Tian 184). The resulting heterosexual couples represent Disney’s view of a patriarchal society (Coca 18). In Disney’s version of *Pocahontas*, love also plays an important role which will be analyzed in chapter 4.2.1.

Another important aspect is the topic of diversity within society and the social structure itself. Particularly the older Disney movies did not display a very positive portrayal of ethnicity and diversity within society (Ward 121). However, in the beginning of the 1990s, Disney began to feature non-white heroes, heroines, princes and princesses, thereby allowing

for a more balanced representation of different ethnicities which, unfortunately, also includes many stereotypical characters as chapter 3.1 will explain. For the most part, the heroes and heroines belong to the upper class which gives them more opportunities and possibilities to question authority and to pursue their individuality, for example (Towbin et al. 32f.). Society, as a whole, is usually organized in a patriarchal fashion; however, the protagonists tend to challenge the system. Ward hypothesizes that “[p]erhaps Disney is aware of its patriarchal emphasis and acknowledges it as an ongoing tension by having characters disobey that authority“(Ward 120). As will be shown in the analysis, Pocahontas also disobeys her father, thereby defying the patriarchal system. Like many other protagonists in Disney’s movies, she is rewarded for her actions (Brode xiv). „The implicit assumption is that the individual human heart knows what is right and good and has the ability to follow that“(Ward 121).

This quotation suggests another predominant feature of the Disney formula, namely the hero’s or heroine’s quest for individuality which assures privileges (Xu and Tian 183f.). For example, in Disney’s *Mulan*, her quest commences when the matchmaker refuses to find a partner for Mulan because she is too particular which leads her to take her father’s place in the army because she wants to follow her own destiny, a decision for which she is rewarded in the end (Ward 98). In *Pocahontas*, all the settlers follow Smith’s lead as he demands the arrest of Governor Ratcliffe, even though Smith has a position inferior to the Governor (Xu and Tian 184). This constitutes only one instance in which individuality is displayed in the film. Xu and Tian are convinced that through this emphasis on individuality, “Disney seems to imply, through animated stars, that acting against the public interest in one’s search for individual gratification is natural, legitimate and desirable, and that the future of the world revolves around the individual, self-interested actions of naturally superior elites“(Xu and Tian 184). This emphasis on individuality is said to be a characteristic feature of Western cultures (Ward 97). However, particularly in the United States, individuality plays an important role. This poses the question whether or not Disney movies portray solely typical US-American features (Xu and Tian 184)

Xu and Tian use the term Disneyfication to refer to this phenomenon (205). According to them „Disneyfication is a kind of localisation in which the products of other cultures are Americanised according to American values, ideologies and expectations, in line with Disney’s organisational imperatives and formulaic approaches“ (Xu and Tian 205). This means that the company uses well-liked stories, reinterprets and adapts them to fit their formula for success and to portray their beliefs about life, society and individuals. Zipes believes that through this process „the ‘American’ fairy tale colonizes other national

audiences. What is good for Disney is good for the world, and what is good in a Disney fairy tale is good in the rest of the world“(Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell” 40). Again, this testifies to the fact that certain values and morals are considered by the company to be universal and, thus, transferrable to a global audience. This point is supported by other researchers who also called attention to Disney’s powerful word-wide presence (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 555). For the most part “[...] Disney animation is considered universal, wholesome and magical, promoting innocent fantasies” (Coca 7). This rather positive image is supported through Disney’s marketing machinery which has an equally global reach (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 555).

However, in recent decades Disney has been placed under more scrutiny by scholars who have challenged the underlying messages portrayed by the majority of films (Coca 7). It has been suggested that Disney created its own world view reflected by the recurrent themes within the Disney formula. Thus, it places an emphasis on heterosexual love within a patriarchal society and the quest of individuality. These values are transferred to the viewer “[i]f [...] films are viewed as answers to the question of how we should live, then film is an inherently value-laden medium that argues rhetorically for a particular moral version“ (Ward 114). Considering the impact television and particularly Disney has on viewers, as was already pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, the films can shape the viewers’ beliefs and behaviors. Especially when it comes to the construction of family life, partnerships and the individual’s role within society, the company seems to have a clear ideal in mind.

Researchers seem to be divided whether or not the portrayed ideology is beneficial or should be consumed with a grain of salt. Scholars such as Brode believe that “Disney ought to be considered the primary creator of the counterculture, which the public imagination views as embracing values that are the antithesis of those that the body of his work supposedly communicated to children”(x). He believes that Disney actually furthers a critical stance towards authority and a culture that embraces protest and riots if the authorities overstep their boundaries (Brode xvi). However, other scholars like Ward caution against just that by stating that Disney films are not as innocent and family oriented as they may appear at first (135). Xu and Tian have pointed out that Disney movies distort the original culture and certain morals in the process of their adaptation of well-liked stories or folk tales even though they might want to “[...] help American and global audiences to get to know the treasures of cultures which are not their own“ (206). Zipes believes that this is not the case because the films replace the reading experience with a simplistic and thoughtless yet still gratifying viewing experience, thereby removing it from the private to the public sphere (Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell”

40). Schickel also criticizes the appropriation and adaptation of the stories: “Indeed, there was something arrogant about the way the studio took over these works. [...] You could throw jarring popular songs into the brew, you could gag them up, you could sentimentalize them. You had, in short, no obligation to the originals or the cultural tradition they represented.”(Schickel 296) In his critique, Schickel summarizes some of the main elements of the Disney formula. Especially the last point mentioned in the quotation is interesting because the cultural distortion plays an important role in movies which feature non-white, non-Western characters such as Pocahontas.

By emptying the story of its cultural background and altering the narrative, Disney is able to infuse it with its own values and beliefs. Examples of such a practice are the portrayed specific gender roles which are complex albeit not necessarily egalitarian (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 555). In addition, in most Disney movies there is a focus on family relationships which mostly portray a father-daughter relationship (Tanner et al. 355). However, relationships tend to be rather one dimensional and stereotypical, especially if other ethnicities are involved, provided they are featured (Towbin et al. 19). Nevertheless, Cheu who admires Disney for its art and Walt for his legacy, makes a valid point by declaring that “[s]ure, we may want the representations of diversity to be different from what we see, but that is only because we understand the reach and impact Disney has, its cultural importance upon shaping our global citizenry” (Cheu 7). By analyzing Disney movies critically we become more aware of what we as viewers and children within society consume.

Although this chapter focuses solely on Disney films, analogies can be drawn to other movies made within the Hollywood machinery. “Other production companies, such as DreamWorks Animations, Twentieth Century Fox (NewsCorp), Sony, Warner Brothers (Time Warner), and Paramount (Viacom) have also moved into the burgeoning market of computer animated films” (Takolander 79). As will be shown by the analyses of the movies discussed in this paper, these other studios have also discovered Disney’s lucrative recipe which is why most of the characteristics pointed out in regards to the Disney formula also hold true for movies made by Twentieth Century Fox.

2.2. History and storytelling

“Narratives help us turn the constant flow of events into intelligible experience. We relate narratives to one another in many forms: from gossip to literature there stretches a continuum of stories” (Watkins 183). Watkins points out, as was already touched upon in chapter 2.1 and its subchapters that narratives appear in various forms and impact our lives

directly or indirectly through the messages they perpetuate. Bruchac, the author of two novels discussed in this paper, also refers to this variety: “We come by stories in many ways – by listening to elders, by reading, by watching the natural world, and by hearing them on the wind.” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 168). Here again a distinctly Native American perspective can be found which refers to the traditions of storytelling but also to the connection to nature which underlies many stories.

The works analyzed in this paper represent this diversity in the sense that they portray two Western mainstream forms in which narratives are told and which are particularly common in US-American culture, namely, in movies and films. Both novels were written by Joseph Bruchac who is “[...] one of the best-known contemporary Native American storytellers. Although he writes in numerous styles and genres, his works tend to reflect Native American oral traditions and he draws extensively on Native American folklore” (Bond 112). This referral back to orality and the story telling tradition is extremely present in his novels, since the chapters narrated by Pocahontas and Sacagawea both start, at first, by retelling creation myths and other oral stories which help(ed) Native Americans make sense of the world. These narrations reflect a particular Native American perspective and view of the world. One example, of such a typical oral story, is about the creation of the seasons:

The Great Circle of the five good seasons then was made for the people, made by Great Ahone. The first [...]Cattapeuk, [...] [t]he second is sweet Cohattayough, [...] Nepinough is the season when the corn forms ears. Good Tautock is the harvest season [...] [and l]ast of all is Cohon, when the Geese fly in with the coming of the cold (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 19).

As described by this quote, the seasons are centered on the animals and plants and their occurrence or rather their impact on the lives of the Native American nations and tribes. Not only does this feature a specific world view, but also the fact that there are five seasons distinguishes the annual seasons from the Western categorization, which features only four. However, it needs to be noted that some of these stories reflect only narratives by specific Native American tribes and nations. From a Western perspective, this diversity might sometimes be difficult to ascertain and to categorize which might be why Native Americans are represented as a unified category in mainstream media; however, as with any ethnic group this variety of different traditions and languages should be celebrated and mirrored (A. Lee 10).

By including these oral stories in his novels, Bruchac tries to maintain the element of storytelling and the diversity in narratives. He selected specific narratives that stem from the Native American nations and tribes whereby he includes their origin: “Two of the stories I

attribute to the Powhatan people in this work of fiction are stories that, for a number of reasons, I believe were part of the Powhatan traditional canon of tales” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 168). This is a rarity, as A. Lee points out. He blames the publishing of these stories in written form for a loss in authenticity, since they had to have been adapted in order to fit those new formats which resulted in “histories that had once been delivered in performance, full of live improvisation, became scriptural and linear, a fixity all too reassuringly western”(A. Lee 96). By the end of the 20th century, most traditional oral narratives had been transformed with a fluctuating degree of accuracy (Stott 505). The printing press, however, also impacted Western oral tales which equally underwent a transformation process. This also meant that they were adapted to fit certain conventions to suit the reader’s tastes and, thus, make it profitable and acceptable to distribute (Zipes, “Origins: Fairy Tales and Folk Tales” 26). Therefore, Hunt argues:

Once we realize that there *is* no original form, no form with priority, then we must learn to be more honest, and to attack versions we dislike on more legitimate grounds: our lack of agreement with the values they consciously or unconsciously espouse and express. Disney fails to the degree to which he successfully and authentically conveys contemporary mainstream North-American values, not to the degree to which he varies from a presumed authentic original (Hunt, “Literature For Children: Contemporary criticism” 13).

According to Hunt, there is no such thing as an original. Any narrative is an appropriation to a certain extent. This view, however, does beg the question to what extent is it (socially) acceptable to tell a person’s life story and yet still be able to alter it to express the writers’/producer’s creativity and purpose. The works analyzed in this paper will provide two answers to this question, as the following chapters will briefly illustrate.

2.2.1. Pocahontas - the ‘Indian princess’

“The real stories of John Smith and Pocahontas have seldom been fully told, much as they are a part of the popular imagination – even more since the highly distorted Disney movie a few years ago” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 169). Bruchac reflects in this statement several issues raised in connection with Pocahontas and her story. The first issue refers to the often criticized version made by the Disney Company which appropriated the narrative to fit their formula as was pointed out in chapter 2.1.2. This is particularly evident when it comes to the main tenets of Disney’s recipe for success included in the film. *Pocahontas* features catchy songs that carry the message of the movie such as “Colors of the Wind” which calls for an

abolishment of stereotypes. In addition, the movie features Pocahontas' quest for individuality and finding her own way, which she does in the end by deciding to remain loyal to her tribe.

Furthermore, the movie includes the dichotomy between good and evil. Since colonialism is not mentioned in the movie, the evil is portrayed by the greedy Governor Ratcliffe who was effeminate. This stands in stark contrast to the John Smith whose appearance resembles an illustration taken out of "a Southern California pinup magazine of male surfers" (Giroux 101). Another dominant feature included in every Disney movie is a heterosexual romance which takes place between John Smith and Pocahontas who is portrayed as a woman instead of a prepubescent girl, as chapter 3.2.1 will show. She is also always surrounded by her sidekicks Meeko and Flit which is another characteristic of the formula as chapter 2.1.2 explained. Since the film was made in order to reproduce this formula, Disney had to alter the real life of Pocahontas for which the company was heavily criticized by various scholars, such as Giroux and Hunt, mentioned in the paper. However, it was not only the accuracy concerning Pocahontas but also history as such that was pointed out as lacking in the Disney movie.

A Disney cartoon like Pocahontas(1995), replete in pastoral and love song, and however winning the animation, says little of Virginia's Powhatan Confederacy, the Tidewater battles(1622-1644), John Smith, or the appropriation in a term like "princess" for her actual status and tribal beliefs before Christian conversion and life and death in England (A. Lee 95).

Ono and Buescher also argue that Native American history and Pocahontas' life were appropriated by the Disney Company and distorted (25f.). They emphasize that "Pocahontas was not an empty shell of meaning prior to being imported into mainstream U.S. commodity culture" (Ono and Buescher 25). However, since Disney is one of the most dominant producers of entertainment films targeted at children and young adults, such a misrepresentation is imprinted in the children's and young adults' world view and system of beliefs. Although children might be aware that the movie represents a work of fiction, they still might use it as information to make sense of the world (Watkins 184).

Another danger has been pointed out by Ward. She believes that "[g]enerations are now raised on Disney fairy tales, and original story lines are forgotten or dismissed as not the real thing"(Ward 2). In the case of Disney's *Pocahontas*, this would mean that they incorporate historical misinformation into their general knowledge of history. This might be the reason why Native American authors, such as Bruchac, believe that "[t]o tell this story well [...] more than one voice and more than one point of view would be needed." (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 169).

This chapter has not elaborated on the historical facts in the life of Pocahontas, since such an analysis is not pertinent for the purpose of this paper. Since there already exists a multitude of academic research on the adaptations and misrepresentations of history, this chapter is devoted to the application of the Disney formula and tries to only briefly summarize concerns mentioned in connection with the movie. Since Bruchac based his novels on historical documents and oral tribal stories of the time (*Pocahontas* 167), his novel provides a rather accurate version of events, if compared to the exemplary work of Robert Tilton² who researched Pocahontas' life in depth and compared it to narratives about Pocahontas. His work has served me as a basis for comparison.

2.2.2. Sacagawea – the 'Indian mother'

"For one hundred and seventy- five years there have been two Sacagawesas" (Clark and Edmonds 1). This quotation touches upon the issue raised in chapter 2.2 by Hunt, namely, that there is no original when it comes to narratives. In their statement, Clark and Edmonds refer to the dualistic person. One is the real Sacagawea and the other is the myth surrounding her person that led to the emergence of several narratives that feature Sacagawea (Clark and Edmonds 1). "One of the most persistent fictions about Sacagawea is that she not only guided Lewis and Clark on their quest for the Northwest Passage but was also the key to the expedition's success" (Donaldson 524). By praising and glorifying her involvement in the expedition, a myth was created (Clark and Edmonds 1). This led to the emergence of the stereotype of Native American Women who welcome and support the colonists which has been reproduced since (Donaldson 524).

Similarly, Sacagawea's role in the expedition has been narrated in several invented stories because "the story of the teen-aged Shoshone girl single-handedly guiding a large expedition through unexplored territory is irresistible fiction if inaccurate history"(Clark and Edmonds 1). Particularly, in US-American culture many such myths and narrations about the beginning of what would later become the United States are related and reiterated (Kessler 2).

The journals of Lewis and Clark were published somewhat after their expedition, as Clark points out: "Though I have not the ability to edit our journals, it shall be done. I shall see them published, and the world will know how great were the accomplishments of my truest friend." (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 190). Clark did indeed hand over the journals to be edited and published after some problems in a two small volume edition in 1814 (Clark and

² For more information about historical facts about Pocahontas' life and the evolution of the narrative consult: Tilton, Robert S. *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative*. Cambridge: CUP, 1994.

Edmonds 88). Clark and Edmonds point out that a complete version was issued a century after the expedition. It featured a reference by Clark in which he regretted not having compensated Sacagawea for her service (89). This again, was mentioned in Bruchac's novel in which Clark states: "'Janey,' Captain Clark said to me, 'you deserve a greater reward for your attention and services than we have in our power to give you.' I said nothing in return" (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 184 f.). This is not surprising, since Bruchac admits that he tried to closely follow Lewis' and Clark's journals even for the dialogues (*Sacajawea*: 196).

During the suffragette movement, Eva Emery Dye came across the journals and Sacagawea's story (Kegan Gardiner and Millie Thayer 488). Dye transformed Sacagawea from a peripheral participant in the expedition into the myth of the woman without whom the expedition would have failed (Donaldson 525). Even though Bruchac tried to base his narrative on the journals, he also incorporated this myth in his fiction. The movie, *Night at the Museum*, reproduces the image of Sacagawea as the guide, even though it takes more creative liberties with the rest of her life. In the film, she is not married and does not have a child. This is due to the fact that in the movie she enters into a relationship with another figure from the museum, which is one element of the Disney formula that is also incorporated into *Night at the Museum*. In addition, the movie features catchy tunes and I would argue that Sacagawea and Teddy Roosevelt function as Lawrence's sidekicks to support him in his quest for individuality and his pursuit of happiness (*Night at the Museum*). All these tenets are characteristic of Disney's recipe for success, thus showing its universal applicability for movies made by other Hollywood conglomerates.

However, Sacagawea's role as a mother was emphasized by Dye who was a firm believer and advocate for women's roles in motherhood (Donaldson 525). This is only partially reflected in the movie by a statement made by the scholar, Rebecca, who admiringly describes the real Sacagawea (not the wax figure which comes to live at the museum every night) as "the ultimate working mother" (*Night at the Museum*).

Similar to the previous chapter on Pocahontas, this chapter has not elaborated on biographical facts in the life of Pocahontas, since such an analysis is not pertinent for the purpose of this paper. Since Bruchac based his novels on the historical journals and oral storytelling (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 196), his novel provides a rather accurate version of events

2.2.3. Two Native American women: one narrative?

Sacagawea and Pocahontas were both two extraordinary Native American women who shaped the relations between the European settlers and the Native American nations and

tribes. Both were advocates of peace. Sacagawea served as an interpreter and conveyed the messages the Corps of Discovery wanted to portray. At the same time, by being a woman and carrying her baby son across the country, she symbolized peaceful intentions: “All of the Indians were reconciled to our friendly intentions whenever they caught sight of the two of you. A woman with a party of men is a token of peace”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 143). Pocahontas herself “appears to have remained an influential voice for peace” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 149). She served as a mediator between the settlers and the Powhatan nation which led to a long and peaceful period of coexistence. In this regard, both women’s stories reflect one narrative, namely, that of a remarkable Native American woman who symbolizes peace and the impact one individual can have. Or as Teddy Roosevelt states: “Every great journey begins with a single footstep. If you could teach the inhabitants to get along they wouldn’t need to be locked up [...]”(*Night at the Museum*). Both these women taught and stood for peaceful cohabitation.

Their actions and lives have inspired many to commemorate them in literature, movies and art. Some artists took more liberties in narrating their lives in order to represent their own individual message and beliefs while others stayed true to their biographies. As is the case with any celebrity and national hero/heroine, both women and their lives have been instrumentalized and used for various causes, such as Sacagawea’s role for the suffragette movement. Therefore, Donaldson argues:

The figure of the welcoming indigenous woman is so deeply entrenched in the North American social imaginary that it has become a "foundational fiction," that is, a story embodying some of the earliest and most enduring features of Euro-America's claim to the space of Turtle Island (Donaldson 523).

Whether it is their adaptability or the creative potential they inspire, it is safe to conclude that both Sacagawea and Pocahontas are firmly embedded in US-American and native culture. Their lives, albeit sometimes very liberally adapted and, as some might say, even distorted, have passed the test of time and will probably continue to inspire writers, movie directors and producers as has happened in the works discussed in this paper. The present paper uses a similar stance as Ono and Buescher who put their emphasis also not “on the historical figure [...] within Native American communities, but on the subsequent reconstitution of the figure [...] within mainstream U.S. culture” (25).

3. “You think I’m an ignorant savage”– Native American women as representation of ‘Western’ beliefs

By telling a story, one involuntarily portrays characters in a certain way, thereby highlighting specific aspects. In the texts, analyzed in this paper, the main characters are represented in relation to each other as the ‘other’. As the subsequent analysis will show, this is particularly evident in Bruchac’s novels; however, both movies portray their protagonists differently from the rest. This might have to do with the fact that both companies that produced the movies are US-American media conglomerates which incorporate non-Western women. Since the otherness and the concept of the West in relation to non-Western countries are closely intertwined, the following chapter will first provide a general theoretical overview of the main concepts which will subsequently serve as a basis for the analysis of how Pocahontas (in the Disney movie and in Bruchac’s novel) and Sacagawea (in the 20th century Fox movie and in Bruchac’s novel) are portrayed and if and how they are representative of their culture.

3.1. The portrayal and perception of the *other*

The following subchapters focus on aspects of the discourse on orientalism. By providing definitions, a theoretical basis will be established which will primarily focus on works by Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Homi Bhaba and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Their concepts will be juxtaposed with the general representation of other cultures.

3.1.1. *Orientalism and the other*

Particularly with the vast and changing discourse on orientalism, it is important to clarify what is meant by terms such as the ‘West’ and the ‘Orient’ or, as Hall named it, the ‘rest’. Due to a lack of a single definition, different scholars use different definitions which can lead to vague terms and unclear results. Therefore, it is vital to reflect on the terminology used. In this paper the ‘West’ and ‘non-Western’ will be used to refer to changing historical and linguistic constructs rather than to concrete geographical regions (Sardar 14). In particular in the analysis, I deliberately try to avoid the usage of the term Orient, due to the fact that Pocahontas and Sacagawea were two Native American women living in North America which stands in contrast to the strict geographical definition of the term Orient. It can be located in a broader sense, in the cultures to the east, such as China, Islamic countries, India and Japan

(Sardar 14). However, the (mostly political) theory behind it can be analogously transferred to the situation of Native Americans, albeit not geographically.

Melman defines the geographical boundaries of the Orient but only considers countries which used to be part of the Osman Empire (3). Nevertheless, she also emphasizes that “[...] the ‘Orient’ is not a fact, nor merely a geographical region, but a politically and culturally charged topos“(Melman 3). Said also believed that such a comprehension in geographical terms was in fact a cultural construct through which the West could describe and materialize the Orient (McCarthy 69f.). This topos refers mainly to the United States and most European countries (Sardar 14). These countries share common denominators for they are all considered modern, have undergone the industrial revolution and feature a capitalist society. These characteristics made these countries distinct from others, thereby creating an own category (McCarthy 71). Hall points this out: „Auf diese Weise bildete sich das Bewußtsein des Westens von sich selbst – seiner Identität – nicht nur durch einen internen Prozeß, der die westeuropäischen Länder allmählich zu einem anderen Gesellschaftstyp formte, sondern auch durch Europas Bewußtsein seiner Verschiedenheit von anderen Welten [...]“(Hall 141). Thus, the classification functions as an ideology that facilitates comparisons between other countries. These were very often considered as not as progressive as the West (Hall 138). This perceived superiority and the need for comparison can be traced back to the 16th century and the rise of the Ottoman Empire (Sardar 15). At that time, Christianity reacted to the threat posed by the expansion of Islam (Sardar 85). By comparing the East to the West, the dichotomy of us and the other was applied. Hence, Europe was considered the norm whereas the Orient was exotic, erotic and everything else that was not typically Western (Sardar 14 f.). “It is [...] in denying the colonized the capacities of self-government, independence, Western modes of civility, [which] lends authority to the official version and mission of colonial power” (Bhabha 83). This binary distinction with ensuing power struggles is not uncommon when two distinct cultures meet, as the analysis of the novels will show.

However, the binary distinction as posited by Said can also be expanded to include the space in between this dichotomy as Bhabha shows.

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew(Bhabha 37).

Thus, Bhabha believes that in this third space interaction and negotiation of meaning take place which can even provide possibilities for the alteration of preexisting stereotypes. He further postulates that “[t]his interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the

possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without and assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 4). This means that in this third space a third entity can be created which has its roots in the two preexisting entities which form the binary pair. By employing Bhabha’s concept to Western imperialism, the third space can be a useful option for the evolution of a third, different and distinct perspective.

Nevertheless, it was the dichotomy of the West and the Orient that gave the impetus for the development of the Orientalism discourse. It is based on the belief that the Orient “[...] cannot speak for itself, therefore it is 'spoken for'” (Melman 4). Spivak criticized this process of speaking for someone else as self-exaltation and as a means to assert one’s dominance over a subaltern group (Steyerl 11). The proclaimed Orient’s inability to speak lead to the emergence of Orientalism as an academic discipline that would construct, present and interpret the Orient (Sardar 85). This resulted in the reduction of the orient’s capabilities and advances in science, medicine, the law as well as its rationality (Sardar 17 f.). Hence, “Orientalism is used synecdochially as a metaphor for a representation of the other that is based on a hierarchical relationship between an hegemonic and a subordinate group [...]” (Melman 4). Within this hierarchical framework the Orient was demoted to a lower evolutionary stage while the West remained in the dominant, developed position. Hence, the population was analogously fitted to represent and fulfill the West’s preconceived notions of what it means to live in the Orient. For example, the female body was eroticized and created as something desirably exotic (Sardar 23). Spivak believes that this portrayal of non-Western women led to the problematic assumption: “Es ist klar, dass arm, schwarz und weiblich sein heißt: es dreifach abbekommen.” (Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 74). This means that being female in the, as Hall puts it, rest of the world puts you at the bottom of the social patriarchal hierarchy due to financial, racial and gender aspects.

The dominant stereotypes and their ensuing results were also one of the points of criticism which were put forward from the 1960s onward.

The assault on orientalism [...] was launched on four fronts: on orientalism as an instrument of imperialism designed to secure the colonization and enslavement of parts of the so-called Third World [...]; on orientalism as a mode of understanding and interpreting Islam and Arab nationalism [...]; on orientalism as a ‘cumulative and corporate identity’ and a ‘saturating hegemonic system’ [...]; and on orientalism as the justification for a syndrome of beliefs, attitudes and theories, affecting the geography, economics and sociology of the Orient [...] (Macfie 5f.).

However, Macfie (6) points out that these four points of critique were also based on theoretical concepts produced by Western scholars such as Marx, Gramsci, Foucault, Hegel

and Derrida. Nevertheless, the criticism resulted in more scrutiny when it came to Orientalism (Macfie 7). It culminated in the debate around Edward Said's *Orientalism* which was published in 1978 and still exists to a certain extent to this day (Humayun Ansari 3). His aim was to analyze the orientalist discourse in order to identify patterns in theory and practice which support imperialistic tendencies on all levels (Macfie 12). Said's main argument is that the Orient is a European construct which is the polar opposite of the West (Said 10).

Daher ist der Orient ebenso wie der Westen selbst eine Idee mit einer eigenen Geschichte und Denktradition, einer eigenen Symbolik und Terminologie, die seine Realität und Gegenwärtigkeit im und für den Westen begründen. Auf diese Weise gilt, dass die beiden Konstrukte einander stützen und im gewissen Maße spiegeln (Said 13).

He, thus, believes that the West and the Orient are closely intertwined due to the power relations and ideologies set in place through colonialism and imperialism (Humayun Ansari 3). "[D]er Orientalismus ist seither ein westlicher Stil, den Orient zu beherrschen, zu gestalten und zu unterdrücken" (Said 11). This is done by the usage of stereotypes in order to present the Orient in a certain way (Macfie 8). Said exemplifies this by mentioning Gustave Flaubert who had a physical encounter with a typically Oriental courtesan that he described (Said 14). By citing such examples from well-known European works and authors, Said wants to highlight that a particularly modified image of the Orient was perpetuated in the Western world to further colonialism and imperialism (Macfie 9). "Hence, social and political interests play a significant role in the adoption of one way of construing reality rather than another"(Humayun Ansari 3).

Said's theory, as already pointed out, sparked a debate in academia (Macfie 10). Some scholars have further developed Said's theoretical concepts and models while others have disputed and/or rejected it (Humayun Ansari 3). All in all, this controversy resulted in a diversity of publications on various aspects as well as case studies based on Said's theory (Macfie 13). "Said's work has provided a spring-board for many of those coming after him"(Moore-Gilbert 35). Since multiple points of criticism have been put forward due to the lively debate, which are not all pertinent for the subsequent analysis, only some will be mentioned. One major point of critique was that Said reproached Europeans for their racism when dealing with the Orient (Castro Verla and Dhawan 42). In addition, scholars accused Said of a nonlinear arrangement of historical facts (Macfie 11). Compiling a comprehensive history of Orientalism was, however, never his intent in the first place, as has been already pointed out (Macfie 12). Another point of criticism targeted the Orient's agency. Orientalists, as was mentioned, opposed the Western belief that the Orient cannot speak for itself (Melman

4). Said's critics used a similar line of argument in their reproach. They accused him of stripping the population of the Orient of any right of agency because he did not include their influence on the Orientalism discourse but, instead, turned them into objects (Stamm 36f.). Furthermore, he believed the discourse to be male oriented (Said 238). Thereby, he postulated a patriarchal structure in which the male Oriental dominates the female which supports the stereotype of the passive and powerless oriental woman (Castro Verla and Dhawan 44). This is particularly interesting given that Said himself reproached Europe for its use and perpetuation of stereotypes (Macfie 8).

The concept of a stereotype first appeared in 1922 in the works of an American journalist, called Lippmann who wanted to refer to specific, simplified images of the world in the mind of each individual (Lüsebrink 88). These images are composed of certain characteristic traits that are generalized and simplified and then applied to a group of people, a location or an object in order to assert dominance and create a feeling of superiority (Stamm 42 f.). Bhabha believes that the stereotype "[...] is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations" (Bhabha 75). Hence, stereotypes annihilate any difference in order to categorize society in clear-cut distinctions. Lüsebrink postulates that stereotypes are necessary in order to fulfill this function and, thus, aid the individual to cognitively make sense of the world (89). Thus, they serve an evaluative purpose. However, as the definition shows, the stereotypes are social constructs closely linked to the issue of representation.

The first stereotypical representations emerged as "[...] Widerspiegelungsform entgegengesetzter Charakterzüge des eigenen Selbst" (Miles 19). They arose from the need to explain the appearance, behavior and beliefs of the encountered strangers who were different from their own identity (Schäffter 11). Particularly, during Europe's colonialism and imperialism, powerful images materialized. These were the opposite of what it meant to be European which lead to the emergence of other dichotomies such as civilized and uncivilized (Hall 167). This surge in new stereotypes can be explained by the fact that foreignness and unfamiliarity have an exponentially larger impact on social relations the more contact exists between the parties involved (Schäffter 11). During colonialism, images that idealized certain wishful or humiliating fantasies emerged in Europe particularly in combination with sexual fantasies (Hall 166). Bhabha also considers these fantasies as crucial for the dominance of the colonizer (81). "Die gewaltvolle Repräsentation der Anderen als unverrückbar

different war notwendiger Bestandteil der Konstruktion eines souveränen, überlegenen europäischen Selbst“(do Mar Castro Verla and Dhawan 16).

Thus, the difference served to upgrade Europe’s identity at the cost of the identities of the colonized countries (Lüsebrink 83). “The stereotype can also be seen as that particular ‘fixated’ form of the colonial subject which facilitates colonial relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised” (Bhabha 78). As pointed out by this quotation, these stereotypes were also perpetuated in order to legitimize and sustain uneven power relations in the colonizer’s favor. This was necessary as Bhabha points out because “[...] the stereotype requires, for its successful signification, a continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes”(77). This constant reproduction of these images is necessary because without it stereotypes are rather frail (Stamm 43).

Since the 1970s postcolonial theoreticians, such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said, have started to focus, among other things, on the violent power of representation and the influence of colonialism (do Castro Verla and Dhawan 24f.). Spivak believed that “[d]as klarste Beispiel für eine solche epistemische Gewalt ist das aus der Distanz orchestrierte, weitläufige und heterogene Projekt, das koloniale Subjekt als Anderes zu konstituieren“ (Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 42). Hence, she posits that the construction of the binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized, as the other, is one manifestation of such violent power. Spivak also refers to the fact that the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes were done from a distance, namely from Europe. This started the process of ‘othering’. This term is used to refer to this process of unequal power relations through which the West, particularly Europe, can maintain its superior position (Melman 88). While Lévi-Strauss believed that concept behind ‘othering’ only occurs at specific historical instances, such as the European expansion, Said postulates that this process of ‘othering’ is in fact a psychological mechanism which is inherent and natural for humans (Melman 88f.). Bhabha posits that “[b]y ‘knowing’ the native population in these terms, discriminatory and authoritarian forms of political control are considered appropriate” (83). Thus, through the use of stereotypes and the process of ‘othering’, unequal power relations are legitimized in favor of the colonizer.

Spivak also questioned the representation of the subaltern, a term which originated in Gramsci’s prison diaries and which refers to the subjugation of a social group through hegemonial power (Steyerl 8). In line with the assumption of Orientalism that the Orient cannot speak, Spivak posed the question if subalterns could speak. She came to the following

conclusion: “Wenn die Subalternen im Kontext kolonialer Produktion keine Geschichten haben und nicht sprechen können, dann ist die Subalterne als Frau sogar noch tiefer in den Schatten gedrängt“(Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 57). This means that subaltern women have no possibility to speak. Even if they make the effort to, they are not being heard since many cannot read or write and therefore, cannot participate in the debate (Castro Verla and Dhawan 61). This latter point will be further elaborated on in chapter 4.1.

All the theoretical concepts introduced in this chapter, be it the third space, the binary opposition of the West and the Orient and the agency of the subaltern, have led to the dismantling of Western ideological and hegemonial structures which served as a legitimization of colonialism. In addition, by deconstructing existing stereotypes, one follows Spivak’s demand to “reconsider position that once seemed self-evident or natural”(Moore-Gilbert 98).

3.1.2. The representation of the *other*

Each contact with strangers is influenced and shaped by previous encounters or historical experiences with other cultures that are distinct from one’s own culture of origin. For instance, in the 16th and 17th century, merchants already had specific expectations about the people with whom they would come in contact and establish trade (Miles 21). This, however, should not be surprising given that even the Bible as well as Ancient Greek and Roman texts had already described a variety of different cultures. These descriptions were partly based on overgeneralizations and stereotypes which were also used to make sense of the Orient and its inhabitants. These were, as briefly mentioned in the previous chapter 3.1.1, based on travel reports that tried to portray even the remotest countries to their Western readership (Hall 156 f.). “As Said’s argument makes clear, Orientalism’s textual universe is constituted by an endless series of representations, each text taking the other as its referent“(Yeğenoğlu 91). Hence, these representations were used to inform about and embellish stories of the people that were culturally and/or physically different (Miles 22). This sometimes impacted travelers’ experiences negatively when they actually went to visit, for example, the Orient in the geographical sense of the word, since their expectations were heightened by the romanticized and exoticized representations present in the existing literature (Stamm 192).

Among the plenitude of texts, one is particularly well known, namely, “*Arabian Nights*”. It was only partially considered a work of fiction but rather believed to be an attestation of a different, strange and exotic culture (Attia 32). “Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Arabian nights had enjoyed the status not only of a literary

classic, a canonical artifice, but also of an ethnographic source“ (Melman 66). Another prominent example is Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*, which was already referred to in the previous chapter 3.1.1. Both texts have in common, that they portray the Orient as a magical place where beautiful, erotic and exotic women live. These women were stereotypically portrayed as being belly-dancers, courtesans or as living in a harem. This representation, in turn, awakened the desire for sensuality and passion in the Western world but, at the same time, also reinforced the prejudice that these countries had a more primitive way of life due to the fact that they had not undergone the Age of Enlightenment (Attia 32f.).

Particularly the harem was problematic. On the one hand, it can be considered a prime example of patriarchal power structures since the man is allowed to live in polygamy whereas this idea is frowned upon in Western societies. On the other hand, it can be argued that the harem is a space of female power due to the superior number of women (Stamm 283f.). However, one fact is certain, namely, that the harem is a place where gender-based segregation takes place. Since those writings made use of stereotypes and were based on false assumptions about the power relations between genders within other cultural contexts, such as within Native American tribes, where it has been claimed that “American Indian women’s portrayal in literature and movies has been selective, stereotyped, and damaging[...]”(Lajimodiere 105).

Nowadays, literature is no longer the only influence and source of information at our disposal. Apart from the magnitude of possibilities the Internet and new forms of technology offer, the cinema and its narratives have a powerful influence on our perception of the world and its people. Through the diffusion of stereotypical images of non-Western minorities, the West can maintain its powerful position and continue to construct itself as the norm. Foster postulates similarly that “[t]he white race, supported by laws based on skin color, was invented primarily as a form of social control, and it would be up to all forms of popular culture, including vaudeville, theater, and motion pictures to maintain and further the construction of whiteness”(Foster 26). She mentions several forms of popular culture of which motion pictures, I would argue, reach the largest audience. The majority of such films are produced by Hollywood, thus presenting US-American values even if their films do not take place in or center on the USA. „American films, including animated films, have frequently based their themes on iconic treasures from world civilisations, particularly from Greek, English, Arabian and Chinese cultures“ (Xu and Tian 182 f.). It has to be kept in mind that these narratives and themes emerged in different cultures. In order to make the film

accessible, understandable and compelling for a global audience, a cultural adaptation or modification usually takes place.

Through this process, “[...] many stereotypes based on gender, race, age and sexual orientation are portrayed in the media“(Towbin et al. 21). This is closely linked to the fact that mainstream Hollywood cinema did not accurately and adequately represent ethnic diversity but rather chose to portray, for example, African American women and men as slaves or maids/servants who, strangely, reproduced or were told to represent white middle class values, beliefs and worldviews in order to get the role (Towbin et al. 22). Foster postulates that this formulaic portrayal is perpetuated purposely because “[t]he nonthreatening, nonsexual, black other performs not only as buddy, servant, and helpmate but also a necessary ingredient in the film’s racial makeup to fully mark the whiteness of the nuclear family in the film and, by extension, the white audience” (Foster 7). As already implied by the quote, this specific representation serves to make the white audience feel safe and comfortable because it makes use of deeply entrenched stereotypes. However, nowadays the situation for African Americans in the Western world has improved somewhat because there exists an attempt at harmonious and balanced relations and depictions in series and in films (Towbin 22). This is particularly important given the fact that “[m]edia images of White characters, including those of animated characters, contribute to the centering of White experience as normal and natural”(Lacroix, “Images of Animated Others” 219).

Asian characters were invisible for a long time and if they were portrayed by the media, their diversity was homogenized into one group, the Asians (Towbin et al. 22). In addition, this representation was again stereotypical and featured, similar to the Foster’s findings mentioned above, nonsexual not very masculine men who were evil and sometimes trained in martial arts while women were depicted as attractive, erotic and exotic but at the same time as submissive (Towbin et al. 22).

The same can be said about Latinos which might be even more surprising due to the fact that the United States has a large Latino population that is particularly present on the US-West coast. Yet Latinos are underrepresented on television and in mainstream Hollywood movies (Towbin et al. 23). There, the stereotypes range from the violent bandit, to a rebel, to the lover who remains non-threatening because he is not allowed to succeed in his conquest (Towbin et al. 23).

Native Americans are also confronted with pre-existing stereotypical images. As Lacroix points out, these preconceived notions stem back to the earliest encounters between European settlers and the native population (“High stakes stereotypes” 3). These narratives

were written mostly by men who often misrepresented the tribal hierarchical society as a patriarchal society because they could not comprehend the “tribal kinship systems, gender roles, social values, and tribal spirituality” (Lajimodiere 105). Lacroix examined representations of Native Americans in contemporary US-culture for these misrepresentations “[...]and argues that these depictions reference age-old racist stereotypes of the Ignoble Savage while simultaneously working to construct a new trope that she terms the Casino Indian” (Lacroix, “High stakes stereotypes” 1). Freng and Willis-Esqueda also refer to the dichotomy of the noble and ignoble savage. They believe that the former is characterized as being “brave, religious, silent, and nature loving” (Freng and Willis-Esqueda 579). All these positive characteristics aim to distinguish him from the other part of the binary pair, the ignoble savage. The ignoble savage negatively typified as being a “lazy, lecherous, superstitious, untrustworthy, thieving, drunken Indian [...]”(Freng and Willis-Esqueda 579). The stereotypical image of the (ig)noble savage has been perpetuated through literature and oral stories and can still be found in films and series (Lacroix, “High stakes stereotypes” 1). However, due to the emergence of new casinos on tribal land, the latter trope emerged and is continually reproduced.

It could be argued that these stereotypes are used in order to make the movie accessible, amusing and appealing to a global audience. By adapting known texts and narratives, culture is hybridized. However, this “[t]ransculturation gives rise to cultural hybridization and may cause intercultural conflict. The latter is evidenced by the fact that Disney animation has angered several ethnic groups in the recent past [...]” (Xu and Tian 185). African Americans, for example, have been portrayed negatively in Disney’s *Dumbo* which was produced in the 1940ies and which characterized them as hard-working but poor and not very intelligent (Towbin et al. 32). However, Disney’s *The Princess and the Frog* can be regarded as an improvement of the relations between African Americans and the Disney studios. The same cannot be said about other minority groups. In Disney’s *Mulan*, for example, most Asians have exaggerated Asian features (Towbin et al. 37). Furthermore, Arab-Americans were appalled and outraged by the original lyrics of the introductory song to the Disney film *Aladdin* (Xu and Tian 185). According to the film’s imdb webpage, before it was changed, the song told viewers that their ears were threatened to be cut off if their appearance was not to the liking of the Arabs featured in the movie. In addition, they were stereotyped as thieves and as being dirty and/or being cheap (Towbin et al. 32). The depiction of Native Americans in Disney’s animated movies also leaves much to be desired as the analysis of the portrayal of Pocahontas in the following chapter 3.2.1 will show. Nevertheless,

it is even more shocking in Disney's version of *Peter Pan* who "refers to the indigenous tribe as 'red skins'; he describes them as being cunning, but not intelligent" (Towbin et al. 32). To this date and to my knowledge, Disney has not produced any animated film that feature a Latin American protagonist apart from rumors that either Sofia's mother in *Sofia the First* or Honey Lemon in Disney's latest movie *Big Hero 6* are Latinas, since they are both voiced by Latin American actresses.

Apart from their character, the non-Western protagonists share a similar look. Their appearance serves to distinguish them from their white Western counterparts. For example, in Disney movies, typically Western princesses such as Belle in *The Beauty and the Beast* have an extremely white skin tone and a youthful and slender body figure with a narrow waist and small breasts (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 220). This serves as a contrast to the women of color. Lacroix discovered that in many Disney films "[...] the White women occupy the least active and mature bodies, whereas the women of color are represented as both physically mature and athletic" ("Images of Animated Others" 221). In addition, these non-Western women have to be physically more mature, since they are eroticized to enthrall the heroes. To achieve this goal, they are dressed accordingly. Their clothes highlight their physique and support the Western stereotypical notions of the exotic and the respective cultures (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 221). While Jasmine's in *Aladdin* and Mulan's physiques resemble those of Western princesses, their facial features, particularly the eyes, and their skin tone set them apart (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 220). However, Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and Pocahontas both have ample breasts and feature an athletic but curvy body and a darker skin tone (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 221). Lacroix reaches the following conclusion:

There appears here, much as in the physical traits, to be an increasing focus on the body in the characters of color. Whereas the costuming of these characters reflects stereotypical images of each woman's ethnicity, the overall effect, taken with the increasing voluptuousness of the characters, works to represent the White characters as more demure and conservative, while associating the women of color with the exotic and sexual. [...] They embody the exoticized Other woman (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 222).

This construction of the Other as something exotic and in the case of non-Western women as something erotic as well has been analyzed by scholars, as mentioned in chapter 3.1.1. However, Foster suggests that the fantasy of the sensual, exotic non-Western woman also alludes to white masculinity and the male's desire to possess (40). This already hints at the complexity of Orientalism and its interrelatedness with gender inequalities. As the

following analysis will show, these two domains cannot always be separated, since both are manifestations of the Other.

3.2. “But still, I cannot see if the savage one is me” – the application of the construct of the *other*

In order to understand and analyze the representation of Native Americans in contemporary US-culture, one has to be aware of the stereotypes that emerged after the first contact with the European settlers and which have been continually reproduced since then. “Early America was a sloppy amalgamation in terms of color and class privilege, with a mixture of bond laborers of different ethnic backgrounds, black slaves, white owners, and even free blacks” (Foster 25). In this quote, Foster actually refers to the seventeenth and eighteenth century; however, analogies can be drawn to the time of the first contact between settlers and natives and the beginning of what would later become the United States of America. As chapter 2.2 showed, the settlers were dependent on the aid of the Native Americans, otherwise they would not have survived. Due to their dependence and insecurities, the settlers felt threatened by the Natives and the first stereotypes emerged. The most prominent ones are the dualistic images of the ignoble and noble savage. “Though there are literally dozens of tropes used to figure Indians over the last four centuries, several are recognized as remaining influential well into the 20th century, almost all of which can be seen as derivative of the dualistic Noble/Ignoble Savage imagery” (Lacroix, “High stakes stereotypes” 4). The power of this stereotype is reflected by its reception in cultural products, such as the Disney film *Pocahontas*. The title of this chapter is a direct reference to the song “Colors of the Wind” featured in the movie. However, this is not the only occurrence of the savage image, since the movie also features another song, “Savages”, which will be analyzed in the following chapter 3.2.1. Following the analysis of *Pocahontas*, chapter 3.2.2 will feature an in-depth examination of stereotypes and the concept of the Other. Lastly, chapter 3.2.3 will juxtapose the dominant features present in the portrayal of *Pocahontas* and *Sacagawea*. As already alluded to by referring to the concept of the savage and the reports about the first contact between settlers and Native American nations and tribes, the subchapters of this present chapter will identify the main theoretical tenets (such as the reduction of the other’s capabilities and the idea of (re)interpreting and renaming as well as the construction of a power system in favor of the dominant rulers in order to legitimize their actions) in the works analyzed. Through these main tenets the chapters will illustrate that the theory underlying

Orientalism can be applied to the Native American context due to Europe's imperialistic endeavors.

3.2.1. Pocahontas- the mediator

All narratives focus on certain features and cultural aspects in order to characterize their protagonists. This is achieved through the opposition between two distinct entities which are differentiated according to their otherness. The framework of theoretical reference on which this assumption is based can be found in chapter 3.1 and its subchapters since this chapter focusses on the analysis of Pocahontas in Bruchac's novel and in the Disney movie, both by the same name. In general, one can conclude that in most animated movies, non-dominant cultures are represented negatively (Towbin et al. 32). This portrayal is often created through the use of negative stereotypes. These are often deeply entrenched in the minds of individuals since "[...] the stereotype requires, for its successful signification, a continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes." (Bhabha 77).

Therefore, nobody can achieve a characterization of any protagonist without including at least some stereotypical traits. This is due to the fact that stereotypes emerged to help humans make sense of the world and categorize people and things, whereby also providing an explanation for their difference (Schäffter 11). With regard to Native Americans, one very often finds the stereotype of the 'Noble/Ignoble Savage' who is either blood-thirsty or helpful, depending on the existence of the prefix (Lacroix, "High stakes stereotypes" 4). This might be due to colonization during which the earliest and most influential stereotypical representations of Native Americans emerged (Lacroix, "High stakes stereotypes" 4). These were reproduced in a myriad of ways in literature and in films, particularly in US-American culture (Freng and Willis-Esqueda 585).

Even Bruchac's novel which tries to avoid misrepresentation of Native Americans sometimes employs the stereotypes in the chapters which are told by John Smith, such as references to the ignoble savage. "The salvages are upon us.[...] Howbeit, 'twas only after that party of salvages, which was blessedly small and poorly armed, had spent all their arrows that they retired into the woods with ab great noise and left us"(Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 28 f.). In addition, Smith describes the Native Americans as "[...] devils came rushing in with the like antic tricks, painted half-black, half-red, but all their eyes were painted white and they wore some red strokes like mustaches along their cheeks" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 140). Although Bruchac admitted himself that he wanted to offer a different narrative in reaction to the Disney version of Pocahontas' story (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 169), the fact that he uses Smith to

describe the Native Americans as devils bears a striking similarity to the song “Savages” in the Disney movie. In the same song in Disney’s *Pocahontas*, Governor Ratcliffe and the English settlers sing “They’re savages! Savages! Dirty redskin devils!” (“Savages”). However, within the lyrics of the same song in the same movie, Disney managed to include a reference from Powhatan who also discriminates against the settlers based on their skin color: “The paleface is a demon. The only thing they feel at all is greed!” (“Savages”).



image 6 settlers (*Pocahontas*)



image 7 Native Americans (*Pocahontas*)

Apart from the fact that Smith refers to the Natives as devils wearing black, white and red body paint, the colors are highly symbolic (cf images 6 and 7). Their symbolism and the importance of body paint will be elaborated on in chapter 3.2.2. Nevertheless, I want to mention another aspect of the color red in the stereotyping of Native Americans in popular US-culture. For instance, in Disney’s *Peter Pan*, viewers, primarily children, are told that Native Americans have a reddish skin tone because they are “in a permanent state of sexual excitement”(Byrne and McQuillan 107). Through the perpetuation of such stereotypes, obviously incorrect images and beliefs are perpetuated. Even though this blatant misrepresentation did not occur in any other Disney movies, the element of sexuality remained a constant and is still continuously perpetuated, as will be elaborated on in chapter 4.2. However, this might be due to Disney’s attempt to create a non-offensive and politically correct film in response to the criticism it faced for its previous movies (Ward 34), as was mentioned in chapter 3.1.2. In *Pocahontas*, Disney managed to refrain from perpetuating the image of the uncivilized other by portraying Pocahontas as “[b]right, courageous, literate, and politically progressive” (Giroux 101).

There are some instances in Bruchac’s *Pocahontas*’ narrative in which she highlights the role of the helpful but also bloodthirsty savage even if she does not do this explicitly. For example, Pocahontas explains why her people killed some settlers “[t]hose black-robed Coatmen behaved so badly that all but one of them were killed”(Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 3). This is a fairly recurrent reason for why the natives killed the settlers. Even though this might be consistent with historic sources and thinking at the time, it implies the stereotype of the blood-thirsty savage to an extent, particularly in the light of contemporary morality where bad

behavior and manners do not warrant physical punishment. In the Disney film, Native Americans are referred to as savages which is underlined by the way they move their bodies when they dance.

As the above analysis shows, the theme of the uncivilized savage is recurrent. Both the novel and the Disney film try to portray both sides of the dichotomy as savages to offer a more balanced and politically correct view. For example, the Natives ponder:

‘Perhaps,’ he said, ‘these Tassantassuk do everything backwards, everything backwards. For example, I have seen that when it is hot, instead of taking off clothing, they put more on, put more on. And when they are dirty, instead of bathing, they stay away from water’(Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 42).

Particularly the stench of the settlers is something that Pocahontas and the fellow members of her tribe disdain. They compare them to raccoons and wonder why the settlers do not bathe (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 57). The lack of understanding, as predicted by the theory about the emergence of stereotypes, lead to the creation of new stereotypes to explain this phenomenon:

They seem to fear, yes, fear the touch of water on their bodies. They never wash themselves or remove their heavy coats.’ Rawhunt laughed. ‘Perhaps, perhaps it is because they have such love for all the little crawling things that live in the fur on their faces and on their bodies. They do not want to disturb their tiny chums by bathing. [...] Long ago, long ago as it was, I still remember how badly they smelled. [...] *Waugh*, you can smell him long before you can see him. Long before you can see him. Long before’” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 57).

In addition, the Native Americans mock the way Coatmen hunt and laugh at their lack of experience, which chases deer away instead of drawing them close (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 144). In turn, the settlers and John Smith ridicule the Natives for their lack of knowledge about the shape of the world. “They imagined the world to be round and flat like a trencher, and they in the middle” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 141).

The same reasoning is used by Pocahontas and John Smith in the movies when they try to describe their people’s goals. Smith explains that the settlers plan to build cities in order to enhance the quality of life of the people. Ward (44) mentions that at first he uses the term savages and then circumscribes this term by calling the people uncivilized. Pocahontas is enraged by Smith’ statement (see image 8). This is when the theme song of the movie “Colors of the Wind” starts. In it, Pocahontas “encapsulates one of the central moral themes: Do not stereotype; racism is wrong”(Ward 44). In the first stanza Pocahontas sings: “You think I’m an ignorant savage and you’ve been so many places; I guess it must be so. But still I cannot

see, if the savage one is me. How can there be so much that you don't know?"("Colors of the Wind").

In that song, she critiques the imagined superiority exhibited by Smith and his countrymen and their stereotyping of Native Americans as savages. This is overt criticism of the stereotypes used to assert dominance over the Natives under the guise of education and the establishment of peaceful cohabitation. The song "Colors of the Wind" then goes on to admonish the settlers that the earth and its animals are alive and cannot be claimed by the people since they belong to everybody (see image 9). In the next stanza, Pocahontas "challenges Smith to look at the world through someone else's eyes, to walk in someone else's shoes"(Ward 44). She wants him to do this to perceive the diversity in the world, be it the multitude of different cultures and humans or the variety of animals and plants, which she compares to the many colors of the wind later on in the song.



image 8 uncivilized savages (*Pocahontas*)



image 9 claiming the land (*Pocahontas*)

The claiming of any land the settlers touch is featured and criticized in Bruchac's novel:

When the Coatmen reach a place they have not been before and they come onshore, they sometimes bring with them a thing made of two posts fastened together, making a shape like that of our design for the four directions. They bury its base in the ground, speak loud words, and then leave it there. Rawhunt thinks it may have something to do with their way of worship.[...] Those crosses they bury in the earth may stand for the four directions where the wind spirits live (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 43).

Their lack of understanding of what the settlers are actually doing leads them to falsely believe that the settlers are praying. That this is not the case, is illustrated by Smith's description of the event: "The four and twentieth day, we set up a cross at the head of this river, naming it 'Kings River,' where we proclaimed James, King of England, to have the most right unto it" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 47). As his version of the events clearly explains, the settlers were not praying but instead already claiming the land, thereby robbing the Native Americans of their rightful land. The economic interest of the settlers is also alluded to in the Disney movies when Wiggins has a conversation with Governor Ratcliffe "[...]fails to understand the man's aim of getting something for nothing from the natives – by discovering

gold and claiming the land for the King; not, as Wiggins suggests, distributing goods and goodwill to the indigenous population” (Byrne and McQuillan 108). This is why the Disney version was criticized for whitewashing history. Not only does the film ignore the ensuing genocide but, as Byrne and McQuillan point out, demand that both parties, the settlers and the Native Americans, are responsible for their bloody cultural heritage (110).

One justification for such a ludicrous claim could be the cultural misunderstandings due to the language barrier. Interestingly enough, in the movie this fact is only alluded to once in a scene between Pocahontas and John Smith when they meet for the first time. They do not immediately speak the same language. This is particularly evident when they demonstrate to each other how their people greet (see image 10 and 11). “Pocahontas uses the Indian word *wingapo*. But then she is reminded of Grandmother Willow’s advice to ‘listen with her heart’ and finds no more need to use her language” (Ward 50).



image 10 European greeting (*Pocahontas*)



image 11 wingapo (*Pocahontas*)

After this scene, Pocahontas and Smith as well as the Native Americans and the settlers can understand and communicate with each other without any problems. This could be argued as necessary for the movie, since small children are not yet able to read and would, therefore, be unable to follow the narrative if the Native Americans used a language other than English. However, another point is equally valid, namely, that Native Americans nowadays are able to communicate in English without any difficulties.

This [...]mirrors the numerous other incorporations of Native Americans into a readable familiar context. Pocahontas’ young female friend has the facial expressions and haircut of a knowing High School deb, and speaks the language of an American teenager, at one point telling Pocahontas to ‘quit fooling around’ (they also exchange girl-talk about Kocoum’s muscles (Byrne and McQuillan 109).

Curiously, Bruchac mentions in his novel that this linguistic history lesson included in the Disney movie is false, since it is actually used to designate a good and honest person who has friendly intentions (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 45).

Apart from the language which can shape a person’s identity, character is also influenced by religion. In the novel, this is a salient and recurrent theme. Native Americans are portrayed as very connected to the earth and favoring a spiritual world centered on

creation myths which are polytheistic. For example, the seasons are believed to have been created by the “Great Ahone” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 19). Another God named Okeus, is responsible for fortune telling and glimpses of the future which is predicted by his priests (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 30). This polytheistic faith of the Native American nations and tribes stands in contrast to the monotheistic faith represented by the settlers. Already at their arrival, Smith’s description of the land resembles somewhat the Biblical paradise (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 26). Bruchac even mentions in his novel that the settlers had built a church so that they could have service there:

The following day, June twentieth, all received the communion. Our church was a simple one. We hung an awning made from an old sail to three or four trees to shadow us from the sun. Our walls were rails of wood, our seats unhewed trees, our pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighboring trees. Rough though our cathedral was, surely God did most mercifully hear us – till the continued inundations of mistaking directions, factions, and numbers of unprovided libertines near consumed us all, as the Israelites in the wilderness” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 63).

This contrast in religion would in turn be used as a justification for the measures taken by the settlers to colonize the Native Americans so that the settlers could expand their ownership of the land. All these distinguishing factors mentioned above, such as the level of civilization, the language and religion served as a means to characterize the respective other as distinct and strange. ”By ‘knowing’ the native population in these terms, discriminatory and authoritarian forms of political control are considered appropriate” (Bhaba 83). Thus, through the perpetuation of the emerging stereotypes and the process of ‘othering’, unequal power relations were legitimized in favor of the colonizer, culminating in the genocide of Native Americans. In *Pocahontas* “[n]o mention is made of the fact that John Smith’s countrymen would ultimately ruin Pocahontas’s land, bring disease, death, and poverty to her people, and eventually destroy their religion, economic livelihood, and way of life”(Giroux 101f.). Disney’s film follows a method comparable to the underlying pattern Foster discovered that reduced black characters’ agency and abilities in order to make white audiences feel safe (7). “Under the cover of a politically correct revisionism [...] Disney manages to reinscribe all the erasures and elisions of white American history (while adding a few more of their own) back into this myth of foundation”(Byrne and McQuillan 115). By erasing colonialism and constructing a narrative that focusses on love, the audience is not reminded of genocide of Native Americans (Giroux 102).

3.2.2. Sacagawea- the rescuing interpreter

Sacagawea as any other character in a narrative is portrayed in a specific way to highlight her distinctness in relation to the white Western 'other'. The underlying theory behind the concept of otherness and the ensuing binary opposition of us and them has been elaborated on in chapter 3.1 and its subchapters. In both the movie *Night at the Museum* and the Bruchac novel, Sacagawea is constructed in relation to the other protagonists. Since Bruchac's aim is to subvert established normative constructions which are based on unequal and artificial reasoning, his work tends to propose a similar stance (Donaldson 532). The movie *Night at the Museum*, however, was produced during the ongoing bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition and has to be seen in this light since it is rather rare that US-American media conglomerates incorporate non-Western women, particularly Native American women, as main characters in their movies as is described in chapter 3.1.2.

For the analysis of the novel, the concept of the Third space plays an important role since it allows for interaction and negotiation of meaning and thus provides a possibility for the formation of a hybrid identity which is not hierarchically structured (Bhabha 4). It is in exactly such a space that the narrative of Sacagawea's journey is situated. In the novel, Sacagawea's son asserts that he himself has such a hybrid identity. "It is the story of how the worlds of the white men and the Indians came together. There is no better to tell the story than I, Jean Baptiste, for I am of both worlds"(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 1). Therefore, he believes that he is qualified to provide the reader with the narrative by elaborating: "It is the custom of my mother's people, the Shoshones, that one can tell only what they have seen. When the Shoshones come to something they do not know, one who was there must tell the tale. [...] It is the shared telling of this story that is the beginning of my life"(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 2). By providing the narrative in such a mediated way, he opens it up to a process of mediation of meaning and reflection. The movie itself, I would argue, provides somewhat of a Third Space since it takes Sacagawea and Teddy Roosevelt out of their historical context and transfers them into a museum in the 21st century. Through this distortion, a space for reflection is equally provided.

Both the novel and the films, however, make use of the dichotomy between Sacagawea and the other protagonists. Languages, in particular, play an important part since language itself becomes a contested field of power struggle within the Orientalist discourse, especially if one draws parallels between the belief that the Orient has to be spoken for since

it is not able to speak for itself (Melman 4) as mentioned in chapter 3.1.1. In addition, there is the language barrier between Lewis, Clark and the Native American nations and tribes.

In the novel, Sacagawea functions as the interpreter because she knew the people and the language (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 49). The movie mentions her role as a translator during the expedition, and, surprisingly, Sacagawea in *Night at the Museum* can speak perfect American English. The only communication problems she faces are caused by the glass in her showcase which prevents her from communicating with the world (see image 12). This is the only time when she tries to convey her message by using sign language, gestures and facial expressions to deliver the meaning (see image 13).



image 12 Sacagawea has trouble understanding (Night at the Museum)



image 13 Sacagawea signs (Night at the Museum)

This stands in contrast to the capable translator portrayed in the novel by Bruchac. The expedition would not have been such a success if it were not for her interpretations and skills who rescued the mission more than once (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 83). In the novel, Sacagawea has a very close relationship with her mother tongue, especially after she was kidnapped.

I vowed to myself that I would not be one of them. No matter how far I traveled, no matter who became my husband, I would never forget my own name. I would never forget the place where I was born and that my mother had planted a small fir tree over my birth cord. Like the roots of that tree, I was bound to that land (Bruchac *Sacajawea* 17).

For her, language constitutes a part of her identity. This becomes even more evident when she talks about her time in captivity during which she had to speak the captive's language which she did not like but which would eventually be of great use to her (Bruchac, *Sacajawea*: 17). Most Native Americans came to learn another tribal language by being kidnapped by rival tribes, as the example of a Shoshone boy illustrates (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 136). Bruchac's Sacagawea believed that her mother tongue was: "more beautiful to me than any song [...], [...] I knew that I had finally come home"(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 123). However, she was glad that she had acquired some words in English, French and in the language of her captors, since this made her particularly valuable to the Corps of Discovery (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 14 f.).

During their expedition, translation and interpretation was an arduous process, as Sacagawea describes:

I would tell them the words in Hidatsa. Charbonneau would then say those words in French. Then, if Jessaume was there, he and Jessaume would argue over which French word was the right one before translating it into English. At times Captain Lewis seemed ready to lose his temper with them both (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 57).

Lewis and Clark sometimes wrote down the words but were otherwise content to have their language translated. However, when it came to names and places and altering their original names and meanings, both Captains assumed that their origin and education gave them the right to change them. “Yes our captains loved to name things that were already named. So it was that I became no longer Bird Woman but Janey”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 16). However, names also constituted a part of a person’s identity, particularly in Sacagawea’s case who was touched after the Lewis and Clark named a river after her, but who also felt that “[i]t was strange to leave a part of myself with that river”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 86). Therefore, it is even more troublesome that in the movie *Night at the Museum*, the guard Lawrence always seems to have trouble pronouncing her name. By repeating several mispronunciations, he establishes her otherness in comparison to the other wax figures in the museum whose names he can read without any difficulty, albeit he does mispronounce Octavian’s name. The spelling of Sacagawea’s name, caused by the orality of Native American tribal languages, is difficult. However, mispronunciations of her name indirectly mark Sacagawea as different.

In Bruchac’s novel, Sacagawea’s son is also marked as different. His hybridity is reflected in the three names he received. Sacagawea did not call her son by his real name Jean Baptiste but rather by the name Pa-ump, which in her language meant first-born while Clark named him Pomp (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 62). As referred to above, Lewis and Clark liked to give new names to people, plants, animals and their surroundings, based on the belief that they were in uncharted and unexplored territories (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 62). This belief is based on the assumption that they, as representatives of an educated and civilized nation, had the right to give anything a new name, thereby placing the Native American tribes on a lower evolutionary stage. By positioning themselves as dominant, educated, developed and civilized, they reinterpreted and created stereotypes of what it means to be Native American which served as a basis for legitimization of their imperialistic tendencies and their claim to the land:

Captain Clark explained to me, as he had before when Captain Lewis gathered leaves and flowers and pulled plants up by the roots to take them with him, that some of these flowers were new. No one had ever seen them before,

he said. No one had ever named them before. But they were all flowers I had seen often when I was a small child. I knew their However, it also allowed them to reduce the Native's capabilities of creating terms for their own land names (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 169).

This resulted in new names for those tribes and nations that Lewis and Clark encountered on their expedition. Since language plays such an instrumental role in the creation of identity, Bruchac paid meticulous attention to the terms and designations he used, as he explained in the afterword (*Sacajawea* 196 f.). He, therefore, chose to use the names given to the various nations and tribes by the Corps of Discovery whenever the narration was carried out by Clark and the Native American names whenever Sacagawea was telling the story (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 197).

The renaming allowed them to reduce the Native's capabilities of creating terms for their own land. This relates to what occurred when Orientalism emerged as a study, as stated in chapter 3.1.1. Through such a reduction of their capabilities, Lewis and Clark were able to patronize the Native Americans they encountered. This is another recurrent theme throughout their expedition:

Captain Lewis had been taken on as the personal secretary to Jefferson several years before, so that Meri could be trained to lead just such an undertaking. Jefferson also had an abiding curiosity about all things scientific and human. So we were to make maps, observe latitude and longitude, and collect specimens and information wherever we went. Making contact with the various Indian nations, both to know them and to civilize them, was to be one of our primary objectives, as was the arranging of peace treaties among Indian nations (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 10).

This was based on the belief that Native Americans were not civilized enough and therefore, needed to be patronized. The perceived superiority complex of Lewis and Clark cannot be overstated in the novel:

[...]‘Not quite as respectable as Columbus,’ said I. ‘Nor Captain Cook,’ Meri replied with a laugh. ‘Think of it. We are about to penetrate into a country two thousand miles wide, on which the foot of civilized man has never trodden [...]’” (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 72).

Lewis and Clark took their European cultural heritage as a basis for the assumption that they were more civilized than the Native Americans who inhabited the land. This assumption, Bruchac explains in the afterword, is based on Lewis and Clark's journals which he took as a basis for writing the text (*Sacajawea* 197). However, this perceived superiority was also commented upon throughout the novel. For instance, Pomp asks whether and for how long the Corps of Discovery ate dogs and horses. He was told that this was due to food shortages and because the men were in need of meat (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 164). By present-

day standards, doing so is frowned upon by society. Sacagawea remarks at one point how strange it is that the white people believe that they can claim land and keep it all to themselves (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 65). She even warns the Corps of Discovery about a particular breed of bears which were extremely dangerous. They ignored the warning because of their perceived superiority, this time justified by the use of guns, but shortly after the warning they “[...] began to see why the Indians feared the bear so”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 80). Such revelations, however, seem to impact their behavior only briefly.

Overall, they felt the urge to educate the Native Americans and show them a supposedly better way to live. The education was to take place through instruction, such as the one given to Sacagawea by Captain Lewis who was pleased to explained to her how his medical instruments and other technological gadgets worked (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 58). However, the Corps of Discovery also wanted to dominate the education of children, which resulted in Clark’s demand that Sacagawea bring her son to him so he could raise him to his liking (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 185).

Another method to lead the Native Americans to a better life was the establishment of peace:

Now there must be a new way among their people, the white warrior chiefs said. Now it was wrong for the Indian nations to fight one another. Think of that, warriors telling other warriors not to fight. They actually ordered the people to stop fighting and said if they did not stop, they would punish them (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 28).

The belief, that they had the authority to tell the Native American nations and tribes to stop fighting was grounded in the assumption that they were more civilized and therefore allowed to speak and decide for the Natives since their President, Jefferson had given them permission and ordered them to:

We had been given the orders to treat with the Indians fairly and to avoid conflict with them. We were to open the way for trade, inform them of our sovereignty, and establish peace among the many warring tribes. (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 32).

Particularly the first sentence is highly contested throughout the narrative because there are several instances in which the Corps of Discovery took advantage of the Native Americans. One such example is the following: “The Indians were generous. They took some of the poorer horses we had in exchange for better ones”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 136). Lewis and Clark and the members of their expedition take the Natives’ generosity for granted since they do not feel any remorse for this unequal trade. In addition, to this unequal trading they also had no remorse to feign medical expertise.

They seemed especially fond of me as a doctor, even though Captain Lewis knew far more of medicine than I. One of their most common complaints was sore eyes, brought about, I believe, by the smoke in their lodges and the poor diet of roots and dried fish they suffered through during the winter. [...]The eyewash I gave them was almost always effective, and such complaints as rheumatic disorders and soreness in their backs responded just as well to massages and poultices. I even managed, through the use of sweat baths, to ease the pain in the back of one of our men who had become unable to walk (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 163).

In the film, Sacagawea displayed her medical expertise by waxing Teddy Roosevelt back together. Her skills are illustrated by image 14.



image 14 Sacagawea waxing Teddy (Night at the Museum)

By using their perceived superior medical knowledge, the whites could establish themselves as the norm whereas non-whites were frowned upon. However, since binary pairs and the dichotomy “us” and “them” includes both sides, it is not surprising that the Native Americans made use of such a system as well. They incorporated it in their contact with the members of the Corps of Discovery and they also applied it to other tribes and nations, as Sacagawea shows:

Those Minnetarees had learned many things from the upside-down-faced people. There was the food they ate. Not just good buffalo meat or deer meat or corn, but strange food. [...]Then there was the way they dressed, with big cloth hats and shirts, mirrors and bright beads and other things bought from the traders. And the way they talked (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 14).

Particularly when it came to the appearance of other Native American nations and tribes, Sacagawea is astonished by the length to which they go to distinguish themselves from the others.

But these Indians did strange things to themselves. They had pierced holes in their noses and placed white pieces of shell, as long as one of your fingers in them. Their heads were flattened and pointed on top. It was not the way they were born. They would take pieces of wood and fasten them on the heads of their babies to shape their heads that way (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 148).

However, more prominently featured is the dichotomy between the Natives and the members of the expedition, whose customs sometimes seem very strange to Sacagawea. For instance, she calls writing making marks on talking leaves and wonders why these markings

do not resemble the actual thing but rather look abstract (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 77). Another instance, in which she describes the marching and drilling is particularly amusing from a Western perspective: “Every day the white men would tie their bright-colored cloth to a string and pull it to the top of a pole. They would stand together in lines and walk back and forth together in funny ways”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 56).

In the film, a similar dichotomy can be found between the ‘real’ people, such as Lawrence, his son and Rebecca, and the wax figures. This is particularly evident at the beginning of the night when the wax figures and skeletons come back to life. In the movie, it is mentioned that they are confined to history and their historical period in their beliefs and behavioral patterns. Therefore, they can be considered sidekicks on Lawrence’s team, thereby supporting the main hero in his quest for individuality and self-fulfillment, one typical feature of the recipe for success, which was described in chapter 2.1.2. Another dichotomy that has to be kept in mind is the romantic pairing in the movie. Sacagawea and Teddy Roosevelt, as will be elaborated on in the next chapters, function as surrogates and as a space for projection of Lawrence’s and Rebecca’s fantasies of ever becoming a couple themselves. They are used as a means to enact the colonizer’s fantasies. Since Teddy is a wax figure as well and only comes to life at night, while he is on display during the day, I would argue that all figures in the museum represent the colonized in the sense that they are powerless to what happens to them, and if it were not for the tablet which awakens them every night, they would have no agency and free will whatsoever. This is interesting in the sense in which Sacagawea is portrayed, since Spivak believed that colonized women with non-white skin complexion were at the bottom of the societal power norms and hierarchies, thus making them the easiest target (Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 74).

However, in Bruchac’s novel, it is York, a black slave who seems to be on the bottom of the social hierarchy of the Corpse of Discovery due to his skin color and enslavement. It might be interesting to investigate this matter of race further in another study; however, for the purpose of this paper, unfortunately, such an analysis is not pertinent and would exceed the limit. Nevertheless, Spivak’s belief is mirrored in the movie. There Sacagawea is the only one who is permanently locked up behind a glass showcase until she is rescued by a man, a fact that will also be elaborated on in chapter 4.2.2.

In the novel, Sacagawea risks her life several times to rescue her husband and the mission but he is not her primary motivation to go on the expedition. Albeit there is also an element of love included, it is different from the love interest portrayed in the movie in which Sacagawea just seems to be waiting for a man to live with happily ever after. In the novel,

Sacagawea's original motive to join the Corps of Discovery was to be reunited with her family (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 56). However, after that happened, she decides to leave her kin behind in order to follow the Corps of Discovery out of curiosity and sense of adventure. This interpretation is supported by Sacagawea's admittance: "So your mother is still eager to see different places, to hear words spoken in other languages, to sit around the fire in distant camps"(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 193). Therefore, I would argue that due to her quest for individuality and her pursuit of happiness Sacagawea has been somewhat transformed into a Western heroine. Particularly her pursuit of happiness, which in her case manifests itself in form of travels and adventures, is a feature typical of US-American culture. It is placed prominently in the US-Declaration of Independence as an unalienable right. The fact that especially the film *Night at the Museum* was influenced by US-American culture, can be seen by stereotypical patriotic images in the background of the museum, such as a shot that features a Coca Cola vending machine and a gigantic flag of the United States of America which is being displayed (see image 15), whereas the latter appears on several occasions.



image 15 Coca Cola & US flag (*Night at the Museum*)

Thus, both the movie and the novel include the dichotomy of "us" against "them", thereby constructing whomever they encounter as inherently different. This manifests itself particularly in statements that refer to a person's look and in the stereotypical belief expressed by the perceived cultural superiority over the uncivilized other who needs to be educated. Within this binary opposition there is not much room for negotiating the meaning of these ascribed characteristics. Therefore, the concept of the Third Space is particularly important so that stereotypes and underlying beliefs can be questioned. Pomp does this when he asks about the colonizers' supposed civilization as well as their practice of eating horse and dog meat. Language, too, plays an important part in shaping and defining the other and one's own identity as particularly Sacagawea's attitude toward her mother tongue showed. Furthermore, the aspect of being spoken for arose, especially in connection with the movie, in which Teddy and Sacagawea served to fulfill the fantasies of Lawrence and Rebecca.

3.2.3. Two Native American women in the crossfire

The first stereotypical images of Native Americans emerged after the first contact with the settlers. This first contact was full of tension and uncertainties. The settlers were in need of food, shortly after they arrived. Bruchac's Pocahontas explains that her tribe believed that the God Okeus gave them food and knowledge about plants so that they would have enough to eat but also made the people promise that they would share their harvest (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 41). The same belief can be found in Sacagawea's narration in the novel about the Native American tribes and nations who came into contact with the Corps of Discovery and who also shared their food with them even if they themselves only had very little (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 126). Without this generosity, neither the first settlers nor the members of the Corps of Discovery would have survived. The members of the expedition were mostly grateful for the food they were provided with and even highlighted the native's manners as hosts: "Hungry and savage as they were, they behaved better than most civilized gents would in such a state"(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 126). The same cannot be said about the settlers in the Jamestown settlement (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 100). However, some of the food, as was pointed out by Sacagawea in the novel, could not be well digested by the European settlers although it posed no problem for the Natives (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 138f.). This led to various sicknesses which influenced the relations between the Europeans and the Native Americans. Pocahontas in Bruchac's novel states for instance that: "Some of our people believe that those sicknesses will continue to come as long as the Coatmen keep arriving"(Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 20). Sacagawea in Bruchac's novel by the same name mentions various of the illnesses that the members of the Corps of Discovery had, however, the first one on which she elaborates is smallpox, a virus which led to the deaths of many Native Americans and which had been brought to them, according to the narrative, by the Spanish (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 46). However, this is contested issue since narratives, as pointed out in chapter 3.1 and its subchapters, were written and shaped by the existing powers structures.

These descriptions were passed on and perpetuated through travel reports and journals kept at the time which tried to represent the remotest and farthest countries to their readership (Hall 156f.). These narrations, as pointed out in chapter 3.1 and its subchapters, included several stereotypical images which highlighted specific traits that were different and thus construed as the other.

One prime example of such a distorted image is the depiction of Native American women as something exotic and sexual. Disney's Pocahontas wears a short seemingly

traditional dress with fringes that highlights her slender, sensuous and athletic physique whereas her body is construed as a sexual object (Orr 22). This will be elaborated on in the following chapter 4 and especially in its subchapters 4.2.1 and 4.2.3.

Another well-known stereotype is the binary images of the ignoble and noble savage. “Though there are literally dozens of tropes used to figure Indians over the last four centuries, several are recognized as remaining influential well into the 20th century, almost all of which can be seen as derivative of the dualistic Noble/Ignoble Savage imagery” (Lacroix, “High stakes stereotypes” 4). The power of this stereotype is reflected by its reception in cultural products, such as the Disney film *Pocahontas* and its songs “Colors of the Wind” and “Savages”. It is based on the binary pair of ‘us’ and ‘the other’. This led to the construction and appropriation of Native Americans by the Europeans, who portrayed them as the uncivilized ‘other’ who was everything that they were not (Hall 167). In both novels and films, this lack of civilization and adaptation legitimized the power of the colonialist to patronize and ‘educate’ the colonized. In the movie *Night at the Museum*, Lawrence’s knowledge about the historical artefacts, which includes Sacagawea and Teddy Roosevelt, leads him to ultimately defeat the villain and to establish peace among the different objects that come to life every night. In Bruchac’s novel however, the assumption that they were superior to the Natives was seen as a legitimization to establish or rather to force peace upon the Native American nations. In addition, their order granted the members of the Corps of Discovery to educate the uncivilized Natives which ultimately resulted in Captain Clark’s demand to raise Sacagawea’s son. Surprisingly, both narratives that focus on Pocahontas do not include any instances in which cultural adaptation was forced upon, except maybe in the case of Smith’s adoption (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 145 f.). In the movie, the only instances of learning feature a communal learning in which Smith learns from Pocahontas how her people greet and vice versa and how to listen to your heart (cf image 16).

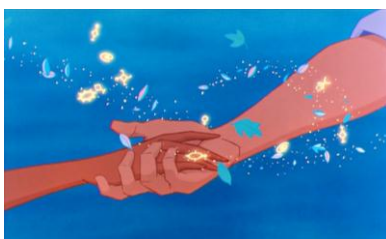


image 16 communal learning (Pocahontas)

Due to cultural diversity, misunderstandings ensued. Translators or rather Native Americans captured by Europeans or other Native nations or tribes were instructed in the kidnappers’ language and served as mediators. Sacagawea is one such example. Pocahontas also recalls meeting a boy who had lived with the settlers and who to her relief “still knew

how to speak as we human beings do” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 3). Through these mediators, certain rituals such as the importance of body paint and its significance were explained. Smith tried to mediate himself, as Bruchac points out: “John Smith’s voluminous writings, of course, provide one source of such information, since he often describes Powhatan Indian customs and traditions with some accuracy – despite the fact that his interpretations are sometimes wrong” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 167). Captain Clark, however, is told the significance of rituals and body paint by Sacagawea and other interpreters: “I would later learn it was a custom among many of the Indian tribes to paint their whole bodies black with paint when going to battle” (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 34). Sacagawea also described that white paint on the cheeks symbolized that one had friendly intentions (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 107). In the novel, Smith is confronted with Native Americans wearing body paint. He described them as devils (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 140). In the song “Savages” featured in Disney’s *Pocahontas*, Governor Ratcliffe and the English settlers refer to the Natives and their body paint calling them: “Savages! Dirty redskin devils!” (“Savages”).

Since language and terms are the means through which these stereotypes are perpetuated, it also serves to highlight its importance as a means to create and maintain one’s identity. In both the movies and the films analyses, there are several occurrences alluding to misunderstanding due to language difficulties and because of the sounds of foreign languages. Bruchac’s *Pocahontas*, for instance, points out: [...]the Coatmen spoke in a strange language, which sounded to some of us like the growls and whines and barks of animals” (Bruchac *Pocahontas*: 2). In the Disney movie, however, she seems to have no difficulty understanding the settlers’ language after listening to her heart. The same is true for Sacagawea in *Night at the Museum* who, at first, seems to have trouble understanding Lawrence, which turns out to be caused by the glass separating her from him. This stands in contrast to Sacagawea in the novel, who explains that the language her capturers spoke sounded strange to her:

Not just their own strange language, but mixing in new words I had never heard before, words I later learned were French and English. Most of them were words that men say to each other only when they want to insult someone or show how much they despise that person. All those things were so strange. It could not have been stranger to me if I had been taken captive by a band of bears dressed like people (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 14f.).

This diversity is in part implied in the song “Colors of the Wind” which Pocahontas sings in the Disney movie to advocate the abolishment of stereotypes and unfounded and misconstrued assumptions about the ‘other’. This message is supported by the novels which highlight the importance of an equal and balanced account that avoids misrepresentation and

tries to avert stereotypical imagery. This is based on the author's belief that "[t]o tell this story well, I thought, more than one voice and more than one point of view would be needed" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 169). Therefore, he includes two narrators who present their unique perspective in order to create a Third Space in which meanings and stereotypes can be discussed, negotiated and deconstructed.

4. It's all about looks

Chapter 2.1 already elaborated on the risk that children and young adults learn about societal constructions such as stereotypes and specific gender patterns from their immediate surroundings and from the media. Particularly, when it comes to their gender expectations and their appearance, they often rely on popular culture, especially the one presented on television. Unfortunately, "[t]elevision portrays images of thin women and muscular men that are unrealistic, especially for females" (Anderson et al. 110). This bears the risk that children and young adults internalize these unattainable images which lead to dissatisfaction with their bodies as the following chapters, particularly chapter 4.1.2 will show.

Apart from looks, the media portray gender roles ranging from stereotypical to neutral to subversive (Dawn, Descartes and Collier-Meek 556). Parallel to the influence images of looks have on the appearance of individuals, "[c]onsistent portrayals of meaningful gendered patterns (e.g., who performs climactic rescues) may contribute to the social scripts the viewer creates when exposed to gender-stereotyped content" (Dawn, Descartes and Collier-Meek 556). Thus, behavior and reactions of children and young adults can be impacted by what they are confronted with in the media. Disney movies in particular portray a specific outlook on what it means to be a man or a woman in society, thereby promoting the company's world view and its beliefs about gender.

Theory about gender is mostly linked to world renown feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Butler and Laura Mulvey to name but a few. The concept was coined to distinguish gender as the social construct from the purely physical and biological sex (Milestone and Meyer 12). By distinguishing solely between these two entities, a dichotomy is created.

While „sex,, refers to biological, bodily differences between men and women, „gender,, refers to the socially constructed categories of masculine and feminine and the socially imposed attributes and behaviours which are assigned to these categories (Milestone and Meyer 12).

As this quotation illustrates, gender and sex are closely intertwined within the human body. Thus, they interact and influence each other reciprocally. Dworkin and Wachs believe

that the “dichotomous gender difference [...]is not just part of a gender order but simultaneously, a sexuality order where adherence to gender norms helps to produce a myth of heterosexuality”(7). The authors believe that men and women are more likely to behave and participate within the framework of heterosexuality, if a strict gender binary exists (Dworkin and Wachs 7). Thus, certain dominant forces within society struggle to uphold this status quo by perpetuating marked gender attributes and behaviors through the media, which will be identified in the movies and books analyzed in this paper. As a basis for their determination, chapter 4.1 provides general definitions and concepts whereas chapter 4.2 features the analysis of Pocahontas and Sacagawea in the films and books as well as a comparison between these two extraordinary women.

4.1. Gender in film and theory

Hence, gender means that certain behavioral patterns and characteristics are attributed to males or females. Even though they appear ‘natural’, they are in reality socially constructed (Milestone and Meyer 12). Individuals learn about these conventions through societal norms as well as through their socialization (Lorber 15). The evoked associations with specific gender roles are widespread and, thus, impact not only society as a whole but also the individuals on the micro-level. Harcourt captures this quite accurately by stating “[g]ender refers to the psycho-social, political-cultural, scientific and economic reading of sexual difference that informs all human relations” (*Body Politics in Development* 14).

This sexual difference is, in most cases, created by the dichotomy of the male and female sex. Simone de Beauvoir would concur with this statement because she believed that the woman is one part of a two part unity which is dependent on the other and vice versa, which makes it impossible to divide society according to the two sexes (deBeauvoir, “Das andere Geschlecht“ 52) De Beauvoir also postulated that “[o]n ne naît pas femme: on le devient” (*l’expérience vécu* 13). This means that women are not born as women but that it is rather our behavior and our actions that place us within this dichotomy (Milestone and Meyer 12). This twofold distinction in itself is one point of criticism put forward by feminists who argue that this view should be deconstructed, de-gendered or changed by adding a variety of gender positions (Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 83). Lorber supports the latter, by arguing that a gender dichotomy is not only too limiting but also wrong because “[s]ome societies have three genders – men, women, and berdaches or hijras or xaniths. Berdaches, hijras, and xaniths are biological males who behave, dress, work, and are treated in most respects as social women; they are therefore not men, nor are they female women; they are, in our

language, 'male women'" (17). Thus, it can be concluded that gender is experienced and lived in different ways depending on its various contexts and situations. If this is not considered, then there exists the risk that white patriarchal stereotypes and patterns are reproduced and thereby excluding gender diversity (Meyer 168).

Therefore, it could be argued that instead of formulating one general definition of gender one should, as Butler suggest, focus on a reformulation of existing terms and their connotations (Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 85). Additionally, Butler used the presented theoretical framework which she developed further and postulated "[t]hat gender is a performance or performative construct" (Milestone and Meyer 12). Within this concept, the body plays a vital role. It can be perceived as a fluid surface or constantly shifting border which is regulated politically (Nelmes 250). Even though the body is in motion, gender appears to be stable and natural due to constant repetition (Milestone and Meyer 15). Therefore, gender can be "[u]nderstood as a performance, a set of codes, gestures and adornments used, rather than a 'real' aspect of individual identity" (Coca 15). This is particularly evident in movies and books geared towards children. In Disney movies, for example, the heroines wear dresses or skirts most of the time to ensure that gender codes are not mixed up or distorted (Coca 15). Clothing plays an important fact, as Butler points out by evoking the example of drag. It reveals that gender is a social construct because it demonstrates that „[m]en can do femininity, women can do masculinity“ (Milestone and Meyer 14). In Disney movies, the villains are often depicted as doing drag to a certain extent as was already shown in chapter 2.2. Through the association of drag with something evil, Disney tries to fortify the established heterosexual norms within society and thereby, furthers the stigma (Putnam 148).

Therefore, Harcourt proposes to conceive gender as a „[b]iologically determined division between male and female“ and as a „[f]luid construct that provides the social inscriptions that enable us to identify, learn and live as male or female in the places we inhabit“ (*Body Politics in Development* 14). By providing the social inscriptions, it is characterized by inequalities and thus, becomes a battlefield of social power struggles which is fueled by dominant attitudes and beliefs (Milestone and Meyer 8). In contrast, Haraway proposes a radical deconstruction in the sense of a destruction of the gender binaries because she perceives it as a chance for change and new development of social hierarchies and human relations (Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 97). Becker-Schmidt and Knapp see this stance as her greatest contribution to the debate (103). They believe that “[f]ür die Sex-Gender-Debatte war es vor allem der Versuch, einen dekonstruktiven Impetus mit einer materialistischen und

historischen Perspektive zu verbinden, der ihr kritische Aufmerksamkeit gesichert hat“ (Becker-Schmidt and Knapp 103).

Another important concept which is closely linked to gender is patriarchal society. The term itself already refers to the patriarch who is a male ruler. Thus, a patriarchal society can be defined as „[a] society in which men have the power and control“ (Nelmes 250). The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary even goes so far as to define patriarchal society as “giving power and importance only to men” (929). Following this logic, men can subjugate and exploit women to profit and legitimize the status quo (Milestone and Meyer 10). Irigaray also believes that “the patriarchal order is indeed the one that functions as the organization and monopolization of private property to the benefit of the head of the family (83). It is his proper name, the name of the father, that determines ownership for the family, including the wife and children.” This implies that women and children are nothing more than property under the rule of the patriarch. DeBeauvoir concurs that women in patriarchal families have been domesticated and are dominated fully after being married which according to her disquietingly resembles primitive societies (*les faits et les mythes*: 282). Nowadays, it would, thus, be a tremendous exaggeration to state that we in the Western world still live in a patriarchal society. However, our present-day society still contains remnants of the old system such as the glass ceiling while seemingly offering equal opportunities to men and women regardless of their sex (Nelmes 250). Therefore, Western cultures can still be considered as having inherent patriarchal elements which grant men a higher social status (Carneiro et al. 81). Ensuing from this higher social status, men reap various benefits which again put them in a more advantageous position than women. “If there are privileges associated with what men do (e.g., higher wages, building stronger bodies, assumptions efficacy and success, valuations of importance), and men’s tasks are more culturally valued, men will have an investment in retaining their tasks while separating women’s task as exclusively female, and a something less valuable” (Dworkin and Wachs 7). Through this process, men can retain their higher social status and, thereby fortify the unequal power relations within the gender binary. Therefore, women are very often still collectively oppressed indirectly through society as can be seen in the following quotation by Milestone and Meyer.

This control works through six key structures: household production, the organization of paid work, the state (including the law), male violence, heterosexuality and cultural institutions. Popular culture, including the media, plays a crucial role in contributing to the maintenance of patriarchy by perpetuating gender ideologies (Milestone and Meyer 11).

As illustrated by the quote, popular culture is vital to maintain this unequal system because it sustains gender ideologies, thereby creating uneven power relations. Kaplan points out that in mainstream Hollywood movies, the narratives are mostly unwittingly shaped by patriarchy (120). Children and young adults in particular are even more susceptible to Hollywood and the media's overall influence and the implicit as well as explicit messages circulating through popular culture. While children and young adult literature has received scholarly attention in recent years, movies for children and young adults, especially Disney movies have only been marginally analyzed by scholars. However, it cannot be overstated how important it is to critically assess these sources, as they help perpetuate these imbalanced ideologies. For example, Disney has specific views of what it means to be a man or a woman. Men in Disney movies usually have jobs (Towbin et al. 24). This stands in contrast to women who mostly stay at home (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek: 556). If they do work, they have stereotypical jobs such as actress, thief, fairy (godmother) or responsible for animals such as sheep (Towbin et al. 24). Thus, uneven power relations are maintained because the male protagonists have a higher social status (Coca 15). As illustrated by these examples, Disney displays the norms it believes to be important in our society. „Although gender messages in Disney movies have become less obviously prescriptive, the movies continue to portray traditionally limiting images of gender“ (Towbin et al. 35). A more detailed explanation of this specific depiction of gender and sexuality in Pocahontas will be explained in the following chapter

At this point it suffices to say that the representation and illustration of men and women in a patriarchal society are important for a comprehensive analysis of gender in the media.

Women then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of women still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning (Mulvey 35).

Berger, for instance, analyzed European art and discovered that women are passive there as well in the sense that “[...] *men act and women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at” (47). This means that the women in art are aware of the fact that they are being regarded. Irigaray assents with this to an extent because she believes that women subject themselves to it in order to experience pleasure which they are otherwise denied (25). “But such pleasure is above all a masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own, and it leaves her in a familiar state of dependency upon man” (Irigaray 25). Berger also believed that this unequal relationship still persists in culture and in the minds to

some extent (63). In an analysis of a painting of Mary Magdalene he stated that “[s]he is painted as being, [...]the compliant object of the painting-method’s seduction”(Berger 92). Thus, he equates the fact of being looked at passively with losing her agency. Also, by objectifying and looking at her, she can be possessed (Berger 83). By possessing her, the woman is turned into “[...]a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man’s fantasies” (Irigaray 25).

Further fields of analysis arose with the emergence of new forums for the representation of women, such as films, for example. Mulvey shaped the discourse on the representation of men and women in the movies. She believes that „the pleasure gained from looking [...] is a male pleasure and 'the look' in cinema is controlled by the male and directed at the female, this is often referred to as the 'male gaze'“(Nelmes 251). Thus, just as Berger, Mulvey differentiates the men who do the looking whereas the woman remains passive. “The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed [...]to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (Mulvey 39f.) Most studies are following a rather psychological point of analysis in which the pleasure is derived from voyeurism which is either based on sexual attraction or narcissistic identification (Nelmes 251). This is often explained by referencing to and using Freud’s theory of the Oedipal complex and Lacan’s theory about the phallus as a basis (Doane 90). Both theoretical concepts will not be elaborated on further in the present paper due to the fact that they, per se, are not pertinent to the following analysis.

However, it is important to note that “[...] the female body becomes an absolute tabula rasa of sorts: anything and everything can be written on it” (Doane 92). Women, thus, can have the role of an erotized object for the characters within the plot or for the audience watching the film (Nelmes 252). Kaplan agrees but believes that “[w]omen receive and return a gaze, but cannot act on it”(121). In her analysis of Disney movies, Coca (17) also reaches a similar conclusion. She observed that Disney often projects the ‘male gaze’ implicitly or explicitly on the bodies of their female protagonists (Coca 17). Lacroix reaches a similar conclusion in her analysis of non-Western heroines: “The reader is encouraged, through this privileging of the body and the physical in the rendering of the physique and costuming, to *look* at Jasmine, Pocahontas, and Esmeralda in different and more voyeuristic manner than the White heroines”(Lacroix, “Images of Animated Others” 222). As this quotation illustrates, gender, race and Orientalism are closely linked since the bodies of non-Western heroines are not emphasized through specific clothing or prominent curves. Nevertheless, Coca asserts that “[c]hildren might not perceive sexualised images and gazes as such. However, the more

explicit signs of men's stares, including enlarged eyes, popping out of their sockets, open gaping mouths and whistling are harder to miss or dismiss" (Coca 17). These actions, however, do not only objectify women but constitute also an example of the performance of heterosexual masculinity (Coca 17). Thus, it can be summarized so far, that the media clearly distinguishes between the male and the female by using certain instruments such as the gaze but also makes use of unconscious patriarchal power structures which allow men to dominate (Kaplan 129). However, Nelmes (252) refers to the fact that in recent feminist film theory several women are able to occupy subject positions and are represented as such. This is also the case in the majority of works analyzed in this paper as described in the following chapters.

Silverman argues as well that the man is not always in control (117). In her analysis of the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* she observes that both male protagonists occupy a position which "resembles that of the female subject than that which is generally connected with the male subject" (Silverman 101). Kaplan also concurs that there exists more than the male gaze but she deems the mutual gazing responsible for the domination (135). What has to be kept in mind, though, is the fact that nearly all of the mentioned theories assume white, (heterosexual) and mostly middle class men or women. Gaines points this out by stating that "[b]y taking gender as its starting point in the analysis of oppression, feminist theory helps to reinforce white middle class values, and to the extent that it works to keep women from seeing other structures of oppression, it functions ideologically" (337). This fact is again reflected within popular culture. Most Disney films, for example, diffuse the image of a young, white, helpless, submissive and slim heroine (Carneiro et al. 81). The feminist critic bell hooks also points to this fact in her analysis of the black gaze. She believes that the black women have created an oppositional gaze which allows for the deconstruction of the dichotomy of the male and female gaze as it was described by Mulvey (hooks 313). By resisting, these black women "create alternative texts that are not solely reactions" (hooks 317). In the analysis of a movie, hooks indicates that the protagonists empower themselves mutually simply by employing various forms of the gaze which leads to various representations (319). This can also be said about the two novels by Bruchac as the following analysis will show. The various gazes can also help to demonstrate, as hook did with the example of black women, that history can be used "as counter-memory, [...] as a way to know the present and invent the future" (319). In Bruchac's novels, history and myths about the past also play a pertinent role in the parts narrated by Pocahontas and Sacagawea. There it helps them explain and make sense of the world whereas the European historical excerpts which form the basis for the chapters narrated

by John Smith and William Clark only foreshadow the events in the immediate chapter for the reader.

4.1.1. Gendered bodies

In the presented children's literature as well as in the movies the body is a recurrent theme. Depictions of it are closely intertwined with the appearance bias, the gender concept as well as stereotypical displays of gender roles. „Gender expectations get inscribed on (parts of) the body, which becomes a 'visible' physical means of shaping and controlling” (Coca 12). This process, however, takes place on a subconscious level. Most people are not aware what role their body and beliefs about their body can have for the implementation of inequality. Harcourt argues that “[t]he body plays [for most people] an invisible and yet also contested role in development discourse”(*Body Politics in Development* 24).

Although this concept is somewhat elusive, scientists from various fields have started to analyze it in the last two decades (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 12). Since then, they have discovered that the concept of gendered bodies has to be treated from more than an essentialist perspective due to the fact that neither women nor men should simply be reduced to reproduction (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 16). It is equally important to take each individuals context and living situation into consideration. One Native American scholar emphasizes this point by stating that “If you do not examine Native experiences and voices, you agree to live in, and help construct, a culture of erasure, invisibility, lies, disguise”(Miranda 334). By doing field research such covert inequalities can be brought to light and discussed. This is why Judith Butler collected testimonials because she was convinced that “[a]pparent contradictions can be closed by looking at how women's realities are grounded in the sexual specificity of the female body“(Harcourt *Body Politics in Development* 18). Other researchers have taken a similar stance. One of them is Coca who believes that “[t]he relationship between gender and the body is maintained by often exaggerating and commodifying the biological attributes of the two sexes”(12). This practice can be found in reality nowadays, for instance in the Democratic Republic of Congo. There male soldiers belonging to the FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo) reject female soldiers as unattractive: “Indeed [...]the 'proof' that these women have 'become like men' resides in the lack of heterosexual desire their bodies arouse in the 'real' soldiers when they gaze upon them“ (Baaz and Stern 581). Furthermore, they discriminate against female soldiers because of specificities of the female body, such as the menstruation circle. “They describe how women 'are' on the battlefield (panicked, afraid, cowardly, and so

weak that they 'menstruate on the spot out of fear') and thus establish that all men/soldiers are not“(Baaz and Stern 574). This binary distinction between male and female already hints at the complexity of the gendered body but it also shows that patriarchy allows for the subjugation of women as was already pointed out in chapter 4.1. Irigaray, therefore, proposes to define femininity as “a role, an image, a value, imposed upon women by male systems of representation” (Irigaray 84).

Nevertheless, the female body and women in general should not be categorized as one united group because it is their differences, such as their background, their specific experiences that shape them as well as the forms of oppression they face (Butler 325). Miranda emphasizes this as well but even goes one step further in suggesting that Native American women face an even bigger challenge than other women of color due to legal as well as social differences (334).

There is something intrinsically different about being an Indian woman in the Americas, which the work of other women of color in this country cannot express: we inherit and still live histories and oppressions designed to legally enforce Indian identities as not just disempowered but genetically incapable of autonomy; we carry and still live out generations of civil rights injustices such as the denial of documented treaty rights and the deadly form of literacy, wrought in Indian Boarding Schools, meant to further enslave rather than empower; our bodies and hearts carry a deep sting, an engulfing shame, and a contrary assertion of survivance, which all stem from the fact that our identities and cultures -our hearts- sprang from this land, from a place stolen, defiled, yet still present beneath our feet every day of our lives (Miranda 334f.).

By elaborating why Native Americans face specific and unique challenges, she calls attention to the diversity of living experiences non-white women around the globe face. The UN made the ‘mistake’ of focussing only on a generic female body which excluded all cultural variety (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 28). This led to the exclusion of women and feminists from the global South who could not recognize themselves in this concept. They felt “[...]that ‘International Feminism’ is in fact first and foremost a discourse of, and about, the developed West, and its engagement with third World women disguises an often patronizing mission of intervention on behalf of its ‘disadvantaged’ sisters”(Moore-Gilbert 92). Especially bell hooks, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have criticized this Eurocentric approach of considering women around the globe as one unified category (Meyer 168f.). Spivak cautions that such a procedure leads to a reiteration of colonialism and Western hegemony; while Mohanty repudiates the fact that women from the global south are reduced to a lacking/negatively connoted other by white Western women who consider themselves as the ideal for emancipated women (Meyer 169).

hooks (317) similarly, argues that black women are different due to colonial experiences but at the same time maintains that this distinctness is not constituted by any inherent quality. Taking the Democratic Republic of Congo as an example, this difference is particularly evident because the belief that women are in need of special protection (by and from men) does not exist there (Baaz and Stern 566). However, the image of the damsel in distress is a well-known image in Western countries.

[W]omen's multiple needs and concerns [...] became translated [...] into an essentially passive productive, reproductive and sexualized female body. This female body was managed and understood [...] [and] engaged in particular types of work with specific health and education needs, as well as needing special protection (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 29).

Portrayals in which women need protection can also be found in the literature and films analyzed in this paper. In addition, this characterization of passive, sexualized women in the Western world can be found in the theory of the male gaze as described in chapter 4.1.

It can be seen that the (female) body is a highly intricate category created through social and scientific discourse and practices (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 18). These mostly classify women as passive, deny them agency and directly compare them to the binary opposite, thereby labelling them the 'other'. Irigaray believes that "[i]n our social order, women are 'products' used and exchanged by men. Their status is that of merchandise, 'commodities'. [...] The use, consumption, and circulation of their sexualized bodies underwrite the organization and the reproduction of the social order, in which they have never taken part as 'subjects'" (Irigaray 84). This means that women cannot be autonomous subjects since these are always masculine. Harcourt refers to this as well by stating that the male body particularly the Western one is still the dominant one in the discourses (*Body Politics in Development* 20). Nevertheless, she strongly advocates that „[w]omen's bodies should not be viewed as male owned occupied territory but women should be autonomous citizens“ (Harcourt "Development as if Gender Matters" 211). One possible explanation for these specific body images are the historical traces that were left on the concept, especially the ones made by colonialism (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 19). During this time Western countries tried to legitimize their oppression by transmitting their values and (unattainable) beauty ideals, especially the one of a white body, in order to create unequal power relations which still put women's health at risk by offering beauty products and services that promise assimilation to 'white Western' skin or European eyes in some of the cultures which were affected by colonialism (Carneiro et al. 81f). This also concurs with Foucault's theory of gendered bodies influenced by biopolitics which turn the body into a non-static location

where power struggles and resistance take place (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 21). This theory is based on Foucault's "analyses of disciplinary power to isolate disciplinary technologies that subjugate women as both subjects and objects of knowledge [...]" (Sawicki 290).

By combining the knowledge about the body with other discourses, one can create the body as a cultural product in which power, knowledge and resistance are in constant competition with one another (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 22). Harcourt, therefore, believes that by analysing the discourses one can create a change and maybe even achieve equality one day (*Body Politics in Development* 17). This analysis can be carried out by considering the syntax as Irigaray proposes.

I think the place where it could best be deciphered is in the gestural code of women's bodies. But, since their gestures are often paralyzed, or part of the masquerade, in effect, they are often difficult to 'read'. Except for what resists or subsists 'beyond'. In suffering, but also in women's laughter (Irigaray 134).

However, it remains questionable if change can really be induced through such an analysis. Nevertheless, Irigaray cautions that if this analysis and an ensuing modification of the discourse is not done, patriarchal patterns will continue to produce the same results and history will repeat itself (205). She also proposes that a change can be induced "by socializing in a different way the relation to nature, matter, the body, language, and desire" (Irigaray 191). Another possibility would be for women to renounce the artificially created beauty ideals as a whole and, in turn, create their own concepts of beauty based on attainable goals (Carneiro et al. 91). However, Berry, puts forth the argument that as soon as gender equality makes progress, new forms of oppression of women occur like the implementation of unattainable beauty ideals (6). She is convinced that those ideals which are targeted at women "[c]an shift, become more stringent, as a way of controlling women. Wolf remarks that the beauty ideal is not universal or changeless, but instead rapidly changing" (Berry 10). They are distributed through mainstream media and are also present in toy as well as in children and young adult literature and films that target that age group. Dworkin and Wachs illustrate that Barbie, Ken and GI Joe dolls, for example, embody unnatural and unattainable proportions and contain explicit gender markers that uphold the gender dichotomy (5).

Disney movies, for instance, adhere to the most part to the established gender patterns. However, some films have questioned the ideal images of a male body, thereby sending the message that men do not have to have a certain appearance, but at the same time keep promoting and reproducing specific beauty ideals of the female body (Coca 12). In Disney movies, women typically have small waists, a big cleavage and long eyelashes to accentuate

their eyes (Towbin et al. 36). Furthermore, women who do not adhere to the conventional beauty ideals are usually depicted as villains or as not trustworthy and are mostly older (Craven 127). Interestingly, women after menopause are generally positively depicted in Disney movies; they are agile, round, loveable, fun, and very often in a caretaker position (Bell 108). Bell discovered that “[w]ithin the language of Disney animation, the constructed bodies of women are somatic, cinematic and cultural codes that attempt to align audience sympathies and allegiance with the beginning and end of the feminine life cycle, marking the middle as dangerous, consumptive, and transgressive realm”(109). This poses the question if women between 25 and 50 are depicted negatively because they possess more education and life experience and therefore, cannot be as easily manipulated as the others. One thing, however, is clear, namely, that in most Disney movies women’s value is mostly due to their appearance rather than their intellect (Towbin et al. 30). This can be considered as discrimination based on looks which will be explained further in the following chapter.

4.1.2. Lookism

Lookism can be defined as a dominant ideology which serves to uphold (gender) inequalities. It does this by discriminating against people due to their appearance (Berry 2). The definition is reflected in the term itself which already refers to a person’s *look*. The added suffix *-ism* marks the word as a noun and hints at an underlying theoretical concept. Irrespectively of this rather linguistic definition, one can also find this term in relation with the perception of a person’s physical appearance and style which, too, can suggest certain cultural influences as well as each person’s individual taste (Tietje and Cresap 33). Hence, lookism „[r]elates to preconceived notions of beauty and cultural stereotyping based on appearance as well as gender roles and expectations” (Gooding 11). Especially women are often subjugated to these preconceptions about beauty and excluded or rewarded for complying with the artificial beauty standards of Western societies (Carneiro et al. 81). In addition, lookism includes other indicators of inequalities such as gender, race and class (Tietje and Cresap 33). However, this is not always reflected by the research on beauty which often analyzes only ‘healthy’, heterosexual white women, thereby reproducing (Western) patriarchal thinking (Carneiro et al. 81). This lack of diversity results in an established norm with ensuing privileges that most (white) people do not question. Miranda exemplifies this by describing an encounter with a white, blond haired and blue-eyed student who perfectly fit one of the stereotypes of the (Western) male (339). “He had no clue about the privileges that his mere physical appearance had already entitled him - or, more to the point, had also

benefited the lives of his ancestors” (Miranda 339). This shows the power a certain appearance can hold and how people are rewarded for fitting certain beauty criteria.

These criteria are established through aesthetics. Aesthetics in the philosophical sense of the word concept is closely intertwined with lookism. It refers to a theory about and of taste created by investigating the prerequisites of “sensuous perception” (Wolfreys 333). Thus, it deals with the construction of beauty, taste and art as well as its judgment (Gooding 12). People tend to assess others based on their tastes and beliefs about beauty as well as social conventions (Gooding 13). These beauty ideals are mostly the same or at least very similar across the majority of groups of people (Hamermesh 10). However, they are ever-changing constructs which are influenced by several factors. Thus, Dworkin and Wachs believe that “[a]ssuming that women and men have ‘natural’ preferences negates the role that cultural and market forces play in constructing and shaping social locations, healthism [...], morality, and what one believes is necessary to be desirable and moral” (10). This means that the economy and society are two important aspects which impact beauty ideals (Berry 10). Thus, it is, sadly, not surprising that “[m]any women will sacrifice their health and financial resources trying to achieve unrealistic beauty standards”(Carneiro et al. 90). Furthermore, most people accept this form of discrimination. „Unlike our dealings with the other ,isms’ (racism, and so on), the social awareness we have of appearance bias is shallow, infantile in its development, and mostly acceptable as a given and unchangeable form of inequality“(Berry 2). This might have to do with the history of lookism.

Considering evolutionary psychology, one can trace the first elements of lookism to the emergence of people (Tietje and Cresap 38). They chose their partners based on natural selection criteria which were important for survival (Meier Jaeger 985). Survival itself can be seen in two ways, either on the long run or in short terms. The latter rather refers to the imminent survival of each individual by judging a stranger in order to know if he or she is a friend or foe (Tietje and Cresap 39). In the long run, survival refers to the whole human species and its reproduction. In this regard, prospective partners had to have certain physical traits which indicated health but also signaled good reproductive qualities in order to be chosen (Meier Jaeger 985). „As a consequence, humans developed information-processing circuits in the brain which recognize manifestations of these 'survivor' traits and instinctively evaluate these traits as attractive or, in the case of deviations [...], as unattractive” (Meier Jaeger 986). By explaining this phenomenon as something natural, as it is done from the perspective of evolutionary psychology, it is rather difficult to change and cannot be simply labeled as unjust (Tietje and Cresap 38). That is why, even though evolution continued, this

basic characteristic went on to exist to this day. “We, as societal members, examine our own and others’ many physical features. We judge ourselves and others to them. And we try to modify them as a way of gaining or keeping social power” (Berry 11). Empirical studies have proven this last point by showing that attractive people benefit from their good looks whereas unattractive people can suffer negative consequences (Hamermesh 7). The latter are of either social or economic nature and can also be expected if one does not adhere to the socially acceptable but arbitrary beauty ideals (Berry 2). „From the standpoint of evolutionary psychology, lookism would [thus] seem to be a requirement, if only to ensure reproductive success“(Tietje and Cresap 39).

Apart from an evolutionary point of view, there exist constructivist and social theories such as functionalism (Berry 83). According to functionalism, stratification by looks occurs so that an elitist group can benefit from its attractiveness (Berry 84). This leads to a non-egalitarian system in which certain people maintain their power by employing artificial and arbitrary features to distinguish themselves from the rest (Berry 85). A similar view can be found in structuralism and post-structuralism which was also influenced by Foucault’s concepts of biopower and docile bodies (Berry 86). In regards to both, the (female) body played an important role. Foucault regards the female body as an imaginary space on which certain meanings are inscribed (Berry 86). These are, in turn, influenced by the biopower because it „[m]easures and analyses the body in an array of strategies that then produce the modern sense of gendered individual and social subjects“ (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 20). This recreates the body as a new and ever changing location where power and struggles for power take place (Harcourt, *Body Politics in Development* 21). Harcourt also believes that it is this fluidity which also impacts gender which in turn influences the body by using it as a means to let “[f]emininities und masculinities flow through“ (“Development as if Gender Matters” 212).

Beauty and lookism can also be analyzed by using Bourdieu’s theory of social capital which considers beauty as a form of capital (Berry 88). However, beauty in itself is not the only determining factor, the positions we, as social agents, occupy play an important role. „These positions are determined by our occupations, education, or proximity to power, as influenced [...] by our physical appearance” (Berry 87). In addition, each individual gathers experiences and learns the adequate social behavior in order to maintain their position within society (Berry 87). By living according to the expected norms, be it behavior or beauty or both, humans gain social capital which they can then use to further their own agenda. Anthony Giddens introduced the concept of structuration which is similar to Bourdieu’s

theory but differs in the belief that humans can make their own decisions which are, however, restrained by society due to certain behavioral codes and the repercussions that can ensue if one does not adhere to them (Berry 86).

Another aspect relevant for this paper which can explain lookism is social psychology. “The principal explanation of the attractiveness advantage in social psychology is the „what is beautiful is good stereotype” (Meier Jaeger 986). This means that humans judge others based on their appearance and derive at certain conclusions about the other person’s character simply by looking at them (Meier Jaeger 986). One can easily find these features among kindergarten-age-children and in storybooks for (young) children as well as in animated movies, particularly in Disney movies. However, adults also used to do this, as can be evidenced by the existence of criminal anthropology. According to social psychology, attractive people are inscribed with positive features, such as intelligence, friendliness and leadership skills whereas unattractive people are characterized with negative features (Meier Jaeger 986).

The last theory which can be of use for the analysis of lookism is symbolic interaction. It deals with interpersonal relations that impact society through interactions on the micro level. For example, „[the] decisions to not hire a disfigured, fat, or otherwise appearance-stigmatized person can culminate in grand patterns of discrimination against all those disfigured, fat and otherwise appearance-compromised” (Berry 92). However, they can also help to show that we are dealing with an arbitrary and socially constructed form to maintain inequalities. Additionally, micro-interactions can also lead to positive discrimination by collectively (dis)agreeing with certain phenomena and thus, by changing or abolishing them (Berry 93).

Considering all these different theories, it comes as no surprise that we are told to try to make ourselves as appealing and attractive as possible (Berry 1). This advice, too, is not a new trend or development but has a longstanding tradition. Archeologists have found traces of minerals used to adorn the bodies in Paleolithic excavation sites (Gooding 113). Similarly, the ancient Egyptians used certain body paint as makeup as well as jewelry (Hamermesh 5). In addition, the Old Testament includes references to eye makeup (Gooding 113). However, these beauty measures were not always popular. During the 19th century, for example, Queen Victoria declared herself against the use of makeup because it was mainly used by prostitutes at that time (Gooding 113). Another more drastic change in appearance can be achieved through plastic surgery. It can be traced to 600 B.C when a surgeon reconstructed a nose (Berry 53). Nowadays these surgical procedures are controversial but beauty enhancing

measures are trending. In 2005, for example, 450 billion US-\$ were spent on such services or products (Hamermesh 5). This number shows the magnitude of this industry and thus, illustrates the influence economy has on the beauty ideals. Advertisements promise women that they will feel better about themselves if they consume certain products (Silverstein and Sayre 4). Therefore, it is not surprising, that mostly women are the ones that consume beauty products and services (Hamermesh 5). “Those we talked with who spent a higher portion of their income on cosmetics felt more satisfied, successful, and powerful; they also reported lower levels of stress even if they worked longer hours” (Silverstein and Sayre 4). At first glance, this might seem like positive discrimination because women appear to benefit from these products and services. However, not everything is gold that glitters. There are certain drawbacks as Berry points out:

[A]s long as we [women] are preoccupied with making ourselves attractive, spending time and money and effort in this temporary and mainly futile endeavor, we are removing ourselves from opportunities to be taken seriously as equal and powerful members of society, as power brokers in a society that stubbornly refused to view and treat women as equals (Berry 14).

Particularly interesting in relation to this quote is a study conducted among university professors and other people employed in the field of academia. Granleese and Sayer discovered that (young) female employees in the field of higher education find that beauty can be counterproductive (510). In regards with the aforementioned quote by Berry, this would mean that these women do not want to spend too much time and effort on their appearance because by doing so they would undermine their authority as professionals in their field. This in itself is already alarming, however, Granleese and Sayer discovered that the women in their study even tried to purposely downplay their appearance and thus, minimize their attractiveness (513).

As the latter example indicates, there exist two sides of the coin in the sense that women either try to modify their appearance in order to adhere more to society's beauty standards or to downplay their attractiveness, in order to be accepted in an expert community. Both sides, however, illustrate the massive influence beauty ideals have on women's lives. Therefore, Carneiro et al. argue that women need to defy beauty standards and start to embrace themselves in the way they are and if they cannot do this alone they should do it with the assistance of a therapist (90). They believe that this can lead to more equality between the genders because it partly calls the concept of patriarchy into question (Carneiro et al. 91).

However, according to Dworkin and Wachs men start to feel the pressure as well because more and more men are discontented with their bodies (7). This, though, might have

more to do with the power of marketing and the influence of the economy. Since companies want to constantly increase their sales, they promote products that promise to appease their ‘problem’ areas if they perpetually buy them (Dworkin and Wachs 8). Thus, the authors believe that

[...] in the process of advertising and selling the right kind of bodily object through consumption, the bodies of the privileged are legitimated and idealized as moral actors. This is because the right kind of bodily object – the cumulative effect of one’s purchases, social practices, and the ensuing surfaces of the flesh – is always out of reach by some [...]” (Dworkin and Wachs 11).

Hence, the industry continues to grow and accumulate profits while more and more people are unhappy with their bodies and might even suffer negative consequences by not adhering to the expected unrealistic ideals. The media are used to perpetuate these images which is why they can already be detected in books and films targeted at children and young adults as the following chapter will show.

4.2. From savage to poster girl

The previous chapter shows that the media perpetuates specific images and ideals of gender, sexuality and the expected roles men and women have to play in this dichotomy. These are necessary in order to maintain a society with a strong patriarchal presence in which women have an inferior position to men. Nowadays, Western societies only partially feature patriarchal structures which have been diminished in number in recent decades. However, the images portrayed in the media do not always reflect the changes in society. For instance, Berry argued that there still exists an appearance bias which has been elaborated on. Another example is the representation of Native Americans in the media, where they are stereotyped as the ‘Noble/Ignoble Savage’ who is either blood thirsty or helpful, depending on the existence of the prefix (Lacroix, “High stakes stereotypes” 4). In the media, specifically in film, their bodies are additionally featured as something exotic and sexual. Portrayals sometimes resemble pin-up girls more than real women.

The circulation and commodification of Native bodies and identity in these films provokes us to question the ends to which this capital is put and whether it is not simply the sale of a variety of ethnic pornography that praises the result of one of the largest scale genocides in recent human memory (Villa, Smith and Kelsey 134).

The authors referred to other movies than the ones analyzed in this paper; however, I believe that this statement can be easily transferred to this context as the subsequent chapters will show. Through this process of commodification, the representation of the identity of

Native Americans is distorted and thus becomes unrecognizable to them (Miranda 335). This is what Spivak cautions about because she is convinced that identity is lost if it is turned into a commodity. She believes that “[t]he national artist in the Third World has a responsibility not to speak for the nation in response to a demand made by this craving for intercultural exchange” (Spivak, “Acting Bits/Identity Talk” 798).

The distorted portrayal ties into another point of criticism brought forward by Villa, Smith and Kelsey. They criticize that Native American culture is being depicted as patriarchal even though there are several important women who were Chiefs (Villa, Smith and Kelsey 137). Examples of tribes in which Native American women were chiefs are, for instance, the Natchez and the Cherokee (Lajimodiere 107). Lajimodiere believes that the misrepresentations of these tribal structures as patriarchal are due to misunderstandings in the first journals which described them (105). Since any text is produced and on some level influenced by the writers’ beliefs and values, this holds true for these journals as well. She believes that these writings “reflected their cultural biases and, perhaps, reflected a desire to manipulate reality to accommodate expectations that American Indian women were to be held in low regard in their tribal societies because women were subservient to men in European societies” (Lajimodiere 105). By choosing to portray only a patriarchal societal structure, women are disempowered. In the Native American tribes described in Bruchac’s novel this, however, was not the case, since women were in fact advisors, as Pocahontas points out (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 7). “If you didn’t know this you would think that Indian women were just exotic ‘arm candy,’ breeding stock, or a way into the ‘New World’”(Villa, Smith and Kelsey 137). This is also something Spivak warns about. She is convinced that non-Western women suffer even more disadvantages than non-Western men, due to their gender. (Spivak *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 74). Considering that these messages are perpetuated by movies, there is the danger that “[r]epeated viewing leads children to retrieve, rehearse, solidify, and expand existing scripts, resulting in cumulative long-term effects”(Anderson et al. 3). The long-term effects in this case are the indoctrination of specific stereotypical images and assumptions about Native Americans, their culture, traditions and tribal life. Therefore, some Native American authors, like Joseph Bruchac, might feel the need to write about their experiences in order to provide another perspective.

By contrasting examples of such stereotypical films to two novels by Bruchac, the following analysis will show to what extent he has been successful in portraying Native American women and their experience accurately. Thus, the subchapters of this present chapter will identify the main theoretical tenets of gender theory (such as the portrayal of

specific gender roles, a patriarchal societal system which reduces female agency and the importance and perpetuation of a specific appearance particularly with an emphasis on the female body) in the works analyzed.

4.2.1. Pocahontas- the 'sexy' Native American girl

"Disney and its princess phenomenon have been identified as a powerful influence on children's media and product consumerism, contributing to a new 'girlhood' that is largely defined by gender and the consumption of related messages and products" (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 555). The authors clearly point out that there exist close ties between gender and capitalism which is one of the driving forces of the Disney machinery. However, the same can be said to be true of children literature. By representing men and women in a certain way, the media impact the development of children as well as their personalities (Towbin et al. 21). England, Descartes and Collier-Meek also state that "[c]onsistent portrayals of meaningful gendered patterns (e.g., who performs climactic rescues) may contribute to the social scripts the viewer creates when exposed to gender-stereotyped content"(556). This as well holds true not only for films but for literature or any other form of narrative. Through the representation of this concept, children's understanding of societal gender norms as well as specific behavioral patterns, especially those linked to dating and courtship are impacted (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 556). Therefore, it is important to analyze and critically assess the dominant representation because they can lead to the development of stereotypes and the reproduction of unequal power structures. However, the portrayal does not always have to have a negative impact. It can also be neutral or beneficial by leading to a deconstruction of traditional and stereotypical gender roles (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 556).

There are some positive representations in more recent Disney movies (Towbin et al. 19). Unfortunately for the most part, "[m]ixed messages are still present in later Disney Princess films, suggesting the importance of considering the interplay of these messages and the context of the movies as well as the simple increase in opposite-gender characteristics exhibited by the prince and princess characters" (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 556). Thus, the improvement of the portrayal of stereotypical gender roles is not necessarily a linear process but rather one that fluctuates from film to film (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 564). Even within the feature-length animated film Disney produced about Pocahontas, there are several different gender patterns that range from highly patriarchal to somewhat emancipated. This stands somewhat in contrast to Bruchac's Pocahontas who is deeply

embedded in the patriarchal tribal structure and does not depart very far from the rather limited gender roles available to her, as this chapter will show.

Considering the dichotomy of the active male and the passive female as described in chapter 4.1, one can conclude that there are fewer women in the position of the active subject in the majority of Disney films (Coca 9). Additionally, on television women are mostly younger, more attractive and slimmer than their male counterparts (Towbin et al. 21). Usually there is an appearance bias, as explained in chapter 4.1.2 because women are mostly valued for their appearance and not their intellect (Towbin et al. 21). This is why Coca (13) concludes that “[t]he construction of femininity is done from a male standard, appreciative of obedience and beauty”. This is the case in both the Disney movie and the book. Pocahontas is aware of her looks and takes care of her appearance. An exemplification will be provided in connection with the salient gender themes present in the book and film.

This male standpoint, as mentioned by Coca, is highlighted and supported by the existing setting within a patriarchal society. In the Disney movie Pocahontas tries to defy this existing patriarchal status quo (Coca 10). This is not the case in Bruchac’s novel where Pocahontas adheres to social conventions.

‘Just tell me,’ I said. I was impatient and not pleased at what I thought I was about to hear. ‘Amonute,’ Rawhunt said, his eyes now on the wall of the lodge, ‘your father, your father says that perhaps, perhaps this is not the right time for you to visit the Tassantassuk. He has decided that first, first we must see what kind of warriors they are (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 23).

Pocahontas suspects that her father does not want her to leave the village and after her father’s advisor, Rawhunt, tells her that this is indeed her father’s command, Pocahontas remains in Werewocomoco. “I have done as my father asked and not gone to the camp of the Coatmen” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 32). She accepts that her father has the authority to demand her to stay, thereby adhering to the hierarchical order in this patriarchal society. In the Disney movie, “[i]t is the young heroine’s independent-mindedness and nonconformity that mark the crucial starting points of the action in the plot” (Coca 10). Disney’s Pocahontas rebels against the patriarch, her father, by calling into question the existing beliefs within her tribe about the new settlers (Coca 11). She also threatens the status quo by not really wanting to marry Kocuum. This refusal can be seen as emancipation and defiance of the patriarchal order. However, Pocahontas is only seemingly breaking through gender patterns since she is mainly characterized in relation to the men in her life she reacts with which reaffirms patriarchy (Giroux 101). Thereby, Disney reinforces the underlying message that girls, stereotypically,

should identify themselves through their relationships to men, particularly through their (first / true) love (Dundes 354).

Interestingly, her sense of adventure is responsible for the fact that in the Disney movie *Pocahontas* spends the majority of the time outside of her home (Coca 11). She explores the fields, spends her days looking for adventure and is mostly only accompanied by her sidekicks or friend Nakoma and not, as one might believe, by men (*Pocahontas*). In the movie, Pocahontas is allowed to explore nature; however, her friend Nakoma is worried about her and does not want Pocahontas to wander off to far since she might be endangered by the settlers (*Pocahontas*). She criticizes Pocahontas for dishonoring her father and tribe if she leaves to spy on the settlers: “If you go out there, you’ll be turning your back on your own people” (*Pocahontas*).

This wanderlust displayed by her, partly concurs with Bruchac’s version of Pocahontas who also likes to be outdoors. She uses her time outdoors to help fellow members of her tribe or to walk around more or less freely. In the book, she asserts, as can be seen above that she did not go to visit the new settlers against her father’s wishes. Nevertheless, immediately after this statement of reassurance of the existing status quo, she adds:

Of course I do not always do what he tells me. I come and go as I choose and do what I want to do. Sometimes, I am told I get in the way of others when I do this. But I have found that if I make a joke of it, if I make faces or go tumbling head over heels, I can make people laugh (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 32).

Here, Bruchac characterizes Pocahontas again as friendly, easygoing and amiable. It also somewhat helps to emphasize her youthfulness in the sense that making such jokes and rebelling a little bit against her father’s wishes is usually normal for teenagers. However, it also serves as an example that Pocahontas knows her boundaries. She knows her place within the social order: “Even though, as the favorite daughter of Mamanatowic, I do not have to work with my hands like the other children of my age, I go into the fields and take part in the harvest. (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 85). She knows that by participating in and helping her tribe she is given more freedom to explore nature. Nevertheless, she really leaves Werewocomoco and its immediate surroundings only twice and solely with her father’s permission thus showing that she does not wish to defy her fathers’ rule.

At the end of the Disney movie, Pocahontas chooses to remain in the domestic environment and with her tribe and, thus, restores the status quo of a patriarchal system (Coca 11). In an iconic scene, Pocahontas is shown standing in front of her people which might hint at her leading role for the long-lasting period of peace between the Natives and the settlers. By remaining unmarried, Pocahontas retains her power, in the sense that she stays the Chief’s

daughter. This is not unusual for Disney films as Do Rozario points out “[t]he passage of power through the princess is ostensibly patriarchal: she ensures the kingdom’s continuity as first, daughter and [...] thus validates majesty”(42).

By interpreting this in the context of the other Disney films, one can consider Pocahontas’ actions as a way to ensure her tribe’s endurance. This validation of patriarchy and the tribal endurance can be considered as a unification of the “Patriarchat und das Matriarchat in der gemeinsamen Urreligion, die aus der Erdenmutter und dem Sonnenvater besteht“(Schwob 58). This assumption is based on the role Grandmother Willow plays as Pocahontas advisor in the movie and her connection to nature. However, at the very end of the movie Pocahontas runs up alone to the end of a cliff in order to catch a last glimpse at the ship and at her love sailing away from her, which can be seen as a way to incorporate the film back within the Disney formula by creating an open ending for her and Smith’s love story. This open ending, however, is problematic in the sense that if one reads it as a possibility for a revival of their love, then this would mean that Pocahontas cannot fulfill her dream and destiny but sacrifices her personal happiness in order to guarantee her tribe’s endurance. This would in turn perpetuate the highly problematic message to the viewers that it is ok to suffer as long as one conforms to the rules made by a patriarchal society which ultimately might or might not reward you for your suffering. Dundes argues similarly: “In a society with conflicting messages about not only the appropriate role for women, but also their changing–discontinuous–role, Pocahontas has modeled a stereotypical and unrealistically fluid transformation from self-indulgence to altruism for hundreds of thousands of young women” (Dundes 363).

Bruchac’s Pocahontas in contrast, remains close to the true story of the historical figure Pocahontas who remained in Virginia, where she married Rolfe. However, this and her trip to England as well as her death are only summarized in the afterword, while the narrative ends with John Smith’s adoption (150 f.). This is interesting because in the novel it is mentioned that Pocahontas is aware of the fact that she cannot ascend to power which is passed down in a patriarchal fashion.

I know that my father’s power is not mine. When my father dies, that power will go to my uncle Opitchapam, his younger brother, who limps from an injury suffered as a child. [...] Among our people, power must always go first to the brothers before it goes to the sons (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 74).

By ending the narrative before her father’s death, Bruchac’s Pocahontas is still an influential woman within her tribe due to her special status as the Great Chief’s favorite daughter. “As my father’s favorite daughter, I sit close to his feet. Others fear him for his

power, but I do not. (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 5). As witnessed by this quote, she is aware of her power even though it might be fleeting. Especially the seating arrangements around the Great Chief as well as the clothes show the social hierarchy within society.

He was richly hung with a great many chains of great pearl about his neck and covered with a great robe made of rarrowcun skins, and all the tails hanging by. At his head sat a woman, at his feet another. On each side, sitting upon the ground, were ranged his chief men, ten in a rank, and behind them as many women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red, many of their heads bedecked with the white down of birds and each with a great chain of white beads about her neck (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 142).

The Great Chief is distinguished by his clothing but also by his position in the center. This quotation points out that women held a special position as advisers within the tribe. “He knows that his power comes from the bravery of the men and the good minds of the women of our nations” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 123). Here again Bruchac tries to balance the uneven power relations between the genders in the sense that patriarchal power is juxtaposed to the intellect of the women who are valued for it. “We women often say that we know what a man will do long before he does it. After all, we are the ones who make up his mind for him” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 67). This illustrates, that women were appreciated for their intellect and had covert power. In their role as advisors they also had overt power as Pocahontas asserts: “It is true that my father is the Great Chief of our alliance, but his power does not just come from himself. [...] I comes from the support and the advice of the women.” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas*: 66). By ending the narrative with Smith’s adoption, Bruchac empowered Pocahontas in the sense that he chose an ending when she was not yet married to Rolfe and an active and thriving force advocating for peace. In the afterword, this is again emphasized: “Through it all Pocahontas appears to have remained an influential voice for peace” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 149). By highlighting her role in the peace negotiations and by giving her a voice in the novel, Bruchac managed to create a powerful narrative that can be considered analogous in effect to the gaze of black women which was described: “as counter-memory, [...] as a way to know the present and invent the future” (hooks 319).

This use as counter memory was particularly important to Bruchac, especially after having seen the dominant narrative created by Disney. He refers to the film’s ending explicitly: “Pocahontas’s story did not end with Smith’s departure. She eventually became the catalyst for the longest period of amity between the English and the Powhatan nations”(Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 150). Here again, the author takes a clear stance by pointing out that Smith mattered to Pocahontas as an uncle but that her life did not revolve around him. This might be another reason why Bruchac ended the narrative with the adoption, thereby

giving Pocahontas agency and ending the story without placing her under the Western patriarchal system which she inevitably entered later by marrying Rolfe.

The concept of marriage, as already alluded to, is mentioned, in both the book and the movie, albeit in different ways. Pocahontas in Bruchac's novel refers to her father's several marriages.

Because he is the Great Chief, my father has many wives from our many different towns. Though my mother was one of his favorites, she would not have stayed at our town of Werowocomoco (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 34).

Hence, within the tribal and patriarchal structure polygamy was present and the wives were not always living with their husband but rather remained in their villages. The concept of marriage itself and its effect was already mentioned in chapter 4.1, therefore it suffices here to say, that deBeauvoir (*les faits et les mythes* 282) believed that being married was the ultimate form of male domination. If one considers the quotation cited above, the Great Chief would use marriage as way of dominance and as a possibility to assert control over the people in other villages, connected with his tribe. In Bruchac's novel, Pocahontas herself is eventually married to Rolfe which is only mentioned in the afterword as is their son (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 150). This showed that for the author, the marriage between these two did not play an important role for the narrative which is centered on the first encounters and their struggle for peace between the Powhatan nations and the English.

The relationship between Pocahontas and John Smith is only described marginally and as based on the kinship principle: “[y]ou are my older brother,” I say to him. “I will always be your child” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 146). This is only one of the instances in which the familial relationship between the two is highlighted. In addition, the afterword emphasizes again that Pocahontas cared for John Smith as if he had been her uncle (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 150). This, again, can be seen as a reaction to Disney's version of the movie. “The real stories of John Smith and Pocahontas have seldom been fully told, much as they are a part of the popular imagination – even more since the highly distorted Disney movie a few years ago” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 169). This quotation demonstrates that Disney did not adhere to the actual life of Pocahontas but instead modified it to fit the Disney formula as well as the message it wanted to portray. However, it needs to be pointed out that Disney's Pocahontas is one of only two of its animated films in which “marriage was not seen as the ultimate goal for women” (Towbin et al. 31). Nevertheless, Disney managed to create a love story between the young Pocahontas and the thirtysomething Smith which monopolized the whole plot of the film. This might have to do with the Disney formula.

As pointed out, love and the happy end among other things reflect Disney's view of a patriarchal society which believes in the dichotomy of male and female and heterosexual love (Coca 18). Therefore, "[...] a heterosexual romance is inevitable and often a central conclusion of the movie" (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 565). Although, Disney's Pocahontas seemed empowered because she did not follow her father's wishes and fell in love with Smith, she also adhered to traditional female role expectations by falling in love with Smith within a day and without even being able to communicate with him in any common language (Towbin et al. 38). However, the latter is only implied in the movie since communication between her and John Smith is not hindered since she listens to her heart, as mentioned in chapter 3.2.1. Through their relationship, Disney communicates the message that heterosexual couples quickly fall in love (if possible at first sight) and against all odds (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 565). To my knowledge, this fact has not been called into question by any hero/heroine/prince/princess until the release of the Disneyfilm *Frozen* in 2013. Until then it remained, similar to the dichotomy of male and female, a social construct not called into question by Pocahontas nor any other of Disney's animated movies. Nevertheless, Bruchac's novel did not feature a romantic relationship between Pocahontas and John Smith, only mentioning in the afterword that Pocahontas later married Rolfe.

In the heterosexual relationships present in several Disney films, men are characterized by the deficiency of emotions they display or only show through acts requiring physical strength and by their lack of restraint concerning their sexuality (Towbin et al. 28). Usually, they are athletic, heroic and have much strength (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 560). Men who do not adhere to this desired appearance because they are overweight, for example, tend to be associated with negative characteristics (Towbin et al. 28). All these features are present in Disney's version of *Pocahontas*. Governor Ratcliffe, for example, is overweight and appears rather feminine due to the pig tails he's wearing and the implied make-up. This stands in stark contrast to John Smith who is mostly seen in his body armor which accentuates his sculptured, muscular body (see images 17 and 18). His short, masculine haircut and seemingly chiseled facial bone structure can be evidenced by the two images below.



image 17 Governor Ratcliffe facial features (*Pocahontas*)



image 18 John Smith's appearance (*Pocahontas*)

In the novel, Bruchac's *Pocahontas* emphasizes the strength and courage of her father's soldiers. She also provides insights into how the men became so strong and courageous.

To make them so strong and brave, we have the ceremony of the *Huskanaw* – which gives one a new body. During that long ordeal, a boy is taken by his keeper into the forest to die and be reborn as a warrior (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 21).

However, it is not only the ritual that turns them into skillful fighters, but also training. This aspect, as Bruchac's *Pocahontas* explains, was enforced rather vigorously by the women, especially by the mothers.

Also, I help him when he practices with his bow and arrow. All of our men are great shots. A boy is given his first bow almost as soon as he can walk. It is the job of his mother to help him practice early every morning by tossing things up into the air for him to shoot at. To make it more interesting, that boy may be denied his morning meal if he misses too many times (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 6).

Since Pocahontas' mother is no longer alive, Pocahontas has taken up this traditionally female task of making sure that her brother is well trained. This is essential, so that he is prepared for battle. "But it is well known that the men of our villages are strong warriors. They are unafraid and are seldom defeated in battle. Even when they are taken as prisoners, they sing their death songs and refuse to show the enemy any sign of weakness" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 84). The singing element is something that is emphasized by Bruchac on several instances, particularly when it comes to the warriors. "Our warriors are proud of their courage and will gladly brag to anyone of the great things they have done – or make up a song about it (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 123). The singing might also allude to the gentleness of the warriors when it comes to women and children.

It was how a true warrior should behave, stern to those who would fight with him but gentle to those who are weak, and kind to those who would be

friends. That is why when our men go to fight they are careful never to injure women and children or those too old to fight (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 103).

This holds true for Pocahontas' characterization of all of the natives in Bruchac's novel. Her father is described as a great leader who is rather stern but who Pocahontas can always make laugh. "All I have to do is dance, or stand upon my hands, or sing to him" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 8). Here, again, singing is mentioned as a means to balance the warrior's courage, strength and power with a friendly, loving, music-loving father. This display is carried out throughout the novel in which Pocahontas is depicted as friendly, easygoing and amiable. Disney's Pocahontas is also similarly portrayed. In most of the Disney movies, in general, women are depicted as "affectionate, assertive, fearful, troublesome, and athletic" (England, Descartes and Collier-Meek 560). *Pocahontas* is one of only two Disney films in which "both appearance and intellect and accomplishment are valued, but accomplishment and intellect are valued more than appearance" (Towbin et al. 30). This is reflected in both the book and the movie analyzed in this paper. Bruchac characterizes women as intelligent, skillful at planting all kinds of crops, apart from tobacco and as a voice of peace (*Pocahontas* 20). In addition, they are good mothers (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 67). However, it is particularly the agricultural aspect which is highlighted:

They also do the things that women do [...] They are trying to plant corn and grow it. [...] No. Nothing they have planted is growing well. Everyone knows the earth prefers the touch of a woman's hands (Bruchac *Pocahontas*: 67f.).

This quotation refers to another aspect mentioned in chapter 3.1.1, namely the surprise that the new settlers were doing strange things, thereby constructing a binary pair of us and them. "What was truly strange was to see men, grown men, working in those fields, trying to hoe and weed as women do" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 76). This again emphasizes that women were in charge of the nutrition. Their capabilities for agricultural work are also shown in the Disney movie (see image 19).



image 19 women working in the field (*Pocahontas*)

However, once a month, when women have their period they do not have to work, as Pocahontas in Bruchac's novel explains.

She does not cook or tan skins, she does not gather useful plants from the forest, or hoe in the gardens, or do any of the many, many things women must do so that the people can live well. At this time others must do the work, and she comes to stay here with her moon sisters in the special house at the edge of the village. She has nothing to do other than relax, and think, and talk. The younger women who do not yet have their moons bring food for her and do whatever small chores she asks them to do, whether it is to comb her hair or keep the fires burning (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 66).

Indirectly this quotation illustrates that men had no contact with the women when they had their period. Instead, the younger women are responsible for them. By separating the women once a month from the men due to their menstruation, they are inherently posited as the 'other'. Analogies can be drawn to what Baaz and Stern discovered in the beliefs of soldiers in the Democratic republic of Congo, which was described in chapter 4.1.1. Another important aspect which was mentioned in the same chapter and ties into the gender binary and resulting different needs is the damsel-in-distress. This is, as pointed out, characteristic of a rather Eurocentric or Western perspective. In the Disney movie, Pocahontas was displayed as in need of protection and helpless at times but the film also included moments in which she did not need a man to help her, where she could be heroic and experience her sense of her adventure (Towbin et al. 31).

In Bruchac's novel a similar pattern can be detected. Pocahontas is generally independent, curious and looking for adventure but she is also aware that she will always be protected by her father's soldiers and the rest of her company wherever she goes. This is particularly evident in a scene where Pocahontas lays awake at night to hear her father's men stand guard:

I hear the soft sounds of those four men who stand alert all through the night outside the big longhouse, one at each corner post. They are not allowed to sleep. So they shuffle their feet, and now and then thump the ground with their spears. Twelve times every night they must sound the call to prove that all is well and safe in each of the four directions (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 134).

Pocahontas is very aware that she will be protected by those soldiers in case anything happens. Whenever she ventures farther out of her father's village, she has to have her father's permission and is, then, escorted by several soldiers who protect her. "[...] I can go where I choose, well protected by those who travel with me" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 20).

By protecting her, the men watching her also observe the new settlers. They come to the conclusion that "[t]he faces of those coat-wearing men were as red and furry as squirrels. They also had long clever fingers [...]" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 2). However, it is not only the Natives who regard the settlers but also Smith himself, who observes:

The day was warm, and I know well how hot and heavy their armor and breastplates must have felt to them. Yet a man used to war also grows used to such discomforts, which are far less than the pain of an arrow piercing unguarded flesh. (Bruchac, *Pocahontas*: 27)

By describing the settlers in this way, Bruchac clearly contrasts them with the Natives. These are also portrayed through Smith's eyes.

All were strangely painted, and every one had his quiver of arrows and at his back a club, on his arm a fox or otter skin. Every man had his head and shoulders painted red with oil and puccoon mingled together, which scarlet-like color made an exceeding handsome show. Each had his bow in his hand and the skin of a bird, with her wings abroad dried, tied upon his head, or a piece of copper, a white shell, a long feather with a small rattle at the tails of their snakes tied to it, or some such like toy (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 131).

Here, both parties appear and are characterized by the gaze of the other. In the first quotation, he describes his men as different from himself, because of the discomfort that they feel when they wear their armor. Considering Berger's theory mentioned in 4.1, by gazing at them he possesses his men and as Irigaray states, turns them into a prop. The same illustration can be found in the Disney movie. However, this portrayal reflects a rather stereotypical display of the Natives as well as of the settlers, as mentioned in chapter 3.1.1.

This display of difference, however, leads to a distinct depiction of the characters, by sexualizing and exoticizing them. The eroticism and the portrayal as something exotic is a trend which can be found in Disney films which feature non-European heroines (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 213). However, only a minority of Disney films include non-dominant, marginalized groups and there are still certain groups that are not represented at all (Towbin et al. 35). Thus, it should be no surprise that Disney movies make use of traditional stereotypes as described above and add a certain element of sexuality and the exotic to their Native American protagonist, Pocahontas. This element of sexuality is manifested by the emphasis on their body and their clothes which highlight these features (Lacroix, "Images of Animated Others" 221).

At this point, it is important to keep in mind, as pointed out in chapter 2.2.1, that the historic figure Pocahontas was actually 11 years old when she met John Smith and the settlers but Disney depicts her as much older. In the Disney film she is a tall, athletic woman with a slender body and big breasts and it is clear that she has already reached or even passed puberty. This again shows that Disney appropriated Pocahontas to fit the Disney formula, as described in chapter 2.2.1. By eroticizing her, Disney created an exotic beauty which did not resemble the actual Pocahontas at all but who fit in well with the dominant beauty standards at the time the movie was created. Her looks tie in with her social class, which as the daughter

of the chief made her a member of the upper class. Bruchac's novel introduces Pocahontas as her father's favorite daughter and at the same emphasizes the chief's importance: "As my father's favorite daughter, I sit close to his feet" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 5). In the movie, Pocahontas has a special status due to her father's position. Usually, she is not alone but always followed by either her sidekicks, her friend and/or other members of her tribe and/or John Smith. However, she is allowed to roam the woods and the area around her tribe's camp site rather freely which could be explained by her special status within society.

As indicated in chapter 4.1.2, for example, certain inequalities are often included in the analysis of a person's portrayal, such as lookism, class and gender (Tietje and Cresap 33). This is due to the fact that they lead to specific roles and expectations which can only come to light if one takes all these factors into account. For the purpose of this paper, class will not be elaborated on in depth but it might be an interesting point of departure for further studies on the subject. Nevertheless, it is evident that Pocahontas, in both the movie and the book, is well aware that she is a powerful member of her tribe due to her father's position. This impacts her behavior as well as her appearance. In the novel, it is particularly evident that Pocahontas is aware of her social standing and the resulting expectations:

The weather has been warm enough to wear no clothing at all – which is the way most of us go about when we are children. However, I was dressing to impress these new Tassantassuk. I would present myself as the favorite daughter of the Great Chief. So I put around my waist a fine white apron of deerskin, which had been softened by tanning with smoke. The apron was decorated with rawrenock shells and pieces of copper, making designs in the shapes of animals and flowers. I hung low earrings of strung pearls through the pierced lobes of my ear and then wound a long necklace of pearls and pieces of copper around my neck so that it hung across my bare chest (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 22ff).

This quotation describes how Pocahontas gets ready to meet the settlers, which is in the end prevented by her father. It shows quite nicely how acutely aware she is of the expectations that come with her place within society. She wants to impress the settlers and knows that this can only be done if she wears fine clothes, jewelry and makeup. This scene hints at the fact that Pocahontas has only started to reach puberty and still partly identifies with the customs of children, who run around without clothes. This stands in stark contrast to the Pocahontas in the Disney movies.



image 20 Pocahontas' body (*Pocahontas*)

Her body structure is similar to the one featured by Barbie dolls (Lacroix, “Animated Others” 220). “Rather than a young adolescent, Pocahontas is made over historically to resemble a shapely, contemporary, high-fashion supermodel” (Giroux 101). Her physique is also highlighted by the rather short dress with fringes she is wearing in order to give her a more exotic look (see image 20). Throughout the film, she does not change her outfit but remains in the same dress. Also, she always wears the same turquoise necklace around her neck which features a stone in the middle. The stone is in a diamond shape that subconsciously functions as a an arrow to point up-and downwards, thereby either emphasizing her long neck, delicate facial features, makeup and her ample bosom.

Following an upward angle, one notices that she seems to wear permanent or water-proof makeup throught the course of the movie because her look never changes even if she gets wet. Disney’s Pocahontas always retains her perfect skin complexion and her subtle makeup. Additionally, her hair always looks immaculate even if soaking wet. In Bruchac’s novel, Pocahontas describes her hair only once, when she gets ready to dance for the settlers. “As is the case for all girls before they reach the age of marriage, my hair is all cut off except for a single long braid at the back of my head”(Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 22). Again, the fact that Pocahontas has not reached the age of marriage is highlighted in this brief excerpt and it also states that she wears her hair in a braid and the rest is cut off. This differs radically from Disney’s depiction of Pocahontas who wears her hair down during most of her time onscreen.



image 21 Pocahontas' air (*Pocahontas*)

But then again, even when the hair blows freely in the wind it, it always looks extremely flattering (see image 21). Even if viewers, primarily children, know that really wet hair never appears quite as enticing as dry and (well-) styled hair, it still creates some underlying social pressure. Somehow the question arises, if Disney princesses and people on

television can always look that good why can't women in real life strive to attain the same goal? In the novel, Bruchac highlights that also men's hair plays an important role.

Our men always shave all of the hair from the right side of their head. Not only does this make them more handsome, it also prevents their long hair from getting tangled in the string of a bow. A priest, though, keeps a lock of hair above his ear on the right side. It shows that he can hear the voice of Okeus (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 33).

In Disney's movie, men have different hair styles. For example, Pocahontas' father wears his hair on the left side while his right side is shaved. The other men, such as Kocoum, have long hair. Wearing long hair as a man, however, is frowned upon in Bruchac's novel because it is considered unmanly: "It is not only that they wear their hair as women do." (Bruchac *Pocahontas*: 99).

Specific conventions, such as the way we should wear our hair in turn, result in the urge to make ourselves as attractive as possible as pointed out in chapter 4.1.2 (Berry 1). In Bruchac's novel, Pocahontas adheres to this well-established pattern. "I hope that my lack of sleep does not make my face puffy or my eyes red. It is important that I look my best today" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 135). She is aware that her appearance can influence the way in which she is perceived and tries to use this to her advantage. The fact that there exists an appearance bias from which attractive people benefit has already been elaborated in chapter 4.1.2. Both, Disney's and Bruchac's Pocahontas uses her looks to impress. This awareness of other's gaze on her, reflects Mulvey's belief, that women exhibit themselves and dress themselves so that they are being regarded (Mulvey 39f.) In Bruchac's novel, Pocahontas puts on makeup to impress the settlers. This is described as an arduous process:

I then went back to my place in my father's house and took out my paint. I chose red paint, made from puccoon, the bloodroot, and the oil crushed from hickory nuts. I stirred it well to make it even and smooth, and I painted my whole face, from the top of my head down to my chin.[...] As I applied my paint, I used the three long fingers of my right hand and then those of my left. One of my mothers, Green Reed, the oldest of my father's wives, watched as I did all this. She made sure the paint was smooth and even and that I had not missed any places. She painted the white circles around my eyes first and with the fingers of her right hand used more red paint to touch up the places I missed. I had to use the eyes of Green Reed to tell me how I looked. 'Close your eyes', Green Reed said as she dipped her left hand into a box of matchqueon, the beautiful dust made by grinding a certain stone. It makes one's face sparkle with many lights [...]. [...] Then I sat without moving until it dried, feeling it tighten the skin of my cheeks as it did so. When it was dry, I stood up and finished dressing myself (Bruchac, *Pocahontas*: 21f.).

As the quote illustrates, Native Americans did not have any mirrors which is why Pocahontas needed someone else to judge whether or not she had applied the makeup appropriately. “Green Reed looked me over and then nodded in approval as did the other women” (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 23). This reflects that Pocahontas is aware, as Berger and Irigaray point out, that she is being looked at. In addition, it mirrors the belief, that “[w]omen receive and return a gaze, but cannot act on it” (Kaplan 121). Pocahontas does not react to the other women watching her but considers it as normal.

His eyes widen as he sees me, I am sure he is impressed with how fine I look adorned with my paint and the glitter of *matchqueon* all over my head and shoulders and bare chest and my best apron, with its embroidery of *rawrenock*. I kneel and throw my arms around his neck (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 146).

This quotation shows how aware Pocahontas is that she is being looked at. She wants to look her best and tries to dress according to her place in society. As Mulvey pointed out, described in chapter 4.1, Pocahontas styles herself in order to fulfill a male fantasy and so that she will receive a gaze. In addition, body paint as an adornment has a longstanding tradition, as described in chapter 4.1.2. Another factor to enhance a person’s appearance at that time, apart from clothes, jewelry and makeup, are tattoos. Bruchac’s Pocahontas has them as ornaments.

I [...] stopped applying paint before reaching the intricate tattoos of intertwined flowers that circle the upper parts of my arms. Those tattoos were made only two seasons ago. I remember the feeling of the sharp bone awl piercing my skin again and again as drops of paint were applied to the places where blood welled up. Of course, I did not cry or show in any way that I felt the pain. I appreciated the great care that my aunts and my mothers took to make me so beautiful by giving me the tattoos (Bruchac *Pocahontas* 22).

This quotation not only describes how the tattoos were made but also ties into the stereotype that Native Americans do not feel any pain which can be explained by their custom not to show it. It also features the way Native Americans used to describe time, by referring to the cycle of seasons. In addition, this quotation is proof for the allegation that women sometimes undergo risky and dangerous procedures in order to attain often unrealistic beauty standards (Carneiro et al. 90). Tattoos remain a controversial matter because they are permanent and health risks are involved due to possibly ensuing infections. This risk and the making of tattoos in general is not mentioned in the family entertainment version Disney created. There, Pocahontas already has a red colored tattoo on her right arm (cf image 22).



image 22 Pocahontas' tatoo (*Pocahontas*)

Thus, Disney and Bruchac created a specific illustration of what it means to be a Native American woman or man in a patriarchal society. Women, especially Pocahontas, are valued for their intellect and their capabilities in agriculture. Family and the tribe are important for all the members who adhere to their expected gender roles. While men are mostly characterized as soldiers, women are a sign of peace because they are responsible for reasonable decisions and are not as eager to start a war (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 20). Both the movie and the novel, therefore, portray Pocahontas as a voice for peace. Bruchac presents her as a young girl who is beautiful yet still somewhat childlike but very curious and clever. She knows how to use her body, by singing or doing acrobatics, to get what she wants. Disney, however, depicts Pocahontas as a grown exotic and sexy woman who knows how to use her body albeit in a more sensual and sexual way which is also emphasized by her dress. Instead of adhering to the patriarchal norms, she defies her father by not marrying Kocoum instead entering a romantic relationship with John Smith which is in the end interrupted, thereby reestablishing the status quo (see image 22). Thus, her life revolves around the lives of the men in her life.

4.2.2. Sacagawea – the emancipated mother

Native bodies have been subjected to capitalism and exoticism as shown in chapter 3.1 and its subchapters. After the first travel reports were published, non-Western women were turned into erotic and exotic human beings who were very sensuous, thus fulfilling male fantasies as Hall (166) points out. Therefore, the stereotypical display is a highly sexualized woman resembling to pin-up girls (Villa, Smith and Kelsey 134). Sacagawea, however, stands in contrast to this image. This is mostly due to Eva Emery Dye, a suffragette, who, looking for a female heroine in the Westward expansion myth of the United States, came across Sacagawea's story (Donaldson 525). "Dye created the persona of Sacagawea [...] not only from the bones of historical fact but also from the prevailing ideologies of both female domesticity and pioneer motherhood" (Donaldson 525). Therefore, Sacagawea is primarily depicted as a loving married mother who carries her baby on the back. However, the fact that she was an abused wife is mostly ignored (Kegan Gardiner and Thayer 488). During the

bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition (2004 to 2007) Sacagawea and her story were revived by putting her on the one dollar coin, for example (Donaldson 523). In addition, she was featured in popular culture, as a part of the movie *Night at the Museum* which was released in 2006. Bruchac's novel about Sacagawea will be juxtaposed in the following analysis. The first striking similarity the book and the movie feature is an introduction of Sacagawea next to Lewis and Clark. Since she was a pivotal figure in the Corps of Discovery, as their expedition was called, this should come as no surprise. What I find interesting is the fact that both immediately refer to the Lewis and Clark expedition, thereby somewhat reducing Sacagawea's agency to this one, albeit exciting period of her life.



image 23 Sacagawea next to Lewis and Clark (*Night at the Museum*)

Within the movie and the book there exist several gender patterns which range from emancipated to highly patriarchal. In the movie, Sacagawea is portrayed as an independent woman who is nonetheless on the lookout for a man. Bruchac's Sacagawea, in contrast, has but a limited range of gender roles she is able to occupy, only straying from traditional role expectations about four times. First, she achieves this by becoming a member of the Corps of Discovery and second by being able to save the mission in various ways while the men were unable to fulfill tasks described as typically male.

At the same time, your good mother was reaching out and pulling back into the boat of all those things that were floating away. Were it not for her quick actions and clear thought, we would have lost much that was priceless. No one on board had more fortitude and resolution than our Janey! (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 83).

In the movie, there is a reference to her tracking skills made by Rebecca who studied Sacagawea. "One of the most famous trackers in history, Sacagawea was the one who led Lewis and Clark on their expedition to find the Pacific Ocean" (*Night at the Museum*). Tracking, however, is considered as a traditionally male domain, as Teddy Roosevelt points out while he observes Sacagawea: "I'm tracking dear boy. A man's got to track" (*Night at the Museum*).

Third, Sacagawea defies typical gender expectations of women during her lifetime by being able to vote on the progress of the expedition which is somewhat downplayed by the fact that Sacagawea justifies her choice with nutritional needs of the group, thereby

reaffirming traditional expectations of Native American women being responsible for crops (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 152). Finally, she defies them by leaving her child with Captain Clark, so that he can educate him (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 185).

In the novel, a patriarchal hierarchical structure is portrayed, in which men have the power. This status quo is continually affirmed throughout the narrative. It is established by Sacagawea telling her son about her arranged marriage:

I had eleven winters. I had a husband already. I did not live with him. I was still in the lodge of my parents. But I had been promised to a man by my father. That man, my husband-to-be, had already made a gift of horses to my family. In less than a handful of winters, I would have gone to him” (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 5).

This quotation implies that Sacagawea was born into a patriarchal tribal structure. As explained in chapter 4.1 such a society is characterized by a concentration of power in the hands of men (Nelmes 250). Sacagawea is, therefore, reduced to an object that can be exchanged by giving gifts, such as horses. This means that she has no agency and can only define herself from a male standpoint. This depiction of Native American culture as patriarchal is a portrayal that Villa, Smith and Kelsey criticize because they believe it distorts reality, since there were several female Chiefs (Villa, Smith and Kelsey 137).

However, Bruchac’s Sacagawea is not in this arranged marriage because other men kidnap her. “She will be valuable as a captive. She will be one who can help my mothers and sisters with their work. Maybe I will even be able to sell her for a good price.” (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 7) Again, the kidnappers objectify her by turning her into a commodity which can be used or resold. Similarly, in the movie, Sacagawea is only ‘saved’ out of her glass cage after the male protagonists realize that they need her abilities as a tracker. They objectify her again, thereby turning her into a mere instrument.



image 24 Sacagawea reading tracks (*Night at the Museum*)



image 25 Sacagawea showing the way (*Night at the Museum*)

Sacagawea, in the movie, is able to find the tracks and to tell them the way. However, since this would give her the credit, Lawrence, one of the male protagonists, asks her how she knew that. Sacagawea’s abilities are then, in turn, ridiculed because the crashed car can be

seen only a couple of meters away. Thereby, her agency is lost again until she can save her romantic love interest in the movie at a later stage.

Heterosexual love is another theme present in both Bruchac's novel and the movie. In Bruchac's novel, Sacagawea is married to Charbonneau, who is introduced as a well-traveled trader. Her husband also married her friend, Otter Woman, thus living a polygamous lifestyle. However, Bruchac makes it a point to emphasize that the Corps of Discovery was more interested in the abilities of Charbonneau's wife than in the man himself:

We were eager to make the acquaintance of that man, Charbonneau, and his wife. Such a woman who knew the land and the people would be of great use. Perhaps we could persuade her and her husband to accompany us (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 49).

Thereby, Sacagawea is given more agency, however it is made clear that she cannot take part in the expedition if her husband does not come along as well. This, again, affirms patriarchal structures. However, Bruchac gives Sacagawea covert power which is illustrated by the following quotation:

My silence troubled your father more than any complaints or angry words. When a man has been foolish, it is sometimes better to let him think of what he has done. If you tell him he is wrong, that just makes him more stubborn about it (Bruchac, *Sacajawea*: 66f.).

Even though there are no other couples that take part in the expedition, marriage is again mentioned at the end of the novel. At first, there is a reference made about Captain Lewis' personal life. "He longed to be married as I was, but each het ended in failure. We all, even President Jefferson, were greatly concerned about him" (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 189). This emphasized that Lewis was unable to maintain a stable relationship because he was uneasy around women, as the novel shows. Captain Clark and his marriage are also mentioned, however, he is the complete opposite of Lewis, due to his charms. "Captain Clark's wife has been kind to us. She has always placed plenty of food on her table. She has made it clear that there is plenty of room in her home for you" (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 193). This quotation is interesting because it clearly describes the role of women in society at that time, namely to provide food and maintain the domestic environment. This, especially according to DeBeauvoir (282) as pointed out in chapter 4.1, reaffirms a patriarchal setting in which power is concentrated in the hands of men. However, not only Western women were tasked with the maintenance of the house and the provision of nutrition (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 155). In captivity, Bruchac's Sacagawea described the tasks she had to do which are typically for Native American women within the tribal setting:

So, even though Red Calf Woman asked me to do only a little more work than my own mother had asked, that work seemed very hard. It was the sort of work I would have done gladly as a young girl among my own people. But for the Minneetares, it was not work I could choose to do or not. It was work I was forced to do or I would be beaten. Tanning skins, carrying water, bringing firewood, such things became my daily routine. I worked tirelessly, from dawn to dusk (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 16).

In addition, she and her friend, Otter Woman, had to hoe the fields with blades made from buffalo shoulder (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 18). In comparison with this hard field work, Sacagawea was given other responsibilities when she went on the expedition. “That night we chose to sleep in a tent made in the Indian style, of the dressed skins of buffalo. Setting up the tent was your mother’s responsibility, and she made it seem an easy one” (Bruchac *Sacajawea* 72).

In the movie, interestingly, Sacagawea is not married and does not have a baby. She is featured as a single woman which is necessary in order for her to not be portrayed as an adulterer. Instead, she stands next to Lewis and Clark and seems to be waiting for someone. Since the Disney formula was so successful and it always included a love story, as elaborated on in chapter 2.1.2, it is not surprising that other companies made use of this profitable recipe for success. Romantic love interests are already implied in the beginning of the movie in the scene in the elevator after Lawrence tries to escape an attack from the Huns. The music played in the elevator is the well-known melody of the song “Mandy” which indicates that the love to a woman will be a dominant theme in the film. *Night at the Museum* features not only one but two heterosexual romances, one of which is between Lawrence and Rebecca, the other between the two wax figures, Teddy and Sacagawea. Sacagawea falls in love with the statue of Teddy Roosevelt, even though this is, historically speaking, completely impossible. However, in the movie they fall in love which affirms heterosexuality as normality. Since movies also portray dominant values in society and these at least overtly condemn adultery, Sacagawea’s husband and child are not mentioned in the movie. Therefore, there is no obstacle, apart from the glass in her showcase that prevents her from entering into an amorous relationship with Teddy Roosevelt. This relationship is interesting in the way it developed because it is full of symbolisms.

Considering Freud and his theory of the phallus on which the concept of the male gaze is based, there are several scenes in the movie that relate to this notion. One particularly obvious instance of the assertion of male dominance is the scene in which Sacagawea brings Teddy Roosevelt his sword which he left with her. This is particularly symbolic in light of the accident he had before with one of the villains in which his torso was separated from his

lower extremities. Sacagawea helps him by waxing him back together. The return of the sword symbolizes, thus, that Teddy Roosevelt is still able to perform sexually, thereby affirming his masculinity.



image 26 Lawrence and Rebecca are watching Teddy and Sacagawea (*Night at the Museum*)



image 27 Teddy being cut in half (*Night at the Museum*)

As can be witnessed by the images above, Sacagawea returns Teddy's sword in the presence of Lawrence and his soon to be girlfriend Rebecca. They both directly gaze at Sacagawea who confirms Teddy's masculinity. However, considering the theory of the gaze, both Teddy and Sacagawea are objectified, also due to their status as wax figures. Thus, Lawrence and Rebecca are the active agents who project their fantasies, as typical for the gaze, on Teddy and Sacagawea. This scene is a prime example, that through the gaze the object is used as "[...]a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man's fantasies" (Irigaray 25). In this case, I would argue that it is not only Lawrence's fantasy but also Rebecca's which is fulfilled by the handing over of the sword and all it implies. This is supported and highlighted by the fact that Teddy then gives Sacagawea a kiss on the hand and holds it. Furthermore, it is reflected in the central conclusion of the movie which, adhering to the Disney formula, offers a romantic happy ending for all the protagonists. Teddy and Sacagawea ride off into the proverbial sunset and Lawrence and Rebecca started to embark on their amorous relationship.

The relationships portrayed in *Night at the Museum* feature men who do not display their emotions and are clumsy and inexperienced at courtship. However, they become attractive by performing heroic acts. For example, Lawrence manages to rescue the tablet from the thieves and saves the 'lives' of all the wax figures that come to life at night. Thereby, he enables Rebecca to meet her heroine and subject of her dissertation, Sacagawea, so that she can ask her several questions since the available knowledge about Sacagawea is limited, especially when compared to other prominent Native American women, such as Pocahontas.

In Bruchac's novel, the only description Sacagawea provides about her traveling companions is the following. "The white men had treated me with friendship and respect always, and I could not imagine ever meeting so fine a company of men again"(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 184). The respect is also emphasized by Captain Clark who states: We were a little

family within than lodge, and no man in our party ever showed anything less than perfect respect to your mother, though she was the only woman with us”(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 73). However, Sacagawea does characterize Captain Clark in more detail:

A big smile came over your good uncle’s face as he looked at me, right at me! Then he came over to us so quickly that he almost ran. He was such a tall man, Otter Woman and I had to lean our heads back to look up at him. He gave us presents, a mirror and some cloth. We were both excited, but we tried not to show any expression. I made the sign for thanks and nodded back to him. He just kept smiling, making gestures, saying things in his strange language. He really was like a big child, as open and friendly as one. I liked him (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 55).

The interaction between him and Sacagawea is always friendly, amiable and very caring. By portraying Clark as friendly and childlike, Sacagawea contrasts him with typical Native American men. Those are soldiers who have proven themselves in battle (Bruchac *Sacajawea*: 29). The dominance of these wars is particularly evident in the following quotation:

When the evening came a fire was made and their young men began to dance about it, telling of their brave deeds in war. They were bold-looking people, the men stout and well made, much decorated with paint and porcupine quills and feathers, all with buffalo coats of different colors” (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 37).

The dancing and the singing of the Native Americans is a recurrent characterization in the novel. Sacagawea, for instance, sings with her friends while harvesting berries (Bruchac *Sacajawea* 5). However, Sacagawea states that tribal members danced for them at their reception. “Poor and hungry as they were, they shared whatever they had with Captain Lewis and his men, and the Indians danced and sang for the men’s amusement till midnight”(Bruchac *Sacajawea* 118). In this quotation another issue is mentioned, namely, that many Native American tribes suffered from food shortages due to conflicts with other more powerful tribes. “They had little food to eat. And indeed everyone in the camp, from the smallest child to the oldest woman, looked thin and hungry”(Bruchac *Sacajawea* 117). Interestingly, in this quotation children and women are singled out since they represent a certain need for protection.

This protection of children, the elderly and women in general is a salient theme. In the novel, the men feel responsible for Sacagawea but also for her son’s health and safety. At first since Sacagawea was the only woman who took part in the expedition she was seen as ‘the other’, in the sense that her husband did not take her pain seriously. “Perhaps it was the medicine of that place that made me become ill. I told your father that I was not feeling well,

that a pain was growing in my stomach. He ignored me” (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 87). This might be due to the fact that Charbonneau belittled his wife’s pain as menstrual cramps.

Then I clutched my stomach. The pain was growing worse. Captain Clark looked at me with concern. ‘It is nothing,’ your father said, trying to convince himself as much as the captains. ‘It is a woman’s illness. Ma petite Bird Woman, she will be well soon’(Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 88).

However, Captain Clark took her seriously and was worried about her which, in turn, led Charbonneau to take Sacagawea’s pain seriously. “Neglectful as he might have been of your mother before her condition became so grave, your father never left her side all the time she was ill, and he would eat or drink nothing until she was well”(Bruchac *Sacagawea*: 91). While Charbonneau was not overly concerned about his wife’s needs, Captain Clark made sure that Sacagawea and her son were safe. This ties into the described damsel-in-distress myth dominant in Western societies, as pointed out in chapter 4.1. “In fact, I think your good uncle wanted me to be with them. It seemed as if he was always watching over me, in much the same way as I watched over you, Firstborn Son”(Bruchac *Sacagawea*: 96). Clark even postponed their travels because he feared that either Sacagawea or her son would become ill (Bruchac *Sacagawea*: 98). This interest in their health was probably also partially due to their value:

As always, you and your mother were a great aid to us. All of the Indians were reconciled to our friendly intentions whenever they caught sight of the two of you. A woman with a party of men is a token of peace. [...]But the sight of an Indian woman with a baby had assured them of our humanity and our friendly intentions (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 143).

In the movie, Sacagawea is portrayed as the damsel-in-distress in need of protection. At first, she has to be rescued from her glass display case in which she is trapped together with Lewis and Clark. After Lawrence breaks the glass so that she can help him track the villains, Sacagawea is in danger from an oncoming carriage. Instead of jumping out of the way and rescuing herself, she freezes and is protected by Teddy Roosevelt who pushes her out of harm’s way at the very last minute.



image 28 Sacagawea freezing out of fear (*Night at the Museum*)



image 29 Teddy saving Sacagawea (*Night at the Museum*)

In both screenshots (images 28 and 29) the viewer gazes at Teddy and Sacagawea. This gaze, as mentioned above, characterizes their whole relationship. Especially when

Sacagawea was still imprisoned in her glass showcase, Teddy watched her at night when he was able to come to life and walk around the museum freely. In the beginning, he would always watch her from a distance with his binoculars.



image 30 gazing at Sacagawea 1 (*Night at the Museum*)



image 31 gazing at Sacagawea 2 (*Night at the Museum*)

The view through the binoculars and the focusing on Sacagawea serves to direct the audience's gaze upon Sacagawea (cf images 30 and 31). Thereby viewers are invited to project their wishes onto her. Furthermore, the gazes serve to emphasize her Native American attire and look. She wears her hair in two braided pig tails and wears a beige leather dress with fringes which serves to highlight her exoticism. The beaded necklace she is wearing is also typically associated with Native American women and their jewelry. In addition, the few shots that reveal her whole body show that she wears a beaded satchel around her waist. In the novel, Sacagawea's outfit is never directly described, although she mentions a string of beads which she used as a belt:

The captains were so pleased that they gave me a beautiful string of the blue beads that everyone loves. I used them as a belt. I did not own that belt long, but I still remember how good it felt to my touch, how proud I was to be useful (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 107).

There are two instances, in which Teddy Roosevelt and to some extent the viewers are 'caught' by Lawrence gazing at Sacagawea.



image 32 Teddy watching Sacagawea (*Night at the Museum*)



image 33 Lawrence catching a peeping Teddy (*Night at the Museum*)

Lawrence goes on to interrupt the secret peeping through the binoculars and suggests that Teddy go talk to Sacagawea in person (see images 32 and 33). Later, Teddy gathers his courage to talk to her but, apart from a very gentleman-like greeting, he does not manage to say anything else due to his nerves. However, his masculinity is reasserted later on in the movie when he manages to rescue Sacagawea from the horses.

In the film, Sacagawea must be aware that she is being watched since she can see that everything comes to life at the museum at night while she is being trapped behind the glass. Given that she also seems to be on the lookout for someone, one could argue that she is in fact looking to see whether someone is gazing at her. This assumption is supported by the showcase which from afar resembles a theater stage on which actors are enacting the expedition. In addition, by keeping her behind glass, the effect of her exoticism is embellished, since rare and exotic objects tend to be put in glass vitrines or in showcases. This interpretation suggests itself particularly in connection with the history of colonialism and the position of women as the bearers of the colonizer's look and object of their fantasies, as pointed out in chapters 4.1 and 3.1.1.

In the novel, the Corps of Discovery know that they are being watched by Native Americans who were on the lookout for their tribe and by curious inhabitants who had heard about their journey and wanted to see them. Two and a half members of the Corps received special attention: "When he saw York, all black as if painted up for war, they really worried him. But then he saw your mother and you. Raiding parties never took along a woman and a child." (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 135). This quotation not only refers to York's skin tone thereby turning him into the exotic 'other' but also mentions another important point, namely, the use of paint. As described in chapter 4.1.2, body paint as an adornment has a longstanding tradition. Its use is explained by Sacagawea:

There was the creek where we got the earth from which we made our white paint. I taught them how a friend would paint the cheeks of someone he or she met. I told them that they should carry paint with them (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 107).

Thus, Bruchac not only depicted the journey of the Corps of Discovery but also explained Native American traditions. While both movie and novel begin Sacagawea's life story with the expedition, they differ radically in their portrayed expectations of gender roles. In the novel, men are mostly characterized as either courageous warriors from Native America tribes, or as the respectful members of the Corps of Discovery. Sacagawea and her son are considered signs of peace. She is portrayed as a hardworking, loving and capable married mother who played a pivotal part in the expedition. However, she seemed to remain within traditional gender roles, only departing from them for brief periods of time but ultimately reaffirming the status quo. In contrast, the movie represents Sacagawea as a single, exotic and attractive woman who grabbed the attention of Teddy Roosevelt. Her exoticism is furthered by the glass showcase in which she is trapped and the traditional clothing she is wearing. Sacagawea's agency in the movie is defined in relation to the male counterparts she

tries to help. In the end, she reaffirms a patriarchal order, by entering into a romantic relationship with Teddy Roosevelt and riding off into the proverbial sunset in order to guarantee a romantic happy end.

4.2.3. Two Native American women: one look?

Pocahontas and Sacagawea are two remarkable Native American women who share the same cultural heritage. Both were raised in a tribal setting and are deeply embedded in patriarchal structures. This limits the range of gender roles they can occupy, leaving them the choice between affirming and conforming to societal and gender expectations or defying them. While Pocahontas is definitely more defiant than Sacagawea, both women tend to remain in their familial setting at the end of the narrative. However, the novels assert that within that tribal structure, women had overt and covert power, as advisers as well as a general covert influence on the men. Pocahontas in Bruchac's novel points out: "We women often say that we know what a man will do long before he does it. After all, we are the ones who make up his mind for him" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 67). Sacagawea in Bruchac's novel uses the same reasoning when she refuses to talk to her husband: "When a man has been foolish, it is sometimes better to let him think of what he has done. If you tell him he is wrong, that just makes him more stubborn about it" (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 66f.).

The same reasoning might serve as a justification for why women were considered to be advocates of peace within the tribal structures. Both women stand for peace, a dominant portrayal which can be found in the novels and films which were analyzed. In Bruchac's works it might seem straightforward, since Pocahontas' role was to function as a mediator between the cultures and people to establish and maintain peace while Sacagawea was employed for her knowledge of the land and of tribal languages, hence also functioning as a mediator. Even the animated Disney version of the Pocahontas narrative with its different foci still firmly establishes that Pocahontas was the driving force of peace between the European settlers and the Native Americans. The most difficult interpretation seems, thus, to be the portrayal of Sacagawea in *Night at the Museum*. Within the movie, her role is a rather limited; however, I would argue that she is the ultimate reason for a peaceful and happy ending of the romantic plot. If she had not been liberated from her glass showcase she could not have read the tire tracks and would not have been endangered by the rapidly approaching horses. It was exactly her rescue by Teddy Roosevelt that set the events which eventually led to the romantic conclusion of the film in motion. By defeating the villain and thus rescuing all the wax figures in the museum, peace could be established and a harmonious cohabitation achieved.

Another striking similarity is the look Pocahontas and Sacagawea share. The warriors bear a close resemblance, too. They are depicted as strong, courageous and proud men who are highly skilled and whose bodies are well trained. Although they have to be stern warriors, they like to sing and dance to celebrate their successes. The singing warriors are not only featured in the Disney movie but also in both novels as the detailed analysis has shown. Pocahontas, in both the movie and the novel, and Sacagawea in Bruchac's novel like to sing and dance as well. While Pocahontas is aware that she can awe her audience by singing and dancing for them, Sacagawea sings while she is working to pass the time: "We were picking berries happily, and singing the picking song our children sometimes sing" (Bruchac *Sacajawea* 5).

The mentioned fieldwork is another fact typical of the traditional role of Native American women since they were responsible for the harvest. This view is reflected in both novels. Pocahontas ridicules the strange men who do a woman's work: "What was truly strange was to see men, grown men, working in those fields, trying to hoe and weed as women do" (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 76). The Disney version shows a panorama shot of women working to hoe corn. In the novel, Sacagawea fulfills this typical gender role while she is in captivity:

When the soil had to be worked in Red Calf Woman's field with the hoes made of buffalo shoulder blades, it was Otter Woman and I who spent longer than any of the other girls in the field. When it came time to use the rakes made of sticks tied to a pole, we were the ones who could always be found scratching weedy soil about the short stalks of corn (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 18).

However, planting tobacco was a male domain (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 20). Scenes in which tobacco is smoked are included in both novels but are excluded from both films. Byrne and McQuillan claim that the emphasis on corn as a replacement for gold is another substitution for tobacco which was omitted due to the influence of the Clinton administration (116f.). *Night at the Museum* does not include any tobacco either since nobody smokes in the movies probably due to societal pressure not to market and advocate smoking and tobacco as something cool.

Another striking similarity with regards to gender expectations is a specific appearance. As highlighted in 4.1 and its subsequent chapters, attractiveness can be advantageous. Both women, at least in the movies, have a comparable look since they wear a similar outfit as the following screenshots (images 34 and 35) illustrate:



image 34 Pocahontas' look



image 35 Sacagawea's look

Both women wear a dress made of lightly tanned leather with fringes. Both dresses end above the knee, albeit Pocahontas' outfit is a bit more provocative due to its v-shaped bottom and the slits on the side of the bottom of the dress. Sacagawea remains more conservatively dressed. Both women have a darker skin complexion and wear a leather band around the waist to accentuate it. Pocahontas sports a simple unadorned dark leather belt whereas Sacagawea has a satchel tied around her waist. This satchel features an intricate pattern made of beads. The same can be found on her dress, necklace and earrings. Disney's Pocahontas is less adorned, however, she also wears a turquoise necklace with a diamond shaped pendant and there is a prominent tattoo on her right arm. In addition, both women have slender bodies and lean legs. They are aware of their appearance and of the fact that they are being looked at.

In Bruchac's novel, Pocahontas puts on an apron intricately adorned with copper and shells, and wears pearl earrings as well as a copper and pearl necklace to impress the new settlers (Bruchac, *Pocahontas* 22ff). The only piece of clothing mentioned in Bruchac's novel about Sacagawea, is a belt with beads which she received as a present but with which she had to part with later on in the narrative (Bruchac, *Sacajawea* 107). This connotes that they realize that their look can be useful and advantageous.

Although both women bear striking physical similarities, they are characterized quite differently. In the novels, Pocahontas is a free-minded, curious and somewhat childlike woman, who has not yet reached puberty whereas Sacagawea is married and already has a baby at the age of sixteen. Thus, Sacagawea is more mature and responsible, however, she also likes to explore the world. These characterizations could not be more different from their film counterparts. In the Disney animated movie, Pocahontas appears to be much older and has a slender but curvy figure made possible by her tiny waist and her ample bosom. Her dress accentuates and highlights her body. In the movie, Sacagawea seems to be much older than 16 and there is no mention that she is a mother or married. She seems to be on the lookout for someone, presumably a man, since she stops her search when she meets Teddy Roosevelt who falls head over heels in love with her.

Another stark difference lies in the heterosexual relationships portrayed. In both movies, entering a stable, heterosexual relationship seems to be the ultimate goal, which is also alluded to by Captain Clark in the novel. Furthermore, Sacagawea, in the novel, is already married and has started a family with her husband. This differs from the central conclusion of the novel about Pocahontas which ends with Smith's adoption long before her marriage to Rolfe which is only mentioned in the afterword, as is her role as a mother. Considering the theory, proposed by hooks, about the oppositional gaze, one can deem Bruchac's refusal to include any marriage of Pocahontas as a manifestation of this oppositional point of view, especially because he was outraged about the Disney version.

Thus, it can be concluded that even though the narratives bear some salient similarities they differ in their portrayal, especially when it comes to relationships, marriage and the extent of the commodification of their bodies. While the movies adhere to the well-established and successful Disney formula for financial success, the novels try to offer a different perspective. Joseph Bruchac, following the tradition of many Native American authors as pointed out in chapter 2.1.1, created a counter narrative that presented a different point of view from the dominant mainstream of stories about these two remarkable Native American women. Unfortunately, not even he is immune to existing scripts and gender stereotypes which are continuously perpetuated through the media, even though he purposely tries to subvert the most obvious and dominant ones, such as putting his female protagonists under an impenetrable patriarchal rule.

5. Conclusion

The present thesis examined the portrayal of Pocahontas and Sacagawea in selected forms of the media targeting children and young adults who are particularly susceptible to the influence hidden messages and stereotypes can have on their beliefs, values, world view and identity. A content-based approach was chosen in order to identify the implicit ideologies and stereotypical representations in the two novels *Pocahontas* and *Sacagawea* by Joseph Bruchac and in the Disney film *Pocahontas* and the Twentieth Century Fox movie *Night at the Museum*. The original hypothesis was that their portrayal of Pocahontas and Sacagawea ranges from them being sexualized females dependent on men to a more balanced view that, nevertheless, favors certain stereotypical gender appearances contingent on the era. This assumption proved to be accurate on most levels.

The movies, in particular, favor a more creative approach to the narrative, in the sense that they take more liberties in the depiction of Pocahontas and Sacagawea and their lives.

This is due to the specific formula developed by Walt Disney. This recipe for success consists of catchy songs, the quest for individuality, the dichotomy between good and evil, the use of sidekicks and the romantic love story. All these features are present in both movies, albeit they are more obvious in Disney's *Pocahontas*. The novels, in contrast, exhibit elements of Native American oral storytelling traditions and rely on a historically more accurate version of events by using historical documents as the basis for the featured narratives and dialogues. Both approaches taken by their creators share one similarity, namely, the use of myths and stories surrounding Pocahontas and Sacagawea to create narratives centering on these women who are firmly embedded in US-American and Native American culture whose elements they incorporate.

By using gender theory and by focusing on the concept of the 'other' it can be concluded that Pocahontas and Sacagawea reaffirm certain gender stereotypes and accept a patriarchal societal order while at the same time reproducing some, albeit not many stereotypical images of Native Americans. These images emerged after the first contact with the European settlers and have been continually reproduced in a myriad of forms since that time. They have been used to explain the differences in appearance, language, behavior and belief and constructed in the oppositional pair of 'us' and the 'other'. Through this duality, a hierarchical structure emerged in which the European colonizer defined the Native Americans as uncivilized, in need of education and as (ig)noble savages. All these features are reflected in the samples analyzed. While the novels and the Disney film portray them in ways to encourage the audience to question them, *Night at the Museum* does not portray Sacagawea as uncivilized. In particular, the notion of the uncivilized savage is questioned in the Disney film by the song "Savages". In the novels, the Europeans' behavior is compared to the Native Americans' and thereby leads to the conclusion that both behave like savages.

In addition, both women function as cultural brokers. Pocahontas' role was to function as an intermediary between the cultures and people to establish and maintain peace while Sacagawea was employed for her knowledge of the land and of tribal languages, hence also mediating between two parties. Thereby, they reinforce the stereotype of the helpful Native American woman.

Through travel reports and journals stereotypes were perpetuated highlighting specific traits that were different. One prime example of such a distorted image is the depiction of Native American women as exotic and sexual. Particularly the movies convey an image of Pocahontas and Sacagawea as exotic Native American women wearing a short seemingly traditional dress with fringes highlighting their bodies. Pocahontas' portrayal shows that she

knows how to use her body to get what she wants. Sacagawea, in the movie, represents a desirable, exotic and attractive woman who has grabbed the attention of Teddy Roosevelt simply by exhibiting herself in her glass showcase. Both Pocahontas' and Sacagawea's agency is defined in relation to their male counterparts which reaffirms a patriarchal order. However, Pocahontas is definitely more defiant than Sacagawea. Yet both women remain in their family setting at the end of the narrative. However, the novels assert that within that tribal structure women had overt and covert power, as advisers as well as a general covert influence on the men. This power is often reflected in the heterosexual relationships portrayed. In both movies, entering a stable, heterosexual relationship seems to be the ultimate goal, which is also alluded to by Captain Clark in the novel.

While the movies adhere to the well-established and successful Disney formula for financial success, the novels try to offer a different perspective. Joseph Bruchac, following the tradition of many Native American authors, created a counter narrative that presents a point of view different from the dominant mainstream of stories about these two remarkable Native American women. Unfortunately, not even he is immune to existing scripts and gender stereotypes which are continuously perpetuated through the media, even though he purposely tries to subvert the most obvious and dominant ones.

Therefore, viewers should retain a critical stance toward the subtexts which are diffused by the media. Through this critical attitude and sensitivity to recurrent patterns and representations, awareness can be gained which is necessary for the abolition, deconstruction and renegotiation of stereotypes.

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9. Appendix

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Erzählungen beeinflussen unsere Werte, Einstellungen und Auffassungen von und über die Welt. Besonders Kinder und Jugendliche sind anfällig, von den in den Medien versteckten Botschaften und Stereotypen beeinflusst zu werden. Eine solche Einflussnahme kann sich auf ihre Identitätsbildung sowie auf ihr kulturelles und historisches Wissen und die dazugehörigen Einstellungen auswirken.

In den letzten Jahrzehnten haben Kinder- und Jugendliteratur sowie Filme für dieselbe Altersgruppe vermehrt wissenschaftliche Aufmerksamkeit erhalten. Die Hintergründe und Forschungsfelder der Wissenschaftler sind ebenso divers wie die verschiedenen medialen Formen und Themen in Kinder- und Jugendliteratur sowie in Filmen. Die vorliegende Arbeit kann ebenso in diesem Kontext situiert werden, denn sie trägt zur Bereicherung des derzeitigen Forschungsstandes bei. Sie befasst sich mit einer Nische, die bis jetzt, meines Wissens nach, keine Beachtung bekommen hat, da sie eine detaillierte Analyse der Darstellung von Pocahontas und Sacagawea in der gegenwärtigen US-Kultur bietet. Diese fokussiert sich auf die intermediale Repräsentation dieser beiden Frauen in Literatur und Film, die beide Kinder und Jugendliche als Zielgruppe hat. Als exemplarische Beispiele für die gegenwärtige US-Kultur wurden der Disney Film *Pocahontas* und der Film *Nachts im Museum* (*Night at the Museum*), sowie zwei Jugendromane von Joseph Bruchac, die Sacagawea sowie Pocahontas' Geschichte aus der Sicht der beiden Protagonistinnen und ihrer männlich Gegenstücke, Captain Clark und John Smith, beschreiben.

Die Analyse nimmt die Gender und Orientalismus Theorie, sowie das Konzept des *Othring* als theoretische Prämisse und Ausgangspunkt, um die Stereotypisierung von 'nicht-westlichen' Kulturen, sowie von traditionellen Genderrollen aufzuzeigen. Dabei wird unter anderem darauf fokussiert, ob und wie stereotype Geschlechterrollen und patriarchale Gesellschaftsstrukturen dargestellt werden, ob Pocahontas und Sacagawea diese bestätigen oder untergraben.

Ein genereller Trend lässt sich in dieser Darstellung ausmachen, nämlich dass beide Frauen als Kulturvermittler dargestellt werden. Pocahontas verkörpert eine Mediatorin, die sich zwischen den europäischen Siedlern und ihrem Volk einschaltet, um so ein friedliches Zusammenleben zu ermöglichen. Sacagawea hat als Übersetzerin ebenfalls die Aufgabe, zwischen den Mitgliedern der Lewis und Clark Expedition und den einheimischen Stämmen zu vermitteln. Beide unterstützen jedoch durch diese Funktion den Stereotyp der hilfreichen

Indigenen. Zudem werden beide Frauen als Friedenssymbol konzipiert. Sacagawea begleitet eine Expeditionsgruppe, die nur aus Männern besteht und trägt dabei ihr Neugeborenes am Rücken. Damit bürgt sie für die friedlichen Intentionen der Entdeckungsreise. Pocahontas symbolisiert durch ihre Vermittlerrolle im Zuge der Besiedelung der Jamestown Kolonie ebenfalls den Frieden.

Besonders die Filme verbreiten ein Bild von Pocahontas und Sacagawea, das sie als exotische, attraktive und begehrenswerte Frauen darstellt. In den Filmen haben beide ein Lederkleidchen mit Fransen an, das ihre Figur betont und dem indigenen Stereotyp entspricht. Um ihre Hüfte tragen Sacagawea und Pocahontas einen Gürtel beziehungsweise einen kleinen Beutel. Beides betont ihre schlanken Taillen. Bruchacs Pocahontas legt viel Wert auf ihr Aussehen, wie sich in einigen Szenen im Roman zeigt. Ebenso wird der Eindruck geweckt, dass Pocahontas, sowohl im Buch wie auch im Film, weiß, wie sie ihren Körper zu inszenieren hat, um den gewünschten Effekt auf ihre (männliche) Umwelt zu haben.

Hinsichtlich der Genderrollen lässt sich konstatieren, dass sowohl Pocahontas als auch Sacagawea im familiären patriarchalen Umfeld bleiben, wie es durch die Filme und Romane beschrieben wird. Damit bestätigen sie Gesellschaftsstrukturen, die die Dominanz des Mannes über die Frau bestätigen, auch wenn Bruchac in seinen Romanen betont, dass Frauen innerhalb des StamMESSsystems sehr wohl direkten oder indirekten Einfluss auf Entscheidungen hatten. Direkten Einfluss übten sie in der Rolle als Beraterinnen aus und indirekten, indem sie die Männer in ihrem Umfeld beeinflussten. Somit wird zumindest teilweise der Stereotyp der rein patriarchalen Stammesstrukturen relativiert und gleichzeitig auf Forschung reagiert, die nachwies, dass es sogar weibliche Chiefs gab.

Die Analyse ergab, dass die Darstellung auf mehreren Ebenen stattfindet. Einerseits auf der Inhaltsebene sowie auf der bildlichen Ebene, die beide stereotype Repräsentationen von Stammesstrukturen, sowie von Pocahontas und Sacagawea ermöglichen, andererseits aber auch auf der Ebene der Musik, die durch einen eingängigen Rhythmus und effektvolle Texte im Gedächtnis bleiben. Daraus ergibt sich die Schlussfolgerung, dass durch diese vielschichtige Darstellung verschiedene Stereotypen untergraben, aber auch zementiert werden können und es daher notwendig ist, eine kritische Haltung gegenüber den Medien einzunehmen, besonders gegenüber jenen, die Kinder und Jugendliche als Zielgruppe haben. Schließlich kann der Etablierung von Stereotypen nur durch das Aufzeigen und Bewusstmachen spezifischer Darstellungen und wiederkehrender Muster entgegengewirkt werden.

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